

Women's History Month 2013

Women's History Month, now celebrated annually in the United States, grew out of a weeklong celebration of women's contributions to culture, history and society organized by the school district of Sonoma, California, in 1979. The idea quickly caught on within communities, schools and organizations across the country. In 1981, the U.S. Congress made it official, passing a resolution establishing Women's History Week. Six years later, the event was expanded into the entire month of March.

USTA recognizes the many women who have made remarkable contributions. They rallied against the odds, have broken through barriers in what was at one time considered a male only sport and have set a true definition of inspiration for all players regardless of gender.

Nirupama Sanjeev

Nirupama was born in the Southern Indian town of Coimbatore and started playing tennis at the age of 5. She was influenced very much by her cousins, K.G.Suresh and K.G. Ramesh, and her brother Ganesh, all of whom played tennis at the national level. Her father K.S. Vaidyanathan was a cricketer who had played for Tamil Nadu in Ranji Cricket tournament coached her at the start of her career.



Nirupama Sanjeev

Her first tennis tournament foray was the National Under 12 tournament, where she reached the semi-final and went on to win her 1st National title in Under 14 age group at the age of 13. One year later in 1991, she won the National Women's title at age 14. She won the National Women's title in 1992-1996. In her younger days she did not have much competition in the Girls draw and she played in the Boys draw and won most of the titles.

In 1996, she moved to Luxembourg where she underwent training to play professional tennis. She turned professional at the age of 18 and started playing mainly in Europe. Nirupama shifted her base to Sarasota, Florida in 1997 where she trained with David O Meara who was the former coach of Leander Paes for two years. By then her ranking was in the 160s and in 1998 Australian Open, she became the first Indian woman in the modern era to feature and win a round at a main draw Grand Slam, beating Italy's Gloria Pizzichini. She has also won the Bronze Medal at the 1998 Bangkok Asian Games in Mixed Doubles, partnering Mahesh Bhupathi.

For the past five years, Nirupama has been on the expert commentary team along with Indian tennis legend Vijay Amritraj for ESPN-STAR sports, one of Asia's biggest TV networks for the four Grand Slams. In 2005, Niru opened the Niru Tennis Academy which she runs to this day. The academy is run out of four South Bay locations in California. It offers various tennis programming, private coaching and coaching camps.

She made a comeback in 2010 when she represented India to play in the Commonwealth Games 2010 and in Asian games in Guangzhou as a 33 year old. In 2010, Niru Tennis Academy received the ACES award for Most Outstanding Open Tournament. In 2011, USTA NorCal interviewed Niru on BlogTalk Radio- [listen now!](#)

Achievements:

- Member of Indian Olympic Tennis Squad in 2000 for Sydney Olympics
- Best WTA ranking of 132. Victories against top-50 world players like Magdaleena Maleeva, Sylvia Pliskhe, Mirjana Lucic, Prakusya and Janet Lee.
- Partnered World No. 1 Kim Clijsters in doubles in WTA event in Belgium.
- Played against Venus and Serena Williams in 2000 Australian Open doubles event.
- Played Wimbledon (from 1999-2001)
- Played U.S. Open (from 1999-2002)
- Played Australian Open (from 1999-2001)
- Played French Open (from 1999-2002)
- Played several other major tournaments around the world.
- No 1 Player for India for 10 years in Asian Games, Fed Cup, South Asian Federation Games and World Youth Cup. Led India to Asia Group 1 in Fed Cup.
- Bronze medalist in Asian Games 1998 in mixed doubles with Mahesh Bhupathi.
- Triple gold medalist at SAF games in Chennai 1995.