

The Kents: Like father, like son

MARK SMITH

Sports Editor



One of A&M's best kept secrets is its head tennis coach, David Kent.

He's not a tall man or extremely muscular. But he's always smiling. His wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses are almost a trademark on his round smiling face.

His entire demeanor reminds one a little of a grandfather-type figure. He knows his tennis and is willing to teach it to anyone willing to listen. You could call him A&M's tennis guru.

During the Texas A&M Tennis Camp he would walk around, talking with each camper, making sure each had some attention and were enjoying the work they were doing.

Nothing you could ask him is too insignificant or unworthy of discussion. He always has time for you when you need to ask him questions, even if they're about this seasons recruits or how the team played in last weekend's tournament.

One of the things that makes him special, is his ability to teach tennis. He just finished his 26th season as a head coach at the collegiate level and has amassed a record of 482-206.

This past season the team finished 17th nationally with a 23-4 record and won the Southwest Conference Championship for the first time in the school's history. The 1985 team finished with a 21-10 record.

Seems like the Aggies should have been ranked a little higher. Well, it wouldn't be the first time A&M was looked over in the rankings.

Kent exemplifies the best that most of us could hope to be. He is extremely successful at his chosen profession, but he still manages to be a nice guy.

He has gained the respect of his peers from across the state and country, but he's still the same old Texas boy who grew up in Amarillo.

But perhaps the best way to see Kent is through his children. Much like any father, you can see Kent's ways in his son, Todd.

Todd Kent maybe stands a little taller than his father, but he looks like a younger version of the original.

He moves through the tennis courts at the Omar Smith Tennis Complex, much the same way as his father. He stops and offers advice to the students gathered there.

Both even listen to irrelevant questions with the same patience and attentive ear.

Some say that professional tennis has an image problem today. They say the players and coaches are rude and won't talk to reporters.

Luckily, here at A&M, that's not a problem.

Men's tennis confident about new recruits

By Mark Smith
THE BATTALION

After finishing ranked No. 17 in the nation by the Intercollegiate Tennis Association, the Texas A&M men's tennis team is looking to continue its success on the court.

To do that, A&M has signed some top-notch Texas recruits as well as a strong player from Peru.

Jonathon Creath from Austin Westlake High School and Satyen Patel from Canyon High School signed letters of intent to play at A&M during the spring signing period.

Creath finished as runner-up in Class 4A singles play during his junior and senior years at Westlake. In his senior

year, he finished with over 30 wins.

"Jonathon is a Texas boy who I think will help us in the future," head coach David Kent said. "Like many freshman, he needs collegiate experience. Once he gets that, he'll be a tough player."

Creath's high school coach Elsa Hinojosa thought he could bring a number of positive qualities to the Aggie team.

"Jonathon's most important quality is his leadership in team tennis and I think that will help him fit right in with Texas A&M and their emphasis on team play," Hinojosa said.

Patel is also a strong player, Kent said. Patel won the Class 3A Doubles competition as a freshman at Canyon H.S. and won the singles competition during his junior year.

"Satyen is a great tennis player, and with his work ethic he could become an outstanding tennis player at Texas A&M," Kent said.

Kent was perhaps most impressed with Carlos Tori of Peru. Tori signed with A&M during the fall signing period. He came to A&M to visit a friend on the tennis team, senior business major Bernardo Martinez of Mexico City, and felt comfortable with A&M, Kent said.

Kent was impressed with Tori's reputation. "From what I've heard of him, he's an all-court player," Kent said. "He can do everything."

"The last I heard, he was in the semi-finals of the French Open junior competition," he said.

Kent is hoping that the recruits can help fill the spot of the only departing senior, Mark Weaver. Weaver was the team's top singles player and finished the 1994 season nationally ranked No. 30 in singles. Kent said losing Weaver was a big loss.

"Mark Weaver has been a catalyst for our team for four years now," Kent said. The three top prospects to replace Weaver are Martinez, Robbie Krause and Blake Arrant, Kent said.

Despite the loss of Weaver, Kent is optimistic about the team's chances for the upcoming 1994-95 season.

"I'm excited," Kent said. "This team has a knack for winning. The winning has become a habit. This team expects to win."

Top seeds advance at Wimbledon

Navratilova enters Wimbledon for 22nd and last time; Becker, Sampras advance in straight sets

WIMBLEDON, England (AP) — Martina Navratilova patted her thumping heart, applause cascading down Monday from the packed Wimbledon crowd standing in a long, sentimental and unprecedented tribute.

She smiled, winked, seemed embarrassed by all the fuss. All she had done was walk onto Centre Court, the grass lush and unblemished on the cool, cloudy evening of the first day. No one ever got cheered like that before a match at Wimbledon.

Rarely do players get that kind of warm, sustained ovation even when they win the tournament.

But this is Navratilova's 22nd and final Wimbledon, her last chance to add a 10th silver salver to her record collection for singles titles.

Every walk onto Centre Court could be her last, and the fans knew it. For a full minute, they stood and clapped.

Navratilova, 37, had worried that the emotion might be too much for her, but she got down to business quickly and dispatched 19-year-old Briton Claire Taylor, 6-2, 6-3.

"I've definitely been thinking about it," Navratilova said. "This is what I thought about just before I went out. This is what I wanted a year ago when I walked off the court. I said, 'I'll be back one more time.' This is what I wanted, one more chance, while I'm healthy and playing well. So here's my chance, go to it."

Pete Sampras, the defending men's champ, followed tradition by opening play on Centre Court at 2 p.m., moments after his boyhood idol, Rod Laver, was honored in the Royal Box on the 25th anniversary of his Grand Slam.

Sampras lost his bid for a Grand Slam when he fell in the French Open, but he celebrated Laver's No. 25 with 25 aces in a 7-6 (7-4), 7-5, 6-3 victory over Jared Palmer.

"I think this is probably my highest ace total," said Sampras, who made a fashion statement of sorts with his new baggy shorts, and a tennis declaration with his 128 mph serves.

"I was really serving as well as I could. He didn't have a clue where they were going," he said.

Sampras was in trouble only in the first set. Palmer had two set points at 15-40 with Sampras serving and down 5-6. Palmer thought he won the set with a forehand at 30-40, but the ball drifted barely wide.

"I was two inches away from losing that first set," said Sampras, who then closed out the set with an ace.

Andre Agassi, 1992 champ, had a slightly tougher match against Andrea Gaudenzi before winning 6-2, 6-7 (7-3), 6-3, 6-2.

"He picked up the serve in the second set, and I couldn't really make clean contact with a lot of his second serves, and that's where I tend to hurt people," Agassi said.

"That posed some difficulty, and I made a couple of double faults in the tiebreaker that I'm disappointed about. But I felt like I served tremendous."

Three-time champion Boris Becker continued his dominance of David Wheaton, beating him 6-2, 6-4, 6-3.



AP Photo

Boris Becker of Germany fires a backhand return to Stephane Simian of France during a singles match at the Japan Open in April.

Stefan Edberg, two-time Wimbledon champion, beat Ellis Ferreira 6-2, 7-6 (7-3), 6-4. Fourth-seeded Goran Ivanisevic eased past Fernando Meligeni 6-1, 6-3, 6-4, while No. 6 Todd Martin needed five sets to get past Grant Stafford 6-4, 6-2, 6-7 (8-6), 6-7 (7-5), 6-1.

French Open champion and No. 8 seed Sergi Bruguera, beat British wild-card Barry Cowan 6-2, 4-6, 6-4, 6-3. No. 10 Michael Chang beat Alberto Costa 7-6 (7-2), 6-4, 6-2, and No. 11 Petr Korda downed John Fitzgerald of Australia 6-2, 6-1, 6-4.

In women's matches, No. 6 Kimiko Date beat Ai Sugiyama 6-3, 7-6 (7-0); No. 11 Mary Joe Fernandez defeated Karina Habsudova 6-4, 6-2; and No. 14 Amanda Coetzer posted a 6-4, 6-0 win over Yelena Likhovtseva.

Els breaks tie to win U.S. Open with sudden-death play

OAKMONT, Pa. (AP) — Ernie Els calmed his jangled nerves and got what he wanted sooner than he expected: A major championship.

The lanky South African showed poise beyond his 24 years when he regrouped after a bogey, triple-bogey start to play the last 18 holes of Monday's U.S. Open playoff at treacherous Oakmont Country Club one under par and defeat Loren Roberts on the second sudden-death hole.

Colin Montgomerie, the other member of the first three-way playoff at the Open since 1963, was eliminated after shooting 78 to the 74s posted by Els and Roberts.

"I've always wanted to win a major," Els said. "It's come pretty quick with me. I'm 24. People have to be patient with me. I have a long stretch ahead of me."

It could be a longer stretch for the golfers who will have to contend with him for the years to come.

After a rocky round in which all three players saved their best for last, it ended with a two-putt par on No. 11 after Roberts found first the rough and then the sand, making bogey when a twisting 35-foot par putt spun out of the hole.

Els, the first foreign player to win the Open since 1981 and only the fourth since 1927, was all over the course, missing the fairway on 10 of the 16 driving holes.

But he scrambled brilliantly and showed the resourcefulness needed to win a major championship.

"It's just a dream come true for me," Els said. "I started out kind of bad. I guess we were all kind of nervous."



It sure looked that way. For a while it seemed as if no one would win the tournament. If this had been a basketball game, all three players would have been benched by the fifth hole.

At that point, Els had two 5s and a 7 on his card. Roberts had two 5s and a 6. And Montgomerie had two 6s and a 5. Ugly golf.

After the 21-minute second hole, on which Els made his 7, the six-stroke limit used at miniature golf courses looked like a good idea.

"You're gearing to play four rounds and then all of a sudden you have to play a fifth," Roberts said. "You're going to be tight. All three of us were too tight and we just didn't get started too good."

Els fell a stroke behind right off the bat when he bogeyed the first hole after missing the fairway with a wild hook left, much like the drive on Sunday that led to the incorrect free drop.

Then came No. 2. He made triple bogey on the short 342-yard hole when his second shot flew the green and landed in a bush, costing him a one-stroke penalty.

"I guess I was kind of nervous," he said about the approach shot. "I took a

wedge. The ball just went over the green. I couldn't believe it."

Els was three strokes behind Roberts after the triple bogey. He cut it to two with a birdie on the next hole and they were deadlocked after Roberts made a double-bogey six on No. 5.

From there on they were never separated by more than one stroke.

Montgomerie, who looked lost, scuffing two chips and leaving several putts embarrassingly short, fell three strokes behind on the seventh hole and never got closer, turning the front nine in a fat 42.

"Obviously I'm disappointed," the Scotsman said. "I'm even more disappointed" knowing that 74 was the best score of the playoff.

Even he settled down, playing the last six holes one under par.

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