ICL Academy’s Dominant US Open Run Showcases the Future of Tennis

From Marcel Latak’s junior championship to Iva Jovic’s electrifying run, ICL Academy students and graduates made an extraordinary impact at the 2026 US Open.



Marcel Latak, 2026 US Open Junior Champion

FLUSHING MEADOWS, NY, ITALY, September 14, 2026 / EINPresswire.com/ -- The 2026 US Open became a showcase for the remarkable depth of tennis talent within the ICL Academy community.

Across the professional and junior draws at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, current ICL students and recent graduates competed on one of the biggest stages in the sport — winning a Grand Slam title, making deep runs through the junior draws, battling some of the best players in the world and demonstrating the strength of a tennis community that now stretches from promising juniors to rising professionals.

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>
> *Kirk Spahn, ICL Academy Founder*

At the center of ICL’s remarkable tournament was ICL 12th grader Marcel Latak, who captured the US Open Boys’ Junior Singles Championship while also advancing to the Boys’ Junior Doubles Final.

The unseeded American put together an extraordinary run in New York, culminating in a dramatic three-set victory over No. 1 seed and French Open champion Guto Miguel in the singles final. Latak prevailed 3-6, 7-5, 7-6, winning an epic deciding tiebreak 15-13. He became the first American boy to win the US Open junior singles title since Taylor Fritz in 2015.

His success was emblematic of a much larger story unfolding throughout Flushing Meadows: ICL

Academy students and graduates were everywhere.



Iva Jovic at the 2026 US Open


Jack Kennedy at the 2026 US Open

Iva Jovic Takes Another Major Step

Among the most compelling stories of the tournament was the continued rise of 18-year-old ICL graduate Iva Jovic, whose remarkable 2026 season has taken her to a career-high No. 14 in the WTA singles rankings.

Jovic delivered one of the most memorable matches of the US Open in the third round, battling friend and fellow rising star Alexandra Eala for more than three hours inside Arthur Ashe Stadium.

The two young stars traded momentum throughout a grueling three-set battle before Jovic finally prevailed, 7-5, 3-6, 7-5. She produced 44 winners in a match that tested both players physically and emotionally.

After the match, Jovic fell to the court overcome with emotion — an unusual display for a player known for her composure. The victory sent her into the fourth round for a marquee all-American matchup against two-time Grand Slam champion Coco Gauff. Gauff ultimately ended Jovic's run, 6-1, 6-4, but the tournament provided another indication that Jovic has established herself among the most exciting young players in professional tennis.

At only 18, she had already reached the Australian Open quarterfinals earlier in the season and continued to build on a remarkable trajectory that has carried her into the upper reaches of the WTA rankings.

ICL Makes Its Presence Felt Throughout the Junior Draws

The success extended deep into the junior competition.

Chukwumelije Clarke produced an outstanding run to the Girls' Junior Singles Semifinals, becoming the final American remaining in the girls' draw before pushing No. 1 seed Xinran Sun to three sets in the semifinal.

Jack Kennedy, a recent ICL graduate, reached the Boys' Junior Singles Quarterfinals, establishing himself among the final eight players in the tournament.
In doubles, Safir Azam advanced to the Boys' Junior Doubles Semifinals alongside Damir Zhalgasbay before falling to eventual finalists Latak and Tanishk Konduri in a third-set match tiebreak.

Vihaan Reddy and Kamil Stolarczyk also reached the boys' doubles quarterfinals with their respective partners.

And brothers Gavin Goode and Griffin Goode had the unforgettable opportunity to compete together in US Open junior doubles — sharing a Grand Slam court as teammates.

The ICL presence included Maggie Sohns, Ireland O'Brien, Allison Wang, Vihaan Reddy, Kamil Stolarczyk, Isabelle deLuccia, Isha Manchala, Chukwumelije Clarke, Hannah Ayrault, Jordyn Hazelitt, Kennedy Drenser-Hagmann, Michael Antonius, Safir Azam, Gavin Goode, Griffin Goode, Anna Kapansdze, Brooke Wallman, Sarah Ye and Eric Muller.

They were joined by an impressive group of ICL graduates competing and continuing their development at the highest levels of the sport, including Jack Kennedy, Iva Jovic, Noah Johnston, Akasha Urhobo, Charlie Cooper, Clervie Ngounoue and Benjamin Azar.

For ICL Academy Founder Kirk Spahn, the sheer scale of the school's presence at the US Open represents something far greater than the results of a single tournament.

"Seeing so many ICL students and graduates competing at the US Open is incredibly meaningful because it represents exactly why ICL was created," said Spahn. "These young athletes are pursuing excellence at the highest level of their sport without having to compromise the importance of their education or their development as people. Marcel winning a US Open championship is an extraordinary achievement, but what makes this moment especially powerful is seeing an entire community of ICL students and alumni competing, supporting one another and demonstrating what is possible when education is built around the ambitions of exceptional young people."

A Graduation Moment on Live Television

Perhaps the most touching ICL moment of the US Open did not happen during a match.

It happened live on the Tennis Channel.

Recent ICL graduates and close friends Iva Jovic and Jack Kennedy were presented with their ICL Academy diplomas and graduation caps on live television — an emotional celebration of two young athletes who had successfully completed high school while simultaneously pursuing tennis careers at the highest level.

For Jovic, the moment represented much more than receiving a diploma.

“The entire ICL family has been there for me throughout my entire career, which has been going like a roller coaster the past couple years,” Jovic said. “It means a lot to be a part of a school and an institution that wants to see me perform not just in the classroom, but succeed in life and in my passions. Tennis is a big part of who I am, and they understand that. They follow all my results and they want the best for me. So I feel like I have a family for the rest of my life through ICL.”

Kennedy, who joined ICL as a freshman, spoke about how important that support had been during the demanding years of junior tennis.

“ICL has been amazing not only to me, but to everyone who is part of it,” Kennedy said. “I started freshman year of high school, and ICL has just done a great job with the flexibility for practice and travel. Tennis is a grueling schedule, and they really make you feel like you’re at ease and comfortable. They don’t only want you to succeed in academics; they want to help make you a great person as well.”

Seeing Jovic and Kennedy put on their graduation caps together at the US Open brought ICL’s educational philosophy to life.

The two graduates had spent years balancing schoolwork with practices, tournaments, international travel and the enormous pressure that accompanies elite junior tennis. Their graduation represented proof that those ambitions did not have to come at the expense of their education.

Built Around the Realities of Elite Tennis

For young players pursuing professional tennis, the traditional school model can create enormous challenges.

Training sessions can consume hours every day. Tournaments may require weeks of travel. Matches change schedules unexpectedly. Recovery and conditioning are essential. A player can compete in California one week, Europe the next and New York shortly thereafter.

ICL Academy’s hybrid model was created for students whose ambitions require a different approach.

The school combines rigorous academics, live instruction, personalized support and flexibility, allowing young athletes to remain engaged in their education while pursuing demanding training and competitive schedules.

But flexibility is only one part of the equation.

ICL's goal is not simply to make school more convenient for elite athletes. It is to surround students with a community that understands what excellence requires — and can help prepare them for the opportunities and challenges that come with it.

Learning From Champions

For ICL's tennis students, that community includes an extraordinary network of champions and accomplished professionals who provide mentorship and curriculum support.

ICL students have access to the experience and perspective of some of the most accomplished names in tennis, including Monica Seles, Novak Djokovic, Michael Chang, Bob and Mike Bryan, Andy Roddick, Michael Mmoh, Tommy Haas, Sam Querrey, Grigor Dimitrov, Kim Clijsters, VasekPospicil, Dominik Hrbaty, and Frances Tiafoe, among many others.

Their involvement goes beyond inspiration.

Lessons learned through decades of Grand Slam competition, professional training, pressure, preparation, resilience and life on tour are woven directly into the educational experience at ICL Academy. Their insights help inform curriculum and provide students with perspectives that simply cannot be replicated in a traditional textbook.

For an aspiring professional tennis player, learning about resilience takes on a different meaning when those lessons are informed by athletes who have stood across the net from the best players in the world.

Lessons about preparation, leadership, sportsmanship, mental toughness, personal branding and navigating a professional career become even more meaningful when connected to the real-world experiences of champions who have lived them.

It creates an environment where a young tennis player is not simply attending a school that accommodates the pursuit of greatness.

They are learning within a community that understands it.

More Than a Tournament

That community was on full display throughout the 2026 US Open.

It could be seen in Chukwumelije Clarke reaching the semifinals. In Safir Azam making the doubles semifinals. In Jack Kennedy advancing to the quarterfinals. In the Goode brothers stepping onto a Grand Slam court together.

It could be seen in Iva Jovic battling for more than three hours beneath the lights of Arthur Ashe Stadium and continuing her emergence as one of the most exciting young players in professional tennis.

It could be seen when Jovic and Kennedy received their diplomas and graduation caps on live television.

And it was impossible to miss when Marcel Latak lifted the US Open Boys' Junior Singles trophy.

Taken individually, each was a remarkable achievement.

Taken together, they told a much bigger story about ICL Academy — a community where elite young athletes can pursue extraordinary goals while receiving an education designed to prepare them not simply for their next tournament, but for everything that comes after it.

At the 2026 US Open, the next generation of tennis was on display. And throughout the tournament, ICL Academy was at the center of it.

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