



Ray Collins goes

ONE ON ONE

with Horia Tecau

HORIA TECAU

Horia Tecau isn't exactly a household name, but he should be—at least in tennis households. He's been ranked #1 in the world in doubles after his 2015 Wimbledon win with partner Jean-Julien Rojer. Tecau also won the Australian Open Mixed Doubles in 2012 with Bethanie Matek-Sands. Recently the 31-year old Romanian sat down with *Play Sarasota* columnist Ray Collins before a recent exhibition in Bradenton.

HOW AND WHEN DID YOU BEGIN PLAYING TENNIS?

My dad was a basketball player and he knew that sports can teach children. He took me to tennis when I was seven.

DID YOU LIKE IT RIGHT AWAY?

I didn't know what it was. I just wanted to play something and be with kids. It got serious when I moved to Florida to start training when I was 13.



WHAT MADE YOU BETTER THAN THE MILLIONS OF OTHERS WHO WANTED TO BE A PRO TENNIS PLAYER?

Belief. You have to believe you can win matches. The most important thing in tennis is the mental game, but very few work on that.

HOW DO YOU WORK ON IT?

You spend a lot of time analyzing yourself, your thoughts. Keep the positive thoughts, but change the negative thoughts. Always look for progress in every aspect of your game.

YOU REACHED THE FINALS OF WIMBLEDON THREE TIMES AND FINALLY WON THE FOURTH TIME IN 2015. THAT MUST HAVE BEEN IMMENSELY SATISFYING FOR YOU.

It was because of getting so close and not winning it. I was carrying that feeling for a long time. I made peace with it before I made the fourth final, and I was very happy to win.

WHAT'S IT LIKE PLAYING IDENTICAL TWINS LIKE THE BRYAN BROTHERS? DO THEY HAVE AN INHERENT ADVANTAGE HAVING THE SAME DNA?

Yes, of course. My partner and I talk and try to get close to that, but we'll never have the same understanding like the twins. We can spend the next twenty years together and never get to that understanding that the brothers have.

IS IT A BIG DIFFERENCE THAT ONE IS RIGHTY AND ONE IS LEFTY?

Yes, it is a big advantage. Bob's got a big left serve and Mike has soft hands at the net. They've mastered the game. They've been dominating the last twelve years. We had a great year this year, but it's amazing they had years like this or better for eleven times in a row.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO BESIDES TENNIS?

I like to visit the cities where I play. I spend a lot of time on airplanes and hotels so I read a lot and watch a lot of movies. I have some friends on the tour. Time passes very easily on the tour.

HOW DO YOU LIKE THE SARASOTA-BRADENTON TENNIS COMMUNITY?

I have lived here for a few years. I came here to train at IMG and more recently at the United Tennis Academy. It's a place where you have a lot of courts, a lot of guys to hit with, good coaches. It's quiet, you rest well, you eat well and you play tennis. It's a great place to train.

Ray Collins is a newscaster on ABC 7 and a media consultant. Details at www.RayCollinsMedia.com

Dave Siddons

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