



Dennis Van der Meer
President

Pat Van der Meer
Academy Co-Director

Marcos Ondruska
Academy Director

Thomas Richter
Head Professional

Vince Bilotta
Head Professional

David Lewis
ATP Pro/Coach

Tommy Shimada
ATP Pro/Coach

Elizma Nortje
Head Professional

Sally Droop
Quickstart Instructor

Rafael Array Pareja
Mimi Emoto
Christian Rangelov
Michael Stevenson
Katie White
Academy Coaches

Kerri Dunn
Fitness Coordinator

Russ Crandall
Head of Housing



Be a Good Practice Partner

What do the top pros look for in a practice partner? While it's nice to hit with someone of equal or better skill, they know it's not always possible to organize. In our experience, they're happy to hit with anyone who's consistent, hustles for EVERY ball, and gives them an enjoyable, solid workout. Many even prefer to practice with strong junior players as hitting partners, so they can focus on improving specific skills, while the coach directs and critiques the workout session.

Similarly, good older juniors don't mind occasional practice or match play with younger/less experienced players with good attitudes. As long as they can get something out of it, (i.e. work on their transition game or slice backhand) and the young player is seriously trying their best to give the older player a good practice it can be valuable for both. If you are the younger or less experienced player, just try your best to get every ball back while you are getting the benefit of the older player's experience and pace. Always keep in mind that you want these players to enjoy hitting with you, so it'll happen more often. Until you reach the point that you are equal in strength, speed, and skill, it's up to you to show the most energy, effort and enthusiasm. Your attitude and work ethic can help you hit with better, older players. And remember that soon you'll be the one who can give younger players a chance...



New Van Der Meer Southern Level 1 BG 18's Tournament

In mid January, VDM hosted a brand new high level junior tournament. The main site was VDM Shipyard, but to handle the 256 top players, Palmetto Dunes, Port Royal, Long Cove and Sea Pines clay courts all saw action. The weather cooperated; while cool, there was no rain to speak of, and by the last two days, the sun was warm. All of the VDM Academy players entered won at least one match, gaining national points in this top tier event to start out the year.





Tournament Results

Richland Co. Junior Championships

- **Alexis V-** Girls 16s Singles Finalist & Doubles Champion
- **Nicole Sister-** Girls 14s singles Champion and Girls 16s Doubles Champion
- **Masako Makiba-** Girls 18s Singles Champion and Doubles Champion
- **Saera Kanda-** Girls 18s Singles Finalist and Doubles Champion
- **Barbora Vasilkova-** Girls 18s singles Semifinalist and Doubles Finalist
- **Honami Watanabi-** Girls 18s singles Semifinalist and Doubles Finalist
- **Sam Fried-** Boys 16s Doubles Champion



Academy News

Part-time VDM Academy player, Luke Sanderson, will play for the Air Force Academy on a full scholarship next year. The Indiana native is pictured on his official visit to the Academy.



Jennifer Learmonth will graduate in May of 2014 from the University of Connecticut from the UConn School of Business, with a Finance major and a GPA of 3.7. She has been a tutor to other student-athletes, a team representative for SAAC (Student Athlete Awareness Committee), and a mentor for Huskies Away from Home. After UConn she will begin to work for PPG (Pittsburgh Plate and Glass) in their FLD (Finance Leadership Development) program at their Oak Creek, Wisconsin location.



VDM alum / University of GA Bulldog, Maho Kowase received NCAA's Sportsmanship Award earlier, showing that a tough player can also be a good person while competing.



What the Olympics Can Teach Us as Athletes

By Pat Van der Meer

Every four years we have a chance to watch stunning performances by individuals making up teams competing for their countries. Each Olympian has put in long years of technical, physical and mental training leading up to what often amounts to a few minutes of performance. In these moments, slight mistakes in timing can be disastrous- a fall at dizzying speeds can be career ending, or simply costly in point standings.

These skiers, skaters, and others have a message for us as tennis players; put in the time perfecting your skills, get strong and fit so you can perform your best, learn positive responses to challenge and mistakes. Stay optimistic, and recognize that medal or not, the journey towards excellence is worthy of your best efforts. You win by striving to be your best.

Check out our
Spring break and
Summer camps
at vdmtennis.com