

EDITOR'S NOTE

Dennis Van der Meer, 1933-2019

The greatest teacher ever transformed how tennis is taught, and influenced millions of players around the world.

As this issue was ready to go to press, we learned the sad news that tennis industry legend Dennis Van der Meer passed away on July 27, after a lengthy illness. No one has had a bigger impact on recreational tennis and tennis coaches than Dennis.

For more than 65 years, Dennis personally taught tens of thousands of people to play the game. But as the consummate “teacher of tennis teachers,” his influence in this sport extends to millions of recreational players around the world.



Dennis' knowledge both impressed and astounded me, and when he got me out on court, his instruction was simply beyond compare.

I first met Dennis in 1987, when I joined *Tennis Magazine*. Throughout the years, I worked closely with him on instruction stories, including the popular “Dennis on Tennis” series. His knowledge both impressed and astounded me, and when he got me out on the tennis court, his instruction was simply beyond compare.

Dennis was born in 1933 in southern Africa. He played tournaments as a youngster, but at age 19, during a Davis Cup tryout in South Africa, he choked on a critical point. After that, his confidence flagged and his playing career stalled. His coach suggested he teach tennis to regain his confidence, and that's all it took. He had also, as it turned out, found his calling.

In Johannesburg, Dennis made a name for himself as an engaging and talented teacher. He came to the U.S. in 1961 and quickly developed a large and ever-expanding following. He eventually coached pro players, including Margaret Court and Billie Jean King, and sat courtside during the “Battle of the Sexes” match in 1973.

Dennis and Billie Jean went on to launch a series of tennis camps. When Dennis realized that the different teaching methods each pro brought to the game were confusing students, he set out to standardize a teaching method. This led to the birth of TennisUniversity, aimed at developing top teaching pros. In 1976, to certify teaching pros and teach the Standard Method, Dennis founded the U.S. Professional Tennis Registry. Today the PTR has more than 16,300 members in 125 countries.

Dennis, who has received many other accolades throughout his career, was one of the inaugural inductees into the Tennis Industry Hall of Fame in 2008.

Our thoughts are with Dennis' wife, Pat, and the entire PTR family. We are thankful that this industry had Dennis Van der Meer as a major part of it. He raised the level of tennis teachers in this country and throughout the world in ways that will influence this sport for generations to come.

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