



# Public Parks Resource Guide

TENNIS PROVIDER STARTER KIT

USTA 

# Special thanks to the **USTA National Public Parks Committee** and its **Parks Provider Resource Working Group** for their work on this resource guide.

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# SECTION I

## Introduction

As a Parks and Recreation professional, you are on the front lines of creating opportunities that help your community thrive. The benefits of parks and recreation are well documented and compellingly summarized by Dr. Howard Frumkin, Senior Vice President at the Trust for Public Land and Dean of the University of Washington School of Public Health:

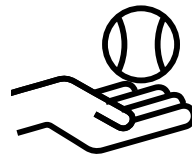
***“If we had a medicine that delivered as many benefits as parks, we would all be taking it. Parks deliver cardiovascular benefits, fight loneliness, combat osteoporosis, counter stress, and anxiety, and more—without adverse side effects and at minimal cost.”***

Tennis naturally supports these same outcomes. It strengthens bodies, sharpens minds, and fosters social connection, making it an ideal addition to parks and recreation offerings. For departments that are not currently providing tennis programs, the sport offers a powerful opportunity to expand access to health, wellness, and community engagement and it is just plain fun!

The sport of tennis is an important part of improving communities, schools, the health of individuals, and the quality of life for all. Tennis can make a difference in people’s lives and is a sport that can be learned and played for a lifetime, appealing across all age demographics. Parks and Recreation departments are uniquely positioned to play a vital role in the growth and accessibility of tennis, particularly since:



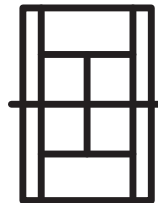
**78%** OF ALL TENNIS IS PLAYED ON PUBLIC COURTS



**47%** OF PLAY OCCASIONS ARE HAPPENING IN PARKS OR RECREATION CENTERS



**57%** OF TENNIS PLAYERS PLAY IN PARKS OR RECREATION CENTERS



**26%** OF TENNIS COURTS ARE IN PARKS AND RECREATION CENTERS

[👉 For more information, see the most recent version of the U.S. Tennis Participation Report](#)

Sources: 2024 Savanta Tennis Market Landscape Survey: “Where do you typically play tennis?”; PLAY Study, Sports & Fitness Industry Association; and 2024 USTA Facility Audit.

As trusted community providers with existing facilities and a mission centered on equitable access, departments can transform underused courts into welcoming, active spaces for residents of all ages and skill levels.

Well-structured tennis programming ensures that courts are not only available but intentionally activated and inclusive. These programs create affordable entry points for residents to learn the game, build skills, and develop lifelong healthy habits. Without purposeful programming, many public courts remain underutilized or intimidating to beginners. Investing in tennis programming helps remove barriers to participation, expand community engagement, and advance the core Parks and Recreation mission of providing accessible, equitable recreational opportunities for all.

This resource guide supports those efforts by providing research and data to help make the case for tennis programming to supervisors, boards, and local government leaders. The evidence highlights the sport's proven health, social, and community benefits, equipping professionals with credible resources to advocate for funding, staffing, and long-term support. By grounding recommendations in research, the resource guide builds confidence among decision-makers and demonstrates how tennis programming aligns with broader community wellness, equity, and engagement goals.

## HOW TENNIS SUPPORTS PARKS AND RECREATION GOALS

- **Physical Well-being:** Tennis promotes cardiovascular fitness, balance, and coordination for individuals of all ages and abilities.
- **Mental Wellness:** The sport fosters resilience, focus, and emotional regulation, while also providing stress relief and promoting personal growth.
- **Community Connection:** Courts become social spaces where families bond, friendships form, and neighborhoods come together.



## What is Included in the Resource Guide

This resource guide will walk your department through practical, beginner-friendly strategies for offering tennis programs that are simple, economical, and sustainable, including:

- Low-cost equipment recommendations and adaptable court setups
- Easy-to-run sample program formats that require minimal staff expertise
- Scalable options that grow with community interest
- Sustainable practices that support long-term program success

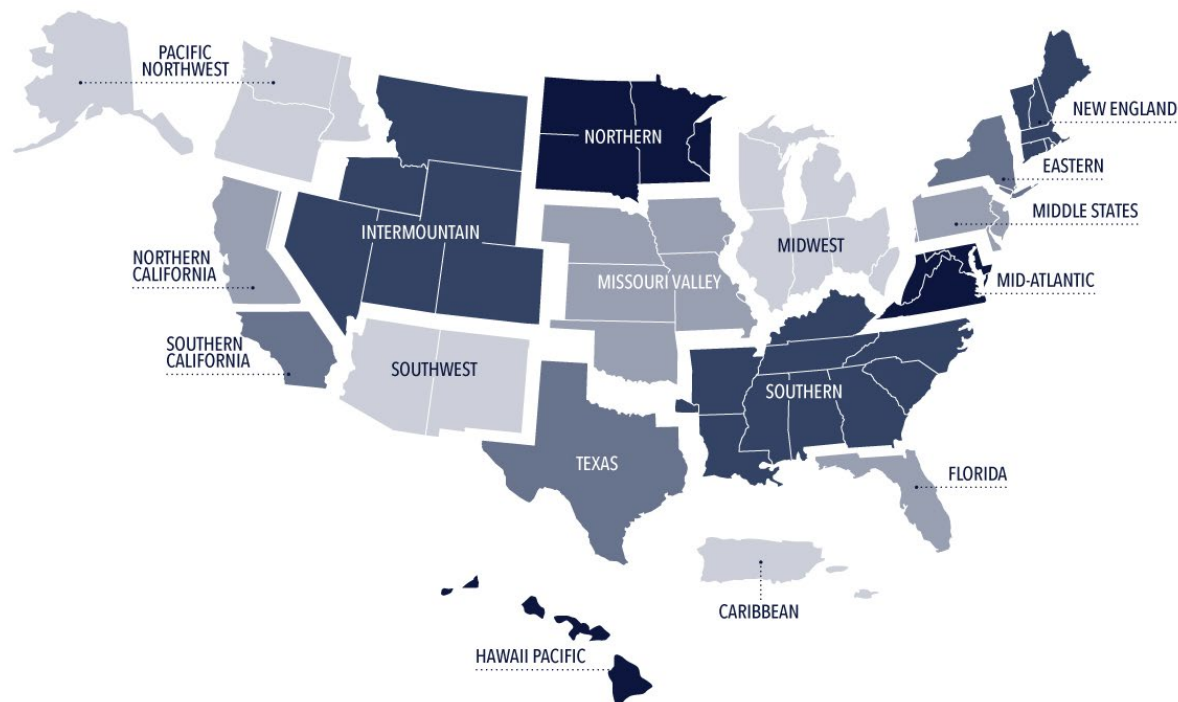
By using this resource guide and leveraging USTA support, your department can introduce a sport that enhances physical health, fosters mental well-being, and strengthens community bonds—helping both youth and adults flourish on and off the court.

## About the USTA

The United States Tennis Association (USTA) is the national governing body for the sport of tennis in the United States and the leader for promoting and developing the growth of tennis at every level, from local communities to the highest level of the professional game.

A not-for-profit organization with more than 620,000 members, the USTA invests 100 percent of its proceeds into growing the game. It owns and operates the USTA National Campus at Lake Nona, in Orlando, Florida, and the US Open, one of the highest-attended annual sporting events in the world, held at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in Flushing Meadows, New York.

The USTA is made up of 17 individual sections, each representing distinct geographic locations throughout the U.S. and all working to support players and promote the growth of the game across the country. In turn, the 17 Sections are each comprised of individual Districts. Each of the USTA's Sections and Districts throughout the U.S. help bring tennis to people of all ages and abilities.



## Support from the USTA

You are not alone in this. United States Tennis Association (USTA) National, your USTA Section, and/or local USTA District are ready to help you bring tennis into your community—no experience required! Support may include:

- Equipment assistance and starter kits
- How to find and/or train coaches
- Simple, plug-and-play program models

Involvement with USTA also gives you access to “Safe Play” - a comprehensive athlete safeguarding program that educates youth (ages 5-12), parents, coaches, and providers on preventing abuse, promoting respectful behavior, and creating positive, fun sports environments.

Whether your department has no prior experience with tennis, little or no funding, or no equipment, the USTA ecosystem is designed to help you launch or grow tennis with confidence. For additional information and resources, the USTA’s Parks and Recreation website: <https://www.usta.com/Parks> includes various programs and education opportunities to help park agencies develop and optimize their tennis programs.



# Benefits of Playing Tennis

## TOP 10 REASONS PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENTS SHOULD OFFER TENNIS PROGRAMMING

- 1 Public Parks Are the Heart of Tennis:** As documented in 2024, 78% of all tennis is played in public parks, placing parks and recreation departments at the center of the sport's accessibility and growth.
- 2 Supports Lifelong Physical Activity and Advances Community Health and Wellness:** Research has shown that Tennis can add up to 9.7 years to your life. It improves cardiovascular health, balance, coordination, and mental well-being, supporting active lifestyles for all ages.
- 3 Promotes Equity and Access:** Affordable, local tennis programs remove financial and social barriers, ensuring residents of all backgrounds and physical abilities can learn and play.
- 4 Accessible to All Abilities and Ages:** Tennis is a sport that can be adapted for players of all ages, skill levels, and abilities, including beginning and experienced players, youth, older adults, and individuals with physical, intellectual, or emotional disabilities. Through inclusive instructional programs, clinics, and entry-level leagues, tennis is a welcoming, supportive, and approachable sport for everyone.
- 5 Supports Learning and Positive Development:** Tennis promotes essential cognitive and social skills for school-aged children. It enhances focus, concentration, strategic thinking, and discipline, while also fostering teamwork, sportsmanship, and self-confidence. Providing structured tennis programs helps children develop positive behaviors and life skills that extend beyond the court.
- 6 Activates Underutilized Courts:** Structured programming transforms courts from passive amenities into vibrant, well-used community assets.
- 7 Builds Social Connection and Community:** Tennis brings people together, reduces social isolation, and strengthens neighborhood connections.
- 8 Allows for Scalable and Flexible Programming:** Potential programs range from beginner clinics to leagues and events, allowing departments to expand their offerings based on community demand.
- 9 Strengthens Public Value and Benefits the Local Economy:** Visible, inclusive tennis programming demonstrates responsible use of public space, and tennis events and leagues drive economic impact by increasing spending at local restaurants, shops, and hotels.
- 10 Aligns with Parks and Recreation Missions:** Tennis programming directly supports departmental goals related to health, wellness, inclusion, and community engagement.

### Additional Information

 [See \*The Sport of a Lifetime in the Appendix\*, page ##](#)

 [See \*Tennis is an Inclusive Sport in the Appendix\*, page ##](#)

 [See \*Youth Who Play Tennis in the Appendix\*, page ##](#)

## SECTION II

# Where to Begin

## Start-Up Programming Ideas

Sometimes the most difficult part of offering tennis programming is deciding where to start, especially if you have never played tennis yourself or have little to no experience running tennis programs. It can feel overwhelming to determine which types of programs will best meet your community's needs, how to structure them, and what resources or equipment you will need to launch successfully.

Below are some suggested general programs to start with by selecting one program and age group. Based on the community's response, you can decide whether to offer multiple sessions of that program, add a new age group, or develop a pathway that allows participants to progress their play to the next level (e.g., beginner-to-intermediate clinics or a beginner league). There is no single or right way to build a program! Let your community's response guide what you do next.

## 1. Red Ball Leagues (Youth and Adults)

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

Red Ball tennis uses smaller courts, slower balls, and skill level-appropriate equipment to help new players of all ages experience success and build foundational skills.

### PROGRAM GOALS:

- Introduce basic strokes, movement, and rallying
- Build confidence through modified play
- Provide a fun, developmentally appropriate entry into tennis

### TARGET GROUPS:

- Youth Red Ball Leagues (Ages 5–10)
- Adult Red Ball Leagues (Beginner adults)

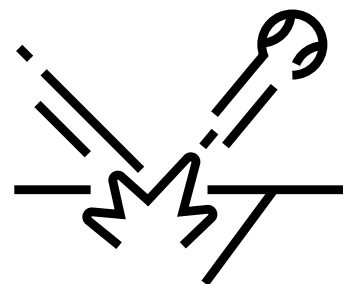
## 2. Youth Programs, Clinics and Classes

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

A variety of instructional options geared toward young players at all skill levels.

### PROGRAM GOALS:

- Establish strong foundational skills
- Promote physical activity and coordination
- Foster long-term participation in tennis



### **PROGRAM TYPES:**

- Beginner Play: Focus on fundamentals, grips, footwork, and basic strokes
- Skill Development Clinics: Emphasize rallying, ball control, and point play
- Seasonal Camps: Combine tennis instruction with games, fitness, and teamwork

## **3. Adult Programs, Clinics and Classes**

### **PROGRAM OVERVIEW:**

Instructional and play-based programs designed to meet the needs of adult participants at varying skill levels.

### **PROGRAM GOALS:**

- Improve technical and tactical skills
- Promote fitness and social connection
- Offer flexible opportunities for recreation and skill progression

### **PROGRAM TYPES:**

- Beginner and Intermediate Clinics
- Stroke-Specific Classes (e.g., serve, forehand, backhand)
- Doubles Strategy Workshops
- Weekly Drop-In Play Sessions

## **4. Cardio Tennis**

### **PROGRAM OVERVIEW:**

A high-energy fitness class that blends tennis drills with upbeat music and cardio-based movement. Suitable for all skill levels, including beginners.

### **PROGRAM GOALS:**

Provide a fun, fast-paced fitness experience

- Improve cardiovascular health and endurance
- Reduce barriers to tennis participation by emphasizing movement over technique

### **TARGET GROUPS:**

- Adults
- Teens
- Individuals seeking a workout-focused program



## 5. Adult Beginner Leagues

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

Leagues for adults who are new to tennis or returning after a long break.

### PROGRAM GOALS:

- Build confidence through guided instruction
- Introduce scoring and match play basics
- Create a welcoming, social environment for new players

### TARGET GROUPS:

- Adult beginners
- Adults seeking low-pressure, instructional match play

## 6. Junior Team Tennis Leagues

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

- Junior Team Tennis (JTT) is a fun, team-based program that gives kids of all skill levels, beginner through advanced, a chance to play tennis. Players join a team, practice together, and compete in friendly matches against other teams. JTT helps kids learn the game, build confidence, improve their skills, and enjoy the teamwork and social side of tennis in a supportive, positive environment.
- This program is hugely popular with high school-age kids because it is a co-ed program, though formats are very flexible.
- This is a “pathway” program. It is a little more complicated, much like running other youth sports leagues, so it is not recommended to start with this program, but it is a great program to add as your initial programs grow and more players improve their skills.

### PROGRAM GOALS:

- Encourage teamwork and sportsmanship
- Develop match play experience
- Strengthen skills through practice and friendly competition

### TARGET GROUPS:

- Beginner to intermediate youth players
- Official age divisions are offered for 8u, 10u, 12u, 14u and 18u but local leagues are entirely customizable.



## Equipment Considerations

Parks and Recreation departments should be prepared to support the program(s) they plan to offer with the appropriate equipment. If you are just getting started, it is best to start with one or two programs and then expand as you gain success and players express interest in additional opportunities.



### Recommended programs to begin with are:

- Youth beginner programs
- Teen and adult beginner programs
- Drop-in or community play opportunities
- Camps, clinics, and special events

### TENNIS RACQUETS

For beginner programs, offering “loaner” racquets for participants to use is highly recommended. Providing racquets for beginner programs, both youth and adult, removes a barrier to participation. Individuals or families may be hesitant to purchase racquets if they are not sure they will enjoy tennis. More people are likely to register for your program if you give them an option to “bring your own racquet or borrow one of ours!”

You can purchase “loaner” racquets relatively inexpensively or even potentially for free through program start-up grants. You can also do a “racquet drive” asking the community to donate new or gently used tennis racquets to your department.

### RACQUET SIZING

- Programs serving children should maintain a range of junior racquet sizes to accommodate growth and varying skill levels.
- Adult beginner programs should offer a selection of standard-length racquets for participants who do not own one.
  - Ideally, loner racquets should be:
  - Durable
  - Clearly labeled by size
  - Inspected regularly

For proper development and a good experience, it is important that young players use a developmentally appropriate-sized racquet. For youth, the following racquet sizes are recommended for each age group:

Ages 4–6	19”–21” racquets
Ages 6–8	21”–23” racquets
Ages 8–10	23”–25” racquets
Ages 10–12	25”–26” racquets
Ages 13 and up	26”–27” racquets

### TENNIS BALLS (USTA RECOMMENDED)

- Whenever possible, programs should use skill level-appropriate tennis balls in line with USTA recommendations. Just as other sports use modified equipment for beginner or younger players, tennis does the same.
- Low-compression balls (red, orange, and green) move more slowly and bounce lower, making them ideal for beginners of all ages. Using the correct ball improves rally success and builds confidence—especially for new players, including adults!
- Ball Details:
  - **Red Balls:** For young beginners (typically ages 4-8)\*

- **Orange Balls:** For developing players (typically ages 9-10)
- **Green Balls:** For transitional players (typically ages 11-12)
- **Yellow Balls:** Standard ball for teens and adults
- It is 100% appropriate to start adult players with a red ball - countless programs around the country are successfully introducing adults to tennis through “red ball” programming.
- Generally speaking, 8-10 dozen balls are recommended for each program to ensure things run efficiently; otherwise, your instructors and players will spend too much time picking up balls. Three to four pickups during a practice are expected, but with any more than that, players will get bored and frustrated.
 

*\*New balls are generally only a significant budget item when purchased in bulk to begin a brand-new youth and/or adult program. Once purchased, balls can be reused across multiple programs, and new balls are purchased only when the existing ones start to show noticeable wear. Only formal USTA adult leagues and competitive Junior leagues or tournaments require new balls for every match.*
- While recommended equipment is preferred, it should not prevent you from starting a program. If necessary:
  - Standard yellow balls can still be used for introductory play
  - Low-compression or worn (“dead”) balls can help reduce speed
  - Foam balls or similar alternatives may be used for players’ first exposure



## NETS AND COURT SETUP

Any tennis net or court can be used for programming; however, you should consider adjusting net height and court size to match the age and ability of participants. Proper scaling helps players rally sooner and enjoy the game more. While these net and court sizes are recommended progressions, for beginners of all ages or social play, pop-up/portable nets are recommended.

 [See Tennis Court Basics in the Appendix, page ##](#)

## RECOMMENDED SETUPS BY AGE GROUP

### Ages 4–8

- Pop-up/portable nets
- Short courts (36' - sideline to sideline)
- Cones, ropes, or tape are other viable options

### Ages 9-10

- Medium courts (approx. 60' - permanent blue lines, painters' tape, or throw-down lines can be used)

### Ages 11 and Up (Youth, Teens, Adults)

- Standard nets
- Full-sized courts

### If the recommended nets indicated above are not available, creative solutions include:

- Ropes, caution tape, or cones can simulate a net
- Temporary barriers can help introduce basic rally concepts

## CONES, COURT MARKERS, AND TEACHING AIDS

Cones and court markers are highly recommended for:

- Organizing drills and stations
- Defining court boundaries for small-sided play
- Improving safety and player flow on the court

### Additional helpful items include:

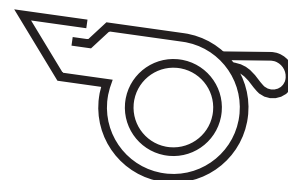
- Poly spots or flat markers
- Chalk or removable court tape (where permitted)
- Hula hoops or targets for fun skill development

These tools are especially valuable in youth programs and camps.

## ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED EQUIPMENT

Depending on program scope, recreation departments may also want to consider:

- Ball baskets or rolling hoppers
- Scorecards or portable scoreboards
- Whistles or clipboards for instructors



- Shade structures or umbrellas
- Water coolers and hydration stations
- First-aid kits readily accessible courtside

## STORAGE AND MAINTENANCE

Clear inventory practices help extend equipment lifespan and maintain safety standards. It is recommended that departments establish procedures for:

- Secure storage of loaner equipment
- Routine inspection of racquets, balls, and nets
- Cleaning and organizing equipment between sessions
- Replacing worn or unsafe items

## PURCHASING EQUIPMENT

- When possible, purchasing durable equipment for program use is recommended. If equipment is being loaned out, entry-level equipment is appropriate.
- Lack of equipment should never prevent tennis from being introduced. With creativity, flexibility, and community support, tennis can be taught almost anywhere and to anyone.
- Equipment can be purchased from online vendors (these usually offer the best prices and offer discounted bulk ordering options), sporting goods and tennis specialty stores, and/or large retail or “big box” stores.

### SUMMARY OF TENNIS PROGRAM AGES, EQUIPMENT, AND COURT/NET SETUP

Age Group/ Program	Racquet Length	Recommended Ball Type	Court/Net Setup	Notes
Ages 4-6 (Intro/Tot Tennis)	19"-21"	Red ball (foam or felt)	36' court, mini-net or lowered net	Focus on fun, coordination, and movement
Ages 6-8	21"-23"	Red ball	60' court, mini-net	Encourages longer rallies and success
Ages 8-10	23"-25"	Orange ball	Full court preferred	Transition toward full tennis rules
Ages 10-12	25"-26"	Green or Yellow ball	Full court	Skill development and match play
Teens & Adults (Beginner)	26"-27"	Yellow ball	Full court	Loaner racquets are strongly recommended
Teens & Adults (Intermediate)	27"	Yellow ball	Full court	Player-owned equipment is more common

## MODIFIED EQUIPMENT AND COURTS

With smaller courts, shorter racquets, and lower compression balls, players (especially those new to the game) can find early success and have fun learning new techniques. Seniors and players with limited mobility may also benefit from using modified equipment or playing on smaller courts.

[👉 See Modified Equipment and Courts in the Appendix, page ##](#)

## STARTER EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST (NEW OR EXPANDING PROGRAMS)

This checklist provides a practical starting point for identifying the equipment a Parks and Recreation Department will need to start a tennis program.

### Essential Equipment

- Junior racquets (variety of sizes)
- Adult racquets for loaner use
- Tennis balls (appropriate for program ages)
- At least one net (permanent or portable)
- Cones or court markers
- Ball basket or hopper
- First-aid kit accessible courtside

### Highly Recommended

- Mini-nets for youth programs
- Extra low-compression or foam balls
- Flat markers or poly spots
- Scorecards or clipboards
- Shade or umbrellas
- Water cooler or hydration station

### Nice to Have

- Targets (cones, hoops, spot markers)
- Whistle for instructors
- Storage bin or rolling cart
- Court tape or chalk (where permitted)
- Portable whiteboard for instruction

### Other Considerations

[👉 See Tennis Scoring and Gameplay in the Appendix, page ##](#)

[👉 See Tennis Court Basics in the Appendix, page #](#)

[👉 See Tennis is for Everyone in the Appendix, page ##](#)



## Coaches and Instructors

One of the most often cited challenges of offering tennis is finding “qualified” instructors or coaches. This is especially true for those parks and recreation departments that serve smaller communities where tennis is not considered a popular sport. They may struggle to know where to begin when it comes to finding someone to run on-court programs or to pay a tennis professional.

The great news is that you do not need an expensive tennis pro to teach tennis to youth or adult beginners, or even intermediate players! There are likely people in your community who know enough to teach tennis basics to youth and/or adults! Here are some things to consider:

- High School Tennis Coaches
- Local or nearby college tennis coaches or assistant coaches
- High-school tennis players
- Local or nearby college tennis players
- PE Teachers
- Local adult league or recreational players
- Volunteer Parent Coaches

If you want to provide training for your current staff or hire certified tennis coach to run your program, USTA has a solution for you!

In the fall of 2025, USTA launched a one-stop shop for coaching. It includes online training modules, links to in-person workshops, online community discussions, job postings, and a search engine for finding coaches in your area.

The “Baseline” course is a FREE course designed specifically for parents, volunteer coaches, high school and college students, and school coaches of local beginner programs.

USTA and PTR (Professional Tennis Registry) both offer training, including youth, adult, school, cardio tennis, senior, and adaptive coaching, including wheelchair and visually impaired tennis.

<https://www.ustacoaching.com/en/home/learning-pathway.html>



## OVERVIEW OF USTA COACHING

USTA Coaching offers both online modules and in-person workshops across all 17 sections, catering to coaches at all levels. The modules introduce the essentials of coaching, helping individuals explore their potential as coaches, embrace positive coaching principles, and implement play-based rally techniques to create engaging and developmentally appropriate sessions. Courses are also available in Spanish.

 [See USTA Coaching in the Appendix, page ##](#)

## USTA PARKS BADGE

The USTA Coaching Badges are short, focused learning experiences within the USTA's modern coaching education pathway designed to help anyone grow as a tennis coach. So, whether you're a Park and Recreation professional, parent, volunteer, PE teacher, new sports coach, seasoned tennis player, or certified tennis teaching professional, these badges target specific coaching roles and topics with practical, accessible content that can be completed at your own pace. Upon finishing, you earn a digital badge that appears on your USTA coach profile as verified recognition of your skills.

Earning badges are also a steppingstone toward more advanced USTA Coaching Certifications, which reflect deeper coaching knowledge, experience, and professionalism.

Learn more about USTA Coaching workshops and events at [ustacoaching.com](https://www.ustacoaching.com) and more about USTA Coaching Badges here: <https://www.ustacoaching.com/en/home/learning-pathway.html>



## SECTION III

# Program Examples

## Starting a Beginner Youth Tennis Program

Offering tennis programs does not have to be hard or complicated; you just need to be motivated, creative, and intentional about the type of program you provide and how you promote it. Starting small and building on quality programming is how you establish a solid tennis program and a long-term pathway for players.

Below is a sample program created by a local Parks and Recreation department in Central Kentucky. Versailles, Kentucky is not a large community. The city's population is under 11,000, and the county's population is under 28,000. Located between two much larger cities (the state capital of Frankfort and Kentucky's second largest city, Lexington), Versailles offers tennis programming that could be considered a model for other similarly sized communities.

The youth beginner tennis program in Versailles is a model that can be easily replicated in any community and is a great way to jumpstart a local tennis program.

### EXAMPLE – LITTLE ACES/FIREBALL TENNIS PROGRAM IN VERSAILLES, KENTUCKY

The staff at the Versailles-Woodford County Parks and Recreation Department created an in-house tennis program that provides an affordable pathway for kids to try tennis, build their skills, and progress to age-appropriate competitive play if they choose to do so.

The program is built around the USTA-provided Net Generation pathway and utilizes the Red Ball and Orange Ball manuals. These manuals provide specific drills and activities for each week of the program, making implementation simple for instructors. These manuals are available online and in print versions, free of charge through USTA channels.



### PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The Little Aces/Fireball tennis programs are for youth ages 5-8 and 9-11 years old.

- Registration fee:
  - 5-8-year-olds: \$40
  - 9-11-year-olds: \$50
  - The department offers scholarships on a sliding scale based on household size and income. The mission is to provide all county residents with access to parks and recreation programming and activities.
- Each program meets 2 times per week for 4 weeks (8 total sessions)
  - 5-8-year-olds meet for 45 minutes
  - 9-11-year-olds meet for 60 minutes

- Group sizes vary, depending on the number of instructors available. Generally speaking, with one instructor, classes would consist of the following:
  - 5–8-year-olds: 1 instructor for every 8 kids
  - 9–11-year-olds: 1 instructor for every 10 kids
- Players are encouraged to bring their own racquets, but they are not required. The department provides racquets for those who do not have them, making the program even more affordable since parents do not have to purchase any equipment for their child to participate.
- Instructors are considered contract labor and are paid \$20/hour (including setup, teaching, and breakdown). Those considering offering this type of programming should check their state and local requirements regarding payroll or contract labor designations.
- The department also provides each participant with a department-branded Little Aces or Fireball Tennis T-shirt as part of their registration fee.
- Little Aces/Fireball Tennis Programs are marketed in various ways:
  - Seasonal Flyers: Information is included in seasonal flyers that go to all elementary students in the county, posted online on the department’s website, and available in print at the community recreation center. These flyers include information for all the department’s programs that are offered during each season.
  - A color postcard featuring only Little Aces and Fireball programming is created and distributed at the recreation center.
  - Program details are provided on the department’s website, which includes a page dedicated to tennis programming.
  - Emails are sent to participants in previous Little Aces and Fireball programs announcing the new session’s details and deadlines.

## THE GOAL – A YOUTH TENNIS PATHWAY

**Step 1:** A separate program called the Kids’ Tennis Club is offered prior to the start of the Little Aces/Fireball Tennis programs. This program is for kids, ages 5-8 and 9-10:

- The goal is to get kids on court at minimal cost to give tennis a try.
- The cost is \$5 per week or \$15 if they register for all 4 weeks up front.
- This program meets once a week for 4 weeks on Sunday afternoons.
- One session is in late April, early May, which leads into the summer Little Aces and Fireball programs, and another 4-week session is held in late summer to lead into the fall programs.
- Racquets are provided for everyone who needs one, with the goal of exposing kids to tennis at a low cost and with minimal time commitment. The department believes that if they can get racquets into kids’ hands with a fun instructor, they will love it and want to continue to play.
- They have had great success in converting Kids’ Tennis Club participants into Little Aces and Fireball Tennis participants.

**Step 2:** In the department’s pathway to develop a solid tennis program for ages 5 to 18 is the Little Aces/Fireball Tennis, as described above. Kids can complete this program multiple times, and as their skills develop, the instructors work with them at their level.

**Step 3:** Junior Team Tennis, which is a USTA Team Tennis format for ages 11 to 18.

## EQUIPMENT NEEDED

- Tennis Balls: Specific balls are used for each age group, much like smaller balls are used for different age groups in basketball, soccer, or football. In tennis, the following ball types are utilized for each age group:
  - Ages 8 and under: Red Ball
  - Ages 9-10: Orange Ball
  - Ages 11-12: Green Ball
  - Ages 13 and Up: Standard Yellow Ball

You will need approximately 8-10 dozen balls for each program to ensure things run efficiently; otherwise, your instructors and players will spend too much time picking up balls. Three to four pickups during practice are expected, but more than that, players will get bored and frustrated.

**NOTE:** New balls are generally only a significant budget item when purchased in bulk to begin a brand-new youth and/or adult program. Great news though! Once purchased, balls can be reused across multiple programs, and new balls are purchased only when the existing ones start to show noticeable wear. Only formal USTA adult leagues and competitive junior leagues or tournaments require new balls for every match.

- **Pop-up Nets:** (sometimes called portable nets): Developmentally, youth ages eight and under should play on a 36' court (basically the width of a standard tennis court) and use a smaller "pop-up" net. These portable nets can be broken down and come with a bag for storage and transport. The number of nets you need will be determined by how many players and instructors you have. For a program with 8-10 kids, one net is great. Pop-up nets are readily available online and in some sporting goods stores. Nets will last many years if taken care of.
- **Ball Carts:** Your instructors will really appreciate having ball carts or a ball hopper. You can have one or more of these and switch out balls for each program as needed, or you can have carts for each ball type. These do not have to be expensive - you could even use laundry baskets in a pinch.
- **Other program equipment:** You may find other equipment beneficial for your program. These items help keep things moving and offer different teaching tools; however, none are required to run a great program. As you have success and look to grow your programs, you may want to consider purchasing the following items:
  - **Court Markers and Targets:** Throw-down spots, lines, and cones (these help organize players, targets, start and stop points, etc.).
  - **Agility Items:** Agility ladder, hollow throw-down circles, etc. (these help with developing coordination, balance, and agility).
- **Program Gifts/Promotional Items:**
  - While not necessary, offering T-shirts, water bottles, wristbands, trophies, medals, or other items as part of your program can generate excitement for young players. If you choose to offer one or more of these types of items, you will need to factor these into your budget and registration fee.
  - Undated gifts or prizes may be the most cost-efficient since they are reusable and easy to replenish.

## SETTING REGISTRATION FEES

- Facility costs (if any); most beginner tennis programs can be held almost anywhere! Tennis courts are great, but they are not required. Programs are often held in gymnasiums, parking lots, on outdoor basketball courts, and other similar venues.
- Equipment including tennis balls (used for each age group), racquets, pop-up nets (8u programs), ball-carts, and other program equipment including targets, cones, throw-down lines/sports, agility tools, etc.
- Insurance: As a parks and recreation department, you likely have blanket insurance that covers your programs. However, be sure to consult your insurance provider to ensure you have proper coverage for the type of program(s) you are offering and the location.

## COACHES OR INSTRUCTORS (OR VOLUNTEERS)

How many instructors/coaches/volunteers do you need and what will you pay them?

- **Ages 8 and under:** minimum 1 coach/volunteer for every 8 kids
- **Ages 9-12 and under:** minimum 1 coach/volunteer for every 12 kids
- **Ages 13-18:** minimum 1 coach/volunteer for every 20 kids
- **Adult Beginners:** 1 coach/volunteer for every 12 players
- **Adult Players with Experience:** 1 coach/volunteer for every 20 players
- **Note:** When offering a youth program, a combination of one coach and one or more volunteers is encouraged.

## FINDING COACHES OR INSTRUCTORS

Finding instructors may seem to be the most challenging aspect of starting a program, but there are likely former or current tennis players in your community who would be happy to teach tennis to new players. Some easy ways to find coaches/instructors:

- Community members who play tennis, whether competitively or recreationally, can be great instructors, especially for beginner youth and adult programs.
- Players on local high school or college tennis teams make fantastic instructors. They are often high-energy, dependable individuals who are eager to earn money doing something they enjoy.
- If you have a Community Tennis Association (CTA) in your area, reach out to them to ask whether they know any instructors or coaches who can connect with you.
- Contact your USTA Section, District, or local USTA office. They have contacts across the local tennis landscape and can help you identify a coach. Some districts will even send a staff member to coach or support your program.
- Parents may hesitate to get involved (even if they are tennis players) because they do not think they know “enough”. However, as is true in all other youth sports, parents can step up to run practices, coach games, and manage team communication, even if they did not play sports at a high level themselves. Asking parents to support, even if with just general communication or as an on-court assistant, can be extremely helpful.

## SAFE PLAY TRAINING

- Requires individuals who are coaching, managing communication, or providing on-court support complete the *Safe Play* online course.
- This course, offered through the US Center for Safe Sport, combines comprehensive education, background screening, and clear policies to implement standards for athlete safety.
- Working alongside the U.S. Center for SafeSport and the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee, the Center for Safe Sport develops safety policies and resources.
- *Safe Play* empowers the entire tennis community to recognize, prevent, and report misconduct.
- This course is free to complete, and an annual refresher course is required.

## Starting a Beginner Adult Tennis Program

Below is a sample program created by a local parks and recreation department in Springfield, Missouri. The population of Springfield is around 170,000. This program is offered at Cooper Tennis Complex, which is a public park facility with a dedicated tennis staff. However, this program can be replicated on a smaller scale and with staff who have minimal tennis knowledge. Instruction and drills can be pulled from USTA Coaching and USTA Red Ball manuals, which are available online or through your USTA Section or District office.

### EXAMPLE – COOPER TENNIS COMPLEX IN SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI

This program is a beginner tennis program for adults. The criteria for this class is any adult, 18 years and older. Adult Beginning Tennis is a 4-week program and includes one-hour classes offered twice a week. Participants choose the day of the week they want to attend the class. This class is offered monthly and runs year-round.

Parks departments can easily alter the schedule to a longer session and/or fewer offerings. For example, instead of 12, 4-week sessions, a department could offer a summer session only. Departments could offer the program multiple times a week, for more hours, etc. The possibilities for offering the program are flexible, depending on the parks department's needs and restrictions.



There is a wide array of players in this program, including adults who have never played, adults who played as a child/teenager but haven't played in 10+ years, as well as adults who have played with a friend or family member once or twice but have never participated in an instructional program. This program accommodates all levels of beginners.

### EXAMPLE DESCRIPTION – ADULT BEGINNING PROGRAM

Adult Beginning Tennis offers a comfortable and easy approach for learning the basics of tennis in a group setting. Participants will start with Red Ball and learn to rally. As players progress, they will learn technical skills with the goal being to rally and play games with fellow class participants. This class is meant to be fun and social. This class is geared towards players who have never played before and former players who are trying to get back into the sport. New sessions start every month. Equipment provided.

**Days:** Mondays or Wednesdays

**Time:** 6pm-7pm

**Ages:** 18+

**Cost:** \$25 member/\$40 non-member (includes 4 classes)

**Location:** Cooper Tennis Complex Indoor

## CURRICULUM

USTA Coaching and USTA Red Ball offer breakdowns on how to structure beginner-level tennis. The Cooper Tennis Adult beginning program is 4 weeks. For our program, we start with Red Ball Tennis and progress based on the class's ability level. Some players use the red balls for the entire month. Some players advance all the way to green or even yellow balls. The goal of this class is to provide a fun environment and let players see success. Players should be able to rally in the service boxes, allowing them to play games. Instructors move at the pace of the class and how quickly they progress. Some months, players will use the service boxes and play red ball for the duration of the program; some months, there will be players rallying from the baseline. Regardless, sessions run either way are considered a successful program.

## EQUIPMENT NEEDED

Nearly all equipment is reusable once acquired, and many districts, sections, and even USTA National often offer program grants, which can help minimize your start-up costs.

- **Tennis Balls:** Specific balls are used for different ability levels. Often, there is a misconception that the Red, Orange, and Green Balls are for children, however these balls should be used based on ability level. For the program at Cooper Tennis Complex, Red, Orange, and Green balls are used. Once players are able to progress to the standard yellow ball, they are typically ready to move on to the Adult Intermediate class.

### **Balls used during a 4-week Program**

- Week 1: Red Balls
- Week 2: Red and Orange Balls
- Week 3: Red and Orange Balls
- Week 4: Orange and Green Balls
- It is common for two different ability groups to begin to form in the class. There is nothing wrong with keeping one group using Red Balls for the entire program, and another group which is progressing faster, moving to Orange and Green Balls.
- You will need approximately one-two cases of balls per color. Typically, having 24-48 Red Balls, 50-60 orange Balls, and 60-72 green balls is a great starting point. Remember, these are the same balls used in junior programs, so they can be used in multiple programs.
- **Racquets:** Cooper Tennis Complex provides racquets for this program. Some players bring their own racquet, while others borrow one. For a beginner-level class, the program will want to have racquets on hand for players to use. Oftentimes, departments can get used racquets at a low cost. Racquets last for years if they are well cared for, so after the initial expense of buying racquets, there is little to no cost. Parks departments can also check with their USTA District and/or Section office to see what grants are available to purchase equipment.
- **Pop-up Nets:** For the adult beginning program at Cooper Tennis Complex, the regular court and regular nets are used. If a park's department is trying to start this program in a non-traditional space (i.e., gym floor, asphalt/concrete area, cafeteria, etc.) pop-up nets can easily be used. Pickleball nets and pickleball courts can also be utilized especially when using Red Balls.
  - Talk with your local USTA District/Section to see what grant opportunities are available to purchase these nets. If funds are not available, it is easy to tie a rope across the area and use that as a make-shift net.
- **Ball Carts:** For the program at Cooper Tennis Complex, there is one large cart with dividers to keep Red, Orange, and Green Balls in the same basket. If there are funds, multiple carts can be used to divide the tennis balls by color. Make-shift baskets are also okay. Many places use shopping carts or any item that can hold tennis balls. Tennis ball hoppers are also a cost-effective way to store tennis balls. These can also be transported easily if there are programs at multiple locations.

## SETTING REGISTRATION FEES

Adult Beginning at Cooper Tennis Complex charges \$25 per session (4 classes) for members and \$40 per session (4 classes) for non-members. This class is offered on indoor tennis courts for 10 of the sessions. In the summer, the class moves outside to a community park. For those sessions, the price is \$25 for all participants (member/non-member is not observed).

When factoring in what to charge for the program, parks departments should detail out their expenses (equipment, any court costs, staff costs, and miscellaneous). Set the program fees to cover these costs. Remember, equipment does not need to be purchased for every session. At Cooper Tennis Complex, we cycle through the tennis balls every 2-3 months. For programs offered seasonally, new tennis balls are purchased once per season. Equipment costs are relatively low.

- **Program Location:** Adult Beginning at Cooper Tennis Complex is held on traditional tennis courts, however non-traditional spaces will work as well. Gym floors, asphalt/concrete surfaces, pickleball courts, and cafeterias are all viable options, especially for Red Ball Tennis. Pop-up nets, tape or throw-down lines, red balls, and tennis racquets are all you need to get started.
- **Insurance:** As a parks and recreation department, you likely already have blanket insurance that covers your programs but be sure to consult your insurance provider to ensure you have proper coverage for the type of program(s) you are offering and the location.

## COACHES OR INSTRUCTORS

There are many ways to structure the types of instructors and their pay. For our Adult Beginning class at Cooper Tennis Complex, we pay the instructor 75% of the registration fee, and Cooper Tennis retains 25%. This is an excellent model for a program that is just getting started. Regardless of whether you have four participants or forty participants, the 75/25 split guarantees the program is profitable. This can also motivate the instructor to grow the program. At Cooper Tennis, for any program with more than eight participants, we provide a program helper, which ranges from minimum wage to \$16 per hour.

At Cooper Tennis Complex, we have other programs that use contracted tennis professionals to lead classes. These are certified coaches through USTA Coaching, PTR, or RSPA. Because they are certified, they are paid a program rate of \$16- \$25 per hour, depending on their experience. We also have program helpers who are *Safe Play*-certified coaches but are not certified through USTA Coaching, PTR, or RSPA. Helpers assist our contract pros or full-time staff.

When starting out, there are many options for who can lead an Adult Beginner tennis program. A Parks Staff member can be the lead and use a program helper. A department could recruit local high school coaches, local USTA League players, local college players, or even physical education teachers to lead the class.

How many instructors/coaches/volunteers do you need? For an adult beginning class, one instructor will typically be enough. Two instructors are ideal, especially if the group is at two different ability levels; however, one instructor can successfully lead a class. Generally, if the class has over eight participants, a second instructor is recommended (the recommended class ratio is 1:8).

Finding Coaches or Instructors may seem to be the most challenging aspect of starting a program, but there are likely former or current tennis players in your community who would be happy to teach tennis to new players. Remember, coaches for beginner-level tennis do not have to be professionals. They need to be passionate about the game and eager to promote and teach it to new players. Some easy ways to find coaches/instructors:

- Community members who play tennis either competitively or recreationally
- Local high school coaches, local college coaches, or local college players
- Physical education teachers

- Community Tennis Associations (CTA)
- Contact your USTA District office or Section. They have contacts across the local tennis landscape and can help you identify a coach. Some districts will even send a staff member to coach or support your program.

## SAFE PLAY TRAINING

**Ensure that individuals coaching, managing communication, or providing on-court support complete the *Safe Play* online course.**

- This course, offered through the US Center for Safe Sport, combines comprehensive education, background screening, and clear policies to implement standards for athlete safety.
- Working alongside the U.S. Center for SafeSport and the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee, the Center for Safe Sport develops safety policies and resources.
- *Safe Play* empowers the entire tennis community to recognize, prevent, and report misconduct.
- This course is free to complete, and an annual refresher course is required.

## Starting a Tennis Program for all Ages and Levels

### EXAMPLE: MERCER COUNTY, NEW JERSEY ADULT FLEX LEAGUE

Does your department manage a large-scale tennis complex? Do you struggle to fill courts on a day-to-day basis or to make the case for funding capital improvements? If so, check out the Mercer County, New Jersey Adult Flex League, implemented by the Mercer County Park Commission. This program keeps courts busy throughout the spring, summer and fall, generates revenue, and offers plenty of play opportunities while remaining affordable for players! The league is an excellent pathway for people who have begun lessons but want to be on court and apply the skills they have learned.



New Jersey Flex League tennis programs, primarily run by the USTA, offer flexible, self-scheduled, local singles/doubles matches for all skill levels. They cost approximately \$25-\$35 per player/season for 8-12 week round-robin formats.

### PROGRAMMING A COMPETITIVE BEGINNER ADULT PROGRAM FOR MAXIMUM IMPACT

The Mercer County Park Commission has been running adult flex leagues in Mercer County Park, NJ, for decades (the mid-1980's). They hold two leagues (April-July and another August-October). The league serves as the foundation for structure and a membership base. It allows people to meet players of their level and, in many cases, has created lifelong friendships.

Their philosophy is to keep costs low, accommodate as many players as possible, give players a lot of responsibility and flexibility to play, and report results.

#### Mercer County Summer League Rules

[📄 See Mercer County Summer League Rules in the Appendix, page ##](#)

## **The league is for experienced players of all ages and levels.**

- Even at the lowest entry point, players need to know general rules, etiquette, different strokes (forehand, backhand, volley overhead, serve), and know how to keep score.
- Once players are at the facility participating in leagues, they can be introduced to lesson programs, tournaments, and special events, which generate more substantial revenue.
- Mercer has a 28-court facility and ensuring court usage and player participation have been primary reasons for securing approvals for capital projects.
- The league is critically important to ensure there is active play on the courts at all times.

## **EQUIPMENT AND COMPUTER SOFTWARE NEEDED**

- A league may be held at a facility with 8+ courts.
- Players bring their own equipment, including tennis balls. If players play each other twice, then they split who brings the balls. If they play each other once on the schedule, then they spin their racquet to determine who opens the tennis balls.
- Mercer uses CommunityPass for registration and Tenniscores for league standings.

## **SETTING REGISTRATION FEE**

- Players register online at <https://register.communitypass.net/mercer>
- Registration fee at Mercer is \$25.00 per player per singles division and \$20.00 per player per doubles division.
- In 2025, \$20,000.00 in league revenue was generated.
- Court fees are separate and are dependent on whether or not the players have a membership.
- Court fees and membership can be modified based on your community and organizational needs.

## **RECORDING LEAGUE STANDINGS**

- A League Administrator is needed to oversee fees and standings.
- Once players have registered, they are dropped into a standings grid on [www.tenniscores.com](http://www.tenniscores.com). There is a \$3.00 per player fee to use Tenniscores for the year. The USTA also offers a flex-league app as an alternative. Here's a link to a video explaining USTA's Flex League App.
- Players enter their results into an app. The league administrator will track the regular-season standings and host a free end-of-season tournament for those who qualify. The USTA Serve Tennis website is used for these draws.
- The set-up is a bit complex, but the league runs itself. Staff do not have to get involved with day-to-day matches.

## **DECIDING DIVISIONS TO BE OFFERED**

- This depends on how many courts you have available and the demographics of your community.
- Mercer utilizes the USTA's N.T.R.P. rating system to ensure players are grouped appropriately.
- Adult 18+ divisions ranging from 2.5-4.5 Singles levels.
- Adult 18+ Combined Gender Doubles and Mixed Doubles Divisions ranging from 6.0-9.0.
- Age group divisions by level for 40+, 50+, 60+, 70+ age groups.
- They also offer Junior divisions for 12 and under, 14 and under, and 16 and under.

## AWARDS

- Winners and finalists from all divisions are presented with an award at the end of the season on Awards Day. Mercer provides the following Awards:
  - Sculpted Ice Award - 6" Black w/2" sublimated Disc and Plate STR74 cost \$12 per award
  - Sculpted Ice Award - 5" Black w/2" sublimated Disc and Plate STR73 cost \$11 per award
- All the information above can be modified and tailored to the needs of your community and facility.
- Director, Marc Vecchiolla [mvecchiolla@mercercounty.org](mailto:mvecchiolla@mercercounty.org) will share more information if interested. Feel free to visit [www.mercercountyparks.org](http://www.mercercountyparks.org)



## SECTION IV

# Suggested Policies & Procedures

This section outlines the recommended policies for all Parks and Recreation tennis programs. You likely already have policies and procedures in place. However, if you do not, consider implementing these, or similar, policies for the safety of your participants and the protection of your department. These standards are designed to ensure a safe, inclusive, and well-managed environment for tennis participants, coaches, volunteers, and spectators. Understanding the governance of Park and Recreation agencies that you will work with is important in aligning policies and procedures.

### 1. USTA SAFE PLAY COMPLIANCE

*Safe Play* is the course offered through the Center for Safe Sport. The U.S. Center for SafeSport was established in 2017 as a direct response to widespread sexual, physical, and emotional abuse in amateur sports, most notably highlighted by the Larry Nassar scandal. It is an independent nonprofit organization, focused on preventing misconduct, educating the community, and ensuring accountability across the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement.

Because USTA is the national governing body for tennis in the United States, all coaches, captains, and instructors for USTA-affiliated programs that engage minors are required to complete the *Safe Play* online course and pass a background check. The goal is to protect children and create a safe environment in all tennis programs. It ensures that coaches, staff, and volunteers follow proper safety standards.

*Safe Play* helps ensure that every child can enjoy tennis in a safe, positive, and supportive environment. *Safe Play* is **entirely free** for providers, coaches, and volunteers. ***Safe Play* Includes:**

- Training on how to keep kids safe
- Background checks for anyone working with youth
- Clear behavior guidelines for adults and players
- A process for reporting concerns if something does not seem right
- Requirements for *Safe Play* Certification:
  - Background screening through USTA's approved vendor. This process is free and completely digital as part of the individual's certification. There is no work required on the part of the Parks and Recreation Department except to document compliance by coaches, instructors, captains, and volunteers.
  - SafeSport certification must be renewed annually.
  - Coaches must agree to the USTA Safe Play Policy and reporting procedures.
  - Documentation of compliance must be verified and maintained by program administrators.

### 2. CODE OF CONDUCT

Having all participants, parents/guardians, coaches, and spectators agree to a Code of Conduct that promotes respect, sportsmanship, and enjoyment of the game helps ensure that everyone understands the expectations and acknowledges that they will be held accountable for behavior that violates those standards.

**Expectations include:**

- Treat all individuals with courtesy and fairness.
- Practice integrity and fair play at all times.
- Refrain from abusive language, harassment, or unsportsmanlike behavior.
- Follow all facility rules and scheduling structures.
- The Code of Conduct should be reviewed at registration and posted at the facility.

**3. WEATHER AND ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY POLICY**

The facility should follow established safety guidelines when environmental conditions may impact play. If your department does not have established weather or environmental safety policies in place, below are a few to consider implementing as soon as possible:

**Procedures include:**

- Suspension of play when courts are wet and slippery.
- Suspension of play when lightning is within 10 miles or observing warnings by Thor Guard or other systems.
- Monitoring extreme heat using Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) readings.
- Compliance with air quality advisories.
- Availability of shade, hydration, and cooling measures during warm weather.
- Other considerations as determined by your department.

**4. EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN (EAP)**

A written Emergency Action Plan should be in place and reviewed annually. It should include:

- Emergency medical protocols and first-aid readiness
- AED locations and personnel trained in CPR
- Shelter and evacuation procedures
- Staff roles, responsibilities, and communication protocols during emergencies
- Incident report forms should be completed for all injuries or critical events and stored in accordance with local record-keeping requirements.

**5. INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY**

Below are some basic standards that help ensure equitable access to programs and facilities for all community members.

**Standards include:**

- ADA-compliant courts, pathways, and restrooms
- Inclusive programming for wheelchair and adaptive athletes
- Outreach and scholarships to reduce financial barriers
- Welcoming environment for all ages, abilities, and backgrounds
- All staff should receive ongoing training in inclusive customer service.

## 6. REGISTRATION AND REFUND POLICY

If your department does not already have a registration and refund policy, below are some suggested guidelines to ensure transparency and fairness.

- Full refunds issued only before programs start
- Prorated credits may be offered for weather-related cancellations
- Refund requests after the start date will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis
- All refund information will be communicated at registration and/or in registration materials.

## 7. FACILITY AND EQUIPMENT USE POLICY

To protect infrastructure and ensure safety, the following standards apply:

- Appropriate athletic shoes required — no hard soles or heels.
- Food, glass items, and chewing gum are prohibited on courts.
- No pets allowed on courts (service animals permitted)
- Equipment must be used as intended and reported if damaged.
- Regular inspections of nets, windscreens, and surfaces will be performed.

 [See USTA Statement of Guidance in the Appendix, page 51](#)

## 8. PHOTOGRAPHY, MEDIA, AND PRIVACY

Parents/guardians must provide consent for the use of photos or videos of minors in promotional materials.

- Unauthorized photography of children is prohibited.
- Media inquiries must be directed to facility management.
- Privacy preferences must be documented at registration.

## 9. COMMUNICATION POLICY

Clear, timely communication ensures efficient program operations. Standards include ensuring that:

- Notification procedures are in place for schedule changes or weather delays.
- Regular updates provided via website, email, text, or social media.
- Contact information for staff is available publicly.
- Participants should be encouraged to sign up for digital alerts.

It is also essential to clearly communicate to parents and coaches what type of communication is permitted between adult volunteers or employees and minors. Safe Play provides very clear requirements for this type of communication.

## 10. PROGRAM EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

To promote continuous improvement, administrators should:

- Distribute participant satisfaction surveys each season.
- Track and analyze feedback trends.
- Adjust programming based on community needs and comments.

## 11. BRANDING AND PARTNERSHIPS

If your department offers USTA-branded programs, your department and/or sponsors must follow approved USTA branding guidelines. For marketing materials including the USTA-branded logos, it is best to reach out to your local USTA Section, District, or local USTA office for approval of marketing materials.

- Permission is required for USTA logo usage.
- No alteration, misuse, or unauthorized sponsorship marks
- Unified messaging focused on community health and access is highly encouraged.



## SECTION V

# Marketing a Tennis Program

Effective marketing ensures your tennis program reaches as broad a base of potential players, parents, and community partners as possible. Use a mix of on-site promotion, digital outreach, and community connections to build awareness and drive registration.

There are many ways to promote programs – it is essential to find the ones that are most effective for your community but also explore new outlets and promotional tools as well. You do not have to use all the ideas below; however, to get the broadest reach possible, it is crucial to understand that everyone receives information and updates from different outlets. For example, some will go to your website, some get their updates from social media, and others look for printed materials. If you are fortunate enough to have a budget for radio spots, television commercials, or access to spotlights on local TV segments for community activities, be sure to explore using those, too.

### THROUGH LOCAL PLATFORMS

- **Facility Signage and Banners:** Place eye-catching posters, banners, or sandwich boards at park entrances, courts, and clubhouses. Include program dates, ages, skill levels, and a simple call-to-action (QR code or short URL).
- **Flyers and Handouts:** Provide flyers at your Parks and Recreation office, check-in desks, bulletin boards, and near courts, playgrounds, and recreation centers, even if they are not tennis-related facilities. Keep messaging simple and visually engaging.
- **Staff Advocacy:** Train front-desk staff and facility personnel to verbally promote the program and answer basic questions. Personal recommendations increase trust and sign-ups.
- **Demo Days and Free Clinics:** Offer short, free introductory sessions to let participants experience the program before committing.

### WEBSITE PROMOTION

- **Dedicated Program Page:** Create a clear, easy-to-find webpage with program details, schedule, pricing, FAQs, and registration links.
- **Homepage Highlights:** Feature new programs on the homepage with banners or rotating announcements during the registration period.
- **Search-Friendly Content:** Use simple keywords (e.g., “youth tennis lessons,” “adult beginner tennis”) to help local players find your program through search engines.

### SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

- **Flyers in Backpacks and Offices:** Work with local schools to distribute flyers through students, front offices, or digital parent portals.
- **After-School Program Alignment:** Coordinate with PE teachers or after-school coordinators to position tennis as an extension of school activities.
- **School Newsletters and Announcements:** Provide ready-to-use content that schools can include in newsletters, emails, or announcements.

## EMAIL MARKETING

- **Targeted Email Campaigns:** Send marketing emails to past participants, facility members, and parents in your database.
- **Clear Calls-to-Action:** Each email should focus on one main action: “Register Now,” “Save Your Spot,” “Try a Free Session”, or “Click Here to Learn More.”
- **Reminder and Countdown Emails:** Send follow-up emails as registration deadlines approach to increase urgency and reduce drop-off.

## NEWSLETTERS (DIGITAL AND PRINT)

- **Facility or Community Newsletters:** Include program highlights in park district, recreation department, HOA, or community newsletters.
- **Seasonal Features:** Tie the program to seasonal themes (summer camps, fall leagues, back-to-school activities) to increase relevance.
- **Success Stories and Photos:** Use short testimonials or images from past programs to show impact and build credibility.

## SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE COMMUNITIES

- **Consistent Social Posts:** Share program details, countdown reminders, and behind-the-scenes content on social platforms.
- **Short Videos and Reels:** Use quick clips of drills, smiling participants, or coach introductions to boost engagement.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- **Partnerships with Local Businesses:** Cross-promote with sporting goods stores, coffee shops, or family-focused businesses.
- **Community Events and Festivals:** Set up a booth or tennis activity station to promote the program in person.
- **Word-of-Mouth Incentives:** Offer referral discounts or small rewards to current participants who bring friends.

## RESOURCE GUIDE TIP

Consistency across all marketing channels—same program name, dates, visuals, and messaging—builds recognition and trust, making it easier for participants to say “yes” and register.

## LEVERAGE USTA SERVE TENNIS

It is likely that your department already offers an online registration platform that your community is familiar with. If that is the case, it is best to continue using the platform you already use for your tennis programs. You will want to keep the registration process simple and familiar for those registering for your programs.

If your department does not use an online registration system, USTA offers a free platform called “Serve Tennis” that uses Stripe® to process online payments. Serve Tennis can help you manage, market, and grow your programs in one place.

If your facility is not already listed, create or claim your venue at [PlayTennis.USTA.com](https://www.playtennis.com). This not only increases your online visibility but also connects your programs to thousands of people searching for tennis in your area.

### **Serve Tennis can:**

- Publish your programs on the national USTA directory.
- Handle online payments and player registration.
- Promote your events automatically through the USTA's digital network.

For facilities without a dedicated website, Serve Tennis can even host a simple, customizable webpage to feature your programs.

### **WORK WITH LOCAL USTA STAFF**

Your USTA Section, District, or local USTA office staff are valuable partners in promoting your programs. Many states (“districts” in USTA vernacular) or sections have dedicated staff to assist local tennis providers with programming ideas, marketing templates, flyers, and graphics. This can save significant time and help maintain consistent branding.

#### **They can also help you:**

- Connect with nearby schools and clubs for cross-promotion.
- Access grants and materials to support outreach in underrepresented communities.
- Learn about local tournaments, leagues, and youth initiatives to connect your players with the broader tennis community in your region.
- Learn specific common public sector language terms to use, when engaging with local governments and park and recreation agencies throughout the country.

### **EXPAND YOUR REACH THROUGH COMMUNITY CHANNELS**

#### **Social Media**

- Encourage participants to share their experiences with hashtags or tagged photos.
- Local Groups and Pages: Post in community Facebook groups, Nextdoor, or local recreation pages (following group rules).

#### **Local Media**

Send press releases to community newspapers, radio stations, and newsletters about free clinics, tournaments, or facility upgrades.

#### **Schools and Youth Organizations:**

- Share flyers or host short “try tennis” sessions at nearby schools or at school events to spark interest.
- Some schools may allow you to send printed program flyers home with students or include them in communications to parents.
- Ask your schools whether your department can have a presence at book fairs or other school activities to ensure all students and families have access to program information.
- Recruit student clubs or tennis teams at the middle school or high school levels to “adopt” your program and help you promote it to their classmates and community.

 [\(See Schools & Park Agencies: Prioritizing Partnerships in the Appendix, page ##\)](#)

## Community Boards and Events

Display materials at libraries, fitness centers, and seasonal events like park fairs or wellness days.

## VISUAL IDENTITY AND BRANDING

Create a recognizable brand for your program; include your park or facility logo, USTA logo, and program name consistently across all materials.

Use photos that reflect your community's diversity and energy. Avoid over-relying on national images; instead, show local players and families. People love to see friends, family, and coworkers in promotional materials, and they are more likely to share them on social media (just be sure you have a signed release before utilizing photos in print, online, or other media, including a release in your registration forms is a great way to ensure you have permission to use photos publicly.) When possible, coordinate with your marketing team (if you have one) to maintain a unified message, for example: *Tennis is fun, affordable, and for everyone!*

## GRANTS AND EQUIPMENT ASSISTANCE

The USTA, as your partner in play, provides tools and resources to, among other things, help park agencies develop their tennis programs, train their instructors, and maintain their infrastructure. The USTA has various services, programs, digital tools, and educational opportunities to help parks and recreation professionals grow the game in public parks. This guide highlights several tools and resources that may be especially valuable for park agencies. For more information about any of these topics or to explore additional areas, please visit USTA.com and USTA.com/Parks. Grants may be available to support new or expanding tennis programs.

 [See Additional Tools & Resources in the Appendix, page ##](#)

### For example:

- <https://www.usta.com/en/home/coach-organize/tennis-support/grants-assistance.html>
- USTA Southwest offers providers an opportunity to apply for a Junior Starter Kit, which often includes mini-nets and racquets.
- USTA Southern offers grants for up to \$2,000 aimed at supporting the development of new tennis programs.
- Other USTA Sections may offer similar starter kits or grant funding.
- Some grants may allow parks and recreation providers to purchase equipment directly from vendors on behalf of the program.

### Programs are strongly encouraged to contact their USTA District or Section office to:

- Learn about available grants.
- Understand application requirements.
- Explore partnership opportunities.

# SECTION VI

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# The Sport for a Lifetime

Tennis is a sport that can be learned at a young age and, unlike other sports, be played for a lifetime, appealing across all age demographics. Tennis is one of the few sports that can have three generations being active and playing together, making it attractive to families as well as facilities that seek to create recreational opportunities that appeal across the demographic spectrum.

## SOCIAL HEALTH

The vast majority of organized tennis is played as a team sport: adult leagues, middle and high school teams, Division 1-3 collegiate tennis, Tennis on Campus, and Junior Team Tennis.

Tennis creates a network of friends who socialize beyond the court; this is vital today as technology often isolates people. For children and students, tennis teaches important life lessons about working together and working as a team.

## MENTAL HEALTH

Because tennis helps deal with physical, mental, social and emotional challenges, the sport is ideal for helping participants cope with stress. When playing tennis, challenges are ever-present, so individuals become problem solvers on the fly. From alertness to tactical thinking, tennis helps keep the brain agile and young, and helps to relieve tension.

# Long live tennis, for those who tennis live longer.



## Get Fit

Lose Weight,  
Burn Calories

An hour of singles  
play can burn  
580-870 calories.

*Oja, et al, British Journal  
of Sports Medicine, 2016*



## Strengthen Heart, Muscles and Bones

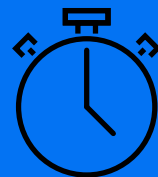
Compared to other sports,  
tennis players have the  
lowest incidence of  
cardiovascular disease.

*40-year study conducted by Johns  
Hopkins University*



## Develop Hand-Eye Coordination

Playing tennis  
involves several skills  
that contribute to  
good hand-eye  
coordination. You can  
improve your agility,  
balance, coordination,  
reaction time and  
more.



## Live Longer

Playing just 3 hours  
per week will reduce  
your risk of heart  
disease 56%

*Harvard University, 2016*

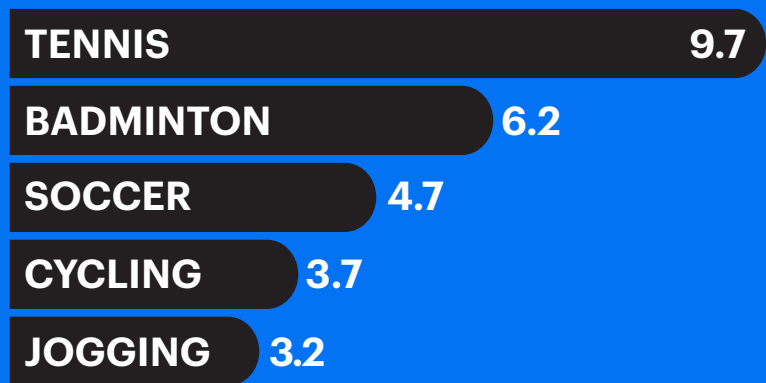
## PHYSICAL HEALTH

Tennis is ideal for long-term health benefits. It is the only sport where a person can be an active participant from age 3 to 103. The Cleveland Clinic has called tennis “an ideal sport for a healthy heart.” In fact, playing tennis just 3 hours per week can reduce your risk of heart disease by 56%. A nine-year study of 80,306 British adults, average age 52, reported tremendous benefits for tennis players:

- Risk of death from all causes: 47% lower among those who played racquet sports
- Risk of death from heart disease or stroke: 56% lower among racquet sports players

Tennis players live longer. A Mayo Clinic study of 8,577 Americans over the age of 25 found that playing tennis can extend your life by nearly 10 years, more than three times longer than running:

**Play tennis,  
live longer...  
10 years longer.**



Tennis adds nearly 10 years to your life, more than any other sport or activity.\*

*\*Mayo Clinic, Sep. 2018*

# Tennis is an Inclusive Sport

Tennis is an inclusive sport. Advocating for tennis in your community can help increase participation in the sport from both under-resourced and underrepresented populations. The USTA's Diversity, Equity & Inclusion strategy is designed to grow and promote our sport to the next generation—and future generations—of fans, players, and volunteers. The USTA is removing barriers and creating opportunities wherever it can so that tennis becomes a true reflection of all of America.

Tennis is a game that can be adapted for any mental, physical, or emotional ability. Across the U.S. there are more than 200 active adaptive programs that welcome and support athletes of all ability levels. Tennis is therapeutic for individuals dealing with post-traumatic stress or other mental health issues, stroke survivors, and those on the autism spectrum, to name just a few. Athletes with cognitive disabilities learn and play the game, enjoying the social nature of clinics and tournaments. Volunteers and coaches working with adaptive programs find they benefit from the experience as much as the athletes.

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion are integral to the USTA mission of promoting and developing the growth of tennis and has been a formal area of focus, with a team in place to lead our efforts, since 1994. The USTA is committed to striving for equity and leveling the playing field of opportunity for all.


Attracting, engaging, and retaining a new generation of diverse tennis participants is a key to our future relevance as a sport and our ongoing success as a national governing body. At the USTA, we celebrate the open format – the idea that anyone from anywhere should be able to play and compete. That's the driving force behind our Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion strategy, designed to grow and promote our sport to the next generation – and future generations – of fans, players, coaches, and volunteers.


Contact the USTA Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion team at [diversity@usta.com](mailto:diversity@usta.com).


Financial disparity is consistently identified as a significant barrier that prevents players from getting into the sport. To help boost tennis participation among aspiring under-resourced players, both the USTA Foundation and USTA Player Development, along with many USTA Sections, have created grant programs for programs and individual players. To learn more about these grants, click [here](#).



# Youth Who Play Tennis

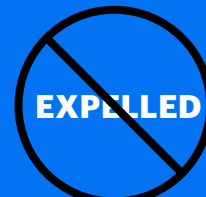
**48%**   
GET BETTER GRADES

**73%**   
ARE BETTER BEHAVED

**81%**   
SAY THEY WILL ATTEND COLLEGE

**82%**   
ARE MORE COMMUNITY-MINDED AND WELL-ROUNDED

## ARE HEALTHY AND LESS PRONE TO RISKY BEHAVIORS

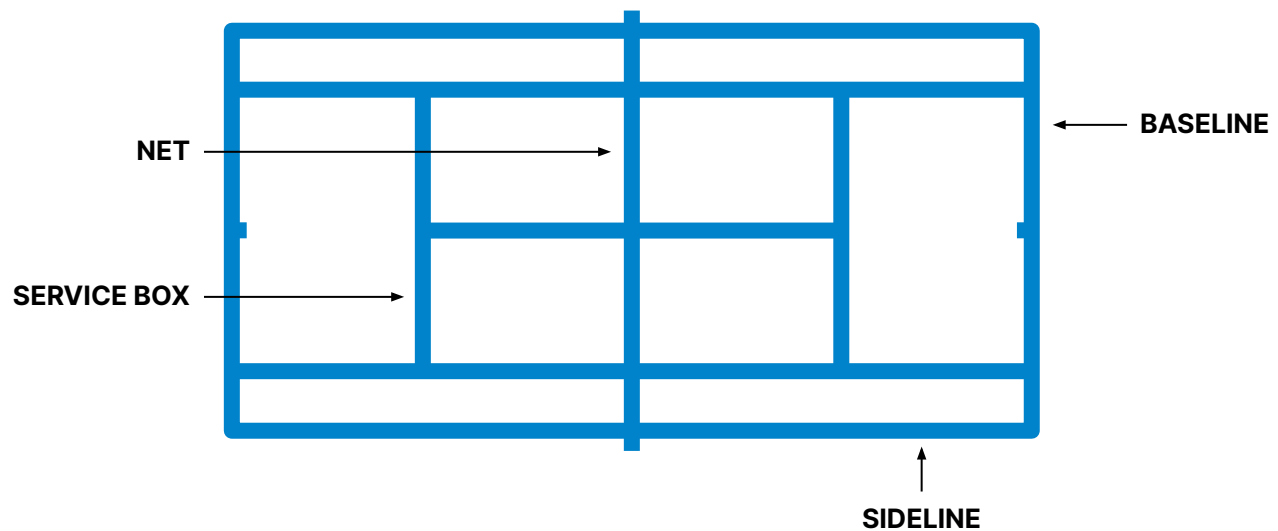


**TENNIS PARTICIPATION POSITIVELY INFLUENCES THE LIVES OF U.S. YOUTH ACROSS ALL SOCIOECONOMIC LEVELS.**

# Tennis Court Basics

## TENNIS COURT SIZE

Tennis is a game played on a rectangular-shaped court that is 78' long and 36' wide. The lines along the short ends of the court are called baselines and the lines along the long sides of the court are called sidelines. The court is divided in the middle by a net and on either side of the net, there are two service boxes.



## TENNIS COURT SURFACES

While the dimensions of the tennis court are standard, there are three primary types of tennis court surfaces – clay courts, grass courts, and hard courts.

- **Clay courts** are typically made from crushed shale stone, brick, or mineral aggregate. Red clay courts are popular in Europe and Latin America while green clay courts are more common in the United States and Canada. On this surface, the ball tends to bounce higher and play tends to be slower.
- **Grass courts** are the fastest type of court. On this surface, the ball can skid and bounce unpredictably.
- **Hard courts** are typically built with an asphalt or concrete base and an acrylic surface layer. The speed of play may be adjusted by varying the amount of sand in the acrylic surface layer. Balls tend to bounce fairly high on hard courts and, generally speaking, hard courts play faster than clay courts but slower than grass courts.

Did you know that the four Grand Slam tournaments are played on different surfaces? The **French Open** is played on red clay courts, **Wimbledon** is played on grass courts, and both the **US Open** and **Australian Open** are played on hard courts.

# Modified Equipment & Courts

Youth and adults alike can also enjoy playing tennis using modified equipment on smaller courts. With smaller courts, shorter racquets, and lower compression balls, players (especially those new to the game) can find early success and have fun learning new techniques. Seniors and players with limited mobility may also benefit from using modified equipment or playing on smaller courts. This is one of the ways tennis can be played and enjoyed for a lifetime.

## TENNIS RACQUETS

Racquets come in a variety of sizes, starting at 19 inches and progressing to 21, 23, 25, and 26 inches before finally reaching the full-sized 27-inch racquet typically used by adults. One recommended way to check if the racquet is the correct size is to hold the racquet at the bottom of the handle and it and make sure it's not touching the ground.

## RED BALLS

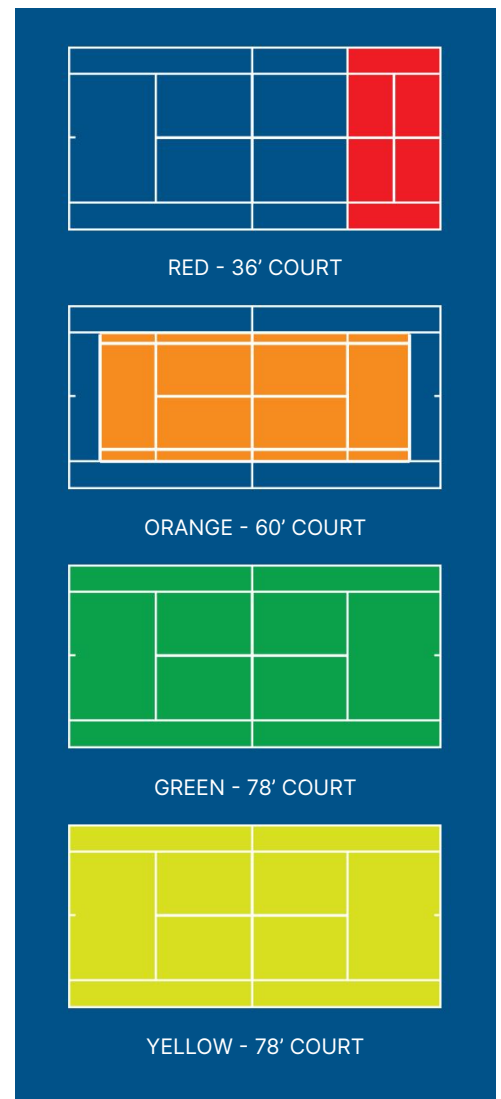
Red Balls can be made of foam or felt, are larger, bounce lower, and travel slower than the traditional Yellow Ball making it easier to learn and acquire skills. Play using Red Balls typically occurs on courts that are 36' long and 18' wide. These courts are short and narrow, making it easier for players to focus on learning the fundamentals.

## ORANGE BALLS

Orange Balls travel through the air a bit faster and farther than the red ball but are the same size and still bounce lower than a Yellow Ball. Play using Orange Balls typically occurs on courts that are 60' by 27'. These courts are slightly smaller than a traditional tennis court and are ideal for players who are developing their athletic, technical, and competitive skills.

## GREEN & YELLOW BALLS

Green Balls are very similar to Yellow Balls but have a slightly lower compression so they rebound lower after a bounce. Play using Green Balls typically occurs on a full-sized court (78' x 36'). At this stage, players can continue improving their tactical and technical skills while adjusting to the full-sized tennis court. Yellow Balls are the traditional tennis ball and play using these balls typically occurs on a full-sized court (78' x 36').



# Tennis Scoring & Gameplay

Tennis is a sport where “love” means zero, and the scoring system is different for games, sets and matches. This may be a bit confusing at first but don’t let the rules be a barrier to learning a lifelong sport. This guide to [Tennis Gameplay](#) breaks down the rules of tennis and the basics of scoring so you can begin playing in no time!

## GAMEPLAY

A tennis match is either played with two players (singles match), or four players (doubles match). Players stand on opposite sides of the net and use a stringed racquet to hit the ball back and forth to each other.

Each player or team has a maximum of one bounce after the ball has been hit by their opponent to return the ball over the net and within the boundaries of the court. In wheelchair tennis, players get a maximum of two bounces. When a player then fails to return the ball into the correct court, the opponent wins a point.

The aim of tennis is to win enough points to win a game, enough games to win a set, and enough sets to win a match.

## SCORING GAMES

Tennis has a different point system than most sports. In order to win the game, a player must win at least four points. The only time this is different is when both players have won three points each and the score is 40-40. This is called deuce.

When the score reaches deuce, one player will need to win at least two points in a row to win the game. When the server wins the deuce point, it is called Ad-In, but when they lose the deuce point, it is called Ad-Out. If the player with the advantage (Ad-In or Ad-Out) wins another point, they win the game, otherwise it goes back to deuce.

Below is a guide to scoring a game:

- 0 points= Love
- 1 point = 15
- 2 points= 30
- 3 points= 40
- Tied score= All
- 40-40 = Deuce
- Server wins deuce point = Ad-In
- Receiver wins deuce point = Ad-Out



# Tennis is for Everyone. Let's Play!

Tennis is a lifetime sport that can be played and enjoyed by people of any age and of every ability. Whether someone is picking up a tennis racquet for the first time or has played the game for years, there are programs and tennis formats suitable for all levels of players. Review these resources to find the best fit for your park agency.

## NEARBY PROGRAMS & COURTS

- **Find Tennis Programs:** Players can search for tennis programs offered in their area. This is a great place to find out what programming options are available in your community.
- **Find Places to Play:** Players can input their location to see nearby tennis courts. Information such as the number of courts, court surface, and type of facility will be included in the listing.
- Find out how you can get your programs and facilities included in these listings at [PlayTennis.USTA.com](https://www.playtennis.org).

## YOUTH TENNIS OPPORTUNITIES

- **USTA Junior Programs:** The USTA offers an array of fun and developmentally-appropriate junior programs that will help kids to unlock the sport's many benefits to their physical, social, and emotional health and wellness.
  - o **Team Challenge:** An introductory environment that allows kids to play without an emphasis on instruction or results.
  - o **Junior Team Tennis:** A more competitive team format that provides kids and teens the opportunity to play singles, doubles and mixed doubles matches.
  - o **Junior Circuit:** These events give kids the opportunity to develop their skills through level-based play while learning and demonstrating good sportsmanship.

## ADULT TENNIS OPPORTUNITIES

- **USTA Leagues:** Organized into three age groups—18 & over, 40 & over and 55 & over—USTA League is the country's largest adult competitive tennis league for players of all skill levels that begins locally and branches out nationally.
- **Social Play:** Many tennis facilities offer a variety of social programming to focus on FUN! A drop-in option allows participants to play for a few hours with multiple partners. Half-day or one-day events are often team based and include all skill levels. Social leagues are typically offered once a week and may include several facilities. Some social leagues or events are held at non-tennis venues using foam balls and light racquets—think breweries, town centers, or other outdoor spots just to name a few.



# USTA COACHING

## Elevate Your Tennis Programming

*Supporting Instructors, Parents, and Administrators at Every Level*

USTA Coaching is a national coach education and support platform designed to help Parks & Recreation departments deliver fun, safe, and sustainable tennis programs for players of all ages. Whether you're hiring seasonal camp staff, supporting part-time instructors, or investing in year-round instructors, USTA Coaching has resources built just for you.

### How USTA Coaching Supports Parks & Rec Agencies



#### • Flexible Education Pathways:

- » Badges for seasonal or part-time staff introducing tennis through camps or clinics  
Badge content includes topics such as: Intro to Coaching, Athlete-Centered Coaching, Inclusive Coaching, Empowering Girls, Equipment, Athletic Development, and Events and Social Play
- » Certifications for full-time instructors delivering year-round tennis programs
- » Coming in 2026: Introducing a dedicated Parks & Rec Badge and a Summer Camp Badge



#### • Professional Development & Recognition:

- » Role-based education that aligns with how and where instructors coach
- » Nationally recognized credentials that support hiring, training, and retention



#### • Discounted Access for Instructors:

- » Discount codes available for memberships for Parks & Rec staff
- » Member discounts on tennis balls, apparel, and equipment from our online store — coming soon



#### • On-Court Tools for Immediate Use:

- » Access to a searchable drill and activity database
- » Direct-to-inbox coaching resources delivered monthly to instructors
- » Planning tools, practice templates, and age-appropriate progressions
- » Insurance coverage including accident and voluntary coverage for our Pro package and liability insurance with unlimited additionally insured facilities at no additional cost (coach, facility, and agency) in our Pro Plus package



#### • Support for Parents & Families:

- » Free access to beginner-friendly resources to help parents introduce tennis to their children
- » Guidance on progressing from play to competition in a supportive way



### Ready to Get Started?

Visit [USTACoaching.com](https://ustacoaching.com) to learn more and explore membership options tailored to fit your staff.

Questions? Need materials or support? Contact us at: [ustacoaching@usta.com](mailto:ustacoaching@usta.com)



[USTACoaching.com](https://ustacoaching.com)

**USTA COACHING**

# MERCER COUNTY TENNIS FACILITY

## Summer League Rules



The Mercer County Park Commission would like to welcome you to the Mercer County Tennis Facility. This year's league has many divisions in men's and women's singles and doubles, mixed doubles, seniors, and juniors. PLEASE play your matches as scheduled, and PLEASE have the courtesy to contact your opponent several days in advance of the scheduled time period. Please make every attempt to play all your matches. Both players on the schedule are responsible for the following:

- Contacting his/her opponent to arrange the scheduled match.
- Making court reservations.
- Providing a new can of USTA-approved tennis balls. (If your group consists of 9 players or teams, you will spin a racket to determine who provides the balls for the match. If you are in a group of 5, you will play each player or team twice. Each player or team will then split the responsibilities of bringing balls.)

### General rules

1. All matches must be scheduled on <https://mercercounty.tennisscores.com> prior to the match being played. If the rule is not followed, the match will be recorded as double default for the players involved
2. The regular court rates as posted at the tennis facility will apply for all league matches. Players should make every effort to respond to phone calls and emails within 24 hours.
3. Any player who defaults and/or no-shows 3 matches during the league season will not be permitted to enter the following year.
4. If a player drops out of the league and is not replaced by a substitute, all players who have not already played their match with this player will be awarded a win by default. Results of matches already played will not be changed.
5. In doubles, you may have a substitute of equal ability finish out your matches if you or your partner has an injury that will not permit you to play the remainder of your doubles matches. All replacements are permanent. You must e-mail [jdement@mercercounty.org](mailto:jdement@mercercounty.org) with the name of your new partner. Results of matches already played will not be changed. A new partner may not participate in the playoffs unless they played at least 3 regular season matches
6. All doubles players MUST be rated within one NTRP point of their partner.

### Schedule

For singles and doubles divisions, the league schedule is eight matches in nine weeks. Matches may be played in any order beginning April 21st and ending June 23rd.

#### Playing Matches

1. All matches are to be played at the Mercer County tennis facility
2. Default time is 10 minutes
3. Warm-up time is 5 minutes.
4. League players with a valid 2025 Season Pass can make reservations for courts three days in advance. League players without a Pass can reserve one day in advance for a Mercer County League Match. Call the tennis center at 609-448-8007 for reservations after 8:00 AM, 7 days a week. Players with valid 2025 Tennis ID cards will have access to online reservations at [www.courtsserve.com](http://www.courtsserve.com)
5. Players make every effort to respond to phone calls and emails within a 24 hour period.
6. In the event of rain or insufficient time, a partial set will be used in determining the winner only if one player has won the first set and is leading the second set by two games. If this condition does not exist the match will be rescheduled with play beginning from the last point play. Both players should write down the score at that time so there are no questions about it when the match resumes. If you reschedule an unfinished match, a tiebreaker is still played to determine the match when the players split sets. Once the match begins, players should be prepared to finish the match beyond their 1 1/2 hour time limit if the court is still available. Please do not book back-to-back matches on a single day unless you have allotted ample time between matches.

7. Players are responsible for entering league results on [www.tennisscores.com](http://www.tennisscores.com). Even if you win by default, you MUST submit the result. Remember if we don't receive a result, both players will receive 0 points.
8. Only players are allowed on the court during the day no coaching during match and no children on the court.
9. Players must wear attire that would allow them to carry two tennis balls on their first serve.
10. This is an outdoor league. If players agree to play on the Mercer County Indoor Courts, then the indoor court rates apply.

### Scoring & Point System

1. All USTA rules are in effect for league matches.
2. In order to complete matches in the designated 1.5-hour time period, the winner will be determined as follows: Best two of three sets, however, if the sets are tied at one all, the third set will be determined by a 12-point tie-break. Example: Set #1 6-3, Set #2 3-6, tie-break 7-2
3. The winner is responsible for entering the result on [tennisscores.com](http://tennisscores.com)
4. Points will be awarded after every match as follows:
  - 3 points:** *Win, Win by default* | 2 points: *Loss by tie-break* | 1 point: *Loss in straight sets*
  - 0 points:** *Default, no-show, or no scorecard for a match: both players receive 0 pts*

### Playoff Tournament

- Draws will be posted on the USTA Serve Tennis site.
- Flex Summer League Playoffs (players schedule matches, time TBD) played over 3 weeks in July

FLEX-PLAYOFF NOTES: *Players* are responsible for finding out their opponent's names and phone numbers on USTA Serve Tennis site by the date indicated. We will email the link once the draws are made. *Players* are responsible for arranging matches and reserving court time. *Players* are also responsible for emailing the results of playoff matches to [jdement@mercercounty.org](mailto:jdement@mercercounty.org). Any match that does not have a result posted on the draw sheet by the deadline above will result in a double default, and neither player will move on to the next round.

1. At the conclusion of the league season, points will be totaled to determine who has qualified.
2. Winners and finalists of each play-off tournament will receive an engraved plaque at the Summer League Awards Day.
3. In all divisions, the top players in each group, according to point totals, will be invited to participate in a single-elimination tournament. All singles players/doubles teams with 19 points will be eligible for the playoffs (tournament play).
4. One player will be seeded for every four players in the tournament according to point totals accumulated during the regular season. The remaining players will be entered into the tournament by draw. Under this new format, there will be no guarantee that you will be separated from other players in your regular-season group for the first round matches, as in the past. In other words, if you are unseeded, you can wind up anywhere in the draw, which will be determined by the computer.
5. Under the flex playoff format, players have the freedom to schedule matches.
6. It is the player's responsibility to find out their opponent's name and contact information. *Players* are responsible for contacting each other, scheduling the match within the allotted time frame, reserving the court, and emailing the result.
7. Draws will be posted on the USTA Serve Tennis site.
8. All players participating in the playoffs are to bring a new can of Babolat, Dunlop, Prince, Penn, Wilson, Diadem, and Yonex balls to their first match. The loser of that match will keep the used balls, and the winner will take the unopened can for the next match.
9. Playoff matches will follow regular-season rules. Two sets with a match tie-break in lieu of a third set.
10. Regular court fees apply.
11. Given the number of tournament matches to be played, we must adhere to the tournament schedule. We appreciate your cooperation in running these tournaments as we conclude the Summer League by the posted date.
12. There will be a special Summer League Awards Day at the end of the season. Awards will be presented to the winners and finalists of all divisions on this day.

If you have any questions about your schedule or the above league rules, please email [jdement@mercercounty.org](mailto:jdement@mercercounty.org)

# USTA Statement Of Guidance - Update

## FACILITIES APPROACH TO TENNIS AND PICKLEBALL

As the national governing body for the sport of tennis in the United States and in concert with court builders and park professionals, the United States Tennis Association (USTA) is putting forth an expanded Statement of Guidance for the development, expansion, and renovation of public facilities and spaces related to tennis and pickleball. This guidance is presented within the context and understanding that – while tennis remains the most popular racquet sport in the United States – tennis and pickleball are currently experiencing significant participation increases throughout the country and demand for both tennis and pickleball courts is expanding exponentially.

### Participation Statistics

- **Tennis:** A total of 23.6 million players in 2022, a 33% increase of 5.9 million players since 2019\*
- **Pickleball:** A total of 8.9 million players in 2022\*\*

This guidance offers the following options:

### OPTION #1: SPORT-SPECIFIC SITES

The ideal solution is the development and/or expansion of sport-specific public sites. Singular-focused sport-specific sites and courts will provide optimum opportunity for use, harmony, and program/revenue generation for each sport that may be unavailable in shared-use scenarios. These facilities should be offered either as one central facility complex or as separate sport-specific developments to best meet the needs of the community. The ultimate goal is to ensure both sports have the infrastructure in place to maintain existing programs and play as well as allow for future growth (Examples 1a & 1b).



Example 1a: Rendering of a sport-specific site with playground incorporated.



Example 1b: Sarah Vande Berg Tennis Center in Zephyrhills, FL

### OPTION #2: NON-TRADITIONAL SPACES

In the event that sport-specific sites are not possible, both tennis and pickleball can be played and enjoyed in non-traditional spaces. Look at all hard surface areas for possible conversion, such as a concrete slab (Example 2a), multi-sport court sites (Example 2b) and/or vacant parking lot locations. When contemplating any type of conversion affiliated with public facility infrastructure, safety must be at the forefront of all considerations. Further, local ordinances should be reviewed to ensure accessing the space for play is allowed.



Example 2a: Pickleball court on a concrete slab.



Example 2b: Pickleball court on a multi-sport site.

\* Tennis number source: The 2022 National Tennis Participation Report available from the Tennis Industry Association (TIA)

\*\* Pickleball number source: Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA)

# USTA Statement Of Guidance - Update

## FACILITIES APPROACH TO TENNIS AND PICKLEBALL

### OPTION #3: SHARED USE OF COURTS

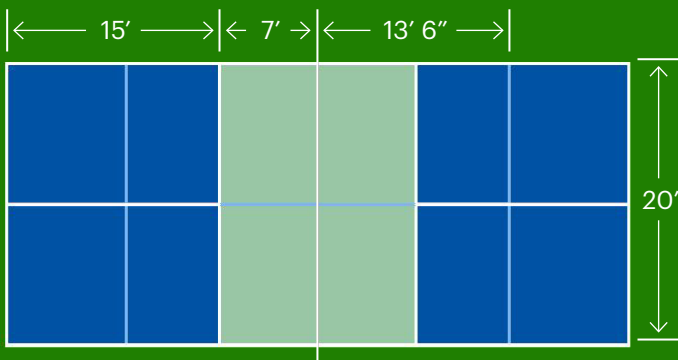
In the event that sport-specific sites and non-traditional spaces are not possible and in the interest of equitable offerings for both tennis and pickleball, shared usage through blended playing lines on existing tennis and pickleball courts is advisable. This recommendation stands for sites with two (2) or fewer tennis courts. For sites with three (3) or more tennis courts, every effort should be made to utilize Option No. 1 or No. 2 due to the sustained growth and increasing public demand for both sports.

#### Recommended guideline when utilizing standalone pickleball courts for tennis play:

- Add blended tennis service box lines to pickleball courts for short court tennis play. (Example 3a)

#### Recommended guidelines when executing blended pickleball lines at sites with two (2) or fewer tennis courts\*\*\*

- Up to two pickleball court blended lines can be added to a 78' tennis court, one on either side of the net. Whenever possible, utilize a shared tennis service line or a tennis baseline with a pickleball blended line.
- All blended pickleball lines shall be textured line paint that is a shade lighter within in the same color family as the playing surface. (Example 3b)
- Blended pickleball lines should terminate three (3) inches from the 78-foot court tennis lines.
- Blended pickleball lines should be 1½ inches wide
- Utilize painters tape to refrain from damaging the acrylic surface when adding temporary playing lines.



**Example 3a: Pickleball court with blended tennis service box lines in light blue for short court tennis play.**



**Example 3b: Blended lines in the same color family as the playing surface.**

**For additional information** or to discuss projects before decisions are made regarding tennis and pickleball expansion and additions, contact the USTA Tennis Venue Services Team for complementary consultative resources at [www.usta.com/facilities](http://www.usta.com/facilities) or email [Facilities@usta.com](mailto:Facilities@usta.com).

\*\*\*See the 2021 American Sports Builder's Association (ASBA) Pickleball Court Construction Manual for guidelines regarding pickleball court dimensions. Industry standards recommend a minimum of eight (8) feet between the pickleball baseline and the permanent fixture. This should be taken into consideration for Option #3 when adding blended pickleball lines to existing tennis court infrastructure.

# Schools & Park Agencies: Prioritizing Partnerships

Tennis is not just a sport; it's a powerful tool to help promote health and wellness in your community and nurture well-rounded individuals. Developing a partnership between park agencies and schools is an excellent way to grow the game of tennis and inspire kids to lead active, healthy lives inside and outside the classroom. Often, a student's first introduction to tennis happens at school. When schools and park agencies work together, they can facilitate a pathway for young athletes to continue playing and staying active.

Explore avenues of collaboration between schools and park agencies to share resources and maximize impact. For example, some schools may have tennis teams but no tennis courts on campus. In these cases, the teams may utilize public park courts for their practices or matches. In other cases, a park agency with tennis instructors on staff may assist a school with PE or after-school programs. Developing strong relationships with community partners is a win-win scenario.

Search for creative ways to expand the number of publicly available courts in your community and see if there are tennis courts at nearby schools. Some schools may have courts that cannot currently be accessed by the public. Consider working with the school to investigate the viability of opening the courts to the public outside of school hours. This is an excellent way to expand the supply of courts available to the residents in your community. Discover how the [SmartAccess Gate System](#) may be able to help.

Many school districts and park agencies have formalized their partnership by approved Joint Use Agreements which allows them priority scheduling of each other's facilities and facilitates joint planning, problem solving, and communication. The school district and park agency may also agree to share court maintenance costs, for example.

To learn more about tennis in schools, visit [USTA.com/Schools](https://www.usta.com/schools).



# Additional Tools & Resources

The USTA, as your partner in play, provides tools and resources to, among other things, help park agencies develop their tennis programs, train their instructors, and maintain their infrastructure. The USTA has various services, programs, digital tools, and educational opportunities to help parks and recreation professionals grow the game in public parks.

This guide highlights several tools and resources that may be especially valuable for park agencies. For more information about any of these topics or to explore additional areas, please visit [USTA.com](https://www.usta.com) and [USTA.com/Parks](https://www.usta.com/Parks).

## TENNIS ESSENTIALS

- [USTA / Parks & Recreation State Associations Directory](#): Not sure who to contact? Access a comprehensive directory of USTA Section and Park & Recreation State Association contact information as well as annual conferences and meeting dates.
- [USTA Statement of Guidance](#): In concert with court builders and park professionals, the USTA developed a Statement of Guidance for the development, expansion, and renovation of public facilities and spaces related to tennis and pickleball.
- [USTA National Advocacy Handbook](#): Refer to this comprehensive guide for tips on advocating for tennis, communicating with local stakeholders, and engaging with decision makers.
- [USTA Grants & Assistance](#): The USTA offers a variety of grants to help grow the game of tennis. Find out how the USTA and USTA Foundation can help with grants, equipment discounts, and more.

## TIPS & TRAINING

- [USTA Resource Library](#): Access resources developed by the USTA and its partners to help you teach and develop players on and off the court.
- [Podcasts for Tennis Players](#): Leading experts, top ranked tennis players, and world-class coaches discuss a variety of tennis topics while sharing personal success stories, advice, and tips.
- [Webinars for Tennis Providers](#): Expert panelists discuss topics including youth athlete development, local advocacy, and how to start a wheelchair tennis program. Take advantage of the opportunity to learn from world-class tennis and industry experts.
- [SafePlay](#): The USTA is committed to promoting safe and respectful environments for athletes to thrive in. SafePlay is the comprehensive athlete safety program consisting of education, screening, reporting tools, and policies for appropriate conduct in tennis. Adults who have regular contact with or authority over a minor athlete in USTA programs, events, or tournaments must be in compliance with SafePlay.



[USTA.COM/PARKS](https://www.usta.com/parks)