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My Meeting with Tennis Pro

# Robby Ginepri

by Brian Dong

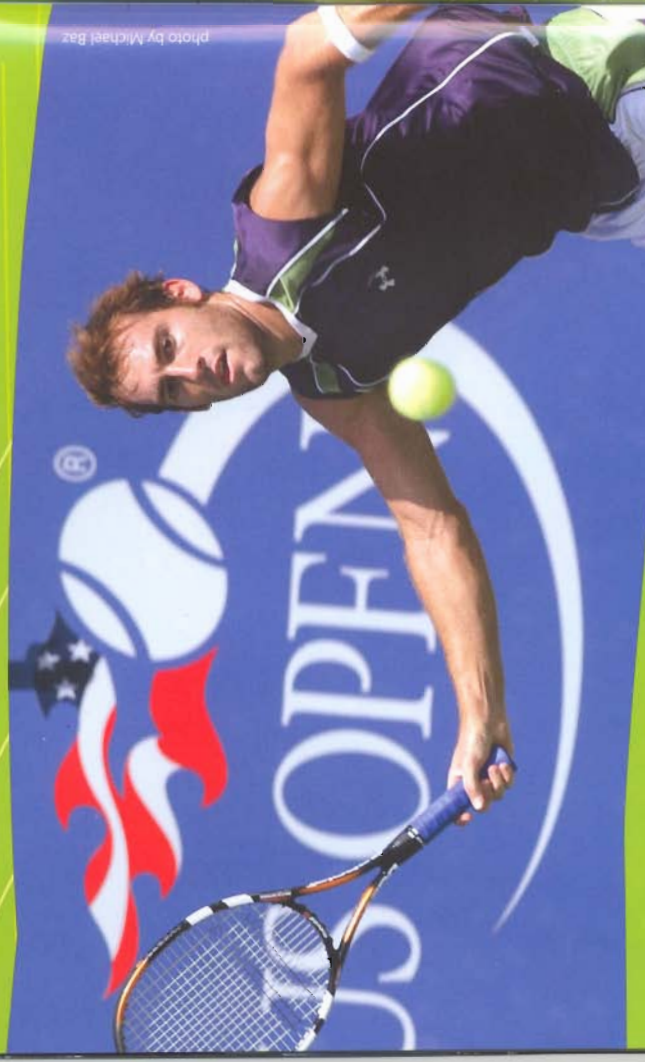


Photo by Michael Baz

Everybody wonders what it would be like to be the best in the world at something - an athlete, a scientist, a chef - so I was excited to meet with Robby Ginepri who has been ranked among the top 15 tennis players in the world.

**G**inepri, who makes his home in Marietta, Georgia, competes with top tennis pros around the world. I was fortunate to be able to talk with Robby Ginepri and learn about his journey to become one of the best.

**Brian:** *We all know that the best of the best tennis players can win even when they are having an off day. As a top pro, how do you win on an off day?*

**Robby:** Luckily, bad days don't happen too often. Going into a game you should be well prepared. The most important thing at the pro level is to hold your serve. If an opponent breaks your serve, it's kind of tough to get back on the ball. A big part of it is mental. So if you're not playing well, you have got to mentally hang in there and hope things will change for the better.

**Brian:** *What are your least favorite and most favorite types of opponents to play against and why?*

**Robby:** I didn't used to like to play against lefties. Lefties are usually tough with the serve. The ball comes at you from kind of a different angle.

**Brian:** *How about a favorite player?*

**Robby:** I like playing serve and volleyers, someone like Taylor Dent. It's fun to play him. To make a quick point, you have to get the ball down low and past them.

**Brian:** *What part of your game do you spend the most time working on and how?*

**Robby:** Training practice is a couple hours of drill in the morning and then I try to play a set in the afternoon or vice versa. In competitions, we usually play enough matches to know if something is wrong with our swing or our serve. Then we go to the practice court to get it right. I spend time on my serve and practice a lot of forehands.

**Brian:** *During the training season, how many hours a day do you spend on the court?*

**Robby:** I try to spend about four hours a day on the court and an hour of conditioning off court. I eat a good meal and get a good night's sleep.

**Brian:** *How important was cross training for you? I know that before making tennis your focus you played soccer, baseball, basketball, and ran track to mention a few.*

**Robby:** I loved playing all different sports growing up. I think I've been in tennis as long as I have because I didn't burn out. By playing a mixture of sports, I realized which sport I really wanted to do.

**Brian:** *You had a successful junior tennis career, so what did it take for you to move through the junior rankings to eventually become one of the top players in the world?*

**Robby:** I think just believing in yourself. Going to a tournament you say to yourself "Oh man! I'm playing the #4 seed. He must be really good." But that's not always true. Mostly they've played more tournaments. You just got to believe in yourself and know you can beat anybody there.



Brian Dong, Oconee County H.S., Senior