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News



Region 8

From Martina to Miami: The Inspiring Life of Jane Forman

Imagine creating a perfect tennis role model. She would have started tennis as a child, starred on her college team, competed on center court at a Grand Slam and, upon retirement, turned these experiences into nurturing children and adults in the game. You don't have to imagine this, though, because she already exists. Jane Forman is alive and well and teaching in Miami.

Jane, who played Martina Navratilova on Wimbledon's Center Court in 1986, is in the business of providing programs for public parks, clubs, and high schools. She currently works with the Dave and Mary Alper JCC in Miami, where she oversees 18 USTA teams, tennis education for all ages, and is an energetic advocate of the USTA's 10 and Under Tennis for kids. Her own career traces its roots back to the age of six, when she first showed an aptitude and love for game. She starred on her high school team, and was a four-time All American at Clemson University.

After 11 years on the women's professional tour, she thought she'd try her hand at teaching, and was in for a pleasant surprise. "I loved being with people," she said. "I loved the initial reaction I'd get from seeing their improvement, and how happy it would make them feel. Their good feelings made me feel good." Hence, a career as a teacher and tennis advocate began.

She founded Jane Forman Sports Management, which has been offering programs that teach the fundamentals of a variety of recreational sports, including tennis, soccer, basketball, and flag football, to athletes of all ages. She's brought the health and wellness benefits of exercising to thousands of people over the years.

Jane, who's currently coaching high school tennis at Riviera Prep, isn't trying to build champions per se; she's trying to teach kids respect for the game and for each other.

"In this day and age, many kids are disrespectful," she says. "Tennis and golf are gentlemen's sports. Not only do kids learn respect, but they enjoy being a part of a team."

While Jane's teaching has touched the lives of kids from ages three to 80, there's no one age group she likes best. "Tennis will never die," she continues, "because it's a lifelong sport. No matter what age, ability, or socioeconomic background you come from, there's a way to play tennis."

Spoken like a true role model.

