

## Tryouts for Amherst Thunder set

The Amherst Thunder softball program will be holding tryouts for its 12U and 14U teams from 9 a.m. to noon and its 16U and 18U teams from 1 to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 23, and Sunday, Aug. 24, at the Amherst Pepsi Center, 1615 Amherst Manor Dr. For more information, call 864-8657.

## World Team Tennis

# North grad Udwardia coaches NY Buzz to first title

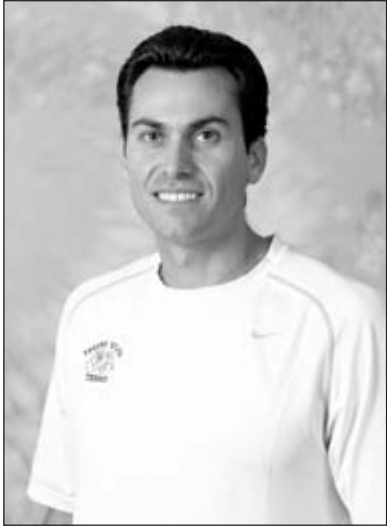
by PATRICK J. NAGY  
Reporter

Since joining World Team Tennis 14 years ago, the New York Buzz had made three WTT finals appearances but never won a championship.

Apparently, all they were missing was Jay Udwardia as their coach.

Udwardia, a 1993 graduate of Williamsville North, coached the Buzz, in their fourth WTT finals appearance, to a 21-18 win over the Kansas City Explorers for the organization's first World Team Tennis title. The championship match was held on July 27 at Allstate Stadium at Westfield Galleria in Roseville, Calif. The Buzz had previously appeared in the WTT finals in 1998, 2002 and 2007.

"It was real special for the players and organization," said Udwardia. "We had a good group of players who really connected. We had good team chemistry. Maybe we weren't the best players on paper, but we came together, played tough matches and won the big points when we needed them."



Jay Udwardia

The four players Udwardia coached were Nathan Healey, Yaroslava Shvedova, Gabriela Navratilova and Patrick Briaud.

The Buzz went 12-4 over the league, which started on July 3, but Udwardia felt the team's most satisfying wins came over Kansas City. Besides the final, the Buzz handed Kansas City its only other loss during the regular season, 23-17, on July 15 in Kansas City.

"Kansas City has a good team," said Udwardia. "On paper, we were the underdog, so to get those wins was nice."

The Buzz took an early 10-6 lead in the finals after wins by Healey over Dusan Vemic, 5-3, in men's singles; and Shvedova over Kveta Peschke, 5-3, in women's singles.

The Explorers answered back with wins from Rennae Stubbs and Vemic over Healey and Shvedova, 5-3, in mixed doubles; and Peschke and Stubbs over Navratilova and Shvedova, 5-3, in women's doubles.

Peschke and Stubbs are the fourth-ranked women's doubles team in the world. Stubbs would



Williamsville North graduate Jay Udwardia, middle, coached the New York Buzz to the organization's first World Team Tennis championship.

up with the best winning percentage out of any player in the semi-finals and finals and earned WTT MVP honors.

With the finals match tied at 16-16, Healey and Briaud defeated Vemic and Auckland, 5-2, in men's doubles to claim the title. The match ended when Vemic touched the net.

"We played nice and relaxed," said Udwardia. "It was a great match."

Udwardia wasn't clear on how he became the coach of the Buzz, only saying that he knew some people, and "it kind of worked out."

"It fits what I do right now," said Udwardia. "I coach a college team (Fresno State University). To coach a professional team, I felt pretty comfortable in that role."

Udwardia is entering his fourth year as head coach at Fresno State. The past three years, Fresno State has advanced to the West-

ern Athletic Conference finals.

Before coaching at Fresno State, Udwardia coached Drake University to their first league title in 11 years and was named 2004 Missouri Valley Conference Coach of the Year and was an assistant for four years at Northwestern University.

Prior to coaching, he played for a year-and-a-half on the Association of Tennis Professionals Tour, accumulating 26 ATP points, and was ranked in the top 800 in the world in doubles. He attended and played for the University of Arkansas on a full scholarship.

In high school, Udwardia played first singles at Williamsville North, earning three trips to the New York State Championships. He made three appearances in the Section VI final, winning the title in his junior year.

As a youth, Udwardia was ranked as high as No. 2 in the East in the 16s. Udwardia worked a lot with Todd Miller at Amherst Hills Tennis Club (now Miller Tennis Center).

"He was the nicest kid I've ever coached," said Miller, owner of Miller Tennis Center. "I brag about him all of the time. He was a quiet, soft-spoken player that no one ever knew about here because he didn't play local tournaments."

Miller said Udwardia was a competitor who always was determined to improve his game every chance he could get.

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**LEARN TO SKATE** — 2007 Williamsville North graduate Mike Jaszka, left, helps Brandon Lukomski, 6, during a learn-to-skate session last Saturday at the Amherst Pepsi Center Olympic Rink. Jaszka played JV hockey for North and plays for St. John Fisher College's club hockey team. The learn-to-skate program is sponsored by Amherst Youth Hockey and Dick's Sporting Goods for new skaters ranging in age from 4 to 14. The program will also be held from 9 to 9:30 a.m., 9:35 to 10:05 a.m. and 10:10 to 10:40 a.m. on Saturday, Aug. 23 and 30, at the Pepsi Center Olympic Rink.

Photo by John Rusac  
Purchase color photos at [www.BeeNews.com](http://www.BeeNews.com)

## New season of Buffalo Soccer Academy approaching

Buffalo Soccer Academy starts its fourth season of operation at Sahlen's Sports Park, 7070 Seneca St., Elma, beginning in September.

BSA is announcing their intention to become a "club" by fielding competitive teams for the upcoming year in addition to their well-respected training program. They envision the new component of their Academy as premier level training with a developmental club that still encourages players to participate with their travel teams.

Teams will compete in the U9-U16 boys and girls age groups and begin play this fall. The U9-12 will play games at Sahlen's and Total Sports Experience in Rochester as well as selected tournament play.

Because older players may be involved with scholastic soccer during this time, the U13 and older age groups will begin practice in November and play their games in the spring and early summer period.

Team members will receive full uniform kits, including two playing T-shirts, shorts, and socks bearing the BSA logo.

Training will be conducted twice per week during the season by BSA's highly experienced staff of coaches including Buffalo Sports Hall of Fame member Rudy Pikuzinski, NCAA All-American Henrik Ambarchian, and newcomer Aaran Lines, a former New Zealand National and Olympic soccer team player who most recently played professionally for the Rochester Raging Rhinos.

BSA's ongoing Academy Program of developmental training will run again throughout the season with four eight-week sessions beginning in September, November, January, and March. The same staff of proven coaches will be conducting that training as well.

A BSA open house will be held from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Sahlen's Sports Park.

For more information, visit [www.buffalosocceracademy.com](http://www.buffalosocceracademy.com).

## South fall sports starting dates set

With the fall sports season just around the corner, Williamsville South is gearing up by posting starting dates for its sports.

Here is a listing of each sport and the day, time and place of the first practice:

### Monday Aug. 25

Girls gymnastics — 9 a.m.-noon, South High (old gym)

Boys gymnastics — 9 a.m.-noon, South High (old gym)  
Boys golf — noon, Audubon Golf Course

### Thursday, Aug. 28

Modified football — 3-5 p.m., South High

### Tuesday, Sept. 2

Girls modified soccer — 4-5:30 p.m., Mill Middle

Boys modified soccer — 4-5:30 p.m., Mill Middle  
Modified field hockey — 4-5:30 p.m., Mill Middle

\*The South weight room will be open this summer from 9 to 11 a.m., Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and from 5 to 7 p.m., Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays.