

USTA Southern Wheelchair Tennis Newsletter

APRIL 2024

Welcome to the newsletter for USTA Southern Wheelchair Tennis. This newsletter provides information about upcoming tournaments, wheelchair tennis programs, tips on how to take your game to the next level, and all things wheelchair tennis. Also, keep an eye out on USTA Southern's Facebook page for Wheelchair Wednesday twice a month, when wheelchair tennis will be the featured post for the day!

Strides In Integration

Just in the last few months, we've seen some wonderful initiatives in the integration of wheelchair tennis players with the rest of the tennis community. The Southern Tennis Foundation has a Junior Financial Assistance program for youth ages 12-18 ranked in the Southern Top 100, and for the first time, it's available to wheelchair players this year. USTA Southern recently hosted the section's first Schools/Wheelchair Tennis Workshop with over 15 state school coordinators, PE Teachers, and section TSRs participating so that wheelchair tennis can be incorporated into their schools' PE curriculum to be inclusive of students who use wheelchairs. This year, we'll also have another High-Performance Integrated Camp, begun last year, and increased integration in the NCAA Nationals. We are so excited about all of the new integration happening in wheelchair tennis!

[Watch the video here.](#)



Collegiate

The National Wheelchair Championships took place April 10 -13 at the USTA Campus in Lake Nona, Fla., Saturday, April 13, from 1-3 p.m. It included a Family Fun Day of on-court and off-court fun and games.



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Coach's Corner

If you're a coach who hasn't yet coached a wheelchair tennis player, this Coach's Corner is for you! A lot of wheelchair tennis coaches don't have any experience in wheelchair tennis before they meet a wheelchair player and end up loving coaching wheelchair tennis and being really successful at it! Meet Jason Tipton, coach of junior player Lucy Heald. Tipton coached tennis in 2005 as a student at the University of Tennessee Chattanooga. After graduation, he got certified by PTR and went from working at a tennis center to Baylor School, where he coached from 2010-2022, starting as an assistant coach and progressing to head coach. During his time there, the tennis program won ten state titles and multiple singles and doubles titles. As head coach of the boys' team, they made it to top 20 in the country. In 2022, he accepted a position as head pro at the Maclellan Tennis Center and head coach at Chattanooga Christian School.

He first met Lucy at the Maclellan Tennis Center in 2022. He was immediately impressed with her ability on the court and her passion for tennis. He said, "Lucy is the type of student every coach prays to work with. She has a strong work ethic and is working to get to the next level." Before coaching Lucy, Jason didn't have much coaching experience in wheelchair tennis. While watching a wheelchair tennis tournament, he had the opportunity to learn the nuances of wheelchair tennis.

He realized that there were many similarities between able-bodied and wheelchair tennis, and for what he didn't understand, he reached out to pros experienced in wheelchair tennis. He sought out every resource that he could find and says that one of the most important things he has done was to put himself in a wheelchair and learn as much as he could by experiencing wheelchair tennis as the athlete. It was in doing that when he really came to understand the game and the athleticism needed for wheelchair tennis. As some additional advice, Jason said that it's the job of the coach to know the heart of the player and what their goals are, and at that moment, the athlete's goals should become the coach's goals. Jason, thank you for sharing your experiences and your desire to see more coaches working with wheelchair athletes!



Tournament Recaps

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The Cajun Classic was held in Baton Rouge, La., March 5-10. This tournament was also a Level 1 tournament and included 135 professional and amateur players from 22 countries and 25 states with winners and finalists from the US Open, Australian Open, French Open and Wimbledon. The tournament also had a strong group of players in the juniors division. The Cajun Classic is sanctioned by the International Tennis Federation and the USTA. It is part of ITF UNIQLO Wheelchair Tennis Tour where players compete for more than \$1 million in prize money in tournaments worldwide.

Congratulations to tournament winners:

ITF Junior Girls: Maylee Phelps

ITF Junior Boys: Tomas Majetic

ITF Junior Doubles: Sabina Czausz and Zane Goodwin

ITF Men's Singles: Alfie Hewett

ITF Women's Singles: Diede De Groot

ITF Quad Singles: Sam Schroder

ITF Men's Doubles: Alfie Hewett and Gordon Reid

ITF Women's Doubles: Yui Kamiji and Kjothatso Montjane

ITF Quad Doubles: Andy Lapthorne and David Wagner

USTA Singles A: Maximus Wong

USTA Singles B: Evan Heller

USTA Singles C: Spencer Davis

USTA Singles D: Sarah Kate Sligh

USTA Doubles A: Caiden Baxter/Nicholas Tijerina

USTA Doubles B: Fernando Dibujes/Evan Heller

USTA Doubles C: Adam Wiseman/William LaFitte

USTA Doubles D: John Henry/Ethen Hansen

USTA Juniors Singles A: Spencer Davis

USTA Juniors Singles B: Ethen Hansen

USTA Juniors Doubles A: Jeremy Perez/Noah Schepman



2024 Tournaments

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Check out the full calendar of 2024 tournaments within the Southern Section for wheelchair tennis players at all levels.

2024 Southern Wheelchair Tennis Tournaments						
Tournament Name	Sanctioning	Dates	Location	Contact	Email	Registration Links
Montgomery Open	USTA Level 3	April 19-21	Montgomery, Alabama	Jessica Weyreuter	dreamcourtinc@gmail.com	Register Here
Mississippi Rock N Roll	USTA Level 3	April 26-28	Brandon, Mississippi	Emillia Viljoen	viljoen@sta.usta.com	Register Here
Garden City Wheelchair Tennis Classic	USTA Level 4	May 3-5	Augusta, Georgia	Margaret Faughnan	mfaughnan@augustaga.gov	Register Here
Vette City Rollout	USTA Level 4-5	May 11-12	Bowling Green, Kentucky	Cameron Levis	Cameron.Levis@bgky.org	Register Here
Smash Cancer on Wheels	USTA Level 4	May 17-19	Wilmington, North Carolina	Christine Tatum	ctatum723@gmail.com	Register Here
Music City Classic	USTA Level 4	June 28-30	Nashville, Tennessee	Kelly Skelton-Weise	skeltonweise@hotmail.com	Register Here
Move United Tournament	USTA Level 4-5	July 13-14	Hoover, Alabama	Cliff Cook	CliffC@lakeshore.org	Register Here
Clemson Tournament	USTA Level 3	July 19-21	Clemson, South Carolina	Jeff Townsend	jeffdtownsend@gmail.com	Register Here
National Public Parks Tennis Championships	USTA Level 4	September 21-22	Mobile, Alabama	Jace Daniel	jacedaniel30@gmail.com	Register Here
Hallowheel	Nonsanctioned	October 3-5	Baton Rouge, Louisiana	Jennifer Edmonson	jennedmonson@aol.com	Link to Come
Lost Mountain Wheelchair Open	USTA Level 2	October 25-27	Powder Springs, Georgia	Tony Oswald	Tony.oswald@cobbcounty.org	Register Here
America Championships	USTA Level 1 - Adult & Junior National Championships	November 14-17	Locust Grove, Georgia	Harlon Matthews	hmatthews@co.henry.ga.us	Link to Come

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Wheelchair Tennis Skill Builder

While there are lots of tried-and-true skills in wheelchair tennis, everyone's body and function is different, so sometimes you have to develop your own way of playing. Eleven-time Grand Slam champion and three-time Paralympic Gold Medalist Nick Taylor is a prime example. As a quad, he needed to develop his own way of serving, so he came up with a literal kick-serve. Check out the ingenuity of his serve, and if you or someone you know have a similar ability level as Nick and have wondered how to serve, give his method a try!

[Click here for the video.](#)



Brad Parks Award

The Brad Parks Award is given every year at the USTA Annual Meeting and Conference. The recipient of the Brad Parks Award is for any individual or group that has been involved in playing, coaching, organizing, sponsoring, or promoting wheelchair tennis. The Brad Parks Award will be given each year in recognition of outstanding contributions to the sport of wheelchair tennis. It will be presented to an individual or group that has been instrumental in providing opportunities to wheelchair players through the development of programs that promote the growth of wheelchair tennis at the section or national level. This year's recognition was for the Baton Rouge Wheelchair Tennis Association led by Cajun Classic and US Open Wheelchair Tennis Tournament Director Jennifer Edmonson.



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Southern Wheelchair Tennis Committee

Do you have any questions? Please feel free to reach out to any of our members.

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