

TuksTennis



A new direction...

Text: Kirsty Querl | Images: Reg Caldecott

2014 has seen TuksTennis academy take a new direction with the academy programme. This programme is facilitated through the hpc and based on the University of Pretoria, LC DeVilliers campus. Prince Madema and Rosemary Owino have been appointed as the coaches of the programme and Kirsty Querl is the Sport Scientist and strength and conditioning coach working in the programme. All the coaches have worked with the ITF Centres in Africa and coached many of the up and coming African juniors as well as players on the professional circuit.



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Both Prince and Rosemary are ITF level 3 qualified coaches and provide a unique coaching team. Two level three coaches in one academy will be difficult to find in any establishment, as well as the combination of male and female experts to deal with the different needs of the players. Prince is also one of few ITF coach education accredited tutors in Africa. Both Kirsty and Rosemary have Sport Science degrees from the University of Pretoria and Kirsty is completing a Master's degree in injury occurrence and prevention in adolescent tennis players. The coaching staff is a passionate, experienced and highly motivated team striving to produce African tennis players that can compete on the world stage. The academy offers an extensive programme package that includes a high school programme adjusted to allow for more training hours, a full boarding establishment, tennis training morning and afternoon daily, strength and conditioning, gym access, a team of medical professionals on site including: doctors, physios, biokineticists, nutritionist, psychologists and video analysts.

The physical training programme is comprehensive and covers all aspects of a player's development; which is an area many junior players lack. On court as well as gym based training is conducted with a focus on educating the athletes specific to their needs and good training practice.

The principles instilled in this programme include discipline, professionalism and hard work. The academy programme aims to create a professional training environment for up and coming players to excel through tennis while remaining in a structured school. We encourage players to enrol from the age of twelve to gain the full benefit of the programme and allow for enough time to develop along the player pathway. Many African players are only discovered aged fourteen to sixteen and by this time have missed some of the crucial developmental phases as an athlete.

We are also a centre for local and International players, coaches and teams to visit for training camps and tournament preparation. This not only benefits the visitors

but also provides regular variety for the permanent players in the programme.

Giving players tournament exposure to the top tournaments in and around South Africa with coach driven guidance is essential to all players' development pathways. This academy is not driven by an individual's business motivations but is part of a larger organisation. Sessions are conducted under a squad structure and coaches are committed to travelling to tournaments as they don't have other clients to worry about.

Currently, our programme has fourteen players with the aim to expand the group and the number of coaches as we grow. The start of the year saw five of the players travel to Kenya to participate in three weeks of ITF tournaments under the supervision of Prince Madema. This was an invaluable experience for our players to gain exposure to a high level of competition and training and playing on clay. We look forward to the possibilities that lie ahead in 2014.