



USTA NORTH CAROLINA

A VALENTINE'S STORY

Doubles Partner for Life

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When Jessica Miller met up with a friend at the NC State University tennis courts, she had no idea she'd be meeting her future husband.

It started out as a normal Saturday morning and Jessica was meeting up with some friends to play mixed doubles. When her guy friends didn't show, she walked over to two men playing a few courts down and asked if they wanted to join.

"My friend and I just finished playing in the Tennis On Campus Nationals tournament so we were in our peak form," Miller said.

After recruiting the guys to play a set of mixed doubles, the pairs exchanged numbers so they could play again in the future. One of those men, Justin Mauney, answered the call and is set to marry Jessica this April.

The couple, who reside in Raleigh, NC, spent the first six months of knowing each other by playing tennis.

"We started playing a couple sets but over time, the amount of tennis we played decreased and the amount of time we spent at the net talking and laughing increased," Miller said. "Finally, after one three-hour 'hitting session' where we only played a total of four games, Justin walked me back to my car and asked me on a date."

Soon after becoming a couple, they got involved with the 30 Under young professionals tennis league in Raleigh and started to play USTA League matches together as well.

"We grow in our relationship constantly because of our favorite sport," Miller said.

Date nights for the couple often include playing a few sets with the loser buying the post-match ice cream. These tennis court dates helped them discover how much they have in common. They quickly learned that Justin sang in an a cappella group and Jessica sang in show choir, both of their grandfathers were pastors in the same religion, they share many mutual friends and graduated from NC State the same year. Most importantly, both Jessica and Justin value the role tennis has played in their life.

"Tennis is so incredibly meaningful for me because my favorite memories from my childhood were playing tennis with my family," Miller said. "When I learned that Justin felt the same way because he also comes from a family of tennis players, it immediately brought us closer as a couple."

With a wedding around the corner, Jessica and Justin are planning to spend the morning of their wedding hitting balls with both families.

"I can't think of any better way to begin our lifetime as a new family," Miller said. "Tennis brought us together and revealed our passions in other parts of life. I'm so excited to be doubles partners for life!"