

Winter 2025



On The Ball: News From LI



Recognizing Achievements

Calendar

1/30-31, 2026 USTA Eastern Conference
@Genesis Health Club at Saw Mill, Mount Kisco

3/16 Start of Boys High School tennis season (tryouts)
@Nassau and Suffolk schools

3/26-30 USTA National Conference
@Orlando, Fla.

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

...
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Thank you to everyone who attended the USTA Eastern Long Island Regional Council's 35th Annual Awards Reception in October.

Special thanks to all of the volunteer LI Council members whose hard work made the event a huge success.

We had a wonderful time celebrating with the Long Island tennis community and offering much-deserved recognition to the evening's honorees.

A full listing of all winners is available [here](#).

Photos from the evening can be seen on page 3 and a complete photo album is available [here](#). Please enjoy the photos and share them with your tennis friends and families.



Eastern Tennis Conference Honors

Each year USTA Eastern celebrates the hard work and dedication of members of the tennis community from across the Section at its annual Eastern Tennis Conference. For more information on the ETC and awards dinner including how to attend, please see page 9.

Long Island is proud to congratulate these special players and organizations who will be honored in January:

10 and Under Award: Advantage All Tennis Foundation

Family of the Year Award: Perez Family

Junior Team Tennis Award: Sam Siegel

Louise Cilla Award: Dorothy Wiggins

Long Island Regional Volunteer of the Year: Dunja Froman



Dunja Froman



Advantage All Tennis Foundation

Jenny Schnitzer Retires

After 33 years with the organization and more than a decade leading it, longtime USTA Eastern Executive Director Jenny Schnitzer will retire at the end of 2025.

Schnitzer joined the USTA Eastern staff right out of college to help grow the section's school and community programming. A prodigious Eastern junior who grew up playing in NYC parks, Schnitzer thought the gig was as close to kismet as you could get.

"I think [the work] means so much to me because I *was* that kid, right?" she explained. "I grew up playing in the parks. I went out and played with my family. I knew nothing about the USTA. But then one day one person came up to me while I was playing and said 'Hey, you're pretty good! Do you know about USTA tournaments?' She just talked to me about it, and then I signed up, and I got hooked. It takes one person to make a difference. I was a blue collar kid. Because of [this person], I learned about USTA tournaments and started playing in them. I got better the more tournaments I played. And because I got better, I got a scholarship to St. John's University. That was my first lesson in how important it is to build a pathway in your local community."



Schnitzer grew up playing tennis in NYC parks



USTA LI Regional Director Mike Pavlides thanks Schnitzer at the 2025 LI Awards

Of course, even though the role seemed like a perfect fit, she didn't get much—or any—time to acclimate. "My first week on the job, I had a volunteer call me," she recalled. "And he just yelled at me for 20 minutes about how upset he was. I finally said, 'Give me one thing I can do right. Let's work on one project together.' From that conversation, we became best friends."

Schnitzer headed to the volunteer's little town of White Meadow Lake, N.J., and together they grew a community park program from 20 to 100 participants.

"To watch somebody take a small program, reach out to the entire area and build it up like that...I just saw the big picture," she said. "We could do this across the section, and that really became the goal."

That experience shaped Schnitzer's entire tenure with USTA Eastern. As she rose up the ranks, she combined that big-picture vision and compassionate can-do work ethic to great effect—and continually emphasized the importance of building community pathways, or as she would call it, "connecting the dots." Once she successfully convinced a school district to integrate tennis into its P.E. curriculum, for instance, she immediately turned her attention to keeping kids engaged in the sport beyond the classroom.

Over the years, she collaborated closely with community tennis associations and recruited many volunteers to help provide additional programming. Some of those volunteers would go on to do so much for the section in the ensuing years that they later won national awards for their endeavors; some were even inducted into the Eastern Tennis Hall

of Fame. One, club owner Ari Roberts, is currently serving as USTA Eastern's president.

"My club opened in 2010 in Goshen, and about a year later Jenny visited to sell me on everything USTA had to offer," he said of their first meeting. "She asked how USTA Eastern could help me and I started throwing out ideas, and Jenny's attitude of 'try and see what happens' is a big reason why MatchPoint is successful today. She genuinely cares, and she has the attitude that it's okay to take risks and that we shouldn't be afraid to fail. Her 'let's figure it out together' mindset is the reason so many great tennis organizations are flourishing across the section."

Even though she is stepping down as Executive Director, Schnitzer's own approach to growing the game will no doubt loom large and influence the organization and the greater Eastern tennis community into 2026 and beyond.

"It's about relationships," Schnitzer said. "It's the relationships we form locally that make a big difference. The local volunteers, the local club owner, the local park person. Without them, we couldn't do what we do to grow tennis. It's about their work. They are the boots on the ground. We're here to support them—with training, with guidance, with grants. And friendship."

Long Island wishes Jenny all the best!



Staff and volunteers celebrated Schnitzer at a surprise party during the US Open in August

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35th Annual Awards Evening

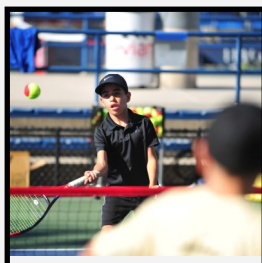


Additional photos available [here](#).

Photo credit: James Alfalla

Around the Region

Hispanic Heritage LI Health & Racquet Club's Tito Perez and his team helped create a fabulous celebration of Hispanic heritage at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center.



Adaptive Tennis

Congratulations to the doubles team of Aaron Stern & Juan Pablo Perez, National Adaptive Tennis Finalists who represented Team Eastern. This event creates an opportunity for neurodiverse athletes to team up with a neurotypical athlete to compete on a national stage.



Teaching the Teachers Thanks to Neil Thakur, manager, Schools Tennis and Long Island CTC, for sharing details of a teachers' workshop that took place in the Amityville School District in October. The Net Gen Workshop for all 12 physical education teachers in the district took place at Amityville High School. Volunteer Jason Wass covered the K-12 curriculum with interactive exercises. All five district schools registered for the USTA's equipment package and have been assigned Jason as their school partner. Tennis will be

incorporated into district PE classes beginning in the Spring of 2026. Does your school want to offer tennis in gym classes? [Email Neil](#) for more information and to schedule a program.



Girls' High School Season: Sportsmanship

Excellent sportsmanship – on and off the court – is one of the most important aspects of the game. That's why the Long Island Regional Council is proud to support high school tennis players by offering each coach who wants one a plaque to recognize one of his or her players for excellent sportsmanship.

The Council is also pleased to work with Jay Harris of Sportime/John McEnroe Tennis Academy (JMTA) to honor one singles player and one doubles team with a plaque and a scholarship to the JMTA in recognition of superior sportsmanship at the Nassau County Individuals Tournament.

This year's recipients of the USTA Long Island Sportsmanship & JMTA Scholarship awards were:

Doubles: Shoriya Baht-Bhandarka & Christiana Kent (Port Washington)

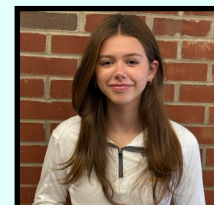
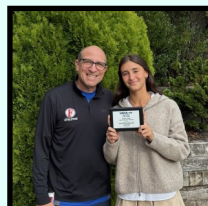
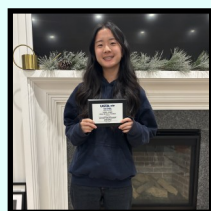
Singles: Stephanie Marcherat (Syosset) (pictured with USTA LI Regional Director Mike Pavlides)



A list of all individual school honorees and some photos are available [here](#).

Honorees include:

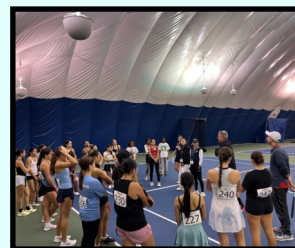
- Arianna Shamin (Oceanside)
- Grace Parziale (Friends Academy)
- Sofie Radolovic (Southside)
- Naya Shah (Manhasset)
- Leah McConville (Oyster Bay)
- Chloe Yim (Great Neck South)
- Julianne Snyder (Massapequa)
- Ava Goldbraykh (Hewlett)



Thank you to all the coaches who participated in the sportsmanship initiative by awarding a plaque to one of their players and providing "On the Ball: News from LI" with a photo. If your school presented a sportsmanship award not listed here, please [email us](#) a photo of the recipient. The email subject line should include the name of the player shown and her school. We will feature any missing sportsmanship honorees in our next issue.

Eastern College Showcase

USTA Eastern held its annual College Showcase Day at the [Saw Mill Club East](#), bringing together college coaches with high school players and parents. Juniors and seniors took part in match play in front of college coaches and learned from recruiting experts during seminars, while freshmen and sophomores participated in camps led by college coaches.



Girls' High School Season: Individuals

Each year, the USTA Long Island Regional Council provides sweatshirts to all the Nassau and Suffolk Girls participating in the [New York State Public High School Athletic Association](#). This season's team members were:

Nassau County

Singles – Champion Stephanie Marcherat (Syosset), runner-up Gabi Villegas (Great Neck South), Lilliana Chou, 3rd place (Levittown Division) and Diane Durante, 4th place (Manhasset)

Doubles— Brianna Lewis & Evie Loewy, Nassau County Doubles Champions (Port Washington), Skylar Lin & Hannah Wang, runners-up (Syosset), Christiana Kent & Shoriya Baht-Bhandarka. 3rd place (Port Washington)

Suffolk County

Doubles—Suffolk Doubles champions Lola Dangin & Lillie Weiss ([Ross School](#)), Runners-up Anabel Van Cott & Lydia Van Cott (William Floyd), Ashley Pursoo & Christina Zhao, 3rd place, (Half Hollow Hills East), and Sachem's Alyssa Davis & Ema Villacreses (4th place).

Singles—Singles champion Sofia Matos (Longwood), Runner-up Lily Castka (Bayport-Blue Point) and Sofia Perez, 3rd place, (Mt. Sinai)

Singles

Runner-up: Gabi Villegas (Great Neck South)

3rd place: Stephanie Marcherat (Syosset)

5th place: Sofia Perez (Mount Sinai)

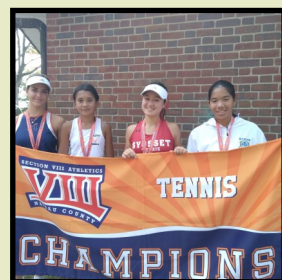
8th place: Lilliana Chou (Division)

Doubles

3rd place: Lola Dangin/Lillie Weiss (Ross School)

5th place: Brianna Lewis/Evie Loewy (Port Washington)

7th place: Skyler Lin/Hannah Wang (Syosset)



Suffolk team at States

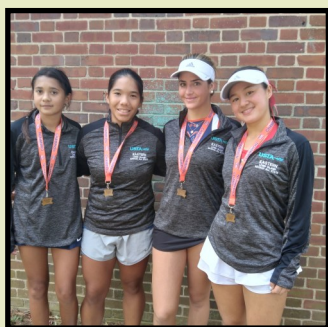
Suffolk Coaches' Awards

The Suffolk County Tennis Coaches Association held its Girls' Varsity Awards Dinner at Villa Lombardi's in Holbrook. Photos can be viewed [here](#).

Photo credit: Long Island Tennis Magazine



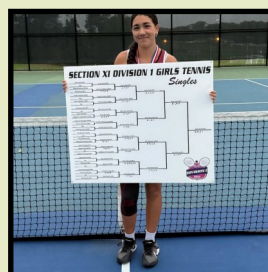
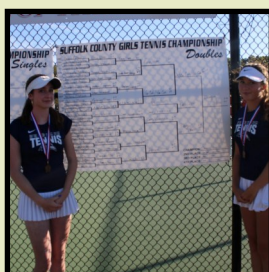
Nassau doubles players at States



Nassau singles players at States

State Individuals

Long Island players did well at the [New York State Public High School Athletic Association](#) Girls' Tennis Individual Championships, which took place at the [USTA National Tennis Center](#). Congratulations to the following players and all the participants for their achievements:



Girls' High School Tennis: Teams

We are the champions!

Long Island ruled the roost at the [USTA National Tennis Center](#) at the [New York State Public High School Athletic Association](#) Girls Tennis Team Championships this fall, bringing home the state titles for both large and small schools.

Syosset captured the Division 1 title, while Bayport-Blue Point brought home the Division 2 championship. Both teams won their school's first-ever girls state tennis title. Bayport-Blue Point won 4-1 over Edgemont while Syosset defeated Horace Greeley 5-2.

Thanks to *Long Island Tennis Magazine* for all the photos from the Tournament.

In Nassau County action, Cold Spring Harbor won its 4th straight Nassau County Small School (Division II) title. Syosset won its third straight Nassau County Girls Large School Championship with a 5-2 win over Port Washington. In Suffolk County play, Hills East defeated Westhampton Beach 4-3 to win its third straight [Section XI - Suffolk County Athletics](#) Large School Championship. Bayport-Blue Point won its fifth consecutive [Section XI - Suffolk County Athletics](#) Small School Title with a 4-3 victory over The Ross School.

Long Island Championships

The USTA Long Island Regional Council supplied plaques for the winners and runners up in the large and small school Long Island championships.

This year's finalists were:

Large schools: Syosset, champions, and Half Hollow Hills East, runner up

Small schools: Bayport-Blue Point, 1st place, Cold Spring Harbor, runner up



Girls High School Season: Play for Pink

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and Long Island's girls' tennis teams always work hard during the month to spread awareness at their matches and in some case raise money for breast cancer charities.

In September, 52 players from across Suffolk County gathered at Smithtown East High School for the annual *Bob Davis Play For Pink* Tournament. This event raised over \$1200 for the *Carol M. Baldwin Breast Care Center* (part of the *Stony Brook Cancer Center*). According to Erick Sussin, coach at Ward Melville High School in East Setauket, the tournament consisted of 26 doubles teams playing a round-robin format of 8-minute mini-matches. Winners (Sofia Perez and Sofia Matos) and runners-up (Lydia Van Cott and Aleksa Brazyte) earned free entry to the Section XI tennis dinner in November.

According to Sussin, putting on this event was a team effort that included assistance from coaches John Selvaggio, Christine Klouda, Debbie Lutjen, Michael Comerchero, Erick Sussin (and wife Kathryn Gutleber), Section XI tennis chair Mark Mensch and the *Suffolk Tennis Coaches Association*.

Teams from across Long Island gathered at Cold Spring Harbor High School on a Sunday in October for a Play for Pink tennis tournament to raise money in honor of breast cancer awareness month.

Many schools held their own pink events and matches during October. These include: Southside, Lynbrook, Oceanside, Valley Stream Central, Massapequa and Sacred Heart.

Did we miss mentioning or sharing a photo of your team? Email us a photo with the subject line: Play for Pink and the school's name.



USTA Leagues Update

By Milly Keighery, Adult League Coordinator Long Island Region
(Keighery@eastern.usta.com)

I mean wow! What a year to join the amazing USTA Long Island Adult League team. Since I began in June, it has been nothing short of incredible — the people I've met, the tennis I've watched, and the sportsmanship and love of the game are truly unmatched here on Long Island!



Since my last update, when we wrapped up Sectionals, our journey has continued with an epic climb to Nationals. This year, NINE Long Island teams qualified to represent the Eastern Section — an amazing achievement! While the level of play at Nationals was nothing short of outstanding, our players fought hard and made memories to last a lifetime.

Teams Representing Long Island at Nationals were:

40 & Over Women 3.0: Donna Healy

55 & Over Men 6.0: Adam Moramarco

55 & Over Women 7.0: Jacqueline Mazzarone

55 & Over Men 8.0: Matt Crowley & Sam Lamba

55 & Over Men 9.0: Lionel Goldberg & Robert Chesney — 4th Place!!!

18 & Over Mixed 6.0: Donna Healy — 5th Place!!

40 & Over Mixed 6.0: David Ng - 3rd Place!!!!

40 & Over Mixed 8.0: Terry Kossegi & Patricia Siler

40 & Over Mixed 9.0: Roslyn Chua-Mcalonie & Justin Liable

Shout out to David Ng's team going to National's 2 years in a row but with a newly rebuilt team - amazing effort! In David's words: "I love how we can bring new people and old friends into tennis together and have so much fun doing it! Everyone on the team played hard and I'm really proud of them."

One of the standout stories came from our 55 & Over Men's 9.0 team, who battled their way to an incredible 4th-place national finish. Shout out to Adrian Chirci and Rob Dwek, who were among the top doubles teams in the entire 9.0 field, going 4-1 with big wins over Texas, Mid-Atlantic, Middle States and Southwest.

As the team's Co-Captain Rob Chesney tells it, one of the weekend's most unforgettable moments came from Adam Kolenberg and Chesney. "In our match against Southwest, which went on to the Final Four, we faced our second match point against us. Adam approached the net, Jaime ripped a shot seemingly past him — but Adam, at full extension, hit a ridiculous volley lob. Jaime chased it down and hit a pro-level tweener, but Adam wasn't deterred. He closed hard and hit a crazy put-away volley to win the point and save match point. Two points later, Adam's service winner sent Team Eastern to the Final Four. Without that point, we don't move on.

"I would not believe it if I weren't next to him. Really incredible — and more than you could possibly hope for at Nationals."

Congratulations to all our teams that represented Long Island and the Eastern Section with such passion, teamwork and sportsmanship. What a



season — and what a year to be part of this incredible community.

Up next are Invitationals, and we wish all the best to the two Long Island teams representing:

65 & Over Women 6.0: Mary Alice Ruppert

65 & Over Women 8.0: Lydia Eitel's team out of Sportime Syosset will represent Eastern for the 3rd year in a row

It's clear that Long Island remains a powerhouse in the Adult League scene within our Section. The effort, perseverance and competitive spirit of our players truly stand out — you all have a lot to be proud of.

What's happening right now in Long Island... Our 18+ Mixed Doubles Leagues are in full swing and rolling right through the winter, while the 4.5 Tri-Level Leagues for men and women are heading toward their exciting finales. Long Island champions will be crowned in mid-December and will advance to Sectionals this January over the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday weekend.

Looking ahead, captain registration is open for the 2026 4.0 & 5.0 Men's & Women's Tri-Level Leagues. We're currently looking for additional teams in both the men's and women's 5.0 Tri-Level divisions. It would be fantastic to see these divisions represented in our region.

Captain registration is also open for our 40+ and 55+ Mixed Leagues where we are looking to have 6.0, 7.0, 8.0 & 9.0 teams across both age groups. If you're ready to lead a team or need any other information on leagues, please [email](mailto:Keighery@eastern.usta.com) me. These leagues kick off in February/March.

2026 USTA Eastern Tennis Conference

USTA Eastern cordially invites you to attend its 2026 Eastern Tennis Conference, which will be headlined by the most successful professional men's doubles pairing of all time: **Bob & Mike Bryan**.

Over the course of their 25-year playing careers, the Bryan Brothers captured a record 119 doubles titles together—including 16 Grand Slams, another record—and finished 10 seasons as the world No. 1 doubles team (yes...another record). They won a gold medal at the 2012 Olympics and helped Team USA secure the Davis Cup in 2007. From January 2005 to July 2006 they reached seven consecutive major finals, and in July 2013 they became just the 2nd men's duo in history to hold all four Grand Slams at the same time. For all their on-court achievements, this past summer the pair was inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame.

At the conference, which will be held January 30-31, 2026 at the Genesis Health Club at Saw Mill in Mount Kisco, NY, the Bryans will lead two on-court clinics that focus on different aspects of coaching and player development, and they will also participate in a wide-ranging Q&A about their experiences competing on the sport's biggest stages. This year's event centers primarily on coaching and will include a session featuring USTA Coaching Managing Director Megan Rose, who will share information about upcoming USTA initiatives in this area.

Coaches, parents and junior athletes, USTA League and tournament players, club managers and tournament directors, CTA and NJTL leaders, volunteers and anyone else interested in the future of the sport (and putting on their coaching hats!) should attend the

conference. [Register today.](#)

Schedule of Events (see more detailed descriptions [here](#))

January 30, 2026

1-2:30pm: Healing-Centered Coaching The Center For Healing and Justice through Sport's core training explores the impact of stress on the brain, body and behavior of athletes.

2:45-3:45pm: Getting the Dub in Doubles with the Bryan Brothers In this interactive, on-court session, Bob and Mike Bryan—who know a thing or 119 about lifting trophies—show you the drills, exercises and coaching strategies that powered their success for over 25 years on the ATP circuit.

4-5pm: RSPA & PTR Member Meetings

5-6pm: USTA Eastern Annual Meeting

6:30-10:30pm: Cocktail Hour and Annual Awards Dinner. *Note: This is a ticketed event and costs \$75 to attend. Dress is cocktail attire.

January 31, 2026

9-10am: Set for Success with USTA Coaching USTA Coaching Managing Director and Head of

Business Development and Operations Megan Rose serves up all the latest on the USTA's brand new coaching program that has been custom built for tennis providers who work with players of all levels.

10-10:45am: Creative Ways to Coach Large Groups Game, set, impact! In this interactive, on-court session, USTA Eastern New Jersey Community Tennis Coordinator and teaching pro **Andrés Sánchez** will take you through fun drills and exercises specifically designed to instruct and accommodate multiple players at once.

10:45-11am: Networking/Break

11am-12pm: In Conversation with the Bryan Brothers Former world No. 1 doubles duo Bob and Mike Bryan—who captured 119 ATP titles together, including 16 Grand Slams—sit down for a candid conversation reflecting on their legendary tennis journey.

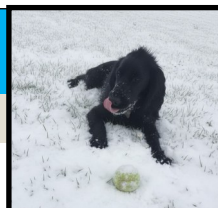
12-12:45pm: Lunch and Vendor Displays

12:45-1:30pm: Regional Council Meetings (open to all)

1:30-2:30pm: All-Love: Finding the Fun in Practice with the Bryan Brothers Bob and Mike Bryan spent over two decades at the

pinnacle of the sport and will ultimately go down in history as two of the best to ever do it. But they couldn't have done any of it if they found little joy in the process. In this interactive, on-court session, the Grand Slam champions reveal how they kept practices fun, stayed motivated through tough times and avoided burnout while competing week in, week out.





Holiday Wishes from the volunteers of the USTA Long Island Regional Council!



USTA Eastern Long Island

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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.