



SNF 69th Annual - 2015

## Rockin' and Bowlin' in Milwaukee

"Still like that old time rock 'n' roll  
That kind of music just soothes the soul  
I reminisce about the days of old  
With that old time rock 'n' roll"  
— Bob Seger

So, let's reminisce, keglers! Who thinks they might know the answers to these SNF bowling trivia questions?

2006 was the last year that a men's team swept Team, Singles, Doubles and All Events.....guess who?

In 2012, South Bend's Lynda Wilson won the high game with what score? 222...266..247

In 2006 and 2009 this South Bend duo won the men's and women's All Events...Guess who.....

In 2006 The Farrell Women won the team event with what score --2960....2801...2968....

Larry Samarzich from Alhambra had a 300 game in 2001-- name the host city.

In 1995, Milly and the Blowfish won the Women's Team Trophy. Where are they from?

Email your answers to Tourney Chair, Zoran Krecak Krecakzoran@gmail.com  
Answers will be in the next American Srbobran.

And who will make SNF history this year? Who will have the best team name? Greatest shirts? You'll have to travel to Milwaukee to find out. Committee members Zoran Krecak, Rudi Petrovic, Dr. Milos Tomich, Mary-Ann Lindberg, Dona Sens, Zoki Miskov, John Plavsic, Rudy Vuckovic, and Stevo Petrovich are planning to make sure that your weekend is enjoyable. All the ingredients will be there—bowling, delicious food, great music, friends, family. You just need to put it all together. The deadline is fast approaching—don't be late! Look for your application in this *American Srbobran*. Those of us who have bowled in many tournaments know that this is a terrific weekend. Conversations frequently start with, "Remember that bowling tourney in St. Louis? In Kansas City? In Monroeville?" Put a team together and come on up to Milwaukee and make some new memories.

October is beautiful in Wisconsin and Milwaukee is a great destination. If you plan to get here during the day on Friday there are many attractions that the city has to offer. Our lakefront and world-renowned art museum with its Calatrava addition is stunning. Check it all out at visitmilwaukee.org. See page 15 for more details.

## WINDSOR INSPIRES GROWTH THROUGH CHILDREN AT 74TH ANNUAL SNF GOLF TOURNAMENT

by Nicky Lubich — SNF Golf Director

*Children represent one third of our population and one hundred percent of our future.  
Children are the world's most valuable resource and its best hope for the future.*

These are a few quotes we need to keep in mind as we get older and start to turn things over to our children in hopes that they will follow the groundwork that has been laid for them. Whether it is education, family values, or other areas, these are the things we hope they will learn from us and take into the next generation.

### GENERATION NEXT

The Windsor Golf Committee certainly understands the importance of this. Twelve young gentlemen ages 8-1, smiled and laughed and played golf for three days without a care in the world. Each morning I would have a quick visit with the boys, going over the daily routine before they went out. They were wide eyed and excited to get out and play, but one thing that impressed me was the respect and the politeness these boys showed, they all listened and were all quiet until the announcements were finished and they were told to head out to the course.

I know some of the parents of these young people; others I had just met, but if the future of the SNF and its events are handed down to kids like these, we will be fine! To the parents of these kids I say, great job, and please keep bringing them to these SNF events.

This year's Junior Golfers were Nicolas Popov, Vuk Maric, Marko Anderson, Aco Maric, Milan Bjedov, Luka Bjedov, Nikola Barach, Stefan Dobrich, Tyler Makaric, Steven Hill, James Hill, and Dane Kotic. Thank you boys, it was a joy having you.

### GREAT HOSTS

The warmth, graciousness, and hospitality that greeted this year's 144 golfers and guests from the Windsor people were second to none. The community took part whole-heartedly. Each night the dinners and music were great, not to mention the sight of friends seeing each other and sharing a few drinks. But topping things off was the dinner at Saturday night's Awards Banquet, it was a home run, what a meal! Well done Teta Djuja Krickich and kitchen staff, and to all of those from Windsor who put their efforts together to make this event a success: Thank you.

### MAJESTIC CONDITIONS

Finally, lets not forget about the golf tournament that was played at the Ambassador Golf Club, a links style course where the conditions were majestic and the view from the clubhouse, magnificent. The AGC welcomed our golfers each day with true

continued on page 9

# NOVAK DJOKOVIC

Honorary Member  
of the Serb National Federation  
Read about Milos Rastovic's  
Excellent Adventure  
Story Continues on Page 6

by Milos Rastovic

Novak Djokovic, ATP World No.1 Tennis Player from Serbia, was awarded an honorary membership in the Serb National Federation at the Western & Southern Open in Cincinnati, Ohio, August 20. Djokovic joins Mihajlo I. Pupin and Nikola Tesla, American-Serbian scientists and inventors, who became honorary members in 1929 and 1935. They are now part of the Serb National Federation, the only Serbian non-profit Fraternal Benefit Society in the United States, founded in 1901, which perpetuates Serbian ethnic, religious, and cultural tradition in North America.

Djokovic is the world's tennis champion and has played ATP Masters at the Western & Southern Open Tournament since 2005. It was his eleventh appearance there and he made it to the finals in 2008, 2009, 2011, and 2012.



# NOVAK DJOKOVIC

Honorary Member  
of the Serb National Federation



continued from page 1

As incredible a story as it is that Novak Djokovic joined Tesla and Pupin as an honored member of SNF, it isn't the most miraculous thing. If I didn't take you back to the beginning, you would miss the best part because the path to his honorary membership was not a short or easy one.

When the SNF decided to honor Djokovic, I was thinking about the best way to reach him and interview him after four years of unsuccessful tries because of his obligations and permanent tournaments. Finally, I searched the website of the Western & Southern Open where Djokovic would play in August, I got an idea to apply for a press pass, something we had already tried unsuccessfully. Press passes are not easy to get and the media directors wanted more information about my writing and the *American Srbobran*.

I told them that the *American Srbobran* is the oldest continuously published American-Serbian newspaper in the U.S. and that it's held in some prestigious historical libraries including the Library of Congress. We are a small newspaper, but a long-running and respected one—since 1906. When I sent them information about my writing and the *American Srbobran*, I was hopeful that they would approve it but there was no guarantee. We waited weeks to hear something from the media directors and it was a long process to get it, but they finally agreed.

I was excited when they approved my press credential, but I knew that it was still a long way from any interview with Novak Djokovic or even meeting him. To make matters more difficult, the hotels were already completely booked, and even though we had achieved the seemingly impossible task of getting a press pass, it looked like our journey to make Djokovic an honorary member was at another dead end. Suddenly, the night before the tournament was about to start, one of the nearby hotels had one room open up and SNF snatched it up immediately.

When I received my press credentials a week before the start of the tournament, I contacted the ATP World Tour Agents to request an interview with Djokovic. After several email requests and an agonizing wait, they told us that there was no possibility that I could get an interview with him, but I could attend the general press conferences with the other journalists and try to ask him a question there. However, my determination to meet Djokovic was much stronger than this response. Never underestimate the determination of a Serbian! Despite the fact that chances were very low to get an interview with him, we took a chance. To economize, I went by bus, leaving Pittsburgh at 3:00 am and rode eight hours to get to the tournament just in time to watch him practice before his first match. I was about to find out though that I wasn't the only Serbian following Djokovic to the tournament.

In the Media Center at the Linder Family Tennis Center in Cincinnati, I met Zoran and Stevan Zlojutro, Serbian

volunteers, who helped me get accommodated. They were a great help to me as they showed me my desk, gave me the media materials, and showed me around the stadium while letting me know how everything works. I am still grateful for all their assistance—meeting two Serbs immediately upon arrival made me feel more at home and much less nervous about what I wanted to accomplish there. I went to Court #15 where Djokovic was practicing for his first match against Benoit Paire that day. Around the court, there were a lot of fans who were watching the practice for his match. I took pictures of him for the *American Srbobran*, and was very excited. During Djokovic's first match, the stadium was crowded. Paire tried to break Djokovic's serve, but Djokovic took control of the match, and like a champion, he won.

At the Press Conference, after the match, Djokovic said: "You have to hold your focus together and try to just forget about what happened and move on. It wasn't easy, but I managed to make that break, 6-5, win the set... So, you know, it was a strange match all in all, but it's what — instructions I got from the coach was expect the unexpected, and that was the case... It's the first match in Cincinnati which holds different conditions than in Canada, so it took me time to really adjust." The press conference was very short and Djokovic and the ATP agents all got up to leave. At that moment, all I could think was that this was something that we at SNF had tried to do for four years, but had no success, suddenly it began to appear that there may actually be a chance—even if the ATP World Tour managers had told me no. I can't explain to anyone reading this how excited I was. I knew this was an all-or-nothing project and that everyone at SNF and all our members were counting on me to do everything I could to make this happen. I was determined not to let anyone down and decided I wouldn't take "no" for an answer from the ATP managers. I managed to catch him at the door and asked him in Serbian for an interview. The ATP World Tour Agent told me that I could not ask any more questions, but Djokovic showed a great graciousness, kindness, and appreciation of someone from the same homeland at that moment. He held up a hand to the ATP World Tour Agent and said "He is from Serbia and I want to hear him."

I explained who I am, from where I come and that I would like to have a short interview with him during the tournament. He told me very kindly that he would try to make time the next day after the match. His great simplicity, generosity, and kindness, things which are characteristics of all great players and men, was striking and reminded me how proud I am to be Serbian as well and is something all SNF members can feel proud about in themselves and their families.

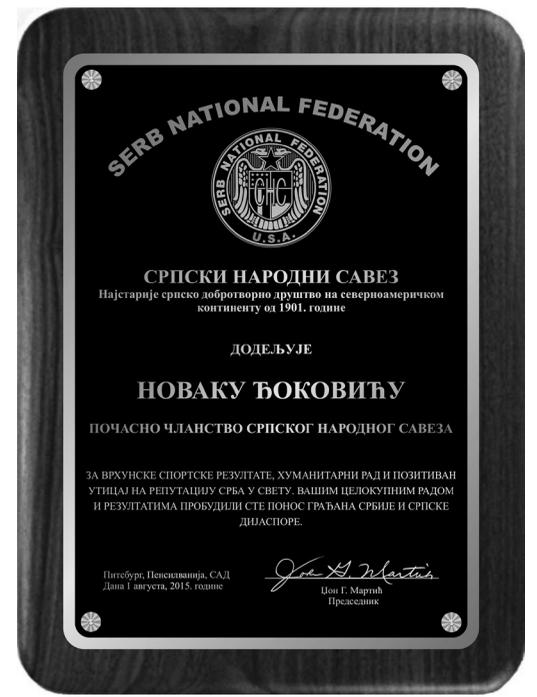
I again followed Djokovic to his practice, and later, to his match which he won against David Goffin by putting forth the best efforts of a champion. At the press conference, he was asked about his struggle during the match: "So it's not easy to really play some consistent tennis. You know, it's ups and downs. You have to make adjustments, steps, all the time... You need to work hard in order to get confidence. You can easily lose it. I mean, you're always playing mind games with yourself. You are

your biggest opponent always and you kind of encounter these particular mental challenges. And then, once you start thinking too much, once you starting allowing, the distractions getting in your way, it's is downhill ride from there. So you've got to try to play one point at time, stay in the present moment, influence whatever you can, and that is, you play as best as quality shot as you can, and then pray for the best." His answer to the question was something I could relate to at that time because it was the situation I was living in too in those days—trying to overcome the challenges, obstacles, and mental distractions by focusing on doing my best at each step toward getting an interview with him. Although he had said he would try to make some time for an interview with me, there were still no guarantees. He could have gotten busy, forgotten, or been too tired. The possibility that there would be no interview or honorary membership was still very real, even though we had come further than ever before toward our goal.

As before, I was perched in the front row in the Press Conference Room. After the Press Conference, Djokovic walked over, sat down beside me, and gave me a personal and exclusive interview for the *American Srbobran*. He has already proven himself as the best Ambassador of Serbia, I asked him about his promotion of a positive image of Serbia to the world. He said that everybody can give his/her contribution according to their abilities. If everybody does that, our country would be much better.

Then I asked him, "Although you are most widely known as a champion sports figure, you have also given back a lot through the Novak Djokovic Foundation by rebuilding schools after the floods in Serbia last year and sponsoring the Serbian Special Olympic team. I asked him if he could achieve anything else to benefit others, what would it be?"

"Currently the mission and assignment of our Foundation is to focus as much as possible on preschool education," he replied, "and we do everything to comply with our mission. We are aware of the fact that people who are our donators and benefactors show and recognize the work of our Foundation and also those who work of our Foundation. They expect to see results, and it is very important for the Foundation to have very clear position and vision, and to focus to one thing. We are focusing on education for the reason that I already stated. I think that a lot of people recognize the importance of education in a life of one man. For this reason, we have an obligation and responsibility to comply with that. How much the Foundation will develop and grow in the future and what projects we will work on, I still do not know. Currently we try to maintain this size and number of projects, and that number is great. We do not have a lot of people who work in the Foundation. The reason for that is not that we do not have enough offers or people who are ready to work for us, but we want to grow step by step. We want to be responsible for each donation that somebody gives to our Foundation, and to show our results, and gradually develop and accept projects for people who need help."



We went on to discuss how he feels about the fact that Serbian-Americans and the Serbian Diaspora worldwide view him as not just a sports hero, but also a cultural hero and what message he wants to send to all the Serbian-American youth who may be losing their connection with their cultural traditions and identity.

“I think that you touched very important question,” he responded, “about our identity, and preserving, maintaining, and nurturing the culture of our families and from the country we come from. I think that a lot of young people have an opportunity to try to give some contribution to their nation in their micro world. Of course, maybe they cannot do that on global level as I do, but everybody has their own possibilities. If each one of us makes an effort to focus on a positive promotion of our country, I think our country would be much better. I am aware that there have been a lot of failures and many people are disappointed in our country and political system. I am aware of that reality, but people should remember the fact that only twenty and some more years ago there was war, two wars in less than ten years. Our country is still recovering from all of that, and it is very difficult to resist capitalism and globalism which are very dominant in the system of social values. However, we should preserve and nurture our identity, and focus more on respecting the human values which reflect our culture throughout the many centuries of our existence. We are a very old nation who settled in the Balkan region in the seventh century. We have an extraordinarily rich history and we can be proud of that; we have a valiant spirit, we have never surrendered to great empires, we respect family values, and we have a rich culture. You are right; the priority of social values has changed because of globalization. People are less reliant on human qualities and characteristics, and more dependent on materialistic values. We should find a balance between them. We should show moderation in both directions. My message is: act with dignity, work very hard, and do not think that success will fall from heaven. Everything, even luck, must be deserved. Be kind to others. Behave toward others in the same way as you would like them to behave toward you. When you meet people, always proudly distinguish where you are from because people will appreciate that.”

During the interview, his positive energy, spirits, and genuineness were obvious when he spoke about Serbia and the importance of preserving our cultural heritage. At the end of the interview, I thanked him for his time and explained to him that the SNF is very grateful for all of his work. For this reason, on behalf of the SNF, we wanted to award him with a plaque commemorating his honorary membership of the SNF inscribed as follows:

**“The Serb National Federation Honors Novak Djokovic, Honorary Member of the Serb National Federation, for excelling in athletics, humanitarian work, and promoting the positive reputation of**

**Serbs in the world. All of your work and achievements awaken the citizens of Serbia and the Serbian Diaspora.”**

He was very appreciative and excited to receive this honor from SNF on behalf of the Serbian diaspora living in the U.S.A. and Canada. He didn't try to hide his pride in receiving such a tribute and indicated that he considered it a great honor and appreciated being included among such great Serbian members as Mihajlo I. Pupin and Nikola Tesla. “I will save this honorary like the eyes in my head,” he told me. I gifted him a book about Nikola Tesla, and he was very grateful and interested to read more about our scientist and inventor.

It was a moment that contained all other moments for me and I admit my voice was probably a little shaky as we said our goodbyes. I left the Press Room with only one thought: “God bless this wonderful player and great man.” I was walking around the stadium bursting with pride in my Serbian heritage and all the achievements that my people--our people have contributed to the world.

The next day, I went to his practice and quarterfinal match against Stan Wawrinka (5) whom he later beat. At the beginning of the press conference, the ATP Tour Agent said that we can ask in English and at the end in Serbian language. Djokovic said about his performance the following: “It was the best performance I had so far this week. Came at the right time against, you know, one of my biggest rivals and the guy I lost to last time we played in the finals of French Open. Obviously, I approached this match very seriously in trying to prepare myself and get myself in a good position to win. That's what I have done.”

I asked him about his fans and supporters in Cincinnati, and he responded: “Yeah, I mean, of course, I do need any kind of support from people from my country who live here in the United States, but also, people who are from United States or anybody who comes and follows tennis. You always like to have the crowd behind you because this can give you an extra motivation and edge and make you feel good on the court. I do feel I have quite good support, so I appreciate that.

“I'm very grateful for that.” After the press conference, Djokovic approached me in the first row to shake my hand and I congratulated him on his win. Like the best Ambassador for the Serbian people of the world, he again showed grace and his appreciation.

In the semifinal, Djokovic played against Alexandr Dolgoplov. Before the match, Alex Machaskee and George Voinovich, former United States Senator of Ohio, both SNF members, were on the court with players to flip the coin. It was exciting to see so many Serbian people together on the court. Djokovic beat Dolgoplov and went on to the final match against Roger Federer (2).

After the final match, Djokovic was awarded a finalist's trophy but no one seemed to believe he was second to anyone, his fans still crowded around him, cheering and congratulating him. As they clamored around him getting autographs, I met his coach, Boris Becker, shook his hand and congratulated him for a job well done. No one deserved the respect and admiration of the fans more than Novak Djokovic that day. Perhaps that is why most of us admire great athletes; they seem to be able to accomplish what would otherwise be impossible for the rest of us. However, he was not the only one to achieve something great at the Western and Southern Open that week.

What appeared to be impossible to all of us in the beginning actually came true through the hard work and determination of the SNF on behalf of all of our members and the larger Serbian Diaspora in the U.S.A. and Canada. One never comes away from a meeting with a great man without taking something, and it is my sincere wish that everyone reading this will consider his advice and find ways to make it a part of their own lives. If there was anything to learn from this time with Novak Djokovic it is this: we are all a part of the same fabric, regardless of whether we are born in Serbia or elsewhere in the world and by helping each other, preserving and respecting our cultural heritage, and standing up and saying we are proud to call ourselves Serbs we will always be stronger for it and can even achieve the impossible—that the success of one Serbian is a success for all Serbs and those achievements come more steadily and easily when we remember who we are and do what we can to help each other.

Those ideals are the foundation of the Serb National Federation because they are the foundation of our shared culture. No living person embodies those ideals more genuinely than Novak Djokovic, who will forever be more than just a sports hero to all the Serbs in the world. And it is the great honor of the Serb National Federation to count him as one of us.

Photos courtesy of Milos Rastovic, Alex Machaskee, Dragan Veselinov, and Elena Cappellaro



matches on Friday and Saturday, said Alex. Also pictured, on far right, is Alexander Dolgoplov.

1 FastScripts by Visit ASAP Sports at asapports.com, August 19, 2015  
 2 FastScripts by Visit ASAP Sports at asapports.com, August 20, 2015  
 3 FastScripts by Visit ASAP Sports at asapports.com, August 21, 2015.  
 4 FastScripts by Visit ASAP Sports at asapports.com, August 21, 2015.