

Take 5 with a North Carolina Tennis Hall of Famer- Stephen Enochs

Our monthly "Take 5 with a North Carolina Tennis Hall of Famer" interview series continues with Stephen Enochs. Stephen is a member of the North Carolina Tennis Hall of Fame Class of 2017. He will be inducted on Saturday, January 28th at Tennis Weekend in Pinehurst, NC.



Stephen Enochs began playing tennis at the age of seven, and won his first tournament, the Greensboro Invitational, at the age of nine. Enochs continued his early success enroute to an illustrious junior career. From 1980 to 1984, Enochs won five USTA National Championships and finished runner-up in two other USTA National Championships. This success placed Enochs within the top 5 nationally, and earned him a spot on the 1985 Junior Davis Cup Team.

Enochs attend the University of Georgia, where he was All-SEC and a two time All-American. In 1987, Enochs helped the Georgia Bulldogs win their second NCAA Tennis National Championship by winning the clinching match. During his senior year in 1989, Enochs was a semi-finalist in the NCAA Singles tournament. Enochs finished that season #7 in the Intercollegiate Tennis Association rankings.

Enochs now lives in Georgia, and has remained active in tennis. Enochs has won two 40 and Over National Doubles titles, and he currently plays on multiple Atlanta Lawn Tennis Association teams.

"Stephen Enochs is without a doubt one of the best tennis players to ever come out of North Carolina," said Kelly Gaines, NC Tennis Foundation Executive Director. "His hard work and dedication made him a great player on the court, and his positive attitude great sportsmanship have made him an incredible person."

Q: What does it mean for you to be in the North Carolina Tennis Hall of Fame?

A: It is a pleasure to be recognized for not only your accomplishments but also all of the hard work and discipline you put into the sport. I also feel that it is recognition for the love of the game as well. I would have never accomplished what I did or made it as far as I did if I didn't love tennis.

Q: Who has had the greatest influence on your tennis career?

A: I cannot pick one person but it is fun to answer this question because it allows you to go through your tennis history and see how many people made a difference in your life. But the first person I would have to say would be my Mom. From age 6 to 10 my mom took me out and fed me balls and really was the first person who got me into tennis and excited about the sport.

She then passed me off to coaches, and the first coach I had was Jim Haslam. He was a huge influence not only on my tennis career but also on my life. We still stay in touch to this day even though he now lives in Australia. When Jim would travel out of town he would leave me in the hands of Dean Mathias

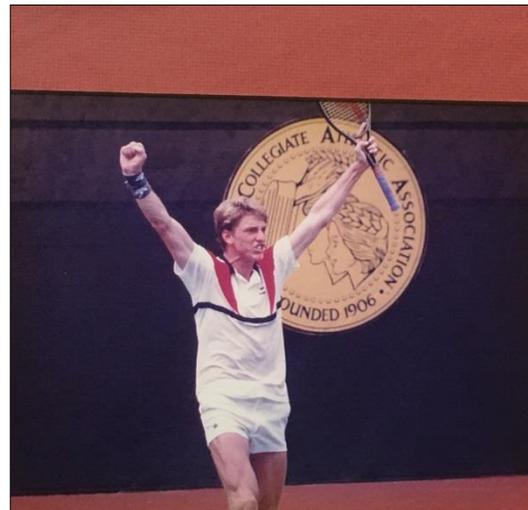
who had a huge impact on my tennis career and life. I actually bought my first car from him; even though the windshield was cracked and I could barely see the road it had a really good stereo!

My senior year of high school I decided to go away to a tennis school. A lot of kids are doing this today but back then it was pretty uncommon, outside of Bollettieri Academy. But I made the decision to go to a small tennis school in Asheville ran by Woody Blocker. Woody had coached Tim Wilkison and Lawson Duncan (both NC Tennis Hall of Fame Inductees). There were about eight of us in the program and we stayed in the Hilton Hotel four kids to a room. It was an interesting experience but Woody really helped me get my game to the next level.

Then when I went to the University of Georgia I was lucky enough to be coached by Dan Magill and Manuel Diaz both who were extremely instrumental.

Q: What is your favorite on court memory?

A: My most favorite would have to be in the finals of the 10 & under division at the Greensboro Invitational at Page High School playing against David Herman. It was my first experience playing a 9 point tiebreaker to decide the match in the third set. Back then in the third set you would play a 9 point tiebreaker, and if the score got to 4-4 in the tiebreaker the next point won the match. Our match had made it to 4-4 in the tiebreak and we were playing one point for the championship. It was a great point that I somehow ended up winning and thus won the match as well. Following the match they took a picture of David and me which was a true depiction of the “agony of defeat and the thrill of victory”. This picture really shows the range of emotions you can experience in tennis and it is one that I will always cherish. I will actually be donating that picture to the North Carolina Tennis Hall of Fame as one of my induction items.



For my second memory I would have to go with the NCAA Team Championships in 1987 when we (University of Georgia) beat UCLA in the Championship match. I played court 2 singles and actually was the clinching match. I was only the clinching match because I choked really bad in the second set. This was the first time I had ever played in front of a really big crowd and it was probably the most nervous I had ever been on a tennis court. I somehow found a way to win the match in the third set but I don't think my arm had ever been so tight. It is still a great memory and just so exciting to win the team championship.

Q: If you could play any player from any era, who and where would you play?

A: I really thought about this one and am still not sure, it is definitely between Connors, McEnroe, and Borg. These were the guys I grew up watching and just loved. For today I am going to say Johnny Mac on

red clay. I think I might be able to be a little competitive with him on his worst surface.

I actually owe him one. I was playing an exhibition when I was 12 and he was also playing in the same event against Jimmy Arias. I was hitting to warm up for my match and had turned around to go grab a ball when I turned back around McEnroe was on the court hitting, he never said hello or anything else to me. So needless to say my warm up was cut short.

Q: Question from Billy Trott, fellow class of 2017 NC Tennis Hall of Fame Inductee

How has your involvement and success in tennis inspired you to give back to the game?

A: It has inspired me to give back in many ways. Tennis gives you more than the actual sport; it's the people you meet and the friendships you develop through the game. Those things inspire you to give back because you want other people to enjoy and love it as much as you have. Tennis actually introduced me to my wife, who also played at UGA, she continues to inspire me and encourage me to give back to the game. I can only hope that other people can get inspired by all the wonderful things tennis can give to them.

Q: What would you like to ask fellow class of 2017 NC Tennis Hall of Fame inductee Billy Trott?

A: What are you most grateful for that the game of tennis has given to you?

Thank you for reading this month's installment of "Take 5 with a North Carolina Tennis Hall of Famer". If you have a Hall of Famer you would like us to catch up with please let us know. To learn more about the North Carolina Tennis Hall of Fame and the North Carolina Tennis Foundation, please visit www.nctennisfoundation.com.