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Women Hit the Jack Pot in Vegas

Submitted by Riki Sorenson



Back: Laura Pagano, Linda Jones, Julia Bates, Miyuki Sheppard, Marianne Lehman, Linda Davidson, Sarah Loughlin, Susan Lundstrom, Sheila Eversole, Ayako Schaham, Blair Paige, front Sharyn Lawrence, Riki Sorenson Photo Jen Pottheiser

The team is captained by Lehman (Moraga) and Linda Davidson (Orinda), and coached by Brian Thomas of OCC. National's participants include singles players Riki Sorenson, Ayako Schaham, and Blair Paige, and doubles players Sarah Loughlin, Linda Jones, Susan Lundstrom, Sheila Eversole, Bates, Miyuki Sheppard, Laura Pagano and Lawrence.

Davidson (Orinda), Lawrence, Loughlin, and Lehman (Moraga), considered "seniors" by USTA definition (over 50), have been playing recreational tennis for twenty years. This generation just missed the benefits of Title IX, but these women have cultivated their athleticism and competitive spirit out on the court.

The team also includes a "youthful" group of women (mostly in their 40's) who did benefit from Title IX, participated in high school and collegiate athletics and who now, after raising families, are re-starting their athletic careers through competitive team tennis.

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A Lamorinda women's tennis team captured third place at the United States Tennis Association (USTA) National Women's Team 4.0 Championships in Las Vegas on October 4. The tournament included sixteen other regional champions. The team competed for the first time in the tournament, besting 176 local teams to earn the berth. The team, sponsored by the Orinda Country Club (OCC), has a roster of 26 players, thirteen of whom traveled to Las Vegas to compete for the national title. Players range in age from 28 years old to 60 years old.

OCC prevailed in its first three matches of the Nationals weekend with three 4-1 victories, to earn a spot in the final four.

Beginning at 7:30 a.m. on Sunday morning, they faced the Las Vegas team on their home turf, in extremely windy conditions. OCC battled, but lost 1-4. They turned around for a second match at 10:00 a.m. versus Michigan, winning 4-1 to earn third place.

During competition Marianne Lehman suffered a potentially career-threatening wrist injury, forcing her to captain from the sidelines. Another team member, Sharyn Lawrence, suffered from bronchitis and was sidelined as well.

"These are the women who paved the road so we younguns could compete. They got us through a pressure-packed series of playoffs, districts, and sectionals to make it to Nationals. It is not only bitterly disappointing that they could not participate, but their absence weakened the team significantly," noted Julia Bates, a young mom and rookie on this year's team.