

Ashare is a sparkler on girls' net circuit

By BOB GROSS

national competition.

There may have been a time, early in the current season, when the powers-that-be in the junior tennis circuit had never heard of 14-year-old Erin Ashare.

That time — if there ever was one — is long past. The eighth-grader at St. Hugo of the Hills school in Bloomfield Hills is making a name for herself in

the current season, when the powers-that-be in the junior tennis circuit had never heard of 14-year-old Erin Ashare.

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Closed Championship in Midland and the Louisville Junior Invitational in Louisville, Ky.

The wins, and her progress at the big tournaments — she beat Amanda Brown, the No. 1 ranked Girls' 14's player in England, at the Orange Bowl tournament — have brought Ashare a long way in a short time.

"When I was about 9 years old," she

said, "my dad wanted us to take some lessons and we liked it a lot, so we kept playing."

Ashare swam and took ballet lessons when she was younger, but once she found tennis, that was it.

"I like it a lot," she said, "love it."

And there isn't much chance of her taking up any other sport.

"I'm satisfied with tennis," she declared.

PART OF THE appeal for Ashare is going to places like Coral Gables and Louisville for tournaments. She says that tournaments are "fun," and that it's nice meeting other children. The way players are housed during the tournaments facilitates making friends.

"Most of the time I'm housed with a friend," said Ashare, "and we stay at someone's house."

The children on the circuit really don't get a chance to correspond, according to Ashare.

But, then, they don't really need to. They see each other so much during the year that it would be a little like writing to the kid down the street.

Of course, living with another family does have its problems. For example, what do you do when you have to play against the girl you're staying with?

"That only happened once," said Ashare, "that happened at the Eastern Bowl this year in N.J. We just didn't talk much at all."

Playing in big tournaments in front of big crowds away from home can also be somewhat nerve-racking.

"I like hitting, in practice," said Ashare. "I usually like that more because you get so nervous in tournaments."

That doesn't mean that she doesn't like what she's doing.

"When it's all over with," said

Ashare, "I'd like to go through it again."

ASHARE DOESN'T play all the tournaments with just the support of her coach, John Trump of Franklin Racquet Club. Her family is sometimes able to make the trips with her.

"We go to tournaments together," Ashare said. "Around Christmas time we went up to Midland together for the Western Indoor, and we just went to Louisville."

Perhaps not coincidentally, the tournaments in Midland and Louisville were both Ashare wins.

"I like it better with the family," she said. "It's more comfortable."

Ashare said her goal is to one day be a professional tennis player, like Tracy Austin, for example. She has the two-hand backhand that is required equipment for most young players these days. And she has a very consistent game from the baseline.

She says the best part of her game are her "ground strokes. When I play matches, I just stay at the baseline."

Surprisingly, she feels that she plays best on hard courts.

"They say I should be best on clay," said Ashare, "because I'm real consistent, but it doesn't seem to make much difference."

While turning pro is a realistic goal for Ashare at this stage of her tennis career, it remains in the distant future — at least for four more years.

Former USA president

Davey is now a Hall of Famer

Chuck Davey, Birmingham insurance executive who has been prominent in all phases of boxing for four decades, will be formally inducted into the Michigan Sports Hall of Fame in ceremonies May 12 at Cobo Hall as a highlight of the annual Michigan Week observance.

Joining him in the hall of fame of the state's athletic elite will be former Lion lineman and Bloomfield Hills resident Alex Karras, all-time bowling great Joe Joseph, and late former Lion coach George Wilson.

Few inductees into the Michigan Sports Hall of Fame have had such a multi-faceted career in their favorite sport as Davey. He is best remembered as the No. 1 TV sports figure of the early '50s — a graceful stylist with blinding speed who put together an unbeaten string of 39 bouts in the pro ranks.

He chalked up 25 KOs, won 12 deci-

sions and fought two draws in a sensational career that lifted him to world welterweight title bout with the great Kid Gavilan. Davey won new admirers for his gallant stand against Gavilan, losing when he was unable to come out for the 11th round.

HIS RECORD AS AN amateur was even more outstanding.

He is the only fighter who ever won four NCAA championships. At 17, he took his first NCAA crown as a Michigan State University freshman. He was voted the outstanding boxer in the NCAA tournament three times. His coach called him the greatest collegiate fighter of all time.

For 15 years Davey served as the boxing commissioner of Michigan until he was replaced early this year. He won international approval for his efforts to encourage amateur boxing and

to spark the resurgence of the pro game here.

He was a founder and the first president of the United States Boxing Association, which seeks to upgrade the sport in this country.

His colleagues on the World Boxing Association paid high tribute to him on several occasions when he was named a vice president of that body. He has held every key subcommittee in the WBA.

DAVEY, WHO HOLDS A master's degree in education administration from Michigan State, never intended to make professional boxing his life's work. As an amateur star, he decided

to get into pro boxing in order to earn enough to launch himself on a business career.

Davey had a fine pro career, beating three past and future world champions — Rocky Graziano, Ike Williams and Carmen Basilio — and he could still demand big purses, when he elected to retire.

He had made enough to begin what has become an enormously successful career in the insurance business. Presently, he heads one of the top 10 New England Life agencies in North America, directing the multi-million-dollar operation from his command post in Troy.

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