

Karman makes the right moves

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NEW DELHI: Champions capitalise on the few chances they get, rather than grumble about missed chances.

At 17, Karman Kaur Thandi is ready to rock the world of women's tennis with her big serves, strong forehand and the unflinching heart of a champion. Six feet tall and weighing 64kg, she has the attributes of a super athlete who is willing to sweat it out in training to enjoy success on the court.

At that age, it is difficult to get the right proportion of junior and women's events, to ensure a healthy progress. Creditably, Karman has also been able to combine quality training to speed up her growth.

After making the third round of the US Open juniors, the student of Ryan International School in the capital, Karman has been training with coach Bobby Mahal in Canada.

She had won a grade-1 junior event in Germany and had also made the semifinals of the Canadian Open junior event. The temptation would have been to improve her junior ranking, which reached a best of 47, the second best in the country behind Pranjala Yadlapalli, the Asian junior champion.

Karman opted to play the qualifying event of the \$50,000 ITF women's tournament in Quebec, Canada, and made the main draw as a lucky loser before being beaten in three sets



Karman Kaur with the grade-1 junior singles tennis trophy in Germany.

by a girl who is ranked No.7 in the world as a junior, and 602 among the women.

Even though she had enjoyed great success, reaching the semifinals of a \$10,000 event in which she came through the

qualifying rounds, in only her second international women's tournament in July last year, Karman has been judicious in terms of competition in both the women's and junior ranks.

With Mahesh Bhupathi stepping in and supporting her through a contract with the International Premier Tennis League (IPTL), there is a good chance that Karman's financial constraints may be a thing of the past.

While coach Vinod Kumar introduced her to the game and laid a strong foundation, it has been coach Aditya Sachdeva who has groomed Karman to be a world class player. In fact, she won the Future Stars under-16 event organised by the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) in Singapore last year. Actually, she had the honour of hitting a few balls with Grand Slam champion Li Na of China to inaugurate the prestigious year-end championship.

"When she came to me five years ago, I saw a talented girl who was determined and willing to work hard. As Bob Brett told me long ago, talent is all about learning and implementing the lessons. Karman has that talent to implement", said Aditya Sachdeva.

"Karman definitely has the heart of a champion. She doesn't hold back. She doesn't fear losing. She doesn't worry about the results and stays focused on the process. Results take care of themselves", he said.