

HYDERABAD

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2011

## Coaching Was My First Love: Nagaraj

By N JAGANNATH DAS



When he took up tennis he bristled with passion. But then his desire to settle down as a top notch coach overshadowed his intent of becoming a big player. He had acquired immense knowledge of the sport and always wanted to impart all this and groom champion players. He has to some extent achieved this, training latest Davis cupper from the city J. Vishnu Vardhan. “He is a special coach. Warm blessed with excellent knowledge of the game. If I’m a good player, it is because of him,” said Vishnu vardhan, who made his Davis cup debut against Japan last month.

Vardhan grew and developed his skills under CV Nagaraj. The affable Nagaraj is one of the unsung Indian coaches. His other list of players include Susheel Narla (Davis cupper in 1997), Vishal punna (2004) and national champions Suresh Krishna, pc vignesh and junior national champions Anant sitaram, Chetan pandit, KH Praveen and a host of other players, including Geeta Manohar.

Nagaraj turned coach at the age of 21. He did not enjoy his role as a player and wanted to become a coach.

“Coaching was my first love rather than playing .I had the fascination of becoming a coach at a young age. Many were Surprised with my decision,” says Nagaraj, who hails from a family of sportspersons.

His mother Rajeswari was a tennis player while father CD Venkat Rao represented Osmania University in cricket.“sports is in my blood and I took tennis because my mother was a tennis player ,” said Nagaraj. “I pursue my post-Graduation in physical education from Annamalai University, specializing in lawn tennis, after obtaining a certificate from National Institute of sports ,”he said.

His love for tennis was too deep that he resigned his job at HAL (Hindustan Aeronautical Limited) as it was keeping Him from being on the court all day. With an urge to groom many players on par with international standards, Nagaraj Struggled to get good courts before he established the power school of Tennis at RRC in Secunderabad in 1997. I knewThat to produce quality players one needs to have good facilities,” said Nagaraj, who has been successful in producing Many international and national levels players.

“I always feel that foundation is important, The basics are crucial to the development of a player. I believe that a playerMust have the ability to play on all surfaces and accordingly the training programme is scheduled for them,” he said.“He is very special kind of coach. He brings the best of the boys . He is very good at fundamentals and spots the talentVery well ,” said the lanky Myneni Saketh, who lost to Yuki Bhambri in the Delhi Nationals on Friday.

According to Suresh Krishna , who won the nationals last year, “Nagaraj’s dedication is admirable . He is averyDisciplined coach . There is a lot of commitment in his approach. That is the secret of his success,” said Krishna

In fact, when Vishnu Vardhan joined Nagaraj’s camp, he was an heavyweight before rigorous training turned him Into a notable player in the country.