



Name: Steve Johnson

Sport: Tennis

Biography:

Steve did what so many young people don't do. He honored his commitment to his school, his team and his coach when so many people told him not to. He came back to school to finish his career and get as close to graduating as possible. He could have turned pro and signed contracts but chose his team over his individual goals. In his first three years at USC, Steve helped his team win three NCAA championships while also standing out as a five-time All-American. He was the first sophomore team captain in USC tennis history and was an undefeated NCAA singles champion his junior year. Those achievements alone made for an impressive collegiate playing career. But Steve not only came back for his senior season, he came back as the best leader I have ever coached, he didn't lose a match in singles, and he lost only once in doubles. When we were having problems with one of our team members, Steve took him under his wing and made him great. At one point we had another player struggling and Steve suggested he play doubles with him. Steve not only made that player great, they would go on to earn the #2 seed at the NCAA Tournament. Steve's career statistics have never been seen before in men's college tennis. He was a seven-time All-American, a four-time NCAA team champion, a back-to-back NCAA singles champion, and he finished his career winning his last 72 singles matches in a row. The next best was Michael Pernfors, who finished his career with a 43-match win streak. The Sullivan award is about commitment to character, sportsmanship and excellence - Steve Johnson represents these attributes better than any other athlete I have coached. You will not find a better person or a tougher competitor.

