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METROPLUS

## Change is the key

 **KALYAN ASHOK** JULY 26, 2015 21:00 IST  
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Vishnu Vardhan (right) with Krishna Kumar

### Vishnu Vardhan wants to reclaim his glory years of tennis

Vishnu Vardhan, the hard-hitting Hyderabadi, who turns 28 today, is easily one of the most exciting tennis players on the circuit.

He was at his peak in 2010-2012, when he won a silver in mixed doubles with Sania Mirza in the 2010 Asian Games in China and partnered Leander Paes in the 2010 London Olympics and later represented the country in Davis Cup. He rose to a career high world ranking of 262. Then came the fall as, in a bid to qualify for the 2013 Australian Open, Vishnu played too many events, which resulted in a spate of injuries.

He was out of action for nearly 18 months and tumbled by 400 spots in rankings. In 2014, he came back to win the Fenesta Hard Court Nationals and made his way up.

In the last few months, Vishnu has won two ITF doubles titles and was runner-up in singles in ITF events. He is now associated with Bengaluru-based Kinesis Tennis Academy director and USPTR coach M. Krishna Kumar, a mental and technical trainer in the game. Vishnu, who spent four days at Kinesis, found his stint 'inspiring'. Vishnu says: "After the IT Tournament at Mysuru in May, I dropped in and had a casual chat with Krishna Kumar. I have been looking at ways to improve my ranking and performance. You know the game is changing and every top player is trying out new things. I needed new elements in my game and Kumar invited me to train at Kinesis. I am glad, I did that."

Vishnu wanted to make his ground-strokes more solid and become strong mentally "I needed a lot more spin on my ground-stroke and needed more bite in my second serve. We worked on those aspects. To play tennis at the highest level, mental toughness is important. I have learnt a lot here and want to incorporate it in my game,"

On the road ahead, Vishnu Vardhan says "To get to the top, it is not enough that you add few elements because you need a whole package. I have to stay injury free. In Hyderabad, I train with my coach Nagaraj and a physical trainer, Mohammed Latif. I feel fitter and stronger." Though he is among the best doubles players in the country and has a successful partner in Sriram Balaji, Vishnu wishes to stick to singles for a few more years. Krishna Kumar says: "He is a quick learner. I feel Vishnu is now playing 60 per cent of his potential. He reached a plateau in 2012 and I want to make sure that when he gets to that plateau again, he doesn't get bogged down. He can go much higher in the game. He has a strong serve and volley but he needs a good topspin in his ground-strokes besides punch in his second serve. These things take some time and once they fall in place, Vishnu's game would see a quantum jump."

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