

USTA Southern Wheelchair Tennis Newsletter

August 2023

Welcome to the Newsletter for USTA Southern Wheelchair Tennis!

Quarterly, we will provide information on upcoming tournaments, wheelchair tennis programs, tips on how to take your game to the next level, and all things wheelchair tennis. Also, watch USTA Southern's Facebook page for Wheelchair Wednesday twice a month when wheelchair tennis will be the featured post for the day!

Grants and Scholarships

USTA Southern Wheelchair Tennis gives grants and scholarships in January and May to programs to fund wheelchair tennis programs and to individuals in USTA Southern states to fund their pursuit of wheelchair tennis. Here are updates from recent grant recipients.

The Mid-Carolina Tennis Association used their grant to cover the cost of coaching, facility use and upgraded equipment for wheelchair tennis. Thanks to the grant, they continue to offer a free weekly wheelchair tennis clinic, Rollin Rackets. One memorable moment that happened because of the grant was when they met Drew, a young athlete visiting from Virginia who loves wheelchair basketball. He was introduced to wheelchair tennis, and the coaches see an awesome future ahead for him in wheelchair tennis.



Columbus Regional Tennis Association (CORTA) in Georgia provided 12 weeks of instruction for members of the Ft. Moore Soldier Recovery Unit, including drinks, snacks, and an end of session lunch. They also hosted the CORTA Special Tennis Games for students from the Muscogee County School District that included 19 students who used wheelchairs, in addition to being able to purchase red, orange, green and yellow tennis balls. One of the students in CORTA Special Tennis Games was a six-year-old girl who was new to using a chair within the past year. She was overwhelmed when she first arrived at the Games, and for her to see other athletes in a chair made her feel more comfortable. A few soldiers from Ft. Moore paid special attention to her which helped her experience, and she ended up having a great day!



BlazeSports in Georgia used their grant to support their weekly wheelchair youth tennis program, which has a primary goal of developing both the developmental and experienced tennis athlete, exposing youth to a new sport, and expanding wheelchair tennis opportunities. They have been growing their program, and the grant helped to cover the cost of equipment, facility fees, program supplies and travel as needed. In addition, funds were used to host their second annual wheelchair tennis tournament with a Run 'N Roll and skills challenge. They are proud to report that one of their athletes, Jude Hiley, is headed to Auburn to fulfil his dream of being a college athlete playing on both the wheelchair tennis and wheelchair basketball teams after two years in the program. Jude was an avid athlete before acquiring his disability, and BlazeSports helped him realize that his goal of becoming a collegiate athlete was still possible. He is the first BlazeSports athlete to play tennis at the collegiate level!



The Asheville Tennis Association has a main goal of players of all ages having fun, mixing tennis with socials during practice to create an environment that keeps participants coming back, a methodology that has doubled their number of participants. Their grant was used for balls, a pump for wheelchair tires, and food, drinks, swag, and awards for players. The players' excitement over the program can be seen in their expressions and gratitude to be able to get out and play tennis while making friends with other wheelchair athletes.



Acadiana Serves in Lafayette, LA used their grant to connect with the community to create awareness that players using wheelchairs can play tennis as well in order to grow their wheelchair tennis program. They noticed a lack of awareness in their community among both people with and without disabilities that people with disabilities can play a multitude of sports, including wheelchair tennis. They loved seeing the smiles on the players' faces as they realized that there is a way to enjoy almost any sport.



Collegiate

Congratulations to four students who received scholarships to play collegiate wheelchair tennis as part of the May scholarship cycle. The students are McKenna Woodhead (Clemson University), Jude Hiley (Auburn University), Gabriel Puthoff (Auburn University), and Tony Shea Nelson (University of Alabama).

Mobile, AL Wheelchair Tennis Activation

Wheelchair tennis has come to Mobile, AL! Mobile Tennis Center was looking to introduce wheelchair tennis to its community, and the event turned out to be nothing short of amazing. Players were introduced to wheelchair tennis, and wheelchair sports in general for the very first

time. Not only was the day a massive success, but also there are now coaches excited to develop more wheelchair tennis programs with a core group devoted to putting Mobile on the map for wheelchair tennis. Every single coach played in a chair that day and are no longer tentative to coach new players. Check out this awesome video of the event. Click on the photo or this [link](#) to watch the video. For more information on the new Mobile, AL wheelchair tennis program, please visit the following [Facebook page](#).



Coach's Corner

We are excited to introduce you to wheelchair tennis coaches in the Southern Section through a new feature, Coach's Corner. First up is Taylor Wingate. Taylor played wheelchair tennis for the very first time in Rock Hill Tennis Center in 2014. He was hooked from the beginning. He soon started traveling across the country, playing in wheelchair tennis tournaments, winning many of them and rising in the rankings as a player.

In 2016, he received his PTR Adult Development coaching certification, and in 2019, he received his USPTA coaching certification in wheelchair tennis. In 2020, he received the PTR Professional of The Year Award.

He still plays in tournaments, too, but he has a love and passion for coaching wheelchair tennis, from young kids to adults and loves that tennis is a sport that people can play for as long as they want in life. He currently teaches at the Rock Hill Tennis Center and is a coach for Adaptive Sports Adventures Program (ASAP) through Carolinas Rehabilitation Atrium in Charlotte, NC, as well as being a guest coach at clinics and events throughout the Southern Section.



Tournament Recaps

The Clemson Wheelchair Tennis Championships were held on the campus of Clemson University from July 21-23, 2023. There was a total of 49 athletes across 5 singles divisions and 4 doubles divisions. A really exciting aspect of the tournament was the participation of athletes new to tournaments. They had 7 junior athletes, 4 of which was their first time competing in a wheelchair tennis tournament, and they also had many adult athletes who this was their first time competing. The winners in each division were:

A singles: Jeff Kegler

B singles: Chris Thomas

C singles: Trey Bates

Quad singles: Gaila Fosbinder

Junior singles: Noah Schepman

A doubles: Rob Popelka & Samir Jusupovic

B doubles: Chris Thomas &

Trey Bates

C doubles: Noah Schepman &

Brett Wolff

Junior doubles: John Grimsley & Jordan Bates



Instructional Video

Learning how to move your wheelchair around the court is key to wheelchair tennis! Former Team USA athlete, Shelby Baron, shows us how to move around the court in this hub drill. The hub is the point that you'll want to return to after every shot so that you can prepare for the next one. Take a look and try it out! Link to video [here](#).



2023 Southern Wheelchair Tournament Calendar

Tournament Name	Sanctioning	Dates	Location	Contact	Email
Alabama Open	USTA Level 1 - Junior Nat'l Championship	October 6 - 8	Tuscaloosa, AL	Evan Enquist	eaenquist@crimson.ua.edu
Hallowheel	Non-sanctioned	October 27-29	Baton Rouge, LA	Jennifer Edmonson	jennedmonson@aol.com
Auburn	USTA Level 4	November 11-12	Auburn, AL	Bret Peterson	bpeterson@auburnalabama.org
America Championships	USTA Level 1 - Adult Nat'l Championship	November 16 - 19	Locust Grove, GA	Harlon Matthews	hmatthews@co.henry.ga.us
Clocktower Classic Indoor Junior National Championships	USTA Level 3	December 1-3	Rome, GA	Ann Hortman	ahortman@romega.us

Need Help Starting?

Have you hesitated to start playing wheelchair tennis because you do not have a wheelchair tennis program or other wheelchair tennis players in your area? Or are you a coach who hasn't worked with wheelchair tennis players before but wants to start? USTA can help you! Contact USTA Southern Committee Chair, Jennifer Edmonson, at jennedmonson@aol.com.



Southern Section Committee Contacts

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