



Name: James Blake

Years: December 28, 1979 to Present

Residence: Yonkers, New York

Brief Biography: James Blake was born on December 28, 1979 in Yonkers. He began playing tennis at five years old. At the age of 13, Blake was diagnosed with scoliosis and was forced to wear a back brace for 18 hours a day for 5 years. Blake graduated from Fairfield High School in Fairfield, Connecticut and attended Harvard University before dropping out during his sophomore year to pursue professional tennis.

At 21, Blake competed in his first Davis Cup, becoming just the third person of African-American descent to compete in the prestigious tournament. Later that year, Blake entered the AMS Cincinnati, where he reached the round of 16 before succumbing to Patrick Rafter.

The next year, Blake won the USTA Waikola Challenger in Hawaii. Just a month later, he went on to get his first win over a top-ten ranked opponent, Tommy Haas, who, at the time, was ranked fifth in the world. In August 2002, Blake won his first ATP Masters Series title in doubles competition, becoming the first African-American to do so in the

tournament's century-long history. The following week, Blake added to his resume by winning his first ATP singles title when he defeated Andre Agassi in the semifinals and Paradorn Srichaphan in the finals.

Blake met moderate success for the next two years before breaking his neck in 2004. Later that same year, Blake's father passed away. To top it all off, Blake developed shingles, which blurred his vision and temporarily paralyzing half his face.

Returning to the court in 2005, Blake began competing in the minor league tennis circuit, winning two tournaments before returning to the ATP circuit and reaching the finals of the International Series Event before losing to Andy Roddick. Later that year, Blake won the Pilot Pen Tennis tournament and upset the number-two ranked Rafael Nadal in the round of 32 at the US Open. Blake advanced to the quarterfinals before losing to Andre Agassi in an exciting fifth-set tiebreak. In October 2005, Blake won his third ATP title, the Stockholm Open in Sweden.

In 2006, Blake added to his accolades by picking up his fourth ATP title in Sydney. Just two months later, he added his fifth in Las Vegas. He then became the first African-American to reach the finals of the Indian Wells, the year's first AMS event. Blake surprised many by making it all the way to the finals of the Stella Artois Championships before losing. After defeating Andy Roddick in the final, Blake went on to win the International Series in Indianapolis. Blake won his seventh singles title that year at the Thailand Open. Later that year, Blake qualified for the Tennis Masters Cup for the first time. He lost in the final, but ended up finishing the year with the number four rank in the world.

Blake won the Sydney International for the second straight time in 2007. Later that year, he won a singles title at the ATP Masters Series and the Davis Cup. The next year, he lost to Roger Federer in the finals of the Australian Open and lost in the finals at the Delray Beach to Kei Nishikori. His losing streak continued into 2009, where he fired his longtime coach Brian Barker shortly after the US Open.

Major Accomplishments: Grand Slam Results: Australian Open QF (2008) French Open 3R (2006) Wimbledon 3R (2006, 2007) US Open QF (2005, 2006), Grand Slam Doubles results Australian Open QF (2005) French Open 2R (2002) Wimbledon SF (2009) US Open 2R (2000, 2001), Association of Tennis Professionals: Top ten American male singles tennis players as of October 26, 2009 (2nd to only Andy Roddick).

References: http://www.netglimse.com/celebs/pages/james_blake/index.shtml ,
<http://www.answers.com/topic/james-blake>