

Spring 2023



Calendar

(dates subject to change due to weather)

April: AED/CPR Training Class (date TBD)

May 21: Tennis in the Park with NYS PTA @Eisenhower Park

June: Robbie's Run in Merrick (date TBD)

July 11: USTA LI Kids' Day @LuHi

July 18: USTA LI Kids' Day @Hempstead Lake State Park

August 1: USTA LI Kids' Day (Suffolk County)

September: USTA LI Awards Dinner (date TBD)

visit www.usta.com/longislandregion for details on all events

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follow us on Facebook at [Play Tennis Long Island](https://www.facebook.com/PlayTennisLongIsland)

On The Ball: News From LI



Eastern Section Honors



Congrats winners!

The following locals were honored at the USTA Eastern Tennis Conference in January.

For information on each honoree, please click here for the USTA Long Island pages in the March/April issue of [Long Island Tennis Magazine](#).

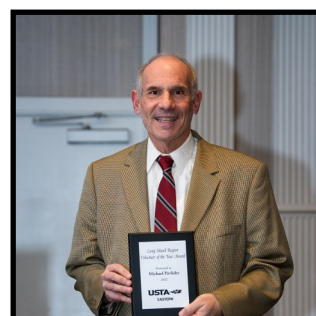
Scott Axler, Leslie J. Fitz Gibbon Tennis Man of the Year
(pictured with Olga Harvey (l), USTA Eastern President, and Jenny Schnitzer, USTA Eastern Executive Director)

Mike Pavlides, Long Island Regional Volunteer of the Year (top photo)

Jacki Binder, Press Service Award (photo 2)

Steven Ferrantello, Virginia & Chuck Landis HS Coach of the Year (photo 3)

Hilary Bressler of Christopher Morley Tennis, 10 and Under Tennis Award (bottom photo)



Boys' High School Tennis Season 2023

Training Coaches in Nassau & Suffolk

On Sunday, March 19th, [Long Island Health & Racquet Club](#) in East Setauket and the PTR (Professional Tennis Registry) will host a high school tennis coaches' clinic from 12:00-3:00pm. The event is coordinated by club manager Tito Perez. For information and to register, contact Tito at: vtapr@hotmail.com

After a three-year hiatus, [Bethpage Park Tennis Center](#) marks the return of its annual High School Coaches' Workshop, to be held on Sunday, April 23rd from 5:00-7:00pm. This free workshop will be a fun and educational afternoon of tennis featuring open play, demonstrations and discussions on fitness, stroke production, strategy, tactics and more. Coaches are encouraged to bring one or two players from their teams to the event.

Prior to the Coaches' Workshop, Bethpage Park Tennis Center will host a clinic for those with special needs, from 4:00-5:00pm.

For more information and to sign up for either or both events, call (516) 777-1358.

Photos are from past years' Bethpage Park Coaches' Workshops.



Mark Your Calendars

All Dates are tentative due to possible rain outs.

Suffolk County

- * 5/11: Large and Small schools team playoffs start
- * 5/18: Small Schools Final
- * 5/25: Large Schools Final
- * 5/12-13, 15: Individuals Division Championships
- * 5/19-20, 22: Individual County Championships

Nassau County

- * 5/13-14: Individual Championships @Eisenhower Park
- * 5/22: Small Schools Team Final
- * 5/24: Large Schools Team Final

New York State

- * 6/2-4: Individual Championships @BJK National Tennis Center
- * 6/9: Small & Large School Team Championships @BJK National Tennis Center

Long Island Team Championships

- * 5/25: Small Schools
- * 5/31: Large Schools



Commack HS, 2022 Long Island Boys' Champions

LI Junior Team Takes 2nd Place At National Tourney

Missing from our Girls' high school tennis round-up in the Winter issue of "On the Ball: News from LI" were two high school champions who weren't able to compete at the State Tournament, even though they had won their place to do so.

The correct placement of Suffolk County Singles champions should have been listed as Victoria Matos in 1st place, **Kira Kronenberg** (Ward Melville) in 2nd place, Anya Konopka in 3rd place and **Maria Perez** (Middle Country) in 4th place.

Kira and Maria had an excellent reason for skipping the State Tournament: their Junior Team Tennis team had qualified for and was competing at Nationals in Orlando on the same weekend.

The JTT National tournament originally had been scheduled for September 29 - October 2, 2022, but was postponed due to Hurricane Ian. The rescheduled date was the same weekend as the New York State Tournament. Both Kira and Maria decided to play in the JTT National Tournament, knowing that if they withdrew, it would have adversely affected the whole JTT team of three boys and three girls.

Kira, a senior who will be playing tennis for the Rochester Institute of Technology next year, has been playing tennis since age three, training at Long Island Health & Racquet the entire time, with coaches Tito Perez, Juan Pablo Perez and Mauricio Doria Medina. Kira has been part of the club's JTT program -- Game Set Match Tennis Academy-- for the past 10 years.

"It has always been a great experience getting to play with my friends that I have grown up with and not against them," Kira says. "Nationals were especially fun for the whole team. It was obviously a more competitive level

but it was nice to travel with them and spend time with the team when we weren't playing as well.

"When the original date was canceled for the national tournament, I was crushed," Kira says. "It was like all our hard work was for nothing. But then when we found out they rescheduled for the same dates as the state tournament, skipping States for me was a no brainer. I think I told my dad probably two seconds after he asked me what wanted to do.

"I have been playing on the same team, with the same people, for basically my whole life and I did not want to pass up the opportunity even if it meant missing states my senior year. There was also an issue of numbers on my team, and I knew if I didn't go to nationals, it would cause my team to not be able to go either. It was disappointing to know that I would not get a chance to play in states, but in my mind, it was better to hurt only myself instead of hurting my team who had all worked so hard to finally get to nationals for the first time," Kira says.

With Kira's commitment and help, the team came in 2nd place at Nationals.

Team members on the championship Junior Team Tennis team were:

- Maria Perez
- Kira Kronenberg
- Carina Cristobal
- Victoria Matos
- Juan Perez
- Harshith Pennabadi
- Shashank Pennabadi
- Aron Burztyn

Matos and Bursztyn did not join the team in Orlando. Matos was competing at the NY State Girls' Tournament, where she came in second place, and Bursztyn is a college freshman.



Kira Kronenberg



Changing of the Guard

Pavlidis Takes LI Helm

Mike Pavlidis, a longtime volunteer and member of the LI Regional Council, was installed as USTA Long Island Regional Director for a two-year term during the USTA Eastern Tennis Conference in January. Most recently, he was Vice Regional Director.

Many in the high school tennis community know Mike from his years as the USTA Long Island Regional Liaison to high school tennis. A longtime coach himself (of the

Previous honors include the USTA Long Island 2010 Adult Volunteer of the Year, 2003 Nassau Coach of the Year and 2012 USTA Eastern Virginia and Chuck Landis High School Coach of the Year.

Klee Looks to Future of USTA Eastern

Jonathan Klee, USTA Long Island Regional Director for three terms, has completed his final term and was installed as Secretary for USTA Eastern.

"It has been an honor and a privilege to represent Long Island as their Regional Director the last 6 years," Jonathan said. "I'm very proud of our Council and all we achieved pre-pandemic, during the pandemic and

now post-pandemic. Long Island, like the rest of the country, has seen tremendous growth in tennis, and our volunteer efforts in growing tennis on Long Island have exceeded expectations.

"From Kid's Days to high school sportsmanship to community tennis days and our Annual Awards Dinner, tennis is booming. Our Council members volunteered at community fairs and festivals, have brought red ball tennis into many schools, introduced PTA and PAL families to tennis, and much more," he said.

"I'm looking forward to my new position on the USTA Eastern Executive Board. Long Island has not had an Executive Leadership position on the Eastern Board in 10 years, and I am excited to focus on growing tennis across the Eastern Section."

Photo: USTA Eastern Board: Klee (seated, 2nd from left) and Pavlidis (standing, 2nd from right)



Massapequa boys and girls varsity teams), he is passionate about high school tennis and has spearheaded a wealth of initiatives for local teams. In 2022 and 2023, he helped provide all coaches in Nassau and Suffolk Counties with a plaque to recognize one exemplary player on each team for sportsmanship. He also has played an instrumental role in the LI council's efforts to celebrate "No Cut" teams.

Mike helps organize the annual Long Island Awards Dinner and Kids' Days, among the council's biggest events. In addition, he is very involved with USTA Long Island website content and this newsletter.

In January, he was honored as Long Island Regional Volunteer of the Year at the Eastern Tennis Conference.

\$\$\$Grant Money Available\$\$\$

USTA Eastern and USTA Eastern Long Island Regional grants are now available for the 2023 year. Organizations are invited to apply for this funding to support their programming aimed at increasing tennis participation in our local communities. Grant applications focused on the following areas will receive special consideration:

- ⇒ School/After-School Programming
- ⇒ Junior Competitive Play
- ⇒ Adult Competitive Play
- ⇒ Diversity & Inclusion Initiatives
- ⇒ Community Tennis Association (CTA) / National Jr. Tennis & Learning (NJTL) Programs
- ⇒ Adaptive/Wheelchair Tennis
- ⇒ Innovative Programs

Click here for more information: [Eastern Grants](#).

USTA Eastern Hosts In-Person Eastern Tennis Conference

Back in Action

On January 27-28, USTA Eastern held its first full two-day in-person conference since before the start of the pandemic, at the Sheraton Mahwah in New Jersey.

The event included on-court demonstrations (at nearby Ridgewood Racquet Club) as well as informative sessions featuring Conrad Singh—whose Centercourt Tennis has produced two junior Wimbledon finalists and one champion in the last three years—and Janet Lefkowitz, who, quite literally, wrote the book on adaptive tennis programming.

One of the biggest hits of the gathering, however, might have been the opening panel, which featured a wide-ranging discussion with former Eastern juniors and now-retired professional players Kristie Ahn, Christina McHale and (Long Island's own) Noah Rubin. The three athletes discussed what drove them to succeed as young players in the section as well as what it was like to compete at the highest levels of the sport. They also revealed some behind-the-scenes details regarding life on tour, including a shared experience (possibly) spotting a Tasmanian devil while at a tournament in Tasmania.

Of course, beyond the lineup, the conference was a great opportunity for the Eastern tennis community to come together.

"What always makes the Eastern Tennis Conference so special for me is the



opportunity for collaboration," said USTA Eastern Executive Director & CEO Jenny Schnitzer. "Ultimately,

we want to facilitate connections. It's about providers or facility owners from opposite sides of the section running into each other in the hallway between sessions, catching up and sharing ideas. We want everybody who attends to learn from our incredible speakers, but it's equally important to us that people come together and learn from each other, as well as hopefully commit to working with each other."

Growing Together Grants

We're in this together! Apply today for USTA Eastern's Growing Tennis Together Grant. Recipients can receive up to \$5,000 to fund programming.

The grant is available to current non-profit USTA member organizations. (Examples include community tennis associations, NJTL chapters, community-based organizations and municipalities such as parks and recreation departments.) Priority will be given to grant proposals that target youth initiatives as well as diversity and inclusion and innovative programming within parks and recreation departments and school partnerships. Read more about eligibility and requirements on [our website](#).

Know an organization that would make a good sponsor? Let us know!

Tennis is booming and we're looking for corporate sponsors across multiple

College Bound

LI high school tennis champs will be taking their skills to college in the fall. Congrats to:

NYS singles champ **Stephan Gershfeld** (Hewlett), U. of Pennsylvania

Olivia Eifert (Islip), SUNY New Paltz

Kady Tannenbaum (Commack), Dartmouth

Nicolette Loeffler (Cold Spring Harbor), Fairfield U.

Dasha Perfiliev (Port Washington), Stony Brook U.

Thea Rabman (Port Washington), U. of North Carolina

Ansh Chadha (Syosset), Bentley U.

Tola Glowacka (Glen Head), Boston College

Eesha Kaushik (Syosset), Washington U.

Did we miss your student who will be playing college tennis this fall? Please [email us](#) with their name, hometown and school and we will include them next issue.

categories in 2023 to keep up the great momentum. If you are interested in involving your business as a corporate sponsor, please email sponsorship@eastern.usta.com.

Photos:

(Bottom left, from left) Rubin, Ahn and McHale pose at the Eastern Tennis Conference

(Middle) An attendee participates in an adaptive session at the Eastern Tennis Conference



USTA League Update

By Becky Bellino

LI Teams Head to Sectionals

In the 18 & Over 6.0 League, Ed Sinn's team from Syosset came in first place and will represent Long Island at Eastern Sectionals in June in Schenectady (*photo below*).

The Tri-Level Sectionals for the 4.5, 4.0 and 3.5 teams took place at the end of January. The Long Island women's team from Sportime Roslyn captained by Seema Imberman and Jane Walsh fought hard as did the Fayez Malik and Amani Siddiqui men's team from Long Beach. The women finished in 5th place and the men's team placed 4th.

New League

Wishing a warm welcome to the brand new women's 5.0 tri-level league. Long Island has two teams participating, out of Carefree and Lynbrook. The winner will advance to Eastern Sectionals in early June and play for a spot in the National Invitational. If you are interested in playing in this league next year (men and women), please contact me.

It's Almost League Season

Registration has begun for the upcoming USTA league season. We will have men's and women's teams for the 18 & Over League, which has teams at the 2.5, 3.0, 3.5, 4.0, 4.5 and 5.0 levels. The 2.5 and 5.0 level matches consist of one court of singles and two courts of doubles. The remaining levels consist of two courts of singles and three courts of doubles.

Our 40 & Over League has teams at the 3.0, 3.5, 4.0 and 4.5 levels. All matches consist of one court of singles and four courts of doubles. Both the 18 & Over and the 40 & Over leagues will begin in May and run through early August.

Our 55 & Over and 65 & Over leagues consist of three courts of doubles at the combined levels of 6.0, 7.0, 8.0 and 9.0. Both leagues will begin in mid June and run through late August.

Annual Captains' Meeting

Captains! Please mark your calendars for Thursday, April 13 at 7:00 p.m. for the annual Captains' Meeting, when schedules will be made available, rule changes will be discussed and questions will be answered. A Zoom link will be provided to registered captains.

Important Dates

Dates to be aware of for Sectional Championships:

June 2-4: 18 & Over Mixed Doubles (Schenectady)

June 23-25: 4.0/3.5/3.0 & 4.0/4.5/5.0 Tri-level and 55 & Over Mixed Doubles (Schenectady)

August 11-14: 18 & Over Women (Schenectady)

August 11-14: 40 & Over Men (Westchester County)

August 18-21: 18 & Over Men (Schenectady)

August 18-21: 40 & Over Women (Westchester County)

September 8-10: 55 & Over Adult Leagues (Schenectady)

September 21-23: 40 & Over Mixed Doubles and 65 & Over Adult Leagues (Schenectady)

Playoff and Regional dates for the men's and women's summer teams will be announced once schedules are completed in April.

Looking forward to seeing everyone on the courts!

Looking for a Team?

If anyone is looking to play on a team, please reach out to me at Bellino@eastern.usta.com



A Key to Sportsmanship: Parents & Family Modeling Good Behaviors

Supporting and encouraging exemplary sportsmanship among players has long been an important objective of the USTA Long Island Region, as evidenced by the sportsmanship awards the LI Council provides to high school teams for one student each season and the adult and junior sportsmanship awards bestowed at the Annual Awards Dinner.

While we all know how important it is to “play nicely with others,” it doesn’t hurt to remind players and their families of the USTA’s rules from time to time.

For Junior Tournaments, the USTA Suspension Point System applies to conduct during all sanctioned tournament matches (main draw, compass draw, consolation, qualifying and doubles); during tournament activities; at tournament facilities, and at facilities like hotels, dormitories and homes where players stay. Each suspension point assessed at ITF tournaments becomes one suspension point under the USTA Suspension Point System. The USTA Suspension Point System does not apply to any Net Generation Program that uses red, orange or green ball tennis unless authorized by the Sectional Association that sanctioned the tournament. For more information on suspensions, please [click here](#).

Suspension points can be assigned in Tournament Desk by the Tournament Referee, Tournament Director or Section Staff. The points can be assigned from three different places

within Tournament Desk. If a player receives 10 suspension points within a 12-month period, the player shall be suspended from competing in sanctioned tournaments for three months. For more information about first and subsequent suspensions, please see USTA Regulation IV.F. There are no suspension consequences for having fewer than the necessary points for a suspension.

Sportsmanship and unsportsmanlike conduct do not just apply to the junior tennis player but also to his or her parents, coaches, families and friends. Long Island tournament directors have seen many scenarios similar to or worse than the unacceptable behaviors described below:

- ◆ During a match or immediately following, a person associated with the player calls their player’s opponent “a cheater” (2 suspension points)
- ◆ During or after a match, someone associated with the player uses expletives or “the finger” to describe their player’s opponent as a cheater (5 suspension points)
- ◆ During or after a match someone associated with the player threatens physical abuse or uses a slur relating to gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc. (8-10 suspension points)

Tournament directors also report they have been verbally and physically threatened by players’ families or friends.

For USTA Eastern’s information on sportsmanship and tournaments: [click here](#).

USTA Eastern’s sportsmanship pledge is as follows:

Every individual playing a sport has the right to feel safe and

supported and should be treated with respect, kindness and dignity.

Like tennis legend Billie Jean King says: “Pressure is a privilege.” And privilege is a resource that can be deployed for the greater good. We pledge to react to pressure and competition with respect, professionalism, courage and compassion.

Check on one another and ask, “How are you doing?” or “How can I help?” We pledge to inspire and motivate other generations to be champions on and off the court.

We pledge to meet the challenge to be inclusive because tennis is a sport that embraces all players regardless of ability, age, race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation.

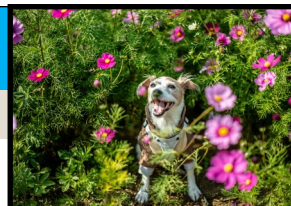
Tennis is a sport that is built on respect. Respect for one another, and for the game itself. We are tennis players, competitors, champions, friends and teammates. We are Team Eastern. We are the future. We will aspire to be champions for tennis. We will aspire to be champions for each other.

Sharing the Love with Racquets

The USTA Long Island Junior Council is conducting a donation drive for used tennis racquets. Collection boxes are located in the following clubs: Christopher Morley, LI Health & Racquet Setauket and Sportime Kings Park. Additional clubs are being added, so check with yours. Please

consider donating your gently used adult and child-sized racquets to help those in need.





IN THE NEWS....

Former pro Christina McHale visited a 10 & Under class at **Christopher Morley Tennis** after the USTA awarded the club "Best 10 & Under Program" in the Eastern Section...



The **Suffolk County Junior Tennis League** prepared local players for team competition by running two tennis team events at Eastern Athletic Club-Blue Point. Programs were held



for middle school and varsity team players.... USTA Long Island volunteers brought a beginner tennis clinic to 60 children ages 5-17, coordinated through the **Baldwin Police Athletic League...**



Congrats to:

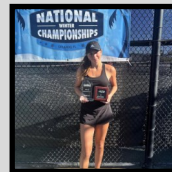
Ethan Solop, winner of the Level 5 Boys 16s at Robbie Wagner's Tournament Training center ...



Christopher Morley's **Leena Friedman**, winner of the 2022 USTA National Girls' 16 Winter Singles Championship...



East Setauket's **Sophia Holod**, who earned the Silver Ball at the USTA Winter National



Championships in Florida by reaching the finals in the Girls 16s Singles Division...

Christopher Morley 6 champion, **Jonathan Kurian...**



Sportime Lynbrook's **Mia** (left), singles champion, and **Melodie**, singles finalist, at the USTA U10 Winter Classic Orange Ball Tournament.



This winter, after three years, the **Levy-Lakeside Elementary School in Merrick** resumed its Family Tennis League for parents and children. The program is coordinated by LI volunteer Fabiana Rezak.



USTA Eastern Long Island

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USTA Eastern Long Island Regional Council Executive Committee

Michael Pavlides, Regional Director
Jonathan Klee, Past Regional Director
Sunny Fishkind
Tito Perez
Jason Wass
Randi Wilkins

Neil Thakur, USTA Eastern Manager of Long Island Region Schools & Community Tennis

We are committed to the promotion and growth of tennis, the "lifetime sport," for people of all ages and abilities to play and enjoy the game. Through the efforts of volunteers, USTA staff and strategic partners, we are dedicated to the highest standards of integrity, honesty and ethics in developing tennis programs in local communities throughout Long Island. Our mission will be served by having our youth, our adults and corporate partners enjoy the "sport for a lifetime."

On The Ball: News From LI is published quarterly by the USTA Eastern Long Island Region. Written and produced by Jacki Binder. Edited by Michael Pavlides. Founded by Daniel Burgess.