

Tennis player is in the swing

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Junior Dominik Koepfer competes in both singles and doubles. This spring, he has an 11-4 record and is currently ranked 13th in the Intercollegiate Tennis Association men's national singles rankings. (Photo by Parker Waters)

When Tulane University tennis standout [Dominik Koepfer](#) arrived on the uptown campus as a first-year student from Furtwangen, Germany, his serve and forehand were already polished enough to succeed at the collegiate level. However, Koepfer's inability to speak English during his first few weeks in New Orleans made the transition a challenge.

“It was really hard to understand people at first because they talked so much faster

than what I was used to,” he says. “It also was difficult to follow my professors in class and understand homework assignments.”

Koepfer credits tennis for helping him to overcome the language barrier. As a member of the [team](#), he instantly had 10 friends who supported him and helped him improve his English. The constant presence of his teammates and coaches quickly turned his early struggles into triumphs, as Koepfer was named the Conference USA Freshman of the Year following the 2013 season.

Koepfer, who is currently a junior, competes in both singles and doubles. This spring, he has an 11-4 record and is currently ranked 13th in the Intercollegiate Tennis Association men's national singles rankings.

Growing up, Koepfer frequently played tennis with his parents in Germany. His success on the court should come as no surprise, since he first picked up a racquet when he was 5.

“I chose Tulane because I really liked the city, the weather and the excellent academics,” says Koepfer. “I knew the team was really good before Hurricane Katrina, and when the coach came to visit me in Germany, we got along really well.”

After college, Koepfer plans to pursue a tennis career at the professional level. If that does not work out, the finance major hopes to earn a master's degree in business.

Greg Thomson is a senior at Tulane University majoring in communication.

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