



NORTHERN EXPOSURE

MAGAZINE

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MAY 2015

HUNTER HECK (right)

2015
Easter
Bowl 12s
Singles &
Doubles
Champion





Cook County Tennis Association's FISHERMAN'S PICNIC TENNIS TOURNAMENT

July 31–August 2nd, 2015
Grand Marais, MN

Seniors start Friday morning.
Juniors and adults start on Friday afternoon.

For more information go to:
[www.facebook.com/groups/
cookcountytennisassociation/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/cookcountytennisassociation/)

This activity is supported in part by funds from
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SAVE the dates for Many Upcoming Events

US Open Pre Sale Set For May

2015 US Open Advance Ticket Sales for USTA Members ONLY is May 26-30. Tickets go on sale at 8:00 a.m. CDT and each member may purchase a total of 16 day session tickets (8 per session). All individual ticket orders are subject to Ticketmaster service fees and handling charges and will be mailed in mid-July.

Included with your ticket order during these dates is a **FREE** pass to the US Open Club (subject to availability) and a **FREE** 2015 US Open poster with every order (while supplies last).

VIP Hospitality Packages including Courtside and Loge seating will also go on sale May 26-30.

To order tickets, visit www.ticketmaster.com or call the ticket office at (718) 760-6363.



USTA Northern Hall of Fame Ceremony October 2 at Minneapolis Club

The 2015 USTA Northern Hall of Fame Social and Induction Ceremony is scheduled for Friday, October 2, at the Minneapolis Club in downtown Minneapolis. Four to six new people will join the other 102 members who are already enshrined into the Hall of Fame which is housed at the Fred Wells Tennis & Education Center.

Nominations from the public are being accepted now online at <http://bit.ly/1H4Lk8C>. You can also submit an electronic copy of your nomination to mushett@northern.usta.com or a paper version of your nomination to USTA Northern, Attn: Lisa Mushett at 1001 W. 98th Street, Ste. 101, Bloomington, Minn., 55124.

Deadline for nominations is July 24, 2015.

Nominations Being Sought For USTA Northern Annual Awards

Recognize deserving individuals or organization by nominating them for a 2015 USTA Northern Annual Award. Nominations are being accepted for the following categories including the Albert Teeter Adult Sportsmanship Award, Family of the Year, Frank Voigt Pro of the Year, Jack Dow Adult Development Award, Jerry Noyce Junior Sportsmanship Award, Bob Larson Media Excellence Award, Member Organization of the Year Award, Ward C. Burton Junior Development Award and the Wolfenson/Ratner Community Service Award.



To nominate an individual or organization online, visit <http://bit.ly/1CL5y14>. You can also submit an electronic copy of your nomination to **Lisa Mushett** at mushett@northern.usta.com or a paper version of your nomination to Lisa Mushett at 1001 W. 98th Street, Ste. 101, Bloomington, Minn., 55124. Deadline for nominations is September 18, 2015.

The 2015 USTA Northern Awards Banquet is set for the weekend of November 20-21, 2015, at a location to be determined.



20 Questions

with USTA Northern Executive Director Mike Goldammer



Northern Exposure is starting a new series featuring a different USTA Northern staff member each issue so you can get to know us a little better off the court. Our first 20-questions blitz is with none other than USTA Northern Executive Director **Mike Goldammer**.

Q. What is your position with USTA Northern and how long have you worked for the organization?

A. I am the Executive Director and have worked for USTA Northern 18.5 years with 11.5 of those as Executive Director.

Q. What is your tennis background? How did you find yourself in the game?

A. I started playing when I was 11 or 12 at the local parks and schools in Rapid City, S.D. I was introduced to the game through my family playing "hit and giggle" tennis. Finally, I started taking it seriously around 14 years old.

Q. Where did you play high school and college tennis?

A. I played at Rapid City Central High School and then played collegiately at New Mexico State University and the University of Minnesota - Duluth.

Q. Describe your job responsibilities?

A. My primary role is implementing Board of Directors' policy, while also developing, supporting and directing the staff.

Q. What is your favorite part of the job?

A. Making a positive and sustaining impact on people's lives through the sport.

Q. What are some challenges of your job?

A. Finding balance and common ground in people's opinions, interests and needs with the game. Also, creating alignment within the tennis industry on standards of communication, play, training and competition is a daily struggle.

Q. What are two of your top memories while working with USTA Northern?

A. Receiving the phone call from (former Executive Director) **Marcia Bach** asking me to accept the position of Play Tennis America Director and going to the US Open for the first time in 1997. It was the grand opening of Arthur Ashe Stadium.

Q. Outside of tennis, what are some of your hobbies and interests?

A. Working out, cooking (not baking), playing tennis, spending time with my family, golf, sports research and education (current and past).

Q. What three words describe you best?

A. Confident, Determined, Loyal

Q. Favorite food?

A. Ribeye Steak (medium rare)

Q. Favorite TV show?

A. The Goldbergs

Q. Favorite Movie?

A. The Rocky Series

Q. Favorite Musical Genre or Group?

A. Def Leppard

Q. Favorite Place To Visit?

A. Barbados

Q. Family? Married, kids, animals?

A. Married to **Tiffany** (It will be 20 years in September). We have two boys: **Caden** (11) and **Tygen** (10).

Q. If you did not work at USTA Northern, what would be your ultimate job?

A. Sports Anchor or Commentator

Q. When you were growing up, what did you want to be?

A. I don't remember wanting to be anything or anyone before I was 14 years old. After that, I wanted to be a tennis coach (help others enjoy and improve their games).

Q. Who are your heroes or people you admire the most and why?

A. My parents, who always gave their unconditional love, support and guidance. They set boundaries and showed tough love when necessary, but always believed in me and my dreams.

Q. If you could take 24 hours and do anything you like, what would it be?

A. Spend it being active and engaged with my family without distraction (phones, email, television, etc.).

Q. In your mind, why should people play tennis?

A. It positively affects your life (health, social, strength of self, cognitive development, physiologically) more than any sport invented.



Tennis FOR ALL



Tennis found each of us in different ways. Some were introduced at a young age by their parents or older siblings. Others found the game in gym class at school or when they signed up for a park and recreation or athletic association program. Many of us started playing tennis when we were children, but gave it up as a young adult as college, careers, courtship and parenthood became the priority. Some never played when they were young, but found the game later in their lives, either following in the footsteps of their kids or waiting until they were empty nesters

looking for ways to stay active and social. No matter how or when you found yourself in the game, tennis offers an array of benefits to one's life. That is why it is considered the sport of a lifetime.

In an article I wrote a year ago for this magazine, USTA Past President **Dave Haggerty** referred to how the USTA needed to look for more ways to embrace and lead change. Society continues to develop and we must keep up with the fluidity of the times. Although there are a number of newer initiatives and growth strategies we are planning to roll out this year (more on this below), we must continue to devote consistent and ongoing energies to our most popular and core programs - USTA League Tennis, USTA Junior Team Tennis, Junior and Adult Tournaments and USTA Schools Tennis. These four programs have been staples of tennis participation for decades, with almost 90% of our membership playing in at least one of these programs in 2014. They are the backbone of our tennis delivery system and are key priorities for us moving forward. We are constantly looking for ways to make sure these programs deliver the best possible experience to our player base and will continue to do so for years to come.

With that said, we also have to keep looking for ways to grow the game. Whether you are new to tennis or took a sabbatical from the court for whatever reason, we want you to experience the life-long benefits tennis offers on a physical, social, mental, cognitive, and physiological level. Thus, USTA Northern is looking for ways to engage prospective players, as well as those existing or lapsed players who might want to sample something different, through a number of new initiatives in 2015 including:

Millennial Play Events (Focused on ages 18-39)

- ▶ **It's Just Sets** – Fun and Social Mixed Doubles League
- ▶ **No Strings Attached (NSA)** – Drop-in Play Events scheduled in parks for the summer/fall months
- ▶ **Grand Slam Tournament Series** – Four half-day events surrounding the summer Grand Slams
- ▶ Each event is low cost, easy entry using Team Snap and no USTA membership required

Tennis Delivery (USTA Northern staff or clinician run)

- ▶ **Out-of-School Tennis Programs** – Working with schools and youth service organizations to offer before- or after-school tennis instruction and play through Kids Clubs and Play Days.

- ▶ **Adult Parks and Recreation Programs** – Partnering with several Parks and Recreation departments to deliver their adult lessons and play opportunities.

Social Media

You may have noticed we have increased our presence on social media this year in a big way - Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Team Snap, etc. – providing more 'real time' engagement with our members/players on tennis opportunities, highlights, news and successes in the Section.

Flexible/Alternative Competition Formats – Juniors and Adults

We are working with our partners in trying to find a balance between traditional scoring and tournament formats and alternative formats (timed matches, half-day or one-day competitions, flexible scoring, etc.).

Inclusiveness Strategies

The United States is becoming increasingly more diverse every year. In order for tennis to continue to thrive and grow, we **MUST** look for ways to become more inclusive. More training of diverse audiences, breaking down barriers currently in place (cost, accessibility, infrastructure, etc.), educating and engaging community leaders on the benefits of the game are all top of mind in 2015.

Reimagine Junior Development and Competition Pathway

Competition in youth sports is on the decline for many reasons and tennis is not immune to this disturbing trend. As we develop strategies and tactics to combat this, we must always remember to put the needs of the child first. We are looking for ways to increase the number of juniors competing in the Section by making the competitive model more accessible, and less intimidating, at every point of entry. We need to provide a structure that allows all players to fulfill their potential. We must also improve the overall customer satisfaction and consumer experience. We have a great deal of work ahead of us on this initiative, but the junior tournament survey that was recently conducted with parents, coaches and players provided valuable feedback that we can use when discussing next steps. (You can read some of the most frequently asked questions from that survey on page 14).

Finding balance in life is something we all strive to achieve. We too must find a balance in best delivering our core programs and play opportunities, along with finding ways to reinvest and reinvent new and existing growth and development offerings. Working together, I believe we can find this balance. It will not happen overnight, but hopefully we are making strides in the right direction this year.

Tennis is a sport that finds each of us in its own way. It's our job at USTA Northern, as well as yours, to create the pathway which assists in making this happen. Let's all do our part in helping others to find themselves in the game!

See you on the courts!

Mike Goldammer
goldammer@northern.usta.com
(952) 358-3284



Make Plans To **Play** In a **SUMMER** **TOURNAMENT**

Kathy Schneider Hired As New Twin Cities Leagues Scheduler

USTA Northern welcomes **Kathy Schneider** as the new Twin Cities League Scheduler. Schneider has already started her new position and will work specifically with the USTA Leagues department with scheduling, roster maintenance and Tennis Link questions. She can be contacted at schneider@northern.usta.com or at (952) 358-3295.



Schneider, from Bloomington, Minn., comes to the Section office after working as a Customer Service Specialist for Coolibar in St. Louis Park, Minn. At Coolibar, Schneider provided customer support for online and catalog sales and supported the online fulfillment program. A computer programmer and software engineer by trade, Schneider has worked at Unisys and Northstar Technical Resources during her career.

She has worked as a volunteer in a number of different capacities at both Holy Angels High School and Nativity of Mary School and served as treasurer of The Bella Center Healing Retreats. She plays USTA League Tennis, and her daughter, **Rachel**, has played Junior Team Tennis, Junior Tournaments and Tennis on Campus.

Schneider graduated from Iowa State University with a degree in computer science and a minor in business. She is married to **Steve Schneider**, and they have three children, **Kelley**, in Paris, France, and **John** and **Rachel**, both at Marquette University.

"I am so grateful to be working for the wonderful people of USTA Northern," Schneider said. "I love playing the game, have enjoyed being a fan at all levels, and am excited to serve the community and promote the growth of the great game of tennis,"



New Millennial Program Aimed At Getting Younger Players Back Into The Game

A top priority for the USTA Northern staff in 2015 is keeping younger players in the game after graduating from high school. Last year, the Section formed a Millennial Task Force of men and women ages 18-39 from a variety of different tennis and non-

tennis backgrounds and asked what types of activities would either keep them playing or entice new players to hit the courts.

From those discussions, USTA Northern has developed a pathway of play opportunities for both existing and new players called "Let's Talk About Sets." There are three components of the pathway: a spring mixed doubles leagues (It's Just Sets...), a summer tournament series ("Four" Play) and summer/fall drop-in play opportunities (NSA: No Strings Attached).

The spring mixed doubles league started with a kickoff party at Life Time Athletic - St. Louis Park in April where over 40 people played tennis and Spikeball, enjoyed pizza and beverages and made their own Tennis Makes You video. The league which started April 9, also at St. Louis Park, has 66 players - well over projected numbers.

"These are the type of play opportunities that members of the task force wanted to see," USTA Northern's **Brandon Jackson** said. "It is amazing at the number of positive responses being received from people who have participated in the events. "Let's Talk About Sets" focuses on tennis in a fun, social and stress-free environment with opportunities for happy hours following the play. The names of the events are catchy and remind people tennis is supposed to be fun."

For more information about how to get involved in the Millennial program, please contact **Jackson** at Jackson@northern.usta.com or at (952) 358-3290.

USTA Northern Competes At Tri-Level Nationals In Indian Wells, Calif.



Congratulations to the following players who represented USTA Northern at the 2015 Tri-Level National Championships as part of the BNP Paribas Open in Indian Wells: **3.5 Women - Betty Swiston, Elizabeth Erickson** (Washburn, Wis.); **3.5 Men - Eric Narvaez, Dan Whalen, Noah Lipschultz, Fadil Dobraca** (Twin Cities); **4.0 Women - Kelsey Jenson, Kelly Krajnik, Amy Cass** (Rochester, Minn.); **4.0 Men - Dominick Bush, Mark Ciccarella** (Twin Cities); **4.5 Women - Megan Newbauer, Erin Humphrey** (Twin Cities); **4.5 Men - Justen Seim, Rick Slachta** (Twin Cities). The men finished 3-1 on the weekend and just missed the semifinals, while the women were 2-1.

"All in all, it was a great showing for our Northern team," Swiston said. "All members supported each other by cheering on the others when matches were finished. We also had a nice group of Northern supporters who came and watched our matches."



USTA Northern Running Leagues Education Series

All captains and players are invited to learn more about USTA Northern League Tennis this spring and summer through our new Captain and Player Education Series. Two sessions are scheduled for the following dates at the USTA Northern Offices at Life Time Fitness - Bloomington South.

- ▶ **Tuesday, June 16:** TennisLink: USTA Rules & Regulations
- ▶ **Tuesday, July 21:** NTRP & Everything Ratings

Each session will be offered twice that day - once in person at the USTA Northern Office from 12 Noon from 1:00 p.m. (refreshments will be provided) and later via webinar from 6:00-7:00 p.m. Please RSVP to **Nancy Lundberg** and indicate session date and time.

Rochester Leagues Captains Meeting May 14

The Captains Meeting for the upcoming Summer USTA League season in Rochester, Minn., will be held May 14 at 6:30 p.m. in the Civic View Room at the RAC (Rochester Athletic Club). Refreshments & light appetizers will be provided. It is mandatory that the captain/co-captains or a team representative attend. Please notify **Sheryl Warfield** (Area Leagues Coordinator) at allaboutsheryl@aol.com by the April 30 deadline if you are planning on having a team this summer. Tentative levels to be offered are: Adult 2.5-4.0W; 3.0-4.5M; and 55 & Over 7.0W; 8.0W; and 8.0M. Players can also contact the RTC and RAC tennis staff if they wish to be on a USTA team.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THESE UPCOMING SUMMER TOURNAMENTS

USTA Northern is playing host to a number of unique adult tournaments this summer. Mark your calendar and plan to play or watch these fun events.

US Open Northern Section Qualifier, June 18-21 at Baseline Tennis Center

Baseline Tennis Center will once again play host to the US Open National Playoffs Northern Sectional Qualifying Tournament. The event, scheduled for June 18-21, 2015, marks the fifth consecutive year the University of Minnesota facility has served as home to this unique tournament. The US Open Qualifier expands the footprint of the US Open to cities nationwide by providing the opportunity for all players 14 years of age and older to earn a berth into the US Open. New this year, the US Open National Playoffs will include a men's and women's doubles competition. Also, players can continue to compete in both men's and women's singles, as well as mixed doubles. Registration for the once-in-a-lifetime event is open NOW.

2015 USTA Northern Sectional Championships, June 19-21 at Baseline Tennis Center

The USTA Northern Hard Court Section Championships are scheduled for June 18-21 at Baseline Tennis Center. The event is even age groups in singles and NTRP in men's and women's singles, doubles and mixed.

2015 National Senior Games, July 3-19 at Baseline Tennis Center

The Twin Cities is playing host to the 2015 National Senior Games with the tennis portion of the event July 3-19 at the Baseline Tennis Center. Come see some of the nation's best senior players compete for national titles. Over 1,000 players are expected to participate in age group events from 50 to 100. Many local players will be competing as well.

20th Annual Aquatennial Tennis Classic, July 13-24 in Downtown Minneapolis

Registration is now open for the 20th Annual Aquatennial Tennis Classic July 13-24 on the Plaza (2nd Ave. & 5th Street near the Lightrail

Tracks) in downtown Minneapolis. The qualifying event is scheduled for July 13-15, while the main draw starts July 16. Events include men's and women's singles, doubles and mixed doubles and you can play two events.



National Public Parks Tournament, July 22-26 in Sioux Falls; Total Purse For Open Events \$10,000

The City of Sioux Falls is playing host to the 2015 National Public Parks Championships July 22-26. Both age group and NTRP levels events are offered, as well as Open draws where the total purse is \$10,000.

30th Annual Pine Tree Apple Tennis Classic, August 6-9 at Dellwood Country Club

The 30th Annual Pine Tree Apple Tennis Classic is scheduled for August 6-9 at Dellwood Country Club in Dellwood, Minn. Look for more information in the coming months about how you can play or get involved in this great event which raises money for cancer research at Children's Hospitals in Minnesota.

65 & Over Category I Men's Nationals August 11-16 at Life Time Athletic Eden Prairie

Life Time Athletic - Eden Prairie and USTA Northern are playing host to the Men's 65 & Over Category I National Indoor Championships August 11-16. The event is open to all men 65 and over. To register, visit www.northern.usta.com.

InnerCity Tennis Adult & Senior Clay Court Championships

August 24-30 at Wayzata Country Club

Wayzata Country Club in Wayzata, Minn., will host the InnerCity Tennis Adult & Senior Clay Court Championships which is a fundraiser for InnerCity Tennis. Play is in the men's and women's 40-80 singles and doubles categories. To register, visit www.northern.usta.com.



THANK YOU

USTA NORTHERN SPECIAL VOLUNTEERS

USTA Northern recognized some amazing volunteers from around the Section during Volunteer Appreciation Week April 12-19. Without the following groups and individuals, we would not be able to promote and develop the game of tennis within USTA Northern. Thank You!!!!

Marv Schneider

Nominator: *Dennis Hykes and the Senior Tennis Players Club*

Marv Schneider has been a tireless backstop to the Senior Tennis Players Club, both on the court and behind the scenes, since joining the Club in 1991. Through the years, he has captained multiple-court group play schedules, both indoors and outdoors, including ladder and team play. He served six years on the Board as Treasurer and has chaired many committees through the years including the Picnic, Grandparent-Grandchild and the Dow Tournament. In 2009, he received our Dow Founder's Award, the Club's highest honor. A true volunteer, Schneider has a heart for the Club, and never says no to a request.

Richard Hicks

Nominator: *Douglas Stevens and the Spearfish Tennis Association*

Richard Hicks has generously served the Spearfish Tennis Association (STA) in the following capacities over the past 7-10 years:

- ▶ STA Secretary - he always provides detailed minutes that are available within a couple days of our meetings
- ▶ Volunteer assistant clinician for our indoor high school and middle school clinics
- ▶ Volunteer co-coordinator of the STA's outdoor middle school program
- ▶ Volunteer facilitator of the STA's Monday night indoor open tennis setting up nets, donating lesson/instruction time and creating positive experiences for new players



It is hard to summarize how much this retired Art professor contributes to our tennis community by making people laugh, fixing nets/net posts and donating his tennis knowledge to anyone who wants to improve their game.

Steve & Kathy Haug

Nominator: *Hal Miller and the Alexandria Area Tennis Association*

Steve and Kathy Haug are the two people responsible for writing grant applications for both the USTA and USTA Northern. They were in constant communication with the review teams answering questions and seeing all forms were in order. They also raised more than \$21,000 in additional monies from Bremer Bank and the Alexandria Foundation. The result of their work is a beautiful 12-court facility.

In addition, Steve has been volunteering all winter working with a group of middle school tennis players, organizing drills, planning snack breaks and teaching the game. Steve also volunteers to help with a free tennis clinic sponsored by the Golden K service club the past five years.

This summer, the Alexandria Area Tennis Association will take over the summer tennis program sponsored by Lakes Area Rec. This will be another volunteer position. Steve also volunteers two evenings each week each summer to work with our varsity and JV tennis players in the area. Steve has recently been elected the president of the Alexandria Area Tennis Association.

These two people are the most deserving people I have been associated with in my 50 seasons of coaching, my 28 years of running the MSHSL state tournaments and the nearly 45 years of my involvement with the game of tennis.

Mike Johnson

Nominator: *USTA Northern Leagues Staff*

Mike Johnson, who is currently the Head Professional at Life Time Fitness – St. Louis Park in St. Louis Park, Minn., has been involved with the USTA League Tennis program since 1995 as both a player and captain. Since 2000, Johnson has captained 75 teams and played on an additional 30. Many of his teams have advanced to USTA League Tennis National Championships, and in 2004, his team, which he captained, won the 8.0 USTA Regional Mixed Doubles Championship in Bloomington, Minn.

In 2004, Johnson won the Coldwell Banker Award of Excellence given to the USTA Northern member who has greatly contributed to the development of USTA League Tennis over the years. He has served on the Twin Cities Leagues Committee for over 12 years and was chair of that group from 2008-12. He continues to pour his heart and soul into the betterment of leagues by now serving his second term as the USTA Northern Section Leagues Committee Chair (2013-current).

In 2012, he volunteered as the Chair of the USTA Northern League Restructure Task Force and was the architect of the USTA Northern's new league format introduced in the fall of that year. That new structure created year-round, weekly continuous play opportunities for all league players, which had never happened in the Twin Cities. Johnson was responsible for developing the entire concept (called the Circle of League Life) including facility scheduling, season dates and days of play. By adding a third season (Winter) to the already existing Summer and Fall leagues, the expanded structure increased league registrations more than 20 percent in the Twin Cities to almost 10,000 players and allowed everyone the opportunity to play weekly throughout the entire



year if desired. For his efforts, Johnson was awarded the 2012 USTA Northern Jack Dow Development Award given to the individual whose efforts have had the greatest impact on improving adult competitive and recreational play opportunities that year.

In addition to embracing the new USTA National structure of leagues (18 and Over, 40 and Over, 55 and Over) and promoting those increased play opportunities, Johnson has also been supportive of the many new leagues USTA Northern has developed over past two years including two sessions of NTRP Doubles, 40 and Over Mixed Doubles and 65 and Over Leagues. He has not only played and captained in these new leagues, but also figured out how we could fit them into USTA Northern's already jam-packed schedule of play, especially during the winter months.

In 2015, even though the year is barely a quarter completed, he has worked closely with the USTA Northern Staff and the Leagues Committee in piloting a NTRP Mixed Doubles league, a new millennials league called "It's Just Sets" and a new Park and Rec League for beginning adult players in Minneapolis and the surrounding areas. He is also the mastermind in creating a new Sectionals Advancement Process for teams in the Twin Cities area.

Jon Farnsworth

Nominator: *Becky Cantellano and St. Paul Urban Tennis*

Jon Farnsworth was added to the St. Paul Urban Tennis Board of Directors in Spring 2014, and from the start, has dedicated endless hours to furthering our mission and capacity. His involvement has led to an increased focus on board development and organizational capacity building and he has been more than willing to accept additional responsibilities as needed. In fact, he was named as SPUT's Vice President in January 2015. He brings a wealth of knowledge and a unique perspective to our board and is a valuable asset to the organization.

Mitch Best

Nominator: *Jason Olson and the Rapid City Parks and Recreation*

Mitch Best is one of the most unsung persons I know. He volunteers at the Sioux Park Complex all year and does the work that no one else wants to do. Just about every day you can find Mitch doing something at Sioux Park including emptying and cleaning the garbage cans, putting out and taking in the court benches, placing the scorecards on the courts on a match day before anyone gets there, cleaning and organizing the storage rooms, putting the up and taking down the flag and cleaning the courts. This is all done free of charge! No one even knows half of the time that it is Mitch who does these jobs. Mitch Best is an amazing supportive person and is vital to the success of our programs and complex.

Eau Claire Memorial High School Varsity Tennis Teams

Nominator: *Matt Boughton and the Eau Claire YMCA Indoor Tennis Center*

The Eau Claire Memorial High School Boys and Girls Tennis Teams and specifically Kyle Woghan, Molly Thapar, Olivia Thapar, Gina Frenette, Kate Tana, Benton Bourget, Andrew Gunem, Annika Klause, Zarah Obias, Kylie Southard, Devon Bourget and Gabby Brucker take 10U tennis equipment into local elementary schools every year in an attempt to grow tennis. Last year, they visited 13 schools and reached 554 unique kids, introducing them to tennis.

InnerCity Tennis Facilities Real Estate Committee

Nominator: *Omar Warfa and InnerCity Tennis*

The InnerCity Tennis Facilities Real Estate Committee consists of a dynamic group of men – Dave Pelner, Steve Bieringer, Steven M. Faber and Greg Huber – who have worked tirelessly over the past two years strategizing, planning and implementing change at the Reed Sweatt Family Tennis Center in Minneapolis. Because of their hard work and dedication, the fruits of their labor and ingenuity are beginning to show through the amazing improvements in the facility. Coming in early each week and late at night to measure, record and reassess, the ICT Facilities Real Estate Committee is truly the unsung heroes behind the architectural and visual improvements to the Reed Sweatt Family Tennis Center.

Huether Family Match Pointe Board of Directors

Nominator: *Cindy Huether and the Sioux Falls Tennis Association*

It's no secret that Sioux Falls had been talking about the need for more indoor tennis courts forever. But, a very special group of seven individuals – Bill Townsend, Cindy Huether, Lou Bosch, Mike McInerney, Mary Thompson, Matt Johnson and Keith Thompson – put their words into action. I will never forget the day in 2007 when the Sioux Falls Tennis Association voted unanimously to move forward with plans to build a public, indoor tennis facility. Each person contributed their time, talent and treasure to bring the project to fruition. They wore so many different hats but a few major accomplishments were to apply and receive non-profit status, fundraise over \$3.7 million and design and oversee the building of the new facility. This group literally spent hundreds of hours in meetings, and did it all for free, while still working at their day jobs. The past years have not been easy, and there have been many ups and downs, but I can proudly say that not one of these people ever stepped away when the going was tough. This group of seven has been together for eight years and Huether Family Match Pointe finally opened its doors in March of 2015. It's a magnificent facility, and while there are many people to thank, this group deserves the credit.

Senior Tennis Players Club

Nominator: *Omar Warfa and InnerCity Tennis*

The Senior Tennis Players Club has found the secret to leading a happy, physically active and infinitely rewarding life by volunteering at the InnerCity Tennis Super Saturday program. Most Saturdays for three hours, InnerCity Tennis opens its doors to hundreds of diverse children and families at no cost. A lean staff of five is buoyed by at least five dozen volunteers – most of who hail from the Senior Tennis Players Club. Together, the volunteers facilitate physical activity, healthy nutrition, positive coaching and just pure fun for children. Many have volunteered for years – some close to two decades. Why do they do it? They love tennis as a lifelong sport that keeps them aging healthily. They love the interaction with children and being a small part of their smiles each Saturday. They love seeing each other every week and benefiting from playing tennis together as a volunteer reward on Monday mornings. They do it because they love InnerCity Tennis and are part of a vibrant tennis community that puts the health and wellness of children at the center of their efforts.



WHAT'S YOUR CALL?

Rules OF THE GAME

Did you know all USTA League matches are played under "The Code," which is the player's guide to fair play and the unwritten rules of tennis found in the 2015 Friend At Court? If you are not familiar with "The Code" or the Rules of Tennis, you should be as many unique situations often arise during a match, and usually at a critical time. Friend At Court and "The Code" can be found on www.northern.usta.com in the Leagues Section or you can order one for \$7 through the USTA Northern office by contacting **Vanessa Sexton** at (952) 887-5001.

Just in my matches during the last month, the following scenarios have occurred and the players involved were not sure of the correct rulings.

Note: The following situations are under the assumption that no officials are present.

#1 SITUATION

In an indoor match, Player A hits a wide angle cross-court shot which lands in the proper court before hitting the side curtain prior to Player B hitting the ball back in play? What is the call? Whose call is it?

Answer: After the ball lands in the proper court and as soon as it hits the curtain, which is a considered a permanent fixture, the point is over and Player A, who hit the ball, wins the point. (#13 in Rules of Tennis, pg. 10) Because the ball is coming towards Player B, it is Player B's call to make (#5 in The Code, pg. 49 in FAC).

#2 SITUATION

Player A hits an overhead in which Player B volleys back over the net into the proper court, but the ball hits Player B's racquet and wrist almost simultaneously when hitting the volley. What is the ruling?

Answer: As soon as the ball in play touches Player B or anything that the players is wearing or carrying, except the racquet, the ball is dead and the point is over. (Rule 24, I, pg. 1 in FAC). Because the ball is coming towards Player B, it is her responsibility to make the call (#5 in The Code, pg. 49 in FAC).

#3 SITUATION

In a tie-breaker, the players switch sides after six points and the wrong player (Player A) serves the next point. What is the call? Whose serves the next point?

Answer: The point stands because it was played in good faith, but since the error was discovered after an odd number of points have been played, the service order remains altered and Player B then serves. If the error is discovered after an even number of points, the error is corrected immediately. (#27 in Rules of Tennis, pg. 20)

#4 SITUATION

In a doubles match, Team B serves out of turn. Both teams realize the mistake after the first point. What should they do?

Answer: If a player serves out of turn in a standard game, the player who was originally due to serve shall serve as soon as the error is discovered. However, if a game is completed before the error is discovered, the order of service shall remain as altered. Also, if a fault is served and then the error is discovered, the fault that was served before the error should stand.

#5 SITUATION

A player serves from the wrong half of the court (the deuce half), when the score is 30-15. What is the call?

Answer: During a standard or tie-break game, if a player serves from the wrong half of the court, this is corrected as soon as it is discovered and the server should serve from the correct half of the court according to the score. If a fault was served before the error was discovered, the fault shall stand.

Remember: The general guiding philosophy in correcting mistakes whether it is failing to change ends, serving to the wrong court, receiving from the wrong court, etc., is this: Any such error shall be corrected immediately as soon as discovered, but not while the ball is in play, and any points completed under the erroneous condition shall be counted as the points were played in good faith. The only exceptions to the "rectify immediately" requirement are:

- ▶ In the case of a doubles match where the players of one team happen to reverse their "sides" when receiving in the middle of a set, and the mistake is discovered during the middle of a game, the players finish that game in their "new" positions, but then resume their regular sides in all receiving games after.
- ▶ In cases of error during a tiebreaker (see pg. 20 in Friend At Court).



For addition questions regarding the Rules of Tennis, please contact Tim Kurtt, USTA Northern Director of Officials, at timkurttt@aol.com.



SUMMER JUNIOR TEAM TENNIS Registration



Going On Now!

Registration is going on now for USTA Junior Team Tennis (JTT) – the largest junior recreational tennis league in the country. As the players grow into their skills, the format is adapted to best meet their needs. JTT is a combination of practice and match play with an emphasis on

skill development, fun, teamwork and friendly competition.

There are five levels of JTT ranging in age from 8-18. Within these levels are Intermediate B, Intermediate A and Advanced divisions. The teams are coed and consist of at least six players – three boys and three girls – based on similar ages and skill levels. Matches include boys singles, girls singles, boys doubles, girls doubles and mixed doubles and all team matches are determined by a total-games-won format.

Last year, a record high of over 2,800 kids participated in USTA Northern Junior Team Tennis, up 10 percent from 2013. Players register directly through a local tennis provider who is forming USTA Junior Team Tennis teams. To find a team or to learn more about your local league, please contact your Local Program Coordinator (see below).

For more information on Junior Team Tennis, or starting a program in your area, please contact **Brandon Jackson** at jackson@northern.usta.com.

Section-Wide Junior Team Tennis Registration Events May 16-28

USTA Northern is celebrating the start of the 2015 Junior Team Tennis season by supporting Section-Wide Play Day/Registration events from May 16-28. All participating organizations will receive yard signs to post around your community announcing your registration event and summer programming. To register your event, please visit www.youthtennis.com.

Register Three Boys, Three Girls For JTT By May 28 And Enter Drawing For \$150 Wilson Gift Cards

USTA National is requiring that all teams have at least three boys and three girls registered into TennisLink to be considered an eligible JTT squad. USTA Northern is rewarding those programs who have at least three boys and three girls registered by May 28, entering them into a drawing for three \$150 Wilson Gift Cards. Be a leader and register your players early!

2015 JTT Important Dates

▶ Section-Wide JTT Registration Events

May 16-28, 2015

▶ Team Registration & Minimum 3 Boys/3 Girls Player Roster Due

May 28, 2015

▶ Area Playoffs Registration Due

June 25, 2015

▶ Last Roster Changes Deadline

July 9, 2015

▶ 2015 Area Playoffs Dates/Locations:

July 13-14: Northern MN Area Playoffs in Brainerd, MN

July 16: North Dakota Area Playoffs in Fargo, ND

July 15-16: South Dakota Area Playoffs in Brandon, SD

July 20-21: Western WI Area Playoffs in Eau Claire, WI

July 20-21: Twin Cities Area Playoffs in six different cities:
Locations TBD

▶ 2015 Section Championship Dates:

Monday – Tuesday, July 27-28 – 14U Intermediate A/Advanced

Wednesday – Thursday, July 29-30 – 18U Intermediate A/
Advanced

Friday, July 31 – 12U Intermediate A/Advanced

Wednesday, August 5 – 10U Intermediate /Advanced

PROGRAM AREA	COORDINATOR NAME	COORDINATOR EMAIL
Greater Twin Cities		
▶ Greater Twin Cities Area	Brandon Jackson	jackson@northern.usta.com
▶ St. Paul Urban Tennis	Tony Gatti	tony@urbantennis.org
Northern Minnesota		
▶ Brainerd Lakes Area	Mike Hintz	mhintz@charter.net
▶ Iron Range/Northern MN	Gary Conda	gconda@yahoo.com
Southern Minnesota		
▶ Mankato/St. Peter	Adam Doll	adoll1@isd77.k12.mn.us
Western Wisconsin		
▶ Chippewa Valley	Matt Boughton	tennis@eauclairemca.org
North Dakota		
▶ Fargo Metro	Oliver Summers	osummers@fargoparks.com
South Dakota		
▶ Sioux Falls/Brandon	Mark Vellek	markvellek@hotmail.com

LOCAL PLAY AND COMPETITION

Local Play and Competition includes Play Days, Junior Team Tennis and Entry-Level Tournaments. All three offerings ensure that kids compete at the appropriate level and have the opportunity to play more. Also, Play Days, Junior Team Tennis and Entry-Level Tournaments have a set start and end time, making events more manageable to host. Events will be more family friendly and welcome a new generation of players to transition from Play Days to Junior Team Tennis and Entry-Level Tournaments.

Play Days

Features

- Short matches allow kids to play a maximum number of matches within two to three hours.
- Team or individual format gives kids the opportunity to be on teams with players of different ages and levels.

Benefits

- Ball and court – you decide the right ball and court for your players.
- Flexibility so you can stop matches in progress to change opponents based on ability and ensures that each player has a positive experience.
- Bundle instruction with play so kids improve their skills while experiencing an introduction to competition.
- This introduction to competition and a positive first experience increases the likelihood that kids will play more often and participate in Junior Team Tennis and Entry-Level Tournaments.

Resources

- YouthTennis.com: Register your events and allow players to sign up in advance. Now you will know the names, skill levels and number of players in advance of your event.
- Offer to accept online payment through PayPal to avoid dealing with transactions the day of the event.
- YouthTennis.com/Host houses educational materials such as the Play Day Starter Guide and educational videos to help you prepare and host a successful event.

Junior Team Tennis

Features

- Easy to form teams, coed or single gender permitted. Form teams based on what works best for your community.
- Guaranteed match play: Shorter scoring and more matches give kids more play opportunities.
- Level-based play: Cooperative line-ups allow team captains and organizers to discuss and agree on order of match play based on strength to ensure a positive experience for participants.

Benefits

- Age groups: Merge ages and genders to fit your needs.
- Multiple weeks of play included in the participation fee.
- Gives players experience competing against other kids outside of their facility or program while participating on a team.

Resources

- Improved TennisLink allows you to register players, receive payments, manage rosters, schedule matches and record scores.
- USTA support: State, District, section and national staff can help start and grow your programs.
- Online training and educational materials provide guidelines and strategies for implementation through web sources, webinars and training modules.

Entry-Level Tournaments

Features

- Non-elimination formats mean equal playing time; can adjust scoring and draws to guarantee more matches.
- Duration: One day or less. A set time commitment and more welcoming format will attract more players from Play Days and Junior Team Tennis.
- Divisions: Coed or single gender; ability to merge age groups such as 16 and 18s for a high school division.

Benefits

- Maximize profit and fill gaps in scheduling for facilities.
- Reduce or eliminate sanction fees and head tax to maximize profits.
- Less pressure promotes sportsmanship, socialization and skill development.
- A more family-friendly offering means less travel and no hotels, missed work or missed school.

Resources

- The TDM "Wizard" is being created to provide support to new tournament directors.
- Webinars and online modules give tournament directors the tools they need to host a successful tournament.

GET MORE KIDS PLAYING TENNIS CLOSER TO HOME

Learn more about the three play opportunities, including play criteria for red, orange, green and yellow ball players participating in Play Days, Junior Team Tennis and Entry-Level Tournaments.

PLAY DAYS	JUNIOR TEAM TENNIS	ENTRY-LEVEL TOURNAMENTS
Kids experience the thrill of competition while playing multiple, short matches with players of similar age and skill. These events last two-three hours.	Kids gain experience and keep improving while playing on a team alongside friends. Junior Team Tennis matches last two hours or less.	Players can test their games, play multiple matches and make friends along the way. These tournaments are half-day to full day.
FORMAT		
Non-elimination formats such as self-rotating round robins, escalator, up and down the river, and musical courts.	8 and Under: All formats guarantee three matches; doubles is optional 10 and Under – 18 and Under: One doubles and one singles round each for a total of four rounds. Each player participates in a minimum of two matches	Non-elimination formats: round robins and compass draws 8 and Under and 10 and Under: Minimum of four matches 12 and Under – 18 and Under: Minimum three matches
RECOMMENDED AGE & GENDER FORMAT		
8 and Under – 18 and Under: Coed or single gender	8 and Under and 10 and Under: Coed 12-18s: Single Gender Can merge age groups or allow new players to play down an age group	8 and Under – 10 and Under: Coed 12 and Under – 18 and Under: Single Gender Can merge age groups or genders if needed
SCORING FORMAT		
Designated number of points, shortened tiebreak games, One no-ad game, timed matches	10-minute timed matches or 7-point tiebreak games	10-15-minute timed matches, One tiebreak game or Two-out-of-three tiebreak games
Designated number of points or games, tiebreak games, timed matches	20-minute timed matches or One short set	20-minute timed matches, One short set or Two-out-of-three short sets for smaller draws
Tiebreak games, timed matches, designated number of games, one short set	30-minute timed matches or One regular set	30-minute timed matches, One regular set or Two-out-of-three short sets for smaller draws
Tiebreak games, timed matches, designated number of games, one short set	30-minute timed matches or One regular set	30-minute timed matches, One regular set or Two-out-of-three short sets for smaller draws
RULES AND REQUIREMENTS		
Flexible according to the skill level of players. Results are not documented and participation is registered. Play Day hosts can register events and players can sign up to attend events on YouthTennis.com. No USTA membership required.	Follow guidelines for appropriate age groups and specifications. Rules may vary according to local community. Results are documented and participation is registered. USTA membership is optional depending on location.	Kids must play in an appropriate age group with approved balls, courts and specifications. Results are published, no ranking points awarded and participation is registered. USTA membership is optional depending on location.



USTA Northern recently conducted a Junior Tournament Survey for players, parents and coaches asking for feedback regarding the current system. We found a number of respondents asked many of the same questions in the results. We hope this will shed some light as to the answers of those frequently asked questions. Please visit www.northern.usta.com if you would still like to complete the survey. For further questions or discussion, please contact **Pat Colbert** at colbert@northern.usta.com.

Q. Why do we not use more indoor clubs in the Twin Cities for tournaments other than Life Time Fitness - Lakeville and Baseline Tennis Center?

A. Great question. It would be nice to have a number of other facilities in the mix to host USTA Northern junior tournaments, but the fact is the interest isn't there by the facilities to host them. First and foremost, a club/facility has to want to host a junior event. Outside of LTF-Lakeville, Baseline, LTF-White Bear and sometimes LTF-Eden Prairie during slower times of the year, the other clubs in the Section have not expressed an interest in hosting junior tournaments. There are many reasons why including not having enough courts available, courts being filled to capacity with members, programming and lessons or it financially does not make sense for them to host a junior tournament.

Q. When we play a tournament at Lakeville, Baseline, Rochester, or for that matter, at most of the clubs, there are always lessons, programming and play going on which is disruptive to the tournament. Why can't they allocate the entire facility to the tournament?

A. The majority of our tournaments take place at private clubs. Fulfilling the needs of their members, programs and pros come before the tournament. They have a business to run and members should always come first. We are fortunate to have some of the larger facilities in the Section hosting our junior tournaments, and they do a fantastic job of accommodating everyone to the best of their abilities. One of the larger facilities in our Section takes a financial loss on every tournament they hold. That being said, they still realize the importance of junior tournaments and we are fortunate to have the partnerships we have with our larger clubs. Without them, our junior schedule would take on a much different look.

Q. Why are tournament matches not scheduled better? Why do we sometimes have to start earlier on Friday and finish later on Sunday?

A. A lot of this relates to the above question in having to work around existing programming and club membership. Another piece relates to the format that is being played within the actual tournament and the number of players registered for the event. Full Feed-In Consolation creates the most matches, feeding the players back into consolation through the quarterfinals of the main draw. First-Match Loser Consolation feeds players into the

JUNIOR TOURNAMENTS

Some FAQs

By Scott Boyer, Junior Tennis Council Chair

consolation if they lose their first match. Right now, all tournaments guarantee players at least two matches in singles. When you add doubles to the mix, the schedule becomes really tight.

At one recent top-level tournament, there were 198 total matches to be played between Friday and Sunday. Fortunately, the facility was able to allocate 10 to 12 courts for the majority of the tournament. Without having these larger facilities hosting these tournaments, we would have to look at playing at multiple facilities around the Section, if they would even choose to host them. As an example, your tournament weekend could potentially look something like this: Boys 12s at Baseline, Boys 14s in Rapid City, Boys 16s in Fargo, Boys 18s in Sioux Falls, Girls 12s in Rochester, Girls 14s in Grand Forks, Girls 16s at White Bear Lake and Girls 18s in St. Cloud. Currently, the Missouri Valley Section runs eight different locations, spread across five states in one weekend for their Level 3 equivalent tournament in order to make it work. Currently, the USTA Northern Junior Competition Committee is looking into ways to provide for better scheduling during tournament match play.

Q. With the exception of the June Level 3, why are the Level 4's and the remaining Level 3 all played between November and March?

A. We are always aware of ensuring we afford ALL of our Section players the opportunity to compete in these tournaments, knowing that points are valuable from both a Section and National standpoint. That being said, these tournaments are set in the schedule as not to conflict with the high school tennis seasons. One of the states in our section, North Dakota, has an opposite tennis season from Minnesota, South Dakota and Wisconsin. Therefore, we cannot host a Boys' Level 4 in August, September or October because the North Dakota boys high school season takes place during those months. The same can be said of the spring season in April and May for the North Dakota girls.

Q. Why can't we have more officials at tournaments?

A. We can, however there would be additional costs to the player in doing so. Your current entry fee would have to increase in order to pay for more officials.

Q. OK... so what all does my entry fee go towards?

A. There are many costs affiliated with running a tournament and the costs may differ from indoor to outdoor. If you are playing a tournament your entry fees may cover the following: court time, officials, awards, tournament staff, balls, t-shirts/player gifts, energy costs (indoor tournaments) and more.



Hunter Heck

MAKING A GOOD FIRST IMPRESSION

By Lisa Mushett

For **Hunter Heck** of New Brighton, Minn., his earliest memories of “tennis” were swinging a ping pong paddle in his living room. Now with the racquet a little larger, the 12-year-old has come a long way from hitting winners in his living room after an impressive last four months where he has claimed three national tournament titles and two regional championships.

His incredible run started in January when he won the USTA Boys 12s Winter Nationals doubles event with partner Karl Lee of Los Altos, Calif. The duo, whose partnership was formed by a simple text between their mothers, won six matches in Scottsdale, Ariz., finally overcoming Billy Suarez of Huntington, N.Y. and Aidan Mayo of Roseville, Calif., 3-6, 6-4, 6-3 in the finals.

Heck also finished fourth in the singles draw, winning five matches before falling to Jameson Corsillo of Boca Raton, Fla., 7-5, 7-5 in the semifinals. In the third-place match, he lost a thrilling three-setter to top-seeded Mayo 5-7, 6-4, 6-0.

“It was fun to win in Arizona,” Heck said. “Karl and I have great chemistry playing together and he really helped me by making great shots. He is a great doubles partner and friend.”

Heck then returned home and won the Boys 14s Regional Championships in both singles and doubles at Life Time Fitness – Lakeville in February. Entering as the fifth seed and playing boys two years older than him, Heck won five matches including defeating top-seeded **Sebastian Vile** of Rochester, Minn., 6-2, 5-7, 6-3 in the finals. He and Vile then teamed together in beating Edina’s **Joe Mairs** and Apple Valley’s **Gavin Young** 8-2 in the All-USTA Northern final.

But it was at the USTA Spring Easter Bowl in Indian Wells, Calif., where Heck really turned heads, making USTA Northern history by being the first player to win the Boys 12s Singles and Doubles title at the prestigious event. Heck, won four matches including overcoming #1 seeded Mayo, to earn a spot in the finals. In the finals, Heck, who was seeded sixth, got the best of Corsillo this time, winning in straight sets 6-3, 6-2. In doubles, Heck and Lee joined forces again, winning three matches before taking out Corsillo and Martin Damm (Bradenton, Fla.) in the finals 8-3.

“I came to win so I definitely trained a lot harder going into the Easter Bowl,” Heck said. “My diet was better and I really focused on my pre-match preparation. I was much more serious and tried to stay really focused.”



Hunter Heck (left) and Karl Lee

Often times playing much more mature than his age, his inner 12-year-old finally did rear its head before the finals.

“I was really nervous going into the finals,” Heck admitted. “After the first couple of games, I settled down and started to play more freely which gave me more confidence.”

The self-proclaimed aggressive baseliner is currently ranked No. 1 in the United States in doubles and No. 3 in singles in Boys 12s – an impressive feat he does not take lightly.

“It means a lot to mean to represent the Northern Section and be ranked so high nationally. We have had some pro players, like **David Wheaton** and **Mardy Fish**, come from Minnesota and it makes me proud that I can continue the tradition.”

Heck, who trains at InnerCity Tennis in Minneapolis with **Glenn Allsop** and **John Wheaton**, is also playing high school tennis for perennial power Mounds View as a seventh grader. He turns 13 on May 15 which means goodbye to

the 12s and hello to the 14s. His goals for 2015 include contributing to his high school team in any way possible, qualifying for the Northern 14 Zonals team and representing the Section at the 14s National Clay Courts.

“Playing high school tennis and aging up just means that I have to train harder and keep progressing with my game,” Heck said. “My coach (Allsop) has really helped me take my game to the next level.”

Two other people who have supported Heck on this wild ride are his parents, **Tim** and **Marni**. Both tennis players, they know their biggest contribution is to keep him focused and grounded.

“It is exciting to see him do so well,” Tim said. “We try to keep it in perspective and remember that each win is just a small step on the long journey to whatever he wants to do in the future. We remind him that he has a lot of work left to do, but hopefully he will use these experiences to keep training and pushing himself harder.”

His mom and dad’s dedication and sacrifice have not gone unnoticed by this up-and-coming superstar.

“I want to thank my mom and dad,” Hunter said. “They are always there to help, and motivate me to work even harder. One of them always travels with me, making sure I am eating good food and giving me pep talks before my matches. They are always there supporting me and I cannot thank them enough.”

CROSSCOURT

Jessie Aney Wins Spring Team Nationals & Girls Sportsmanship Award

Congratulations to **Jessie Aney** (Rochester, Minn.) who was part of the gold-ball winning Angels team at the USTA Spring Nationals in Mobile, Ala. This is the second consecutive Gold Ball she has won at the USTA Spring Nationals. She also won an individual Gold Ball last December at the USTA Winter Nationals in Girls 18s Doubles with partner Christina Rosca of Princeton, N.J. She is currently ranked fourth in the country in the latest USTA National 18s rankings.

Aney also was named the Girls Sportsmanship Award winner and was selected by the USTA to recite the Sportsmanship Pledge in Mobile. Aney has now earned an impressive six National Sportsmanship Awards during her career including 14s and 18s National Clay Courts and 16s Intersectionals.

The 2014 USTA Northern Jerry Noyce Junior Sportsmanship Award winner, Aney is graduating from high school in the spring after only three years and will play tennis at the University of North Carolina in the fall. The Tar Heels are currently ranked No. 1 in the country.



Jessie Aney

Ingrid Neel Wins Two Pro Circuit Doubles Titles

Ingrid Neel (Rochester, Minn.) continues to make an impression at the next level winning the Gainesville (Fla.) and Orlando 10K professional doubles championships in March with partner Fannie Stollar of Hungary. The 16-year-old Neel now has three professional titles in her short career and is currently ranked #552 in the world.

Neel, who currently is training at **Nick Bollettieri's** IMG Academy in Bradenton, Fla., received a wild card into the qualifying draw at the WTA Miami Open where she defeated Donna Vekic of Croatia, 6-1, 6-2, in the round of 64 and then narrowly lost to Alison Van Uytanck of Belgium 7-6 (7), 6-4. Vekic was ranked No. 82 in the world and Uytanck 115th.

She also advanced to the semifinals of the ITF Grade 1 USTA International Spring Championships in Carson, Calif., in March. Neel won four matches, including defeating top-seeded Uswe Arconada 3-6, 6-0 6-3, in the quarterfinals. Neel, the seventh seed, finally lost to Stollar 6-4, 6-4.

Former Northern player **Michaela Gordon**, originally from Rapid City, S.D., also advanced to the semifinals in Carson. Gordon, who was seeded third, won four matches before falling to eventual champion Sofia Kenin 6-2, 6-3.

Tony Larson Wins USPTA Indoor Nationals

For the fifth time in six years, **Tony Larson** (Fridley, Minn.) won the men's open singles division at the \$5,000 United States Professional Tennis Association (USPTA) Indoor Championships at the Racquet Club of Memphis in Memphis, Tenn. Larson defeated Thiago Barbosa of Glendale, Ariz., 7-6, 6-0. Larson had won four consecutive men's open singles titles between 2010-13.

The victory gives Larson six overall singles title in all divisions, in addition to his eight doubles titles in the USPTA Surface Championship series. In Memphis, Larson also earned finalist honors in doubles with Rudy Obregon after a close 7-6 (5), 7-5 loss to Paulo Barros (Winter Garden, Fla.) and Guillaume Gauthier (Austin, Texas).



Tony Larson (right)

ITA Creates Steve Wilkinson Sportsmanship Award

As a special tribute to the late **Steve Wilkinson**, the Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA) created the Steve Wilkinson Team Sportsmanship Award to be presented annually to the team that has displayed exceptional sportsmanship, character and ethical conduct in the true spirit of competition and college tennis during the ITA Division III National Men's Team Indoor Championships. Trinity University, in San Antonio, Texas, was the winner of the inaugural award.

Wilkinson, long-time Gustavus Adolphus men's head tennis coach, USTA Northern and ITA Hall of Famer and founder of Tennis & Life Camps, passed away on January 21, 2015, at the age of 73, after a seven-year battle with cancer.



USTA Northern Hosts First Early Development Camps As Part Of Team USA Program



USTA Northern, in conjunction with USTA Player Development, played host to its first Team USA Early Development Players and Coaches Camps in March and April at Life Time Fitness - Lakeville.

The Coaches Camp was run by USTA National's Director of Early Development Camps **Alanna Broderick** and featured 30 of the best coaches in USTA Northern, focusing specifically on Orange Ball and 60' Court Tennis and the Youth Pathway.

In April, 20 kids attended the first Early Development Camp which hopes to develop and execute a player development pathway that helps identify, train and develop a continuous wave of fundamentally sound young tennis players from ages 8-13. Juniors participating in the first camp included **Emanuel Alex** (Arden Hills, Minn.), **Ella Berg** (Elk River, Minn.), **Tej Bhagra** (Rochester, Minn.), **David Coyle** (North Oaks, Minn.), **Conor Cruse** (Rapid City, S.D.), **C. William Fleming** (White Bear Lake, Minn.), **Marshall Gordon** (Farmington, Minn.), **Ronan Hartwig** (Sioux Falls, S.D.), **Zoya Hasan** (Edina, Minn.), **Noah Hong** (Minneapolis, Minn.), **Nandini Iyer** (Rochester, Minn.), **Hadi Ka-laaji** (Rochester, Minn.), **Caleb Kennel** (Rochester, Minn.), **Drew Lindstrom** (Rosemount, Minn.), **Quinn Martini** (Minnetonka, Minn.), **Molly Miller** (Bloomington, Minn.), **Brandon Pham** (Woodbury, Minn.), **Sofia Reuter** (Minneapolis, Minn.), **Alicia Simonson** (Plymouth, Minn.) and **Thomas Wickersham** (Wayzata, Minn.).

Scholarship Deadline Updates

USTA Northern offers a number of scholarship opportunities to attend summer camps including Nike, adidas, Young Tennis Camps and Tennis & Life Family Camps.

For the Nike, adidas and Young Tennis Camps, scholarships

are awarded to male or female players age 13 or younger that demonstrate both a financial need and commitment to tennis and players must receive an endorsement from their tennis coach in order to be eligible. Recipients receive a scholarship to attend a camp located within USTA Northern.

Due to high school regulations, applicants for the Tennis & Life Family Camps, either July 16-19 or July 23-26 at Gustavus Adolphus College, must be 18 years of age and over and not playing high school tennis. Applicants can then apply to attend with younger family members. Only families who could not afford to attend a tennis camp without financial assistance or have a special story or circumstance should apply.

For applications, please visit www.northern.usta.com and click on Funding & Support and Scholarships. Application deadline is May 22, 2015. For more info, contact **Tony Stingley** at stingley@northern.usta.com.

Special Olympics Competitions Coming Up; Volunteers Needed!

Volunteers are needed for the Special Olympics Minnesota Area 12 Games **May 17**, from 8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. at the Fred Wells Tennis and Education Center in St. Paul and the Special Olympics Minnesota Summer Games **June 20**, at Stillwater Area High School. For more information, please contact **Tony Stingley** at stingley@northern.usta.com.

Want To Volunteer With USTA Northern? Register In Our Volunteer Network

Are you passionate about tennis and interested in giving back to the game you love? Then you've come to the right place. USTA Northern has a rich history of dedicated volunteers, all of whom share the same fundamental drive that gives them the passion to volunteer: they all love tennis. Prior volunteer experience is not required! Fill out a volunteer form today. For additional information, please contact **Sandy Smith** at 952-358-3288 or ssmith@northern.usta.com.

USTA Northern Hosts Member Appreciation Event At Gophers Match

USTA Northern hosted a Member Appreciation Event in conjunction with the Gopher men's tennis team on Sunday, March 29, at Baseline Tennis Center. Over 80 people attended the event which featured two Cardio Tennis Clinics prior to the Gophers match against Indiana. Lunch and prizes were also provided by USTA Northern and the Gopher men's team. Minnesota defeated the Hoosiers 4-0.





Congratulations to the University of Minnesota who earned runner-up honors at the 2015 Tennis on Campus National Championships in Cary, N.C. The second-place finish marked the best-ever showing by a USTA Northern team at the Tennis on Campus Nationals.

Minnesota won six matches before finally falling to defending National Champions Cal-Berkeley 28-17 in the finals. The two teams traded wins early with Cal jumping out to a 6-2 win in men's doubles before Minnesota answered with a 6-4 victory in men's singles. In women's doubles, Berkeley broke a 2-all tie by claiming four consecutive games to widen the lead to 16-10 heading into women's singles. Cal took the singles 6-3, putting the champs up 22-13 heading into the final match.

For the Golden Gophers, 2015 was the year in which they finally broke through and made their first Tennis On Campus Gold Bracket appearance after more than a dozen attempts. Minnesota went undefeated in Pool Play beating Carnegie Mellon, Gonzaga and Boston College to earn a spot in the Gold Bracket. Once there, Minnesota opened play defeating the University of Miami 28-16. The Gophers then took out Texas A&M, who had four Tennis On Campus National Championships on their resume, 22-21, before beating North Carolina in the semifinals 23-19. For the season, Minnesota finished with a 40-1 dual-match record.

Members of the Minnesota A roster included **Jeff Adolf, Omar Shahed, Daniel Cooper, Kelsey Frechette, Laura Cattaneo, Giselle Beebe, Salam Bachour, Sofia Terzic, Hanna Mache and Rumeal Setts.**

"We don't necessarily have a championship caliber team," said team captain Adolf after the match. "This year all the stars kind of aligned. We had a really great team this year. We fought for every match in the Gold bracket and had a lot of really close ones."

Carleton College was making its second appearance at the Tennis on Campus National Championships and placed 60th. In Pool Play, Carleton lost to Virginia, Stanford and Illinois falling into the Copper Bracket. Once there, Carleton lost to Tennessee 25-20, then defeated Lamar University 26-13 and then lost to Sam Houston State in the 11th-place match 26-13.

Members of the Carleton team included **Zach Walsh, Rachel Moore, Lalangi Marasinghe, Justin Grossman, Gabby Chen and Avi Moorthy.**



The team is coached by Kevin Rust, captained by Jeffrey Adolf (Gr.) and made up of Salam Bachour (So.), Giselle Beebe (Fr.), Laura Cattaneo (Fr.), Daniel Cooper (Gr.), Kelsey Frechette (Jr.), Omar Shahed (Jr.) and Sofia Terzic (Fr.).

SKI-U-MAH!

MINNESOTA FINISHES SECOND AT TENNIS ON CAMPUS NATIONALS



Carleton College

Minnesota Wins 12th Straight TOC Championship

The **University of Minnesota A** won its 12th consecutive Tennis On Campus Section Championship defeating Minnesota B 30-10 in the finals.

Minnesota A took a commanding 12-5 lead after doubles and 18-5 lead after women's singles and never looked back. The team of **Laura Cattaneo** and **Giselle Beebe** defeated B's **Meera Damodaran** and **Carly Hayes** 6-5 before the men's doubles team of **Jeff Adolf** and **Omar Shahed** beat **Sandrato Andriasamy** and **Sebastian Adesoro** 6-0. Minnesota A's **Kelsey Frechette** then took out **Allison Mamsten** 6-0 before **Daniel Cooper** beat **Adesoro** 6-5 in men's singles. In mixed doubles, **Adolf** and **Frechette** beat **Catherine Haugen** and **Andriasamy** 6-0.

Carleton College A also advanced to TOC Nationals with its third-place finish after defeating **Valley City State** 30-11. Carleton came out fast, leading 12-3 after doubles and 18-4 after women's singles. **North Dakota A** won the Silver title over Minnesota-Duluth 28-11, while **Carleton B** took home the Bronze flight championship 27-19 over South Dakota.

Gustavus Adolphus A was named the Team Spirit winner for the weekend.



Gustavus Named 2015 TOC Club of the Year



Growing from only 12 members at the start of 2014, to 27 by the Section Championships, and hosting two events were the tip of the iceberg for the 2015 USTA Northern Tennis On Campus Club of the Year - **Gustavus Adolphus College**.

The Gustavus program, led by club president **Mark Meier**, has become a well-known and respected club on campus this year after making it a priority to have a presence at all student information fairs and gatherings. It is also a No-Cut program, meaning any student who wishes to be a part of the fun, can and will be on the team. Current team members are strongly encouraged to bring friends to practices and social outings in hopes they might one day become members of the team as well.

"Our program is an incredible place for students to play tennis and enjoy the community feel of students playing a sport they are passionate about, while encouraging each other to improve," junior **Hannah Jakel** wrote in her nomination of the team.

While improving the quality of players on their roster with some former varsity and even state high school participants this year, practices are now more efficient and productive, not only helping the team improve on specific skills, but also become better overall players, while still having fun.

"I have vastly improved this year under the direction of members who are of a higher skill level," Jakel said. "I appreciate how willing and patient everyone is to share their knowledge with other members of the team as there is no discrimination between skill sets."

Gustavus hosted its first two Invitationals in school history this year – a fall event in September and a warm-up event for the 2015 Section Championships. Showing its progress as an up-and-coming program, Gustavus was sixth overall with 130 points during the Fall Campus Series. The Gusties also fielded two teams at the Tennis On Campus Section Championships in March, where they had one team each in the Gold and Silver Brackets.

The team has also improved its communications efforts this year staying connected through Facebook, e-mail and text, and is involved in many social activities from planning meals to group bonding after practices. There is no member excluded from these events.

"The level of closeness is a unique experience exclusive to club tennis here on campus," Jakel said. "It is one of my favorite activities to be a part of here at Gustavus."

Mark Meier Named TOC Leader of the Year

A sign of a good leader is that he has a presence about him when he enters a room. Gustavus Adolphus Tennis on Campus Club President **Mark Meier** is no exception. Always wearing the Gustavus flag on his back at every tournament, with some gold and black face paint to complete the look, Meier has brought pride and unparalleled success back to the Gusties' TOC program.

This year, 15 new members – who are all freshman and sophomores – joined the team, doubling the size of the roster. Almost all of the players have competed at the varsity level in high school and some have even participated at the state tournament. Even with this influx of talent, he still adopted a No-Cut policy meaning that anyone who is interested in being a part of the team can, and will get to, play. And just to show he is all about what is best for each individual player over the team, Meier encouraged two of his stronger players to try out for the nationally-ranked Gustavus men's varsity program – a selfless move on his part when trying to build a competitive program.

He also encourages sportsmanship and reminds the team about having a positive attitude and representing Gustavus with the highest of class. Both Gustavus teams won the Team Spirit Award at Section Championships.

Meier has spent countless hours working on the program since becoming president in September including recruiting, fundraising, making travel plans, arranging transportation and communicating with his team and other club leaders both at Gustavus and within USTA Northern. His hard work has paid off as Gustavus was named the 2015 USTA Northern Tennis on Campus Club of the Year as well.

"Our president is a leader of both spirit and passion for the sport," junior **Hannah Jakel** said. "His encouragement and coaching pushes the team to be the best they can be. From wearing the Gustavus flag at all of our tournaments and chanting our school cheer before every match, to individual advice on our technique and motivation, he has done wonders for the members of our program."





TO GRIP OR NOT TO GRIP

While **William Shakespeare** did not have Hamlet specifically ask “to grip or not to grip ... that is the question,” he probably would have if he had been his tennis coach.

Most people know the expression “white knuckler” as meaning someone is suffering from a lot of tension, and yet, if you watch the vast majority of players, they have white knuckles when holding their racquet as if they are trying to squeeze blood from a turnip.

There are many different ways, and grips, to hold a tennis racquet – Continental, Eastern Forehand, Semi-Western, Western, Hybrid, Eastern Backhand – the list goes on and on. Then you have “variations” of all these grips, including Strong Eastern or Weak Semi-Western – which are basically fancy ways of saying in-between grips. While knowing the different grips, and advantages and disadvantages of each one, is recommended (see your local teaching pro for specific grip-related questions), an area often overlooked when holding the tennis racquet is grip tension.

If you asked most people on a scale of one to five, with five being the tightest, what number should they grip their racquet at, many people would say four or higher. Actually, if you felt their grip, it would be more like a 6 or 7, and if you looked, you would see those white knuckles. In reality, the correct answer is different with each shot. While serving, it should be a 1.5. Overheads are closer to a 1. And with groundstrokes and volleys, you should never grip the racquet tighter than a 2.5.

Try this experiment ... hold your racquet as tight as you can and then swing fast and listen. You should hear nothing as the tension in your arms is so strong the racquet head speed is close to non-existent. Now take your racquet and hold it at a 1.5 on the scale. When you swing, you will hear a swooshing sound. That is racquet head speed. Generally, you can hit the ball harder, with less effort and more spin, by simply relaxing your grip.

A very common observation about professional players in any sport is they make everything look so easy. This is because they are not tense,

but instead, relaxed when hitting their shots and moving seamlessly around the court. The great **Roger Federer** flows on the court while cracking the ball with effortless power. The ease of motion displayed by the Swiss Maestro is something all players can benefit from in improving their game.

Here are two other grip tests you can use to check your tension. Have someone toss a ball to you and tap it up to yourself. Then volley it back to them and have them do the same back to you. If you are holding the racquet too tightly, the ball will ricochet off the strings out of control rather than bounce up lightly to you. The second test has you standing very close to the net and someone feeding a very short lob. See if you can just fling your arm at the ball and make it bounce over either the side or back wall. The tighter you hold your grip, the more difficult this task is to perform.

Are there times when you want to increase your grip pressure? Yes. An example is a high volley. If you squeeze lightly right at contact, you will get more bite on the ball. Also, blocking shots back, such as a service returns, require you to hold the grip a bit tighter at contact, but never more than at 50 percent capacity.

Some people seem to be naturally more relaxed than others, but everyone, including the pros, gets tight on occasion. A great way to control this and be more aware of your body is to participate in yoga, tai chi or other meditative exercises. Another method is the Alexander Technique (AT), which is a self-help approach for developing awareness of one’s posture and movement in order to improve it. Developed by **F.M. Alexander** in the late 1800s as a means to recover his speaking voice, the AT helps restore a dynamic relationship between the head, neck and back which leads to improved breathing, coordinated movement, better posture and effortless balance.

While pressure may be a privilege, tension can certainly be the enemy. Relax your grip and enjoy the game even more. Good luck!





RETIREMENT MANAGER

IS STRATEGIC *On* AND *Off* THE COURT

It was by mere happenstance that **Michael Kobbervig** discovered tennis at the age of 10 in his hometown of Valley City, N.D. When a buddy found an old racket in his garage, he told Kobbervig to look for one too, convinced the Kobbervigs must have one lying around somewhere. To Kobbervig's good fortune, they did and the two friends headed to the tennis courts. From that point on, tennis would be one of Kobbervig's passions.

Kobbervig played varsity tennis for Valley City High School starting in seventh grade and claimed the #1 singles spot as an eighth grader. He qualified for the state tournament every year starting in eighth grade, placing fourth in doubles as a freshman and fifth in singles as a junior and senior. As a senior, he was named a Prince Honorable Mention All-American and committed to play tennis at Concordia College in Moorhead. He stayed at Concordia for one semester before transferring to North Dakota where the school did not have a program.

When his family moved to Casselton, N.D., in 2002, there was no community summer tennis program. With the help of the local parks department and grants, Kobbervig and his wife **Beth**, also a former tennis player at Valley City High School, helped facilitate a program which now brings tennis to over 50 kids every summer. The summer tennis program has now become a total family affair for the Kobbervigs as their boys **Max** (12) and **Sam** (10) help teach the 5-10 year olds and daughter **Abby** (7) participates in the program. Kobbervig also volunteers his time teaching tennis to the elementary school children for a week as part of their physical education classes, and often times, you can see the entire family playing on a 60-foot tennis court in their driveway or at the local park.

Kobbervig's dedication to others goes far beyond the tennis courts, as he now works as a financial advisor, specializing in retirement planning. Kobbervig, who still plays tennis two to three times a week and is an avid tournament player when it works with his kids' baseball schedules, realizes that saving for the future can be very challenging for

many people, but this is where he uses his tennis background, drawing analogies between the two concepts.

When it comes to tennis, Kobbervig "loves the idea of putting a strategy together, employing it and accomplishing a win." When he's working with a client on their retirement plan, it's the same thing.

"I want my clients to feel like I'm thinking about their retirement needs before they do," Kobbervig said.

Kobbervig and his team are committed to providing guidance, planning and solutions to their clients, whether through a company 401(k) plan, an individual retirement account or another type of plan for the future. Helping clients master their "game and play for the end result" is the goal – just like on the tennis court.

"To keep improving, you have to keep your head in the game and think about what's next," Kobbervig said. "It is the same in retirement planning."

He tells his clients that each time they get a raise, they should give their retirement plan a raise, as well.

"Like tennis, when it comes to retirement planning and saving, the more you invest and the earlier you start, you will have that

much more time and potential to grow."

Through the market's peaks and valleys, and as he has aged, Kobbervig's approach to tennis has changed throughout the years and so has his retirement planning strategy.

"The challenge now is to keep up with younger players that move faster than I do," he says. "The reward is relying on my experience to beat younger players."

But because Kobbervig has stayed on top of his game both on and off the court, he continues to be a competitor. This is true of his approach to retirement too. While the economy continues to be volatile and ever-changing, it's Kobbervig's goal to keep his eye on the ball for his clients.

"Ultimately, the choice is theirs – to play or not to play – but, like tennis, you won't regret it if you stay in the game."





MODEL STUDENT, *Tennis Player* and COVER GIRL



It is hard not to notice 14-year-old **Olivia Paradise**. Her tall athletic frame, flowing blonde hair and beautiful face made for magazine covers cause a person to stop in their tracks whether she is banging balls on the tennis court or appearing on the front of *Minnesota Bride* magazine. You see, Paradise is one of the best junior players within USTA Northern and a top model for the prestigious Ford Agency nationwide.

Paradise started playing tennis well before modeling, although many thought she would follow in the footsteps of her famous grandfathers – Hockey Hall of Famers **Herb Brooks** and **Bob Paradise**. Brooks was the head coach of the legendary gold-medal winning 1980 United States Olympic Hockey Team and Paradise was a member of the 1968 U.S. Olympic Team and played in the National Hockey League for nine years.

"She broke her leg skating in kindergarten and that was the end of her hockey career," said her mother **Kelly Brooks Paradise** to the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*. "She picked up a racket and never looked back."

Driven at a young age, which she attributes to her grandfathers, Paradise came up with a list of tennis goals when she was just nine years old which included being one of the top players in Minnesota and playing college tennis at a Division I school. She is well on her way to being one of the best players in the state as she is currently ranked No. 11 in the latest USTA Northern Girls 14s rankings and has won the Section 4A singles championships the past two seasons playing for Mahtomedi High School and qualifying for the state tournament. She also was a member of the USTA Northern Junior Team Tennis squad who played at the National Championship in both 2013 and 2014 and has a Junior Sectional title.

But her quest to be the best has had a few bumps in the road recently. Paradise has grown six inches in the past two years, including four in 2014 alone, causing tendonitis and limiting her training and tournament play. Finally topping out, she hopes, at over six feet, she is back to playing full time which means three hours a day at the Fred Wells Tennis and Education Center with high-performance coaches **Marc Stingley** and **Viet Pham**.

"Last year was really tough, because I was injured most of year," Paradise said. "I was growing so fast and my body could not keep up."

Fortunately, being on the sidelines opened some other doors for Paradise. Throughout her life, people would stop Olivia and her mother telling them she should model. Her dad, **Marc**, was a former model and finally encouraged her to attend a modeling presentation. Local modeling agency Meredith signed her and she started doing small jobs almost immediately. But it wasn't until a trip to Chicago two years ago when the Paradise girls decided to stop in unannounced at the Ford Agency that changed Olivia's life.

"My mom wanted to see what it (modeling) was all about," Paradise said. "I really had no idea what it was, but by the end of the conversation I had signed a contract."

She is now represented by Ford's Miami, New York, Chicago and Los Angeles offices, while still working locally with Meredith and Moore Creative Talent. In just the past two years she has modeled for Kohl's, Penneys, Target, Cost Cutters, Regis, Ulta, Herberger's, Taymark and LifeTouch, and recently, shot fashion editorial's for *Today's Chicago Woman's* and *Jute* magazines. In fact, when interviewing her for this story, she had just finished a shoot for *Minnesota Bride* magazine, due to hit check-out lanes everywhere in July.

"I model just for fun," the unassuming Paradise said. "It is just when I have time."

For the *Minnesota Bride* shoot, she had to wear seven different dresses in a 10-hour period. Was it strange for her wearing wedding dresses and being only 14 years old?

"It was fun, but different," she admitted. "I am not used to wearing dresses, especially big dresses. I have a friend who had done a wedding shoot when she was 15 so she really helped me in knowing what to expect."

What to expect is probably the biggest challenge for Paradise when it comes to modeling. She is finally used to having her hair and makeup done and people "touching her all the time." Often times she is amazed by what she looks like after taking the photos.

"I never see myself before I do the actual shoot," Paradise said. "There are never mirrors around so many times I look at the photos and do not recognize myself. Most of the time they do not even look like me."

She has done many different types of shoots the past two years including commercials, ads, fashion editorials, and now, is delving into runway work, although she admits to not being a fan of the runway scene. She often travels to New York when it does not interfere with school and her tennis schedule and was also offered a chance to work in Tokyo for three months this summer.

With all of this in her portfolio, one type of job she is dying to do is a sports-related shoot in tennis clothes.

"I would love to do an athletic shoot since that is more me," Paradise said. "Unfortunately, I do not have a say in that."

Paradise insists modeling is only "a hobby" and has no plans to pursue it as a career. She is almost reluctant to talk about this part of her life and during the interview kept steering the conversation back to academics and tennis. Even at school, she rarely talks about her modeling accolades, wanting to be known more for her tennis prowess and the fact that she is a straight-A student.

"School and tennis are my priorities," Paradise said. "I miss a lot of modeling jobs because of school and tennis. I work really hard in trying to balance everything, but my goal is to play tennis at a Division I college."



James Blake Celebrates Grand Opening of Huether Family Tennis Center in Sioux Falls

Tennis great James Blake headlined the grand opening of the new Huether Family Match Pointe on April 25 in Sioux Falls. Citibank, which is the official sponsor of the championship court at Huether Family Match Pointe, sponsored Blake's appearance.

Blake, a former No. 1 American and No. 4 world player, helped celebrate the formal opening of the six-court indoor facility by attending a breakfast for major donors of the facility, conducting youth and junior clinics, doing a question and answer session for junior players, signing autographs for the public and playing a singles exhibition against USTA Northern's top player **Tony Larson** and a doubles exhibition with members of the community.

Four Schools Receive Adopt-A-School Grants From Northern Tennis Foundation

The Northern Tennis Foundation has awarded \$1,000 each to four different schools as part of its Adopt-A-Team Program. The grant recipients are Columbia Heights (Minn.) High School, Fridley (Minn.) High School, Harding High School in St. Paul, Minn., and Humboldt High School, also in St. Paul.

The Adopt-A-School initiative connects passionate adult tennis players with high school teams in need of additional financial

resources to grow the sport and compete at the Varsity level. These schools were chosen after completing an application where they identified anticipated team expenses and other qualifications such as percentage of students who are part of the free and reduced lunch program, student tennis opportunities outside of the normal high school season and other obstacles facing the program like transportation and low participation numbers.

One school hoped to use the money to deliver additional tennis programming opportunities to both the student body and current players. Another school plans to buy equipment and training aids for their players to learn basics before the start of the season. A third school has over 60 players participating, but many cannot afford basic equipment like shoes, balls and racquets. The final school hopes to provide safe transportation home for its players because many parents cannot drive, as well as shoes as most cannot afford them.



USTA Northern Awards Almost \$43,000 In Grants

Congratulations to the following communities and organizations who all received either Community Tennis Grants or Adopt-A-Court Facility Grants from USTA Northern in March. Community Tennis Grants are for starting or expanding community-based tennis programs and activities. Adopt-A-Court Grants are given out once a year and help support USTA Northern's mission of promoting and growing tennis on a local level.

March 2015 Community Tennis Grants Recipients

- ▶ \$1,950 to Altoona Middle School to purchase green dot balls for all of the area middle school programs for use in practice and competition.
- ▶ \$1,500 to Johnson Senior High School to support the purchase of basic equipment needs and t-shirts for the tennis program.
- ▶ \$1,000 to InnerCity Tennis for the addition of Summer Fantastic Camps and programming with Bdote Learning Center at Brackett Park.
- ▶ \$750 to Aberdeen Community Tennis Association to support pursuit of 501c3 tax-exempt status with the IRS.

2015 Adopt-A-Court Facility Grant Recipients

- ▶ \$10,000 to Harrisburg High School for the construction of new tennis courts and addition of school sponsored tennis teams.
- ▶ \$10,000 to Cook County Tennis Association for reconstruction of tennis courts.
- ▶ \$7,500 to the City of Barron for reconstruction of tennis courts.
- ▶ \$5,000 to Buffalo Hanover Montrose Community Education for the construction of permanent 36' courts.
- ▶ \$3,606 to Wahpeton Park Board to resurface tennis courts at Chanhinkapa Park.
- ▶ \$1,520.94 to St. James High School for tennis court amenities.

For more information about how your community or organization can apply for future Community Tennis Grants in 2015 or for Adopt-A-Court Grants in 2016, please contact **Christine Nickels** at nickels@northern.usta.com. The next Community Tennis Grant deadline is September 1, 2015.



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