

# Local tennis column: Sneaky Pete's tourney starts Saturday

[Tom Rife](#)

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NAPLES, Fla. - How does something that happens every year sneak up on you?

To get an answer, simply ask the tennis players who are regulars in Sneaky Pete's Tennis Championships. The 16th annual version of the event begins Saturday at The Club at Sterling Oaks complex north of Naples. Action runs through March 7.

Divisions include 3.0, 3.5, 4.0 and 4.5 men's and women's singles and doubles, as well as 7.0, 8.0 and 9.0 mixed doubles.

Of particular interest to the spectators each year is the open division that spotlights the best local pros, high school and college players around the area.

Cash prizes will be awarded to the winners in each division. Registration ended Wednesday. On Friday, draws will be posted at [www.SterlingOaksTennis.com](http://www.SterlingOaksTennis.com). Click on Sneaky Pete's in the events menu.

## Sterling Oaks crowns familiar and new tourney champs

Randy Kambic, Special to Coastal Life 12:19 a.m. EDT March 15, 2015



(Photo: Randy Kambic/Special to Coastal Life)

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Befitting its usual wide draw of tennis talent from both year-round and seasonal players, the 16th annual Sneaky Pete's Tennis Championships presented by Hamilton Mikes P.A. at The Club at Sterling Oaks in North Naples showcased many familiar and also new champions in a week of spirited play that culminated March 7.

More than 160 players competed in 17 separate divisions with \$2,500 divided up among the winners and finalists.

Dennis and Sandy Christensen's entry in the 6.0 mixed doubles marked the first time the husband and wife ever teamed up in tournament play and they staged a major comeback to win in the finals over Derek Carlson and Mindy Sylvester, both of Naples, 6-0, 7-6 (7-2).

"He has played Sneaky Pete's several times (the couple were seasonal residents at Sterling Oaks for years before moving full time to Village Walk in Bonita Springs last summer) and has been asking me for years to play with him and I'd tell him I wasn't ready," admitted Sandy afterwards. "I can hardly believe being champions."

After their first set victory, they were down 2-5 in the second set. Then Sandy made several adjustments and they won the second set in a deciding tiebreak. "Mindy has a powerful serve so I backed up a little and adjusted my position to return more with my forehand, plus went to the net

more other times,” she recalled. Four days later, Dennis earned a second title in the men’s 7.0 doubles finals with Pete Dedich, of Flat Rock, N.C.

Meanwhile, the mixed doubles 9.0 finals pitted familiar foes, as all four often play at Heritage Bay in North Naples where Alexander Perez and Betsy Netherton reside and Craig Turner and Kathryn Taylor often visit, representing Naples Bath & Tennis Club and The Club at Mediterra, respectively.

The firepower of Turner and steady play of Taylor were prevalent in their 6-2 first set victory and continued in the second stanza, with a putaway by Turner clinching a service hold for Taylor, propelling them to a commanding 5-2 lead. Turner, who supervises the 239tennis.org recreational website, eventually held serve as he did throughout the match for the victory.

“We’re all friends,” opted Taylor afterwards, adding that Netherton is known as the “angle queen” for her sharp volleys from a two-hand forehand swing.

Paul Barrus, director of tennis at Sterling Oaks, was pleased both with the player turnout and the richness of the competition. “We were able to field both 9.0 men’s singles and mixed doubles divisions this year compared to last year. While many of the top seeds prevailed in many divisions, the men’s open doubles champs were unseeded local players with both of them heading back to college.”

Division winners were: Andoni Vivanco, Daytona Beach, men’s open singles; Jasmine Ladurner,

Naples, women’s open singles; men’s singles — Tom Zucchi, Naples, 4.5; Terry Funk, Big Canoe, Ga., 4.0; Louis Belanger, Bonita Springs, 3.5; Tamton Hashim, Naples, 3.0; men’s doubles — Paul Zavala, Estero, and Marius Espeleta, Cape Coral, 9.0; David Spahn and David Townsley, both of Naples, 8.0; D. Christensen and Dedich, 7.0; and Don Copps, Junction City, Wis., and Floyd Rodgers, Naples, 6.0; and mixed doubles — Turner and Taylor, 9.0; and Channon Champ, Coraopolis, Pa., and Townsley, 8.0; Adelka Laszlo and Richard Viau, Laval, N.Y., 7.0; and Dennis and Sandy Christensen, Bonita Springs, 6.0; women’s doubles — Nicole Soderlund and Renea Tucker, both of Naples, 8.0; and Trisha Borges, Naples, and Pat Wille, Menemonee Falls, Wis., 7.0; men’s open doubles — Nick Springer, Lafayette, Ind., and William Shisler, Naples.