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Atkins Tennis Center - University of Illinois



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### **2008 Singles and Doubles Champions Return to Defend Titles at JSM Challenger Former Illini Anderson Ram, and DeHeart set for return**

**URBANA, Ill.** – The ATP tour will once again make a stop at the Atkins Tennis Center in Urbana, Ill., as the 14th annual JSM Challenger gets underway Nov. 14-21, highlighted by the return of last year's singles champion, Kevin Anderson, and doubles champions, Rajeev Ram and Bobby Reynolds.

Anderson posted his lone victory of the season at the San Remo Tennis Cup in May, while also finishing runner-up at the Levene, Gouldin and Thompson Tennis Challenger and Granby Challenger over the summer.

Ram has enjoyed a successful season thus far, highlighted by his first-career ATP singles and doubles titles in July at the Campbell's Hall of Fame Tennis Championships. Ram was the first-ever "lucky loser" to win the grass-court tournament during the first all-American final in an ATP World Tour event since 2007 and also became the first American to win at Newport since 2003 and the third player to win both the singles and doubles titles at the tournament in the same year. Additionally, he also became the first former Illini to ever win an ATP event. He is currently ranked a career-high 97 in the world and has compiled an 8-5 singles record and a 19-11 mark in doubles on tour this season.

Reynolds will be making his first tournament appearance since the L.A. Tennis Open this past July, while 2008 singles runner-up Kevin Kim will be one of five players currently in the top 100 in the world.

Robert Kendrick checks in at No. 80 this week to lead the talented field, followed by Michael Russell at No. 85, Kim at No. 87, 2007 JSM Challenger Champion Jesse Levine at No. 94 and Ram rounds out the top 100 at No. 97.

One young player to watch for in the qualifying rounds is tournament newcomer Devin Britton, who at 18 years old became the youngest NCAA singles champion as a freshman at the University of Mississippi in 2009, joining the ranks of Cecil Mamiit (USC) and John McEnroe (Stanford), who also won in their first collegiate season.

In addition to Anderson and Ram, Ryler DeHeart also will be returning for his first tournament since the U.S. Open in August. DeHeart jumped to a career-high ranking of 197 in July, after advancing to the semifinal round of the Granby Challenger.

The 2009 JSM Challenger begins with qualifying play on Nov. 14th and 15th, with the main draw beginning on the 16th and the finals on the 21st.

