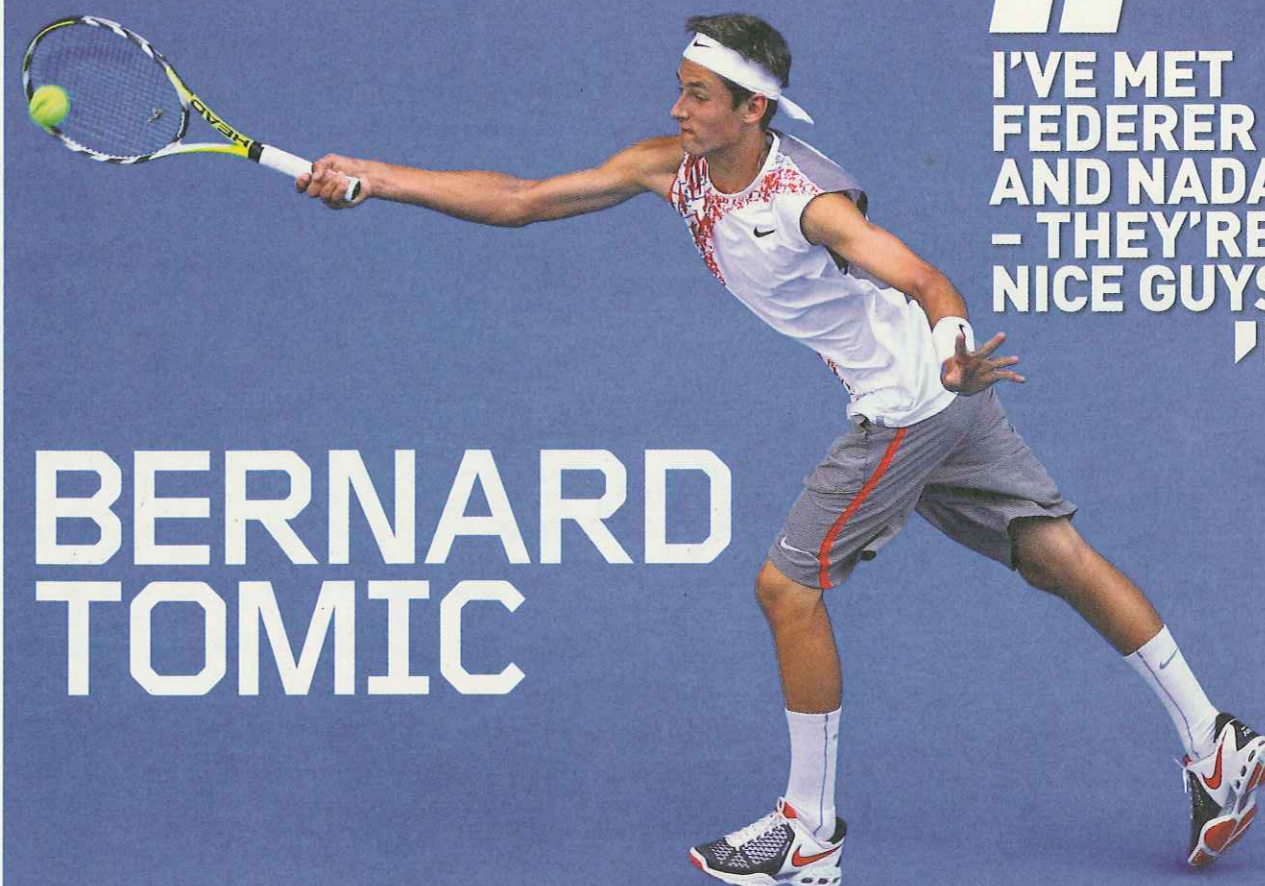


RISING STARS

BERNARD
TOMIC

“ I’VE MET
FEDERER
AND NADAL
– THEY’RE
NICE GUYS ”

Bernard Tomic may be the youngest ever winner of the Australian Open Boys’ title and more than handy with a tennis racket, but his vocabulary needs a bit of work... yeah

FAST FACTS



BERNARD TOMIC
Born October 10 1992
Birthplace Stuttgart, Germany
Lives Gold Coast, Australia
Height 5ft 11ins
Plays Right-handed
Career highlight
 2008 Australian Open
 Boys’ Champion

**When did you hit your first tennis ball?**

“I was seven and a half. We had a tennis court at home, and my dad bought me a racket from a garage sale for 50 cents. So I started playing, and found that I was pretty good.”

When did you realise you were good enough to turn professional?

“At one of the first tournaments I entered, I came in the top five out of about 60 kids. It was really fun, too, so I played a couple more tournaments and won a few and... yeah.”

Are you enthusiastic about training, then? Do you wake up in the morning with a smile on your face and a spring in your step?

“Yeah, it’s a normal day’s work really. I want to get ready for the clay-court season in Europe. I’m not very good on clay; I haven’t played on it that much, and there aren’t many clay courts in Australia. Hopefully I can train up well, though.”

What was it like to play in the juniors and the seniors at this year’s Australian Open?

“The older guys are more powerful than the

juniors, and have much bigger serves. It’s the experience and the guys’ strength that makes the real difference. I got to the second round in qualifying, though, after beating a guy ranked 140 in the world. The guy who beat me was ranked 278.”

Who would you most like to face on court?

“Maybe in the future, Rafael Nadal. It would be tough, especially on clay, but if I played well I could put up a good challenge. Roger Federer and Nadal are pretty much everyone’s favourites; I like their demeanour on court and they’re good role models. I’ve met Federer before and had pictures taken with Nadal. They’re nice guys.”

Lots of people have been tipping you as the ‘next big thing’. Do you feel any pressure?

“Kind of, yeah, but I focus on my tennis when I’m on court and leave those people behind. I read some of the press, now and then. It’s alright, I don’t mind it... yeah.”

Do your friends get jealous that you get so much time off school?

“No. If they did what I do, they’d see that it’s boring. The plane trips are so bad; I had a

PSP, but it broke. I’ve got a PS3 that I play here at home, though.”

Oh, right. Can you see yourself winning a Grand Slam title one day?

“Well I’ve already won half of one – the junior Australian Open. The other half is the hardest, though... yeah.”

And when that day comes, what’s the plan for your winnings?

“I don’t really care. I just want to win a slam and have that feeling, but it’s a long road. I have to develop – I’m young and still have lots to learn and... yeah.”

Your dad coaches you – how do you get on?

“Yeah, he’s coached me since I started. It’s not that bad, I can say what I like to my dad.”

A British junior got sent home from the Australian Open for forgetting his rackets – what advice do you have for him?

“Let the past go away, yeah, and move on.”

SARAH SHEPHARD

Bernard Tomic is represented by IMG and senior client manager Lawrence Frankopan