

USTA Southern Wheelchair Tennis Newsletter

May 2024

Welcome to the newsletter for USTA Southern Wheelchair Tennis, providing you with 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!

Grants

Each January and May, USTA Southern Wheelchair Tennis gives to programs to fund wheelchair tennis initiatives. Here are some of our latest grant recipients.

Abilities Tennis Association of North Carolina was proud to provide wheelchair tennis lessons from tennis professional David Marquinta for 10-year-old Morgan Jenkins. Morgan has recently begun using a sports chair through ATANC, and she needed to learn how to move and play in the chair. She has made great progress in her playing ability with Coach David's help, to the delight of both Morgan and her family. Other than Morgan honing her tennis skills and making friends in the Abilities Tennis clinics, one of the memorable times for her was being highlighted in the local news.



Ken Smith, an ATANC board member, interviewed Morgan and her family about her new chair and tennis lessons. She received a lot of positive attention through the media. You can read the article [here](#). We love that she has even built aspirations of playing in college!

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The **Asheville Tennis Association** used their grant extend the wheelchair indoor season for participants. Indoor court time was available into spring when outdoor weather doesn't cooperate. The players were ecstatic to be able to get out and exercise even when it's cold and wet. Players remarked that the opportunity for more tennis makes such a difference in their lives, and it also has brought in new players who wouldn't normally be as active in the cold weather months.



BlazeSports in Atlanta hosted a skills challenge and tournament for wheelchair athletes. They had 12 competitors and two coaches in wheelchairs for the event. One athlete came to the event who had never tried tennis before and was an absolute natural. They are hoping for him to become a regular in their wheelchair tennis program. They also remarked that some people came from quite a long way in Georgia and really loved the experience.

The **Greater Wilmington Tennis Association** in North Carolina used their grant to host Smash Cancer on Wheels, a wheelchair division of a larger tennis tournament called Smash Cancer May 17-19. The funds were used to offset the court costs.



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Columbia Tennis Association in South Carolina had their kickoff Wheelchair Workshop, where tennis pros, volunteers and a few wheelchair players came to listen, learn and participate ahead of starting their new weekly wheelchair tennis program. Player and coach Taylor Wingate led their training workshop. They are now purchasing accessories for three tennis chairs, balls and hoppers, and they'll be developing a logo and promotional material. The grant will also be used to support the tennis professionals who will be leading the program. Check out a few pictures from the workshop. The program is set to begin in June.

Lakeshore Foundation in Birmingham, Ala., used the grant to purchase tennis equipment and competition apparel for their wheelchair tennis team members. They were also able to use the equipment during a wheelchair tennis clinic introducing new athletes to wheelchair tennis. The new athletes loved wheelchair tennis, and through interest built in that clinic, they are planning to start a youth wheelchair tennis team in June.



Coach's Corner

Did you know that the USTA has a library of coaching resources and videos to help coaches learn how to work with wheelchair tennis athletes. Check it out [HERE](#).

Wheelchair Tennis Coach Development Workshop

Montgomery, Ala., is excited to host a Wheelchair Tennis Coach Development Workshop on Thursday Oct 3, from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm at Lagoon Tennis Park.

Workshop Schedule:

9:00 am - 11:00 am: Classroom
12:00 pm: Lunch
1:00 pm to 4:30 pm; On court
4:30 pm to 5:00 pm; Wrap Up

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For those coaches interested in putting your new skills into practice, there will simultaneously be an All-Comers Wheelchair Training Camp at the same facility that weekend. Once you conclude with the Wheelchair Tennis Coach Development Workshop on Thursday, you are welcome to stay for Friday, Oct. 4, and/or Saturday, Oct. 5, to coach wheelchair athletes in action.

For registration or more information, click [HERE](#).

Tournament Recaps

Montgomery Open was held April 19-21 with 33 wheelchair tennis players from eight different states participating. For the first time, they also held a Junior Clinic and Skills Challenge to accommodate players that are not quite ready to participate in a full tournament but want to increase their skills and enjoy the atmosphere of the tournament. Special thanks to coach Daniel Lachman for coaching this new opportunity!

Mississippi Rock N Roll Wheelchair Tennis Championships were held in Brandon, Miss., on April 26-28. The tournament had 18 players, and the winners were:

B Singles: Robbie Sullivan
B Doubles : Johnny McGinn/Allen Champagne
C Singles: Johanthan Broadway
C Doubles: Rowdy Burton/Jonathan Broadway
D Singles: Ariyon Smith
D Doubles: Ariyon Smith/Daniel Witwer



The **Garden City Wheelchair Tennis Tournament** was held May 3-5 in Augusta, Ga. Despite lots of rain, they ended up having a successful tournament. It was an important tournament because one of the players, Donald Shapiro, who had been playing in tournaments for many years, passed away within the year, so it was a great time for players to get together and remember him. There were a total of 23 players in the tournament.

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Winners were:

A Singles: Chris Thomas

B Singles: Trey Bates

C Singles: Lynn Siedman

Doubles finals did not finish due to rain, but the players in the finals were:

A Doubles: Rob Popelka/Jennifer Speer and Chris Thomas/Trey Bates

B Doubles: Mark LaRatonda/Alexander Puga and Abbey Mayfield/Lisa Maddox

Collegiate

The ITA Collegiate Wheelchair Championships were held April 10-13 at the USTA National Campus in Lake Nona, Fla. A total of 33 athletes competed from University of Alabama, University of Arizona, Auburn University, Clemson University, Houston, Michigan, Michigan State, San Diego State, University of Virginia,



and Virginia Tech, matching an all-time high for competing number of teams. Playing alongside the Billie Jean King Cup between the United States and Belgium brought a lot of enthusiastic fans to watch wheelchair tennis, with thousands of fans watching the championship action, marking the single-largest attended collegiate wheelchair tennis match in the event history.

In the team competition, San Diego State and Houston had an over three-hour battle for the title, with Houston coming out on top. Flight B was won by UVA's Jacob Wald, and Flight C was won by Arizona's Den Baseda in just his third ever tournament. Evan Heller from the Auburn University was named the first ever Intercollegiate Tennis Association Collegiate Wheelchair Player of the Year! The final four of the National Collegiate Singles Wheelchair Tennis Championships was played alongside the NCAA Division I singles championships in Stillwater, Okla., May 24-25. Competing athletes were Martha Harris (Alabama), Eric Court (Arizona), Gabe Puthoff (Auburn), and Nicholas Tijerina (Houston). Congratulations to Eric Court for winning the championship!

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2024 Tournaments

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
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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Southern Wheelchair Tennis Committee

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

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