

The Kooyong Foundation has just enjoyed its most successful year since its inception in 2002.

The success came both on and off the court. Foundation scholarship players had outstanding results in local, national and international events while the Foundation enhanced its financial position thanks to the generous donations from members and friends of the club.

The highlight of the playing year came at Flushing Meadows, New York, in September when 17-year-old lefthander Omar Jasika turned in a stunning performance to clinch the US Junior Singles and Doubles titles.

Omar has been a Foundation project since he was first awarded a John Fitzgerald Kooyong Foundation Scholarship in 2010. He has always shown a great deal of promise, working with Wayne Arthurs (a Kooyong Foundation Director), Richard Fromberg, the late Paul Arber and his current coach, Tennis Australia's Liam Smith.

The US victories represented the big breakthrough in his career, not least because he overcame intense heat and a gruelling schedule in which he played doubles and singles on several consecutive days.

He was clearly on the ropes in the Singles Final when, having lost the first set, he served two double faults to gift his opponent, Quentin Halys, the reigning European champion and world's fourth-ranked junior, the chance to serve out for the match.

Omar then proceeded to storm over the French junior, winning 17 of the next 18 points and claiming the title 2-6 7-5 6-1. His win put him alongside fellow countrymen Pat Cash (1982) and Bernard Tomic (2009) as a Junior US Singles winner and moved him to Number Eight in world junior rankings.

Questioned about his remarkable comeback, Omar put it simply: "I just stuck in there, I guess.

This week has been unreal for me. Just sticking in and hanging in got me through a few matches, so I kept it in my head and I hung in and kept fighting." A day earlier he had won the doubles final with Japanese partner Naoki Nakagawa.

Pat Cash was certainly impressed with the young Australian's gritty performance in New York and predicted a fine future for him if he could maintain his development. "He is a real talent," said Cash.

"He is a little guy, but he reminds me of Marcelo Rios (the Chilean lefthander who won 18 titles and nearly \$10 million in prizemoney) and Rios got to No.1 in the world (1998).

"He is a little leftie but he really hits the ball hard and fast. He has a good all-round game and he works hard."

Earlier in the year Omar and two other Kooyong scholarship players, Marc Polmans and Destanee Aiava, each reached the third round of the Australian Open Junior singles.

Destanee's performance was particularly notable because she was only 13 and toppled players three and five years older to win her first and second round matches.

Throughout the year Destanee played at the highest level, with great consistency and determination, racking up 30 wins and just three losses in nine months. She won four consecutive Junior ITF titles and was the youngest player in the world's top 100 for under 18s. She was also an outstanding contributor as the Australian team reached fourth place in the World Junior Finals in the Czech Republic.

Other highlights from the Foundation scholarship players included:

- Andrew Whittington got through to the quarter final of the Doubles at the Australian Open with South Australian Alex Bolt. They also qualified for the main Doubles draw at Wimbledon.
- John Peers was seeded in Doubles with Andy Murray's brother, Jamie, at all four Grand Slams in 2014. The pair also combined to win the ATP Doubles title in Munich.
- Codey Gunn and Greg Polmans represented Australian in the World Team titles.
- Daniel Nolan recently reached the final of the ITF Oceania Closed Junior Championships in Fiji while also reaching the final of the singles at the ITF Victorian Junior Claycourt International in April.
- Marc Polmans made the semi-finals of singles at ITF events in South Korea (November) and Thailand (March) as well winning the doubles title at the ITF event in Germany in June. He was runner-up in doubles in events at Traralgon and in Belgium.
- Katerina Valos won the ITF doubles title and was a semi-finalist in the singles in Kawana, Fiji, in July. She was runner-up in doubles at the ITF Victorian Junior Claycourt International in April. She also made the semi-final of the singles at the ITF event in Gosford.
- Danielle McIntyre reached the semi-finals of both singles and doubles at the ITF event in Hamilton, NZ.

## TEAM CUPS

As in past years the Foundation sponsored two major teams tournaments for Victorian players 10 and under (Wayne Arthurs Cup) and 12 and under (Alicia Molik Cup). Up to 16 metropolitan and regional teams of four players took part, watched by hundreds of family members and friends.

## HOT SHOTS

The Foundation's newest program, the Hot Shots for members' children and grandchildren, aged from five to 10, was extremely popular with up to 60 youngsters turning out each month for their lessons on Centre Court. Club coaches and helpers take the children through their paces in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere designed to encourage them to embrace the game.

## SQUASH DEVELOPMENT

A group of Kooyong's squash players, led by Bert Armstrong and Colin Cruikshank, have been strong supporters of the Foundation, raising funds to be directed towards identifying and nurturing talented and deserving young squash players.

The Foundation assisted the following players:

### SARAH CARDWELL

Early in 2014 Sarah was advised she was in contention to be selected for Australia in the Commonwealth Games held in August. The selection was subject to her world rankings (versus other players in contention) at the time when the official team was announced in early July.

From January onwards Sarah then selected tournaments around the world travelling to those tournaments gaining experience and world rankings. As a result Sarah was selected to represent Australia in Scotland and given the honour of playing singles for her country at the Games.

### TATE NORRIS.

At 15 years of age Tate is the number one ranked player in Victoria within his age division and ranked number four in Australia. Kooyong coach Malcolm McClarty coaches Tate on a continuous basis. Tate is undefeated in Pennant squash this season and will gradually play A grade squash for Kooyong.

Tate was selected to represent Victoria in the Australian Junior Championships, both individual and State v State, in Perth in October.

## JASON HOLMES.

Jason won the South Australian under 17 Championships in April this year and also played in the Western Australian Championships in June, falling short of winning the title.

Like Tate, Jason has just been selected to represent Victoria in the Australian Junior Championships, both individual and State v State, in Perth.

After finishing year 12 this year Jason plans to enter University in 2015 and his goal is to train and play much harder once year 12 is completed.

## SAM EJTEMAI

Sam was the Number One ranked player in Australia in the 19-year-old grouping in 2014 and was officially ranked by the World Squash Federation as the Number Eight junior in the world.

Sam is completing year 12 in 2014 and has been restricted to local tournaments due to the pressure of study. His goal is to defend his Canadian Title in 2015, a prestigious event which he has won on two previous occasions.

## THE MILLION MARK

As it celebrated its 12<sup>th</sup> birthday the Kooyong Foundation marked a real milestone, passing the million dollar mark in total donations since its inception. Over the years the funds have been donated by members and friends of Kooyong, grateful for the wonderful experiences they have enjoyed at the club and willing to “put something back”. Some have made a further commitment by leaving a bequest in their will.

In recent times we have also benefited from a number of 50-year members who have decided that now they are enjoying free membership they can direct all or part of the waived fee to the Foundation.

The help from of all these people has enabled the Foundation to run its dynamic program to develop junior tennis and to purchase much of the memorabilia on display throughout the clubhouse. They are the practical outcomes from our dual mottoes: Preserving the Past. Promoting the Future.

In the past few years the level of giving has risen substantially which has made it possible for the Foundation to expand its support for talented juniors, without which many may have found it difficult to achieve their full potential.

All of the money donated goes directly to Foundation work because the club supplies all administration services and CEO Chris Brown provides key professional support.

The Foundation is chaired by the club's immediate past President, Peter Quinn, and others serving on the board include the current President, Ian Hill, and another former President, Terry Fraser. There are three patrons – Evonne Goolagong Cawley, Frank Sedgman and Josh Frydenberg, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Member for Kooyong and a former Kooyong Club champion.

If any member would like further information on the Foundation and the availability of tax deductibility for donations they can contact CEO Chris Brown (9822 3333) or Foundation Chairman Peter Quinn (0418 396 999).