

Caledon tennis player ends NCAA season atop Division

By Jake Courtepatte

While these days, tennis player Erin Routliffe may roll tide, her roots in the sport are grounded with the Caledon Tennis Club. The 20-year old earned the number-one overall ranking in NCAA Division 1 doubles last week for the University of Alabama Crimson Tide, along with her partner Maya Jansen.

Routliffe and Jansen are the first doubles team in the history of the program to reach number-one in the rankings in back-to-back seasons. What's more amazing is they were the first Crimson Tide team ever to earn the top spot in 2014.

They'll now be looking to continue making history in the NCAA Championships, which the pair handily won 6-1 and 6-0 over Georgia last season. And they seem destined to repeat this year.

Carrying a commanding 18-1 record for the dual match season, the pair have quickly climbed the NCAA rankings since only meeting for the first time in Routliffe's freshman season last year. Jansen was a sophomore at the time.

The two come from vastly different backgrounds ? the American Jansen had a tennis coach for a father, while her siblings shared her love for the sport from day one.

While Routliffe first picked up a racket at the age of six, two years after moving to her hometown of Caledon. She was born in New Zealand, while her parents were sailing around the world. Her first tennis event was a free competition for kids at the Caledon Tennis Club.

At 16, she spent time at the national training centre with the hopes of going pro after a successful collegiate career. Four years later, she's right on track while setting program records with the Crimson Tide.

?Maya Jansen and Erin Routliffe are undoubtedly the most potent, the most lethal and the most talented doubles team that's ever played at Alabama,? said head coach Jenny Mainz. ?When they make the decision that they're going to dominate on the court, good luck to whoever is playing them.?

Routliffe is also ranked 39th in singles competition.

Outside of collegiate play, Routliffe has already made waves on the junior international circuit. She has competed in all four junior Grand Slams, reaching the quarter-finals in both Wimbledon and the U.S. Open in doubles in 2012.

The dominating pair will be heading to Texas in mid-May in hopes of repeating as national collegiate champions.