

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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Contact: Carol Weyman
www.mcbtennis.org

Information: (214) 754-7065
Email: Cartennis@aol.com

“LITTLE MO” NATIONALS

presented by



CHAMPIONS CROWNED

Dallas... The 18th annual “Little Mo” Nationals presented by Babolat was held at the Austin Tennis Academy in Austin, Texas from October 16-19, 2015. The event was hosted by the Austin Tennis Academy staff, players, and volunteers. The Tournament Director was Brian Notis and Assistant Tournament Director was Deb Cahill.

The “Little Mo” Nationals is the only national tournament for boys and girls ages 8, 9, 10, and 11 and we were excited to add the 12’s division this year. It is the culmination of the yearlong “Road to the Little Mo Nationals” circuit featuring the youngest and brightest stars in junior tennis. The “Little Mo” tournaments are designed to be fun and provide good competition for the younger player at the sectional, regional, and national level.

The “Road to the Little Mo Nationals” began in the spring with a “Little Mo” tournament held in 20 sections. (Approximately 1,500 youngsters participated at the sectional level.) The quarterfinalists from each age division at each sectional advanced to one of the four “Little Mo” Regionals held in the summer. The semifinalists from each age division at each Regional advanced to the “Little Mo” Nationals. The winner of each division was crowned “Little Mo” National Champion. Sportsmanship and Kindness awards were also given.

Boys 8 – Roman Sancilio (Richmond, Virginia)
Boys 9 – Nathan Blokhin (Fort Lauderdale, Florida)
Boys 10 – Andrew Salu (San Diego, California)
Boys 11 – Christian Gonzalez (Burleson, Texas)
Boys 12 – Alexander Chang (Berkeley, California)
Sportsmanship Award Winner: Owen Medrano (Boca Raton, Florida)
Kindness Award Winner: Christian Gonzalez (Burleson, Texas)

Girls 8 – Thea Latak (Burr Ridge, Illinois)
Girls 9 – Natasha Rajaram (Los Altos, California)
Girls 10 – Ria Bhakta (Saratoga, California)
Girls 11 – Ashlyn Krueger (Keller, Texas)
Girls 12 – Valentina Loretz (Katy, Texas)
Sportsmanship Award Winner: Paulina Loretz (Katy, Texas)
Kindness Award Winner: Kinna Graham (Austin, Texas)

The Opening Ceremony was held on Friday afternoon whereby players paraded on court with their state flag. Luke Sosobee and Alexandra Gualario sang the national anthem. Cowboy Doug entertained the players and parents with his trick roping skills and Cindy Brinker Simmons, daughter of the late Maureen "Little Mo" Connolly, was the guest speaker.

In addition to the tennis, the players enjoyed a fun pizza party with laser tag, foam pool, video games, music, and a fire show on Saturday evening at the Austin Tennis Academy. Carol Weyman, MCB Executive Vice-President of the Maureen Connolly Brinker Tennis Foundation and "Little Mo" Tournament Chairman, presented the trophies. The "Little Mo" Nationals is one of the many events the Maureen Connolly Brinker Tennis Foundation organizes to promote junior tennis development.

Maureen "Little Mo" Connolly was the top ranked woman's player in the world in the early 1950's, winning Wimbledon in 1952, 1953 and 1954. In 1953, she became the first woman (at age 18) to win the Grand Slam. She is still the youngest player and the only American woman to have ever won the Grand Slam. Only five players in the history of tennis have achieved this significant tennis milestone. She won nine successive majors from 1951-1954. "Little Mo" died of cancer in 1969 at the age of 34 in Dallas, Texas.

For the full results, follow this link: <http://www.usptaplayer.com/tournaments/862/>.