

Students of Smith-Stearns Tennis Academy brought home the title 12 times at USTA National Tournaments, 8 times in ITF tournaments and 77 times at the Sectional level.

2016 proved to be a year where the students and coaches of Smith Stearns Tennis Academy saw their hard work on the court and in the gym come to fruition. Players were able to take home the singles or doubles title in an astounding 97 tournaments-12 at the National level including four Gold Balls, 77 at the Sectional level, and 8 times at the International level. Aside from titles there were numerous great tournament results which came up just short including finals appearances at both the Eddie Herr and Orange Bowl championships, three Silver Balls, two Bronze Balls, and a run to the quarterfinals of the US Open Juniors. Current students were not the only ones reaping the benefits of their time training as academy alumni found immense success at the collegiate and professional level as well. Here are just a few of the highlights.



Eddie Herr and Orange Bowl

Arguably the two most prestigious international tournaments at the 14& under and 16& under level saw junior Vikash Singh make at least the semi-finals in both the singles and doubles of each tournament in back to back weeks. The Indian native came up just short in the singles final of the Orange Bowl and partnered with academy classmate Cleeve Harper to make the doubles final at Eddie Herr before dropping a match tie-breaker.



Sculley Dominates on the Doubles Court, Choses Duke

Senior Sean Sculley started off 2016 by partnering with Nick Stachowiak to win the Southern Closed tournament in January. The pair would later make a run to the finals of the USTA National 18's Kalamazoo doubles earning a Silver Ball and a wildcard into the US Open Junior Doubles field. In the first round, the tandem knocked out the tournament's one seed before losing a heartbreaker in the quarterfinals. Sculley also announced this fall he was signing with the Duke Blue Devils where he will join Stachowiak under the tutelage of Head Coach Ramsey Smith, the son of Stan Smith.



Gold Balls Galore

Students were able to take home a total of four Gold Balls in the last twelve months. Jack Armistead held off a match point in the final and won a third set tie-break to win the 12& under singles at the recent Winter Nationals. Also at Winter Nationals JJ Tracy was able to take home the Gold Ball in 14& under doubles while Briana Crowley did the same in the Girls 16& under doubles. Crowley would also win a Silver Ball at the USTA National Doubles Championships with fellow Smith Stearns student Ali DeSpain. At the same tournament in Winston-Salem, Kylie Collins was able to win the Gold Ball at the USTA National Doubles Championships in Girls 14& under. Collins was also able to take home a Silver Ball in the 14& under doubles at Winter Nationals, and two Bronze Balls as well—one in the singles of Winter Nationals and another in doubles with fellow Smith-Stearns classmate Sara McClure at the USTA National Championships.



Alumni Find Success in College Ranks

Long-time Smith Stearns student, Hayley Carter, was able to help lead her UNC Tarheels to a third straight ACC Championships. Along the way, Hayley herself was able to grab the #1 ranking nationally in both singles and doubles—a Tarheel first. Finishing with a run to the finals of the NCAA Singles Championship, Carter was able to earn All-American honors. Carter was not the only alum to garner All-American recognition as Mariana Gould, a sophomore at Georgia, was given the honor after finishing 10th in the national doubles rankings.

Heading into Spring 2017 the collegiate singles and doubles national rankings find several alumni positioned well after a great Fall 2016 season including:

Hayley Carter- University of North Carolina (#5 singles, #2 doubles)

Harrison O’Keefe- University of South Carolina (#89 singles)

Robert Loeb- University of Georgia (#24 doubles)



Pegula and Lewis Make Presence Known on

WTA Tour

This past July, former Smith Stearns student Jessie Pegula found herself in her first semi-final of a tour level event making the semi-finals of the Citi Open in Washington D.C. The run saw her post wins over Christina McHale and former US Open champion Sam Stosur. A few weeks later Jessie would make through the qualifying at the US Open for the second straight year before losing to fourth seeded Radwanska.

2016 saw LSU commit, Jade Lewis, reach her career high ITF junior ranking of 59 and when the national championships of New Zealand. Early in 2017 made her WTA tour debut facing off against Venus Williams in Auckland. Lewis would hold a set point in the first set point before dropping the match.



Smith Stearns Withstands Hurricane Matthew

To Host First National Tournament

The academy was set to host its first national level tournament at The Sea Pines Resort with

a Girl's 14's and 16's USTA National Select Tournament in October. However, with Hurricane Matthew tracking towards the island and becoming the Lowcountry's first major hurricane in almost three decades the tournament was postponed. While the storm brought devastation to the area, Smith Stearns and The Sea Pines Resort were strong and quickly handled damages to host the rescheduled tournament with Smith Stearns students taking home three of the four titles awarded.

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