Stiff competition expected at Tennis Classic

Nearly 200 tennis players will be competing in 11 divisions of doubles during the Tahoe Tennis Classic, July 30-Aug. 2.

This is the first year the 32-year-old event has been four days. Action begins at 7:45am Thursday at Zephyr Cove Tennis Club.

Bring a lawn chair or sit in the new bleachers – for free – to watch the most competitive tennis on the South Shore. Food and beverages will be sold for a nominal fee.

Mark Peterson and Randy Houston are the top seed in the Men's Century. This event requires the combined ages of the team add up to at least 100 years. South Lake Tahoe's Ryan Johnston and Tad Yukawa of Palm Desert will team together to defend Johnston's title in this category.

Tournament officials say the best team in this division is likely Dick Johnson, recently named to the National 70 team, and Terry Ward of St. Louis, Mo. However, locals Zeke Straw, director of tennis at Northstar, and Chris Beye will be a factor.



Mitch Rittiman goes for a volley in the 2014 Tahoe Tennis Classic against brothers Jim and Dennis Thorne. Photo/Carolyn E. Wright/Copyright

The Mixed B division has Stateline's Ray Fugitt and Tricia Ward as the top seed, with the Zephyr Cove mother-son team of Holly and Mitch Rittiman as another strong team.

Fugitt also will team with Darryl Whittaker, who splits his time between Park City, Utah, and Lake Tahoe, in the men's b as a top seed. Reno's Dennis Diehl and Jim Kumpel also will be contenders for the title in that contest.

The Mixed C division will field several competitive teams. Past champions Judy and Marc Spellman, who are from Florida but spend their summers on the South Shore, are back. Zephyr Cove Tennis Club Foundation President Carolyn Wright and her partner R.J. Gardner fill the top seed; they won the event in 2013.

Ernie's Coffee Shop owner Paul Bruso and his partner from Carson City, Carel James, will be formidable opponents. Pinewild's Melissa Jester and Reno resident Heck Meta, along with Grant Thompson and Lorraine Segala of the South Shore, also will be playing in the Mixed C division.

Some of the most competitive play comes in the Men's A division. Tahoe Donner Tennis Club tennis Director Ian Mindell returns with Ryan Johnston, while Reno's Kevin Strawn and Tony Matkulak are the top seed.

Partnered with Julie Chan, Sacramento's Nancy Bui-Thompson will celebrate her birthday by playing in the Women's A division. Defending champs and the mother-daughter team of Carol and Holly Tretten will again be the favorites in this division.

The Mixed A division will feature Kim Iliffe of Mill Valley with Ty Yarbrough of Texas. Iliffe's partner last year, Blake Beavers, also of Texas, is partnering with Reno's Holly Tretten. Andrew and Ann Stanley return after a long absence to try to dominate the Mixed A. ZCTC member John Wlcek teams with Sacramento's Cynthia Reddick to be likely title contenders.

In the Women's B division, South Shore's Joyce Youngs and Reno's Carol Tretten are the top seed. The tandem of local Sally Huttenmayer and Becky Smothermon from San Jose will be competitive. Denise Hallerbach from Reno will team with newcomer and Las Vegas resident Laurie Sabol.

The Women's C division could be interesting. Former champion Carolyn Wright and last year's consolation round winner Becky LeBuhn are the top seed. They will be hard pressed by Sheryl Herschman and Carel James. Melissa Jester and Judy Spellman will be a strong factor.

The Men's C will be competitive with returning champions Bart Tretheway from Chicago and his brother, Ray Tretheway, from Sacramento. Last year's consolation round winners Heck Mata and Frank Blankenship are anticipated to give the Tretheways a good fight. Long-time participant Rich Brown and partner Bill Gephart, both from Vallejo, merit strong attention in this division.

There also is the spirited Super Century event, in which the

combined ages of the team must equal a minimum of 130 years. Founder of the Tahoe Classic, Hersh Herschman, will pair with Tournament Director Bob Beutenmiller to vie for the No. 1 spot this year. David Lee of Rancho Mirage will team with Dick Johnson of Ballwin, Mo. Jim Bilicki of Rancho Mirage will partner with Ron Moore of Seal Beach, who was a semi-finalist in the Super Century Division last year. Bob Valdez and Lee Ruch represent the Reno-Carson area and are long-time Classic participants.

Zephyr Cove Tennis Club Foundation runs the tournament. Complete info about the Classic is **online**. The club is on Warrior Way off Highway 50 in Zephyr Cove.