

USTA NorCal Hall of Fame

Heather Ludloff | Class of 2025



Gratitude Means Everything for Heather Ludloff

by Joel Drucker

As hard as Heather Ludloff has worked on her tennis, as gritty and determined a competitor as she was over the course of more than a decade on the WTA Tour, as many matches as she won and lost in all corners of the globe, when speaking with Heather, the concept that most comes to mind is her strong sense of gratitude.

“I was just very fortunate,” said Heather. “Tennis gave me an incredible life. I’m thankful for all that it gave me – the chance to travel, meet people, learn life lessons. I’m very grateful for all of that.”

Heather can vividly recall her first summer playing USTA NorCal novice tournaments as a teenager and not winning a single

match. That only motivated her to work harder. While growing up in Foster City, Heather gained valuable insights from prominent coaches Dixie Macias and Ken Walts (later she’d work with another wise Bay Area coach, Todd Mitchell). Also in the area were such notables as Rosie Casals, Ann Kiyomura, Peanut Louie and, for a time, Billie Jean King. Each of these greats practiced with Heather and helped her see what was required to improve and thrive as a competitor. “They were all so supportive,” said Heather. By 1979, she was ranked eighth in the country in the girls’ 18s.

Though she considered turning pro, Heather played college tennis, first for Brigham Young University, then at UCLA, earning All-American honors at both schools. At UCLA, Heather studied history and, in 1982, won the NCAA doubles title alongside Lynn Lewis. Soon after, Heather began to compete on the WTA Tour.

An excellent all-court player, Heather attained career-high rankings of 57 in singles (‘83) and 37 in doubles (‘87). In 1982, she advanced to the third round of the US Open in singles. The next year, paired with Ilana Kloss, Heather reached the quarterfinals in the doubles at the Australian Open.

One highlight for Heather came when she partnered with Martina Navratilova in World Team Tennis. “That was one of those situations where you’re going to either step to the plate or you’re going to get eaten alive,” said Heather. “But it turned out I was ready and we played well together. That was very gratifying.”

It had been a long and engaging journey. Said Heather, “I so appreciate the game, everything it’s brought me, and most of all, the friendships I’ve built with so many people. Tennis is like an extended family for me.”

USTA NorCal Hall of Fame inductee Joel Drucker (‘24) is the historian-at-large for the International Tennis Hall of Fame. His work has appeared in such outlets as *Inside Tennis*, the *New York Times*, Tennis.com, Tennis Channel, HBO, and CBS.

Heather Ludloff: Tennis Accomplishments

- **Juniors**
 - Nationally ranked 8 in the 18's '79
 - Represented US on Junior Wightman Cup and Junior Fed Cup teams '79
- **College**
 - All American in '81 (BYU) and '83 (UCLA)
 - NCAA Doubles Champion '82 (w/ Lynn Lewis)
 - Reached semi-finals of NCAA singles '83
- **WTA**
 - Career high 57 in singles and 37 in doubles
 - WTA Tour Doubles Titles:
 - Newport '86 (w/ Terry Holladay)
 - Taipei '89 (w/ Maria Lindstrom)
 - WTA Tour Doubles Finalist:
 - Singapore '87 (w/ Barbara Gerken)
 - New Orleans '87 (w/ Peanut Louie)
 - Grand Slam Doubles:
 - Australian open quarter-finals '83 (w/ Ilana Kloss)
 - Wimbledon 2nd round '83, '84, '85, '86, '87, '90
 - US Open 3rd round '82, '89
- **Other:**
 - World Team Tennis
 - South Florida Breakers '88
 - Female Rookie of the Year
 - Wellington Aces '89-'91
 - Atlanta Thunder '92-'93
 - WTT Championships 1992
 - Played doubles with Martina Navratilova