

ODU's Cahana cruises to crown

BY JOHN PACKETT

TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITER

If someone had inquired about the odds on Nataly Cahana winning the women's singles title of the SunTrust State Tennis Championships, they would have been off the board, as they say in Las Vegas.

After Old Dominion assistant coach John Hill talked Cahana into entering the tournament, it was almost a lock that the Monarchs' No. 1 player would leave Raintree Swim and Racquet Club with the crown.

Cahana thought so, too, and the top seed capped her blistering run through the draw with a 6-1, 6-1 rout of No. 5 seed Lindsey Howard of Richmond yesterday.

STATE TENNIS

MEN'S FINAL:

Saber Kadiri vs.
Sears Driscoll

WHEN/WHERE:

11 a.m. today,
Raintree Swim and
Racquet Club

"I have no idea who the players are," Cahana said. "But

SEE TENNIS, PAGE D5 ►



MARK GORMUS/TIMES-DISPATCH

Nataly Cahana of Isreal and Old Dominion University returns the ball during her straight-set victory over Richmond's Lindsey Howard. Cahana needed just 55 minutes to beat the 15-year-old.

Howard managed to hold her serve in the second game, then Cahana rattled off 14 straight points en route to a 5-1 lead and ended the set with an overhead after running Howard all over the court. That point was indicative of Cahana's strategy.

"She doesn't hit so hard, but she hits spins and deep balls," said Cahana, who will be a junior at ODU this fall. "It's hard to hit the ball out of it. You have to give it some topspin. . . ."

"I waited for the short ball, either to change the pace or give it slice or come to the net, so I can do something with it."

Howard broke Cahana's serve at love in the second game of the second set with a backhand crosscourt volley and had a game point in the next game. But it was all Cahana the rest of the way, as she claimed the final 11 points, sending a forehand volley into an open court at match point.

"She plays well," Cahana said. "I think she will get more power into her shots and more variety. I have much more experience and a variety of shots. If she gets more power into the ball and makes less mistakes, I think she's going to do well."

Since neither Cahana nor

Howard can accept anything other than expenses, the prize money (\$1,500) went back into the tournament.

The men's final is scheduled for today at 11 a.m. and matches fourth-seeded Saber Kadiri, Virginia Tech's No. 1 player, against No. 6 Sears Driscoll of Richmond.

• Contact John Packett at (804) 649-6313 or jpackett@timesdispatch.com

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Women's singles — Final: Nataly Cahana d. Lindsey Howard 6-1, 6-1.

Men's doubles — Semifinals: Carl Clark-Trevor Spracklin d. Ed Butterworth-Jon Ramthun 6-2, 3-6, 6-3; Sean and Scott Steinour d. Jay Bruner-Saber Kadiri 6-4, 6-1. Final at 1 p.m. today.