



My whole family started playing tennis a couple years ago and I wanted to play, too. I'm a left-handed player who needed surgery on my wrist and shoulder to get joint stability. The surgeries were a bigger deal than expected, and I was told I wouldn't be able to play tennis again.

Since I was young, our family had a saying "where there's a will, there's a way". I committed to physical therapy over many months. Therapy was intense. I suffered a major setback due to a car accident. At times, I was ready to give up. But, I decided I had nothing to lose. I even started taking lessons and playing right handed as a back-up plan.

A year after my surgery and with my wife's encouragement, I joined a mixed doubles league with her. I had never played anything in the USTA, and I wasn't 100% confident in my left shoulder and wrist, so I wasn't sure what to expect.

Mixed doubles on Friday nights was a lot of fun (I would encourage anyone to try it), I met some great people, and one of them introduced me to their men's league.



Gary Willardson (right), pictured with Audrey Kutuzov

I would have never thought 6 months from starting to play again, and signing up for USTA events, that I would win the Ivory Homes Utah State tournament in singles in my division.

There is a Place in Tennis for Everyone!