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MARCH 2018



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***BECKY CANTELLANO
NAMED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR***

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USTA Northern Named 2017 Section of Year



USTA Northern made history in fulfilling its mission to promote and develop the game of tennis as it was named the 2017 USTA Section of the Year by *Tennis Industry* magazine.

Several new initiatives were introduced in 2017 including the Stars & Trophies 10U Youth Progression Pathway, Team Northern, World Team Tennis, Net Generation, Tennis In Your Parks and a massive overhaul of USTA Northern's presence in the digital space with a new website (www.usta.com/northern) and a more personalized user experience through single sign-on capabilities. These new projects, in addition to continued success and growth with our core programs - USTA Leagues, Junior Tournaments and Section Infrastructure - were featured in the publication's January 2018 issue as part of its 17th Annual "Champions of Tennis" awards which honors people, businesses and organizations dedicated to improving the sport and business of tennis.

"We are honored to be recognized as the 2017 USTA Section of the Year by *Tennis Industry* magazine," USTA Northern president **Liz Hamburg** said. "We might be small in size, but we are mighty in what we are able to do in growing and developing the game of tennis with all people in Minnesota, North and South Dakota and NW Wisconsin."

2017 USTA Northern Highlights

- Over 12,480 players competed in USTA Northern Leagues, a 6.3% increase from last year's record numbers. ONE Doubles saw a 16% increase from 2016. Northern also enjoyed its highest League retention rate in history at 76% and placed over 827 new players on teams in 2017.
- The Tennis In Your Parks adult beginner program expanded from two to eight communities within the Twin Cities and had 279 new players find themselves in the game - up 116% from last year. Northern trained 17 instructors and developed its own curriculum for the program, while branding and marketing the program to new audiences on social media.
- USTA Northern continuing to fortify its junior pathway introducing Stars & Trophies events, World Team Tennis and Team Northern. Specifically for kids ages 7-10, 380 unique players participated in 127 events in 2017 earning virtual stars and trophies in preparation for the junior tournament circuit. Northern boasted 5,500 unique junior tournament players in 2017 and had 12 kids ranked in the Top 100 of the country. The Section also added to its robust junior high-performance menu with the creation of Team Northern featuring 21 of the best 11-14 year olds in the Section.
- Team Tennis was enhanced with the introduction of World Team Tennis to complement Junior Team Tennis. Over 116 teams and 1,179 players took part in the inaugural season of WTT, which allowed beginning and intermediate players ages 12-18 to compete in a low stress environment with their friends. Junior Team Tennis had 111 teams and over 1,200 players participate.
- The Section and USTA National provided over \$115,000 of support to under resourced organizations and individuals. USTA Northern also continued its partnership with Youthprise, raising funds for the Urban Youth Tennis and Education Fund, while the Play It Forward campaign exploded with the Section donating over 500 racquets to underserved high school programs. New for 2017 was Northern's partnership with Twin Cities in Motion in sponsoring a running team at the Twin Cities Marathon, raising over \$10,000 for the Serving Up Love initiative, and the creation of the Tony Stingley Diversity and Inclusion Scholarship. Northern solidified its infrastructure by doing 15 on-court trainings for over 220 tennis deliverers and participated in 10 different diverse festivals, as well as wheelchair and Hispanic school programs.

USTA Northern Hires Becky Cantellano As New Executive Director

She is back! Former USTA Northern Director of Tennis Programs and Services **Becky Cantellano** has been named the Section's new Executive Director replacing **Mike Goldammer**, who resigned in November. In her new position, Cantellano, who starts in mid-March, will ensure USTA Northern is providing tools, training and leadership necessary for volunteers, community leaders and tennis enthusiasts to continue promoting and growing the game of tennis. She will also lead efforts to expand and enhance the organization's programs while increasing and strengthening participation in the game and the volunteer engagement.

"It is an exciting time for tennis in USTA Northern," Section President **Liz Hamburg** said. "We are thrilled Becky is returning to USTA Northern in this important leadership role."

Cantellano brings extensive experience in association management, including strategic planning and community development to USTA Northern. Since January of 2012, she has served as the Executive Director for St. Paul Urban Tennis where she grew the non-profit's offerings nearly three-fold. Some of her major accomplishments while at St. Paul Urban Tennis include:

- Doubling the operating budget from \$250,000 to half a million gross receipts annually.
- Establishing a cash reserve to ensure financial security of the organization and setting up an investment committee to maximize the long-term impact of significant gifts.
- Rebranding the organization with a new logo and messaging to highlight the life skills and leadership development programming.
- Negotiating a management contract with the City of St. Paul to move into and operate the Eastview Recreation Center.
- Organizing financial systems to include approval of an annual operating budget and monthly board reports to ensure sound oversight.
- Adopting a strategic vision and creating an organizational "Theory of Change" to inform decisions and set annual goals.

- Formalizing human resources management and development through annual coach training, employee handbook, performance reviews and payroll systems.
- Strengthening the board of directors through the approval of term limits, creation of a board manual and orientation process, and recruitment of new members.

During her tenure, Cantellano was also selected by former St.

Paul mayor **Chris Coleman** to serve as part of the Sprockets Network Community Advisory Council, a coalition of non-profits to support youth during out-of-school-time hours.

She also was highly engaged with USTA Northern, working as a member of the Community Tennis Association/National Junior Tennis & Learning Committee since 2012, and serving as chair in 2017, and the Diversity and Inclusion Committee from 2012-16. She graduated from the USTA Foundation Capacity Building Program in 2017 and was a USTA Adjunct Faculty and Netspeed Leadership Trainer from 2009-13.

Prior to her work at St. Paul Urban Tennis, Cantellano was an integral member of the USTA Northern team where she oversaw operations and performance of the Adult, Junior and Community Development departments. She also directed the Section's grant making, advocacy and public assistance programs and helped merge the Northern Tennis Foundation and USTA Northern. She was named the Section's ACE Award winner in both 2005 and 2010.

"I'm proud to accept this position and help lead this organization to our next chapter," Cantellano, who has played USTA Junior Team Tennis, junior and adult tournaments and leagues, said. "I am truly excited to continue working with this great staff to promote and grow our game in Northern and beyond. I look forward to continuing to build on the progress that's been made in recent years."

Cantellano graduated from Wisconsin-LaCrosse in 2002, majoring in Spanish and Secondary Education. She attended the Disney Institute for Business Excellence in 2009, and earned a mini MBA in Non-Profit Management in 2015 from the University of St. Thomas. She is a Professional Tennis Registry Professional Level Coach and a USTA Northern On-Court Clinician.

A graduate of Mounds View High School and current resident of St. Paul, Cantellano is married to **Aldo Cantellano** and has two children, **Ela** (8) and **Javier** (6).



New Executive Director Becky Cantellano

Q. How long have you been a part of USTA Northern?

A. I was born and raised in Minnesota and been part of the Northern Section tennis community since I first started playing Junior Team Tennis as a teen. I was part of the section staff for 10 years prior to becoming the Executive Director of St. Paul Urban Tennis (SPUT). While at SPUT, I served on the CTA/NJTL and Diversity & Inclusion Committees.

Q. What is your tennis background? How did you "Find Yourself in the Game?"

A. My dad introduced me to tennis when I was about 12 years old, but it wasn't until I joined my high school team that I truly found myself in the game.

Q. Where did you go to college, major, play college/high school tennis?

A. I'm a proud Mounds View Mustang and went on to play college tennis at UW-Lacrosse where I majored in Secondary Education and Spanish.

Q. What is your professional background?

A. I've been working in the tennis/non-profit industry my entire professional career. I think the combination of tennis industry experience and non-profit leadership will serve me well in this role.

Q. What made you decide to come back to USTA Northern?

A. It was the right opportunity. This is a dream job for me and I am excited about returning to a talented team of passionate staff and volunteers armed with the knowledge of what many of our organization members are challenged with on a day-to-day basis.

Q. What is your favorite part of being involved in tennis in the Northern Section?

A. The people. Tennis has connected me to so many wonderful individuals and opportunities.

Q. What are some of your perceived opportunities and challenges facing the Section?

A. A lack of indoor facilities, deteriorating outdoor courts, competition from other youth activities – not just sports. Tennis connects families and communities – it provides a great opportunity for grandparents, parents and kids to be active together – away from a screen. It's also an international sport that speaks many languages. We need to harness those opportunities! We also need to tap into the energy and creative ideas of millennials to expand our adult tennis offerings.

Q. What are your top tennis memories?

A. There are so many... playing in the Minnesota State High School Tournament, summer at Tennis & Life Camps, Tennis Festival of the



North, first visit to the US Open, meeting **Billie Jean King**, watching **Roger Federer & Rafael Nadal's** epic Wimbledon final on television, the annual St. Paul Urban Tennis Summer Picnic, seeing the smiles that tennis brings to so many kids' faces...especially my own!

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

A. I love the seasons in the north and being outdoors – enjoying our lakes, parks and trails. I love exploring new places and trying new things. My in-laws live in

Miami so we have taken to loading up our minivan each year for a road trip that most people find to be crazy, but has become a fun family tradition. There are also an unlimited number of new places to explore along the route!

Q. What three words describe you best?

A. Passionate, thoughtful, sincere

Q. Favorite food?

A. Tacos

Q. Favorite TV show?

A. This Is Us

Q. Favorite Movie?

A. Love Actually

Q. Favorite Musical Genre or Group?

A. Depends on my mood...**Maná** and **Adele** are go-to favorites

Q. Favorite Place To Visit?

A. "The lake" in Osceola, Wis.

Q. Family? Married, kids, animals?

A. Married to husband, **Aldo** for 12 years with two kids **Ela** (8) and **Javier** (6)

Q. What would be your ultimate job?

A. This one

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

A. An astronaut

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

A. Billie Jean King because of her courage, leadership and authenticity. **Koua Yang**, **Sandy Martin**, **Peg Brenden** and many of the other trailblazers at SPUT. Teachers – both in a formal setting and those who share their knowledge with others informally. My parents and my husband are also everyday heroes in my life.

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

A. Probably take my kids on a fun adventure, maybe a trip to a nearby waterpark or ski hill, followed by a date night with my husband.

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

A. Because it's fun!

President's Message



Looking back on my first year as President of USTA Northern, I see tremendous growth, achievement and change for our organization. We made great strides in fulfilling our mission of promoting and de-

veloping the game of tennis in Minnesota, North and South Dakota and Northwestern Wisconsin for players of all ages and ability levels looking to find themselves in the game.

Several new initiatives were introduced in 2017 including the Stars and Trophies 10U Youth Progression Pathway, Team Northern, World Team Tennis, Net Generation, Tennis In Your Parks and a massive overhaul of our presence in the digital space with a new website (www.usta.com/northern) and a more personalized user experience through single sign-on capabilities. These new projects, in addition to continued success and growth with our core programs – USTA Leagues, Junior Tournaments and Section Infrastructure – led to USTA Northern being named the 2017 USTA Section of the Year by *Tennis Industry* magazine. We might be small in size, but we are mighty in what we can accomplish together, and I would personally like to thank our Board of Directors, USTA Northern staff, volunteers, providers, members and others who make up our tennis “family.” It is because of you, and your commitment to the game, that we received this prestigious honor.

We are currently in a period of organizational change with the departure of three key staff members for new opportunities last fall. With change comes opportunity, and we are excited about what the future holds with the naming of **Becky Cantellano** as our new Executive Director. Becky returns to the Section, where she worked for 10 years before serving as the leader of St. Paul Urban Tennis since 2012. We had a fabulous list of applicants for the position and I would like to thank **Roshan Rajkumar** for his leadership in the selection of our new Executive Director, as well as the other search committee members including **Kathy Lundberg**, **Julie Whitaker**, **Jeff Baill** and **Christine Nickels**.

We are not the only Section experiencing organizational change as three others (Florida, Middle States and Southern California) have either hired or are looking to hire new leaders in the past two months. Section staff structure and the review process for Executive Directors will be a hot topic for Section Presidents and Delegates at the USTA Annual Meeting March 16-19 in Carlsbad, Calif.

Strategic planning will also be discussed in California as national leadership is working on creating a new strategic plan for the USTA. We will also be reviewing and updating our Section's strategic priorities, as this will be the primary focus of our Board retreat at the new indoor tennis facility in Eau Claire, Wis., in May.

Northern will once again take center stage at the awards ceremony during the USTA Annual Meeting as the **Fridinger Family (Tom, Ellen, Steve, Beth, Evan, Caleb and Luke)** will be recognized as the USTA Ralph Westcott Family of the Year and Rajkumar will be honored with the USTA National Volunteer of the Year Award for those serving 10 years or less. The Fridingers will be the sixth Northern family to earn the national award, while Roshan joins Baill, as the second Northern winner in three years of the volunteer honor.

I also would like to take this opportunity to congratulate other Northern members who have been recognized for their outstanding work including: Life Time's **Ajay Pant** who was named the 2017 *Tennis Industry* magazine Person of the Year and received the Professional Tennis Registry (PTR)/Tennis Industry Association (TIA) Commitment to the Industry Award; Nickels and board member **Jessie Daw** on receiving the PTR Pro of the Year Award for their respective states; **Bruce Gullikson** being named the United States Professional Tennis Association (USPTA) Northern Division's Pro of the Year; **Wendy Hastings** (Menomonie, Wis.) on being named to the USTA No-Cut Coaches All-Star Team and **Ruby Rott** (St. Paul, Minn.) on winning the Breaking Barriers Award at the Minnesota celebration of National Girls and Women's In Sport Day.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not take a moment and recognize the USTA Northern staff during the period of transition. **Pat Colbert** has been serving as the interim Executive Director the past three months, in addition to his current role as the Director of Junior Competition. Pat did an amazing job keeping the entire organization moving forward and on task during this time. I also want to thank the USTA Northern staff. It is never easy when you lose one employee, let alone three at the same time, but every person stepped up and covered all the bases necessary in making USTA Northern even stronger on the local, Section and National levels. The Board of Directors and I are both grateful and so proud. We have some truly outstanding people in our Section and that is why we are loud and proud when we say “WE ARE NORTHERN!”

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Liz Hamburg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Liz Hamburg
USTA Northern President

Ajay Pant Receives Person the Year; PTR Award

Life Time National Tennis Director **Ajay Pant** of Chaska, Minn., was named the 2017 "Person of the Year" by *Tennis Industry* magazine in December and then also claimed the Professional Tennis Registry (PTR)/Tennis Industry Association's Commitment to the Industry Award at the PTR International Tennis Symposium on Hilton Head Island, S.C., in February.

Pant, who is based at Life Time's headquarters in Chanhassen, Minn., joined the company last March, overseeing the tennis and racquet sports business at 28 Life Time tennis clubs and 300 coaches across the United States. Prior to joining Life Time, he was Senior Vice President of Operations for the Junior Tennis Champions Center (JTCC), in Maryland and JTCC satellite operations in Florida and Connecticut. He was also the National Tennis Director for Tennis Corporation of America (TCA)/Midtown clubs.

Pant is one of 10 tennis pros who have been designated Master Professional by both the PTR and USPTA. He served on the PTR Board of Directors, and as the two-term Chair for the USTA National 10 and Under Committee. Currently an ambassador for USTA's Net Generation initiative, Pant also serves on USTA's Junior Competition National Committee.



Christine Nickels Honored By PTR

Christine Nickels of St. Louis Park, Minn., was honored in February as the Professional Tennis Registry's Member of the Year for the state of Minnesota presented to a PTR member who has shown dedication and diligence in promoting and supporting tennis and the PTR. Nickels is the Assistant Executive Director and Director of Education and Partnerships at the Fred Wells Tennis & Education Center.

Prior to joining Fred Wells, Nickels was the Director of Community Tennis for USTA Northern, where she oversaw efforts to provide resources and support to community tennis programs, including grants, public facility assistance, organizational development, advocacy, diversity and inclusion, coach education, school tennis and junior teams programming. She came to USTA Northern in 2005, after completing an internship at the Minnesota Women's Golf Association.

A graduate from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse with a degree in Exercise and Sports Science, Nickels was a member of the women's tennis team. In 2014, she completed the Mini-MBA for Nonprofits course offered through University of St. Thomas Executive Education and volunteers her time with several local non-profits including the Minnesota Coalition of Women in Athletic Leadership, Sports Alliance of Minnesota, Positive Coaching Alliance and Hammer.



Jessie Daw Named South Dakota PTR Member Of The Year

USTA Northern Board member **Jessie Daw**, of Sioux Falls, S.D., was named the Professional Tennis Registry Member of the Year for South Dakota. A PTR professional since 2012, Daw is certified in two PTR education pathways: 10 & Under and 11 to 17.

Daw is a tireless volunteer for tennis and her community as she serves on the USTA Northern Board and is chair of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee. She is also on the board of the Sioux Falls Tennis Association, serving as the USTA Liaison, as well as on the Junior Leagues and Grants/Fundraising Committees.

Her commitment to diversity and inclusion was demonstrated last year when Daw organized a Girls & Tennis Clinic, an event that introduced more than 30 girls to the many ways they could get involved in tennis and enjoy the game. As the former Executive Director of the Huether Family Match Pointe in Sioux Falls, Daw hosted PTR's only workshop in South Dakota, to ensure others had the opportunity to become certified teaching professionals.



Bruce Gullikson, Dan Shannon, Scott Sundstrom honored by USPTA

Congratulations to **Bruce Gullikson** (Burnsville, Minn.) of Life Time Fitness Bloomington South, who was named the United States Professional Tennis Association Northern Division Pro of the Year in January. The award recognizes the professional who helps promote tennis and educate the members. Gullikson has helped bring in tennis royalty such as **Magnus Norman, Craig O'Shannessy, David Bailey, Brian Boland** and **Allistair McCaw**, among others, to the Section in the past.



The USPTA Northern Division also honored **Dan Shannon** (Eden Prairie, Minn.) with the Lessons for Life Award, and **Scott Sundstrom** (Mounds View, Minn.) with the Under-30 Award.

Why Net Generation? Did We Mention It Is FREE?



Felicia Raschiatore has been in the tennis business a long time – first as a former top-100 player in the world and now as a 32-year teaching professional at Williston Tennis Center in Minnetonka, Minn. Having seen all the efforts looking to increase youth engagement in tennis over the years, Raschiatore thinks she has finally found the ace the industry has been seeking – Net Generation.

Net Generation is the USTA's groundbreaking initiative welcoming a new generation of players into the next era of tennis. By offering full support of coaches, schools and parents, the USTA is looking to break new ground on and off the court with youngsters ages 5-18 by focusing on empowerment, unity and play. Through a comprehensive program of adaptable curricula, teaching and learning tools, promotional and communications materials and player and provider incentives, Net Generation aims to capture the imagination of kids of all ages, backgrounds and skill levels.

"The USTA has spent an enormous amount of time researching and talking to established and successful tennis professionals in compiling a comprehensive, all-encompassing program for anyone to promote and grow the game of tennis," Raschiatore, who is one of USTA Northern's three Net Generation Ambassadors, said. "Net Generation is fantastic as it is easy to understand and turn-key because the USTA did all the work for us!"

So what makes Net Generation different from past USTA initiatives? A few of Raschiatore's favorite features include mandatory background checks, the Net Generation provider directory and marketing generator, the partnership program between tennis providers and schools and the mobile coaching app.

"Did I mention, it is all FREE," Raschiatore said with a smile.

For the first time in history, all providers must submit to a FREE national background check and complete a SafeSport education course developed in conjunction with the United States Olympic Committee before becoming an approved provider.

"The safety of our kids is so important, especially in this day and age after seeing what has happened in other youth sports," Raschiatore said. "It is definitely a positive selling point for both parents and employers."

Another great feature of Net Generation is all approved programs and coaches are listed on a national Net Generation directory located at www.netgeneration.com. This allows parents with children that want to play tennis and looking for programming to go to one central location to find the program that works best for them in their community, while coaches and providers have a new outlet to promote and grow their business for FREE.

All approved providers also have access to FREE marketing and promotional materials through the Net Generation Marketing Generator. Now tennis deliverers can produce consistent, customized and professional marketing materials with a recognizable brand

Net Generation on the 9s

Having trouble or want to learn more about Net Generation? We know everyone is busy so plan ahead and join USTA Northern for "Net Generation on the 9s" as we are dedicating the 9th of every month to getting all of our providers registered in Net Generation! Take advantage of all the awesome benefits being a part of Net Generation provides include the curriculum, the mobile app and FREE equipment!!! Contact the USTA Northern office for help at (952) 887-5001 or at info@northern.usta.com.

identity to current and future customers with flyers, posters, post cards, lawn signs and more.

Net Generation also encourages partnerships between community programs and local schools. Schools receive FREE equipment while introducing more kids to the joys of tennis, providing a win-win for everyone.

But perhaps the greatest asset of Net Generation according to Raschiatore is the new curriculum and FREE mobile coaching app which includes lesson plans, videos, competencies and assessments for red, orange and green ball levels right at one's fingertips.

"Coaches do not have to create lesson plans anymore as they are already done for them from the warm-up, to athletic and tennis skills, to corresponding games and finally take-home exercises," Raschiatore said. "It is easy to learn and the kids really love it."

Raschiatore says the curriculum also creates a consistent level of instruction and advancement to the next level, especially when you have kids taking multiple classes with different coaches.

"With 20 instructors using the app and following the curriculum, we all are doing the same thing from both a teaching and evaluation standpoint. And for those on my staff who are not comfortable using a mobile device on court, the USTA provides the same information in a paper format which is super convenient."

Another great thing about the app and the new curriculum for Raschiatore and her coaches is that they can modify it as needed depending on age and ability level.

"We love that we can adjust the existing curriculum depending on level of play or time frame allotted per class. That is one of the great things about Net Generation as the USTA has emphasized to use the resources however works best for your existing programs and don't be afraid to add your own personal touches to it. Right now, all of our players ages 4 to 12 are on the Net Generation curriculum, and we cannot wait for the yellow ball curriculum coming soon."

To become part of the changing face of youth tennis and to receive all of these great FREE incentives, visit www.netgeneration.com.

LET'S SHAPE THE FUTURE OF TENNIS



Net Generation, powered by the USTA, makes it easier and more fun to get kids and teens into tennis. We provide the tools, world-class curricula, marketing materials and training to empower coaches, teachers, parents, volunteers, NJTL networks and community organizations to grow the game.

The next generation of tennis starts now!

Here's what we're serving up:

- Comprehensive print and digital curricula
- Equipment starter kits and/or welcome packs (depending on provider)
- Free online and in-person training
- Marketing campaigns promoting your program
- Free registration with helpful digital tools including a Program Management Center, educational support, and the Net Generation Coaching App

Join The Net Generation today:
NETGENERATION.COM



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Congratulations Winter Level Three Champions

Congratulations to all of the winners and finalists of the USTA Northern Level 3 Junior Sectionals held at Baseline Tennis Center, Life Time Lakeville, Life Time White Bear and Life Time Eden Prairie.



Nisal Liyange, Ryne Reger, Sujit Cherpuri, Bjorn Swenson

SINGLES

Girls 18s – Sophia Reddy (Eden Prairie, Minn.) def. **Nicole Copeland** (Edina, Minn.) 6-4, 7-5

Girls 16s – Aili Hietala (Duluth, Minn.) def. **Nore Ann Heinitz** (Duluth, Minn.) 7-5, 6-3

Girls 14s – Vunnisa Vu (Maplewood, Minn.) def. **Karin Young** (Apple Valley, Minn.)

2-6, 6-2, 6-4

Girls 12s – Amanda Diao (Blaine, Minn.) def. **Annika Munson** (Stillwater, Minn.) 6-0, 6-0

Boys 18s – Sebastian Vile (Rochester, Minn.) def. **Hunter Heck** (St. Paul, Minn.) 6-7 (0), 6-1, 6-2

Boys 16s – Bjorn Swenson (North Oaks, Minn.) def. **Nisal Liyanage** (Eagan, Minn.) 6-2, 6-3

Boys 14s – Oskar Jansson (Minneapolis, Minn.) def. **Riley Eddins** (Minneapolis, Minn.) 6-3, 4-6, 6-1

Boys 12s – Max Exsted (Shakopee, Minn.) def. **Emmanuel Alex** (Arden Hills, Minn.) 6-1, 6-4

DOUBLES

Girls 18s – Andrea Jansson (Minneapolis, Minn.)/**Maddie Suk** (Minnetonka, Minn.) def. Copeland/**Ellie Puzak** (Minneapolis, Minn.) 6-3

Girls 16s – Delaney Schurhamer (Woodbury, Minn.)/**Nicole Snezhko** (Minneapolis, Minn.) def. Heinitz/Hietala 6-3

Girls 14s – Nicole Ridenour (Minneapolis, Minn.)/**Paige Sargent** (Rochester, Minn.) def. **Zoe Adkins** (Maple Grove, Minn.)/**Annika Elvestrom** (Wayzata, Minn.) 6-2

Girls 12s – Diao/Munson def. **Karina Elvestrom** (Wayzata, Minn.)/**Emmeline Wang** (Hamel, Minn.) 6-0

Boys 18s – Heck/Vile def. **Jack Barker** (Minneapolis, Minn.)/**Ben Wheaton** (Minnetonka, Minn.) 6-1

Boys 16s – Liyanage/Ryne Reger (Edina, Minn.) def. **Sujit Cherpuri** (Minneapolis, Minn.)/**Swenson** 6-2

Boys 14s – Tygen Goldammer (Rosemount, Minn.)/**Jansson** def. **Allen Gong** (Eagan, Minn.)/**Nolan Ranger** (Edina, Minn.) 6-2

Boys 12s – Alex/Exsted def. **Tej Bhagra** (Rochester, Minn.)/**Ashton Adesoro** (St. Paul, Minn.) 6-0

Max Exsted Wins National Level 3 In Sioux Falls

Congratulations to **Max Exsted** (Savage, Minn.) on winning the 12s doubles title and earning singles finalist honors at the USTA National Level 3 Tournament played at Huether Family Match Pointe in Sioux Falls, S.D.

Exsted and his partner **Astro**

Philipovic (New York,

N.Y.) won three matches before taking out fellow Northern players **Emmanuel Alex** (Arden Hills, Minn.) and **Nolan Ranger** (Edina, Minn.) 6-0 in the championship.

In the singles final, Philipovic and Exsted were on opposite sides of the net with the New Yorker edging Exsted 6-3, 3-6, 10-8. Alex and Ranger faced off in the Boys 12s third-place match with Alex winning 6-3, 7-5.

In Boys 14s, **Sujit Cherpuri** (Minneapolis, Minn.) lost in the finals to **Ellis Short** (Boca Raton, Fla.) 7-6 (10), 6-1, while **Bjorn Swenson** (North Oaks, Minn.) took home third place honors with a 6-1, 6-2 win over **Noah Hernandez** (Hinsdale, Ill.). Cherpuri and Swenson also advanced to the doubles finals, falling to **Daniel Schaffer** (Boca Raton, Fla) and Short 7-5.

The event marked the first time that Huether Family Match Pointe played host to a National event of this magnitude. In 2017, Huether Family Match Pointe was one of 12 venues nationwide named a USTA National Outstanding Facility winner.

Many Scholarships Available For Junior Players; Apply Today

USTA Northern has a number of scholarships available to junior players. For more information, please contact **Sandy Smith** at ssmith@northern.usta.com or at (952) 358-3288.

- **USTA Northern Tennis Camp Scholarships** – Awarded to a male or female player age 13 or younger that demonstrates both a financial need and commitment to tennis. Player must receive an endorsement from his/her tennis coach in order to be eligible. Recipient receives a scholarship to attend a camp located within USTA Northern. To apply, visit <http://bit.ly/2F2LgK1>.
- **USTA Northern Entry-Level Tournament Scholarships Award** – USTA Northern offers scholarships for youth ages 10-14 who reside within the USTA Northern Section and have a financial



Max Exsted, Astro Philipovic, Nolan Ranger, Emmanuel Alex

hardship that prevents them from playing in USTA Junior Tournaments. Scholarship funds can be used for either Level 7 or Level 8 tournaments. Please note that youth playing high school tennis are not eligible to apply due to MSHSL bylaws. The Scholarship covers the entire cost of the tournament entry fee and will be paid directly to the tournament director. Among items to be considered include financial need and sportsmanship both on and off the court. Contact **Sandy Smith** directly for more information.

- **USTA Northern Junior Tennis Scholarships** – Juniors ages 10-17 who have a financial hardship are eligible to apply for a USTA Northern Junior Tennis Scholarship. This application form works for the Tony Stingley Diverse Player Scholarship, the Serving Up Love Junior Tennis Scholarship and the new Serving Up Love College Scholarship. To apply, visit <http://bit.ly/2FeKSvc>.

Wendy Hastings Named USTA No-Cut Coach

Head girls tennis coach **Wendy Hastings** of Menomonie High School in Menomonie, Wis., has been selected as a member of the USTA National No-Cut Coach All-Star Team which recognizes exceptional high school coaches who implement an inclusive “no-cut” policy for their high school tennis team.

For the past 34 years, Hastings has served as the coach of the varsity girls team at Menomonie High School. Each year, she has

35-45 girls on the team and has coached thousands of girls and boys in her career. Additionally, Hastings developed the town's middle school program, featuring more than 50 boys and girls on the team.

“By providing more students the opportunity to play and represent their high school, No-Cut Coaches provide their players with a lasting impression of inclusion and what it truly means to be part of a team,” said **Elliott Pettit**, Director, USTA School Tennis. “We are proud to honor their contributions as these coaches play such a critical role in their players’ high school experience and in turn, in the future health of our sport.”

Since 2006, more than 4,000 tennis coaches nationwide have made a commitment to offering a no-cut policy, with some programs including more than 100 team members on a high school team. The coaches of these teams make a difference by spending the extra time and effort to ensure that players experience the fun and fulfillment of playing tennis and participating in a school sport.





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The Space Between: Developing Better Routines Between Points



In art there is a term called negative space which refers to the empty area that is contained around or between the subjects of an image. There are even some instances where the negative space itself can form a unique picture such as in the optical illusion of Rubin's vase. While pondering this concept, I realized that negative space is also readily apparent on the tennis court, especially between points.

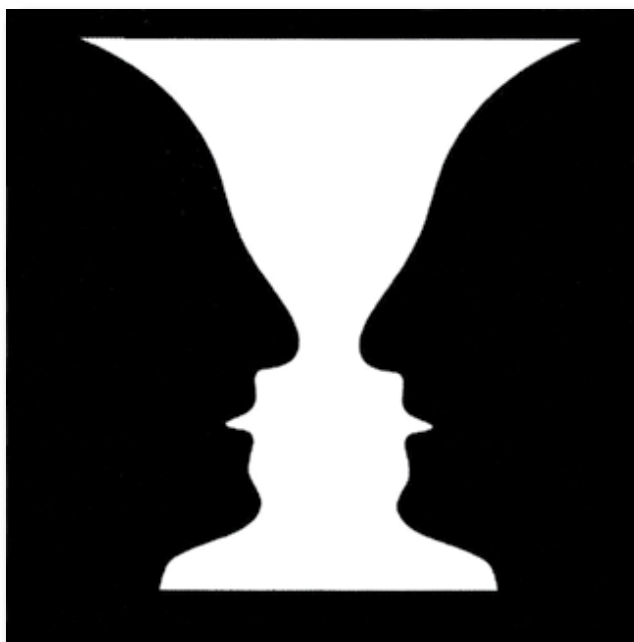
So much of our time and energy as players and coaches is spent focusing on technical strokes or tactical point construction that is easy to disregard the time between points. The reality is in a competitive match, an overwhelming amount of the time is spent emotionally reacting to the previous point and waiting for the next point to start. Therefore, if most of our time is spent in limbo, then it is critical that coaches properly teach our students to develop sound routines between points and strategies to help manage their emotions, maintain concentration and properly prepare them to play the next point.

Green Light Routine

In order to make sense of this open space and best prepare our players for the emotional challenges that arise in competition, **Dr. Larry Lauer** from USTA Player Development helped to devise two different types of between-point rituals: Green and Yellow Light Routines. The Green Light Routine means "go," and should be employed on every point when you are confident and things are moving smoothly.

This Green Light Routine has four stages: respond, recover, refocus and ready. The respond stage refers to the emotional reaction of the player immediately following the completion of a point. The player should exhibit either a positive or neutral emotion, and limit the time that is spent in negative reflection. Turning away from your opponent, focusing your eyes on your strings and quickly moving towards a predetermined spot on court all help to promote a positive response.

The recover stage addresses the physical need of the player as they quickly need oxygen and to lower their heart rate. This is best achieved by utilizing deep breathing techniques in through the nose



for three seconds and out through the mouth for five seconds.

Next is the refocus stage, which requires leaving the previous point in the past and planning for the following rally to be played. Visualizing a solid pattern of play is a great way to achieve this goal.

Last, the ready stage is where you are fully prepared to engage in the upcoming point. Having an ignition word to help you activate can be useful here ("energy," "attack," etc.), as will having a little bounce in your step prior to the start of the point.

Yellow Light Routine

The Yellow Light Routine indicates "caution" and should be utilized when things are not quite going your way. You might be down in the set, your

shots might be off or you could just be struggling with your emotions. Instead of rushing to play the next point, here it is crucial to slow down and take a little extra time. One helpful tool that Dr. Lauer suggests is to "breathe and believe." By engaging in one deep belly breath, as described above, and visualizing the proper execution of an appropriate pattern of play, you will significantly increase your chances of success on the following point.

Developing a mastery of Green and Yellow Light Routines takes time, as does the development of self-awareness to recognize when to utilize each routine. However with patience and deliberate practice, these routines will become more naturally engrained in a player's behavior patterns. By focusing on what occurs in the space between points you will develop a more resilient, confident and poised player who is well equipped for the rigors of tennis competition.

About the author:

Danny Kantar is based in Minneapolis, Minn., and is the co-owner of Colossal Tennis. He is a past winner of the Northern Section's Ward C. Burton Junior Development Award, USTA High Performance Specialist in Player Development, USPTA Elite Professional, Northern Section Team USA and EDC coach, and head coach of the 14 and Under Northern Section Zonal Team. Danny welcomes questions and comments at Danny@colossaltennis.com.

Why Kids Should Participate In Team Tennis?

By letsplay.com

BUILDS CONFIDENCE

When playing a sport, children have the opportunity to show their skills, gain greater self-awareness, and enjoy an activity that they love the most.

PROVIDES CONSTANT EXERCISE

Most kids have too much screen time and not enough hands-on activity. Team sports commit your child to regular exercise, which helps boost immunity and contributes to overall physical health.

DEVELOPS RELATIONSHIPS

Children build friendships with other children and their coaches, which is a great way for your child to expand their social skills and understand expectations.

CONTRIBUTES TO STRONGER ACADEMICS

Children who play team sports are more apt to stronger academic achievement. Through sports, kids learn the importance of time management and discipline.

HELPS PUT WINNING INTO PERSPECTIVE

This can be a real sore subject for some kids. Participating in team sports gives kids the opportunity to gain an understanding of both winning and losing, as well as recognize the value of every teammate's abilities in contributing toward a shared goal.

TEACHES RESPECT

In team sports, children learn to respect other authoritative figures, such as coaches, referees and umpires, as well as their peers.

ENCOURAGES FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Your child is not the only one who will benefit from participation in team sports. Moms, dads and siblings can practice skills, attend games and cheer each other on, providing a bonding opportunity for the whole family.

WHEN YOUR KIDS TAKE PART IN TEAM SPORTS THEY DEVELOP:



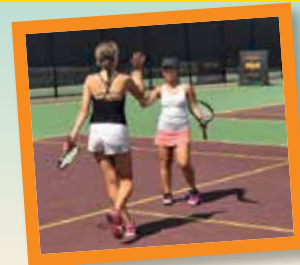
Friendship and camaraderie
Cooperation and teamwork skills
Social interaction skills
Team goal-setting skills



Respect for teammates/
opponents/officials
A sense of belonging/
team membership
Physical skills
Self-esteem and self-concept



Leadership skills
Appreciation of different abilities
Self-discipline, patience and
persistence
Resiliency through positive and
negative experiences.



QUESTIONS?

Contact Brandon Jackson at
Jackson@northern.usta.com or at (952) 358-3291.



Member Appreciation Days With The Gophers



Come enjoy FREE tennis, food, drink and prizes as part of USTA Northern Member Appreciation Days with the Gopher tennis teams.

The Gopher women host the first event as they play Big Ten rival Rutgers March 18 at the Baseline Tennis Center. Participants can register for one of two Cardio Tennis sessions at 9:30 or 10:15 a.m., followed by lunch and the match beginning at 11 a.m. It will be a sneak preview as Minnesota plays host to the Big Ten Women's Championships April 26-29 at the Baseline Tennis Center.

The men's event is Sunday, April 15 versus Michigan with Cardio Tennis sessions at 10:30 and 11:15 a.m., followed by lunch and the matches with first serve at 12 noon. This match will most likely be played outdoors so dress accordingly.

Please RSVP to **Sandy Smith** at ssmith@northern.usta.com or at (952) 358-3288 for either event. Please indicate your NTRP level or if you are a beginner, intermediate or advanced player.



2018 USTA Northern Yearbook Available

Celebrate the individuals and organizations who were instrumental in USTA Northern being named the 2017 Section of the Year by downloading the 2018 USTA Northern yearbook. Visit <http://bit.ly/2EolYVn> and print your version today.

Ruby Rott Wins Breaking Barriers Award

Ruby Rott (St. Paul, Minn.), was awarded the Breaking Barriers Award during the 32nd Annual Minnesota National Girls and Women in Sports Day Celebration at the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul, Minn.

For the first 50-plus years of her life, Rott experienced sport vicariously through her daughter who excelled in multiple sports during college. Knowing she should become more active, Rott picked up the sport of tennis at 55 and has become one of the most inspiring Senior Games players



in Minnesota. Rott has qualified for the National Senior Games every year since 1995 and was named a Personal Best Athlete by the National Senior Games at age 80 after winning a national medal despite two recent knee replacement surgeries. She continues to play tennis in multiple St. Paul leagues and inspires people of all ages to enjoy the benefits of an active lifestyle.

Org Member Discount T-Shirt Program Back

Organizational Members... the popular discount t-shirt program is back in 2018. T-shirts are only \$6. Orders must be completed online during the following windows:

- April 23-May 4 (ship May 21)
- May 21-June 1 (ship June 18)

To order online, please visit www.signatureconcepts.com/ustanorrgts. For more information, contact **Sandy Smith** at ssmith@northern.usta.com.



BLAST After-School Tennis Program Thriving In Bismarck



Last spring, Bismarck (N.D.) Park and Recreation was looking for new activities to offer as part of its Bismarck's Life After-School Time (BLAST) initiative – an after-school recreation-based program that takes place at selected elementary school sites in the city where participants enjoy games and activities with their peers and leaders in a safe and supervised environment.

With the help of a grant from USTA Northern, **Katrina Hanenberg** – who is a Facility Specialist at Capital Racquet and Fitness – spent a full week at five different BLAST sites introducing tennis to the 400+ kids and leaders in the program. Starting with fun-based tennis games, Hanenberg soon added nets and caution tape to create a tennis haven that students and leaders could enjoy year-round. The program has since taken off, expanding into five additional elementary schools in February with plans to have tennis at all 19 BLAST sites by the end of the summer. Capital Racquet and Fitness is also serving as a Net Generation community partner with each school, enabling them to receive a free equipment package that includes racquets, balls, caution tape and curriculum to further grow the program.

"The kids and leaders are loving it," Hanenberg said. "It is something new and gives the kids a chance to be active in an organized setting. We have had many parents call us at Capital Racquet and Fitness asking how they can get their kids into additional tennis programming so it must be working!"

In Memoriam

USTA Northern Mourns The Death of Hall of Famer Pat Lamb



USTA Northern Hall of Famer **Pat Lamb** passed away on January 28, 2018, after a long battle with cancer. She was 83.

Lamb spent her life in service to women's athletics, particularly at Carleton College in Northfield, Minn. Lamb is recognized as an early champion for women's physical education and was an influential leader in the develop-

ment of increased sport opportunities for women at the state, regional and national levels.

Lamb came to Carleton in 1962 as a physical education instructor, and became Carleton's first athletic director for women in 1970, a position she held for 15 years. During that time, she supervised the development of 12 varsity athletic programs, coaching many of them herself. Because of her advocacy, Carleton became an early model for providing wide-ranging physical education instruction, classes and resources for women.

Lamb's enthusiasm, presence and love of sport and teaching were infectious and made lasting impressions on her student-athletes. She served in many leadership positions in state and national organizations, including the USTA, the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women, the National Association for Girls and Women in Sport, and the NCAA. Her many honors include being named the NCAA Division III Tennis Coach of the Year, induction into the Minnesota Tennis Hall of Fame, and receiving the University of Minnesota's Eloise M. Jaeger Physical Education Award.

Lamb retired from Carleton in 1994 as Professor Emerita of physical education, athletics and recreation (PEAR). She was inducted into the 'C' Club Hall of Fame in 1993 and received the college's Exceptional Service Award during Reunion in 2016. After retirement, Lamb continued to support women's athletics in myriad ways, including the Pat Lamb award which is given annually to two outstanding Carleton senior female athletes and scholars.

Tennis legend **Billie Jean King** tweeted this about Lamb after her death.

"Coach Pat Lamb of @CarletonCollege always gave 100% of herself to everything she did. She was a pioneer and a gamechanger for women's athletics, an exemplary coach and a loyal friend. We will miss her. #WomenWhoLead

A celebration of Lamb's life will be held at the Carleton Chapel during Reunion on Friday, June 15, at 10:00 a.m. Gifts in Lamb's memory may be sent to the Pat Lamb Endowed Tennis Fund through the Carleton College Development Office, One North College Street, Northfield, MN 55057, 507-222-4200.

Long-Time Official Peter Meyerhoff Dies

Long-time USTA Northern official **H. Peter Meyerhoff** died peacefully on February 6, at age 92. His life embodied the American immigrant and refugee experience, having arrived in the United States from Germany as a teenager during World War II. He graduated from high school, and then joined the army where he was made a citizen.



When he returned, he obtained a college degree and enjoyed a long career as a mechanical engineer, during which he earned several laser gyroscope patents for Honeywell. Pete and his wife **Rose** moved to Minnesota in 1959 and raised three children.

When **Dr. Martin Luther King** was assassinated, it inspired them to do something to improve black Americans' status, so they created the Buy Black campaign which encouraged people to patronize black-owned businesses by publishing a list of such businesses in the Minneapolis area. Their mission quickly expanded to include other minorities on a national level, and 50 years later continues as Diversified Information Resources.

Meyerhoff did volunteer work throughout his adult life including teaching, coaching and refereeing tennis, organizing fundraising auctions, becoming an EMT, tutoring math, helping other immigrants get jobs and learn to drive and delighting children around the world with balloon animals.

A memorial service will be held in the future. Memorial contributions can be made to the National Ataxia Foundation in Minneapolis or to Diversified Information Resources.

Snapshots



While on a winter training trip to Australia, the University of Minnesota men's tennis team practiced on the grounds of the Australian Open. While there, former USTA Northern player Jackson Allen and freshman Vlad Lobak took photos with Rafael Nadal.



USTA Northern's Director of Junior Teams Brandon Jackson poses with US Open Finalist Madison Keys after singing the National Anthem before the Florida/Florida State College Match Day tilt at the USTA National Campus in Orlando, Fla.



Members of the USTA Northern staff got into the spirit by visiting Super Bowl Live on the Nicollet Mall in downtown Minneapolis during Super Bowl week.

Adult Update



3.0 Men - Ray Matthews, Sai Tong (Twin Cities)



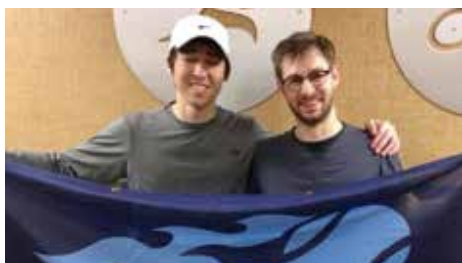
3.0 Women - Melonie Sebring, Jenny Kor, Amy Loveless and Tasha Flikeid (Twin Cities)



3.5 Men - Paul Bonnie, Nathan Moseley (Twin Cities)



3.5 Women - Nicole Multhauf, Michele Seeman, Ann Hayes, Jenna Southard (Eau Claire)



4.0 Men - Paul Jilek, Alex Chin, Matt Seiler (Twin Cities)



4.0 Women - Stephanie Barton, Cindy Pfingston (Rapid City)



4.5 Men - Oliver Summers, Adam Gustad, David Youngs (Fargo)



4.5 Women - Kristine Paul, Leslie Gale, Astrid Perez (Twin Cities)

Congratulations Section ONE Doubles Champions

Congratulations to the following teams who claimed titles at the USTA Northern Section Championships at Life Time Fitness Bloomington South.

3.0 Women – Melonie Sebring, Jenny Kor, Amy Loveless, Tasha Flikeid (Twin Cities)

3.0 Men – Ray Matthews, Sai Tong (Twin Cities)

3.5 Women – Nicole Multhauf, Michele Seeman, Ann Hayes, Jenna Southard (Eau Claire)

3.5 Men – Paul Bonnie, Nathan Moseley (Twin Cities)

4.0 Women – Stephanie Barton, Cindy Pfingston (Rapid City)

4.0 Men – Paul Jilek, Alex Chin, Matt Seiler (Twin Cities)

4.5 Women – Kristine Paul, Leslie Gale, Astrid Perez (Twin Cities)

4.5 Men – Oliver Summers, Adam Gustad, David Youngs (Fargo)

Winners at the 3.5, 4.0 and 4.5 levels will represent Northern at the Tri-Level National Championships in Palm Spring, Calif., during the BNP Paribas Open in mid-March. **Kyle Syverson** and **Kris Paul** will serve as captains of the team.

Northern Tournament Players Receive Golden Tickets To Nationals

Congratulations to the following players who received "Golden

Tickets" to compete in the inaugural NTRP National Championships. The 18 & Over Championships are April 6-8, at the Surprise Tennis & Racquet Complex in Surprise, Ariz., and the 50 & Over Championships are April 20-22 at Academia Sanchez-Casall Florida in Naples, Fla.

SINGLES

18 3.5 Men – Paul Kotz (St. Paul, Minn.)

18 4.0 Men – Chad LaTour (Edina, Minn.)

18 4.5 Men – Dylan Sperry (Scandia, Minn.)

18 4.0 Women – Mia Robillos (Minneapolis, Minn.)

18 4.5 Women – Kaitlyn Dennis (Minneapolis, Minn.)

50 3.5 Men – Michael Streater (Sunfish Lake, Minn.)

50 4.0 Men – Tim Theisen (Maple Grove, Minn.)

50 3.5 Women – Lisa Bennett (Rapid City, S.D.)

50 4.0 Women – Virginia Kuberski (St. Paul, Minn.)



DOUBLES

18 3.5 Men – Derek Fermstad (Burnsville, Minn.)/**Lucas Tesh** (Lakeville, Minn.)

18 4.0 Men – Derek Beiningen (Mound, Minn.)/**Andrew McIntyre** (St. Paul, Minn.)

18 3.5 Women – Jeanne Wagner (Rapid City, S.D.)/**Carolyn Biven** (Rapid City, S.D.)

18 4.0 Women – Yuliya Grassby (Rapid City, S.D.)/**Tsede Parkin** (Rapid City, S.D.)

50 4.0 Men – Aaron Rosenbery (Lakeville, Minn.)/**Matt Bartell** (Waconia, Minn.)

Sioux Falls and Rochester To Host League Section Qualifiers

New for 2018 and open to teams outside the Twin Cities are two USTA League Section Qualifiers in Sioux Falls and Rochester. Cost is \$250 per team and the deadline to register is March 18. For more information, or to register, please contact **Nancy Lundberg** at lundberg@northern.usta.com or (952) 358-3286.

18 & Over 3.5 Women's Section Qualifying Tournament

April 27-28, 2018, Sioux Falls, S.D., Huether Family Match Pointe

Requirements:

- Teams must have 8-12 players
- Team match format is two singles and three doubles
- Best of three sets, with a 10-point match tiebreaker in lieu of a third set
- Three team matches guaranteed

Winner qualifies for Sectionals August 10-12 in Minneapolis. Nationals are October 12-14, 2018, at the USTA National Campus in Orlando, Fla.

40 & Over Section Qualifying Tournament

April 20-22, 2018, Rochester, Minn.

Requirements:

- Teams must have 8-12 players
- Team match format is two singles and three doubles
- Best of three sets, with a 10-point match tiebreaker in lieu of a third set
- Three team matches guaranteed
- Play offered at the 3.0, 3.5 and 4.0 levels
- All events will be held if two or more teams register

Winners qualify for Sectionals August 24-26 in Minneapolis. Nationals are either the third or fourth weekend in October at various locations.

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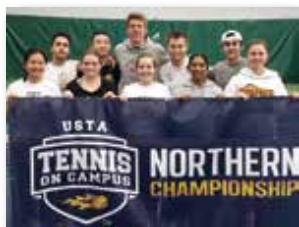
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Tennis On Campus

Minnesota Wins 15th Straight Tennis On Campus Title

Ski-u-mah! The **University of Minnesota** kept its streak as the only school to ever win a title in tact at 2018 USTA Northern Tennis On Campus Section Championships March 3-4 at Life Time Fitness Lakeville.

In the finals, Minnesota defeated **Carleton College** 28-12 for its 15th consecutive championship. Carleton jumped out to an early lead, winning women's doubles 6-4, but Minnesota came back with a vengeance, winning the men's doubles 6-0, giving the Gophers a 10-6 lead. Minnesota then lost only six total games in the final three matches in securing the title. Members of the winning Minnesota team included **Meera Damodaran, Sabrina Tang, Andrew Rust, Arend Turner, Zoe Lindbloom, Rafi Barash, Chloe Hall** and **Aanik Lohani**.



University of Minnesota



Carleton College

Both Minnesota and Carleton now advance to the 2018 Tennis On Campus National Championships April 12-14 at the USTA National Campus in Orlando, Fla. Last year, Minnesota placed fourth at Nationals and was the runner-up in 2015.

This will be Carleton's third trip to Nationals. Carleton's roster includes

Lynn Daniel, Katie Paasche, Brandon Carrillo, Jon Gillespie, Maddie Bryant, David Galanbos, Rachel Moore and **Honus Frohlich**.

In the third-place match, **North Dakota State** defeated **Minnesota State Moorhead**, who was competing in its first-ever season of Tennis on Campus, 30-6.

Valley City State won the Silver Bracket, overcoming **Winona State** 23-17, while **North Dakota State B** took home the Bronze Bracket crown with a 25-8 win over **Wisconsin-River Falls**.

Nate Young; Valley City State Win Tennis on Campus Awards

Congratulations to **Nate Young** of Minnesota State Moorhead and **Valley City State University** on being named the 2018 USTA Northern Tennis on Campus Leader and Club of the Year, respectively. Both are now eligible for the national awards to be announced at the Tennis on Campus National Championships in April.

After founding the program in the Spring of 2017, Young's first order of business was to recruit players to the program through the school newspaper and a booth at freshman orientation. Over 50 people showed interest in the program with 20 remaining active throughout the season.

MSUM played seven events in its inaugural campaign, including the Minnesota State Moorhead Invite. Other tournaments played included the Valley City State Invite, the Gopher Invite, the Cyclone Slam at Iowa State, the Gustie Invite, and the first ever Border Battle in Fargo. The team practiced three times a week and had organized several social opportunities for members including movies and a US Open viewing party.

Young started playing tennis as a freshman in high school and has played at Junior Team Tennis Nationals in South Carolina, participated in the state tournament and has been a teaching pro for the last four years at Courts Plus in Fargo where he teaches 20 hours a week. He is getting his certification from the Professional Tennis Registry in May.

"Since transferring to MSUM from Valley City State, Nate has done an outstanding job working with the University to establish its first-ever Tennis On Campus club team," **Erik Kringlie**, Tennis on Campus leader at Valley City State, said. "He has worked hard to recruit players, raise money, arrange transportation and even host a TOC series event, all in his first year. The Dragons have been a great team to compete against and work with as they teamed with NDSU to host the first-ever



Valley City State University



Nate Young and Brandon Jackson

TOC Northern Border Battle at Courts Plus. For a first year TOC Club Captain, he has done an outstanding job getting this team going and making sure it can continue in future years! Nate is very deserving of the USTA Northern TOC Leader of the Year Award!"

Established in 2014, Valley City State boasted its second-largest team ever with 14 players and raised

over \$5,000 this season. Playing in all five USTA Northern TOC events offered this year, the team finished with a program high 17-6 regular-season record. The Vikings took home the Silver Bracket title at the 2018 USTA Northern Section Championships.

For the ninth year, the team played host to the Viking Invitational in September and then co-hosted the first-ever Tennis On Campus Northern Border Battle in January which saw teams from North Dakota and Minnesota faceoff against each other for bragging rights. North Dakota won the inaugural tournament.

Off the court, the team is making a huge impact in the community as it works with the university, schools, the Valley City Tennis Association (VCTA) and the local park and rec. The club hosts an annual campus tennis tournament for players and non-players creating a connection with students, campus staff and faculty. They also partner with the VCTA to coach a USTA World Team Tennis team, serve as court monitors during the Valley City Junior Level 6 tournament, provide volunteers to help run a Tennis Block Party for the community each May and assist with high school drill nights in the summer and during the season. Club president **Paige Fettig** serves on the Valley City Tennis Association Board of Directors, and this summer, Fettig and her teammates participated in the Valley City Summer Adult League.

The team also partnered with the VCTA to collect gently-used racquets and equipment in supporting USTA Northern's Play it Forward campaign and donated \$400 to the Valley City Park and Recreation summer tennis program.

Why Federer is Betterer

Last year after the Australian Open, I wrote about things to learn from the ageless **Roger Federer**, and lo and behold, he won it again this year so I think it is worth taking a closer look at what he is doing. Not only has Federer repeated as Aussie Open champ, but now he has returned to #1 in the world rankings, becoming the oldest male player to hold that spot. How is this possible? Aren't sports for the young? Apparently, Roger did not get the message that he was supposed to be planning his retirement tour instead of winning Grand Slam titles, but neither has **Tom Brady**, **Dirk Nowitzki** or other older athletes who are not only competing, but excelling at their craft.

Roger, Tom, Dirk and the others have realized that one is never too old to stop learning and there is always room to improve. If you compare the 26-year-old Roger to the 36-year-old Roger, it is hard to find many areas where he was better at 26. Granted he was faster and probably had more endurance and less wear on the tires, but the older Roger has learned to cover the court more efficiently. I think if such a match was possible, I would bet on the older Roger.

Roger also has become a master problem solver in his old age. Traditionally, Roger has done well against most everyone on every surface (with the exception of **Rafael Nadal** on clay), but now he has figured out a solution to the heavy topspin shots to Roger's backhand that gave Nadal a great deal of success against him in the past. Roger has made four subtle, but major, changes to his backhand including flattening it out, hitting it earlier, going down the line more frequently and coming over the top of more service returns than he did in the past. Credit his current coach **Ivan Ljubicic** with helping him make these improvements.

He might be 36, but Roger's physical conditioning is second to none on the tour. Why is it that Roger has never suffered a major injury while his tour counterparts – Nadal, **Novak Djokovic**, **Andy**

Murray, **Stan Wawrinka** – are years younger but all have missed significant time with serious injuries? Federer and his long time physio **Daniel Troxler** seem to have figured out the formula to keep him pliable and for the most part injury free. To quote the great **Pete Sampras**, "It is hard work to make it look so easy."

Federer is not ever going to be confused with **Arnold Schwarzenegger**, but his training is very functional which is what training should be. Too many players train like football lineman and do weights and repetitions that lead to injury and tightness.

Healthy, and with everything being equal, Roger has realized that forward is the direction you want to go. Certainly there are times when one should make some space or back up to play defense, but when possible, it is better to be moving into the court. In the finals of the Aussie Open, Roger returned 91% of his second serve returns from inside the baseline. In my opinion, this was the single biggest determining factor as to why he won. He rushed **Marin Cilic** on big points. Think about it, how often do league players stay put when returning someone's second serve, acting as if it were a first serve? Far too often. Most players' second serves are their weakest shots, yet it is amazing how much respect we give them position-wise as if it were going to be a 140 mph heater (which it never is).

Roger also realized that the serve should not be ignored. While it is fun to run and jump and hit the various shots, most players never work on the most important shot of all - the serve as it sets up the rest of the point. Federer is serving as good as he ever has in terms of placing his serve and winning points. He out-aced the bigger harder hitting Cilic in the men's final 24-16 and won 80% of the points in which he got his first serve in and 58% of his second serves.

Finally, Roger loves to play. Federer, unlike a lot of professional athletes, really seems to love what he does win or lose. This is the crucial X-factor. You must have passion about playing and enjoy yourself. How many club matches have you seen or participated in where someone gets upset, or complains about the net being a 1/4 inch high, or the court being too slow instead of enjoying the fact they are playing the greatest sport in the world, getting exercise and competing. Loving the challenge of the match is crucial, and if you have fun when playing, you are guaranteed to play better.

We are seeing something truly remarkable with the reemergence of Roger. We should all appreciate the maestro from Switzerland because at this rate he will probably only play another 10 or 12 years.



Boy and Betty Toy Donate \$1 Million To Tennis & Life Camps

Long-time USTA Northern volunteers **Boy and Betty Toy** of Mounds View, Minn., gave the ultimate gift from the heart, and their wallets, this Valentine's Day by donating \$1 million to Tennis and Life Camps (TLC) at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minn. Their commitment serves as a cornerstone gift of Tennis and Life Camps' ambitious 40-Love Campaign, which seeks to raise \$4 million over the course of 40 months to celebrate the 40th anniversary of one of the nation's preeminent summer tennis camps.

"Boy and Betty come from harrowing beginnings, barely escaping World War II China with their lives," TLC Director **Neal Hagberg** said. "When you see people who believe in their depths about giving back and embrace the privilege to help others, it makes us reevaluate our own beliefs and encourages more generosity in us toward others."

The couple's gift will establish the Boy and Betty Toy Endowment Fund to support the Wilkinson Legacy Endowment, which seeks to fulfill the dream of late Tennis and Life Camps founder and former

Gustavus Men's Tennis Coach **Steve Wilkinson** to continually upgrade the College's first-class tennis facilities by providing for court maintenance, improvements and expansion. The gift will also provide funding to support the Swanson Tennis Center renovation project and supplement the Boy and Betty Toy Tennis and Life Camps Staff Programming and Development Endowment Fund, which the couple created in 2015 with a \$50,000 gift.

"Our first attendance at camp gave us unbelievable mental and physical changes in our daily living," the Toys said. "The bottom line is we not only learned how to play better tennis but also how to be better people in life and to control the things we can control, accept the things we cannot and the wisdom to know the difference. Steve and **Barb Wilkinson** are wonderful and generous individuals who gave so much of their lives to create TLC so others can become better tennis players and more importantly better citizens of our country. We have a deep desire for continuous support of the organization."

Eau Claire Facility Grand Opening April 6-8



Come celebrate the grand opening of the **John & Fay Menard YMCA Tennis Center** April 6-8 in Eau Claire, Wis. The new facility, constructed on land currently owned by the Eau Claire YMCA just west of the entrance to Carson Park on Menomonie Street, has eight courts and replaces the current five-court L.E. Phillips Tennis Center that opened in 1972.

Festivities begin Friday with a high school tennis tournament and the Grand Opening Gala and Silent Auction from 7-10 p.m. Tickets for the Gala are \$50, which includes food and beverage, and dress is business casual.

On Saturday, there will be a Cardio Tennis session from 9-10:30 a.m. (Free for members; \$5 for community members), followed by group drills with former French Open Doubles champion **Luke Jensen**. A doubles mixer and reception will follow with the opportunity to purchase Jensen as your doubles partner. Cost is \$20.

More Cardio Tennis kicks off Sunday's events with open court time to follow (Free for members; \$5 for community members).

For more information, or to purchase tickets to the events, please contact **Matt Boughton** at tennis@eauclaireymca.org.

BMTA Performs A Christmas Miracle For Big Brothers/Big Sisters

The **Bismarck-Mandan Tennis Association** gave the gift of tennis this holiday season to the Bismarck-Mandan Big Brothers/Big Sisters program with the help of USTA Northern and many generous individuals

in the Bismarck-Mandan (N.D.) community. The BMTA donated 100 tennis racquets and balls to all the boys and girls and their match during the organization's annual Christmas Open House.

"What better Christmas present than the gift of tennis – the sport of a lifetime," organizer and former BMTA President **Kevin Allan** said.

In Sports Day With The Gopher Men's Tennis Team

Smiles and laughter took over the Baseline Tennis Center as 20 kids ages 8-13 participated in the second Gopher Tennis InSports Day on February 17 as the University of Minnesota men faced border-rival Wisconsin.

The kids participated in a series of stations while working on their serve and stroke techniques, followed by a question and answer session with Gopher junior **Jesse Sprinkel**. The kids also had an opportunity to meet with the Gopher players and coaches, stand on the court for the coin toss before the matches and stand beside them



during the National Anthem and introduction of the starting lineups.

Thank you to Youthprise, InSports, Baseline Tennis Center, the University of Minnesota men's team and all of the volunteers in making the day a huge success.



LOVE-LOVE: The Boy and Betty Toy Story

This is a love story.

At the end of December, **Boy** and **Betty Toy** and I met at the American Swedish Institute in Minneapolis. We sat across the desk from each other when Boy teared up and said, "I woke up this morning and looked at Betty saying, 'Can you believe we are going to give a \$1 million dollars to Tennis & Life Camps today and yet I have this tremendous feeling of happiness?'"

We talked awhile about the journey that took them to this point.

Boy and Betty grew up in different villages in China during World War II. Both nearly starved to death with their families because of famine and brutal Japanese wartime control of their areas. Boy said to me, "Do you know those pictures you see on TV? The ones with kids whose stomachs are so big from malnutrition, whose ribs show through and eyes are hollow? That was my family. That was Betty's family. Our villages were located relatively close, but we never met."

After the war, both sets of parents immigrated to the United States. Boy and Betty met in Duluth, Minn. Halfway around the world, they have been together now for 60 years.

Those who know them, know where one goes, you will usually find the other. Their smiles are filled with gratitude. For each other. For the life they share. For the goodness they have been shown in this country. And for Tennis & Life Camp founders **Steve** and **Barb Wilkinson** and all of the instructors that have served over 60,000 campers not only teaching tennis but the TLC Three Crowns philosophy of positive attitude, full effort and good sportsmanship since 1977.

They attended camp just one time, in 1983. They were so moved by the instructors Steve had hired and their sense of mission, joy, kindness and dedication to helping each and every camper, that Boy went to Steve and said, "I don't know where you found these people, but this gives me hope and renews my faith in America."

In 2015, Boy and Betty returned for summer camp, perhaps the longest stretch between attending camps in TLC history. Thirty-five years later, Boy is saying the same thing. In times of great division in this country, the Toys see unity at Tennis & Life Camp. They recognize the diversity we strive for and the inclusion of all. Being outcast as children, they know what it is like to be embraced by people who appreciate them and celebrate who they are from the depths to the heights.

When they came to America to live and study, they wanted to



give back. They both spent over three decades of their lives dedicated to public education. Boy, now in his 80s, still teaches an AARP Smart Driver class regularly for seniors in the northern suburbs of the Twin Cities area.

They know what it is to sacrifice. And they know what it is to suffer, to see others suffer and to want to do something about it.

And now, they want Steve's and Barb's legacy to carry forward long after they – and we – are gone.

Boy has told me often a story I still want to hear every time I see him. He said, "My dad was a firm believer in Buddhism. When my father was in ill health, a very close person to me who was a Christian came to me and said, 'Boy, you have to tell your dad he must take God into his heart in order to get to Heaven.' Years later, we were on one of TLC Australian

trips. Knowing Steve was a professor of world religions with special emphasis on Eastern Religion, I posed this question to Steve. "I can safely say, 80% of the world's population is not into Christianity, does a person have to take God into his heart in order to get to Heaven?" Steve looked at me, paused, and said with sincerity, "Boy, it's hard for me to imagine a God who would send 80% of the people to other places than Heaven."

Boy continued. "Steve didn't tell me yes or no. I have never forgotten this." And each time he recounts this story he chokes up.

Each time I hear this story it is like an oasis in the desert to me. In a world of "us and them", we are all really "us."

So there they sat, Boy and Betty, pens in hand. They are giving a million dollars to TLC's 40-LOVE Campaign, a transforming gift that will help us push towards the finish line in the next two years.

They were so happy. I was so happy. TLC is so happy.

Who would have guessed that two people, who have been through what they have, who nearly starved to death as children, who separately found their way to America, who met in Duluth of all places, who worked in public education most of their lives, and who still have a deep and abiding love after 60 years, would find themselves in that room at that time?

No one. Except maybe Betty and Boy, who talk of how much they receive by being able to give this gift.

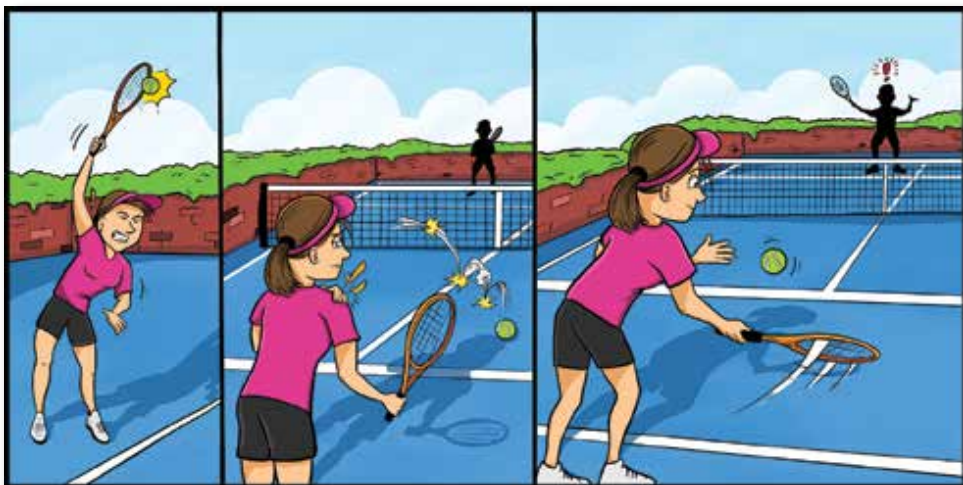
Love-Love. It comes in many, many forms. Thank you, Boy and Betty, for teaching us the meaning once again.

What's Your Call

Question: In the middle of my match, I hurt my shoulder and the normal serving motion really hurt. I didn't want to retire so I started serving underhand. My opponent said serving underhand isn't allowed. I disagreed. Who is correct?

Answer: Great thinking! We should call you Michael Chang. He famously won the 1989 French Open after defeating Ivan Lendl in a five-set battle using an underhand serve. Although unconventional, the rules allow for it. As long as the ball is hit with the racquet prior to hitting the ground, it doesn't matter if it was released in an upward or downward motion.

Where To Find The Rule: Friend at Court under the ITF Rules of Tennis #16 The Service.



Question: You and your opponent cannot agree upon the score. You think it is 30-all, while your opponent believes it is 40-15. What should you do?

Answer: Disputes over the score should be handled one of the following ways, listed in the order of preference.

- 1) Count all points/games agreed upon by both parties and replay only the disputed point or game. (i.e. – you agree about all points but the third point played. Therefore, you would replay only the third point of the game.)
- 2) Play from a score mutually agreed upon by both players
- 3) Flip a coin

Where To Find The Rule: The Code #34 on page 40 of Friend At Court.

Question: Your opponent is serving and requests the third ball. Do I have to go get it for them?

Answer: When a server requests three balls, the receiver should comply when the third ball is readily available. Distant balls shall be retrieved at the end of a game.

Where To Find The Rule: The Code #22 on page 39 of Friend At Court.

Question: You are serving and ready to serve. The receiver is not. Who is right?

Answer: The receiver should play to the reasonable pace of the server. If the receiver is not ready, the receiver should make no attempt to return the ball. If the player attempts to return the serve (when they were not ready), then the receiver is presumed to be ready. Once the receiver is ready, the receiver cannot become unready unless there is outside interference from another court.

Where To Find The Rule: The Code #29 on page 39 of Friend At Court.

Question: When can I talk when the ball is in play?

Answer: The following rules apply to talking while the ball is in play.

- Singles players can never talk when the ball is in play
- Talking between doubles partners when the ball is moving towards them is allowed.
- Doubles players cannot talk when the ball is moving towards their opponent's court
- Any talking that interferes with an opponent's ability to play a ball is a hindrance. A player who is claiming a hindrance must STOP play as soon as possible.

For example: If a doubles player hits a weak lob and yells "get back" and the yell distracts an opponent who is about to hit the ball, then the opponent may claim the point based on a deliberate hindrance. If the opponent chooses to play the lob, but misses it, the opponent loses the point because the opponent did not make a timely claim of the hindrance.

Where To Find The Rule: The Code #34 on page 40 of Friend At Court.

Question: When can a player move?

Answer: A player may feint with the body when the ball is on play. A player may also change position at any time, including while the server is tossing a ball, but any other movement or any sound made to distract an opponent including waving arms or racket or stomping feet is not allowed.

Where To Find The Rule: The Code #35 on page 40 of Friend At Court.

Question: My opponent's racquet came out of her hand in the middle of a point and wants to play a let? Should I give it to her?

Answer: No ... A let is never authorized for a hindrance caused by something within a player's control, such as when a player's racquet comes out of a hand, when a player's shoe falls off or when a player trips over his or her own hat. However, if a player's hat falls off during the point, the opponent can call an immediate let due to an unintentional hindrance.

Where To Find The Rule: The Code #36 on page 41 of Friend At Court.



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