

Tennis Talk
With Shelby Rhyne
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What IS a Community Tennis Association (CTA)?

In this world of acronyms, tennis has a vocabulary all its own. I'm not talking about our crazy scoring system (Love, 15, 30, 40, Deuce, Ad,) but about these abbreviations: USTA (United States Tennis Association), USPTA (United States Professional Tennis Association), ITA (Intercollegiate Tennis Association), LLC (Local League Coordinator) and finally CTA (Community Tennis Association).

If you've followed the local tennis news this last year, you might have noticed that we now have a **Community Tennis Association** called Rockingham County Tennis Association (RCTA). There are not Rockingham County sports organizations for football, soccer, baseball, or basketball...why tennis?

First, our national organization (USTA) is passionate about pushing money and programs out into communities across the county to engage youth and adults in the game of tennis. CTAs are charged to distribute these funds and programs into their communities.

Where does that money come from? The US OPEN, the highest-attended annual sporting event in the world, held each year at Flushing Meadow New York, provides the USTA with income to support players across the country to "find themselves in the game".

In NC, the USTA is represented by NC Tennis, just down the road in Greensboro. A staff of 10 passionate tennis experts supports adult and junior tournament play as well as communities like ours that are revitalizing and providing local tennis programs. In the past year Kelly Gaines, Executive Director, Amy Franklin, Community Development Director, Andrew Waldrop, Community Program and Training Coordinator, Caroline Downs, Junior League Coordinator, and Cy King, Tennis Service Representative have ALL spent time in Rockingham County.

We're not alone in our pursuit of promoting community tennis; there are about 15 active CTA's across North Carolina of varying sizes and missions. Lake Norman Tennis Association (LNTA) hosts the state 40 & Over adult tournament. Greater Wilmington Tennis Association (GWTA) offers an after school Middle School league. Greensboro Regional Tennis Association (GRETA – of course) has over 7000 registrations in USTA adult leagues. And our nearest neighbor, Kernersville Tennis Association (KTA) is advocating for resurfacing tennis courts in a local park.

Here in Rockingham County, RC Tennis (better than RCTA don't you think?), is about introducing the game to our youth age 6-12 and creating a pathway for them to enjoy the game as they grow. There were a few administrative details to get out of the way – forming a Board of Directors, becoming a 501c3 non-profit charitable organization – but most of our time and effort is directed to getting children and their families out on the courts...or in the gym....or in their driveways and parking lots with rackets in their hands.

How does RCTA accomplish our mission? - with help from LOTS of people. We've received tennis rackets, balls, and nets from NC Tennis to share in over 50 free RC Tennis youth and family events. Xerox Corporation is our first local program sponsor.

We've trained 20 volunteer coaches (young and old, tennis players and not) to work with our young players, including. Bitrus Istafanus, a NPTR certified instructor based at the Eden Family Y. (There's yet another acronym - National Professional Tennis Registry)

FOUR local Rockingham County organizations have invested in their OWN youth tennis equipment. You'll find kids on the court or in the gyms playing at the Eden Family Y, Boys and Girls Club of Eden, Bridge Street Recreation Center, and Madison Mayodan Recreation Center. Fitness Clubs and after school programs are hosting Kids Tennis Clubs at South End, Williamsburg and New Vision Elementary Schools and Western Rockingham, Reidsville, and Western Rockingham Middle Schools

We've got game Rockingham County. Thank you for such an exciting welcome for our CTA – Rockingham County Tennis!

For more information about tennis for all ages in Rockingham County, check out our NEW webpage at www.rockingham.usta.com and follow us on Facebook at [www.Facebook.com/RCYouthtennis](https://www.facebook.com/RCYouthtennis) .