

Donald E. Barnett Awards for 2013-2014

Each year, the First-year Composition Program recognizes excellent writing in English 1101, 1102, and 1103 by presenting three Barnett Awards. Named in honor of Donald E. Barnett, who directed the Freshman English Program for many years, the awards consist of cash prizes and publication of the winning essays in the *First-year Composition Guide* required of all students registered in our courses and on the FYC site at: <http://www.english.uga.edu/newsite/fyc/barnett.html>.

ENGL 1101

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The Gut-Churning Love of Tennis

BAM, the ball travels over the net at rapid speeds. BAM, the ball travels back even faster than before. DING, the hit is off the edge of the racquet frame and travels at the slowest pace out of the single lines. Novak Djokovic falls to his knees in celebration of winning the prestigious Australian Open. This thirty seconds of glory on the court was what Novak had been waiting for throughout the entire tennis off-season. Andy Murray, the losing contender, walks the longest twenty feet of his life to the net to congratulate the victorious Novak. Andy thinks of all the things he did wrong and knows he could have played better. Both of these well-deserving men think of that day as they prepare for the next meeting in a major grand slam tournament. Rewind! Neither of the men would be at this point if their

zest and gusto for the game of tennis was not at the maximum fulfillment. Tennis starts at the beginner level and requires lots of motivation to get to the point of being a professional. The love of tennis must be greater than anything in your mind to achieve this success. Tennis is a game of self-motivation, exercise, self-building, and glory that leads to a passionate love for this honorable game.

Have you ever pushed yourself to the point of tears rolling down your face like a small waterfall? Many players have, including myself, because they know they could have done better. These tears motivate the players to strive for bigger goals. In the game of tennis, it is just you, the other player, and the court. Unless you motivate yourself, you will never be able to win the clutch game. Many people think that your personal coach can motivate you, but on the court, it is just you that swings the racquet. You cannot push the blame onto something else. You cannot say it was not your fault. You have nothing to blame, just your lack of talent compared to the other player. If you want to get the best backhand in the world, you go to the court every single day and work on your skills for that shot. If you want to be able to slice, you work on your spin every day until you can place the spot in each corner of the single lines. This motivation will never be enough. There will always be some other player who has motivated himself to a higher standard. This is just the way the world is. Your zest and your gusto need to be greater than the other contenders in order to win. This self-motivation makes you show your passionate love for the game of tennis.

Have you ever screamed in pain when you were pushing yourself to the maximum to be the best you can be? I believe every tennis player has given this sign of commitment, at some point, while exercising. Exercise, physically and mentally, is something that is a part of everyday life for a professional tennis player. Tennis players are constantly exercising to be the best they can be. They show their zest by going to the gym every day for hours and hours. When running a tennis court, the average professional runs over two miles of straight sprints. They never think about this crazy number since they have conditioned themselves for this two miles. Their passionate love for the game has pushed them to be in the best shape they can possibly be. These players are not even winded after points since their body is so in shape from the commitment to exercise. How well you train is how much you will gain from the game.

Have you ever risen from the bottom and defeated something you were about to lose, or lose something you were about to win? The game of tennis is an emotional rollercoaster that every player rides every time he picks up a racquet. Each person has ups and downs, but overall a person's character is built when playing tennis. A player may be one point from losing in straight sets, but comes back to win because he never gets down on himself. This aspect of self-building goes hand and hand with the zest and gusto of a person when playing tennis. Your love for the game depends on how you uphold yourself on the court. You could be one point from winning and be easy-going, then you can take the opponent lightly and end up losing. In my experience, letting the opponent take advantage

of my easy-going character caused me to lose a set in the state playoffs. I still won the match, but my character allowed the match to be much closer than the way I played. How we hold ourselves on the court is the key to building our character. You learn who you really are when it comes to playing the gut-churning game of tennis.

Have you ever cried tears of joy while you were on your knees, thinking that everything that just happened was all a dream? All of the aspects mentioned in this paper are all build-ups to the final aspect of glory. Glory is what every player dreams of. The moment when you fall to your knees and take in all the praise and glory from your fans. The moment when you cry wonderful tears of joy. The moment when you have achieved a glorious, long-awaited victory. Your love for the game has been fulfilled and you are passionate for every aspect of the game. Your zest and gusto has reached its peak when you achieve this victory. This glory is something you would not trade for anything in the world. Glory is what every tennis player dreams of.

The love of tennis is something that is not easy to obtain, since the game requires so much effort and time to achieve greatness, but many have obtained the honor of winning a prestigious championship or tournament. If you can motivate yourself to be the best you can be, have self-confidence throughout all your ups and downs, and push yourself to be in the best shape physically, you can play tennis and win. Everything is up to you. Only you can make your decisions. This is why I love tennis. Everything is up to me. If I don't try, then I will never succeed,

but if I play my heart out and go 110%, then I will be successful. I am not saying that I will ever be at the professional level like Novak Djokovic, but I will succeed at whatever level I play.

If you think you can handle the painful path to greatness, then come to the court ready to play the tough, gut-churning, and honorable game of tennis.