

My Life in Tennis by Chris NUMBERS

Since I was 10 years old I had a dream of playing professional tennis. From the ages of 12-18, I trained 6 days a week, with a combination of drills and matches and physical conditioning. I attended San Diego State University to further my tennis career before trying the pro tour. In the summer holidays of each school year (1992-1995) I played Satellite and Challenger tournaments around the world. I held a singles and doubles ATP ranking for 5 straight years, and my best win was over Michael Tebbutt who is known in the top 100 of the ATP Tour.

I grew up in Southern California playing junior tennis with Michael Chang and Pete Sampras. Competing against Michael was always tough. His dedication and determination at a young age was very noticeable. The defensive foundation he had at the age of 12 was extraordinary. The harder his opponent hit the ball Michael just got his racket on it and played off his opponents pace. It was very frustrating to play him because of his steadiness and court smarts, and his ability to hardly make any unforced errors. Regardless of how powerful or of what age, Michael would always outthink his opponent. What was interesting about Michael was while he was waiting around to play a match he would always be making good use of his time, whether it was reading a book or skipping rope.

In the 16 under age division I played in a Sectional team event (Southern California vs. Northern California) where Pete Sampras was my teammate and I got to witness his talent at a young age. Michael was a much better junior player, but Pete was volleying, attacking and getting his game ready for the senior level. Pete developed into an all around player because of his ability to look at the process instead of results and his willingness to take advice. Pete was process, not result oriented, he switched from a two handed backhand to a one hander in the juniors, losing his next 16 matches in a row. He didn't worry about his immediate losses, but instead worked through it as he knew it would pay off later.

In summer of 1992, I was Jim Couriers' practice partner during his preparation for the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. What impressed me the most about these training sessions was his work ethic. Regardless of where the ball bounced on his side of the court he would never let it bounce twice. We would drill in the morning for 3 hours followed by on court conditioning of line sprints and agility exercises. The afternoon session would include match play followed by off court training, which consisted of track work, medicine ball, weight training and stretching. His intensity and focus on court was exemplary.

In the spring of 1996 I played German Team Tennis, playing the #1 position in both singles and doubles in the Oberliga division. Playing on clay courts was very important to my development as a player. The results may not be instant but in the long run it is very beneficial for all players to get on the clay courts and to experience the different mentality you must use to be successful on clay courts, as this mentality can be transferred to other surfaces. By playing on this surface it develops a solid defensive foundation, consistency, strategy and patience.

If the Hong Kong juniors can implement the way Chang, Sampras and Courier approached tennis at their age and use them as role models, the future will only get brighter for Hong Kong Junior Tennis.



Mr Chris NUMBERS
HKTAA Head Professional Coach

我的網球生涯－林柏仕

從十歲起，我便夢想成為職業網球員。在十二至十八歲期間，我每星期接受六日的訓練。包括操練、比賽、體能訓練等。後來，我到了San Diego 大學進修，為我的網球生涯鋪路。在學期間（1992-1995）的每個暑假，我都曾到世界各地參與 Satellite & Challenger 賽事。連續五年，我都能爭取到 ATP 的單打及雙打的排名。而最漂亮的一場比賽，要算是擊敗 Michael Tebutt 的那場賽事，因為 Michael 是 ATP 排名頭一百位的球手。

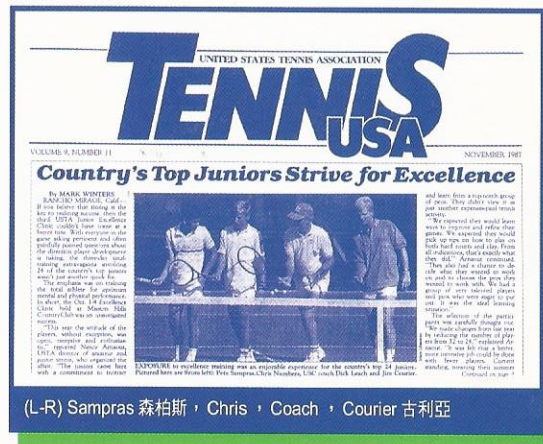
我在南加州長大。並與張德培及森柏斯一同練習網球。與張德培作賽是艱苦的。眾所週知，他從小便醉心於網球運動。十二歲時，他的防守能力便已十分鞏固。對手的擊球越是猛烈，張德培的還擊便越是厲害，更往往打亂對手的陣腳。他的穩健性、強烈的作賽意識及極少出錯的特點，使得人們與張德培比賽，常有挫敗的感覺。無論對手的實力如何高超或年紀比他優越，張德培只會深思熟慮，想出出奇制勝的方法。有趣的是，張德培在每次等候比賽時，都會閱讀，或是跳繩，總之，善用每分每秒。

在16歲以下組別，我參加了隊際分組比賽（南加州對北加州），那時森柏斯是我的隊友，所以我便有機會親身目睹他年輕時候的無比天份。森柏斯比其他球員都要出色，無論是訓練或比賽的時候，他都明白這原全是為應付高級賽事而作的準備工夫。森柏斯是個全面的運動員，因他著重的，不僅是比賽成績，而是整個過程。因為他要改變雙手反手握拍，改而以單手握拍，便連續輸了十六場賽事，但他不介意連番失敗，反而更加努力，因為他知道努力是會得到回報的。

1992年夏天，古利亞正為1992年巴塞隆那奧運會備戰，而我就是他的練習拍檔。在訓練中給我深刻印象的，是他的態度。只要網球落在他的半場，他決不會讓球有著地兩次的機會。我們早上操練三個小時，接著是疾跑練習；下午的訓練包括練習賽及場外訓練，如跑步、軟皮球鍛練、舉重練習及伸展運動等。他對網球的熱誠及訓練時的高度集中是十分值得我們學習的。

1996年春天，我參加了德國國際網球賽，在Oberliga 高級組的單打及雙打賽中取得頭號球手位置。泥地場上的練習對我來說是非常重要的。短期的訓練未能立竿見影，但長遠來說，熟習泥地場及體驗在泥地場作賽的精神，對每個運動員都有莫大的益處。這種精神，足以令球員應付不同的場地環境。在泥地場練習，可培養頑強的防守力、耐力、策略運用及耐力。

如果香港的青少年運動員能以張德培、森柏斯及古利亞為典範，學習他們少年時對網球運動的熱誠，香港青少年網球運動的前景必定會更加美好。



(L-R) Sampras 森柏斯, Chris, Coach, Courier 古利亞