

Spring 2012

CrossCourt

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March into Tennis Promoting Youth Recruitment Efforts



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MISSOURI VALLEY

The USTA Missouri Valley publishes CrossCourt on a quarterly basis, focusing specifically on the members and events in the section. All material is copyright USTA Missouri Valley, unless otherwise noted.

Your feedback is welcome.



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MISSOURI VALLEY

theSERVE with the Jr. Team Tennis 14s Advanced Team

Seven teens from Kickingbird Tennis Club in Edmond, Oklahoma had a tennis experience in 2011 that they'll always remember. The 14's Advanced Division team competed in the 2011 USTA Jr. Team Tennis National Championships in Surprise, Arizona. The team, coached by Javier Easton, shared their thoughts about going to Nationals and why they love the game with **CrossCourt** before they left for Surprise last October.

Story by Manon Eilts

At right:

Members of the Jr. Team Tennis 14s Advanced Team - Beau Lanier, Joel Tinker, Caleb Belden, Miller Zeiders, Kinsey Fields, Rylee Tucker, Jaci Smith



When did you first start playing tennis?

Jaci: I have gone to tennis camps and played in my front yard since I was six, but I started competing in tournaments when I was 11.

How did you first get started playing tennis?

Rylee: I started playing tennis because my friend was going to play and I wanted to play with her. I started out doing beginner drills and loved it, so I kept on playing.

Do you play any other sports?

Kinsey: Basketball and barrel horse racing.

Jaci: I run cross country and track and I also play basketball.

What is your favorite subject in school?

Beau: My favorite subject in school is EVERY subject!

Kinsey: Art.

What are your goals in tennis?

Caleb: To continue advancing in the Missouri Valley, to make it to Nationals in 14 singles in 2012 and to get a college scholarship.

Who is your favorite tennis player, and why?

Miller: Roger Federer because he has a one-handed backhand like me.

Beau: Pete Sampras because he is a legend and I try to develop my game similar to his.

Joel: Andy Murray because he never gives up and I love his style of play and work ethic.

Are you excited to play at Jr. Team Tennis National Championships?

Beau: Yes, extremely excited. I think it will be an experience I will never forget.

Caleb: Yes, I am very excited because I have never played in a national tournament.

What are you most looking forward to at the Jr. Team Tennis National Championships?

Caleb: I am looking forward to playing some great competitors and doing well for my team.

Rylee: I'm looking forward to playing great competition and having fun.

What's the best part about playing tennis?

Miller: That it's physical but I also have to use my head. And it's just fun!

Kinsey: The fun and the competition.

It's a Saturday afternoon, what are you most likely to be doing?

Joel: Playing tennis or hanging out with friends.

Jaci: If I'm not playing a tennis tournament, I would be outside running or swimming or hitting tennis balls against my garage door.

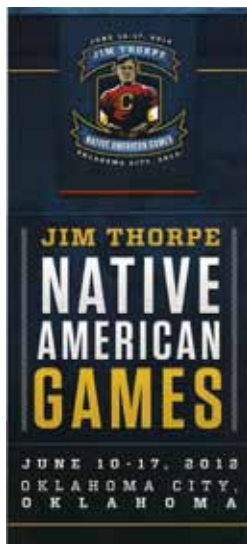
Describe your tennis style.

Jaci: I guess I'm a counter puncher. I get everything back deep with spin and wait for a good opportunity to put the ball away.

Joel: I try to play consistent until I get a short ball and then I rip it!

HONORING A LEGACY:

Jim Thorpe Games Will Celebrate the
100-Year Anniversary of Athlete's Olympic Triumph



Few athletes have impacted sports history like Jim Thorpe. Born in Oklahoma, his versatility was unmatched as he won multiple Olympic medals and also played professional baseball, football and basketball.

Thorpe's legacy will be honored from June 10-17 in Oklahoma City, which will play host to the Jim Thorpe Native American Games. The event will coincide with the 100th anniversary of Thorpe's performance at the 1912 Olympic Games in Stockholm, Sweden.

The Games will feature athletic competitions in 11 traditional sports – including tennis – as well as exhibitions in other games, such as stickball, blowgun and hatchet-

throwing. More than 3,000 Native American athletes representing Indian nations, bands and tribes from across the United States are expected to participate.

The tennis tournament will offer a range of divisions, including men's and women's open singles and doubles, in addition to mixed doubles. It will also have age brackets for juniors and adults alike. Players will travel from around the country to play in the event.

"I am so happy that tennis is one of the sports chosen to be part of the Jim Thorpe Games," said Margaret Knight, tennis tournament director. "I'm hoping that tennis is a sport that Native people can become interested in and that it will become a sport for the entire family."

The Jim Thorpe Games tennis tournament will take the place of the North American Indian Tennis Association (NAITA) Championships, which are held annually each Memorial Day weekend. The event has frequently been held in the Missouri Valley section and will return to it in 2013, in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

This year, however, the tennis tournament will be a part of a larger focus – honoring Thorpe's historic contributions to the sporting world. And in that spirit, the Games will aim to build those positive aspects in its competitors, especially younger ones.

"The Native American communities know the importance and value of supporting healthy lifestyle choices for their youth. Some of the many benefits of the Games will include promoting leadership development, increasing cultural awareness and most importantly, motivating young people to achieve great things," said Annetta Abbott, Executive Director of the Jim Thorpe Games.

"Our young people are not only the leaders of the future; they are the leaders of today."

Proceeds from the Games will benefit the Jim Thorpe Bright Path Youth Programs that include Jim Thorpe All-Star Games, Children's Challenge, Artfest and the statewide Red Ribbon Week. In addition, a portion of the proceeds will benefit the "Awakening the Spirit"

Native American Diabetes Awareness and Prevention program of the American Diabetes Association.

For more information, visit the Jim Thorpe Games website:
www.jimthorpegames.com.

WILLIAMS HOPES TO MAKE MARK AT JIM THORPE GAMES

The Jim Thorpe Games will feature elite athletes from around the United States, and the tennis event will be no different. One of the names to watch will also be one of the youngest competitors in the field: 15-year-old Austin Williams, who lives in Wichita, Kansas, and trains in Kansas City, Missouri.

Williams is of Cherokee heritage and will participate in the Games for the first time.

"I'm excited," Williams told the Indian Country Today Media Network. "I've never played in it before. I think it will be fun to see some of the other Native American games along with my sport."

The high school sophomore has made an impact in the USTA Missouri Valley junior circuit, ranking as high as No. 6 in the Boys 16s division of the Missouri Valley section. He also ranks in the top 250 nationally in that same division.

Williams maintains aspirations of playing tennis in college and is currently interested in such high-profile schools as Michigan, Pepperdine, Florida, Texas and Tennessee.



Above and lower left: Athletes compete at the 2008 NAITA games. The Jim Thorpe games will take the place of the NAITA games this year.



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Anthony Perkins is quite familiar with the 10 and Under Tennis movement here in the United States. As a child, Perkins grew up learning tennis in a similar system in the United Kingdom – known there as “Short Tennis” – and is now working to help young kids here develop their games. As the Director of Junior Tennis at Midtown Athletic Club in Overland Park, Kansas, Perkins is implementing programs that fully embrace 10 and Under Tennis. He spoke with the USTA Missouri Valley about his approach and how learning tennis in a modified format made him a better player.

CrossCourt: Tell us a little bit about your tennis background and how you got involved in the game.

Anthony Perkins: I started playing tennis around age four in the United Kingdom because my whole family plays. I started out playing a few tournaments at under-10 and then, by under-12s, I was part of the Junior National Team. At age 16, I moved to a Tennis Center of Excellence in London to train full-time and go to school. When I graduated high school I traveled all over the world, playing lower satellites and playing professional club tennis in Germany. I wasn't doing so well on the tour, so decided to come to the United States and took a scholarship at Drake University in Iowa. I played for four years at Drake and then took over as the coach there for a season before working as the Junior Director at Aspen Athletic Club for about five years. In 2009, I decided to move to Kansas City and took the role of Director of Junior Tennis at Midtown Athletic Club in Overland Park, Kansas.

You grew up in England and learned to play tennis with a method similar to 10 and Under Tennis here in the U.S. How did that shape your development as a player?

Back in the late 1980s it was called “Short Tennis,” and my mother actually used to teach classes in a church hall, so I went along and played with them. We had state and national championships with it on a 42-foot court using a foam ball. I went to the national championships and was lucky

enough to be selected to do a demonstration at Wimbledon in 1988 with the red ball. [Learning this way] helped for a couple of reasons. First, I could play games, which meant it was more fun so I kept going back. More importantly, it helped me become a better tactical player since I was able to work more on playing out points as opposed to technique.



How did you get involved in teaching tennis?

When I was playing at Drake, the men's coach there had us help out with lessons and camps, and when he left I took over for him. I chose to go into teaching as opposed to collegiate coaching after coaching 16s Zonals. I found that you get to make more of a difference with kids when you start them young as opposed to coaching 20-year-olds in college.

Why do you think that using a modified play format like 10 and Under Tennis is important for the development of young players?

Because it's fun! It allows us to play more with the kids and it allows the kids an environment in which they can learn for themselves, as opposed to us simply telling them what to do. It's like a science experiment; you never really know what's going to happen. It allows for us teaching professionals to really get involved with each student individually. And it makes players so much more tactically aware as they find out what their strengths and weaknesses are by playing. We see kids come in and play tennis on their first day. That never happened before.

What types of events and tournaments do you host at your club for 10 and Under Tennis players, and what has the response been from the players and parents?

We run an in-house Grand Slam circuit (US Open, Australian Open, French Open, Wimbledon) for each level – red, orange, green – which has proven very popular with the kids and parents. Also, we recently had a parent-child orange court tournament where parents had to use 25-inch racquets and play on the smaller court with their kids. At Midtown, we have permanent lines on all of our courts, which allows us to go back and forth easily. We hosted two sanctioned 10 and Under Tennis tournaments last year, and will host a 10 and Under Tennis individual championship for the Missouri Valley in June, along

with a Tennis Play Day in March. We also did a "QuickStart Tennis, pizza and a movie" night for the kids a couple of months ago.

What advice would you have for other teaching pros who may be hesitant to use 10 and Under Tennis and break from the more traditional methods of instructions?

First of all, just put lines down on all your courts. That way you don't have any excuses. And second, don't interfere with the players as much as you think you should; allow them to find out things for themselves. They are much more likely to retain information if they think that they figured it out for themselves. Create a positive, fun learning environment and don't be afraid to be a kid yourself. And finally, use the same equipment that the kids are supposed to use because they will be more likely to use the correct equipment if we show that we can use it, too.

What do you like to do when you're not playing tennis?

I watch a lot of soccer from England, hang out with my wife, Emily, and my dog, Oliver.



Join the celebration!

Host or attend a youth tennis event and be a part of the USTA's largest youth tennis recruitment effort!



Join the celebration! Host a turnkey Youth Registration event this March and be a part of the USTA's largest youth tennis recruitment effort - and grow your business. Sign up kids for Spring and Summer tennis programs and show parents how the game has been sized right for kids.



Play Days are events designed to introduce kids to competition in a low-pressure setting where results are not documented. These events provide kids with the opportunity to continue to develop and enhance their skills. From beginners to more experienced players, a Play Day is a welcoming way for kids to experience the social and competitive aspects of tennis.



A Kids' Tennis Club is a great way for kids to be introduced to tennis in a safe, open-play setting at local schools, parks, youth centers and tennis facilities. These "clubs" offer kids the opportunity to have fun, gain confidence and meet new friends, while enhancing their social and physical development.

To learn more or to register an event, visit 10andundertennis.com

Net Notes



Homestead Country Club to Host US Open National Playoffs

Homestead Country Club in Prairie Village, Kansas will host the US Open National Playoffs Missouri Valley Sectional Qualifying Tournament, June 28-July 1. The event will again include both men's and women's singles and mixed doubles.

The champions from each sectional qualifying tournament will advance to the US Open National Playoffs – Men's Singles, Women's Singles and Mixed Doubles Championship. The men's and women's singles champions of the national championships earn a wild card into the US Open Qualifying Tournament, held the week prior to the US Open. The US Open National Playoffs mixed doubles champions receive a main draw wild card into the 2012 US Open.

Registration opens on March 15 at www.usta.com/tennislink. The entry fee is \$100 for singles and \$120 for each mixed doubles team (\$60 per player). All players competing must have a current USTA membership valid through August 27, 2012. Participants can be of any playing level, from aspiring novice to seasoned professional, giving everyone an equal opportunity to advance.

Sock Wins \$10k Futures Title in Florida

While much of the tennis world was focused Down Under in early January, Jack Sock was keeping his sights set not-so-far south at the \$10,000 Plantation Open in Plantation, Florida.

In an effort to grind out some victories on the Futures circuit and build up his game at the start of his first full professional season, Sock stayed stateside in January rather than travel the Australian circuit. The effort paid off on Sunday, as he won his second professional singles title – and his first since 2009 – with a 6-1, 7-6(5) win over Aussie teenager Jason Kubler in the championship match.

The Missouri Valley teen breezed through the draw during the week, winning five matches without dropping a set. He upset third-seeded Benjamin Balleret 7-6(7), 7-5 in the quarterfinals before topping Matwe Middelkoop 6-3, 4-1(ret.) in the semifinals. That set up Sock for his title match against Kubler, another straight-set win.



Washington University in St. Louis took home the crown at the USTA Missouri Valley Tennis on Campus Winter Invite, held at Creve Coeur Racquet Club in St. Louis on January 28. Wash U topped Missouri in the final round by a 25-19 tally. The win follows Washington's first-place finish at the Fall Invite in Kansas City in October. In total, eight teams competed at the event.



Missouri Valley Offering 10 and Under Incentive Program

The USTA Missouri Valley is offering an incentive program for Organization Members and their 10 and Under Tennis programming for 2012. Incentive packages will be offered for hosting USTA Play Days, one-day 10 and Under Tennis tournaments and USTA Jr. Team Tennis.

The basic categories for events and their funding are listed below. Organizations can earn up to \$900 in funding for hosting three of the listed events, as well as bonus funding for taking video, photos and using social media to promote the events. For full details and information about the incentive program, visit www.tinyurl.com/MVincentive.



SHARE YOUR NEWS

Have news for CrossCourt? Send an e-mail to CrossCourt@movalley.usta.com.

Check out the following youth events coming to a town near you!

O'Fallon Parks & Recreation

Youth Registration Event
March 15, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.
2650 Tri Sports Circle
O'Fallon, Missouri
aanderson@ofallon.mo.us

Fremont Family YMCA

Play Day
March 18, 2-4 p.m.
Fremont, Nebraska
ymcadmyers@yahoo.com

McPherson Advantage Junior Tennis Club

Youth Registration Event
March 20, 7-8 p.m.
1509 Heritage Place
McPherson, Kansas
janiebremyer@yahoo.com

Boonslick Heartland YMCA

Youth Registration Event
March 24, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.
757 Third Street
Boonville, Missouri
mhollrah@boonslickheartlandymca.org

Homestead Country Club

Play Day
March 24, 11 a.m.-12 p.m.
6510 Mission Road
Prairie Village, Kansas
kctennispro@gmail.com

Boonslick Heartland YMCA

Play Day
March 24, 2-5 p.m.
757 Third Street
Boonville, Missouri
mhollrah@boonslickheartlandymca.org

Free Tennis Day

Play Day
March 25, 1-3 p.m.
10101 Bond
Overland Park, Kansas
laddadi1@aol.com

Marshall Junior Tennis

Youth Registration
March 25, 1-3 p.m.
805 South Miami
Marshall, Missouri
scarney@marshallschools.com

Free Tennis in Overland Park

Play Day
March 25, 1:30-3 p.m.
9516 Farley Circle
Overland Park, Kansas
laddadi1@aol.com

Cooper Tennis Complex

Play Day
March 25, 2-4 p.m.
2331 E. Pythian
Springfield, Missouri
lhaugness@springfieldmo.gov

Guthrie Junior Tennis - Kids Free Day

Youth Registration Event
March 25, 3-5 p.m.
3736 East Seward Road
Guthrie, Oklahoma
eric.moore@qg.com

Grover Park Tennis Courts

Play Day
March 29, 6-8 p.m.
428 Mill Street
Warrensburg, Missouri
matt.clawson@warrensburg-mo.com

Jefferson City Parks and Recreation

Play Day
March 31, 9-11 a.m.
1200 Missouri Boulevard
Jefferson City, Missouri
dunville@embarqmail.com

Wood Valley Racquet Club

Play Day
March 31, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.
2909 SW 37th Street
Topeka, Kansas
ozcat@cox.net

Guthrie Junior Tennis Camp

Youth Registration Event
March 31, 2-3:30 p.m.
3736 East Seward Road
Guthrie, Oklahoma
eric.moore@qg.com

Midtown Athletic Club

Play Day
March 31, 4-8 p.m.
6700 West 110th Street
Overland Park, Kansas
anthony.perkins@midtown.com

**Don't forget - you can host or attend a
Tennis Play Day year-round!**

Visit www.10andUnderTennis.com for more information.

