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DENNIS VAN DER MEER AND HOWARD HEAD INDUCTED INTO INAUGURAL CLASS OF TENNIS INDUSTRY HALL OF FAME

Hilton Head Island, S.C. — Dennis Van der Meer and Howard Head are the first two inductees into the new “Tennis Industry Hall of Fame.” The announcement, by the Tennis Industry Association, was made in New York City just before the US Open at a special reception honoring the two men and their contributions to the sport of tennis.

“We’ve set the bar very high with our inaugural inductees into the Tennis Industry Hall of Fame,” said Dave Haggerty, president of the Tennis Industry Association (TIA), at the reception at the Grand Hyatt in New York on Aug. 24. “Dennis Van der Meer and Howard Head are two titans of tennis, well-deserving of this honor. Dennis’s life work has contributed to the betterment of tennis for those in the industry as well as players worldwide, and Howard was a true visionary who revolutionized both the tennis and ski industries.”

Van der Meer, born in 1933 in what is now Namibia in southern Africa, founded the Professional Tennis Registry (PTR), based in Hilton Head Island, S.C., in 1976 to certify tennis teaching professionals. Often lauded as “the greatest tennis teacher in the world,” having personally taught tens of thousands of recreational players and thousands of tennis teachers, Van der Meer’s influence in the game has touched millions of players. He also has coached world-class players on both the women’s and men’s professional tours.

Cited by the U.S. State Department for furthering international relations through sports education, Van der Meer also is a recipient of the Tennis Educational Merit Award from the International Tennis Hall of Fame. In 2004, he was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Greenwich, England, for his contribution to Sport Sciences in tennis education.

Howard Head, who was born in 1914 and died in 1991, first transformed the ski industry in the late 1940s when he designed a new type of ski that combined metal, plastic and plywood that was more durable, lighter and easier to turn. His new ski made it possible for almost anyone to enjoy the sport.

He founded the Head Ski Co., which later became Head Sports and diversified into tennis, producing a metal racquet in 1969. He then joined Prince Manufacturing, where he first helped to redesign and improve a tennis ball machine, then later designed and patented a racquet with a 20 percent larger head, which enlarged the sweetspot and made

the game easier for millions of players. The new frame also was quickly adopted by players on the pro tours.

“At this inaugural event, we’re starting at the top,” said former New York City Mayor David Dinkins, speaking on behalf of Van der Meer, who was present at the reception to accept his award. Dinkins, an avid tennis player and fan, is a member of the board of directors for both the U.S. Tennis Association and the PTR.

Ray Benton, the president of KSB Ventures and the co-founder of the senior tour for men’s professional tennis—and a longtime friend of Head and his wife, Marty—accepted the award on behalf of Head. “You couldn’t have picked two more deserving people,” said Benton.

The Tennis Industry Hall of Fame recognizes those individuals who have made a significant impact to the sport, from the 1960s to the present. Nominations are made in four categories: inventors, founders, innovators and contributors. For more information, or to submit nominations, visit www.tennisindustry.org/hof.

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The Tennis Industry Association, the not-for-profit trade association for tennis, is THE unifying force in the tennis industry whose mission is to promote the growth and economic vitality of tennis by working closely with the USTA and industry partners to develop and implement initiatives to increase tennis participation. Core TIA activities include TIA/USTA Tennis Health Index, Consumer and Trade Research, Growing Tennis System including Tennis Welcome Centers, Cardio Tennis, 50-50 Co-op Program, Quickstart Tennis and TennisConnect.org. For more information, please visit TennisIndustry.org or GrowingTennis.com or call the TIA at 866-686-3036.

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