

USTA NorCal Hall of Fame

Tom Ross | Class of 2025



Tom Ross: From Golden Gate Park to Wimbledon

by *Joel Drucker*

Tennis players thrive because they focus on a single task at a time. But for someone involved in the business of tennis the way Tom Ross has been for more than 40 years, multi-tasking is a valued asset. At tournaments all over the world, be it before sunrise or after midnight, Tom's multi-tasking skills are unsurpassed.

As a senior vice president for 30 years with Octagon, one of the sport's leading management firms, Tom educated young players and their families about the rigors of life on the tour and oversaw all aspects of their career throughout. Notable clients included Stefan Edberg, Todd Martin, Michael Chang, and

Lleyton Hewitt. More recently, Tom served as co-tournament director of the China Open, the largest ATP-WTA event in Asia.

Tom's journey is quintessentially Northern California. It began in San Francisco, with Tom and his father, Marcel, hitting balls at the local playground and later Golden Gate Park. When the family moved to Marin, Tom was captain of the team at Redwood High. Tom's tennis journey continued at UC Berkeley, where he earned a degree in political science and a letter on the tennis team.

During Tom's formative years, a pro tournament was held at the Cow Palace in San Francisco – the Transamerica Open, run by NorCal Hall of Famer Barry MacKay. In his teens, Tom volunteered there. At Cal, Tom was mentored by men's coach Bill Wright, who offered insights about careers in tennis. While earning a law degree at Golden Gate University, Tom further explored pro tennis. Jim McManus, a former pro who'd attended Cal, offered Tom a summer internship at the ATP's headquarters. The next summer, Tom worked in Washington, D.C. for the prominent sports management firm, ProServ – which hired him full time upon graduation. When ProServ split in 1983, Tom joined the new firm, Advantage International (which became Octagon).

True to his NorCal roots, Tom signed UC Berkeley star Mike Bauer as his first client, established a Chang Family Endowment benefitting the Cal tennis program, and returned to the Bay Area in 1996 to open Octagon's first West Coast office. Most recently, he helped support and promote the refurbished YTA facility at Hunter's Point.

"The values of hard work, strategic thinking, and fair play I learned on courts all over Northern California have carried me through a fascinating career," said Tom. "I'm grateful for so many inspiring

local mentors – and for having been able to round out my career back in, and giving back to, the local tennis community that has given me so much.”

This tribute was written by Joel Drucker. 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.

Tom Ross: Tennis Accomplishments

- **Founding member of sports industry leader Octagon, rising to Senior Vice President and Global Head of Tennis over 30-year career.**
- **Managed the careers of dozens of ATP Tour players, including Grand Slam singles champions Stefan Edberg (ATP #1), Michael Chang (ATP #2), Lleyton Hewitt (ATP #1), and two-time Grand Slam singles finalist Todd Martin (ATP #4).**
- **Worked with NorCal based players and aspiring pros including USTA NorCal Hall of Famers Matt Anger, Mike Bauer, Steve DeVries, Dan Goldie, Jim Grabb, and future USTA NorCal Hall of Famer Mackie McDonald.**
- **Continues to guide Michael Chang's career - in its fourth decade now - and the groundbreaking commercial portfolio he engineered across Chang's rise to becoming a global icon and “the Michael Jordan of Asia.”**
- **Following his time at Octagon, he delivered key corporate partnerships for the USTA/US Open and events on the ATP/WTA Tours, and served as Co-Tournament Director and EVP of the China Open, the largest combined Tour event in Asia.**