

Hollywood Has the Hilton Sisters ... Sarasota Has the Holton Sisters

By Ray Collins

It sounds almost too unlikely to believe—but it's true, and it's happening right now in local high school tennis. Three sisters are coaching three high school teams in Sarasota.

Kathy Rosenberg, 46, has coached the girls team at Riverview High School for three seasons and in that time they've won three straight district regional titles.

Holly Holton-Moore, 38, just began coaching the boys team at Riverview and right away led her team to the district boys championship.

And the middle sister, Amy Lyons, 45, has led the boys and girls team at Cardinal Mooney for the past two years. Her boys team won their district title this year.

Richard and Marcy Holton had four children including a son, Rick, who played for University of Florida. The Holtons moved to Sarasota from Dayton, Ohio, in the late 1970's.

And all three sisters graduated from Riverview. Kathy and Amy lead the Riverview Rams to a state title back in 1980. They won four national tournaments in 1982, were ranked first in the nation and received a wild card into the U.S. Open. Kathy then went on to play first singles for the Florida Gators. She joined Amy to play in Wimbledon and the French Open in the early 80's.

Doctors told Holly a foot injury at age 15 would prevent her from playing again. She proved them wrong. She played first singles and doubles all four years at Riverview high school, leading the team to the championship all four years!



Amy Holton Lyons, Holly Holton-Moore, and Kathy Holton Rosenberg

Today, her players have been quoted as saying she's brought the team closer and made them better players.

So—who's the best player in the family?

"Ha ha, let's just say the Holton sisters are still very competitive," Kathy said during a recent work-out at Sarasota's Bath & Racquet Club.

But wait there's more! All three sisters have children who play competitive tennis. Kathy's daughter, Ashley, played 1st singles this past season at Riverview and plans to play for the Rollins College team this fall in Winter Park.

Ashley said it was fun having her mother as the coach. "She knows what she's talking about, that's for sure. I'll miss her next year (when I'm at college), but I'm sure she'll come to the matches."

Amy's son Kevin played for his mother at Mooney.

Holly has three children who all play tennis—including Michael who is a top-ranked junior and a future member of Holly's team. Holly says having her two big sisters also coaching in Sarasota is great. "I enjoy coaching with my sisters, it brings back great memories of playing together as juniors 25 years ago!"

Kathy says having her sisters as peers has made it more convenient in ways you wouldn't imagine. "It is great being able to bounce ideas off of one another, such as how to handle try-outs or where to order uniforms from. It has really been enjoyable and I hope we keep it up for a while."

Their respective teams are all doing well—and many say that's due to the experience and dedication of the Holton sisters.

Eric Davidson, the Director of Tennis at Sarasota's biggest club, Bath & Racquet, says the Holtons have done a lot for the local tennis scene. "They have been great for high school tennis. They truly are giving back to the game that they grew up with and still love today. It has been a pleasure working with them." Davidson said. And the Holtons say it's been a pleasure to work together—yet separately—helping these high school students develop into adults. "It's fun going back, it's fun to hang out with them," Kathy said.

Ray Collins owns a Sarasota-based media company. For information, go to RayCollinsMedia.com

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