

USTA SOUTHERN ARIZONA (SAZ) NEWSLETTER



Tucson, Arizona

www.saz.usta.com

Volume 1, Issue 2

SUMMER 2013

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USTA SOUTHWEST MEETING – Mike Capp

I had the opportunity to attend the USTA-Southwest Section Semi Annual Meeting in Albuquerque on May 10-11. It was a productive and encouraging meeting because it was evident that there are many very qualified volunteers who are truly dedicated to promoting tennis throughout the Southwest. There was too much that was addressed over the one-and-a-half day meeting to cover here; however, following is a partial summary:

As everyone knows, the US Open is on the horizon. Most people probably do not know, however, that the US Open is watched in 180 countries; with its approximate 750,000 tournament attendees, the US Open provides a \$757 million economic impact on New York. This \$757 million economic impact is more than what the New York Yankees and New York Mets provide, COMBINED, in an entire baseball season on New York; and, unlike the USTA, the Yankees and Mets get public funds!

The USTA is planning on a \$250 million renovation of the National Tennis Center, including construction of a roof on Arthur Ashe Stadium. Further, the USTA provides more than \$70 million to the various sections throughout the country. Much of

this money goes to junior player development.

Not all of the USTA funds go toward junior development, but junior development is the focal point. Following are just 2 of the junior programs being run in the Southwest:

In Phoenix, (the Central Arizona District) they have established a "10& Under Slam Series". This program is a series of 4 tournaments: The Aussie Open-February; The French Championships-March; The All-England Championships-April and The U.S. Championships-May. These tournaments were designed to encourage repeat tournament play for 8U and 10U age group players. Each participant receives a "bag badge" which is the respective country flag, which the kids can attach to their tennis bags. This tournament series has been very successful; the 2013 series has averaged approximately 50 kids per tournament.

The Northern New Mexico District has established a "Junior Pathway" tennis program by tying the summer Jr. Team Tennis concept, with elementary, middle school, high school junior varsity and varsity tennis programs. The idea is to provide after school (the "at-risk" time for kids) with tennis

opportunities at every level. The elementary and middle school programs utilize facilities at high schools and/or other municipal entities that have courts. Getting the younger kids involved has acted as a "feeder" for players to play tennis on middle school and high school tennis teams. The Junior Pathway program has grown from 6 schools (with 1 team each and 100+ students), to over 35 schools with over 50+ teams and 700 student participants!

These are only 2 examples of what is being done to promote tennis in the Southwest, with funding help from the USTA. There is an obvious and significant time commitment required to begin and sustain programs like the above. However, this is time well spent and the pay-off is self evident. If anyone has questions regarding the above programs, or wants more information about the SWS Semi Annual meeting, please do not hesitate to contact me at: sazpresident@gmail.com. Thanks, Mike

Contact Mike at
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JUNIOR COMPETITIVE NEWS – Evan Phillips

WHEN DID BECOMING GOOD STOP BEING FUN?

As chairman of the Junior Competitive Committee, my job is to promote more junior tournament-players and better junior tournament-players in our area. As a teaching pro for forty years, I've always been under the impression that this is what all teaching-pros want to do, as far as teaching young kids is concerned. This is what they do in other places I've lived. Since I've been in Tucson, I've been quite concerned about the relatively small number of "good junior players" we have in our area, and I've been trying to find out why. I believe I may have finally found the answer—Fun. Yes, that's right, fun. Apparently many kids are taught that you're either a serious, competitive, tennis-player, or you have fun. They get the impression that working hard and being ambitious about becoming a good tennis player is not fun. As I was recently told by a fellow teaching-pro, "It's not about competition or playing well or rankings, it's all about fun."

Tennis is a difficult game to learn. It is not like soccer, basketball, baseball, table-tennis, badminton or even cricket, (to name a few other sports). In these games, proficiency can be achieved with minimal coaching and in a fairly short period of time. Proper technique and movement patterns in tennis are difficult to learn, and much patience and tenacity are required by teaching-pros to get beginners to achieve even a decent level of play. This is true even when softer balls or smaller courts are used. It is very difficult to correct or change bad habits once they become imbedded in a player's muscle-memory, regardless of age. This is why it's very important to teach good technique from the beginning, if a young player is to have any hope of achieving a high level of proficiency. If the teacher doesn't know what good technique is, then that's a major impediment to a student's potential.

There has been a concerted effort by the USTA in recent years to introduce more youngsters to the game. I have the greatest admiration for those individuals who promote our sport

through these various out-reach programs. It is not easy to go to schools or other communities to introduce a new and often foreign game to young kids. But after the kids are introduced, what's next? Is it enough to simply introduce them to the game as a means of recreation, or should we find a way to teach some of these kids to become good? I personally believe that if we're going to take the time to introduce kids to the game, we should have a system in place to help some of them develop into tournament-level players. The USTA also spends a lot of money on its junior, player-development programs, but thousands of potentially great players are lost in grass-roots programs when the kids are taught that tennis is merely a recreational sport, rooted in non-competitive fun.

As a teaching-pro for four decades, I've always endeavored to teach every child to be as good as they could possibly be. This has been difficult at times, as I've taught tennis in places where courts are very, very limited. A handful of the kids I taught lost interest and moved on to other areas, a few of them became exceptional players, playing in college on scholarship and even professionally, but most of them became good, solid, competitive players, who continue to play and be challenged by the game well into adulthood.

I believe that when you teach a child to be really good at a sport (or any other activity), you help to develop tremendous self-esteem in that individual. When kids are taught to play tennis well, the life- lessons that go along with the process are almost endless. They learn to concentrate, to understand discipline, to work hard, to set goals, to deal with victory and defeat, to compete hard within rules, to be gracious and friendly with opponents, to fight hard and not give up in tough situations, and on and on. To this day I'm still emotional when a young student who has been struggling with the demands of our game finally "gets it". They can actually control the ball, hit it back and forth a number of times, and then make it go at a faster

and faster rate.

As a teacher, whether in the field of academics, or tennis, or golf or any other activity I've taught, I've always believed in the pursuit of excellence. I don't believe there's anything wrong with reaching and falling short. I do believe there is something wrong with not reaching at all. Were it not for the pursuit of excellence, we'd have no Mozart, no McEnroe, no Bach, Beethoven, or Baryshnikov. Without the pursuit of excellence, the world would never have known Evert, or Navratilova or Graf, or Streisand or Streep. We have been blessed with some amazing talent in our lives, and each one of these great performers or artists, had teachers who taught them the importance of becoming as good as they could possibly be.

We live in a metropolitan area of approximately a million people, a number of excellent tennis facilities that claim to have junior-development programs, and great year-round weather. We should have more high-level, junior tennis players. I would like to appeal especially to my fellow teaching-pros to teach their young students to be as good as they can be. Don't do it because of the great life-lessons the kids can learn, don't do it because the kids might become great players, don't do it to be recognized as a great coach, or because teaching kids to become good IS a lot of fun. Do it because it's your job.

Contact Evan at:
evphil50@comcast.net



MEET MARK SWENSON, SAZ TENNIS SERVICE REP

Mark Swenson is SAZ's Tennis Service Rep. Mark got his BS from the University of Arizona in Athletic Administration and a Masters from Northern Arizona in Education Leadership. He was previously the athletic director and tennis coach at St. Gregory for 12 years. The Arizona Daily Star named him the High School Tennis Coach of the year in 2010. His experience with HS and MS tennis has allowed a natural transition to assist the USTA in growing tennis with school age children. This year he has visited over 20 schools and brought tennis to over 2300 kids. Mark provides teacher training to camp groups, schools, Special Olympics,

and various other groups so they can teach their kids the progressions that will make learning tennis easy and fun. Mark's current project involves growing Junior Team Tennis. SAZ is hoping to have more teams each year competing in this fun team format for kids ages 8 - 18.



ARIZONA JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

The 2013 AZ Junior Championship was recently held at Reffkin Tennis Center and El Conquistador Resort. The following are some of the outstanding results by SAZ players:

Robert Seby won the boys 18s singles. In the final he defeated Augustus Ge, 6-0, 0-6, 6-2.

Robert also teamed up with Augustus to win the 18s doubles.

Yash Parikh won the boys 16s singles. In the final he defeated Nathan Niemiec, 6-0, 7-5.

Jared Perry won the boys 10s singles, defeating Natal Richards in the final, 2-4, 4-1, 10-5(tiebreaker)

Emily Flowers defeated Teodora Vuksan, 1-4, 4-0, 10-5(tiebreaker), in the girls 10s final.

Caroline Amos teamed with Melissa Pick to win the girls 16s doubles and was third in the singles.

Jamie Schroer also won the 3rd place playoff in the girls 14s, over Julia Lilien, 6-3, 7-6.

Christopher Gleason won the boys 14s silver event, defeating Daniel Wieland, 6-2, 4-6, 7-5.

Misa Malkin won the girls silver 14s. In the final she defeated Halle Zadro, 6-0, 6-3.

Yash Parikh



Robert Seby



Congratulations to all the competitors in this L4 event. The next major junior tournament in our section will be the Southwest Closed. It is an L3 event, and will be held in Albuquerque June 8-11. Two superset tournaments will be held in our area in June. June 21 at Reffkin Tennis Center, and June 29 at El Conquistador Resort.

TUCSON RACQUET & FITNESS CLUB

Tucson Racquet & Fitness Club has been in Tucson since 1967. They are open 24 hours a day on 20 acres by the river. There are 33 lighted tennis courts along, a restaurant and bar, Olympic heated pools, basketball/volleyball courts, a track, weight room and other amenities.

You do not have to be a member to attend the tennis clinics.

For more information contact:

Gretchen Schantz

Tucson Racquet & Fitness Club

Tennis Activities Director

(520) 795 6960 ext. 334

gschantz@tucsonracquetclub.com

<http://tucsonracquetclub.com/>

UPDATES TO REGULATIONS – Sara Kaufman

Recent changes to the Southwest League Regulations in April 2013 were adopted by the SAZ in June 2013. These changes will soon be posted online in the SAZ League Regulation website (http://www.saz.usta.com/saz_league_rules_2013/).

Regulation changes include the following:

**Incorporated further direction when declaring court surfaces, as needed for home venues with multiple surfaces (Court Surfaces).

**Updated the reason a match could be delayed is due to weather issues or circumstances beyond the players' control. Matches should be played to the schedule posted in TennisLink, and rescheduled matches should be played as soon as possible (Match Delay and Postponements).

**The process for refunds was updated to apply credits and if the

credit is not used by December of that year, a check will be sent to the address on file in TennisLink for the refund (Refunds).

The Southwest League Regulations are to be applied for consistent regulations within the Southwest districts. The changes will be thoroughly reviewed with Captains in an upcoming Captains' Meeting to be scheduled. The changes will be applied for 2014 leagues beginning with early start leagues in the fall.

2014 SAZ League Schedule to be announced in the month of July. Get ready for more fun-filled league tennis!

Sara Kaufman, League Coordinator

Contact Sara at:

saztennis@gmail.com



TUCSON TENNIS – Jeff Brack

Summer is cooking now and so is summer programming! Adults are ramping up for the Mixed Doubles season and hopefully, most of our children are in some sort of tennis camp. Many of my best memories on the court are from summer camp as a kid. The summer break affords more of our youths the time for both learning and playing.

As many of you are already aware, Tucson is a “Target Market” recipient of a grant from the USTA, focused on growing 10 & Under Tennis. Over the last few years, the USTA has done extensive research on what makes a youth sport successful, what keeps children engaged and how do they best develop. The answer has come back repeatedly as “Team Sport”. The added dimension of friends and social fun is what has made so many team sports thrive. That is why our major focus of this summer is Junior Team Tennis (JTT), with the addition of 10 & Under and 8 & Under divisions. We strongly believe that JTT is the future of youth tennis and will be a strong component of the “competitive continuum” along with tournaments, rather than an alternative. Team play will be the format most will experience for the rest of their lives, there’s no reason why they shouldn’t enjoy and benefit from it as a kid!

We are thrilled with the initial participation for this first season and look forward to building on that momentum for a fall season. Then our young competitors will be even more prepared to excel at team play in high school, college varsity, college intramurals and adult league!

For more information on Junior Team Tennis, please contact our Community Program Coordinator, Mark Swenson at sazcpc@gmail.com.

Contact Jeff at
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ED OSNOWITZ, Head of Referees

Two of our umpires were selected for Chair Umpires recently at The Western Athletic Conference Tennis Championships in Denver, Colorado.

Rob Grady and Ron Coleman represented USTA SAZ, and did outstanding work. Congratulations.

Ed Osnowitz
emoz@cox.net

FEATURED JUNIOR PLAYER – MATT DUNN

Matt is the 2012 USTA Southwest Male Junior Player of the year and the 2012 USTA SAZ junior male Player of the Year



Tucson native Matthew Dunn just completed his freshman year as a member of the U of A Men's tennis team. Highlights included non-conference trips to University of Denver and University of Louisville, and of course the west coast PAC 12 trips, which included USC, UCLA, Cal-Berkeley and Stanford, all of which are schools ranked in the top 50 (USC and UCLA ranked in the top 5). Matthew understood that the PAC 12 is the strongest division for Division 1 collegiate tennis, and cites that as one of the main reasons for playing for the U of A. "To have an opportunity to play in the best conference in the country is amazing. To have an opportunity to play for one of those schools in my hometown is even better." Playing for a high level D1 program doesn't come without its sacrifices. "We have fall workouts that start at 6 AM 5-6 days a week, and in the spring we get to sleep in til about 8 AM before we would begin our daily routine. I was usually pretty tired during the day but I got used to it as the season progressed. I like the feeling of having tennis as a job, and at U of A it certainly is one." With the amount of practice, workouts, and travel time it can be very difficult to keep up with your studies. It's tough to transition academically from high school to college as it is, and adding a rigorous tennis schedule on top really makes for a challenge. "The last 5 weeks of the season we traveled out of state from Thursday morning thru Saturday night. That makes it really hard playing catch up on your studies." Nonetheless, Matthew maintained a 3.4 grade point average. The regiment doesn't slow down over the summer. "I just completed an online summer school course to keep in compliance for my scholarship. Each week day morning I spend coaching at the U of A Nike Tennis Camp. Most days I can squeeze in a noon workout with the strength coaches in McKale [Center], and then I help coach tennis at the Reffkin Center in the evenings." It may seem like a lot for one person to handle, but Matthew seems to in this environment. "I'm a very structured person. I like having a schedule when I start every day, and I do my best to complete everything on the schedule before the day is up. Right now my #1 goal is to work as hard as I can to be prepared for the fall U of A Tennis season. Go Cats!"

Pat Wagner's Himmel team coached by Casey Pfordt took third at the Super Senior Nationals in Surprise, AZ. – CONGRATULATIONS!



USTA SAZ BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS NEEDED. FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE GO TO WWW.SAZ.USTA.COM

Please visit <http://www.saz.usta.com/> for all the Southern Arizona Tennis news!!