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The ageless **ApMadoc**

By Mike Touzeau, Special to the Green Valley News

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Five years ago, I wrote an article for this newspaper about Tudor **ApMadoc's** remarkable runner-up finish at the USTA National Men's 85 Hard Court Championships in Rancho Santa Fe, Calif.

The "85" denotes the minimum age of the participants.

A couple of weeks ago, the ageless **ApMadoc**, who still plays four times a week in Green Valley and once a week in Tucson, decided to repeat the feat, taking silver medals in both singles and doubles in the 90+ championships at Mission Hills Country Club in Rancho Mirage, held April 4-9.

Most people figure making it to 90 is a feat in itself, but ApMadoc is still nailing forehands into his ninth decade, trying to find players in their 70s who can keep up with him.

“The main thing in tournaments is to not get too tentative,” he said in 2004 after he and Tom Treasure, one of his doubles partners who no longer plays, took the trophy for second place in the 85+ age division of the United States Tennis Association National Championship Series — a tournament that attracts some of the best players in the country to compete on grass, clay, and hard court surfaces, as well as indoors.

He also won the Fiesta Bowl singles title that year, and finished nationally ranked 13th in singles and 10th in doubles.

ApMadoc often plays against former teaching pros and top ranked college players who have competed at an advanced level all their lives — some who have their own coaches and trainers. He’s a late bloomer himself, picking up a racquet for the first time in his mid-60s because he wanted to keep in shape for skiing in the winter.

Since those days, he has developed a fearless and steady style with all the shots, even though he does no drilling or other training, doesn’t work out or follow any regimen.

“I did practice with our pro (Ray Wardlaw) to prepare for this tournament,” he acknowledged.

Sharp eyes surrounded by a snowy oval of a beard and fluffy hair zero in on the ball as his still flawless form defies explanation at such an advanced age.

“The best shot at this age is the drop shot; players can’t get to it,” he modestly remarked at the same tourney back when he was a “young” 85.

At 90, he still shows no signs of weaker drives or slowing serves. In addition, he is in great shape.

A two-time World Senior Games champion, **ApMadoc** lost to Howard Moffett, 6-4, 6-3, in the singles final after “bageling” Otto Roemmich from San Marcos, California, in the opening round, love and love.

Moffett regularly pairs up in doubles with billionaire Kirk Kerkorian, coached by the legendary Pancho Segura, once Jimmy Connors’ mentor.

Moffett reached the final losing only two games in knocking off Doyle Royal and No. 1 seed Ed Osgood from San Francisco.

ApMadoc beat nationally ranked and USTA international team member Tom Whitlow from Long Beach, 6-2, 6-1, in the semis to earn his spot in the final.

“I moved him around a lot,” he said in describing how he breezed through his first match against Roemmich, who possesses great strokes, through nowhere near as mobile as **ApMadoc**.

Moffett was a different story.

“He moved real well,” **ApMadoc** said.

He said he hopes to pair with Moffett to compete in doubles in the indoor championships in Vancouver May 4, and plans to compete in the clay court championships at Pinehurst in the fall.

Paired with Robert Newman from Massachusetts for the doubles, they narrowly defeated Moffett and Roemmich in a third set tiebreak to reach the final, but had to settle for silver when Newman had to default, eventually hospitalized for dehydration.

When you see Tudor **ApMadoc** nearly every day on the courts at West Center, you understand how amazing a player he is after 90 years.

“I’m lucky to have good genes,” he said.

Mike Touzeau is a freelance writer for the Green Valley News.