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Kommireddi Young but Dominant

Sophomore compiled third most singles wins in a season in 2005-06

Christian Lemon - GoBlueRaiders.com

For 10 years from 1985-94, there was no woman tennis player in the world more dominate than Steffi Graf. Graf set records winning tournaments as well as streaks of winning majors. Like her hero Steffi Graf, Middle Tennessee woman's tennis player [Pooja Kommireddi](#) is creating a collegiate tennis career based on total domination.

Kommireddi is a sophomore Business Administration major at Middle Tennessee. In her freshman year, Kommireddi posted a 27-5 mark in singles matches over both the fall in spring seasons as well as an 18-2 doubles record. Perhaps even more impressive was her 12-match winning streak to finish the season.

Kommireddi talked about the pressure of playing with the streak, saying, "You can't let the pressure of the streak get to you. I can look at it as confidence or pressure. I like confidence. They have to come and beat me," she said.

When all was finished she ended her freshman season with a winning percentage of .844, the second best in Middle Tennessee history.

A large part of her success has been because of second year women's coach and former University of Tennessee All-American, Alison Ojeda.

"She is a player and has been their. She knows what she is talking about, and we all respect this," said Kommireddi.

"Alison has really helped me magnify my strengths and cover up my weaknesses. With Alison, you have to be ready to work hard. She knows what she is doing."

After her strong campaign last year, Middle Tennessee women's tennis is facing one of its most competitive schedules to date.

"We are playing some very good schools this spring," Kommireddi said. "The next two tournaments this fall should help me to improve for the spring."

Kommireddi first began playing tennis in her native India.

"My family taught me the game. Both my granddad and dad were big tennis players and had me playing since I was young," she said.

In India, Kommireddi was a very competitive player in the IPSC (Indian Public School) Games. In 2002, she won the Under 16 individual tournament. Then she was the Under 18 individual winner in 2003 and was runner-up in 2004. While competing in the IPSC Games, Kommireddi was also gaining international experience playing on the international junior circuit.

"One of the proudest moments in my career came on the junior circuit in Thailand when I beat Top 100 internationally ranked player Mary Anderson," Kommireddi said.

After graduation, Kommireddi was at a cross roads.

"I had plans of coming to the United States to play tennis, but things fell through for me. Then I talked to a friend of mine from India who told me about Middle Tennessee."

After finding her collegiate home in Murfreesboro, Kommireddi had to adjust to life in a completely different country and culture.

"The academics were not the hard part. It was hard leaving my family and having to find my way in a country very different from mine. It can make you very homesick," she said.

"Tennis helped me adjust a lot. The training was a lot more rigorous and I really struggled with the extended weightlifting. I was not used to this. This has, however, made me a stronger player.

"Everything so far has helped me a lot. Alison has us doing the right thing and everything is in place," Kommireddi commented.



Sophomore Pooja Kommireddi has been a dominant force for the Blue Raider tennis team in her short time in Murfreesboro, posting 27 singles and 18 doubles victories last year. (Bradley Lambert)

In her short time at Middle Tennessee, Kommireddi is creating a dominant collegiate career like her childhood hero Steffi Graf.

"Steffi was very hardworking and is someone I continue to learn from."

Only in her second year for the Blue Raider tennis team, things are only getting better for Middle Tennessee's young tennis ace.

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