

## Stead Open: World Class Tennis with Small Town Charm

By Sarah Henningsen

In the second round of recent Championships at Wimbledon, a relatively unknown player named Hana Sromova from the Czech Republic faced Venus Williams, eventually losing to the legendary player in straight sets. Though she has yet to win a Grand Slam title in her tennis career, Sromova is a multiple champion at what Lamorinda locals know as the Stead Open.

The tennis tournament, held annually at Moraga Country Club in August, features everything from professional players at the Wimbledon level to local athletes rising in the sport. Such diversity among competitors has made the Stead Open a very popular, respected, and interesting competition.

“What is so unique about this event is that it includes players from all different skill levels—ex-tour players, new people on the circuit, local juniors and collegiate players,” said Mark Orwig, the tennis pro at MCC and director of the Stead Open. “That’s the kind of flavor we want to keep in the tournament.”

Play begins Tuesday, Aug. 7 in the morning during early-round matches and sometimes continues throughout the evening depending on how long the matches take to complete. Registration entries are

available to USTA members and must be turned in by the end of the July for inclusion in the tournament; seeding will be announced by Aug. 5. Consistent with the tournament schedule from the past two years, several matches will also be featured specifically on Thursday night. This addition to the tournament has enabled individuals who work during the day to attend the event and watch some topnotch tennis matches.

Since its inception in the late 1980s, the Stead Open has grown to become one of the best open tennis tournaments in the country, mainly due to the high caliber of athletes and a large purse of prize money. As Orwig acknowledges, Stead Family of Fine Automobiles and Alain Pinel Realtors continual support of the tennis tournament shows “a real desire to be a part of the community.” Even more importantly, their huge donations to the overall prize money for the tournament have clearly been successful in attracting talent new and old from throughout the world, the nation, and Lamorinda.

All of the Lamorinda community, even those who are not members of MCC, are welcome. “I absolutely love watching the Stead and it is often the highlight of my summer vacation,” said Theresa Luu, a senior at



Mark Orwig – Head Tennis Professional

Miramonte High School who has played golf and tennis at Moraga Country Club for many years. “Even those who don’t play tennis, or know anything about it to begin with, should come out and cheer on the players. I always have a great time.”

The Stead Open combines a small-town feel with some world-class tennis – a gem of an event. Who knows? The next big star could be warming up to play right in front of your eyes.

### Event Highlights Aug. 7-12:

Tue: 9am Singles  
 Wed: 9am Singles and Doubles  
 Thu: 9am Singles, Doubles and Mixed Doubles  
 5:30pm Evening Featured Matches  
 Fri: 9am Singles, Doubles and Mixed Doubles  
 Sat: 9am Singles and Doubles  
 1pm Ladies Doubles Finals  
 Sun: 9am All Finals:  
 Ladies Singles, Man Singles, Man Doubles, Mixed Doubles

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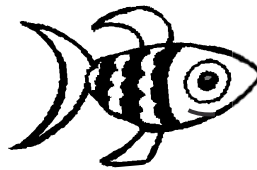
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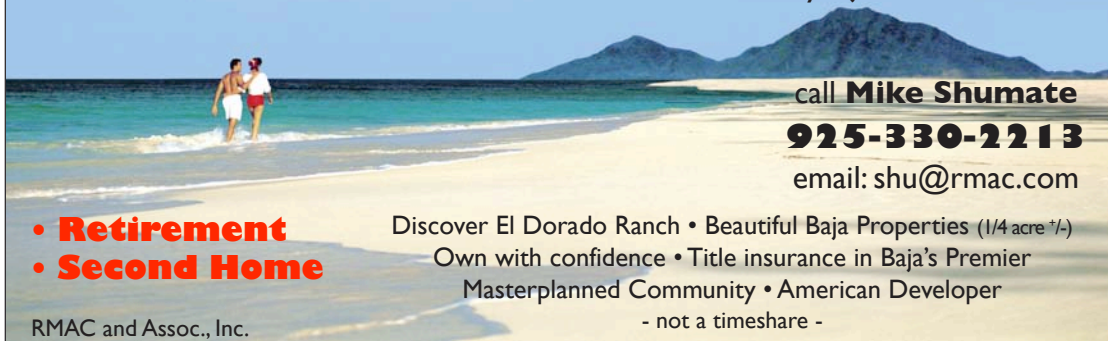
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