

# President's Report

October 2013



There have been a number of significant developments at Tennis Alberta and Tennis Canada in 2013.

## Tennis Alberta Board

Organizationally, Kyle Runzer from Edmonton, Shaun Richards of Calgary and Tobi Macleod of Lethbridge have all resigned from our Board and their efforts will be missed. Thank you to all for your service as a volunteer. We are excited to have two new board members expected to gain nomination at our AGM on Sunday October 27 in Red Deer from Calgary, Susan Demchuk of Calgary who has accounting and systems expertise and who previously served on the Calgary Tennis Club Board and Elizabeth Huculak, also of Calgary who come from the Oakridge Racquet Club and whom has a great deal of public and private sector expertise at a senior level in strategic and market analysis and planning and program development. We welcome both Susan and Elizabeth to our board!!

## Tennis Alberta Staffing

Jill Groves formally took over the Executive Director position in the new year and has demonstrated great leadership with staff and in implementing solutions to assist in the growth of tennis on a limited budget. Well done Jill!

Charlie Mclean was hired on a semi-permanent basis as the Tennis Alberta's Director of High Performance & Player Development. Many of you already know Charlie as a tireless contributor to the high performance component of Tennis Alberta and an exceptional coach with a passion to grow the sport. We are very lucky to have Charlie on board.

We also hired Catlin West as the tournament and Program Co-coordinator in June and he has greatly assisted in helping the office with this important interface with our members and the Tennis Community. Welcome aboard Catlin!

Lastly, I would be remiss if I did not extend thanks to Mary Manley for her exceptional efforts with the Little Aces program and now the minor tennis leagues and West 8 schools program. Thank you!!

### High Performance

What an extraordinary year for Canadian Tennis on the world stage. Milos Raonic at #11 in the world, Vasek Pospisil leaping up the rankings to finish in the top 40 and Vasek and Milos meeting in the semifinals of the Montreal ATP event. Daniel Nestor continues to impress as he plays without aging although he's recently slipped to 18<sup>th</sup> in the Doubles Rankings.

The strong men's performances also translated into an unprecedented run at Davis Cup with Canada narrowly losing to Serbia in September of this year in the semifinals. I was lucky to be in attendance along with tennis fans from Calgary and Edmonton and an additional 400+ fans from across Canada. What a great moment for tennis in Canada!!

On the women's pro tour, we have a rising star in 18 year old, Eugenie Bouchard, reaching the top 40 and her first WTA final in Japan this year.

On the local front, we were able to garner a bronze medal in the doubles at the Canada Summer Games and a gold medal in boys' singles. At the national championships we also had decent success with one a doubles championship in the boys' U18 event and a finalist in the boys U16's event. Tennis Alberta continues to be challenged to provide appropriate training and competitive opportunities for our players from 14 to 18 due to a lack of facilities and competitive opportunities.

The high performance tennis pathway offers a tremendous opportunity to for Alberta kids to pursue a college education in the United States, often with full scholarships being offered. Present players include: Westin Bennett at N. Dakota State, Matt Labarre at Rensselaer Polytechnic in New York, Akhil Mehta at the University of Buffalo, Mark Hamill at University of North Florida, Mikala Bennett at N. Dakota State, and Kelsi Oliphant at Quinnipiac, and Kirsten Scott at SUNY Albany.

In conjunction with Tennis Canada, Tennis Alberta and the PTA's are actively working on a national player retention strategy and the NCAA college pathway is one element of the same.

### Tennis Canada/Tennis Alberta Interface

In conjunction with the Provincial Tennis Associations operating under the Council of Provinces, we meet regularly with Tennis Canada in an effort to grow the sport of tennis in Canada. In high performance, Tennis Canada has at long last published a high performance manual containing criteria for selection of players by Tennis Canada and we are cautiously optimistic that after decades Tennis Canada will actually use the criteria and select players from Alberta for additional funding and training opportunities on the same basis as players from Ontario and Quebec are selected. Hopefully their definition of "Canada" will at long last include Albertans.

We are also working co-operatively with Tennis Canada to eliminate duplication in processes and leverage their resources across the country to grow the game of tennis. Hatem McDadi, Vice President at our national body, reports that Tennis Canada is very supportive of TA's efforts and is indeed working well in areas of common interest, knowing that we can always improve in certain areas. Here are some highlights that we are working on as we look toward formalizing our MOU for 2014:

- Investment in VR ranking and tournament management system that will be used by all PTA's and TC;
- \$500k commitment to help with capital costs of the new indoor tennis centre in Calgary as well as to technical support from COO, Derek Strang, who will work closely with the Capital Campaign Committee as needed;
- \$48k support for Little Aces strategy in Alberta in addition to working closely with TA and TC staff to help as needed;
- \$60k for staffing support to help increase overall staffing capacity and to sustain the Director of High Performance & Player Development position, with a potential increase the professionalization fund for 2014;
- \$100k in support for Alberta Tennis Development Centre (TDC) clubs (seven), current BTC's (10), U12 training, HP training, Rogers Rookie Tour events, Rogers Rankings, U9 and U10 competitive events, as well as travel to junior nationals and support for coach certification and development.

## Facilities

Finally, with the unprecedented success of our professionals, we are seeing demand for programming and court time grown significantly and our abilities to meet the growth of the sport are hindered by the lack of facilities. Recently we were able to access court time in Edmonton at the Kinsmen Sports Centre in co-operation with the City of Edmonton to provide additional court time and programming. I also had an opportunity to meet with former Mayor Mandel to press the need for additional indoor courts for Edmonton to meet our programming and other needs.

In Calgary, in conjunction with the tireless work of Ron Ghitter of the Tennis Canada board, we have secured three acres of land from the City of Calgary at nominal cost and have over \$2 million in private funding to build a new eight court indoor tennis centre. There are also six additional outdoor courts at Acadia across the street from Beaverbrook High School. We expect to make application for a development permit with the City of Calgary later this year and if we are able to secure the remaining funds, to commence construction mid-year 2014.

This facility will run as a not-for-profit facility under the auspices of Tennis Alberta. I can tell you that this tennis facility will transform the sport in Alberta and help it to leap to the equivalent level of Ontario, Quebec, BC and perhaps higher in regards to programming, high performance and competitive and recreational play. I am very excited about the new tennis centre.

## Michael Downey

Finally, I would be remiss in my remarks if I did not pay tribute to Michael Downey who is leaving the CEO position of Tennis Canada to take up a similar post at the LTA in London in the new year. The appointment alone speaks volumes of the talents and leadership possessed and provided by Michael and he will be sorely missed. We wish him the best in his new position. Go Canada Go!!!

Respectfully Submitted,

Glen B. Scott

El Presidente