



SPORTS

GV's ApMadoc earns No. 1 tennis ranking**By Mike Touzeau, Special to the Green Valley News**

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"I never expected to be anywhere near it," admitted Tudor ApMadoc after recently being named the United States Tennis Association No. 1 nationally ranked men's age-90 player in both singles and doubles.

It's been a banner year so far for the steady all-court specialist who took four silver and two gold championship balls in three of the four major USTA championships.

ApMadoc, who still plays four times a week in Green Valley, captured the USTA National Men's 85 and 90 Grass Court Championships doubles title at Longwood Cricket Club in Chestnut Hill, Mass., last week with partner Albert Ritzenberg of Bethesda, Md., coming back from a 4-1 deficit in the final set to beat Alex Swetka of Mountain View Calif., and Robert Newman of Shrewsbury, Mass., 6-4, 4-6, 6-4.

"I was lucky to have a great partner," ApMadoc modestly said.

Ritzenberg had called him and asked him to play with him in the tournament.

He lost to Swetka, who won each of the four gold balls last year, in the grass court singles final 7-6, 5-7, 1-6, but took the No. 1 ranking by virtue of his titles and runner-up finishes in the hard court and indoor tournaments earlier this year.

It was a memorable experience, he said, playing at the club where the first ever Davis Cup match had been decided more than 100 years ago.

He had to learn quickly to get up to the net on grass, especially since rains had made the surface much slower, but he quickly adapted. He was particularly tickled with playing in front of lots of spectators with an umpire who called out his name and the score after every point — something all the pros take for granted.

"It was my first experience with that," he said, smiling.

ApMadoc has amassed 2,280 points in singles and 2,780 points in doubles and is the only top-10 men's age-90 player from Arizona.

His previous best rankings were 10th in singles and 13th in doubles when he was playing in the age 85-90 division.

ApMadoc and Howard Moffett took the USTA Indoor Championships doubles title in May, sweeping Ed Osgood of San Francisco and Tom Whitlow of Long Beach, 6-2, 6-1.

Moffett then beat him in the singles championship match, just as he did at the Hard Court Championships in



Photo submitted Tudor ApMadoc, the No. 1-ranked tennis player in the age-90 division, practices in preparation for the hard court championships.

April after ApMadoc destroyed the competition in his own bracket, losing only three sets on his way to the final.

Local pro Ray Wardlaw has been working with him each week, and was instrumental in getting him ready to play on grass, an unfamiliar surface for ApMadoc.

They're drilling at Tucson's La Paloma, preparing for the USTA Clay Court Championships later this month in Pinehurst, N.C., where he will try to hang onto his No. 1 ranking.

Wardlaw is helping him with the familiar "sliding" needed on clay and improving his speed in getting to the ball, since drop shots are a big part of the game with players of advanced ages, he said.

ApMadoc took up the game in his mid-60s to keep in shape for skiing, but obviously has exceeded even his own expectations with the sport.

"He works for a solid hour, and as hard as anyone else I work with," Wardlaw said.

Who knows how much longer the amazing Apmadoc will keep winning tournaments?

He shows no signs of slowing down, and now as the No. 1-ranked in the country, he remains an inspiration to everyone who loves the sport, regardless of their age.

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

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