

European Junior Championships 18 & under

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„Mister Switzerland“ and his old racket

Marco Keller

The European Junior Championships are every year a melting pot for youngsters and people with a bit more experience. Spectators have the unique chance to get a glimpse of the stars of the future but there are also former top players on site, working in different tasks. We introduce three of those stars of the past to you:

Giorgio Galimberti: The chief of the Italian girls was a force in the first



edition of the tournament back in 1994. He was the top-seed and reached the semifinals, where he lost in three sets to eventual champion Car-

los Moya. Even there, the quality in the draw was tremendous as both champions would later reach the throne in professional tennis. The female winner of that year went by the name of Martina Hingis. Galimberti later climbed up to position 115 on the ATP tour.

Stefan Kilchhofer: The assistant of the referee has plenty of practical tennis knowledge as well. Back in 2003 and 04, he played in Klosters himself, where he reached the round of 16 in singles and the quarterfinals in doubles. Joining forces with Janusch Graf he beat a certain Marcos Baghdatis of Cyprus there. Today, Kilchhofer's working days are even significantly longer. Together with the Austrian referee Kurt Gogg he does a great job in assuring the smooth running of the competition.

Jiri Novak: It was easy to give the Czech the nickname „Mister Switzerland“ back in his playing days. He won 7 singles titles on the ATP tour, 3 of them in Switzerland, 2 in Gstaad, 1 in Basel. In 2003, he beat in the final a newly crowned Wimbledon champion named Roger Federer. The for-



mer world number 5, who is responsible for the Czech boys in the Prättigau, will keep many positive memories of Klosters as well, also because he was able to fill a gap in his collection of racket models he used to play. He had never been able to find one particular Völkl racket until he saw - out of the blue - two of those in the Sportzentrum. Thanks to an effort of Hans Markutt he can now take them home. The remuneration for the tournament director: A precious bottle of Chateau Lafite. Cheers! Follow us on Twitter: EJCKlosters

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