

DAVIS CUP 2002



WADE BYARS, THE DESERT SUN

Getting ready: Chris Numbers prepares for Davis Cup competition. The Valley resident will represent Hong Kong in Davis Cup play for the third time. He is 1-1 in previous Davis Cup matches.

Going East

San Diego native likes playing Davis Cup matches for Hong Kong

BY LEIGHTON GINN
THE DESERT SUN

Chris Numbers has the typical blond hair and blue eyes you would expect of any native Southern Californian.

It kind of shocks you to learn, then, that when the San Diego native begins playing in the Davis Cup competition, it will be with Hong Kong.

Huh?

That's right, Numbers will play for Hong Kong against Chinese Taipei in the Asia/Oceania Zone Group II tie of the Davis Cup competition.

So how exactly did Numbers end up playing for Hong Kong?

Numbers graduated from San Diego State University in 1996, but a bad knee limited his chances of playing on the ATP Tour. So he ended up going to Hong Kong through his job at Peter Burwash International, a tennis management firm, to be

Davis Cup, however, is different. When the Davis Cup is concerned, expatriates will do just fine.

This will be third year Numbers has played for Hong Kong. He is able to play for Hong Kong in Davis Cup because the International Tennis Federation has a rule that states if a player has a working visa in a country and has spent at least two years there, he is eligible to compete for that country in international competitions.

"There's a lot of pressure on them to succeed in Davis Cup because it's country versus country," Numbers said. "Obviously, they need my help if they keep calling me to come back."

Numbers now works at Marriott's Desert Springs in Palm Desert. He is working with Canadian player Bryon Weinberg, a top junior player who is beginning his professional career.

Yet two weeks ago, Numbers

said. "Tennis is so individualized, but when you see someone representing something other than themselves, that's different."

And for Numbers, he'll be representing something other than his own country. He said he doesn't mind it, however, because he never thought he would be in a position to play in Davis Cup.

"It was always such a rush to watch it," Numbers said. "To actually be in the middle of it, even though they're calling out Hong Kong instead of my country, it's still a big rush. The whole country gets behind it."

Numbers carries a 1-1 record in Davis in Davis Cup competition, both matches in doubles in 2000 and 2001. His first tie against Kazakhstan was a victory in Hong Kong. His second match was against Lebanon in Beirut. Growing up and watching the unrest in the country, Numbers said he was wary until