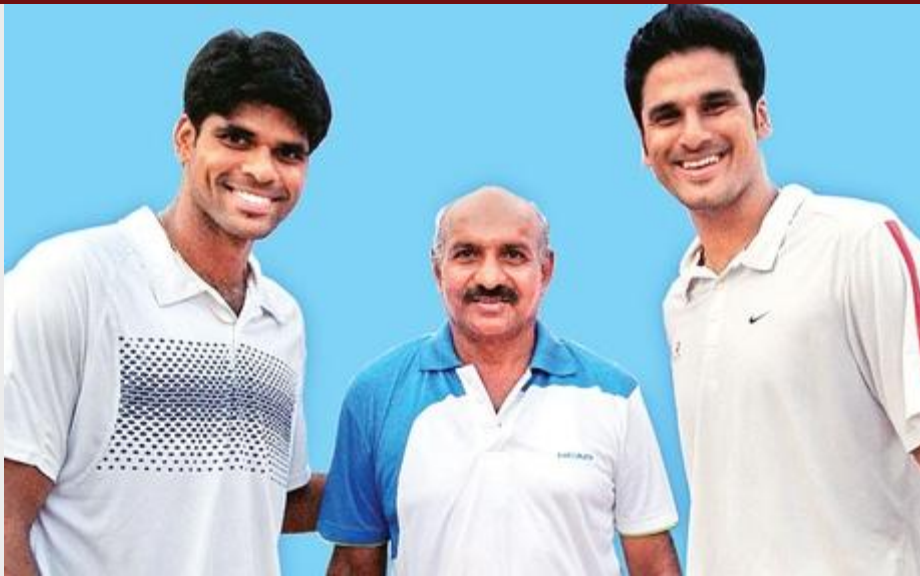


Coach with double-impact

By N Jagannath Das / ENS - HYDERABAD

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• Photos



CV Nagaraj with Vishnu Vardhan (left) and Saketh Myneni

To boast of two proteges in the Indian Davis Cup team is indeed an enviable distinction, which coach CV Nagaraj has toiled hard for years.

The fruits of his struggle have finally been realized as Olympian J Vishnu Vardhan and the rising Saketh Myneni are in the new-look four-member Indian team that will meet New Zealand in Asia/ Oceania Group I tie at Chandigarh from September 14.

In fact, Susheel Narala was the first from Nagaraj's camp who was in the Davis Cup team way back in the nineties.

"In 1997, when Narala was selected in the team to play Davis Cup, it was a huge boost to my coaching career. But with two of my boys in the Davis Cup team among the four now, I'm happy for them. And now, I would like to see more of my wards play for the nation at this level," said a delighted Nagaraj.

It was the love for the game that made Nagaraj a coach.

Starting his School of Power Tennis (TSPT) camp in the 1990's at Railway Recreation Ground, Nagaraj strives hard to churn out champions.

“My vision to set up tennis schools was mainly to fulfill a larger mission to groom world class tennis players in India,” he said.

The 51-year-old coach is inspired by the legendary motivator like John Maxwell by saying: “Great leader's courage to fulfill his vision comes from passion, not position”.

True to his words, Nagaraj, who moves around the city with his two-wheeler, has been modest about his achievements.

Nagaraj has had to his credit five men's National champions that include Susheel Narla, Vishal Punna, Vishnu Vardhan, Suresh Krishna and Saketh Myneni.

Apart from the senior champions, he has also under-14 boys category national winners from TSPT like Anant Sitaram, KH Praveen and Chetan Pandit.

Vishnu Vardhan has been with Nagaraj since 17 years. “Vishnu is hardworking and earned his due. He is an attacking baseline player,” said Nagaraj.

The 2011 Grass Court National champion Myneni has a variety in his game. “He has the unique capability to change the pace. The opponent mostly takes time in reading his game and by then he makes sure he takes the lead,” said Nagaraj, adding, “both Vishnu and Saketh have big serves and both have very good return of serves”.

Myneni is all praise for his coach.

“He is one of the coaches whose dedication is amazing. His passion for the game makes him one of the best coaches that I have come across. What I like about him is that with modest facilities and with meagre financial support, he has been able to run the show successfully. He is surely the unsung coach of Indian tennis,” he said.

Vishnu thinks that Nagaraj keeps things simple.

“But he is very particular about discipline. He has the unique ability and patience to groom young talent, at the same time not averse to modern day technology,” said Vishnu.