

# **KO's Top Ten Tips for Tip-Top Captains**

## **Overall**

### **1. Show Leadership**

- a. Your players and co-captains will look up to you.
- b. Stay positive; don't speak badly of other players.
- c. Maintain good relations with other captains and the League Coordinator. You'll build a good reputation and your team will too. Remember, everyone's a volunteer and each person deserves respect
- d. KO does this to show leadership:
  - i. Always encourage players
  - ii. Accommodate fellow captain requests, if possible
  - iii. Be fair, be friendly, and be positive

### **2. Make it fun**

- a. If you and your players have fun, you'll play better, win more matches, and your players will want to stay together and play on your team, year after year.
- b. KO does this to make it fun:
  - i. Pick team colors
  - ii. Pick a fun name for the team
  - iii. Take photos of players during matches to share
  - iv. Stay after each match and share refreshments
  - v. Send a recap email to the team after each match
  - vi. Have an after-season party and invite players and spouses
  - vii. Show a slide-show using photos taken during the season

## **Building a Great Team**

### **3. Recruit new players and build loyalty to your team**

- a. Finding the right players for your team and building loyalty and friendships will make next year's job a lot easier – so take time to find new players and help them with an easy transition to your team.
- b. KO does this to build a great team:
  - i. Asks all team players to be on the look out for new players
  - ii. Talks to Club Pros about players who are taking lessons and looking for a team
  - iii. Lets League Coordinator know we're looking for players
  - iv. Once player is identified, contacts the player and introduce the player to our great, fun team, but do some research before adding the player to the roster. We want to make sure the player will fit in with the team in terms of experience level, expectations, and schedules.
  - v. Asks player to send a short email about her experience, her preferences (singles, doubles, ad side etc), other teams she

- plays for, and whether she has any friends with whom she likes to play (may recruit another player)
- vi. Researches the new player on Tennis Link
  - vii. Before putting new player on the roster, we want to make sure the player understands the goals of the team, the general schedule of play, and my management rules for the team. This will make the team more cohesive, and avoid problems during the season.

#### **4. Identify and Recruit a Co-Captain**

- a. Identify a co-captain who is responsible and can help with team management. Make it easy for that person to serve as co-captain. Be clear as to what you want that person to do, and don't overburden the person with responsibilities. Acknowledge her help and thank her for her service.
  - i. KO does this to identify co-captain:
  - ii. Find one person who has time, and can multitask. I give them specific assignments: collect team fees; put together a roster; ensure that all players on team roster are registered in Tennis Link.
  - iii. If co-captain is in a particular match lineup, co-captain will serve as captain for that match, although I always enter the scores in Tennis Link unless the co-captain wants to do so.
  - iv. I also identify other responsible players to serve as captain for a particular match when neither captain nor co-captain is in the lineup.
  - v. I make sure not to over-burden the co-captain. A set number of responsibilities makes my job easier and makes it more likely that I'll get a volunteer to co-captain.

#### **Managing Your Team**

#### **5. Communicate Clearly and Concisely**

- a. Make sure your League Coordinator, co-captain, and players all have your contact information. Check your email frequently and respond to texts and emails promptly.
- b. If you're going to be unavailable for a period of time, let your League Coordinator, co-captain, and players know. Ask your co-captain to step in to manage the team for the time you are out of communication.
- c. Send a detailed email to the entire team before the season starts and provide important information about how the league will proceed and how you will manage the team.
- d. Make sure players clearly know what you expect of them, and what they can expect of you. Explain the rules you've established for your

team, but do so in a friendly way – and explain why you’ve created the rules.

- e. Clear communication and prompt responses to texts and emails will go a long way to keeping your team on track and your season fun.
- f. KO does this to ensure clear communications:
  - i. I send out an email before the season starts explaining that I will send the entire schedule out soon and that I need each player to let me know what matches they can play.
  - ii. I explain that I will be in charge of arranging subs if a player has a conflict. It is too confusing to allow individual players to swap matches between themselves.
  - iii. I then put together lineups and alternates for each match and ask players to promptly confirm their availability.
  - iv. I send out copies of all rules that govern the league matches and ask all players to read the rules.
  - v. I ask all players to print a copy of the local rules and keep a copy in her tennis bag.
  - vi. I explain how rain-out procedures work, and outline my responsibilities clearly while also establishing players’ responsibilities.
  - vii. While this email takes time to compose and send, its well worth the effort, as the team is clear about how the season will proceed.

## **6. Delegate**

- a. It’s a lot of work to be a captain! It can be fun, but only if you delegate work to your co-captain and team members. You’re the leader, but each team member has responsibility, so delegate certain tasks to team members. They’ll feel more invested in the team, and usually are glad to help out!
- b. KO does this to delegate:
  - i. Co-captain collects league fees; creates roster; checks roster against tennis link roster; serves as match captain when in lineup; fields questions and manages team when I’m not around
  - ii. Other players are asked to: Serve as Match Captain when neither Captain nor co-captain are in the lineup and record scores; take photos during matches; coordinate refreshments after matches; and host a team party after the season.

## **7. Use a Team Management App or System**

- a. Use a good Team Management app to help you manage your team. Team Traks is a really terrific app, which automatically sends emails and text reminders to teammates. Very helpful!!

### **Managing Your Match**

## **8. Make Sure You Are Ready**

- a. Prior to a match, make sure you've done everything you need to do well before match time. You don't want to be harried, so ensure that you've got your rules in your tennis bag, your lineup printed from Tennis Link and completed with players who are scheduled to play.
- b. Make sure all players have confirmed for the match and know where and when to show up.
- c. KO does this to ensure I am ready:
  - i. I send a reminder email to those players who are scheduled to play and ask each to confirm by reply email.
  - ii. If I am not serving as captain, I make sure my Match Captain is all set to go.
  - iii. I have read the local rules and understand them, in the event that a question arises during the match.
  - iv. At the match, I make sure players know who they are playing and ensure that they start the match on time.
  - v. After the match, I record the scores, confirm with opponents captain and promptly enter scores into Tennis Link

## **9. Make Sure Your Players are Ready**

- a. Make sure your players know the rules, and know where and when to show up for the match.
- b. KO does this to ensure players are ready:
  - i. I remind players to read the local rules before they begin their first match.
  - ii. I ask each player to put a copy of the local rules in her tennis bag.
  - iii. I make sure players and Match Captain knows her responsibilities for the match.
  - iv. I enter the scores promptly in Tennis Link.
  - v. Players stay after the match to enjoy refreshments and share friendship.

### *At the End of the Season*

#### **10. Recap and Thank**

- i. At the end of the season, players look to you to recap the season and wrap things up. If you send a recap email to all players, you'll build team loyalty and encourage friendships.
- ii. KO does this at end of season:
  1. Send an encouraging email highlighting our good times
  2. Remind players that the team will continue next year and ask each whether they plan to play again next year
  3. Thank my co-captain for her service
  4. Thank all players for helping out and for making the season fun.