

Petra Hule: Sweet Music A Key To Tennis Success As A Senior

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Tallahassee, Fla. (seminoles.com) – While she admittedly hasn't touched one in quite a while, Florida State senior Petra Hule is an accomplished violin player. Her parents grew up in Romania, and Hule became accustomed to listening to Romanian folk music in her family's home. She was encouraged to learn how to play the dominant sound within the music and quickly became proficient at playing the violin.

Currently ranked No. 7 in the ITA rankings and the third winningest player in school history, Hule will lead the Seminoles into the 2022 ACC Women's Tennis Championship beginning Thursday at the Rome Tennis Center in Rome, Ga. The eighth-seeded Seminoles face ninth-seeded Notre Dame in their first match of the championship.

Hule enters the ACC Championship with 197 career wins. She ranks eighth in school history with 94 singles wins and is third in school history with 103 doubles wins. Hule is just 10 overall wins from becoming Florida State's all-time winningest player and only four wins from becoming the school's all-time doubles winner.

So when did Hule's success as a tennis player begin?

It began when the redshirt senior began watching her sister, Chloe, play tennis in their hometown of Adelaide, Australia. As she watched Chloe play the game she would quickly grow to love, she knew she had to get her hands on a racket.

"I was about four when I saw my sister playing and said 'I think I can do it better,'" Hule said.

She began with tetherball and graduated to become Chloe's hitting partner.

Like her sister, Hule fell in love with the game and began her journey on the court.

In Australia, Hule was best in her state for under 14's, 16's, and 18's. Her success back home led her to continue playing tennis in America.

Although the same game, the main difference lies in accessibility.

"The opportunities are abundant in America, especially for internationals," said Hule.

Hule made her first official visit to Florida State, and immediately knew that becoming a Seminole was an opportunity she could not pass up.

"My future in the sport aligned with the program and what they envisioned for me," Hule said.

Playing tennis for Florida State was important for Hule moving forward. In her fifth year as a Seminole, she has grown tremendously since her freshman year. She will earn her bachelor's degree in English (with a minor in business) on April 30 and become a college graduate.

Hule has performed at a high level in the classroom, too. She has earned Dean's List Honors three times, has been named to the ACC Academic Honor Roll three times, and was named to the 2018 and 2019 All-ACC Academic Women's Tennis Team.

"The sky's the limit and beyond for Pep," said Head Coach Jen Hyde. "It's a long season but she is working hard, staying present, and getting all the boxes checked when it is game time."

On the court, Hule is one of the top players in the nation.

Hule earned a 12-match winning streak this season which is the 12th longest single winning streak in school history earlier this season and holds she a 19-1 overall dual match record entering the ACC Championships. Recently named ACC Co-Player of the week for the first time in her career, Hule has played in the Seminoles' No. 1 position throughout her career.

While Seminole fans recognize Hule as a dominating player on the tennis court, she is very much a giving and caring person off of the court.

"I have dealt with my game, my mindset, and myself as an athlete on the court which has also impacted the way I am off the court," said Hule.

It's the maturity she has gained during her career that makes her a mentor and friend to her teammates.

As a fifth-year player, Hule continues to evolve and embrace her role as a team leader. She has taken what she has absorbed over the years and uses it to guide her teammates.

"She has a lot of responsibility but wants it and is working her tail off," said Hyde. "She will continue to try to put the team first and the responsibility that comes with that in her top spot on the court."

As a team leader, Hule works to create an atmosphere where everyone is able to speak their mind. She has established a bond with her teammates while also bringing good energy to games and practices.

"When people get to know me they learn fairly quickly I am fun and lighthearted, but I will get cracking when push comes to shove," Hule said. "I lead in the form of actions speaking louder than words."

"Pep leads by example," said Seminole junior Vic Allen. "Her focus and work ethic are unmatched. Her main goal is to help bring success to lift and guide the team."

Hule is looking forward to the ACC championships to see how the team's hard work throughout the season has paid off.

Afterwards, she looks forward to the team advancing to the NCAA tournament. The Seminoles have advanced to the Elite Eight of the NCAA Tournament in two of the last three seasons.

As for her on the court demeanor, she thrives on the 'thrill of the hunt' as she calls it.

In every game, she is faced with a constant puzzle to solve on how to approach each opponent. She gets excited trying to figure them out and works to put her best game forth.

"The process of continually growing drives me forward," said Hule. "I learn new things in each match and then put it to the test."

As one of the school's all-time leaders in both single and doubles victories, she prefers not to choose which she enjoys more.

"I love the thrill of doubles and connecting with your partner." said Hule. "But I also love singles because I am in control and my racket resembles my game."

With the season coming to an end, she finds it easy to get caught up thinking about the future. She aspires to be a professional tennis player when she graduates.

“I want to see what I can do professionally,” said Hule. “I want to travel, continue to learn and experience the world. The world has endless possibilities and opportunities.”

“Playing tennis is what I have wanted to do since I was a kid,” said Hule. “I think I am putting myself in the position for my dreams to come true.”

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