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Staying rooted, aiming high

V.V.S.

Tennis Nagaraj has trained and groomed three Davis Cuppers and a recent national champion



Coach C. V. NagarajPhoto: V. V. SUBRAHMANYAM

He is looking to achieve what no other tennis coach from Andhra Pradesh even dared to think of – win the coveted Dronacharya Award. , t The 51-year-old Canjeevaran Venkatrao Nagaraj, a former junior national player has already the rare distinction of producing three Davis Cuppers – Susheel Narla, Punna Vishal and J. Vishnuvardhan besides five national champions, with the most recently crowned national champion being Mynaneni Saketh.

Everything he does at The School of Power Tennis Academy on the RRC premises in Secunderabad is unique – it doesn't close down after the morning session. The training, under the watchful guidance of Nagaraj, is an on-going process throughout the day with brief breaks.

“I enjoy this job. Honestly, I am just trying to see my players achieve something big which I couldn't as a player in my younger days,” says Nagaraj. A contemporary of the indefatigable Narendranath (former two-times national champion), he quit his HAL job because it did not permit him to dedicate time to the tennis court; now he is thrilled at the way his wards have been performing.

The list of his big achiever trainees is a virtual who's who of India's young generation of players, especially in men's circuit.

“The credit for all these achievements goes to them. I just tell them some practical points to keep improving and they keep trying to be better players,” says the modest tennis coach.

A recipient of Farkunda Ali Khan Award, given by the AP Lawn Tennis Association, for the best coach, Nagaraj feels he has still a lot to offer. “My ultimate dream is to win the Dronacharya Award. That is one thing which keeps me motivated,” he says with all honesty. Nagaraj doesn't even bother to travel with the players on the circuit. “I send my support staff by rotation with them. I cannot leave the Academy for I have to take care of so many other talented youngsters,” he explains.

So, far from the madding crowds, this gentleman keeps doing what he simply loves to – coaching.

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