

Spring 2025



## Calendar

4/6 HS Coaches' & Special Needs Tennis Workshops @Bethpage Park Tennis Center

5/3 LI Special Olympics @Plainedge Schools Athletic Complex

5/31 Robbie's Run @Levy Lakeside School in Merrick

6/14 Tennis Family Fun in the Park @Hempstead Lake State Park

6/4 Large Schools Team Regional Champs. @Harrison HS

6/6-6/8 NYSPHSAA Individual Champs @NTC

6/13 NYSPHSAA Team Tennis Champs (Large & Small Schools) @NTC

7/9 and 8/11 Summer Tennis Kids' Days (Nassau & Suffolk locations)

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

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

And Instagram [USTA Eastern](https://www.instagram.com/USTA_Eastern)

# On The Ball: News From LI



## 9th Grader Demos Doubles with Isner

Most 9<sup>th</sup> graders don't play doubles with a former #8 in the world professional tennis player. But Sofia Perez isn't most 9<sup>th</sup> graders, and the Mt. Sinai High School freshman got to play and demonstrate doubles strategy with John Isner in front of a roomful of the USTA Eastern Tennis community.

Perez, who has been playing tennis since she could walk and trains at Long Island Health and Racquet Club (LIHRC) in East Setauket, joined her father, LIHRC General Manager and USTA Long Island Regional Council Volunteer Tito Perez at the USTA Eastern Annual Conference in January.

"My dad goes every year," Perez says, adding that this year her coach, Mauricio Doria Medina, asked her to join him during his presentation. Isner was also presenting at the event: he participated in three on-court sessions—a coaches' clinic; a doubles strategy workshop, and a Q&A and exhibition that also featured 2014 Wimbledon junior boys champion and Long Island's own Noah Rubin.

Perez says when Isner asked for volunteers, she was excited to help him. "On the

first day we worked on approach and volley, and on the second day I participated in doubles drills and serving with three other players. They weren't super intricate drills; the focus was on how to move in, have two people at net, and also some volley drills," she says.

"John helped me by letting me know to not be discouraged if I missed the ball," Perez says, adding that she was happy to see that "the drills were things we normally do (in tennis training) and it reinforced (many concepts) for me to hear them from John Isner."

When she's not demonstrating strategy with former top 10 tennis players, Perez plays on her high school tennis team (she joined the team in 7<sup>th</sup> grade). She won 2<sup>nd</sup> place in singles in the Section XI Individuals Championships and competed at States this past fall. She also won the Girls 10s USTA Eastern Junior Sportsmanship award in 2018.

She enjoys competing in USTA tournaments as well. "I usually play around (New Jersey and (New York) City; before my injury (last year) I traveled to Florida and played at the Little Mo tournament," Perez says.



She says she's excited to start traveling again to compete at higher level national tournaments.

## Eastern Honors

The Eastern Section held its Annual Awards Dinner during the Conference weekend in January, recognizing volunteers, organizers, players and coaches for their remarkable achievements in growing the game. You can see [a full list of winners](#) and [photos from the celebration](#). LI awardees were:

**Lauren Norris**

\*

**Roger Rubin**

\*

**Gigi Banks**

\*

**Linda Bracco**

\*



Isner and Rubin Q&A

## Appreciation & Education

### Eastern Provider Appreciation

USTA Eastern will host an interactive provider education day exploring how USTA programs and services can help member organizations to grow their tennis programs and attract new players.

All organizational members are invited to join USTA National and USTA Eastern Leadership and Staff for this FREE day of networking, food, education and golf. Participants will learn how data-driven decision-making and new programming initiatives such as Red Ball Tennis, Kinetica Gap Maps and Tennis Venue Services can expand their customer base, grow programs, increase revenue and improve customer engagement and retention.

The event is scheduled for Thursday, April 10<sup>th</sup> from 10am - 2pm at [TopGolf Holtsville](#). The day will include:

- ✦ Continental breakfast with USTA staff
- ✦ 2-hour interactive sessions on tennis technology and new programming initiatives
- ✦ Lunch
- ✦ RSPA and PTR Continuing Education Credits available for certified coaches
- ✦ Prize raffle and TopGolf

Register to attend by clicking [this link](#) by April 1<sup>st</sup>. Select TopGolf on the registration form.



# TOPGOLF

### 2025 USTA Grassroots Tennis Webinar Series

Exciting news for tennis enthusiasts and professionals! Registration is now open for the 2025 Grassroots Tennis Webinar Series.

Whether you aim to enhance your facility, ensure a safe playing environment, build thriving community programs, discover new programming opportunities or elevate your coaching career, these webinars offer invaluable insights and resources. Don't miss this chance to connect with experts, access funding opportunities and stay ahead of the game – secure your spot today and empower your tennis journey for 2025. [Click here](#) for more information and to register.

### Did You Know?

According to the annual Physical Activity Council study report, [tennis participation in the United States surged to 25.7 million players in 2024](#) and one out of every 10.5 people across the Eastern Section picked up a racquet last year!



### Scholarships

USTA Eastern is pleased to announce the application is now open for those wishing to apply for the 2025 Althea Gibson Tennis Scholarship.

This scholarship, funded by the U.S. Tennis Association, will be awarded to an incoming HBCU student with a demonstrated passion for tennis and a commitment to excellence in academics. Applications will be considered by the Puissance Scholarship Executive Board (dates vary based on student's USTA region.) The Eastern Section deadline to apply is March 28, 2025. USTA Eastern will award two \$5,000 scholarships to high school seniors – one for a boy and one for a girl – in New York, northern New Jersey and Greenwich, Conn.

Apply here: <https://www.hbcupuissance.org/apply>

Questions can be addressed to: [info@hbcupuissance.org](mailto:info@hbcupuissance.org)



## Boys' Spring High School Season

The Spring Boys' High School tennis season is underway, and Long Island is looking forward to some exciting tennis. Key dates on the high school calendar are:

### SECTION VIII/NASSAU

5/17-5/18 Section VIII Singles/  
Doubles Tournament (rain date 5/24-  
5/25)

5/28 Small Schools Section VIII Team  
Championship

5/29 Large Schools Section VIII  
Championship

### SECTION XI/SUFFOLK

#### Individual Division Championships

5/10 & 12-13

D1 @Smithtown West

D2 @East Islip

D3 @ Mt. Sinai

D4 @William Floyd

#### Individual County Championships

5/17 & 19-20  
@Smithtown East

### LONG ISLAND CHAMPIONSHIPS

Week of 6/2: LI  
Small Schools Team  
Championship @Nassau location

Week of 6/2: LI Large Schools Team  
Championship @Nassau location

### NY STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS: TEAM AND INDIVIDUALS

6/4 Large Schools Team Regional  
Championship @Harrison HS

6/6-6/8 NYSPHSAA Individual  
Championships @NTC

6/13 NYSPHSAA Team Tennis  
Championships (Large and Small  
Schools) @NTC

*Pictured are players to watch this  
season and last year's Long Island  
team champions. Photos courtesy of  
Long Island Tennis Magazine*



*Eric Benderly, Commack*



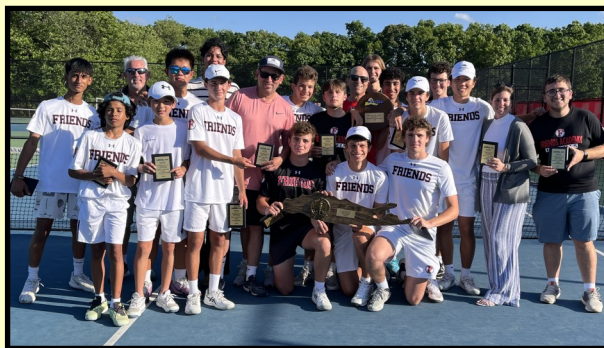
*Shashank Pennabadi, Ward Melville*



*Ethan Solop, Roslyn*



*Max Golubenko, Manhasset*



2024 LI Small Schools Champ Friends Academy



2024 LI Large Schools Champ Syosset

## Long Island Tennis is Better Together

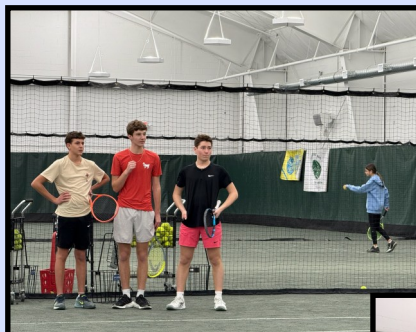
For the second year in a row, USTA Eastern Long Island, Sportime Port Washington/JMTA Long Island and Advantage All Tennis Foundation hosted the “Better Together” Tennis Tournament for middle and high school tennis players in March.

The event raised \$5,000 for the Roslyn Scholarship Fund, which provides scholarships for members of the Roslyn High School tennis community in memory of Drew Hassenbein and Ethan Falkowitz.

A total of 92 players from across Long Island participated in the event, which included three rounds using a team format (1 boys doubles, 1 girls doubles and 1 mixed doubles) and used all the courts at the facility.

Congratulations to the winning teams -- **Syosset Bulldogs, Falcons, Chiefs, Juicy Js and Tennis Players** – and to all the competitors!

Advantage All Tennis Foundation was founded as an NJTL (National Junior Tennis and Learning) in 2023 with the goal to empower and inspire the next generation through tennis. The event took place at Sportime Port Washington.



## Coming Soon to Long Island!

The Long Island tennis calendar is full, and the Long Island Regional Council, its volunteers and partners are looking forward to many fun and educational events in the next few months. Further information on all events can be found at [www.longisland.usta.com](http://www.longisland.usta.com), [Play Tennis Long Island on Facebook](#) or by [emailing](#) us.

### APRIL

#### April 6 @Bethpage Park Tennis Center

**\*Special Needs Tennis Clinic** from 3:30-5pm. This free program will include on court demonstrations from teaching professionals.

**\*High School Coaches Workshop** from 5-6:30pm. Offered in conjunction with *Long Island Tennis Magazine*, this clinic will include discussions on fitness, stroke production, strategy and tactics, open court time and prizes.

To register for either program, please call (516) 777-1368.

**April 21:** deadline to sign up for **USTA Flex League**. Play tennis on your terms—you make the schedule, you set the time, you play when it's convenient for you. Meet local players and play friendly competitive matches. Get matched with players of similar ability. [Click here](#) for more information and to download the app.

### MAY

**MAY is National Tennis Month: want to plan an event to celebrate tennis in your community?** [Email us](#) your ideas!

#### May 2 "The Bridges to Adelphi Adaptive Tennis Clinic"

**May 3** @Plainedge Schools Athletic Complex. USTA Long Island Council volunteers are looking forward to assisting at the Special Olympics Spring Games North.

**May 31** @Levy Lakeside School in Merrick. USTA volunteers will present tennis demonstration and instruction for children during the annual **Robbie's Run** 5K run and family day. Proceeds from Robbie's Run support Forever 9: The Robbie Levine Foundation, which provides AED and CPR instruction and donates AEDs to youth sports programs.

**May through September:** The Town of Oyster Bay is seeking tennis assistants for its summer programming. Must be 16+ with experience playing on a tennis team. For information, please call (516) 797-7943

### JUNE

**June 14:** Tennis Family Fun Day @Hempstead Lake State Park

### JULY

**July 9:** USTA Long Island Summer Kids' Day at LuHi presented in conjunction with *Long Island Tennis Magazine*

### AUGUST

**August 11:** USTA Long Island Summer Kids' Day at Island Quest presented in conjunction with *Long Island Tennis Magazine*



Robbie's Run



Special Olympics tennis



Nassau & Suffolk Kids Day



Nassau & Suffolk Kids Days



Bethpage Park clinic



USTA Flex League

## Grant Money Available

USTA Eastern is offering Growing Tennis Together Grants which will provide up to \$5000 to fund programming within the section.

These grants are available to current non-profit USTA member organizations (such as 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 [here](#). The application deadline is **April 4, 2025**.

Of course, the Growing Together Grants are not the only source of funding offered by USTA Eastern. Members can also apply for the USTA Eastern Grants listed below. Click on the links to learn more about eligibility and requirements:

[School Youth Tennis Initiative Grant](#) (up to \$1200)

[Region Grants](#) (up to \$1000)

[Youth Tennis Growing Tennis Together Grant](#) (up to \$500)

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Calendar Observances Grant](#) (up to \$2000)

[Adaptive and Wheelchair Grant](#) (up to \$2000)

[Tennis Venue Services](#) (opportunity to get courts refurbished and more from USTA National - [read about their \\$10 million commitment](#))

[Eastern Tennis Venue Services](#) (opportunity to get courts refurbished)

Have questions about USTA Eastern grants? Please contact Neil Thakur, Manager, Schools and Community Tennis Coordinator, Long Island & Metro Region, by email at [thakur@eastern.usta.com](mailto:thakur@eastern.usta.com)



Neil Thakur



## LI Council Participates in Eastern Conference

The USTA Long Island Region was well represented at the USTA Eastern Annual Conference and Awards Dinner. Pictured below are:

- 1) *LI Council volunteers celebrating at the awards dinner*
- 2) *LI Council Regional Director Mike Pavlides congratulating awardees Gigi Banks and Linda Bracco*
- 3) *Pavlides joining John Isner and USTA Eastern Southern Regional Director Peter Krasinski*



LI Council



Krasinski and Pavlides



Bracco and Banks

## USTA Leagues Update

By Becky Bellino, LI Adult League Coordinator



I hope everyone has enjoyed their start to 2025 with lots of tennis on their calendar.

Eastern started the year off strong with a stellar Eastern Tennis Conference in Mount Kisco. The weekend was full of fun with tennis great John Isner hosting a number of sessions and panels throughout the weekend. Our very own adult league stars Lauren Norris, Gigi Banks and Linda Bracco got to shake hands and pose with the 6'10" champion for the awards that they won this year for their continued support and love of the game. It was great to see all the winners and Long Island attendees throughout the weekend. I hope you enjoyed the event as much as I did!

Other events happening this winter were the various Invitationals in which Long Island players of all ages and levels participated. For the second year in a row, Lydia Eitel and Mona Giovanni's 65+ 8.0 women's team from



Syosset went to the desert in Arizona to attempt top honors as did Harish Khullar and Sam Lamba's 65+ 8.0 men's team.

While both teams came up short of the title, we hope they had a great time with some good tennis sprinkled in.

The last of the Invitational season was the 55+ Mixed Doubles. Dawn Schosberg and Jennifer Mao captained their 55+ 7.0 mixed team to success last June and traveled to Scottsdale, Ariz. in March to participate in the tournament for this relatively new USTA Adult

League. Good luck to our men and women making the trip. We know you will do great things and have fun while you are at it.

As for current events, all 2025 mixed leagues are ongoing with playoffs around the corner for the 18 & Over Mixed. 2025 tri-level leagues are up and running as well; this gets many of our players up and ready for the spring/summer season which will be shortly upon us.

Registration has now been completed for the USTA league season. We will have men's and women's teams for the 18 & Over League, which has teams at



the 2.5 level, 3.0, 3.5, 4.0, 4.5 and 5.0. The 2.5 and 5.0 level matches consist of one court of singles and two courts of doubles. The matches for the

remaining levels consist of two courts of singles and three courts of doubles.

The 40 & Over League has teams at the 3.0, 3.5, 4.0 and 4.5 levels. All matches for all levels 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 the beginning of August.

Finally, we have the 55 & Over and the 65 & Over leagues, consisting of three courts of doubles at the combined levels of 6.0, 7.0, 8.0 and 9.0. Both of these leagues will begin in mid-June and run through late-August.

If anyone is looking to play on a team, please reach out to me at [Bellino@eastern.usta.com](mailto:Bellino@eastern.usta.com)

Dates to be aware of for Sectional Championships:

++May 30-June 1: 18 & Over Mixed Doubles (Location: Westchester)

++June 20-22: 4.0/3.5/3.0 & 5.0/4.5/4.0 Tri-level and 55 & Over Mixed Doubles (Location: TBD due to possible construction at Central Park courts in Schenectady)

++August 8-10: 18 & Over Adult & 40 & Over Adult (Levels/Location TBD)

++August 15-17: 18 & Over Adult & 40 & Over Adult (Levels/Location TBD)

++September 12-14: 55 & Over Adult Leagues (Location: Schenectady)

++September 19-21: 40 & Over Mixed Doubles and 65 & Over Adult Leagues (Location: 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!



## What to Know If You Experience a Cardiac Event on Court

It's one of the scariest occurrences on a tennis court: Experiencing medical duress or witnessing it happen to an opponent or doubles partner.

In honor of American Heart Month in February, we spoke to Dr. Ersilia M. DeFilippis, an advanced heart failure and transplant cardiologist at New York -Presbyterian/Columbia University Irving Medical Center, about how to best handle cardiac emergencies should they happen during a match. Below, she identifies the warning signs to watch for, what you can do to help and what to discuss with your doctor about playing with heart conditions.

**What are some signs that you may be overexerting yourself on a tennis court?**



**DR. DEFILIPPIS:** If you feel any chest pain, dizziness, lightheadedness or shortness of breath that goes beyond what you normally feel

running to chase down a ball, take that as your signal to stop. Wearing a smart watch to monitor your heart rate while playing can also be helpful.

**What is actually happening in the body when you experience a cardiac emergency?**

**DR. DEFILIPPIS:** When you are having a heart attack, an artery in the heart is blocked, and no blood is getting to that part of the heart muscle. If the artery remains completely blocked for a certain period of time, that part of the heart muscle can suffer permanent damage. Sometimes a heart attack can lead to abnormal heart rhythms, which prompts the heart to stop beating. A person may collapse if they are standing and lose consciousness. This is called cardiac arrest.

**What symptoms may indicate you are experiencing a heart attack?**

**DR. DEFILIPPIS:** The most common sign of a heart attack is chest pain. Some people describe it as an elephant sitting on their chest. However, others may instead feel a pain that radiates down the arm or up to the jaw. Other symptoms include shortness of breath, nausea, vomiting or abdominal pain that comes on with exercise. Dizziness and lightheadedness might be due to dehydration, but they are also signs that can indicate an abnormal heart rhythm, especially if chest pain is also present. If you are newly experiencing any of these symptoms while playing, and they continue even after you get off the court, call 911.

**How might activity, such as running around on a tennis court, influence a cardiac emergency? Would the symptoms change?**

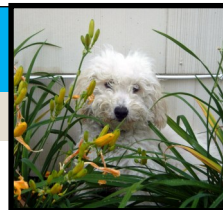
**DR. DEFILIPPIS:** During exercise, your heart works harder to pump more blood to your organs than it normally would when you're simply resting. If the blood vessels in the heart contain blockages, the [increased effort] would make you more likely to experience chest pain. So, the symptoms are the same, but you would be more likely to experience them during exercise than if you were at rest. When cardiologists try to determine if someone's chest pain is originating in the heart, two of the questions we ask are: Did the pain get worse with exercise or exertion? Did the pain stop with rest? If the chest pain is worse with exercise and improves with rest, this makes us more concerned it could be coming from the heart.

**How might another person on court support a person experiencing a cardiac emergency while waiting for EMTs to arrive? Is aspirin helpful?**

**DR. DEFILIPPIS:** If someone is experiencing chest pain and you're worried they may be having a heart attack, aspirin could be helpful. Call 911 and do not let the person drive to the hospital. If someone collapsed and is not responding, and you believe they had a cardiac arrest, start CPR as soon as possible. CPR will help restart the blood flow to the heart and the rest of the body—it can save someone's life! Surveys have shown that only about half of Americans would know how to perform CPR in these situations. Organizations like the American Heart Association have resources on their website that can help you find a nearby CPR class. The longer someone is without oxygen while waiting for EMTs, the longer vital organs, such as the brain, are not getting any blood flow. If another person is around, ask them to check to see if the facility has an automated external defibrillator (AED) or other type of defibrillator. This can help determine if there is a dangerous heart rhythm and if they need to be shocked back into a normal heart rhythm.

**How can people with heart conditions safely play tennis? What precautions should they discuss with their doctor?**

**DR. DEFILIPPIS:** We know that regular exercise is good for people with heart disease, but the "safe" level of effort may differ from person to person. If you recently had a heart attack or needed a stent placed in one of the arteries in your heart, talk to your doctor before you get back on a court. They may wish to run other tests before giving you the green light. They may also advise you to start out playing doubles for a bit before diving into singles. If it has been a while since you hit last, start slowly and gradually increase your intensity and length of play. Ultimately, listen to your body.



## Recent Happenings

Players in the [Eastern Athletic Clubs](#)

programs trained and practiced with the Stony Brook Seawolves during a Junior Tennis Clinic in February.



**Paige Wygodzki** won the Girls 16s singles title at the

[United States Tennis Association - USTA \(Official\)](#)

Winter National Championships in Florida. The LI native won her quarterfinals, semifinals and final matches all in

straight sets to bring home the title. The Huntington sophomore trains at Robbie Wagners in Glen Cove.



Several Sportime Lynbrook juniors were champions or finalists in recent tournaments. Congrats to:

\***Daniella Yogumyan:** USTA L6 Road to NYC 14s Singles Champion

\***Eva Karmazin:** USTA L6 18s Singles Champion

\***Arham Shroff:** USTA L6 Road to NYC 12s Singles Champion

\***Alma Margittai:** USTA L7 Singles Champion

\***Alexis Wu:** USTA L5 Singles Finalist

\***Lifan Zhang:** USTA L7 Finalist



**Kamil Stolarczyk** won the Drew Hassenbein Dream Big Boys 16 Level 3 tournament presented by [Dwight Global Online School](#) at [Robbie](#)

[Wagner's Tournament Training Center](#), winning the title at his home club.

Glen Cove native **Sebastian Bielen** captured the singles title, and paired with Juan Jose Neira Rodriguez to win the doubles title, at the J60 Anapoima Copa Mesa de

Yeguas in Colombia in December. Sebastian trains at [Robbie Wagner's Tournament Training Center](#).



## 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.