



Med student dreams of tennis glory

The players of TuksTennis are starting to seriously make their presence felt on the local, national student tennis scene.

At a recent tournament in Potchefstroom Amy Olivier and Henco Doman were selected for the provisional squad of eight from which the final team of six (three men and three women) will be chosen to represent South Africa at the World Student Games in Italy.

Their selection should not be a surprise. The rise of TuksTennis is part of a long-term strategy.

In the past, Tuks tended just to make up the numbers during the annual USSA Tournament, but that started to change in 2017 when the team went on to contest the final against Kovsies.

Last year Tuks lost out again to Kovsies in the final, but this could change in 2019.

Olivier, a fourth-year medical student at Tuks, has been playing tennis since she can remember.

When under-18, she was ranked in the top 10 locally.

After school, she took up the offer to play college tennis in the USA.

She was based at the University of Louisiana Monroe.

"It was a great experience. In South Africa, it is easy to get into a comfort zone. It was while I was in the USA that I truly realised what it would take to become a top player in the world.

"It felt like there were no bad players and everybody had the same goal.

"That is to become even better. I was especially impressed by the Europeans.

"They ate, drank and slept tennis all the time," said Tuks's top-ranked female player.

Olivier would have loved to try and make a career from tennis, but her other big passion – getting a real opportunity to make a positive change in people's lives – got the better of her and that is why she started studying medicine.

However, that does not mean she is any less passionate about tennis.

"It would be a really great honour if I can get to represent South Africa at the Student Games.

"And I would really love to be part of a TuksTennis team that wins the USSA Tournament," she said.

She also realises that to do so will take a lot of hard work and significant sacrifices to achieve her goals.

However, Olivier told *Rekord* that she believes she is ready for it.



Amy Olivier in action on the court. Photo: Reg Caldecott