

# LEISURE & ENTERTAINMENT

## IRWIN HOFFMAN'S TUTEES

# Young tennis stars

Story and Picture By GERALD MELLMAN

*IJN Sports Editor*

**T**here is a current crop of young tennis stars on the horizon deserving recognition.

Except for one, all of these boys are 12-years-old.

The four boys are good friends, good at academics and are willing to help each other.

These qualities justify their mentor, Irwin Hoffman, in bursting with pride as he envisions their present and future.

Joel Lowinger, son of Michael and Cynthia Lowinger and grandson of Micky and Louann Miller and Andy Lowinger, has established himself as one of the best 12-and-under players in the state by winning many prestigious tournaments in Colorado.

He plays on Team Colorado, representing the intermountain region in the number one classification on their Zonal Team.

Competing in tournaments in neighboring states, Joel has garnered a national recognition for his stellar play. His uncle, David Miller, was another standout player and a top-ranked junior. Joel attends RMHA.

Jonathan Shpall, aka JJ, the son of Jim and Debby Shpall and grandson of Buddy and Dena Shpall and Alan and Barbara Freis, is another of Colorado's best 12-and-under players.

His opponents are unnerved by his left-handed spin serve. He successfully plays the intermountain circuit. This year he had no trouble with the 12-and-under competition.

He joins Joel as a nationally ranked junior and as a member of the intermountain Zonal Team. He attends Kent Denver School and is a future shoe-in for the Kent High School's state champion tennis team. A few years back JJ threw out the first pitch at Coors Field before a Rockies game.

At 11, Dillon Gust is the youngest of the four. He is the son of Carolyn and Art Gust and the grandson of Walter and Rita Smith and Barbara and Lyle Gust.

He won many trophies in the 10-and-under satellite and open categories of competitive tennis before he began play in the 12-and-under division.

In his first year in the 12's he is exclusively playing in the prestigious open classification. In July he reached his first finals in the division. He still has a year to play in the 12-and-under division. He attends St. Vincent DePaul school.

Reed Spitz, another 12-year-old left hander, is the son of Jill and Lee Spitz and grandson of Joan and Bill Spitz and Al and Janice Dinner.

This summer he battled his way to the finals of an important satellite tournament. Reed also competes in the championship open tournaments. He was asked to be a member of the five-state intermountain team which is comprised of the 20 top players 12-and-under in this region.

**T**hese young tennis stars would not be where they are today without the coaching talents of Irwin Hoffman, who has paved the way for their prowess.

Hoffman has been the tennis professional at the Green Gables Country Club for 47 years, since 1957. His state champions number in the hundreds and some of these have achieved national rankings.

Many students he has taught have become tennis teachers themselves, starting or maintaining tennis programs at various hotels and country clubs. A grateful tennis community has honored him over the years with awards of appreciation.

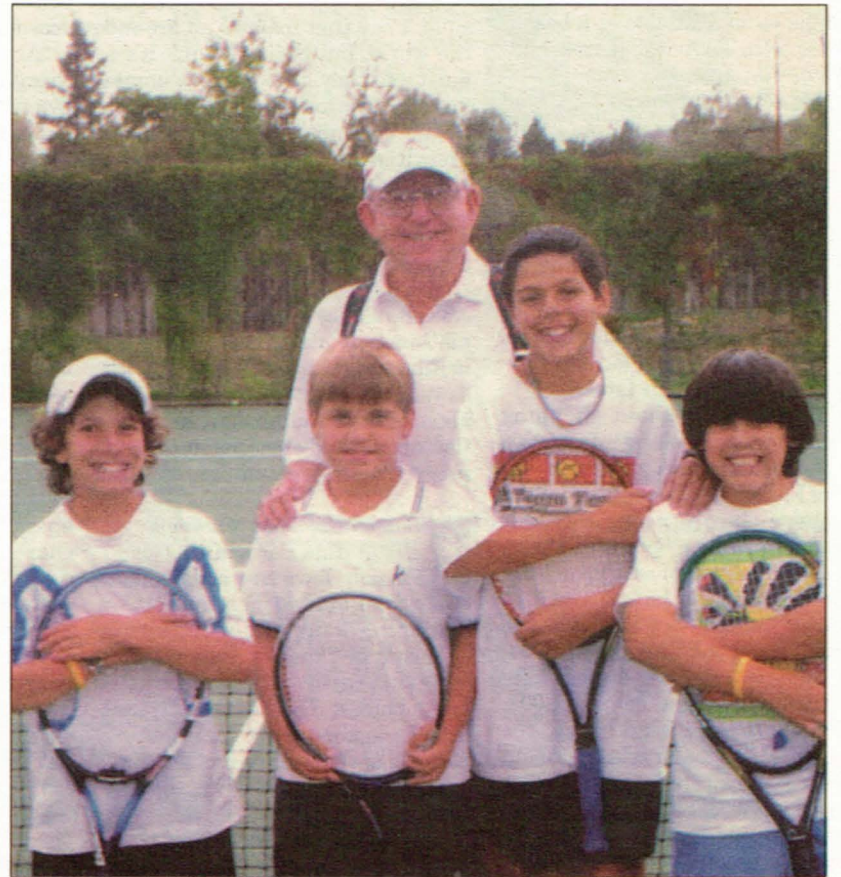
The Robineau Award was presented to Hoffman for his outstanding long-term contributions to tennis.

The Creek Club of Cherry Creek High School recognized Hoffman for his contributions to junior tennis as well as to their championship teams. A testimonial dinner in his honor was held by the Colorado Youth Tennis Foundation.

This year he was inducted into the Colorado Tennis Hall of Fame to take his place along with 30 others.

He displays the same enthusiasm in teaching the grandchildren of his initial students as when he first began teaching.

It's a safe bet that unlike Dr. Irwin Hoffman few tennis instructors have a PhD in mathematics. The foremost tennis instructor in the area retired from teaching mathematics and computer programming at George Washington High after 29 years of teaching and coaching the tennis team as well as managing the Heather Ridge Racquet Club. After retiring he worked for a time at IBM as a consultant using computers to teach mathematics. If ever we can call a tennis instructor a super star, this is the case.



Tennis coach Irwin Hoffman with l-r: Jonathan (JJ) Shpall, Dillon Gust, Reed Spitz, Joel Lowinger.



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