



Ray Collins goes ~~ONE ON ONE~~ TWO with Bryan Brothers Then and Now



Back in the early 1990's, I was freelancing for a national tennis show on the Prime Network called "Tennis TV."

The producers sent me to events and tournaments around Florida. I was paid per story, so often times I would try to generate as many angles as I could at each destination.

When I covered the Lipton on Key Biscayne, I not only interviewed the current legends of the game like Andre Agassi—but I also sought out up-and-comers like some teenage girl everyone was talking about named Lindsey Davenport. I never saw her hit a ball, but I thought I could make a few dollars extra if she won a few matches. She did, and I did.

In 1993, the show producers in New York told me to cover the Easter Bowl at the Doral Resort & Country Club in Miami.

The top singles player among the boys was a cocky kid from New Jersey named Justin Gimelstob. What he lacked in charisma, he made up for in talent.

After covering the nuts and bolts of the tournament—and there were a few nuts, especially among the parents—I kept my eyes open for other feature stories around the tournament.

I saw a set of parents with their sons sitting quietly amid the chaos. The boys were identical twins and dressed alike as well. The four of them made for a striking scene in their normalcy.

I approached the father and identified myself as a tennis feature reporter and asked if I could interview his boys. He was happy to allow me access.

I talked to these 14-year old blonde haired boys about their California roots, how they often play each other in the finals, and how they strive to be good students.

I can recall asking, "How are you so aware at such a young age that school is so important?"

"Our mother reminds us," one of them laughed.

And so it went, I thanked the little family for their time, wished them luck and never expected to hear of them again. They were too nice to be that good, right?

About seven years later, I was anchoring the TV news in Richmond, Virginia, and went up to Washington, DC, to watch a pro tennis tournament called the Legg Mason Classic.

I saw a pair of tall blonde-haired twins on the court—and it reminded me of the little guys I had seen years earlier in South Florida.

"Could it be?"

It was.

Bob the lefty and Mike the righty. I saw their father who hadn't changed nearly as much as his sons.

"Mr. Bryan, I'm Ray Collins. I actually did a story about your sons years ago at the Doral--"

"I remember," he began.

"You do?" I asked, incredulously.

"Yup, that story actually helped the boys get their first sponsors and led to them getting into Stanford."

At that point, Wayne Bryan asked me where we were sitting and offered to upgrade our tickets. That treatment continued for a few years after until I had used up all my bargaining points, and the boys had become the best doubles team in the history of tennis.

I've since been around Wayne and his boys several times at various tournaments and events. Wayne knows me by name, and each time

he introduces me to the boys, and explains who I am—and who I was back at Doral years earlier. They nod and smile and look away before their boredom creeps through.

A few years ago they came to the Bath & Racquet Club for an exhibition. I was lucky enough to announce the opening match before handing the mic over to Wayne who likes to announce his sons' matches.

This time I came prepared with a picture of our interview. One said, "Oh yeah, I remember this. This was our first interview ever!"

I may have done the first, but it certainly wasn't their last.

And no, I still can't tell them apart.

Ray Collins is the Voice of the Sarasota Open, Ray Collins is a local newscaster on ABC 7, and a media consultant. Details at www.RayCollinsMedia.com

How old were you when you first started playing tennis?

Bob: Our Mom, Kathy, who was pregnant with twins obviously, played a social doubles match at our club on our due date. She tells us we were actually playing doubles before we were even born!

Mike: Our parents believed in an early start and always made it fun with balls and rackets around the house. Rolling balls on the kitchen floor and hitting balloons over the sofa and all kinds of little easy and enjoyable skill things in the house. Our parents were the pros and owned a tennis club in Camarillo. We started going to our club's Tots Clinic when we were four and five.

Bob: We played and won our first 10 and Under Tournament at Lake Lindero when we were six. We were both in the Finals and one of us defaulted to the other as we would do many times as the years rolled along.

Your coach, David McPhearson, is based in Sarasota. How did you ever meet up with him in the first place?

Bob: Yes, David MacPherson is our traveling coach and we, of course, played him some on the tour and we knew him that way, but we got to know him well when we played a few matches for the Kansas City Explorers. He was on that team too.

Mike: He is a solid and hard-working guy and really knows doubles and he has become a good friend. We sure appreciate all he has done for us and he is behind us win or lose and through good times and tough times.

Are you more alike or more different?

Bob: Yes, more alike.

Mike: I agree. We both love tennis and we both love music and we have the same basic DNA and we look alike and talk alike and are the same size and went to the same schools and grew up in the same house and we have the same parents.

Bob: Ha. Ha. Other than that we are totally different.

Do you have any goals left?

Bob: We actually reached every goal that we ever set for ourselves in the juniors, in college, and in the pros.

Mike: But we'd be happy to finish this year as #1 again.

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BRYAN BROTHERS RECORDS As of June 6, 2016

- Most career men's doubles team titles: 112.
(Woodies second with 61)
- Most times year-end #1 doubles team: 10.
(Woodies second with 5)
- Most Grand Slam doubles championships: 16
(Newcombe-Roche second with 12)
- Most weeks at #1: Mike with 455.
(Bob is 2nd with 440 and John McEnroe 3rd with 270 weeks)
- Most times voted Fans Favorite Doubles Team:
11 – every year they have had the award.
- Only team to win the Gold Medal plus four consecutive Grand Slam Titles – the so called Bryan Golden Slam.
- One of only two teams that have won every Grand Slam, plus an Olympic Gold Medal – the Golden Slam. (The Woodies are the other team).
- Only team to win every Grand Slam at least twice.
- Most times ITF World Doubles Champions awards: 11.
(Woodies second with 3)
- Most wins by a US Davis Cup doubles team: 24.
(John McEnroe-Peter Fleming second with 14)
- Most career doubles finals: 166 – 112 titles and 54 runner-ups.
- Most grand slam doubles finals: 29. (Woodies second with 15)
- Only team to win a Grand Slam title for 10 consecutive years– 2005-2014.
- Only team or individual doubles player to win at least 5 titles for 14 straight years.
- Most consecutive grand slam finals: 7.
- Most doubles titles by brothers: 112. (Gullikson brothers second with 10)
- Only team to win 600 & then 700 and now 983 matches.
- Only team to win 60 matches a season for 10 straight years.
- Most Masters 1000 doubles titles: 36.
- Most Masters 1000 doubles finals: 54.
- They have the Career Golden Masters having won each Master Series Tournament at least once and some as many as five times.
- They are the only players to ever win 6 Masters 1000 titles in one season – 2014.
- Most doubles titles by an individual: Mike with 114. (Bob is second with 112 and Daniel Nestor is 3rd with 86)
- The most times a team has played in the Masters Cup with 13 and the most wins by a team in the Masters Cup with 35. (Daniel Nestor is second with 34)
- Most points ever amassed in the Race during a season by a singles player or doubles team: 15,110 in 2013. (The 2nd place team that season had 7,640 and the 3rd place team had 5,735)
- Earliest the #1 ranking has ever been clinched in singles or doubles: August 19th, 2013.
- Most prize money ever won by a doubles team in one year: \$3,265,708 during the 2013 season.
- Most prize money ever won by a doubles team in a career: \$27,476,990.

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