



Reports by Maneesh Bakshi
For events and press releases email
qatar.editor@gmail.com or
call (974) 44422077



Andy Taylor at the Khalifa International Tennis and Squash Complex during Qatar ExxonMobil Open 2017.



Marquee events specialist who's become the 'Voice of Qatar Open'

Andy Taylor has lent his voice to international competitions ranging from tennis Grand Slams to Olympics and several top events across the world

UNTRING efforts of a large number of professionals and volunteers make it possible for an event as big as 'Qatar ExxonMobil Open' to run smoothly. The hard work of hundreds is clearly visible but for someone like American Andy Taylor, it is only heard by the audience in the form of a familiar voice that intermittently introduces players before and after the match, and may be termed as the 'Voice of Qatar Open'.

Every year, this tennis tournament turns into a battleground of the top players as they try to stamp their supremacy over the coveted Qatar Open trophy. The tournament, incidentally, has run into its 25th year, growing bigger and bigger with every passing year, and today, it is identified as a tennis season opener and also as the highest prize-money event of the Tours.

Twice a year, Taylor travels to Qatar to host the Qatar Tennis Federation ATP-250 and WTA tournament 'The Qatar ExxonMobil Open' and the 'Qatar Total Open'. He emcees the draw ceremony, hosts the official players' dinner, introduces the athletes during player walk-on, conducts interviews and hosts the championship trophy presentations.

Those who still remember "Titan the Robot", who became popular as the friendly robot a couple of years ago, also had a voice-over provided by Taylor himself. His association with Qatar Open began in 2014, when he was recommended by an old acquaintance, who joined QTF from US Tennis Association.

He was offered to take complete charge of running the show that included announcements, on field interviews, emcee for the final presentation and other stuff. "The offer was lucrative as well as difficult to be ignored by any chance," Taylor said.

Most people may not know Taylor but his crisp familiar voice is well known to tennis fans in Qatar, who have been hearing him for the past many years, while he introduces players as well as the winners to the audience before and after each match throughout the tournament.

From humble roots as a broadcaster in

Missouri, USA, he's lent his voice to international competitions from tennis' Grand Slams and the Olympic games to a variety of marquee events. "I worked in radio for many years running a daily morning programme in a little town called Springfield in Missouri, USA," he said, talking about his career.

Taylor was raised in a family that had a deep connection with radio. His father is a veteran radio presenter and he grew up hearing his father on radio and watching him going to work every day, who by the way, still runs a show in Boston, even when in his 70s. His father was a great source of inspiration for young Taylor when he was at the crossroads of choosing a career for himself.

"I have always seen my father happily enjoying his life as a radio presenter while I had also seen many others going to work since they had to do a job. Yet, in my father's case, he had to do his job to have fun and laughter. It was natural for me to take up radio as my career," Taylor said.

However, it was never a bed of roses in the initial years and "after slogging for a couple of years as a volunteer and scrubbing toilets of the radio stations, at last an opportunity came to me after I finished high school."

joined college. It was in a small town of North Carolina about 1,000 miles from my hometown, where I started an afternoon radio show.

"I hopped on a truck and drove down to North Carolina to work as an afternoon host at a radio station. That was the first time I was on air and loved to present a fun-filled community show of my own," Taylor said, describing his journey as a radio presenter.

Despite the fact that he had many opportunities to work on TV show, he enjoyed radio much more. Taylor explained, "I found radio to be more satisfying than working on TV because the former provides more opportunities of self-expression because of its simplistic set-up as com-

pared to the latter, where there is a whole team that is responsible for a show." Later, he joined a legendary community-based radio station called KITS Popular, well known for its commitment to the community. "I love to have an intimate one-on-one relation with the audience, which is very satisfying at the end of the day. There is lot less aggravation yet far more creative freedom and self-expression to enjoy at the end of day," said Taylor.

"Part of my job was to entertain and inform people for four and a half hours every morning and help them have a big smile on their faces while they were getting ready for their day's work. I would get up at 3am every day and reach the radio station by 5am to present the programme that would start at 5:30am until 10am," Taylor told Qatar Tribune.

According to Taylor, this regime continued without a break for many years starting from 1997 until 2011. "What I adored about this job was the sense of responsibility and there was something nice about being the first person awake and to access the information about the day and then share this information with people who needed it to get their day started," Taylor said.

He continued, "The job was pure fun on account of being live on air every day, knowing its nature, where there was no space for mistakes whatsoever, and if there was any, to correct it then and there, without appearing too obtrusive, was one of the biggest challenges of this job."

Creativity in terms of spontaneity and improvisation are major tools in the hands of a presenter through which a live presenter can make the programme interesting and is able to connect with his audience. "Sharing of day-to-day experiences, live chats with the audiences, directing attention to common issues are some of the ingredients that bring flavour to the live shows and that is what I had been doing for a very long time," Taylor explained.

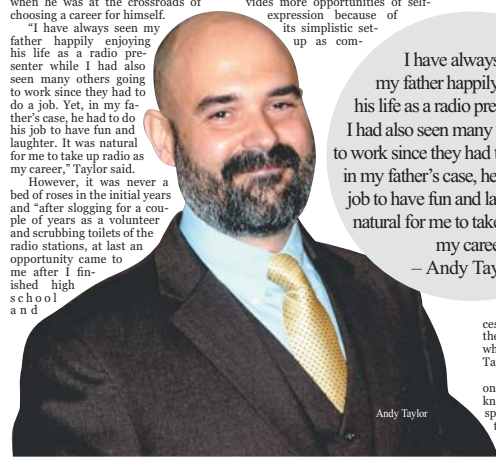
After having successfully pursued his passion for working as a radio presenter for about 15 years, Taylor felt a need to shift gears in order to explore new avenues available, so as to gradually make a transition to other lucrative areas. As luck would have it, an opportunity knocked on his door to work as a stadium announcer during Fed Cup in 2002.

One opportunity led to another and the president of the United States Tennis Association, who appreciated his working style at Fed Cup, decided to offer him to become the 'Voice of the US Open' in New York - a role he still enjoys to this day. "I hardly believed when this offer was given to me and I thought it to be a joke but it wasn't to my surprise," said Taylor with a smile.

When asked why he felt the need to explore new areas after having a successful career as a radio presenter, he said, "With the popularity of internet and new age media, the popularity of the main stage media such as radio saw a decline and it was inevitable for me to find a new field where I could have time for myself and my family, besides having fun."

Taylor now works as a freelance collaborator providing a voice or face to a product, project or event to be promoted. At the least, he may be described as a skilled writer and outgoing person with a passion for creative urges and spontaneity.

"After living a disciplined life for years while with radio, it was hardly a crime to wish for some comfort and liberty to enjoy personal life especially after getting married," he said smiling.



I have always seen my father happily enjoying his life as a radio presenter while I had also seen many others going to work since they had to do a job. Yet, in my father's case, he had to do his job to have fun and laughter. It was natural for me to take up radio as my career
- Andy Taylor

ENTERTAINMENT & EVENTS AT QATAR EXXONMOBIL OPEN 2017

