

Junior Hot Shots program hits the Highlands

■ TENNIS

By Lauren Wright

JUNIOR tennis players will take over the Moss Vale courts next month when the Hot Shots program is launched.

Led by Peter Carnegie and Michael Poulos from Bowral Tennis Centre, the Hot Shots program is aimed at giving younger children the chance to experience playing tennis at their own level.

Mini nets and racquets are used as well as balls with lower compression so they children don't feel overwhelmed on a full size court.

The program which has taken off in Europe and America has hit Australian shores with Tennis Australia putting millions of dollars of funding into the program.

"It's been going through Europe and America for a fair while and they've had a lot of success and Australia's got on the bandwagon. They give free t-shirts to all the kids so if you're not involved with it you're missing out," Poulos said.

Players start at the age of five with red balls which are 25 per cent compression and from six to nine they get an orange ball and then they progress to a green ball which is still low compression.

"It's pretty cool and it means that even at that age they can feel like they're playing a real match where they've got another three years probably till they can play a real match. It gives them a sense of playing the real sport rather than just always being in the coaching."

The program will kick off at the beginning of Term 4 at the Moss Vale tennis courts and Poulos said they would also take the program into schools to generate interest.

Carnegie will be the head coach running the program and Poulos said he was fantastic with the younger children.

"Pete, he's the king of the kids, he is unbelievable, just phenome-

nal. He's only a young fella but he's all over it. Sp he's our Hot shots guy and he'll be at Bowral, Moss Vale and Wollongong.

President of the Moss Vale Tennis Club Vic Gerado who runs the club on a volunteer basis with his wife Jo said it was a great opportunity for them.

"We're very happy to be associated with Michael and a professional coaching arrangement. It's great to be associated particularly with the Hot Shots program. We've got competitions going here but we've had very little junior involvement because of the volunteers' time," he said.

"So this is going to be a great opportunity to use these courts which are a good facility and to make coaching available to some of the outer lying villages which are a lot further away from Bowral."



Michael Poulos, Vic Gerado, Peter Carnegie, Julia Poulos and Annabelle Arnott are excited to launch the Hot Shots program at Moss Vale.

Photo by Lauren Wright