

THE RULES OF THE TENNIS HAVE CHANGED (1) April 24 Madison Mayodan Rotary

3 year ago, the International Tennis Federation and the USTA changed the rules of tennis. (2) Players ten year old and younger use smaller lighter rackets, larger slower bouncing balls on smaller courts over lower nets. A revolution began that has brought hundreds of thousands of children onto tennis courts for the first time across the country and here in Rockingham County.

It all began with a tennis Festival on May 17, 2014 at Farris Memorial Park. (3, 4, 5) Using a corner of the parking lot and the basket ball court, we set up fun tennis stations including with an obstacle course, including bucket ball and ending with a mini-court hosted by teaching professional Bitrus Istafanus. 10 adult volunteers and Caroline Downs, USTA Junior Coordinator hosted 20 children and their families. (6)

In June, Andrew Aldrop, USTA Community Program and training Coordinator, arrived at the Eden Family Y for a coach youth tennis workshop. 20 community volunteer attended (7). They were Program Directors, counselors and staff from area summer day camps, experienced adult and high school tennis players, high school tennis moms, and even an ex-mayor of Madison. Some had tennis experience, many did not

Then the fun began...

During our first summer, we hosted 40 youth tennis events at 6 different locations across the county. Madison Mayodan Recreation Center in Mayodan (8), The Eden Family YMCA (9), Bridge Street Recreation Center(10) and Boys and Girls Club in Eden (11), the Reidsville Family YMCA (12) and Camp Carefree (13) in Stokesdale.

We call these first events Kids Tennis Clubs. (14) A KTC clinic is usually an 30 minutes to an hour long. The format includes a fun warm-up game, introduction of a tennis skill, and games across the net. The scoring is also kid-friendly using playing cards, clothespins or seconds ticking off a clock.

It's important for you to see another "revolution" in the way the children learn to play tennis today. Yes, the equipment and the court are now child-sized, but the children learn to **play with each other**. No longer do they learn standing in a line with a coach feeding balls from across the net, they learn racket and ball control, agility balance and coordination and play games across a net with each other. (16, 17, 18, 19)

In our first summer of 2014, over 250 children held rackets for the first time.

The Rockingham County Tennis pathway continues (21) as we became a USTA non-profit Community Tennis Association in September of 2014. In year #2, 2015 RC Tennis hosted over 150 youth and family tennis events including:

- Family Play Days held on summer evenings in Madison, Eden and Reidsville.
- Two seasons of USTA Junior Team Tennis at Jaycee Park courts in Reidsville (22)
- 2014-15 After school Kids Tennis Clubs partnering with the Reidsville YMCA (23)
- Tennis lessons at Rockingham Community College's Eaglemania summer program (24)
- A second summer of Kids Tennis Clubs with 7 seven summer camps and daycare providers supported by a grant from the Reidsville Area Foundation. We gave away over 200 youth tennis rackets and balls to our summer Kids Tennis Club players. (25)
- Appearances at Rockingham County Fall Festivals in Eden Reidsville and Stoneville (25)
- 2015-16 Kids Tennis Clubs at 10 after school care locations for supported by a grant from USTA NC (27)

We've even painted playground tennis courts at 6 elementary schools, Boys & Girls Club of Eden and the new Salvation Army recreation center in Reidsville using a USTA line grant and connected Rockingham Community College to a \$20,000 USTA grant to help resurface their tennis courts. (28)

The result – over 1,900 kids and families joined RC Tennis on the courts, play grounds and parking lots in 2015 - Many playing tennis for the very first time. (29)

I'm sure no speaker leaves the podium without including this important slide...what can YOU do? Here are some suggestions.

Volunteer to be a coach like Coach Jackie Cantrell who has never played a tennis match but loves children and is an accomplished Kids Tennis Club organizer with over 100 events under her belt. (30)

Help us connect to children and families in your community (31)

Give tennis a try! (32)

QUESTIONS and DEMO

Enough talk, let me show you how a 6-12-year-old learns to play tennis in rallies across a net in less than 30 minutes – I'll give you 5. (ups and down, self rally, rally over a line/net with a partner.)