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Welcome to The Ojai Tennis Tournament

The joy of my job as president of the Ojai Tennis Tournament is to meet and work with all of you — players, coaches, parents, spectators and our wonderful volunteer community of Ojai. Welcome to you all! Please enjoy “The Ojai,” a tournament in its 113th year of tennis and tradition.

Our events include an outstanding field of Juniors, the always-tough Small and Community Colleges, the ever-impressive Pac-12 and an exciting Open division. Thursday, April 25, we will have our third annual 10-and-under tournament for the players of the future, followed

by a barbecue with celebrity entertainment and an exhibition match. And, of course, every day you will want to partake of our complimentary freshly squeezed orange juice in the morning and tea and cookies in the afternoon.

President's Message

This year, we are proud to host the Community Colleges first-ever State Championships! On Wednesday, April 24, the top team from the north will face the top team from the south in a dual-match championship at Pierpont Racquet Club and

Ventura College in Ventura. The winners will be crowned at a banquet at the Crowne Plaza in Ventura that evening. The next day, the community colleges will begin their individual competition play, ending with the semifinals and finals Sunday at Libbey Park in

Ojai. Whether you are following

your favorite Juniors on the private courts throughout Ojai, watching the Community Colleges State Championships or the Pac-12 men's team format, the Pac-12 women's individuals, or the Open where pros play for prize money, I hope you enjoy your



Photo by Holly Roberts

Vivian Perrett

experience in Ojai. We are glad you are here, watching over 1,500 players in our 30-plus events on 112 courts.

Enjoy the best that tennis has to offer in this, the largest tennis tournament in the United States.

Ojai Valley Tennis Club

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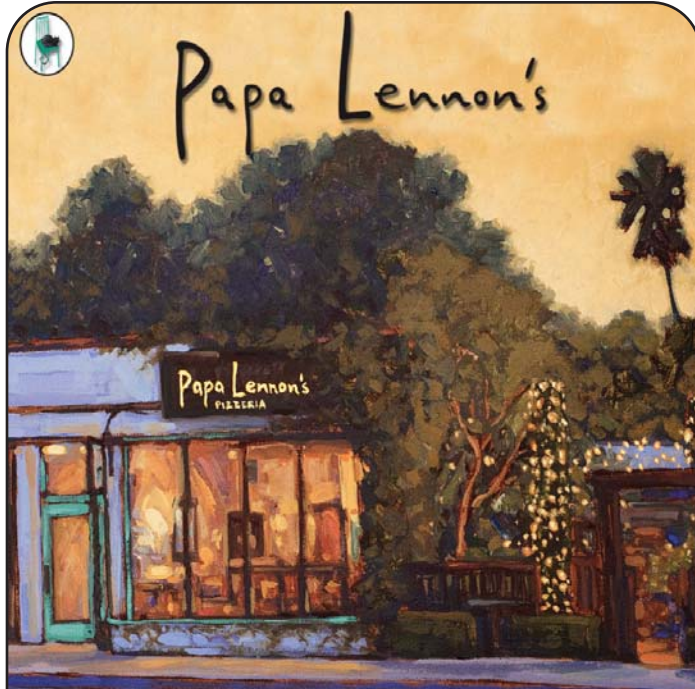
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The Ojai Tennis Tournament: A place where champions are discovered

By Steve Pratt

Look through the list of names of past champions in the updated Record of Events book on sale at the merchant booth this year and you will surely get lost in 50-something pages of names that represent a who's-who in the history of tennis' greatest players. It's simply what makes The Ojai so great.

In 1928, Bill Tilden played and won The Ojai at the peak of his popularity during the "Golden Age" of sports in the 1920s. There are even stories of how Tilden slept under the eucalyptus trees during the warm, late-April nights in Ojai. His victory came just one year after Big Bill won the first Pacific Southwest Championships in 1927 in Los Angeles. That event became known as the longest running professional event in Southern California before it was sold for \$3 million last fall to a group of investors in Bogota, Colombia.

The Ojai became a place where even an astronaut was first discovered as a very good tennis player. Sally Ride played the tournament as a junior in the late 1960s.

Ride, of course, later became the first woman in space, serving on two shuttle missions. According to her biography, Ride was coached by a former world No. 1 player, four-time U.S. National and two-time Wimbledon champion Alice Marble starting at the age of 10. Look through The Ojai Record of Events and there is Marble's name under Women's Open champion in 1933.

Ride played two years for Swathmore College in Philadelphia, and that's the



Photo by Dave Kenas / Easter Bowl

Gage Brymer has a chance to make history this year by taking three consecutive interscholastic titles.

name of the school next to her name as a finalist in 1970 of the Women's Independent Colleges singles championship, which she lost to Pam Richmond of Arizona State.

Ride returned to Southern California to train for a professional tennis career, but just a few months later gave up that dream to discover a whole new world.

Before she was a member of the

"Houston Nine" Julie Heldman was turning heads at The Ojai playing for Stanford, and winning the Intercollegiate singles title in 1963. The "Houston Nine" was a group of women who, in 1970, left the USTA to play in the Virginia Slims tournament in Houston. The tour was so successful that it later merged with the USTA and became the current WTA Tour.

In 2006, the buzz around The Ojai

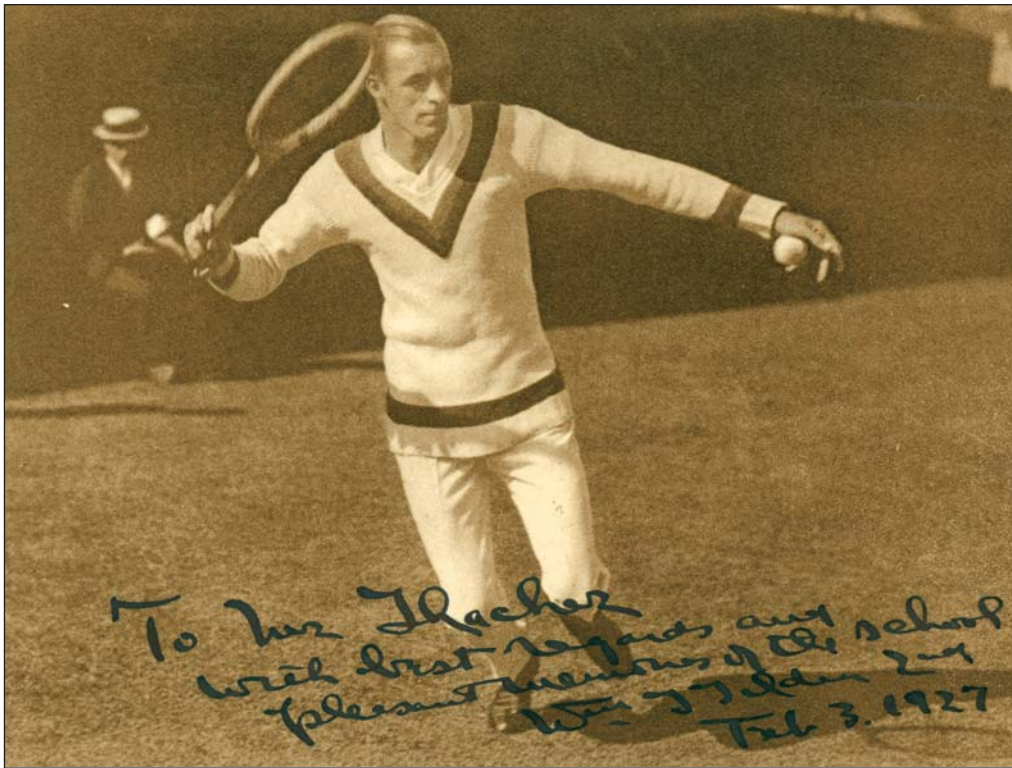


Photo courtesy of The Thacher School

Bill Tilden reportedly slept outside when he played at the Ojai in 1928.

centered around a lanky teenager from Thousand Oaks who was mulling over the prospects of a pro tennis career, or playing collegiately for USC. Sam Querrey has gone on to a successful pro career and is a member of the U.S. Davis Cup team. Querrey never won an Ojai Open title, having lost in the final of the Men's Open in 2006 to Zbynek Mlynarik and in the 2005 and 2006 Open doubles final with his coach Grant Doyle. He did, however, win the Boy's CIF event in 2004.

One could truly spend hours poring over the 113 years of winners and finalists of The Ojai Record of Events, which has been updated in book form for the first time since the 100th event in 2000. Looking back at 113 years of Ojai champions is enjoyable, but perhaps not as much as dreaming of what the next 113 years will hold.

Sometime this week, before you head into picturesque Libbey Park during the 113th playing of the tournament and settle in to watch your favorite Pac-12 men's team, or perhaps your favorite Pac-12 women's player, do yourself a favor and stop by the draw boards outside the Media Room and check out the first name atop the Boys' CIF Interscholastic Division draw.

The name you see there should be Irvine-University High's Gage Brymer, an integral part of this year's event because



Photo by Leslie Vallee-Miller

An up-and-coming Sam Querrey made big waves at The Ojai in recent years.

Brymer so proudly represents a link to Ojai's rich past, its present – and perhaps most importantly – its future.

Run your finger through the draw following Brymer's progression to a possible finals appearance at Libbey Park Sunday morning and try to catch one of his early-round matches played somewhere in Ojai.

This year, Brymer is attempting to become the first player in almost 80 years

to win three consecutive Boys' Interscholastic titles in a division that began in 1899. The last player to do so was none other than tennis Hall of Famer Bobby Riggs – known then as Robert – playing for Franklin High from 1934 to 1936.

"It's an honor to come back to Ojai and try and do something no one has done in so long," Brymer said. "Ever since I won last year and heard it had been since the 1930s that a player had won three straight, I've had it in my mind to come back to Ojai and win it again."

Brymer has been playing at The Ojai since he was 13 and in 2009 he lost a memorable boys' 14s final to Ventura's Brendan McClain. That was the same year Brymer sat mesmerized looking through the fence at the amazing UCLA players and decided then and there that he wanted to be a Bruin eventually signing a letter-of-intent to play under another Ojai past great, UCLA Coach Billy Martin, assuring Ojai fans they'll be seeing much more of Brymer over the next four years.

"We remember players like Tracy Austin, Michael Chang and Sam Querrey starting their careers at The Ojai as juniors," said Alan Rains, a longtime tournament official and past president of the Ojai Valley Tennis Club. "And most of the time with players like that you realize there is something special there. The Ojai truly is a place where tomorrow's champions are discovered."

Schedule of Events

Depending on venue, play generally starts at 8 or 9 a.m. and continues throughout the day. Schedule is subject to change without notice.

Tuesday, April 23

- Ojai Valley Athletic Club: Men's and Women's Open Singles Qualifying Rounds

Wednesday, April 24

- Libbey Park: Two Pac-12 Men's Team Dual Matches and first round CIF matches
- Pierpont Racquet Club: Men's California Community College Team Championship
- Ventura College: Women's California Community College Team Championship

Thursday, April 25

OJAI SITES:

- Libbey Park: Two Pac-12 Men's Team Dual Matches Junior Events
- Ojai Valley Inn: Open Men's Singles
- Ojai Valley Athletic Club: Pac-12 Women's Singles Pac-12 Women's Invitational Singles
- The Thacher School: Boys' CIF Junior Events
- Villanova Preparatory School: Junior Events
- Ojai Valley School Upper Campus: Boys' CIF
- Ojai Valley School Lower Campus: Junior Events
- Nordhoff High School: Junior Events
- Matilija Junior High School: Junior Events
- Private Courts: Junior Events
- Camp Ramah: Junior Events

VENTURA SITES:

- Pierpont Racquet Club: Independent College Women's Singles & Doubles
- Ventura College: Community College Women's Singles & Doubles Independent College Women's Singles & Doubles
- Camino Real Park: Community College Women's Singles & Doubles
- Buena High School: Community College

Women's Singles & Doubles

OXNARD SITES:

- Oxnard Tennis Center: Community College Men's Singles & Doubles
- Pacifica High School: Community College Men's Singles & Doubles
- Residence Inn Marriott: Community College Men's Singles

Friday, April 26

OJAI SITES:

- Libbey Park: Two Pac-12 Men's Team Dual Matches Junior Events
- Ojai Valley Inn: Open Men's Singles & Doubles Open Women's Singles
- Ojai Valley Athletic Club: Pac-12 Women's Singles & Doubles Pac-12 Women's Invitational Singles & Doubles
- The Thacher School: Boys' CIF Junior Events
- Villanova Preparatory School: Junior Events
- Nordhoff High School: Junior Events

VENTURA SITES:

- Pierpont Racquet Club: Independent College Men's Singles & Doubles
- Ventura College: Community College Women's Singles & Doubles Independent College Women's Singles & Doubles
- Camino Real Park: Community College Women's Singles & Doubles

OXNARD SITES:

- Oxnard Tennis Center: Community College Men's Singles & Doubles Division III College Men's Singles & Doubles
- Pacifica High School: Community College Men's Singles & Doubles
- Moranda Park (Port Hueneme): Division III College Men's Singles & Doubles
- Residence Inn Marriott: Community College Men's Singles & Doubles

Saturday, April 27

ALL EVENTS IN OJAI:

- Libbey Park: Pac-12 Men's Team Final Dual Match Pac-12 Women's Singles & Doubles Semifinals All Junior Event and Boys' CIF Finals
- Lower Libbey Park:

Selected Junior Event Semifinals

- Ojai Valley Inn: Open Men's Singles Semifinals Open Men's Doubles Quarterfinals and Semifinals Open Women's Singles Semifinals Open Women's Doubles Quarterfinals and Semifinals
- Ojai Valley Athletic Club: Independent College Men's Singles and Doubles Independent College Women's Singles and Doubles Community College Men's Singles and Doubles Community College Women's Singles and Doubles
- The Thacher School: Division III College Men's Singles & Doubles
- Villanova Preparatory School: Selected Junior Event Semifinals

Sunday, April 28

ALL EVENTS IN OJAI:

- Libbey Park: (all matches are Finals, unless otherwise indicated; all starting times are approximate)

8 a.m.

Pac-12 Women's Invitational Singles
Division III College Men's Singles Semifinals (2)

Community College Men's Singles Semifinals – Lower Libbey
Community College Women's Doubles Semifinals (2) – Lower Libbey

9:30 a.m.

Open Women's Singles
Pac-12 Women's Championship Singles
Independent College Men's Singles
Independent College Women's Singles

11 a.m.

Open Men's Singles
Pac-12 Women's Invitational Doubles
Division III College Men's Singles
Community College Women's Singles

12:30 p.m.

Open Women's Doubles
Pac-12 Women's Championship Doubles
Independent College Women's Doubles
Community College Men's Singles

2 p.m.

Open Men's Doubles
Division III College Men's Doubles
Independent College Men's Doubles
Community College Women's Doubles

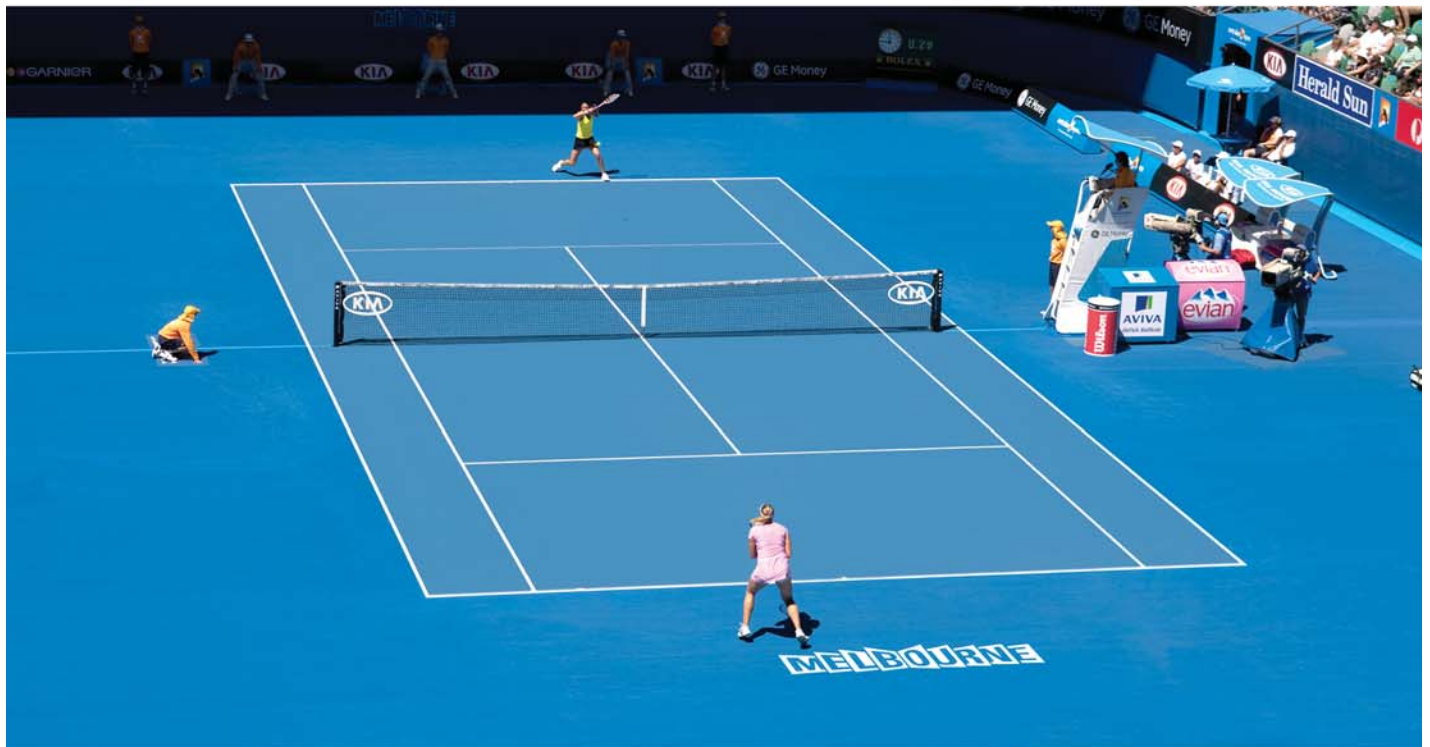
3:30 p.m.

Community College Men's Doubles

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Website gets a facelift

One of the highlights of “The Ojai” offseason was the unveiling of a newly-designed Ojai logo and tournament website, www.ojaitourney.org.

“We put together a terrific team and committee that really turned ‘The Ojai’ website into something very special,” said Vivian Perrett, Ojai Valley Tennis Club president. “The website has some great old photos of Ojai’s past and really allows you to get a sense of the rich tradition and history of the event.”

The website’s landing page, shows six photos introducing the site.

Visitors can bypass the photos and get to the home page by clicking on the logo or by waiting 25 seconds.

The home page is designed to give viewers information about “The Ojai,” headquartered at Libbey Park and played on courts in Ojai, Ventura and Oxnard.



Scan to visit the tournament website.

singles final will be televised live at 10 a.m.; the doubles final will be broadcast later.

Barbecue is Thursday

The Ojai’s Welcoming Barbecue will move to upper Libbey Park this year, beginning at 6 p.m., April 25. The cost for the barbecue is \$8 per person for all coaches, players and fans. It is once again being put on by the Rotary Club of Ojai-West, and includes tri-tip, chicken, beans, salad, bread and a drink, said George Conrad, Ojai Barbecue committee chairman.



Students create cover, logo

This program cover was designed by Nordhoff High School graphics arts teacher Heather Farley and her students from the NHS Media Arts Academy. In the center, USC head coach Peter Smith holds the Pac-12 Team trophy following the Trojans’ victory over UCLA in 2012’s first team dual-match championship at “The Ojai.” Many of the greats of tennis got their start at “The Ojai,” a place where

champions are discovered before they make it big in the world of tennis, including, at left clockwise, USC’s Steve Johnson, Billie Jean King, 2012 Pac-10 women’s singles champion Nicole Gibbs, USC star Raymond Sarmiento and Arthur Ashe.

The merchandise logos this year were designed once again by Heather Farley’s Nordhoff High graphic arts class. Ojai native and Nordhoff senior Sophia Maria Bendorf designed the t-shirt logo. A tennis player all her life, she has played varsity tennis all four years of high school (three years at Villanova and her senior year at Nordhoff).

This is her first year in graphic arts class but she really enjoyed design and plans on continuing in college and is considering a career in graphic design. Lissette Sosa designed the logo for the hats this year. She is a junior who has lived in Ojai Valley her entire life. This is Lissette’s first year in graphic design at Nordhoff and she plans on taking advanced class next year. She plans on a career in the art field.



The Ojai to be televised

The Pac-12 Networks will televise the Men’s Team Championships and the Women’s Individuals this year with Paul Sunderland and Justin Gimelstob serving as the commentators. Saturday’s 4 p.m. Men’s Team final will be televised on a tape delay at a time to be announced. Sunday morning’s Women Individual

Ojai Tennis Tournament trophies from throughout the years on display in Libbey Park

The Ojai’s trophies are more than just polished metal cups and plates; they’re pieces of history.

Many are as old as the tournament itself, with names etched on every open

surface — the bases, the insides, the handles. There are cups, plates, bowls, chalices, even some that look like beer steins and candy dishes.

Some have been retired and are no

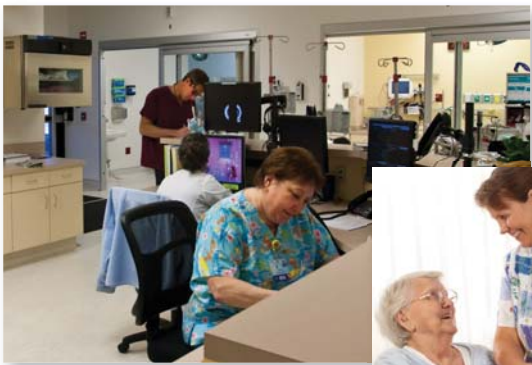
longer used, after the events they commemorate — such as mixed doubles — are themselves retired.

Stop by the trophy display and drink in a shiny bit of Ojai tournament history.





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Mike Taggart



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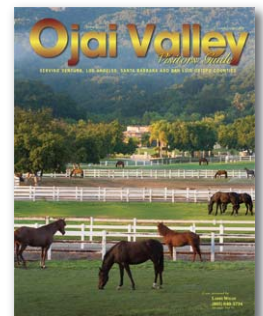


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Ojai Tennis Tournament
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about the Ojai Valley,
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Ojai Valley
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Women boast a strong field

Stanford women's tennis star Nicole Gibbs' short love affair with "The Ojai" will likely end with this year's tournament, as the reigning NCAA women's singles and doubles champion will likely turn professional at the end of this season.

As a freshman, the Ohio native was a singles and doubles semifinalist at The Ojai in 2011. Currently sitting inside the Top 200 of the WTA Tour rankings, Gibbs, a Cardinal junior, won The Ojai Women's Pac-12 singles title last year and was a finalist in doubles. Weeks later, Gibbs became only the third player in college history to win both the singles and doubles at the NCAA Championships.

"Nothing is official yet, but the team knows there's a 90 percent chance I won't be returning next year," Gibbs said back in February. "I won't be playing the French Open because of the NCAA championships, but am hoping to make Wimbledon my first tournament as a professional."

The reason for Gibbs' decision is simple: she had some outstanding results on the pro circuit last summer. She looks to follow in the footsteps of another Stanford women's player, Mallory Burdette, who just last fall decided to turn pro after her junior season. Burdette reached the third round at both the U.S. Open last year and Indian Wells this year, and is close to breaking into the WTA's Top 100. In last year's Ojai Women's doubles final, Gibbs and Burdette lost in the final to USC's Kaitlyn Christian and Sabrina



Photo by Ryan Buller/Pac-12

Continued on page 18



Will Cal's Anett Schutting revenge her loss in last year's singles title match?



Photo by Ryan Buller/Pac-12

USC's Sabrina Santamaria (right) and Kaitlyn Christian celebrate winning the Pac-12 Women's Doubles title last year.

From page 17



Santamaria with Gibbs taking the singles title 6-0, 6-2 over Cal's Anett Schutting.

Gibbs won a \$50,000 USTA Pro Circuit event in Denver, Colo., last summer and won a round at WTA events at Stanford and New Haven, Conn. She played in the U.S. Open and won a round in qualifying this year at the Australian Open.

The Cardinal are coached by Lele Farood, who won The Ojai 1976 Women's Intercollegiate singles over Barbara Hallquist of USC. Other Stanford players to watch for this year include 2011 Ojai Pac-12 Women's champion Kristie Ahn, freshman Krista Hardebeck, Stacey Tan and Ellen Tsay.

Once again this year, all Pac-12 women's matches will start with opening rounds at the Ojai Valley Athletic Club the first two days before moving to Libbey Park for the semifinals Saturday at 9 a.m. The singles final will be played Sunday at 10 a.m., because of scheduled television coverage. The doubles final will follow.

Here's a quick look at the 10 other Pac-

12 teams that field women's tennis programs and will be competing this year at The Ojai — five of which have appeared in the Top 25 ITA rankings this season.



UCLA: Past Ojai winner Stella Sampras Webster leads a talented Bruins squad into Ojai this season. UCLA was ranked No. 2 midseason after making the finals of the NCAA Team Indoors. Robin Anderson was ranked as high as No. 2 in singles nationally this year, and freshman Kyle McPhillips has been a welcome edition to the team. Kaitlin Ray, Pamela Montez, Chanelle Van Nguyen and Catherine Harrison were all ranked between No. 63 to No. 82 midseason.

USC: Coached by another former Ojai player Richard Gallien, (Men's Open final in 1986) the Trojans come into Ojai loaded with top Southern California homegrown talent, including three players



who have appeared in the Top 25 in the singles rankings: No. 3 Santamaria, Danielle Lao and Zoe Scandalis. Other top players for the Trojans are Gabriella DeSimone and Giuliana Olmos.

CAL: The Bears have three players who have appeared in the Top 50 this season, including two within the top 10: Zsofi Susanyi and Schutting. Cal is coached by another former Ojai great Amanda Augustus, who lost in the 1996 doubles final. Lynn Chi is the No. 3 player and one to keep an eye on, as is No. 4 Klara Fabikova.



ARIZONA STATE: Jacqueline Cako and Desirae Krawczyk lead the way for the Sun Devils, coached by late-1970s Ojai player Sheila McInerney. Other players include Leighann Sahagun, Stephanie Vlad, Hannah James and Joanna Smith.



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Pac-12 Women



Photo by Ryan Buller/Pac-12

Pamela Montez is part of a strong UCLA team.



Photo by Ryan Buller/Pac-12

USC's Danielle Lao is one of the top Trojan players this year.



Photo by Ryan Buller/Pac-12

Washington Husky Andjela Nemcevic should be strong, especially in the early rounds.

ARIZONA: San Diego County's Lacey Smith has played well at No. 1 all season long for coach Vicky Maes' team and posted a 12-1 record to start the season to go along with a Top 35 ranking. Fellow junior-teammate Kim Stubbe is 10-3 at the No. 2 singles spot this season, and sophomore Laura Oldham was 9-3 after the first 12 matches at the No. 3 spot.



WASHINGTON: Former Weil Tennis Academy student Riko Shimizu has been playing at the end of the Huskies' starting lineup this season. The No. 31 Washington team was 8-3 before a pair of road losses at Cal and Stanford. Top player Andjela Nemcevic should pose a threat in the early rounds. Grace



Ysidora, Ellanne Douglas-Miron, Julija Lukac and Natali Coronel are the others who have cracked the Top 6 this year.

WASHINGTON STATE: Coach Lisa Hart's 10th year at the helm for the Cougars see her boast one of her top teams led by the play of Russian Liudmila Vasilieva. Ksenia Gooze, Andjela Kankaras, Teal Vosburgh, Elizaveta Luzina, Olga Musilovich and Charlotte Koning will all be considered for spot in the main draw, and will also play in the Invitational.



OREGON: Sophomore Nicole Long is a transfer from the University of Oklahoma who is the No. 1 singles player this season, starting the dual-match season with a 20-3 record and reeling off 14 straight



singles matches. Head Coach Paul Reber played at The Ojai for Arizona State in the early 1990s. Patricia Skowronski and Julia Metzger are the No. 2 and No. 3 players.

UTAH: Paige Miles and Tereza Bekerova have formed a solid top doubles duo for the Utes (ranked No. 34 nationally), as have Anastasia Putilina and Callie Craig. Natasha Smith played at Wilson High in Long Beach and Elena Najera-Salas hails from San Diego.



COLORADO: Julette Steur, Winde Janssens and Dhany Quevedo lead a balanced Lady Buffalo team making just their second appearance in Ojai as a member of the Pac-12. Colorado is coached by Nicole Kinnally.



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Emilio Gomez is the top player for the Trojans and is the son of 1990 French Open singles champion Andres Gomez.

Up-and-comers making noise with their racquet

Ojai Tennis fans, meet Emilio Gomez.

He's spent most of this collegiate season in the Top 5 of the ITA collegiate tennis rankings, but because he played in the shadow of two-time USC All-American Steve Johnson the past two seasons for the Trojans, you may just be hearing his name for the first time. So let's get you up to speed.

The 21-year-old from Guayaquil, Ecuador, is the son of 1990 French Open singles champion Andres Gomez, who was ranked as high as No. 4 in the world in singles and No. 1 in doubles. Emilio is a member of Ecuador's Davis Cup team and has achieved a career-high ranking on the ATP World Tour of 573 in singles and No. 310 in doubles.

Gomez has the task this season of continuing what Johnson did so magnificently the past four seasons: leading the Trojans to a national team title.

Five straight is the goal once again this year for coach Peter Smith and his squad,

but he knows Ojai comes first in a conference tournament which includes some of the top teams in the nation. Smith says he is in favor of the Pac-12 team format which was switched from an individual event in 2012.

"Our goal with 'The Ojai' was to make it relevant again and I think we achieved that," Smith said. "I am hoping the dual match format can help the tournament grow and grow. Introducing all of the juniors to the excitement of a college dual match is an added bonus. All of the dual matches are really exciting to watch."

Smith said more can be done to market just how exciting the dual matches are. "Getting the word out so people can watch this exciting format is key," he said.

USC and UCLA split their first two meetings in nail-biting fashion by a score of 4-3 in each, with the final match deciding both in a third-set tiebreaker.

USC has been ranked No. 2 for most of the season with UCLA breathing down their necks at No. 3.

"The rivalry is always intense — it is just very close these days," Smith said.

"We live for the passion and excitement that those matches bring."

All men's Pac-12 matches will take place at Libbey Park culminating with the team championship Saturday at 4 p.m. Teams will be seeded based on won-lost percentages during regular-season Conference play. On Wednesday, matches between seed Nos. 5 and 8 and Nos. 6 and 7 will open play. The No. 3 and No. 4 seeds will play the winners, respectively, Thursday. The No. 1 and No. 2 seeds advance directly to the semifinal round Friday.

With only four courts at upper Libbey, it's hard for fans to follow the entire match since the No. 5 and No. 6 matches are played down at lower Libbey. Cal Coach Peter Wright said, "Ideally, all six matches would be played at the same site, but Libbey Park is one of the best settings for tennis in the country."

Here's a look at each of the eight teams:

USC: How strong is this Trojans' team? Eight players are in the Top 125 in the

Pac-12 Men

nation, meaning two of those won't even crack the starting top six. Ray Sarmiento is a Top 10 player nationally and has shared time with Gomez at No. 1. Roberto Quiroz, Yannick Hanfmann, Eric Johnson and Max de Vroome are the ones who will help in the "Drive for Five."



partner Dennis Novikov in several pro tournaments and the pair even won the Pacific Southwest event earlier in the year. Adrien Puget and Dennis Mkrтчian give the Bruins and coach Billy Martin a top 4 that is stronger than any in the country.

CAL: Coach Peter Wright said midseason that if his team avoided injuries, "I think we can play with anyone in the country." Christoffer Konigsfeldt plays the top spot for the Bears with Ben McLachlan, brother Riki McLachlan, Campbell Johnson and Chase Melton rounding out the roster.



STANFORD: Coach John Whitlinger's squad is young and untested, and is led by sophomore No. 1 John Morrissey, freshman No. 2 Nolan Paige and sophomore No. 3 Maciek Romanowicz. Robert Stineman, Daniel Ho and Trey Strobel are the other Cardinal players to watch for.



UCLA: Four Bruins have cracked the Top 50 this year, led by sophomore Marcos Giron (No. 10), the former Ojai Men's Open winner from Thousand Oaks. Giron has teamed with doubles



WASHINGTON: This will be a special year for the Huskies' top player Kyle McMorrow, as the



Continued on page 22



Photo by Ryan Builer/Pac-12

Kyle McMorrow, from Thousand Oaks, leads the Washington Huskies' efforts.



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From page 21



senior will say farewell to The Ojai until he returns to possibly play in the Open division someday. McMorrow, from Thousand Oaks, is the grandson of former Ojai Valley Tennis Club President William E. Huffman, for whom the Pac-10 singles trophy was named until it was retired when the conference switched to a team format last season. McMorrow leads a team that is ranked No. 25 in the country. If UW is going to get to the finals, it must have strong play from starters like Marton Bots, Max Manthou, Emmett Egger, Viktor Farkas and Nicholas Kamisar.

OREGON: Coach Nils Schyllander is fielding one of his strongest teams as the Ducks started the season 8-0 before falling to Washington. The top two singles players, Jeff Mullen and Robin Cambier, have also managed to rack up some nice wins as the top doubles team. Aaron Clissold and Daniel Sardu played No. 2 doubles and Daan Maasland and Alex Rovello No. 3.



ARIZONA: If you get a chance to watch any of Arizona's matches, be sure to check out the No. 1 player Fredrik Ask, who happens to be a Davis Cup player from Norway and a former No. 1 at Wisconsin. Returning for the Wildcats this season are juniors Giacomo Miccini, Kieren Thompson, Mario Urquidi and Andre Vidaller as the most experienced members of the team. Sophomore Sumeet Shinde has also seen time in the Top 6.



UTAH: No Californians appear on the Utes' roster this season, but you will find players from Tunisia, Germany, Canada, Ukraine, Mexico City, Israel, Bosnia and the Netherlands. And just one from the home state as Devin Lane hails from Salt Lake City and most certainly serves as the team's unofficial tour guide. Dmytro Mamedov, Alejandro Medinilla, Rafael Davidian and Ben Tasevac are the top players.



University of Arizona sophomore Sumeet Shinde has spent time in the top six.

Photo by John McGillen/USC Athletics



UCLA Bruins sophomore Marcos Giron is a former Ojai Men's Open winner.

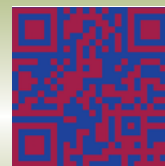
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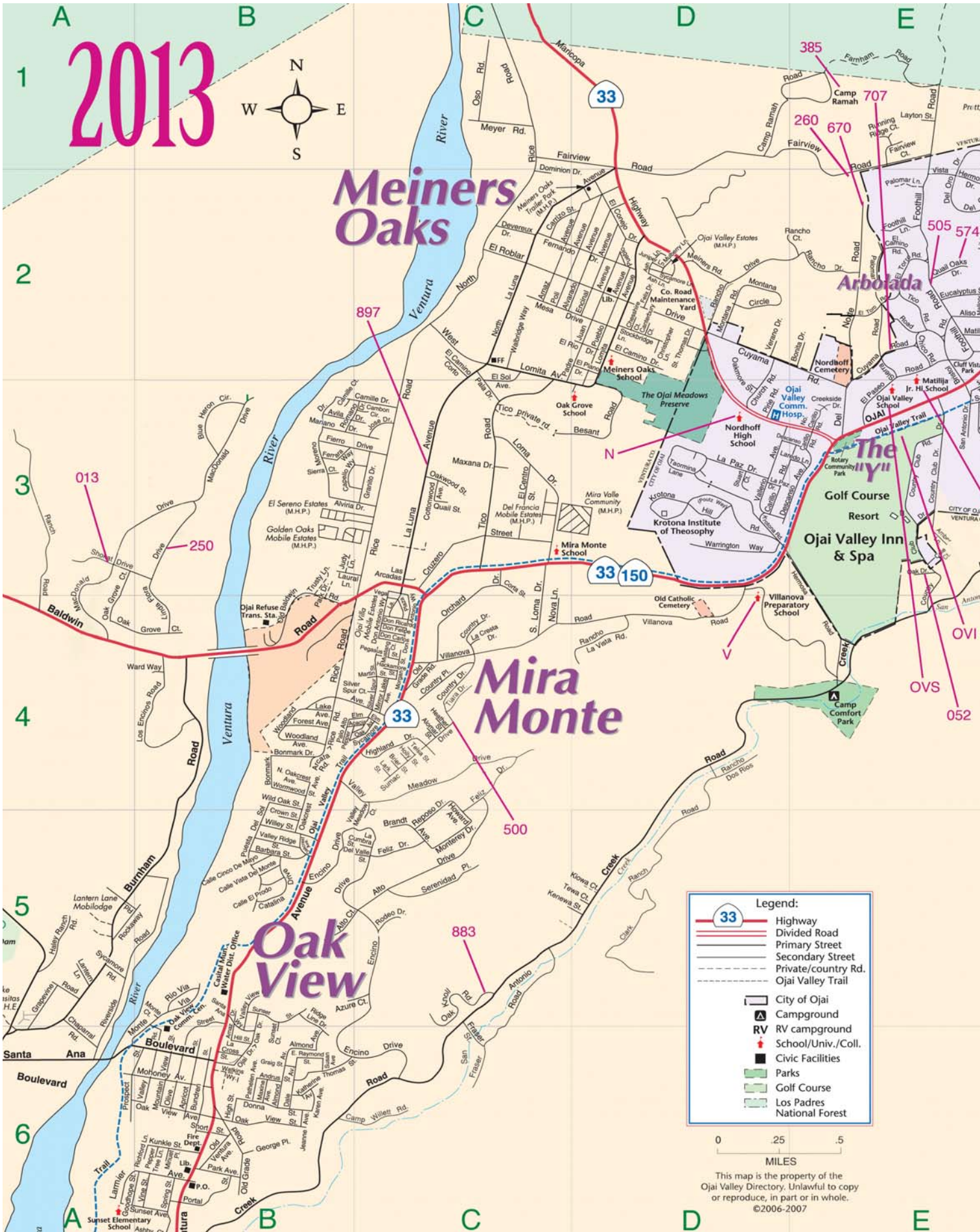
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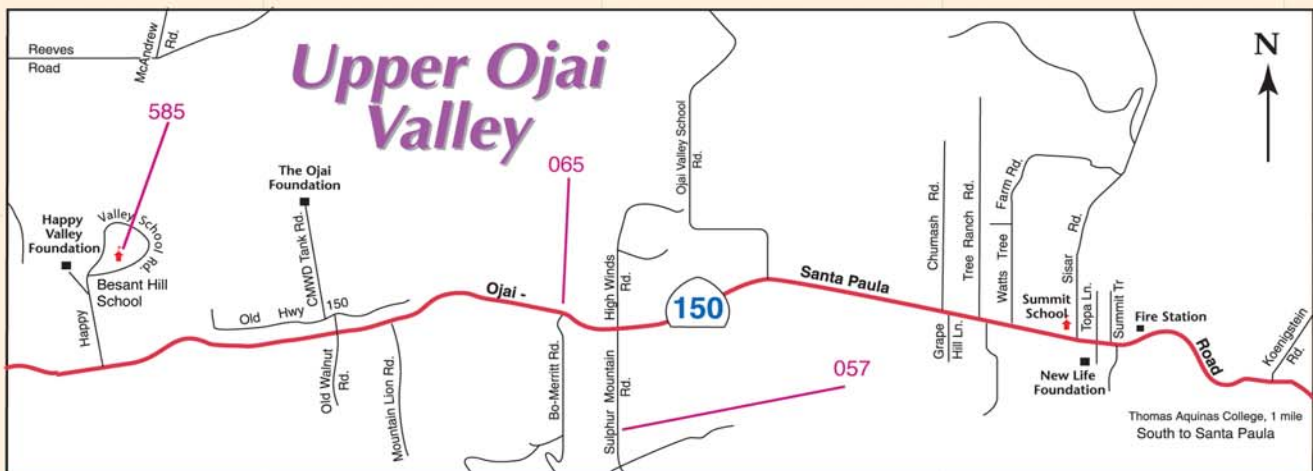
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574	574 Quail Oaks Rd
707	707 Cuyama
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Division open to big names in the past

By Mike Miller



Photo courtesy of Bobby Riggs Tennis Museum

Robert "Bobby" Riggs played in the Open Division, but lost in the finals.

Take a look at the long list of past participants in "The Ojai's" Open Division and you will find an impressive list of accomplished players that few tournaments can rival.

This year's top ranked Open Division players will include Travis Rettenmaier who was ranked 273rd in the ATP standings and climbed to number 57 in the doubles rankings during his tennis career. Rettenmaier attended UCLA for two years before turning professional in 2002. Joining Rettenmaier in the Open Division will be Lester Cook, who was the ATP's 175th ranked player back in 2010. At age 16, Cook played in the French Open, U.S. Open and Australian Open. He played his college tennis at Texas A&M University where he was a three-time All-American for the Aggies. Cecil Mamiit has also entered the Open singles division, having won titles in 2005 and 2008.

Zach Fleishman, who has a career high ATP ranking of 127, will also take part in The Ojai this year. Fleishman played

one season at UCLA before turning professional in 2000. Also playing in the Open Division this year will be Robert Yim, who turned down a full scholarship at UCLA to play professional tennis back in 2003.

Ojai's Weil Tennis Academy will also have some players in the Open Division fans should keep an eye on.

On the men's side, Sasha Solonin, Ciro Riccardi, and Ren Nakamura will represent the Weil Tennis Academy. Solonin is a top 20 player in the Southern California Boys' 18 Division while Riccardi won the 2011 Boys' 16

Division at The Ojai but did not play in 2012 so this will be his first year in the Open Division. Nakamura, of Tokyo, Japan, will play in his first Ojai and is in the top 200 of the ITF rankings. Rio Kitagawa, who has had some success in The

Ojai, will play in the Women's Open Division.

The Ojai Tennis Tournament does not award ATP points, but local tennis coach and tournament volunteer Mark Weil said, "ATP points are important to the top ranked players because they allow them to enter bigger events throughout the year.

However, participating in The Ojai is seen as an honor and we are still able to attract top level players to Ojai to take part in the tournament."

Top level players do make their way to The Ojai, but they

do not always win, as history shows. Weil added, "There is an unrivaled tradition and history at The Ojai. We have had players like Pancho Gonzales, Arthur Ashe and Bobby Riggs. Riggs played and lost in the finals! The Ojai



Ojai Valley News file photo

Ciro Riccardi, is a Weil Tennis Academy student.

Open Division has also seen a number of up-and-coming players over the years. It is a great tournament and a lot of fun."

Anne Williamson, director of the Open Division, said, "We offer prize money for the winners and we work with the Ojai Valley Inn & Spa to supply rooms. Through prize money, community collaboration and the history and reputation of The Ojai, we are able to attract some highly-ranked players in the Open Division." According to Williamson, the purse for the Open Division will be around \$20,000, but donors will sometimes show their support by adding to the grand prize in an effort to attract top players just prior to the start of the tournament.

Williamson added, "We are able to attract great players through a lot of hard work by many of our volunteers and the fact that The Ojai is such a great event. The community really gets behind the players and the event and it makes for a unique experience that top players want to be a part of."



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State Championships debut in Ojai this year

The 113th Ojai Valley Tennis Tournament will play host to the California Community College Athletic Association (CCCCAA) men's and women's team and individual State Championships beginning this year at The Ojai.

Longtime Ojai collegiate tournament official Terry Lynch, of Ventura, has been named the event's tournament director.

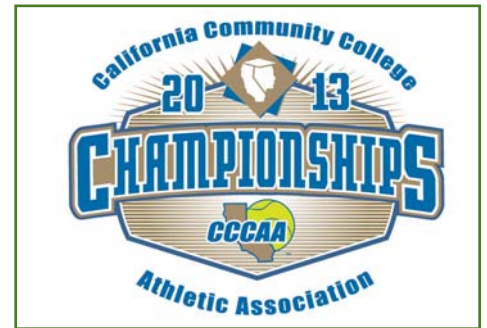
"What's really amazing about The Ojai hosting the California Community College State Championships is that each of the 84 men's and women's teams in all of California that field tennis teams will be able to participate and be represented at The Ojai," Lynch said. "So we are hosting what we feel is a true state championship. The Ojai has had a long history and has fielded strong community college divisions for years. We're proud to be hosting the state championships as part

of The Ojai."

The top team based on regular season performance from northern California will face the top team from Southern California in a dual match for the CCCCCA State Team Championship on Wednesday, April 24. The women's match will begin at noon at Ventura College and the men at 1 p.m. at Pierpont Racquet Club.

"Holding the CCCCCA Men's and Women's Championships at Ojai will be new for our programs and association. Obviously the history associated with the Ojai Tournament and tremendous gathering of tennis talent provides a great venue and opportunity to showcase community college tennis and we are very grateful to the organizers and staff for hosting our championships," said Carlyle Carter, CEO and president of the California Community College Athletic Association.

Following the team championship, there will be an awards banquet at 6:30



p.m. at the Top of the Harbor at the Crowne Plaza in Ventura.

The team championship marks the second straight year The Ojai has played host to a major conference team championships. Last year, the inaugural Pac-12 Men's Team championship debuted at The Ojai, with four-time defending NCAA Division I champion USC taking the title.

In individual play, regional rounds, which serve as qualifying for the state championships, will be played throughout Oxnard and Ventura April 25 and 26. Ventura College will be the home site for the women and the Oxnard Tennis Center the home site for the men.

The top 16 singles and doubles teams that come out of regionals will then advance to the individual championships at The Ojai. The first two rounds will be contested April 27 at the Ojai Valley Athletic Club, and the semifinals and finals will be played at Libbey Park April 28.

Last year's California Community College men's team state champion was Fresno City College, with Foothill College's Tobias Galskov and College of the Desert doubles duo Sergio Chip and Justin Seller taking individual state championship honors in men's singles and doubles, respectively.

On the women's side, the California Community College individual and team state titles are currently vacant. Santa Monica College swept the women's state championship awards in 2011, with Katerina Mozolyuk winning in singles and Criss Rodriguez and Krystal Hansard winning in doubles.

Southern California tennis venues, which have most recently hosted the California Community College State Championships, were the Balboa Tennis Club in San Diego, in 2012, and the Tennis Club at Newport Beach, in 2010.



Photo courtesy CCCCCA

2012 Community College Athletic Association championship men's singles winner Tobias Galskov competed at The Ojai last year for Foothill College in Los Altos.

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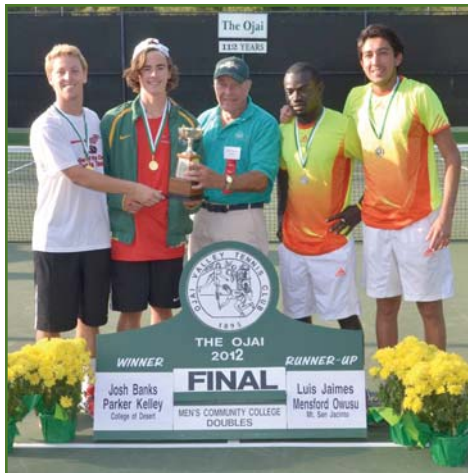
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Competition should be fierce in CCCAA matches

The Community College stakes have been raised now that the 113th Ojai Valley Tennis Tournament will play host to the California Community College Athletic Association (CCCAA) men's and women's team and individual State Championships for the first time.

The 2013 CCCAA State champions will achieve an added measure of history at "The Ojai," which has more history and tradition than just about any other amateur tennis tournament on the continent.

Day 1 of The Ojai, Wednesday, April 24, will feature the CCCAA Men's and Women's State Team Championship matches, pitting the top teams from Northern California and Southern



Southern California men considered title contenders include College of the Desert's Josh Banks, the school's top singles player. Along with partner Parker Kelley, Banks won the Men's Community College doubles championship in 2012.

California, based on regular season performance, in a dual match format. The women's championship will begin at noon at Ventura College, with the men's championship at 1 p.m. at Pierpont Racquet Club.

In individual play, regional rounds on April 25-26 serve as qualifying for the state championships. Ventura College will be the home site for the women, and the Oxnard Tennis Center the home site for the men. The 16 singles and doubles teams that advance from regionals will play in the Individual Championships at The Ojai Saturday, April 27 (Round of 16 and Quarterfinals are held at the Ojai Valley Athletic Club). Famed Libbey Park hosts the semifinals and finals Sunday, April 28.

The men's individual singles and doubles champions may come from Northern California powerhouse programs Fresno City College, American River College or Chabot College. Fresno City features what is widely regarded to be four of the top 10 men's players in the north with Sam Bertram, Adam De Romas, Alessandro Moriano and Scott Gray.

American River's Andrew Amor and Simba Baratti, and Chabot's Brook Workeneh, Gerald Mahone and Brandon Lew may also compete for the CCCAA championships along with Reedley College's Philipp Mueller and Foothill College's Nikolay Petrov.

Southern California men considered title contenders include College of the Desert's Josh Banks, the school's top singles player fresh off of winning the Men's Community College doubles



Photo courtesy CCCAA

Fresno City College players celebrate last year after taking the team title.

championship at the 2012 Ojai. Other major contenders include Ventura College's Tom Douglas, Richard Catabona of L.A. Pierce College, and Riverside City College's Jordan Gabatie.

In trying to handicap the race for the women's individual championships, fans should watch out for Southern California players Sarah Anderson (Fullerton College), Bruna Magalhaes (Santa Barbara City College) and Sonia Landeros (Ventura College).

Two females from Northern California also figure to contend: Sierra College's Jessica Ho, who returns after winning the 2012 Women's Community College doubles championship at The Ojai and Darya Ashim of Diablo Valley College.

Ventura College always carries strong local fan support at The Ojai given its proximity to the tournament. Douglas and Landeros lead a Ventura program which also includes Vitor Mendes and Cameron Lee from the men's team and Katy Scheck and Christy Pulido from the women's team.

Resurfacing paves the way for hosting community college matches

The expansion of the tournament has been warmly embraced by the all-volunteer organization that runs the tournament; but the additional players, changes in format, an additional day of competition and shortage of suitable courts posed significant challenges.

Already the largest tennis tournament in the nation, using 112 tennis courts donated in the area, eight additional courts in close proximity to the local college were needed. The courts at nearby Buena High School in Ventura were in

very poor condition due to deferred maintenance and were no longer suitable for competition. With just one year to make the arrangements to accommodate the increased size, playability and safety for the State Championships, the Ojai Valley Tennis Club committed \$10,000 of its operating funds to initiate a community fundraising program in Ventura.

The Ventura community enthusiastically supported the project and will be helping with the hospitality to

welcome the community college players, families and spectators. A total of \$50,000 has been donated to the school district for resurfacing and replacing the fences of the Buena courts, with the school district paying the remaining \$35,000. An additional \$5,000 is also being raised to help the city of Ventura resurface the Camino Real Park courts next year. Tournament sponsor Plexipave has committed over \$15,000 of materials for resurfacing both the Buena and Camino Real Park courts.

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- Ventura Rentals: (805) 644-4496; <http://venturarental.com/equipment/index.html>
- Wilson: The official ball for The Ojai; <http://www.wilson.com/en-us/tennis/balls/>
- City of Ojai: <http://www.ci.ojai.ca.us/>
- Rock-It Cargo USA, LLC: <http://www.rockitcargo.com/content.asp>
- Chobani Greek Yogurt: <http://www.chobani.com>
- Plexipave Sport Surfacing: Official Surfacing for the Ojai Tennis Tournament: <http://www.plexipave.com/>
- Barry Golden
- Solinco: Official stringer for The Ojai at Libbey Park: www.solinco.com
- Tom Rohrbacher Stringer at Ojai Valley Inn: (805) 640-2109
- Ojai Valley Inn & Spa: <http://www.ojairesort.com/>
- Ojai Valley Athletic Club: <http://ovac.caclubs.com/club/scripts/public/public.asp>
- Life Line Medical Transport: <http://www.lifelineems.net/>
- Coast Mayflower: (805) 646-1234
- E.J. Harrison & Sons: <http://ejharrison.com/>
- Ojai Valley Directory: <http://www.ojaivalleydirectory.com/>
- Mission Linen Supply: <http://www.missionlinen.com/>
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- Pac-12 Conference: <http://pac-12.com/>
- Intercollegiate Tennis Association: <http://www.itatennis.com/>
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- CIF – Southern Section: <http://cifss.org/>

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Weil Academy bringing young players to the sport

Story by Misty Volaski

Photos by Christen Minnick

The Ojai Tennis Tournament has, for more than 100 years, been a place that showcases and nurtures young tennis players from all over Southern California. Countless racket-wielding teens — hello, Bryan twins — who began their competitive careers at The Ojai have gone on to international greatness.

For the last decade, that pool of SoCal talent has swelled to include kids from places like Bulgaria, Mexico, Japan, Slovakia, Brazil and Russia. That's thanks in large part to the Weil Tennis Academy. The Ojai-based school attracts top youth players from all over the world — and they have been dominating the youth divisions of The Ojai in recent years.

Former Weil student Gail Brodsky, a Ukraine native, has the distinction of sweeping the Junior Girls' Singles divisions — 14s, 16s, 18s — then taking the Women's Open title. She has ranked as high as No. 182 in the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) and No. 28 in the International

Tennis Federation (ITF). Academy founder and director, Mark Weil, rambled off a list of other Weil players who have made waves at The Ojai: Georgian Anna Tatishvili, who won the Girls' 14s as a 12-year-old and is now ranked in the top 70 in WTA; Boys' 16s winners Bozhidar Katsarov and Kallim Stewart, who later came back to compete for UC Berkeley and UCLA, respectively; and Bulgarian Grigor Dimitrov, who has ranked as high as No. 1 in ITF.

This year, Weil is once again bringing more promising talent to The Ojai's youth divisions:

- Dominique Schaefer, 14, was an Ojai finalist in the Girls' 14s two years ago, then took the championship last year; she will play in the Girls' 16s this year. Ranked in the top 20 in the USTA, Schaefer and her partner took the Girls' 16 doubles title at the So Cal Sectional Juniors last November. A month later, she was a Girls' 14s semifinalist in the Eddie Herr



Dominique Schaefer, 14, lines up her shot.

Continued on page 36



Seira Shimizu, 14, lost in the finals of The Ojai Girls' 14s in 2012 to fellow Weil Academy player Dominique Schaefer.

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Takako Aikawa, 14, hits a forehand during a recent practice at the Weill Tennis Academy.

From page 34



International Junior Championships. "She's kind of like a Gail Brodsky. I can honestly say that I really enjoy watching her play," said Weil. "She's creative — she does stuff nobody else does out there. I find myself watching her and thinking, 'Wow, what a great idea!'"

• According to Weil, Japanese player Seira Shimizu "is right up there with Dominique." Shimizu lost in the finals of The Ojai Girls' 14s in 2012 (to Schaefer), and Weil thinks the 14-year-old has a good chance of locking in the top seed in the Girls' 14s this year. "She's now winning designated tournaments in the 16s," Weil said. Case in point: She won the Girls' 16s division of the Whittier Junior Designated in January. She's also been a finalist in the



Ethan Young-Smith, 16, reacts with a smile.

Girls' 18s division in the Calabasas Junior Open (November 2012), and won the Girls' 18s division in the Rose Bowl Pasadena Junior Open last fall. Concluded Weil, "She's becoming one of our top girls."

• Ethan Young-Smith has had two productive years at Weil Academy. In the last year, he's won the Boys' 16s in the Fullerton Junior Designated, the Anaheim Junior Open, the West Coast Junior Open and the South Bay Junior Open. In the 2012 Ojai, he made it to the quarterfinals in the Boys' 14s, and this year, he'll be hunting down the Boys' 16s title. "He's developed into one of the top 16-year-old boys in Southern California," said Weil.

• Dominique isn't the only Schaefer in the tennis game. Her brother, Fabian, is expected to be one of the top Boys' 16s seeds in this year's Ojai Tournament after making it to the quarterfinals in 2012. Last spring, he was also a Boys' 16s quarterfinalist at the SoCal Sectional Championships, and at the USTA Easter Bowl, he was a semifinalist in doubles. "He's definitely top 10 in So Cal Boys' 16s," said Weil. "He puts on a great show."

• Ojai Valley resident Jack LaPlante has been with Weil Academy for 7 years, and has cracked the top 20 rankings in Southern California. He took first place at the Rose Bowl Pasadena Junior Open last fall, and according to Weil, is a player to watch in this year's Boys' 16s at The Ojai.

• Another 2013 Ojai Boys' 16s hopeful, Nick Mitchell, was a singles quarterfinalist in last year's tournament, and should be seeded well this year. He was ranked as one of the top 10 boys in Southern California and top 50 in the nation last year, which was a big one for him. Among his 2012 accomplishments: quarterfinalist in the So Cal Sectional Championship Boys' 14s;

singles finalist in the Long Beach Designated for Boys' 14s; and singles champion in the Burbank Junior Open Boys' 14s.

• Aiden Jiang won the Boys' 14s in 2011, and last year lost in the semifinals — in a third-set tiebreak — of the Boys' 16s. He's looking good to win the 16s title again this year, and with good reason. He's been ranked as high as No. 10 in China's Boys' 16s and recently took the win in the Boys' 18s division of the South Bay Junior Designated, and was a Boys' 18s semifinalist in the Northridge Junior Designated. "He should be seeded in the top four this year," said Weil.

Other Weil Tennis Academy students to watch in the Junior Divisions include: Brazil's Natalie Da Silveira in the Girls' 18s; Bulgaria's Jessica Livianu in the Girls' 16s; China's Xixi Feng in the Girls' 18s; Russia's Lola Gorbacheva in the Girls' 14s; and Brazil's Bernardo Oliviera in the Boys' 16s.



Pengaxuan Jiang, 16, concentrates on a return shot.

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Young players chasing Farnam Cup have impressive predecessors

University High of Irvine senior Gage Brymer is well aware of the history of one of the oldest and most prestigious events at The Ojai.

This year, Brymer will attempt to become the first player in almost 80 years to capture three straight Boys' Interscholastic CIF titles at Ojai. The last player to do so was none other than Bobby Riggs from Franklin High School, who won three straight from 1934 to 1936.

The Farnam Cup, also called The Ojai Valley Tennis Club Cup, is the oldest of the Ojai Valley Tennis Tournament perpetual trophies and was first presented in 1902. Every available space is covered with the names of those who've won it, even the inside, the handles and the bottom. The later names were re-engraved on the pedestal plate, according to Tony Thacher's 100-year book on the history of The Ojai.

Allen Fox, Billy Martin, Rick Leach, Jeff Tarango and Robert Kendrick are just some of the great players who have won Boys' Interscholastic titles at The Ojai.

"I've always been impressed with the professional atmosphere of the tournament," Brymer said. "Being surrounded by the top junior, CIF, college and open players, all at the same tournament, is a truly remarkable experience for a junior player. Just seeing pictures of the champions as you walk into Libbey Park, and seeing the names of the Wall of Champions really leaves a lasting impression on the younger players."

Following his first CIF victory in the finals two years ago, Brymer said he recalled winning the final against Johnny Wang of San Marino High and playing



The Farnam Cup was first presented in 1902 and is the oldest of The Ojai's perpetual trophies.

next to a Pac-10 semifinal match. After he won, he was congratulated by UCLA's coach Martin. "That was an unforgettable moment that will stay with me forever," Brymer said.

The UCLA-bound Brymer will have some stiff competition this year if he is to make history and win his third straight



Gage Brymer celebrates a point.

Photo by Dave Kenas/Easter Bowl

title.

Corona del Mar is once again a Southland powerhouse led by its top player Alec Adamson, who will play at UC Davis next year, and junior Carson Williams. Newport Harbor boasts sophomore stud Reese Stalder and Los Alamitos has a strong 1-2 punch with senior Camden Marco and freshman Riley Smith, who is the son of USC men's coach Peter Smith. Smith will likely play in the Boys' 16s division this year. Palos Verdes High also has the son of a former Ojai champion, as Tracy Austin's son Brandon Holt is playing in the top doubles spot for PV High, along with Brett Landon.

Thousand Oaks High School is traditionally one of the top Ventura County high schools represented at The Ojai. The top two Lancers' players are Chris Lees and Daniel Minami.

Independent College Division promises some exciting matches

Ojai fans should definitely keep an eye out for Nicholas Ballou and the rest of the California Lutheran University men's team this year.

Coached by Mike Gennette, the Thousand Oaks school is once again loaded with top players like Ballou, who is the defending Ojai NCAA Division III West Regional singles champion and doubles runner-up with Raymond Worley.

Ballou is currently the top-ranked singles player and will

likely be seeded No. 1 at Ojai, according to Gennette, whose team is ranked No. 6 nationally and finished third at the ITA National Indoors in Minnesota earlier this year. "We have four All-Americans in our line-up, including three former Weil Academy players on our roster," Gennette said, adding his squad also has former Ventura College standout Thomas Millet from the Pirates state championship team.

Claremont Mudd-Scripps is another top-five, nationally

ranked school that has looked strong all year led by No. 1 player Warren Wood, an Ojai quarterfinalist last year, and No. 2 Joe Dorn.

Other top schools to watch for include nationally ranked UC Santa Cruz, Pomona-Pitzer and Redlands.

Once again this year, some of the top women's players in Southern California will take part in the Independent College division.

Look for these players top players in singles: Kristin Lim

from Claremont-Mudd-Scripps Colleges, Courtney Lawless from Whitman College, Crystal Lim from Claremont-Mudd-Scripps Colleges, Jamie Solomon from Pomona-Pitzer, Samantha Mae Coyiuto from Pomona-Pitzer and Maegan Zamilpa from Whittier College.

In doubles play, watch for: Sumida-Ly from Redlands University, Lim-Haley from Claremont-Mudd-Scripps, Scotten-Wade from UC Santa Cruz and Wang-Chao from Pomona-Pitzer Colleges.

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Ojai has plenty to offer those with a little time between matches

So, you have some time to kill between matches? No problem!

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A few minutes of downtime:

- Take in Ojai's famous architecture with a stroll through Ojai's Arcade. Be sure to check all out the great shops selling everything from "Ojai face" T-shirts (Ojai Village Pharmacy, 202 E. Ojai Ave.) to one-of-a-kind paintings and sculptures (Primavera Gallery, 214 E. Ojai Ave.)

- Have a sweet tooth? Steps away from the Libbey Park courts is Ojai Ice Cream (210 E. Ojai Ave., in the Arcade) for creamy delights made on the premises — try the Ojai Orange flavor or the homemade fudge! Down the street, Bliss Frozen Yogurt (451 E. Ojai Ave.) offers a host of ever-changing flavors and every kind of topping you can imagine.

- Get a taste of sugary nostalgia at Kingston Candy Company (307 E. Ojai Ave., Suite 100), or unleash your inner kid at Serendipity Toys (221 E. Matilija St.)

- Spark your spiritual side with a trip to Soul Centered (311 N. Montgomery St.) a metaphysical shop; check out the crystal garden bench out front!

A few hours of to kill:

- Stop in at the Ojai Valley Museum (130 W. Ojai Ave.) for history on the area.

- Take a drive through Ojai's rural East End and get a whiff of the orange and jasmine blossoms.

- Have a stiff neck from watching the ball speed back and forth across the court all morning? Pop in for a quick massage at Bamboo Creek Spa (1002 E. Ojai Ave., Suite B) — no appointment needed.

- Book worms will love the storied Bart's Books (302 W. Matilija St.), a unique outdoor book store that's been around for decades.

- Swing by the Soule Park Golf Course (1033 E. Ojai Ave.) or the Ojai Valley Inn Golf Course (905 Country Club Drive) for a round on the links. Just minutes away from Libbey Park, they're two of Southern California's most beautiful courses.

- Go wine tasting! In downtown Ojai, you'll find the Casa Barranca tasting room (208 E. Ojai Ave.) and The Ojai Vineyard (109 S. Montgomery St.). In the East End, head to Boccali's (3277 Ojai-Santa Paula Road) for wine sourced from grapes

grown minutes from the restaurant. And between Oak View and Casitas Springs, the winding Old Creek Road will take you back to Old Creek Ranch Winery and VINO Winery (10024 Old Creek Road). Get a taste of more with the Ojai Beverage Company's (655 E. Ojai Ave.) always-changing wine (or beer!) flights.

- Schedule a spa treatment at the Ojai Valley Inn & Spa (905 Country Club Drive) — we love the Kuyam Experience mud treatment. Or stop in at the East End's Day Spa of Ojai (1434 E. Ojai Ave.) for even more indulgent offerings in one of Ojai's historic buildings.

- Experience Ojai's rural areas with Bodee's Horseback Riding (www.bodee.net; (805) 794-9089), Ojai Valley Trail Riding Company (www.ojaitrailrides.com; (805-890-9340) or Ojai on Horseback (www.ojaionhorseback.com; (805) 509-3991). Each have easily-customizable trips for all skill levels.

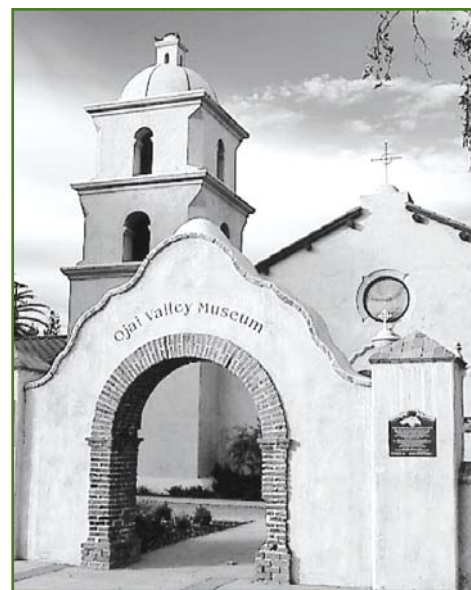
- The Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts (8560 Ojai-Santa Paula Road, Upper Ojai) is not to be missed for any art lover. Beato's signature style — paintings, sculptures and philosophy — will knock your socks off.

After the matches:

- Don't miss the Pink Moment, an Ojai trademark, on display most evenings. Look to the tallest mountains in the east as the sun sets and be wowed as brilliant shades of blush, rose and magenta light up the sky.

- Grab a cocktail. The Village Jester (139 E. Ojai Ave.) has been voted Best Bar in the Best of Ojai competition five years running, and often has live entertainment rocking the stage. Los Caporales (307 E. Ojai Ave.) and its Tequila Bar offers the most tequilas in the area — and the bartenders know their spirits well. The Hub (256 E. Ojai Ave.) has pool tables; the Wrec Room (219 E. Matilija St.) and JJ's Sports Zone (820 N. Ventura Ave., Oak View) have TVs galore for catching the latest tennis highlights — as does Jimmy's Pub at the Ojai Valley Inn (905 Country Club Drive). Azu (457 E. Ojai Ave.) has great Mediterranean tapas and drinks.

- The Ojai Art Center (113 S. Montgomery St.) has displays of a variety of home-grown artists, music and theater throughout the year. Catch the last weekend of "The Wizard of Oz," with matinee and evening performances weekends through April 28.



The Ojai Valley Museum is hosting a special exhibit commemorating the 113 years of The Ojai. The Museum is two blocks west of Libbey Park on Ojai Avenue.

Hungry?

- For breakfast: Ojai Cafe Emporium (108 S. Montgomery St.), Eggs and Potatoes (1103 Maricopa Hwy.) and Bonnie Lu's (328 E. Ojai Ave.) are a few local hot-spots — and they also offer great lunch menus. Grab a coffee or tea and a pastry from the Ojai Coffee Roasting Company (337 E. Ojai Ave.) or Bohemia (214 W. Ojai Ave.) in the downtown area, or Ojai Coffee Connection (311 E. El Roblar Drive) in Meiners Oaks.

- For lunch or dinner: Agave Maria's (106 S. Montgomery St.) offers tasty, fresh Mexican food; Rainbow Bridge Natural Foods (211 E. Matilija St.) has great, super-healthy meals to go; Marche Gourmet Deli (133 E. Ojai Ave.) offers a charming, authentic deli experience; Ojai Pizza (331 E. Ojai Ave.) has been voted Ojai's Best Pizza for several years running; Suzanne's Cuisine (502 W. Ojai Ave.) and the Ranch House (102 Besant Road) offer high-end dining with world-class wine menus.

- In Ojai's quirky, artsy Meiners Oaks neighborhood, Papa Lennon's (515 W. El Roblar Drive) blends casual, order-up-front dining with a romantic European courtyard. The Deer Lodge (2261 Maricopa Hwy.) offers a rustic, backwoods ambiance with great food (try their organic, locally-sourced beef!)

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Juliana Adelman stretches to reach an outside forehand during the 2nd Annual Ojai Holiday Adult/Child Tennis Challenge.

Macy Holiday Tennis Challenge a success in spite of rain

It took more than a little bit of rain, or even a deluge, to keep players in one of America's Best Tennis Towns from hitting the courts for a fun filled and action packed family day of tennis to benefit a great cause—Ojai Valley youth tennis programs.

Parents, uncles, grandparents, step parents or 'adopted' aunts and uncles



Aspiring local youth player Mikel Elizalde connects squarely with a forehand during the 'In for Fun.' Draw.

Story and photos by Holly Roberts

teamed with daughters, sons, step kids, granddaughters, nieces, nephews or 'adopted' youth at least 22 years their junior—to play in the 'In For Fun' or the 'In To Win' draws of the Holiday Tennis Challenge honoring Bob Macy, tournament mastermind.

Rain delayed the start of the 2nd annual tournament, sponsored by the Ojai Valley Tennis Club, from Saturday to Sunday but did not deter nor ruffle competent challenge directors Craig Fugle and Jakob Vos, who regrouped and managed to get all of the tournament play accomplished in one rousing day. Sixty players waited for the mist to rise off the wet and in some places, icy, courts, then warmed up their hands at the net before embarking on their 8 game pro set journeys.

Every doubles team played at least two sets. Teams that won their first round play, moved into the Championship draws, while runners up teams moved into the consolation draws of each division. The challenge format was single elimination thereafter with competition particularly fierce in the championship brackets. Spectators stomped their feet to keep warm and cheered on the competitors with shouts of encouragement.

Players as young as 8 (Justice Martin) and grandmothers as young as 73 participated. According to Jakob Vos, the

primary goal of the tournament was to 'have fun,' though challenge participants in both draws to consistently hit their best serves, volleys and smashes from the baseline while promoting camaraderie and lots of 'high fives' on the courts.

Several families brought multiple members to play, including the Quackenbush family who brought no less than six to compete, while both the Adelmans and the Martins had four family members each.

David Quackenbush, who played with daughter, Gemma, said, "We loved it! It got me back on the court with my kids and we will play next year for sure."

Joseph Quackenbush, a local junior player, made it to the Championship Final for the second year in a row with his explosive power and dynamic play. Last year, he teamed with his uncle, John Hall. This year, he partnered with a different, but equally talented, John Hall.

A former Weil Tennis Academy student currently training in Santa Monica, 15-year-old Chad Gilfenbain wowed onlookers with his athleticism and anticipation on the court. With partner Holly Roberts, the pair reached the Finals, where Gilfenbain managed to withstand Quackenbush's power strokes and hurtled his team toward the 'In to Win' Championship Draw win (8-3).

Fearsome 9-year-old Julienne Thompson teamed up with her dad, ORD tennis professional Rick Thompson, for



15 year old Chad Gilfenbain smashes a serve during the Ojai Holiday Challenge.



Youth Dakota Martin runs down a deep shot in the 'In for Fun' Division match play of the Ojai Holiday Adult/Child Tennis Challenge.

the second year in a row and this time came up with a big 'W' in the 'In For Fun' Championship Draw (8-6). Rick was fortunate to keep up with Julienne, who hardly missed a return and put the ball away at every opportunity. Runners Up teammates, mighty Mikel Elizalde and terminator David Jones, played scrappy and smart points throughout the tight match, though the Thompsons prevailed in the end.

"It was a really good experience for my daughter. It inspired her to be out there having everyone cheering for her. She really kept her cool all the way through, especially considering how many balls went to her side." Rick Thompson explained. Julienne added, "I love playing tennis with my dad, even when he misses the ball."

Rick Thompson also expressed his appreciation for the challenge sponsors and how the tournament raises money to

help the youth programs throughout the year, while at the same time giving the community's kids great match experience. "I am so very grateful to live in a town that has such a wonderful organization as the OVTC. This is a great tournament they put on!"

Ojai's own former nationally ranked (13th) Stacy Margolin-Potter, with steady partner Juliana Adelman, defeated jamming Jeff Jenkins and tireless Fabio Lauretta in an entertaining and hard fought battle in the 'In to Win' Consolation Draw (8-5) — where Potter displayed her Wimbledon credentials to the cheers of the spectators.

A formidable mother/daughter team of Joyce and Inga Parkel defeated Kanoko Esheim, from Thousand Oaks, who played with youth Rosie Quackenbush in a tightly contested match in the 'In For Fun' Consolation Draw (8-4). Joyce Parkel said that both she and Inga loved the way the

tourney format brought youth and adults together, allowing each to give something very important to the game. "The youth gave the speed, while the adults gave the team the strategy for the game, in some cases. I think we all learned how to respect one another in a different way."

The cold, misty morning brightened immensely for participating players when Topper's Pizza Place delivered (donated) pizzas and salad for lunch and Friends Ranch treated them to tangerines for dessert.

Challenge player Nikki Neumann's mother, Robin, summed up the 2nd annual tournament which took place during that peaceful respite between the old and new years when locals enjoy time spent with family and community. "We loved it!! It is really special because it is a local event that brings EVERYBODY together! We are looking forward to next year!! Great tennis in a great tennis town!"



"In for Fun" Ojai Holiday Tennis Challenge Winners (from left), Rick Thompson with daughter, Julienne Thompson, OVTC Chair Jakob Vos, event organizer Craig Fugle, runners up players, Mikel Elizalde and David Jones.



"In to Win" Ojai Holiday Tennis Challenge Champions (from left), Chad Gilfenbain, Holly Roberts, OVTC Chair Jakob Vos, Challenge director Craig Fugle, runners up players Joseph Quackenbush and John Hall.

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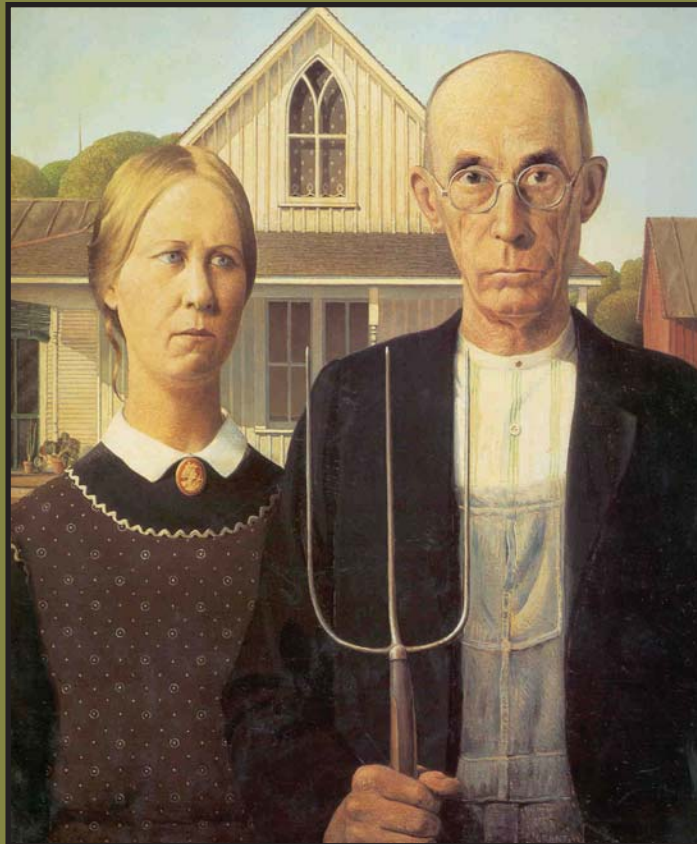
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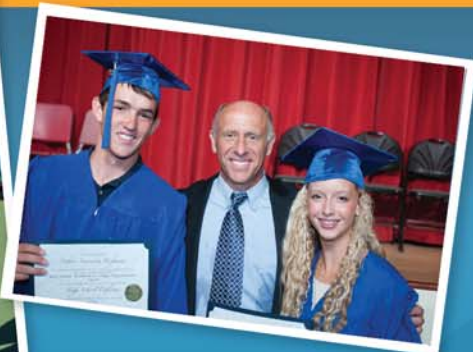


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