



2015 NMTA Annual Award Ceremony in Review

Northern Michigan Tennis Association hosted their 2015 Awards Reception on Nov. 22 in Gaylord at the beautiful Treetops Resort. There was a great turn out of about 40 players, coaches, and volunteers from all across the Northern 39 counties to support the 6 Award recipients. Executive Director Lisa Cassity welcomed all attendees warmly on the cold snowy afternoon as guests helped themselves to a light lunch with dessert.

Board President for NMTA Steve Witte, greeted guests with a smile and Santa-like cheer by providing a variety of Tennis related door prizes for guests. The Alpine Regional Tennis Association was in large numbers, about 11 guests, in support of their Midwest Michigan award. As guests finished up their pie and coffee, the door prizes were handed out and the Award presentation started. Details of the awards and recipients are as follows:

Volunteer of the Year Award:

This award is given to someone who has given up his time willingly to support and promote the game of tennis in our District.

JOSH KITTO



Presented to **Josh Kitto** by Steve Witte and George Lowe, MI Tennis Service Representative

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Quoted from his nomination by Ruth Smith: "Josh is a tennis professional working in the Upper Peninsula. He covers a lot of area near Marquette. Josh has gone way above what a pro would normally do to try to provide tennis to the youth and adults of his area. He is definitely the Facebook King getting information out to players about programs, tournaments, & changes of dates & times due to inclement weather."

George Lowe shared with people in attendance that Josh is "always thinking about how to get more people playing the game of tennis."

He is certified by PTR for 10 and Under tennis and 11-17 juniors and runs Midwest Youth Team Tennis at 2 locations in UP (Ishpeming and Marquette). He has had over 50 players in first year.

Josh recently started a 10 and Under USTA Junior Team Tennis League with 10 players in Marquette, MI. This is the First ever in the UP!

He currently is Volunteering as the Junior Team Tennis Coordinator for Northern Michigan Tennis Association and completed training for the 2016 season.

In Adult program participation, he has run the Start ReStart program for 2 years with over 100 participants, 2 Sets In The City Events, and participates on a weekly ESPN radio interview to talk tennis. He offers tennis programming at 7 different locations in the Marquette County area and hosted Multiple Play Days and Play Events since 2014." The Northern MI tennis Association is very pleased to have Josh as a volunteer!

Tennis Organization of the Year Award:

This award goes to an outstanding Tennis Association that services both juniors and adults with tennis play options, and has dedicated volunteers who give much time, effort, and support to better their community.

Alpine Regional Tennis Association

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George Lowe presented this Award on behalf of USTA Midwest to ARTA President, Laura Hansmann, and ARTA board members.

INDIANAPOLIS, IND., NOVEMBER 11, 2015 -- The USTA/Midwest Section is proud to announce that the Alpine Regional Tennis Association (ARTA) has been awarded Michigan's 2015 State Community Tennis Association (CTA) of the Year Award. This is a new award designed to recognize the work CTAs throughout the Midwest Section are doing in support of the USTA's mission to promote and grow the game of tennis in their respective communities. The Alpine Regional Tennis Association was recognized at the USTA Northern Michigan District's annual meeting on Sunday, Nov. 22, 2015.

ARTA was formed in the fall of 2012 with a mission to "foster interest and skill development for the lifelong sport of tennis for people of all ages in Northern Michigan." Although there were informal men's and women's leagues in Gaylord for over 20 years, when certified professional tennis coach Dave Johnson and his wife Cathy relocated to the area, they organized efforts to formalize an organization that leveraged the resources and programming of the USTA. The association also partnered with other local organizations and schools to kick-start its programs. Now, the association offers a variety of programming for players throughout Otsego and neighboring counties.

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In its infancy, ARTA focused on youth tennis, offering Midwest Youth Team Tennis in partnership with Kiwanis to provide the program at a discount. The association has donated tennis equipment to area schools to help expand instruction to middle and high school students. Volunteers also painted blended lines at the public community center courts to create the smaller 36' courts for youth play.

ARTA also offers adult programs for players of all skill levels such as clinics, lessons, cardio tennis, and "Start/ReStart", a program for beginners or those returning to the game. USTA Leagues, and other competitive and recreational programs are offered.

ARTA continues to focus on partnering with the community to help improve tennis courts and facilities, and build new courts as well. The association is currently leading efforts to build four new courts at the Otsego County Sportsplex so that it can eventually host regional tennis tournaments and other events." - USTA Midwest

In his presentation, George added how he was impressed to hear how they

- Raised \$10,000 with the US Open President's Box ticket fundraiser
- Donated tennis equipment to Gaylord schools for use in PE curriculum
- Have plans to build 4 tennis courts at the Otsego County Sportsplex
- Painted blended lines on the Community Center tennis courts and at the Otsego County Sportsplex Energy Outlet
- Organize and maintain a local adult league
- Have successfully partnered with local organizations and officials to advocate for tennis
- Created a ARTA informational brochure to increase awareness of the organization and their mission to build 4 courts at the Otsego County Sportsplex.
- Developed their own website
- Ran a successful Adult Start ReStart program with 10 players in first season, led by tennis pro Dave Johnson
- MYTT Two Seasons reaching 100 participant, led by Bonnie Campbell-Hervela

Phyllis Laurila Award:

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Goes to someone who contributed to the development of tennis programs from the grass roots level up for 5 years or more.

Dave Johnson



Presented by Laura Hansmann and Steve Witte

“Dave has been instrumental in the growth of tennis in our community. Gaylord has long had tennis leagues for men and women, but no way for beginners to get into the game.

He and his wife, Cathy, came to Gaylord in May 2012. They have since dedicated their summers to teaching tennis - youth clinics , adult clinics, USTA sponsored CardioTennis and the Start/Restart program. He helped ARTA plan and offer the Midwest Youth Team Tennis in 2014 and 2015 and this spring, the Futures tennis program was added. He also planned a free program for veterans, but the program was cancelled due to lack of participation.

While I don’t know a lot about his previous experience, I do know that Dave has been a PTR tennis professional since 2006. He and Cathy came from Grand Blanc, where he

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taught at a large local tennis club. He was also an assistant high school tennis coach."

One of his players that he coached and trained at Grand Blanc went on to become a two time state champion.

"The Gaylord community is so very fortunate to have such a qualified and dedicated tennis professional living here. I dare say that Alpine Regional Tennis Association would not have formed without his input and participation. We are very grateful they chose to come to Gaylord!"

Junior Female Sportsmanship Award

This Award goes to the 18 and under age division female tennis player who demonstrates the highest standard of tennis accomplishments, character, conduct, sportsmanship, appearance, and amateurism.

Jordan Sengenberger



Presented by Mary Lewandowski and Steve Witte

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Words from her Alpena HS Coach, Charlie Giordano:

“Jordan has played for me for 3 years. Over these three years she has always conducted herself with integrity and shown good character. We play in a very tough conference and very rarely beat the teams we play. Jordan has learned that winning is not the main goal of our tennis program. She understands that it is important to play your best, play fair and play with grace. Jordan works hard to improve her game every day at practice. She understands that the effort you put in on the court in practice is a direct correlation to how you play your matches. She has played with 3 different partners most of which are younger than her. I do this because I can trust Jordan to be the positive role model and lead the younger player through the season in a way that allows for tennis growth as well as personal growth. Jordan is very flexible when it comes to partners and positions on the team. She is always saying whatever is best for the team is what she wants to do. That attitude is appreciated by myself as well as the other coaches. Jordan is a solid student that is at the top of her class academically and also participates in band as well as competitive dance. She very rarely if ever misses practice. She has managed her time to stay balanced in her endeavors. Jordan has a drive to improve and succeed, but that drive never belittles or hurts another player on the team. She is a TEAM player through and through. She enjoys seeing the other players do well and is well liked by the players. She is very level headed and does not get wrapped up in the drama of high school. She is a great asset to our team and a deserving nominee for this award.”

Junior Male Sportsmanship Award

This Award goes to the 18 and under age division male player who demonstrates the highest standard of tennis accomplishments, character, conduct, sportsmanship, appearance, and amateurism.

Jack Seymour

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Presented by Coach Shane Dilloway and NMTA President Steve Witte

Larry Nykerk as coached him for many years as has this to say about Jack:

"Jack is the personification of good sportsmanship. He has already won the "Spirit and Attitude" award for TC Central tennis twice, with a third time likely. He also captured the "Trojan Award" last year, which reflects Jack's competitiveness, the kind that will fight for every point, love the battle, but also applaud his opponent's best efforts.

Jack was selected Team Captain this year, a huge honor on a team with rich history and tradition! As Captain, Jack has shown great leadership, both by example, and with verbal support of younger players. He has been a "coach's dream" as both Captain and player, both on and off the court. In my coaching tenure, which spans a few decades, Jack has been the best Trojan Captain ever!

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For TC Central, Jack has won 92 matches and captured 14 tournament titles. He owns a Regional doubles title. He has Big North and All Conference honors the past 3 years. He has been on the Record Eagle Dream Team every year, and is the leading candidate to be the Captain this year, an honor reserved for the “best player in the North!”

On the USTA front, Jack has traveled to lots of sanctioned tournaments to keep improving his game. He has played on the Jr. Davis Cup team twice, won Sportsmanship Awards at two USTA tournaments, and was a Sportsmanship Award nominee at the Midwest Closed. Jack is also Jr. Club champion at the Grand Traverse Resort, and is ranked #1 in boy’s 18’s in the NMTA, and 110 in the Midwest.

As a volunteer, Jack teaches at the Grand Traverse Resort on Free Play Days, and has been a court monitor for Red Ball and Orange Ball tournaments. He also volunteers in the TC Central Ambassador program, mentoring eighth graders transitioning to high school.

Future plans involve going into the Professional Tennis Management Program at Ferris State University, with plans to teach tennis professionally. He has been teaching tennis to junior players at Grand Traverse Tennis Camp and Grand Traverse Resort. He would also like to play varsity tennis for Ferris.

Family of the Year Award

This Award goes to a family in the Northern Michigan who has at least one adult and one junior member who are actively involved in playing / promoting tennis in our District.

The Malpass Family: Tad, Brenda, Kirsten & Keegan

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Presented by Steve Witte

“Every time I see the Malpass family at a tennis event or at Bay tennis & Fitness racquet club they always greet you with a smile and hello. They always have positive attitudes on and off the court,” shared NMTA President, Steve Witte during his presentation.

Kirsten played no.1 singles for East Jordan HS for 3 years. She was the driving force behind forming their first ever girl’s tennis team. There was no tennis team her freshman year and so she decided to promote having one formed. She approached the Superintendent and convinced him that she and others could develop the interest in tennis for the following year, which they did. Kirsten received a partial scholarship to play at LSSU and is currently on the varsity women's team. As a team they had a character-building year but also had several bright spots and Kirsten was able to win

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some matches. They are a young team and only have one senior, one junior, two sophomores and the rest are freshman. She is studying business and marketing and has adjusted well.

Keegan played no. 2 singles for EJ in her freshman year last year and is expected to play number 1 this year. When volleyball season ended, she was back in the club playing tennis the very next day. She typically goes up 3 times a week for academy and in addition does some separate lessons.

Brenda has always been supportive of the family with tennis and has hit with the family all along. In the past year she has been taking lessons from Doug Dickinson once a week at Bay Tennis and is playing very well and enjoying it a lot. Tad and Brenda's very first date was on a tennis court back in 1985 and will celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary come this summer.

They have all enjoyed the facilities at Bay Tennis and Fitness and utilize them regularly. Kirsten sometimes comes down from college for the day to play in 2 hours of drills with Keegan and Tad, and then play an additional half hour followed by the girls playing an additional hour in a lesson from Doug Dickinson. Both of them have had many lessons from Chris Wagner as well.

Tad retired from work in 2012 as his travels interfered extensively with his time with the family. Since retiring, he has not missed any tennis matches, volleyball games, or other school activities including academic award ceremonies, parent-teacher conferences, and more. It has been very rewarding for him and he finds fulfillment to be there and support his daughters.

The girls started off with tennis from about the time they could hold a racquet and it has

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become an extremely important part of their family life. Many of the family vacations have revolved around tennis and the girls have been going to Sea Island, GA for many years since they were born. They took lessons there through the years including most recently from Luke and Murphy Jensen.

The family spends summers at their cottage on Lake Charlevoix in East Jordan where they have a tennis court. The girls have played with friends and neighbors there all of their lives. There have been a number of kids go on to play HS tennis as a result of learning how to play with Kirsten and Keegan and others have honed their skills there. The girls' Grandfather built the court back in 1969.

In the East Jordan History book, there was a large interest in boys tennis as a result of a gentlemen from Alabama who moved to EJ and coached, by the name of Ed Burrows, who inspired Tad to get involved in tennis. Tad was fortunate to play for Burrows and played in HS state finals for two years. Burrows keeps in touch with the family and calls every few weeks to see how the girls are doing. He spends his summers in Northern MI and is a frequent visitor to the Malpass cottage to watch the family play. Tad says, "he still coaches us from the sidelines at 87 years old."

The Malpass family has developed many friendships as a result of playing tennis, especially at Bay Tennis & Fitness. They have met so many wonderful people there that the girls often comment on how it has become just like family. Both the staff and members have been so kind and supportive. The girls have attended academy there and have become very good friends with many of the Petoskey, Harbor Springs, and other area tennis players, both boys and girls. Even though the drive can be up to an hour each way, you can find Tad on the court most mornings for two hours or more. Tennis has been and is such an important part of the Malpass family. They cannot imagine being without the sport they love so much.

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