



BRENT LARKHAM

TENNIS ACT WALK OF FAME INDUCTED 2025

Brent Larkham was born on 8 January 1972, the first child of Bruce and Stephanie Larkham. The Larkham name had already made a mark on the Canberra sporting landscape through Bruce and Stephanie in tennis, and Bruce's brother Geoff in rugby union. Brent, younger brother Todd, and cousin Stephen, were each destined to further add their own successes to the Larkham sporting dynasty.

Brent was first raised in Higgins, where the family house tennis court was used by Bruce for tennis coaching. In 1978, the family moved to Hawker, over time establishing a highly successful twelve court tennis complex. The complex became a fulltime business with coaching, tournaments, and court hire; the perfect environment to develop Brent's sporting pedigree.

At age eight, Brent won the ACT Under 11 Resident Singles, followed by the Under 10 Junior Open Doubles. Through the 1980s, Brent represented the ACT in the Bruce and Pizzey Cups and won several age titles. By 1989, whilst still a junior, Brent was the No. 1 ranked ACT male player, having won the ACT Resident Boys Under 18 title two years in a row. In the Linton Cup, Brent narrowly lost only one match, to the World No 1 Junior, Grant Doyle.

Moving into the adult ranks, Brent won his first Challenger level doubles title in 1992 and the following year, doubles and singles titles. In the Queen's Club Championship, he defeated the world No 60 Patrick McEnroe before losing to Stephan Edberg.

1994 proved to be a pivotal year in Brent's tennis career. Receiving a wildcard into his first Grand Slam, the 1994 Australian Open, he defeated the world No. 27, Amos Mansdorf, to reach the third round before losing a tough five setter to Martin Damm.

Brent's game had come of age, centred on a massive forehand, combined with a powerful serve, court speed, and tactical awareness. Winning the Finnish Open alongside solid results in Newcastle, Bogota, Wolfsburg and Bristol, Brent achieved his highest world rankings of 108 in Singles and 128 in Doubles – today still the third highest for a male player from the ACT.

With a record seven ACT players in 1994 representing Australia internationally – all current or future top 200 World ranked players – Brent was judged the 1994 ACT Male Player of the Year.

Sadly, in late 1994, Brent suffered a rupturing of two discs in his back. Three years of rehabilitation and several failed attempts at comebacks saw Brent retire from the professional circuit at the age of 25.

For many, such a devastating injury would have been the end of any association with the sport. Not to be defeated, Brent turned to coaching – initially with Wayne Arthurs and brother Todd, both also trying to make it on the world stage. Setting up a base near Wimbledon, Brent became a focal point for post-junior Australian players. In addition to Wayne and Todd – Paul Hanley, Alun Jones, Ben Ellwood, Richard Fromberg, and Andrew Kratzmann, all achieved career best results under Brent's tutelage.

Wayne Arthurs' observations are particularly telling: "Brent was the biggest influence on my career, completely changing my game style and was the sole reason I was able to turn my tennis around. From a lowly 1500 world ranking, within two years, I entered the top fifty, winning an ATP title and competing with the world's best."

Brent's success saw him appointed Head Coach of the AIS Pro Tour program in Canberra from 2006 to 2012. Success stories include Peter Luczak, Chris Guccione, Casey Dellacqua, Sam Groth, and Jarmila Gajdosova. A special mention should also be given to Nick Kyrgios, who was in the program in 2012; the year Nick won the Australian Open Junior Boys Singles title.

Brent is currently Head Coach of the Tennis Australia National Tennis Academy in Brisbane, mentoring stars such as Kim Birrell, Olivia Gadecki and most recently, Maya Joint. In the words of Tennis Australia CEO, Craig Tiley: "Brent's track record in developing and transitioning athletes to the Pro Tour is second to none, and he is respected globally for his tennis insight and leadership as well as his technical knowledge and ability".