

Quirkies and Quickies

by Rick Angus
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Pospisil Falls Short in his Effort to Upset the #1 seed in U.S. Junior Open

Vasek Pospisil met a young man from Belarus by the name of Uladzimir Ignatik, the #1 seed here in N.Y., and fell in straight sets, 6/3, 6/4, to the powerful serve and baseline game of the world's number one in international junior rankings.

Pospisil, who recently turned 17 on June 23rd, is in his first year of junioreligibility. Vasek fought bravely in his defeat utilizing his innovative, for junior tennis, approach that employs a varied court strategy and a touch of finesse. This style should make a losing result much less likely in future junior competitions.

Pospisil attempted to go to net often. That alone is rare in most junior contests. Vasek was broken in the opening set when he missed on a series of volleys at the net while striving to gain the early lead.

In truth, when Vasek chose to take something off the serve and use placement to his advantage, the Belarussian seemed to regularly have great difficulty with that more mature approach. While Vasek's plan failed to win the day, it will put him in good stead if he perseveres with the aggressive game complete with much variety that he is quickly developing under his coach and father Milos' guidance.

From Then to Now

In 1968, international tennis opened the door to the renegade professionals who previously were banned from competition at the Slams. The first men's winner of the U.S. Open in what became known as the Open Era was Arthur Ashe. As Ashe was serving in the U.S. Armed Forces at the time, Arthur could not accept the first place prize money of \$14,000.

This week, Roger Federer of Switzerland is aiming to win his fourth consecutive title here in New York and the handsome reward that he will reap for such an effort this year is \$1.4 Million, 100 times as great as that stipend of yesteryear.

Lest we forget, Roger was the top point getter in the 2007 U.S. Open Series of events leading to the Open and a victory here in N.Y. will bring a bonus payment of an additional \$1 Million to ease his tax bill, I suppose.

James Blake Succumbs to Tommy Haas in the Round of 16

What for Americans present at the 2007 U.S. Open was the match of tourney, was decided in true 21st century fashion.

Tommy Haas finally relegated American James Blake, a local crowd favourite given his legitimate family roots in the New York area, to the sidelines after in excess of three hours (197 minutes) on the

court. But it was not to be decided by human error and that outcome evidently mollified even the cantankerous John McEnroe who was commentating on the match.

At match point in the fifth set tiebreaker, Haas was serving at 6 points to 3 when passed by a tricky Blake shot that appeared to land right on the baseline. Haas appealed to the Hawkeye line calling system high above the stadium and the call was upheld by the slimmest of margins, the ball had indeed barely graced the line. Score 6-4

Tommy returned to the service line and served an ace out wide to the Blake forehand. Shocked by this timely winner at match point, James appealed to that same Hawkeye God high above such mere mortals as the umpiring crew for a much needed reprieve.

While the players approached the net they watched in unison as the ball once more barely tickled the paint and it was confirmed that Haas would move on to the quarter finals and Blake had no choice but to accept the scientific proof of his dashed hopes for 2007.