

Moraga Country Club Treats the Community to Great Tournament

By Sophie Braccini

Some Lamorindans plan their vacations around it: Moraga Country Club's (MCC) Stead Open, the tennis tournament they do not want to miss. "This will be our 22nd year," says MCC Tennis Director Mark Orwig, "every second week in August, we have between 220 and 280 participants registering to compete in men's and women's singles, doubles and mixed doubles." The free event attracts thousands of visitors every year from all of our neighboring cities; they come to see great tennis and unusual games.

"What is specific about the Stead Open is that it is not a professional event," explains Orwig, "still, there is \$25,000 in prize money to be won, so we attract some very good players." You may not see Federer, Nadal or Sharapova on the Moraga courts, but definitely some great players; some on the Tour at this time, some ex-professionals and some nationally ranked juniors. The eclectic group makes for unusual encounters and very interesting games, a delight for spectators.

When the event was first envisioned, Orwig began working with Michael Stead, the owner of many auto dealerships in the East Bay. Since then, the Stead family has been a great sponsor and supporter of the event. This year



Darrin Cohen of Lafayette in last year's Mens' Doubles Final Photo Tod Fierner

the Club secured the support of an additional generous sponsor, Barons Jewelers. It is thanks to the sponsors that the event is free for the public. "We do this for the community," says an enthusiastic Orwig, who spends many hours on this event every year, "the Club is completely accessible during the tournament, the parking is plentiful, food is available and the restaurant is open to all during the week." As a special treat for people who work

during the week, Orwig announces that featured matches will be presented in the evening, starting at 5:30 p.m.

This year's tournament runs from August 5th-10th. The public can check the results and announcements on bulletin boards at the Club or by calling 376-1314. USTA players can register until July 26th by sending an email to Orwig at Mark@moragacc.com.