

CELEBRITY TENNIS FANS

# Big names enjoy tennis in desert

Christopher Knight, Dr. Phil take in Pac-Life tennis Saturday

BY LEIGHTON GINN  
THE DESERT SUN

**INDIAN WELLS** — Christopher Knight, best known as Peter Brady on “The Brady Bunch” and for his own reality show on VH1, said that as a frustrated tennis fan in L.A., he was incredibly impressed with his return to the Pacific Life Open.

Knight, actress Donna Mills of Knotts Landing, Michael Weatherly of NCIS and talk show host Dr. Phil, were celebrity guests in the City of Indian Wells box for Saturday’s matches.

Lea Goodsell, owner of the Goodsell Group, arranged for the celebrities to attend the matches. Also in attendance was tennis legend Rod Laver and LPGA star and reigning Kraft Nabisco Championship winner Morgan Pressel.

Knight was a big tennis player and fan many years ago, coming to this tournament when it was at Hyatt Grand Champions, and played frequently until he was derailed by problems with his shoulder and knee.

“That’s all I did. Tennis was my life,” Knight said. “I’ve broken dozen of rackets.”

“I was getting them for free, thank god.”

Knight said he enjoys going to



WADE BYARS, THE DESERT SUN

Christopher Knight of the TV show “The Brady Bunch” came to the Pacific Life Open on Saturday. Knight is a big tennis fan and enjoyed the top-notch experience of the Pacific Life Open.

## More online in our blog

See our Pacific Life Open musings: Find out more about Dr. Phil’s and Donna Mills’ adventures on the tennis court, including each of their experiences playing Andre Agassi in celebrity tournaments. [mydesert.com/paclife](http://mydesert.com/paclife)

matches, but has been disappointed with the ATP Tour stop in Los Angeles, where many top names regularly pull out.

“I was always a little frustrated that we here in Southern California, with such weather for tennis, don’t have more of an impact,” Knight said. “It always seems our tournaments aren’t taken seriously. It’s really refreshing to see we have a tournament you have com-

mitment to from the players, and they stay in. It’s nice. We have so many tennis players and the weather for it.”

Knight just completed his recent season of “My Fair Brady,” on VH1 with wife Adrienne Curry, winner of America’s Next Top Model in 2003. Curry was in Indian Wells, but did not accompany Knight to the tournament. “She doesn’t play the game and

doesn’t understand the intricacies, although she’s built like a tennis player,” Knight said. “If I can get her out there to hit a ball, she could do very well.”

Joining Knight was Dr. Phil, who has been a regular at the Pacific Life Open the last few years. An avid tennis fan, Dr. Phil said coming to Indian Wells is always enjoyable.

“First off, it’s such a quality tournament,” Dr. Phil said. “I go to the U.S. Open every year, and this is the only tournament I go to that has the feel of the U.S. Open, in terms of quality of the facility, the level of play and the fan support. You have the intensity among the fans that you get at the U.S. Open. It’s so appreciated here.”

Dr. Phil calls himself a persistent tennis player, playing seven to eight times per week, as well as playing in celebrity charity matches.

If the Pacific Life Open decided to have a celebrity tournament as part of its festivities, Dr. Phil said, “I’d be proud to come here and play. I’d be here in a heartbeat.”

Mills also used to play in the celebrity tournament in La Quinta.

However, Mills’ desire to learn tennis wasn’t because of an appreciation of the game at that time.

“Someone told me there was a tournament going to Monte Carlo,” Mills said of a celebrity event. “They said if you play tennis, you can go. I said, ‘I’ll learn.’ And I did, and then fell in love with tennis and played ever since.”

## Fish

Continued from G1

“I just kept telling myself that, you know, there was somebody else on the other side of the court,” said Fish, who had lost to Federer in their previous five matches. “You just try to blank out who it was.”

Other times, Fish admitted he knew exactly who was across the net.

“After the first set, I was thinking, ‘OK, I won the first set, but now he’s going to kill me, right?’” he said. “I was more nervous maybe than I ever have been with two breaks, serving two breaks.”

The match flew by so quickly, Federer said it was hard to tell exactly what happened.

“Mardy was really impossible to beat, it almost looked to me,” he said. “He was just trying to go for everything and it sort of worked. He would never miss, really.”

Saturday was Federer’s first loss to a U.S. player since 2003, ending a 41-match winning streak against Americans that he kept alive even with mono earlier this year against James Blake in the Australian Open.

Federer said he was perhaps a little too rested Saturday. German Tommy Haas withdrew from their semifinal match on Friday, and since ending his brief two-match losing streak in the second round at Indian Wells a week ago, Federer had won three matches in straight sets and faced just one seeded opponent: No. 23 Ivan Ljubicic of Croatia.

“I was a little deflated (Friday),” Federer said. “I was ready to play Tommy. I think it would have giv-



OMAR ORNELAS, THE DESERT SUN

Roger Federer wipes his sweat after a lost point against Mardy Fish on Saturday during a Pacific Life Open semifinals match in Indian Wells.

## RESULTS

### PACIFIC LIFE OPEN

Saturday’s results at The Indian Wells Tennis Garden, Indian Wells, Purse: Men, \$3.589 million, (Masters); Women, \$2.1 million (Tier I), Surface: Hard-Outdoor.

#### Singles

##### Men

**Semifinals**  
Novak Djokovic (3), Serbia, def. Rafael Nadal (2), Spain, 6-3, 6-2.

**Mardy Fish, United States, def. Roger Federer (1), Switzerland, 6-3, 6-2.**

##### Doubles

##### Women

**Championship**  
Dinara Safina and Elena Vesnina, Russia, def. Yan Zi and Zheng Jie (3), China, 6-1, 1-6, 10-8 tiebreak.

en me great rhythm if I were to win against him and come into the semis. Maybe during the match you could feel that, but it’s not an excuse.”

## Women

Continued from G1

match it is — final or first round. That’s what she was doing when she won the U.S. Open in 2004: Not thinking too much.

“For me, it’s really important because I’ve been to the finals and I know what it’s like, you know?” she said. “To play it, you know? To really play it, not to think about that it’s finals, but play it. So I think this time I can get it better. I will need to put myself out there and play my game, not thinking about something else.”

That means ignoring Ivanovic’s 4-1 record

## Head-to-head matchup

IVANOVIC 4, KUZNETSOVA 1

Year	Event	Rnd.	Winner	Score
2007	Tour Champ	QF	Ivanovic	6-1, 4-6, 7-5
2007	Fr.Open	QF	Ivanovic	6-0, 3-6, 6-1
2007	Berlin	F	Ivanovic	3-6, 6-4, 7-6 (4)
2006	Sydney	QF	Kuznetsova	7-6 (3), 6-3
2005	Miami	R16	Ivanovic	6-3, 3-6, 7-5

against her, too, in today’s showdown of the top two seeds and Nos. 2 and 3 in the world.

Ivanovic, meanwhile, has the chance to keep

the momentum she’s gained from runner-up finishes at the French Open in 2007 and Australian Open in January. Ivanovic, 20, has a career finals record of 5-3.

Ivanovic, who has concentrated on keeping her nerves and emotions at bay late in the Pacific Life, says she has a game plan in mind for Kuznetsova.

“She’s a very powerful player, so I think it’s important to stay right there with her and not give her many chances,” Ivanovic said. “I think we have little bit similar games. I’m not going to say now my tactics so she can read it tomorrow. But, you know, definitely I know what I’m going to do once I get out there.”

## GAME SET GINN



Sports writer Leighton Ginn gives his take on what’s happening at Indian Wells.

The real question is, which was more shocking: Roger Federer’s loss to Mardy Fish on Saturday or Federer’s loss to Guillermo Cañas in the second round last year. Federer still has the title of the best player on the planet, so you never expect him to lose or bullets

to penetrate his skin.

The losses happened for different reasons. Cañas was returning everything Federer threw at him until Federer finally blinked. Fish swung for the fences just about every time and hit a home run every time. Both Cañas and Fish had amazing performances, and that is what it takes to beat a player of Federer’s caliber.

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