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## Oudin Decides on the Pro Route



When I interviewed Melanie Oudin after the Orange Bowl final last year, she told me that although she had always wanted to be a professional tennis player, she

had not yet relinquished her amateur status. But she said then, after winning 27 high-level ITF junior matches in a row, that "pretty soon, I think I'll make a decision, but not yet. I'll do some more pro tournaments and see how I'm doing."

Oudin has been doing well, making the semifinals of her first 2008 tournament, a \$25,000 Pro Circuit event last month and following the next week with an appearance in the finals of another \$25,000 tournament. She won a round at Indian Wells, defeating Estonian Maret Ani, ranked 123, and has now risen to 271 in the WTA rankings, up over 100 spots in just three events this year.

So she has decided to compete as a professional, although that doesn't mean she is done with junior events. Due to the restrictions placed on teenage girls, Oudin, who turned 16 last September, is allowed to play only 13 pro events until she turns 17, and the Sony Ericsson her seventh. She will need to play junior events to keep match tough in the next six months, so

the next two junior slams are likely. And, should she lose tomorrow in Key Biscayne, where she plays 46th-ranked Italian Tathiana Garbin, who at 30, is 14 years her senior, Oudin will compete in the ITF International Spring Championships in Carson next week, and in the Easter Bowl regardless of her performance at the Sony Ericsson.

And speaking of the Easter Bowl, I don't think I've linked to the TennisLink sites, where the competitors have been displayed, although the fields are not complete in the 18s. For the ITF B1 event, [click here](#). For the 14s and 16s, [click here](#).

Tags: [junior tennis](#), [Melanie Oudin](#), [Easter Bowl](#), [Colette Lewis](#)

POSTED BY COLETTE LEWIS AT [8:49 PM](#) \_

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