



Tennis Canada, in conjunction with Tennis Manitoba and Tennis Saskatchewan, announced Monday the joint hiring of Rufus Nel as senior director of the Prairie Tennis Alliance.

Nel, who was born and raised in South Africa, possesses an impressive tennis resume that includes more than 30 years of coaching experience in South Africa, Germany, California and



Canada. In his home nation he worked closely with Neville Godwin, a former Top 100 player on the world rankings, and while living in British Columbia he took a young Philip Bester under his wing and guided him to become a junior tennis phenom.

For the past 14 years Nel has worked at the Hollyburn Country Club in West Vancouver, starting as an assistant before moving up to head pro and then tennis director. In his time there, Hollyburn grew into a major club with programs available for children and adults of all ages. It also hosts three provincial tournaments annually and the Odlum Brown Vancouver Open which is an ATP and Sony Ericsson WTA Tour event. The club received the 2007 Tennis Canada and Tennis Professionals Association (TPA) Excellence Award for Facility of the Year. Nel will now move his entire family to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan to take on his new role.

"Tennis Canada is pleased to have Rufus on board in this newly formed position," said Hatem McDadi, vice-president of tennis development for Tennis Canada. "Rufus brings a wealth of tennis experience to the Prairies, and I am confident he will play a significant role in developing the sport in this region and building on the success currently in place. All partners are excited to have Rufus join our team."

As the senior director, Nel will work with Tennis Canada, Tennis Manitoba and Tennis Saskatchewan to lead all tennis development programs and activities in the prairies to help achieve Tennis Canada's mission of growing, promoting and showcasing tennis in Canada and developing a system that is capable of producing world-class players.

"I am very excited to be taking on this new position," said Nel. "I have been coaching for a very long time and am looking forward to a new challenge. I am thrilled to have been given the opportunity to build the game of tennis in the prairies."

Together, Tennis Canada and the provincial tennis associations will create a total of six customized joint regional staff positions whose mandate is to deliver growth, retention and excellence strategies which will be utilized at a national level over the next two to three years. In order to fulfill this mandate, Tennis Canada, Tennis Manitoba and Tennis Saskatchewan will work together to develop tennis in the region.

Tennis Manitoba and Saskatchewan become the third region to adopt a regional director joint staff position following in the footsteps of the Atlantic Tennis Alliance and Tennis BC.