

Summer 2024



On The Ball: News From LI



Nominations Wanted!!

Calendar

(may change due to weather)

7/10 Kids Day @
Luhi Day Camp

7/18 Kids Day @
Sportime
Hempstead Lake

8/1 Kids Day @
Island Quest Day
Camp

7/29 **Nominations
due for LI Annual
Awards**

8/7 Advantage All
“Courts for a Cause”
fundraiser
@Sportime Port
Washington

9/18 USTA Long
Island Annual
Awards Event @Sea
Cliff Manor

visit [www.usta.com/
longislandregion](http://www.usta.com/longislandregion)
for details on all
events

...
follow us on
Facebook at

[Play Tennis Long Is-
land](#)

And Instagram [USTA
Eastern](#)

The USTA Long Island Region’s Annual Awards will be back in September, and we need your help!

Do you know someone who should be recognized for their outstanding service to the tennis community? Please let us know about them now! Nominations are open through July 29th.

The 34th celebration of our tennis community will be held on **Wednesday, 9/18/2024** at **Sea Cliff Manor**.

We listened to you and have instituted a format change: The event will include a cocktail hour at 6pm to celebrate the

honorees, followed by the awards ceremony and photos at 7pm; the event will end at 8:30pm. The cost to attend is now just \$40 for adults or \$35 for children under the age of 12.

To make a nomination, **email us** the following information:

- Nominee’s name, email address, street address and phone number
- Award for which you are nominating this person/organization
- Short paragraph on why the nominee is deserving of this award

Include your name and email

address in case we have questions.

****All awardees will be notified and invited by email only, so email addresses are required for all nominees.****

Visit us [online](#) to see the awards categories and a list of past winners. The deadline for nominations is **Monday, July 29, 2024**.



Stan Smith Film Debuts in Manhasset

The USTA Long Island Regional Council, along with USTA Eastern, was pleased to sponsor the local premiere of “Who is Stan Smith?,” a documentary presented by the Gold Coast International Film Festival. Long Island Council members (photo, left) attended the film’s launch at the Manhasset Cinemas. The Council also made tickets available to lucky winners who play in the Tuesday Tennis in the Park mixed doubles group.



Celebrating Sportsmanship & Teamwork

The USTA Long Island Regional Council supported the boys' high school tennis season in several ways.

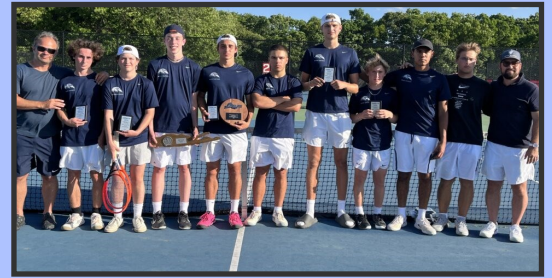
As it has done for girls' tennis and in past boys' seasons, the Council provided plaques to each Nassau and Suffolk coach who wanted one for presentation to a member of their team in recognition of great sportsmanship. A complete list of recipients and photos of those who received them can be found [here](#).

The Council also supplied championship and runner up plaques for each member of the teams competing in the Boys' Large Schools and Small Schools Long Island Championships. Recipients were Large Schools Champion Syosset and Runner Up Commack and Small Schools Champion Friends Academy and Runner Up Ross School.

The Council presented its 2024 Doubles Sportsmanship Award and John McEnroe Tennis Academy (JMTA) scholarship award to



Commack High School



Ross School



Syosset High School



Friends Academy

B. Jarius Bo & Zakaria Ahmed (Manhasset) and Singles Sportsmanship Award and JMTA scholarship to Aiden Patel (Plainview). Michael Pavlides, Nassau County Tennis Coordinator and Regional Director of the LI Council, presented the awards on behalf of the Council and of JMTA's Jay Harris, at the Nassau County Boys' High School Tennis

Tournament this spring.

Each of the boys who competed at States received a quarter-zip pullover courtesy of the Long Island Council.

Pictured are the Nassau Boys Singles and Doubles players and the Suffolk team at the New York State Tournament.



Some of the sportsmanship winners



Nassau Doubles



Nassau Singles

High School Accomplishments

Individuals

Long Island was the big champion in doubles at the 2024 New York State Tournament, as the team of Harshith Pennabadi & Shashank Pennabadi (Ward Melville) won the New York State Championship held at the BJK National Tennis Center in June. The Pennabadis were the Suffolk County Division III doubles champions.

At the Nassau County Tournament, Samarth Deepudass (Herricks) was the Section VIII Singles Champion while the doubles team of Nikhil Shah & Devan Melandro (Syosset) came out on top for the second year in a row.

Joining them in competing for Nassau County at the state tournament were singles runner-up Ethan Solop (Roslyn) and Maxim Golubenko (Manhasset) and doubles runners up Russell Notaris & Bryan Bin (Friends Academy) and Brian Berger & Anish Pylla (Jericho).

Teams

Syosset won its second straight New York State Division I (Large School) Title, and defeated Commack to win the Long Island Division I Championship. Along the way Syosset also defeated Roslyn to win the Nassau County Division 1 Championship. Commack won the Suffolk County Championship by defeating Ward Melville.

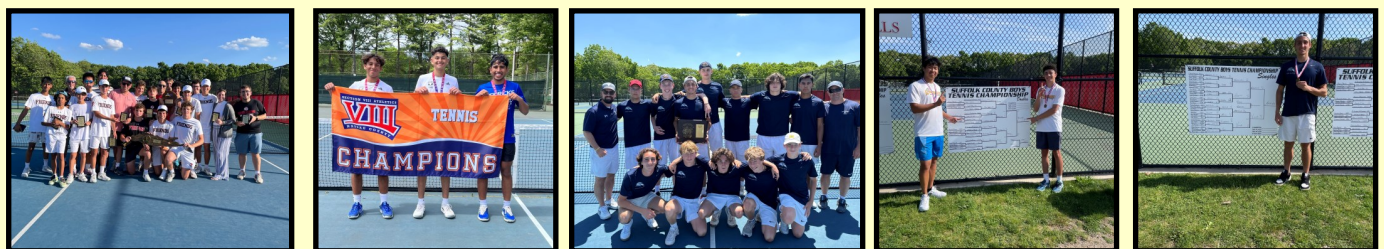
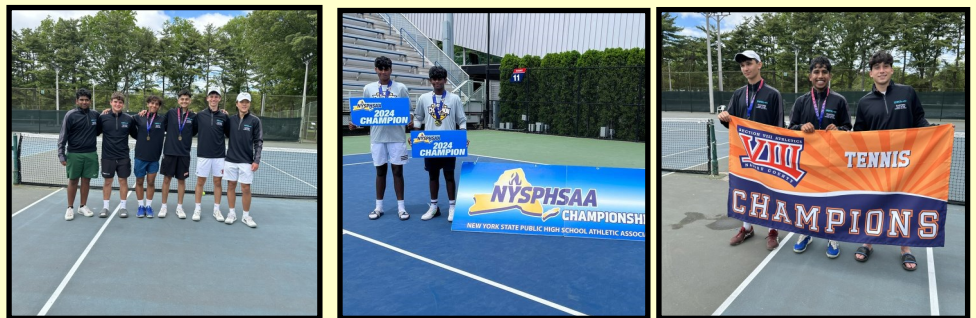
In small school action (Long Island Division II), two-time Nassau Champion Friends Academy defeated Ross School for the second year in a row. Ross was the Suffolk County Small School Champion for the second straight season, defeating Bayport-Blue Point. Friends Academy won the Nassau County Small School Championship after defeating Wheatley.



In Suffolk County, Eduardo Menezes (Ross) won the Section XI singles title while James Yu & Eric Benderley (Commack) won at doubles.

Joining them at the NY State Tournament were singles runner up Bryan Volk (Half Hollow Hills West) and Juan Perez (Mt. Sinai).

In doubles, the Commack and Ward Melville teams were joined by Leo Carmo & Henry Tietz (Ross School).



In Our Communities

Free Lessons ... Volunteers Sunny and Eddie Fishkind, with members of the Calhoun High School and Merrick Ave. Middle School tennis teams, introduced tennis to children attending **Robbie's Run**



in Merrick. The Council has supported Robbie's Run since its inception. The event is a 5k and 1 mile road race, plus a kids' festival, in Merrick. It raises money to allow [Forever 9-The Robbie Levine Foundation](#) to purchase defibrillators for children's sports programs and to sponsor CPR/AED trainings to save lives.

Special Olympics... Plainedge HS hosted the **LI Special Olympics Spring Games**. Juan Perez oversaw tennis competition, with volunteers from the Plainedge boys' and girls' tennis teams, Coach Justin Ayoub and USTA LI Regional Director Michael Pavlides.



Tennis & More... [Advantage All Junior Tennis](#), a new NJTL, held an event in June at the Old Westbury Golf & Country Club. Drills and matches for players of all ages raised money to support the organization's mission to provide tennis and tutoring. The group will hold a fundraiser at Sportime Port Washington on August 7th and will bring youth tennis to



Westhampton Elementary school in July. Roslyn HS Coach Kerri Jannotte-Hinkley and a team of volunteers started Advantage All this spring and have been running free clinics at Sportime Roslyn.

Free Clinic... Sanam Mehta, a Syosset tennis player and intern at *LI Tennis Magazine*, organized a Spring Break community clinic for elementary and middle school students. Nearly 50 children enjoyed learning tennis skills. Mehta, an ambassador Girl Scout, created



the clinic as part of her Gold Award Project. Players who did not have a racquet received one of several donated by Woodbury Sports, 40 Love Lifestyle and Carefree Racquet Club.

Alzheimers Fundraising... **Carefree Tennis** held a fundraiser for The Longest Day, which provides resources for the care, support and research efforts of the Alzheimer's Association. The event raised \$15,000.

Special Needs Clinic... Grow Tennis NY (*NY Tennis Magazine*) and Serve & Return (Bethpage State Park Tennis) combined efforts to host a Clinic for Special Needs Individuals & Special Olympic Athletes.



School Programs.... Robbie Wagner's Tournament Training



held off-site tennis programs at the Portledge School and Sea Cliff Elementary. The children loved their lessons with Coach Steve Abby.



Family Fest... Game, Set, Match hosted a free National Tennis Month Family Festival at Long Island Health & Racquet Club in East Setauket. Former top ATP player and current academy director Emilio Sanchez led clinics for adults and kids at the event, attended by over 200 people.

PAL Programs... Police Activity League (PAL) chapters from Valley Stream, Baldwin, West Hempstead, Roosevelt, Massapequa and Merrick enjoyed a Long Island PAL kick-off event in May at Hempstead Lake State Park. Neil Thakur, USTA Eastern Manager of LI Region Schools & Community Tennis, says more than 80 junior players attended, most of them playing tennis for the first time.



Competitive Achievements

@Sportime Lynbrook

Excel High Performance Player Daniella Yogumyan won the Girls 12s Singles Championship at the 2024 Mayor Dinkins Cup.



@Christopher Morley

Madelyn Lai was 12U Level 6 champion in events at Match Point and Amagansett.

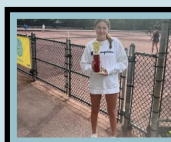


Yann Barthold was Boys 12U L6 winner at Port Washington Tennis Academy.

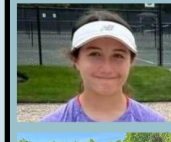


@Game Set Match Tennis Academy

Ali Cristobal won in Team 16s L5 at Sportime Lake Hempstead.



Sofia Matos was finalist in the Girls 16s L6 Sportime Amagansett Memorial Day Championship.



Tony Shu won the L7 Long Island Health & Racquet Club Boys 14s.

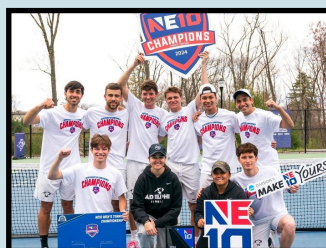


Neha Golya & Emily Martínez were champion and finalist in the LIHRC L7 girls 14s

Carolina Traxler & Katherine Statharos were champion and finalist in the LIHRC L7 girls 12s.

@Adelphi University

For the first time ever, Adelphi's men's tennis team is the NE-10 Champions.



The team defeated Southern New Hampshire 4-0 to capture the program's first conference

title. Viktor Hockl was named NE-10 Championship Most Valuable Player. The team is coached by Rebecca Fakas. The Panthers went on to compete in the opening round of the NCAA Division III Championships, where they were defeated by Jefferson University.

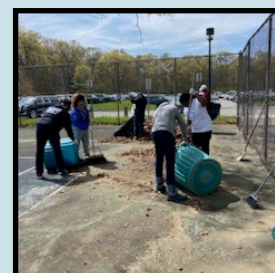
@Farmingdale State

The Farmingdale State College Men's Tennis Team won the Skyline Conference Championship for the 6th time with a win over Manhattanville University. The 17-0 Rams were the first team in Farmingdale athletics' NCAA history to be undefeated through both the regular season and conference championship play. They went on to compete in the 2024 NCAA Division III Men's Tennis Championship. Junior Vansh Aggarwal was named Championship MVP. The team is led by Head Coach Adam Waterhouse.



@SUNY Old Westbury

Students at SUNY Old Westbury held a tennis and court clean-up event this spring. Organized by Jean Telfort, more than 40 students came out to "spring clean" the tennis courts. The students also got an introduction to red ball tennis.



Lynbrook's "Sportime Aces" team won the 14s title at the Level 5 Closed Eastern Team Sectional Championships hosted by

Sportime Hempstead Lake. Team members included Gabby Villegas, Daniella

Yogumyan, Nella Glowacka, Kanin Michael, Ben Wiese and Kobie Aranbayev. Coach Jason Pasion, director of tennis, captained the team.



Excel High Performance Player Mia Prifti won 3rd place in her age division at "Little Mo" East Regionals in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. She qualified for "Little Mo" Nationals in Texas this September.



Sportime Lynbrook hosted its first-ever Red Ball Tournament Series this

spring, providing young players with a great introduction to competition and teamwork. Team Banana Snakes defeated Team Tennis Stars for the win.

USTA Leagues Update

By Becky Bellino, LI Adult League Coordinator

In March, the last of the 2023 National Invitationals took place in Phoenix, Ariz. Long Island's 55+ 8.0 mixed doubles team punched their ticket to the tournament all the way back in June 2023. But the team's members are connected on a daily basis by their intrinsic involvement in both Long Island and USTA Eastern tennis. The team consists of veteran league players who also represent several levels of USTA Eastern leadership.

I had the opportunity to interview the team captain, Shanon Blue, a USTA LI Council volunteer, Long Island Regional Director Mike Pavlides and Jonathan Klee, Eastern Board of Directors Secretary, about their experience. While we discussed their success on the court last year, it was their love for the game and how it came to be that is worthy of a read for this month's newsletter.

It's hard to believe that all three of these players became involved in the tennis community over 30 years ago, in the 1990s. Jonathan and Mike both participated in a Sunday ritual called the Ego League, which started at Hempstead Lake Indoor Tennis and rotated to other nearby facilities as their numbers grew. After a morning

men's and women's doubles tennis, win or lose the group would gather for coffee and bagels to wallow in their terrible play or bask in their glory. From there, USTA teams blossomed and captains found their calling. Only the 18+ leagues existed back then, but the program evolved to 40+, senior leagues and then mixed doubles; Jonathan, Mike and Shanon have participated in all these leagues.

Shanon first put on her captain's hat for Adult Leagues 14 years ago. This year alone, she plays for a grand total of 24 teams between the Metro and Long Island regions. It is Long Island where she goes a step further and gives back to her community as a member of the Long Island Regional Council. Over the years, Shanon has had her fair share of success, with many of her teams advancing to Sectionals and Nationals, and it seems she has found the formula for success in recruiting and maintaining players who stay committed to her teams.

Jonathan, Mike and Shanon all love the game and are friends off the court, which seems to be a key ingredient for success. Other team members are:

If there was a recurring theme in the conversation with the three, it was the importance of relationships, friendships and social engagement. At the end of the day, it is about the level of respect and bonding between teammates and opponents that matters most, and adult leagues is an intrinsic system that allows for this bonding. It can be said that this specific 55+ mixed team's success can be attributed to their exceptional teamwork, strategic play and unwavering determination. However, it is the pure enjoyment of being around one another that made this team special.



NTRP Qualifiers

The women's 40+ national qualifier event – the first in the NTRP summer series – took place in June at Sportime Hempstead Lake. For more information, see story, page 7.

Winners were:

- 3.0 Singles - Kendall Gastelu
- 3.5 Singles - Christine Schuler
- 4.0 Singles - Kellie Mae
- 4.5 Singles - Lisa Allison
- 3.0 Doubles - Fran Smith & Elizabeth Haggerty
- 3.5 Doubles - Polina Shchukina & Leah Nguyen
- 4.0 Doubles - Xiaoyu Sun & Alexandra Miller Clark



Eastern finished in 9th place that weekend going 1-3, a record they may say they are not too proud of. But when asked about how the weekend was, the response: "It was the best time ever!" As the saying goes, winning isn't everything.

In photo at left, team members who competed at Nationals were: Shanon Blue, David Dikman, Ronni Armstrong, Sondra Glueck, Andy Funk, Darryl Blue, Lionel Goldberg, Jonathan Klee, Albert Sasson, James Helburn, Francesca Roth, Alyssa Bonadonna, Gigi Banks, Carlos Rios, Michael Pavlides and Aliza Bitton.

USTA Eastern Holds NTRP Qualies

Represent the section at a national championship!

USTA Eastern will hold NTRP National Qualifier tournaments on multiple dates this summer **for the divisions indicated below*** at various Long Island locations. Champions at these events automatically qualify and advance to the [2025 NTRP National Championships](#), to be held in spring 2025.

In 2023, Rockville Centre's Casey Schnabel captured the Men's 4.5 doubles title at the NTRP National Championships (with partner Christopher Chan) and the experience was immensely rewarding.

"It's an amazing feeling to just say you're able to play at Nationals to begin with," Schnabel said. "You never take that for granted. But I've always wanted to be one of those people on the final day holding the trophy. Getting to say I'm a national champion is unreal. Not only did we make it here, but each match we played, we played so well. We wanted to get this for each other, not just ourselves. You never actually think you can win a National, so to actually be able to accomplish it is crazy. We're ecstatic."

Interested in experiencing that feeling for yourself? You'll never know if you don't sign up for a Qualifier! See dates and registration links below, or [visit USTA Eastern to learn more](#).

June 29-30: 55 & Over 3.0, 3.5, 4.0, 4.5 Men (*Doubles 6/29 and Singles 6/30*) [REGISTER HERE](#)
(Hosted at Sportime Kings Park)

July 13-14: 18 & Over 5.0 Men and Women (*Doubles 7/6 and Singles 7/7*) [REGISTER HERE](#)
(Hosted at Sportime Kings Park)

July 13-14: 18 & Over 2.5 Men and Women (*Doubles 7/13 and Singles 7/14*) [REGISTER HERE](#)
(Hosted at Sportime Kings Park)

August 17-18: 55 & Over 3.0, 3.5, 4.0, 4.5 Women (*Doubles 8/17 and Singles 8/18*) [REGISTER HERE](#)
(Hosted at Sportime Kings Park)

August 24: 18 & Over 6.0, 7.0, 8.0, 9.0, 10.0 Mixed [REGISTER HERE](#)
(Hosted at Sportime Kings Park)

See page 6 for photos of winners from the 1st weekend of competition.



Schnabel (left) and doubles partner Christopher Chan pose with the championship hardware at the 2023 NTRP National Championships.

Garner named 2024 Eastern Tennis Hall of Fame Inductee

USTA Eastern and the Junior Tennis Foundation (JTF) recently announced the 2024 class for the Eastern Tennis Hall of Fame. Among the six inductees is Long Island's Chris Garner.

Garner was a nationally ranked junior at just 12 years old, and he eventually attained a No. 1 ranking in both the 14-

and-under and 16-and-under divisions. He went on to earn All-American honors competing for the University of Georgia Bulldogs before joining the ATP tour.

On the circuit Garner was ranked as high as No. 120 in the world, and in 1993 he reached the fourth round of the Australian Open as a qualifier before losing to Petr Korda. Today he serves as head coach for Navy's men's tennis team, where he has amassed a 202-103 record over the last decade.

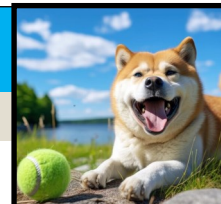
Support Chris at the induction ceremony, which will be held August 23 at the River Club of NYC. All proceeds from ticket sales will benefit the JTF, which provides grants and other financial assistance to hundreds of worthy tennis programs and organizations that focus on underserved and at-risk youth and people with disabilities.

Since its incorporation in 1982, JTF has provided more than \$2 million for programs and scholarships in the Eastern Section.

For more information and to purchase tickets, please click [here](#).



Chris Garner coaches members of the Navy tennis team.



Eastern Tennis Hall of Fame to Induct 2 LI-ers in August



USTA Eastern and the Junior Tennis Foundation will host the 37th Eastern Tennis Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony on August 23rd at the River Club of New York in Manhattan. The previously announced 2024 class includes two people who started their tennis journeys on Long Island—Chris Garner (see story, page 7) and renowned instructor Antonio Palafox.

A two-time Grand Slam doubles champion, Palafox went on to enjoy a successful career as an influential coach at Port Washington Tennis Academy, where he helped develop the games of legendary players John McEnroe, Mary Carillo, Vitas Gerulaitis and many more. At 87 years old, he continues to teach tennis in Atlanta.

Speaking about the induction class, Mark McIntyre, Junior Tennis Foundation Executive Director, said “Tennis would not be what it is in our corner of the world without their immense contributions to our sport - each in their own way, each with their unique talents. We are thrilled to be able to formally recognize them for remarkable achievements.”

Proceeds from the induction ceremony will benefit the JTF, which provides grants and other financial assistance to dozens of worthy tennis programs and organizations that focus on underserved and at-risk youth and people with disabilities. Since its incorporation in 1982, JTF has provided more than \$3 million for programs and scholarships in the Eastern Section. For more information or to attend the event, [click here](#).



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.