

# FROM THE TENNIS ARCHIVES – Randy King

Courtesy of the Oregon Tennis Historical Committee



*Randy King after winning the High School singles state championship in 1968*

The following is a list of his recollections of playing tennis in Portland in the 1960's:

- Irvington Club
  - You asked “Did I play much at the Irvington Club?” Yes, play, practice, sets, matches, tournaments and goof off. More importantly, Irvington was Portland’s tennis base for clusters of players, courts, championships, and champions. And by extension, Irvington’s influences

weaved its way through Oregon; our tennis played and travelled well. From this tennis ecosystem I am a life long beneficiary.

- I practiced with friends or the ball machine, usually, Friday or Saturday 9:30 p.m. Prime time slots were not available to juniors.
- One of first tennis experiences was tagging along with my Dad to the public parks or Irvington where I met lots of other kids. We goofed off while our parents played tennis. When I was 10 I played the 12s and met Tim Ramis and Jeff Hockley, whose Dads were Irvington members.
- I have no idea when my father joined Irvington or who were his proposers or seconders. When I was playing juniors I paid no attention to anything like that or read the notice boards.
- Mr. Lee was an Irvington Club member and a champion in many ways. He was part of the Oregon Tennis Foundation and for two years they helped fund my trips to the US Hardcourts (Burlingame CA) and California States then to US Clay (Louisville), Western (Springfield OH), St. Louis, US juniors (Kalamazoo).
- Later Mr. Lee when he was President at MAC suggested to tennis players including Mr. Ramis and my Dad to join MAC. MAC was planning to build indoor tennis courts. Then Mr. Lee nominated Dad to the Membership Committee to seek new members from other races for membership at MAC.
- Tim's Dad, Vic Ramis, was an Irvington Club member and a past tournament chairman of the Oregon State Championships. Mr. Ramis played singles and doubles the junior vets (35s) and probably senior vets (45s). Until Tim's current cancer treatments, he actively played USTA league matches, MAC tournaments and played at Madison High. This is a tennis childhood friendship which continues to today.
- Jeff's Dad, Claude Hockley (he looked like pack a day smoker), was an Irvington Club member (and champion). Hockleys were a big family- Jeff and siblings Joyce, Janet, Jayne and Jim played tennis, I think at Grant High. Mr. Hockley played singles and doubles junior vets (35s) and senior vets (45s).
- Looking back and blissfully (ignorant) as a teenager, the older players were teaching us tennis etiquette, social, sportsmanship and culture skills which traveled well to the circuits (junior, open and seniors) in America and international. I could've (and should've) paid more attention to the technical, mechanical, physical, emotional and mental attitudes taught. I learned the fundamentals in Portland.
- Tennis Coaching
  - Like other kids my Dad introduced me to tennis then my teachers were in the public parks e.g. Washington Park, Buckman (now Portland Tennis Center) adjacent to Benson across the street from Wes Hartman's tennis shop and a few steps from Franz Bakery. Before Dad joined Irvington (Chinese were not allowed to be members) I remember lessons from Jim Flynn, Bill Rose, Mirja Rose and a woman named Dorothy [] who wore a long skirt.

- Ed Leonard was coaching me full time from 14 years old on until he died except when I was at USC. George Toley and Mr. Wheeler, (Freshmen coach) coached me. Ed Leonard wanted me to volley (and think) like Sam Lee ... racket in front with eastern backhand grip for a backhand and an east forehand grip for a forehand.
- Three or four out of five practices, Ed Leonard used a ball machine (manufactured in Eugene) ... unusual then. This was probably a carry over from his NFL days – drills, drills and more drills.
- Ed made trips to Eugene and Roseburg to coach the teams
- Junior Tennis
  - In the early 1960s the age group divisions were 12s, 15s and 18s. The guys in the 15s were bigger by a lot e.g. height and weight. This was changed circa 1963; 15s were cancelled and junior tournaments included to 14s and 16s.
  - In the 1960s, as juniors we were house guests (housed) at private homes usually a member of the tennis club. Sometimes two players at one house depending on the size of the house or family. From 12s to the last year of the 18s the hosts were always polite and friendly enough.
- Tennis Courts
 

High School: Catlin Gable, Benson (Buckman Park), Grant, Madison Wilson, Lincoln had Washington Park and MAC shared courts with the school team.

  - Often, I played Portland Heights next door to Strohecker's and Washington Park (Rose Garden). They were closest to the house or I could bicycle.
  - Played National Guard Armory (indoor) off West Burnside before they moved to the east side near PDX. [Ed Leonard coached at both armories as well as at University of Portland]. Courts were fast, balls lost under the boxing ring or among the jeeps and tanks.
    - At the Armory we learned from Jim Flynn how to ball boy for pro tour events – Gonzales, Rosewall, Laver when they played at the West Burnside Armory. Same kids showed up like: Ramis, Hockley and Findlay,
- Tennis players.
  - Lincoln High – Chet Orloff, Brad Look, Dick Singer ... Chet is the Executive Director Emeritus, Oregon Historical Society
  - Madison High – Tim Ramis...
  - Catlin Gable – Jordan Schnitzer. Findlay Jr., Kim McCall ...
  - Salem – Jack Schunk and Cooley Brothers (Craig and Eric).
  - Roseburg – Randy Garrison, Tom Gardiner, Rick Wilson.
  - Vancouver WA which was considered 'far.' We butted heads with Bob Thompson, Roy Heikkala (sp?), John LaPlante.
  - Further up was Dick Dudley from Longview and Stoney Anketell.
  - Seattle, specifically, Seattle Tennis Club, Warren Farmer, Richard Neil, Jim Eden, John Hynes, Pete Meyerson (his dad was Ed Meyerson the head pro at STC).
  - British Columbia – Roger Skillings and Tony Bardsley

- Tennis tournaments
  - In the 1960s Irvington Club (Oregon State Championships) was an integral part of the tennis scene and one of the venues for juniors in the summer
  - From a regional view, the summer circuit started in Eugene (Eugene Swim & Tennis Club), Portland (Irvington Club), Tacoma (Tacoma Lawn), Seattle (STC) and Vancouver (Jericho, red clay). Men and women open players were at the same events but started later in the week. Juniors started Monday and finished by Friday. The adults and juniors separated after Seattle – juniors to Vancouver and adults to Victoria. In August, juniors went to Roseburg, Yakima and Wenatchee.

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