

Kevin LONERGAN

1930 – 2020

It is with sadness that Tennis Seniors Australia announces the passing of Kevin LONERGAN who was a great contributor to the South Australian Division and the national association for many years.

Kevin (b. 27/8/1930) as a 20-year-old moved to Victoria and played A Grade Pennant for Grace Park. A highlight of this time was that Harry HOPMAN would visit the complex each Sunday morning and give Kevin and his team mates a Hopman-style workout.

Kevin returned to Adelaide and represented South Australia in annual interstate tennis challenge matches against Victoria from 1952-1958 and attained the ranking of Number 2 in South Australia. It was during this time Kevin won the "Burr" medal for best and fairest 3 times going on to be a professional coach at Memorial Drive for several years.



Kevin Lonergan hits the court at Woodville with his coach John Caldana.

Kevin returns to the circuit at 86

South Australian tennis great Kevin Lonergan is preparing to take on the world's best senior players when he competes in the Oceania Regional Championships at Kooyong, Melbourne, in March.

Despite a shoulder injury, the 86-year-old has been training four times a week to prepare for the international clay court event.

Kevin, who lives in an ACH Group housing unit at Walkerville, retired from tennis 20 years ago but has kept up his fitness at the gym and pool.

He's working with coach John Caldana to brush up on his skills for the Kooyong event, where he will play two sets of doubles in a round robin format.

"I've always enjoyed tennis and I'm looking forward to getting back into it and seeing some old friends," he said. I thought maybe if I work hard I might be able to play in the 85s this year. I might not be as quick but I'm thinking I can get to the net.

"I've been lucky to play tennis, it's given me a lot of opportunities to play all around the world."

The competition will be a family affair for Kevin: his daughter Kerry will travel from the Gold Coast to play in the 55s, while his sister Pauline Wood will play in the 75s.

The Oceania Regional Championships is open to senior players 35 years and over from around the world and will be held from March 9 to 13 on Melbourne clay courts.

Kevin has a long history of success in tennis on the world stage, representing South Australia and Australia many times in a career that spanned more than three decades.

From 1952 to 1958 he represented the state against Victoria in the annual interstate matches, and won the Burr Medal for best and fairest three times.

In his early 30s he competed in Wimbledon and qualified for the French Open and 13 European tournaments, winning two titles in France and Switzerland. Kevin travelled to the US, UK and Europe many times, playing in 21 tournaments in Europe in 1990 alone and winning three of the over-55 singles titles in France, Germany and Italy.

In between playing as a professional, Kevin coached at Memorial Drive and several colleges in Adelaide.

At 33, Kevin went on to play the international tennis circuit competing in Wimbledon qualifying and the French Open plus 13 other European tournaments, winning two titles in France and Switzerland. He furthered his passion for tennis as a senior by playing in the US, UK and Europe many times, playing in 21 tournaments in Europe in 1990 alone and winning three of the over-55 singles titles in France, Germany and Italy.

As a senior, Kevin won the Australian men's & mixed doubles titles in 1990 and represented Australia in the world team championships in 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993 & 1996. He was a regular on the senior's circuit before retiring from tennis for about 20 years and made a comeback in 2016 in the MS85+ at the Australian Seniors Championships in Shepparton. In 2017, Kevin prepared for the Oceania Regional Championships at Kooyong in the MS85+ by training four times a week and worked with a coach to improve his fitness and skills (refer to article hereunder titled '*Kevin returns to the circuit 86*'), which is indicative of his commitment to his tennis. This was a special occasion as daughter Kerry travelled from the Gold Coast and sister Pauline WARD from Adelaide to play in their respective age groups to make it a family affair.

Kevin LONERGAN was an inspirational member of the Kensington Gardens Tennis Club imprinting a long-lasting legacy, particularly with junior development.

Sources:

2017 – ACH GROUP 'Good Lives for Older People' – 'Turning the page Autumn 2017- Article titled 'Kevin returns to the circuit at 86'
2020 - Alan Walsh, TSA Secretary