Keowee Key Pro Tennis Tournament

BY BROOKS GALLMAN
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SALEM — Beginning today and lasting through Sunday evening, the place to be if you want some top-flight tennis action is at Keowee Key.

For the sixth year in a row, the community's Tennis Association is putting on its annual Keowee Key Pro Tennis Tournament, this time organized by tennis director George Esqueda, who's about to put his first year with the association behind him.

And all signs point to the tournament being a good one.

"It's going great," Esqueda said. "I've organized many, many tournaments. This is a little different because it's only eight pros, which is great. There are eight guys, including myself, that are tennis directors or pros here in the Upstate including Greenville, Spartanburg and Anderson."

Though it's Esqueda's first year organizing the event, he's not too worried about it and is actually looking forward to hosting.

"I'm not nervous," he said. "I love a running tournament. That's one of my passions. I enjoy the pressure of putting together a good event. I'm more excited to see how it all turns out. This is my first tournament of this type, and I'm more excited than nervous."

As one of the eight pros taking part in both tournaments — doubles and singles — he's also confident in his game.

"I've been in the gym practicing, working out, lifting weights and running on the treadmill for about three months now, so I'm in pretty good shape," Esqueda said. "I feel pretty confident in my game."

All things considered though, the most important part of the whole event is showing off what Keowee Key has to offer, both as a community and a tennis association.

"I think showcasing Keowee Key as a successful tennis program and organizer of tennis events (is the most important thing)," Esqueda said. "I think people will get to see the attention to detail that Keowee

SEE KEOWEE KEY, PAGE B5

KEOWEE KEY: Set for tennis tourney

FROM PAGE B1

Key puts into every little aspect of the event. From the hospitality to sponsors, to great food, it all has a unique touch.

"We invite anybody who is curious about seeing some good tennis or coming to Keowee Key," Esqueda said. "Everybody's welcome to come and watch."

The tournament kicks off today beginning at 3 p.m. with a clinic for anyone interested.

The eights pros participating in the tournament will offer their services for an hour, consisting of three-20 minute sessions with three different pros, for anyone that signs up. A clinic will also be held at the same time on Saturday.

The play begins tonight at 6 p.m. with the doubles tournament, which should wrap about 9 p.m.

On Saturday, the quarterfinals of the singles tournament get under way at 6 p.m., with the semi finals to follow. The finals are set to begin at 6:30 p.m. on Sunday evening, with a total purse of $5,000 on the line.

ready to crank up



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In this June 25, 2010, file photo, then-Keowee Key tennis pro Andy Lake plays a backhand during the Keowee Key Pro Tennis Invitational. George Esqueda will represent Keowee Key as the host pro this year.