

# Rolling Brown gathers no dust

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**Chennai:** Dustin Brown played for Jamaica, his father's homeland and was involved in a bitter spat with Tennis Jamaica, and as a result contemplated playing for Britain where his grandmother belonged to, before finally deciding to play for Germany, his motherland, this year.

His multi-cultural background means he has a take-it-as-it-comes attitude, handsome looks, dreadlocks and fluency in German, Jamaican and English.

The hours of practice he puts in means he also has a booming serve and a steady game that's upwardly mobile. Brown came to Chennai Open last year only to lose in the final qualifiers; but now ranked 92 and ever improving, he has the game and the attitude to ruffle a few feathers. "I played in Chennai last year and I liked the tournament," he said. "You know my rank is 92 and I haven't been playing that many ATP tournaments. Right now, I enter whichever tournaments I can but Chennai definitely is a tournament that I am comfortable with." Practising in one of the outside courts Brown's hitting was briefly interrupted by a squirrel which ran across the court but soon he was toiling again.



Brown in Chennai on Thursday

You watch him practise and you'll feel he's focused but more importantly he's having fun too. "I am pretty much the same off court as I am on court, I try to have fun and relax, a lot more relaxed compared to the other guys. You could say that I am a more open person off the court," he said.

Brown had struggled and survived in the lower level European circuits for four years with a camper van which his parents had bought for him.

"It was hard to finance my stay and everything while playing tournaments in Europe and the camper made it possible. By giving me the camper van my parents gave me the opportunity to play tourna-

ments week in and week out. Even if you play the futures and lose in the first round you make a hundred dollars or euros whichever and have enough money for the next week for gas and good food and that's how everything started."

Life of a top player is so much different to what it is of a player slogging his way through his Challengers and Brown has first-hand experience of it. "If you win a tournament like Chennai every week I guess you are doing ok. But if you are playing the Challengers and stuff and you don't have a sponsor, it is not that easy," he said. But steady rise in rankings has given him an opportunity to play with the best and improve his rankings further.

"Last year has been my best and I am in a very good situation right now. There are a lot of ATP tournaments especially in the beginning of the year and my goal right now is to get to 60-70, be in the main draw and choose which tournaments I want to play in." True to his style, he's happy with what he has achieved but you can be sure he will give his best shot whatever comes his way. No special targets, just by being in the main draw I've gone further than last year. Just play and hope you get a good draw and give your best.