

## Two Streams Are Better Than One

TENNIS CANADA COACHING DEVELOPMENT + ROGERS CUP = CANADIAN SUCCESS

BY DAVID PHILLIPS

Two Streams ARE better than one: Tennis Canada Coaching Development + Rogers Cup = Canadian Success. 185,252 die-hard fans attended the Rogers Cup at the Uniprix Stadium in Montreal setting a world record for a one-week professional tennis event on both the ATP and WTA tours. As well, with a trio of Canadian women advancing to the second round, the Rogers Cup in Toronto promises to eclipse last year's event which welcomed 174,706 people, a WTA record that still holds today.

In Montreal on the men's side, Frank Dancevic's near-upset of world No. 2 Rafael Nadal gave tennis fans reason to cheer. Falling just a few games shy of reaching the semifinals, the Niagara Falls native enjoyed a well earned run through his first three opponents before pushing Nadal to the limit. This result serves to punctuate his phenomenal showing in the final of the US Open Series Indianapolis Tennis Championships - which included the biggest win of his career over world #5 Andy Roddick in the semifinals. Dancevic now has a career-best ATP world ranking of No. 67, 15 spots higher than his previous career-high of last year.

On the women's side, Canadian's Aleksandra Wozniak, Stephanie Dubois, Marie-Eve Pelletier and Ekaterina Shulaeva gave Toronto fans tons of excitement and reason for applause including Dubois' stunning 3-set upset of world No. 27 Ai Sugiyama. The trio of Wozniak, Dubois and Pelletier advanced to the second round, marking the first time in 16 years that such a feat has been accomplished.

The icing on the cake definitely belongs to Canadian favorite doubles specialist (and burgeoning tennis philanthropist) Daniel Nestor, who added his 6th Grand Slam doubles title with

a win at the French Open with partner Mark Knowles. Alongside a title at Queen's Club earlier this year, twice world ranked #1 Nestor has 9 career Grand Slams to his credit, an Olympic Gold medal and 48 ATP Tour Titles - along with a respectable \$6,074,664 in career prize money. And lest we forget that Nestor followed in the footsteps of Grant Connell, former world #1 and holder of 22 ATP Titles.

So this being the case, why are so many people talking about the lack

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of success in Canadian tennis? More importantly, in a learner-centered, consumer-driven world, who exactly is making the decision about what we, as fans or as teaching professionals, deem success to be? And why are we so tempted to believe what they have to say?

Let's take a step back and look at what role Tennis Canada's Coaching Development department and certification system has to do with the production of professional tennis players? Unlike baseball whose fan base does not play the sport competitively, tennis fans are die hard players. We play in parks, on public courts, at community clubs and in year-round facilities. We love to play the game and love to watch the game! In comes the role of certification and coaching education. Upon completion of the first two levels of certification, the Instructor level and Club Pro 1, budding tennis professionals now have a choice of two streams of coaching certification: the "high performance" or the "club professional" stream. Each represents a completely different set of competencies.

The Club Professional Stream is oriented to those individuals who work in

our seasonal and year round facilities

- private, commercial and community
- who are interested in developing the varied skills necessary to be successful in a club environment including business skills, customer service, programming, staff and departmental management, club maintenance, running team practices, etc. In other words, this individual is trained to be a "tennis pro".

The High Performance Stream is oriented to those individuals who are interested in player development (work-

ing in elite junior programs from age 5 - U18 and/or with high performance players from college to on-tour professionals). This stream focuses globally on up-to-date sport science and training techniques necessary for developing world-class competitors. This individual is trained to be a "performance coach". The result of this innovative approach to coaching education is a simple and successful one: committed and well prepared coaches and club professionals yield a strong and vibrant fan base. This fan base in turn has a direct result on record attendance at our two professional events. The dollars generated fund Tennis Canada who in turn supports both high performance coaching and player development.

So perhaps it's not a question of whether or not we are successful as a tennis nation - more importantly, it's about who we allow to define success for us. So what conclusions can we draw from the last few months? One thing for sure - Canadian tennis is healthy, promising and its fan base strong and supportive. The future of our coaching profession is on the right track and in good hands.