

CrossCourt

Vol. 4 No. 3

Spring 2009

missourivalley.usta.com



**quickstart
tennis**

*A QuickStart
Tennis Success
in Springfield*



MISSOURI VALLEY

From The Alley

Letters to the Editor

A Great Surprise!

Nice article in CrossCourt (Winter 2008 issue) on the incoming president of the USTA Missouri Valley, Shelley George. It was a great opportunity for those not familiar with her to get to understand why we view her as such a great choice and such a valuable asset for our district, section and the USTA as a whole.

Also, thanks for the nice article on Red Oak, our store, and Ann and I. Good to finally set the record straight, I was initially just a carpool ticket to her.

Keep up the good work in the CrossCourt magazine.

Mark Jackson

Red Oak, Iowa

Iowa District President

**Editors Note: Mark Jackson and his store were recently profiled in Values magazine which caters to hardware stores across the country.*



CrossCourt welcomes your comments and suggestions. If you'd like to see your comments in a future issue, e-mail crosscourt@movalley.usta.com

Visit us online!

Headline box with hot news

Find out who and what is in our spotlight

Spotlight

Tennis Night in America

Spotlight

Attend a Jr. Team Tennis Town Hall

Spotlight

Follow the USTA Missouri Valley on Twitter

Spotlight

Sign up to host a Tennis Block Party

Headlines

- USTA Missouri Valley Announces 2009 Hall of Fame Inductees
- Attend a Jr. Team Tennis Town Hall
- USTA Missouri Valley Announces 2009 Hall of Fame Inductees
- USTA Missouri Valley Announces 2009 Hall of Fame Inductees
- USTA Missouri Valley Announces 2009 Hall of Fame Inductees
- USTA Missouri Valley Announces 2009 Hall of Fame Inductees
- USTA Missouri Valley Announces 2009 Hall of Fame Inductees
- USTA Missouri Valley Announces 2009 Hall of Fame Inductees
- USTA Missouri Valley Announces 2009 Hall of Fame Inductees
- USTA Missouri Valley Announces 2009 Hall of Fame Inductees

Newest Headlines

missourivalley.usta.com

MISSOURI VALLEY

30 **CrossCourt** SPRING 2009 // MISSOURIVALLEY.USTA.COM



MISSOURI VALLEY

The USTA Missouri Valley publishes CrossCourt quarterly, focusing specifically on the members and events in the section. All material ©USTA Missouri Valley, unless otherwise noted. This is our 15th issue of CrossCourt, and third in the fourth volume.

Your feedback is welcome.



USTA Missouri Valley
6400 West 95th Street
Suite 102
Overland Park, Kansas 66212



missourivalley.usta.com
crosscourt@movalley.usta.com



(913) 322-4800
(888)368-8612 Toll Free



(913) 322-4801 Fax

Shelley George
President

Mary Buschmann
Executive Director

Manon Eilts
Marketing/Communications Director

Richard Dedor
Communications Coordinator - Pubs.
CrossCourt Editor

Eli Gieryna
Communications Coordinator - PR
CrossCourt Writer

For issues with your membership with the USTA, please contact USTA Member Services at 1-800-990-USTA, or visit the Membership Center at www.usta.com/membership.

CrossCourt is mailed to every household with at least one member.

If you would like additional copies for your facility, please contact CrossCourt at the address above.

Inside this Issue/Spring 2009

32 BE A TENNIS OFFICIAL

Getting trained as a tennis official allows you to travel and help grow the game at the grassroots level.

33 NET NOTES

Closer to home, these people are making an impact in your communities. See who they are!

34 ACOSTA BROTHERS STORY

Two brothers. One passion. Learn about the Acosta brothers (not to be confused with the Bryan brothers) of Springfield, Mo., and their dreams on the court.

36 GETTING TO KNOW

A former Division I player at the University of Northern Iowa, Ryan Kalis is now the head boys tennis coach at Park Hill High School in Kansas City. He's also a no-cut coach and volunteer.

"It was a great year and I played really well, winning three more [Gold Balls] was a boost for my play and I hope to continue it in 2009."

WANT MORE TENNIS?

Log on to missourivalley.usta.com daily for the latest news and events from across the section.

Exclusive Video

Check out our YouTube Channel!
<http://www.youtube.com/user/mvusta>



TYLER ACOSTA
STORY PAGE 34



MIA LANCASTER



JACK SOCK

In or Out? Become a USTA Tennis Official

We Need Officials!

- Do you enjoy tennis?
- Do you have sharp vision and the ability to concentrate?
- Do you have good communication skills?
- Are you interested in giving back to tennis some of what it has given you?
- Have you considered becoming a tennis official?

We need trained, certified umpires and referees for tournaments and college matches across the Missouri Valley. We offer the training to get you started in a rewarding and exciting part of the game—tennis officiating. Accept the challenge, you'll be glad you did.

What Does an Official Do?

While serving as a referee, chair umpire, rover or line umpire, a tennis official makes sure that a tennis match is conducted under the fairest possible conditions.

How do I become an Official?

To get started as a USTA official you must: be an active USTA member, have corrected 20/20 vision and pass a written rules test.

Where Can I Officiate?

- Junior and Adult Tournaments
- State High School Championships
- District and sectional events
- Collegiate matches
- National Championships
- Future Series
- Challenger Series
- Tour level events
- Over 8,000 tournaments throughout the country



For More Information

If you are interested in becoming an official for the USTA, please either **e-mail the USTA Missouri Valley Officials Chair, Verne Weber at vaweber10s@aol.com**, or call us at (888) 368-8612.

For further information, visit us online at missourivalley.usta.com and click **Officials** on the left of the page.

40 YEARS OF
GIVING TENNIS
PLAYERS AN
ADVANTAGE.



THE JOHN NEWCOMBE
TENNIS RANCH



JUNIOR CAMPS

ALL LEVELS: TOP GUN, SPRING, SUMMER & WINTER CAMPS

YEAR ROUND ACADEMY

SEMESTER, MONTHLY & WEEKLY PROGRAMS.
MODEST SIZE-INDIVIDUALIZED FOCUS, COLLEGE PLACEMENT
ASSISTANCE, COACHES TRAVEL TO TOURNAMENTS.
GENEROUS SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE.

ADULT YEAR ROUND CAMPS

AUSSIE FUN, QUALITY INSTRUCTION, EVENING ENTERTAINMENT,
4:1 RATIO

SUMMER ACADEMY

MULTI-WEEK PROGRAM, OFF-CAMPUS TOURNAMENTS & COACHING
BY ACADEMY PROFESSIONALS.

SPRING BREAK ACADEMY

WORKOUT WITH SCHOOL YEAR ACADEMY STUDENTS

SPORTSMANSHIP

TEAM-FAMILY-TEAM
THE HEART OF WHAT WE TEACH!

NEWKTENNIS.COM | 800.444.6204

FILA

Babolat

Net Notes

WHAT'S GOING ON AROUND THE MISSOURI VALLEY

Recently, **David Minihan**, the director of tennis at the Westwood Tennis Center in Norman, Okla., was recognized by the USPTA as a Master Professional. Only about 1 percent of USPTA's more than 15,000 members have achieved this distinction.

Chase Hodges, head men's tennis coach for the Drake Bulldogs (Des Moines, Iowa), recently was awarded the Campus Recreation Award by the ITA. This award honors coaches who have done an outstanding job implementing recreational tennis programs on campus.



Three Missouri Valley community organizations have been awarded grants by USTA Serves, the foundation of the USTA. Two organizations were awarded grants by the USTA Public Affairs Committee which is seeking to reduce and prevent gang violence. **Children & Family Urban Ministries** of Des Moines, Iowa, was awarded \$5,000 and the **Genesis School** of Kansas City, Mo., was awarded \$15,000 towards their programs. **The KIPP Endeavor Academy** of Kansas City, Mo., was awarded \$25,000 from the Aces for Kids initiative towards their programming as well.

Aces for Kids is a national initiative of the USTA that is overseen by USTA Serves in conjunction with the USTA Public Affairs Committee. It strives to promote healthy lifestyles by combating childhood/adult obesity by providing disadvantaged, at-risk children the opportunity to learn to play tennis and improve their academic skills in a structured format; develop computer literacy; interact with a mentor and other students; and attend college preparatory sessions.

Dustin Perry (Kansas City, Mo.) was named Prince Sports Sales Representative of the Year for 2008. Perry services players, clubs, coaches and academies in Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Southern Illinois.

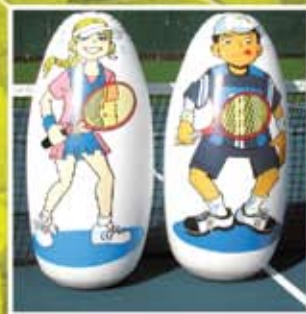
This July, seven-time grand slam champions Bob & Mike Bryan along with Anna Kournikova will appear in the Missouri Valley playing for World TeamTennis franchises in Kansas City and St. Louis.
(view WTT information on page 26.)

For more information, visit www.WTT.com



Oncourt Offcourt

Leaders in Fun and Innovation



Oncourt Offcourt
Leaders in Fun and Innovation

OVER 300 CREATIVE
✓ tennis training aids
✓ fitness tools
✓ target systems
...and more



"beep"



FREE CATALOG

1-888-366-4711

www.oncourtoffcourt.com



SMALL COURTS BIGGER DREAMS

BY ELI GIERYNA

T Tyler and Evan Acosta were initially skeptical of QuickStart Tennis. The format, a USTA initiative launched last year, reduces the size of the court and racquets to make tennis an easier game for younger players to learn. The kid-friendly specs aim to increase the length of rallies, making tennis more fun and competitive for all players.

But for Tyler (age 9) and Evan (age 8) they had already been playing tennis for several years with, as Evan says, “big-kid nets” and were reluctant to change to smaller courts, smaller racquets and softer tennis balls.

"We weren't sure at first," said Tyler. "We had played regular tennis for a while and it was weird to change."

The brothers play at Cooper Tennis Complex in Springfield, Mo., where QuickStart – alternatively known as Play and Stay – has become a major part of the facility's youth programs. Amanda Donat, Cooper's assistant tennis pro, says that it has greatly helped young players pick up the game.

"I'm a big believer in the format," she says. "It's worked for a lot of kids. They're actually able to play tennis. Serving, returning, volleying – they're doing all of that."

After their initial reluctance, the Acostas transitioned to the new format and have seen their games greatly improve.

"I like it now because it's easier to volley, and I feel like I'm playing real points," Tyler said.

Evan agrees, saying, "It was a good way to start off. It's really fun to play longer points."

The increased ease of play has sparked a strong dedication to tennis in the brothers, who state that their goal is to someday win the US Open together in doubles. They play nearly every day in the summer months, sometimes staying at the courts for most of the daylight hours.

"We're like Venus and Serena," said Evan. "Only we're a boy version."

But perhaps the biggest influence for the brothers is another pair of

racquet-wielding siblings – Bob and Mike Bryan, the No. 1-ranked doubles tandem in the world.

Tyler and Evan dressed up like Bob and Mike for Halloween in 2007, and they've even perfected the famous Bryan Brothers chest bump as their on-court celebration. And as one might imagine, they were thrilled this past summer when they

“
I like it now because it's easier to volley, and I feel like I'm playing real points.

were able to meet Bob and Mike at a Springfield Lasers World TeamTennis match. They received autographs from the duo and also talked to Wayne Bryan, the pair's father.

"Wayne said that he'd be watching the TV for our names," Tyler said.

If the Acostas do eventually experience a Bryan-like ascension to the top of the world rankings, or even if they simply continue to grow and develop as tennis players, the simplified QuickStart format will have played a role in that progression.

"Tyler and Evan were more developed than a lot of kids who begin [QuickStart]," said Donat. "But I think that's a testament to the format. Learning to play out points is a big benefit. Hitting one or two shots on a full-size court isn't a rally, and it doesn't help young players to do it."

She continued, "And it's not just small equipment for the sake of being small. There's a lot of biomechanical research behind the format and how it's better for kids to learn to play this way."

While scientific research and biomechanics may not be foremost on the minds of the young brothers, they seem to recognize that the format has played an instrumental role in their tennis lives.

"It's helped," said Tyler. "I'm better now than I was before. Plus it's fun to play."

He then looked at his brother, who replied in turn.

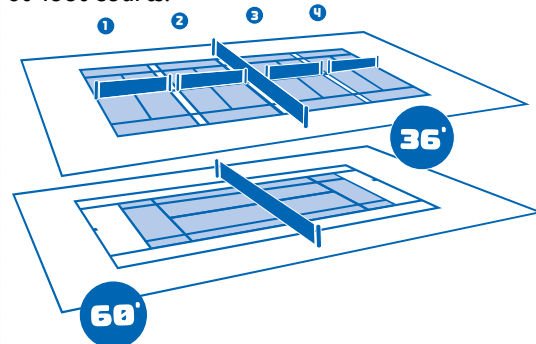
"Yeah, it's fun," Evan said. "We really love tennis. And we want to play forever."

What is **quickstart tennis**

QuickStart Tennis is a targeted, tennis industry-wide path to making the game easier for young players. It is supported by the USTA, USPTA, PTR, TIA and equipment manufacturers. Making the courts smaller, similar to what other sports do with their games, is a proven method to teach the game to beginning players.

Going Small

The courts are made smaller to ease the transition into a "full-court" game at the age of ten. For 8-and-under, children play on 36-foot courts. For children 10-and-under, they play on 60-foot courts.



You can get trained!

There are Recreational Coach Workshops (RCW) to teach instructors and parents the QuickStart Tennis methodology. A host of support materials, a dedicated Web site, and your district Tennis Service Representative are available to assist your training needs.

It's Easy!

It is quick and easy to set up the lines needed to mark off the courts. Mini-nets and low-compression balls can also be purchased at a myriad of retailers.

Play on a Team!

With the USTA's Jr. Team Tennis program, kids as young as six can now play on a tennis team and play using the QuickStart Tennis format. It's a win-win for everyone!

Play Now!

If you're interested in finding a QuickStart Tennis facility for your child or providers wanting to learn more or to register their tennis facility as a QuickStart Tennis site, please **Go to the net at** www.QuickStartTennis.com

On Court With...

Ryan Kalis

BY ADAM BURRIS
SPRING 2009 INTERN

This "Getting to Know" segment is a feature of every issue of **CrossCourt**. We pick a Missouri Valley member who has an interesting personality trait, skill, or hobby. To suggest someone for this feature, email crosscourt@movalley.usta.com

This month, CrossCourt sat down with Park Hill High School (Kansas City, Mo.) tennis coach Ryan Kalis to discuss his lifetime involvement in the sport he calls his passion. Kalis has coached at Park Hill for eleven years and previously spent time coaching high school tennis in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, before moving to Kansas City. Kalis also plays World TeamTennis Corporate Leagues and recently won the national championship in his division.

CrossCourt: How did you first get involved with tennis?

Ryan Kalis: When I was around 10 years old I started playing at the local country club in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and followed that up by playing at a local racquet club. I moved onto playing in USTA events before playing high school and college tennis at the University of Northern Iowa.

CC: Coaching tennis seems like a natural progression after playing for so long and at a high level. How did you get your start in coaching?

RK: Tennis is a lifelong game for me and coaching is a way for me to be involved. I have a passion for the game and when I was playing, I had many great experiences with coaches along the way. Matt Knoll, my coach at UNI (currently men's tennis coach at Baylor University), was phenomenal and someone I could look up to. I was already working towards being a teacher, so after college I had an opportunity to coach at Washington High School in Cedar Rapids and I took it.

CC: What has been the most rewarding part of coaching for you?

RK: Seeing the growth and progress of the kids along the way. They come out freshman year as novices, some of them have never even hit a ball in their life, and they end up a few years later playing competitively and playing for the varsity team. I also enjoy running into former students, and seeing them still involved with the sport. They still have love and passion for the game and I have always enjoyed watching that grow.

CC: You use a no-cut policy at your high school. Why did you decide to be a no-cut coach?

RK: The bottom line is giving every kid an opportunity. My first year here, we only had about eleven or twelve students out for the team, which was barely enough to field a team and we were not that strong. I knew it would take numbers for success to come and the goal was to get as many kids out as much as possible. It's a formula that has worked. I'm not required to be a no-cut coach, but I still am.

CC: What are the benefits to the students on a no-cut team?

RK: The worst time for teenagers is right after school, in the hours

between three and six. Not cutting kids keeps them interested, allows for more students to try out that may not have if I were to cut and it keeps kids working out. It provides

something they can enjoy after school and it gives experience to kids whether they are a competitive tennis player or a novice.

CC: You still have enough time to play competitively yourself. Tell me about your experience with World TeamTennis.

RK: I play for a local team in Kansas City and I am in my third season with the team. Scott Hanover put together a team and two years ago we won the national championships at Indian Wells in California. We didn't repeat, but we did return to nationals again last year. Hopefully, we will qualify for nationals again, and win again. Socially, the atmosphere is great and I love the format and variety of World TeamTennis. Through WTT, we got a chance to visit with Billie Jean King and I got a chance to get a feel for her passion and philosophy of the game.

CC: What are your favorite places that the sport has taken you?

RK: I am lucky enough have been to some of the pinnacle events in all stages of my tennis career. As a coach, going to Springfield, Mo., for the high school state championships is definitely a favorite memory of mine. As a fan, I have gotten the opportunity to see Wimbledon and the US Open. And as a player, going to Indian Wells in California for the national championships.

CC: Playing tennis is better than...?

RK: Better than playing any other sport. It is also better than watching it or being a casual observer of the game.

CC: What are your favorite non-tennis activities?

RK: Spending time with my family and kids. I have a 5-year-old daughter and 2-year-old son. Whatever they are doing I get into and I love doing things with them. I also enjoy being a math teacher and working out.



Ryan Kalis celebrates winning the 4.0 WTT Championship at Indian Wells in 2007.