

# TennisPro®



The International Magazine for PTR Tennis Teachers and Coaches

October 2020

## CELEBRATING 30 Years of ACE Excellence



Arthur Ashe



Rodney Harmon



Hemel Meghani Cosmo



Jorge Andrew



Jillian Alexander-Brower



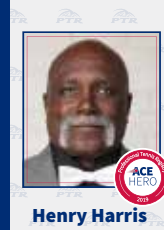
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Joe Goldthreate



Ann Koger



Henry Harris



Lloyd Dillon, Sr.



Ollen Dupree



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Ajay Pant



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*Cover: PTR ACE Heroes  
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*Dan Santorum*

Dan Santorum  
CEO/Executive Director

PTR has always embraced diversity. Our Founder, Dennis Van der Meer, was forever welcoming tennis players from all walks of life. From humble beginnings, our organization has always been inclusive, and ever since, PTR has continued to lead by example when it comes to diversity.

Here are some examples of how PTR has been a Champion of Diversity.

- PTR's first Executive Director was a female
- In 1988, PTR started offering certification workshops in several U.S. cities to increase access to education
- In 1990, PTR began the ACE Program, which is celebrating 30 years of excellence and growth in the numbers of both coaches and players of color
- **Arthur Ashe** was the PTR ACE Program's first spokesperson. Arthur required certification as part of the program to help coaches of color obtain education to compete for jobs.
- Several Clinicians of color were trained to conduct PTR ACE workshops around the country
- **Jean Mills** was the first PTR President and succeeded PTR Founder, Dennis Van der Meer
- **Jorge Andrew**, PTR's 3rd President, became the first Hispanic PTR President
- **Rodney Harmon**, PTR's 5th President, served as the first Black PTR President
  - ◆ Three of PTR's six Presidents, or 50%, have been diverse!
- Rodney is our immediate past president and chairs the PTR Diversity and Inclusion Taskforce
  - ◆ One initiative is working with the ITA to increase the number of diverse college coaches
- For more than a decade now, PTR's diversity in terms of race and gender is evident in our Board, Staff, Clinicians, and Members

We are pleased to report that the vast majority of the categories mentioned above are at least 1/3 diverse. As PTR International Master Professional **Billie Jean King** has always maintained, you need to have at least 1/3 representation to have a voice. This year in the USA, PTR reached an all-time high of 33.9%, who are coaches of color. To put it in perspective, less than seven years ago, we stood at 27% - a fantastic improvement. In terms of gender, at least 33% of the PTR Board and staff are women. So as you can see, PTR is leading by example and not just words. It is easy to tell people how diverse you are, but the key is to be diverse.

The cover of TennisPro is a testimonial to the many diverse coaches who have made significant contributions to the PTR ACE Program and to tennis. Our "baseball card-like" tributes to our male and female ACE Heros show the face of the PTR coach on the front of the card, and each card features their remarkable accomplishments. As Rodney Harmon has said, "the PTR ACE Program is the most impactful minority tennis coaches program in the history of tennis."

Many of these ACE Heros are pioneers who have won tennis awards for their service, dedication, and excellence. Also, some are respected members of tennis Halls of Fame, and we want to celebrate and acknowledge their achievements.



I would be remiss not to mention the contribution from the USTA and TIA in our early years of the ACE Program to help get us started. Furthermore, most USTA sections and districts/states also played a supportive role in recent years. PTR looks forward to increased support from the USTA and the USTA Foundation as we work together to improve diversity in tennis.

In closing, sadly, we recently lost one of our superstar ACE Hero's – Lloyd Dillon. Lloyd, and all our coaches of color, have done so much to grow our coaching profession and tennis. Thank you for your contributions and meaningful efforts to improve the lives of coaches and players of color.

Let's keep Making a World of Difference!



As TennisPro was finishing up, we received the fantastic news that PTR Founder, Dennis Van der Meer is on the selection ballot for the International Tennis Hall of Fame. Dennis is so deserving. See page 17 for details.

## Industry News

The ITF has announced the Fed Cup, the women's world cup of tennis, has been renamed the **Billie Jean King Cup by BNP Paribas**.

It is the first time a major global team competition has been named after a woman, ushering in a new era for the historic tournament and representing a landmark moment for sport.



Billie Jean King said, "There is nothing quite like the feeling of representing your country and being part of a team, which is why this competition is so special and important to me. It is an honor to have the women's world cup of tennis carry my name and a responsibility I will not take lightly. Our job is to share this vision with future generations of young girls because if you can see it, you can be it."

### NEW Courses offered from PTR

PTR is excited to announce the release of two new online specialty courses. The new online specialty courses are self-guided (unless otherwise indicated) and will qualify for the continuing education requirement!

#### PTR Leadership Course with Dr. Mark Brouker

This course provides coaches the opportunity to explore key principles important to every successful leader.

Throughout this course, multiple case studies bring to life examples of the techniques used to develop some of the most successful military leaders. Exploring real world scenarios and leadership research allow you to uncover your ability to unlock your teams best performance.



You can complete the self-guided, online PTR Leadership course, with access to all presentations and documents for \$199.

We also have open enrollment for a LIVE virtual course with Dr. Mark Brouker for \$299. This course will give coaches the opportunity to blend the online content with three (3) virtual sessions facilitated by Dr. Mark Brouker. During these virtual sessions, Dr. Brouker will bring to life the content introduced while providing personalized approaches for applying each concept to your environment. Space is limited to the first 15 coaches to register.

#### PTR offers FITU Course with Dean Hollingworth



This course provides coaches the opportunity to explore theoretical principles affecting physical priorities through the ages and stages of development.

Dean Hollingworth is your Coach Developer in this thought-provoking course designed to improve your awareness of factors that improve physical development when working with athletes of various ages and stages of their playing career. From the classroom to the court, coaches will be immersed in information to shape a greater awareness and confidence to support athletes' individual physical needs.

This is a unique opportunity to learn online from one of Tennis' leading experts in athlete performance. Get access to the PTR FITU online course for just \$45! To register for these fantastic online courses visit [ptr.teachable.com](http://ptr.teachable.com).

## Your Serve

#### Dear PTR,

I must tell you that you all have a wonderful organization at PTR. I called one evening after hours a few years ago to leave a message, and much to my surprise the phone was answered by none other than the CEO, Dan Santorum. He jumped right in to help me, and he sets a great example for the entire organization. I will never forget that experience. Anytime I have emailed, called, or asked for help, all of the staff at PTR couldn't be more pleasant and helpful. My compliments to PTR for running a high quality organization. Thank you for making people like me feel like we matter to the organization.

**John Parker, Louisville, KY, USA**

#### Dear PTR,

Regarding the SafeSport Training. I'm done! Thank you. Well worth the time. Just FYI it took me about 3 hours --- but I wanted to learn it and not rush through the material. Hope you and all those you love are safe and healthy!

**Joe Dinoffer, Intl. Master Professional, Dallas, Texas, USA**

#### Dear PTR,

Thank you to the USTA and PTR for the membership grant.... that means a lot this year since most of us coaches were without a job for close to 10 weeks and are still paying debts accumulated in that time....

**Vlatko Bosevski, Woodbridge, VA**

#### Dear PTR,

Thanks so much for setting everything up for my retest with Louie (Cap). He gave me really great feedback afterwards. I took notes! I'm really thankful for his expertise and wisdom. He was very helpful and truly wanted to help me be the best coach I can.

**Monique Delatour, St. Helena's Island, SC, USA**

#### Dear PTR,

Thank you, PTR!!! You guys are the best!! Thanks for all you've done for tennis and all the pros during these past several months. Please convey that to Dan and the rest of the PTR staff.

**Constantine Ananiadis Head Women's Coach, Oberlin College**



**Spring TennisFest**  
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## Top 10 Reasons to Bring Your College or High School Team to PTR Spring TennisFest on Hilton Head Island

- 1 The BEST rates for registration and accommodations - all located on the island and close to the beach, restaurants, activities & practice courts
- 2 The MOST professional hard courts on Hilton Head Island with spectator viewing at the world famous Van der Meer Tennis Center, all with singles sticks, score posts, site directors and cold water
- 3 FREE Souvenir T-shirts for team members (8 per team -- a \$160 value)
- 4 FREE Team Dinner Party if you use our Accommodation Partners, each week (big savings -- one less night to feed your team) -- Great opportunity to socialize with other coaches and teams. All-U-Can-Eat Food. Music and Prizes - Beachside
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- 9 EASY Communication – Text or email available 6 days a week, year round. Event Director on site at each venue throughout the day; and available by text or cell.
- 10 PTR is a global non-profit organization of tennis professionals and coaches dedicated to improving the sport of tennis. PTR is corporate member of ITA and a member of the ITF



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# PLAN NOW PLAY LATER

by John Borden

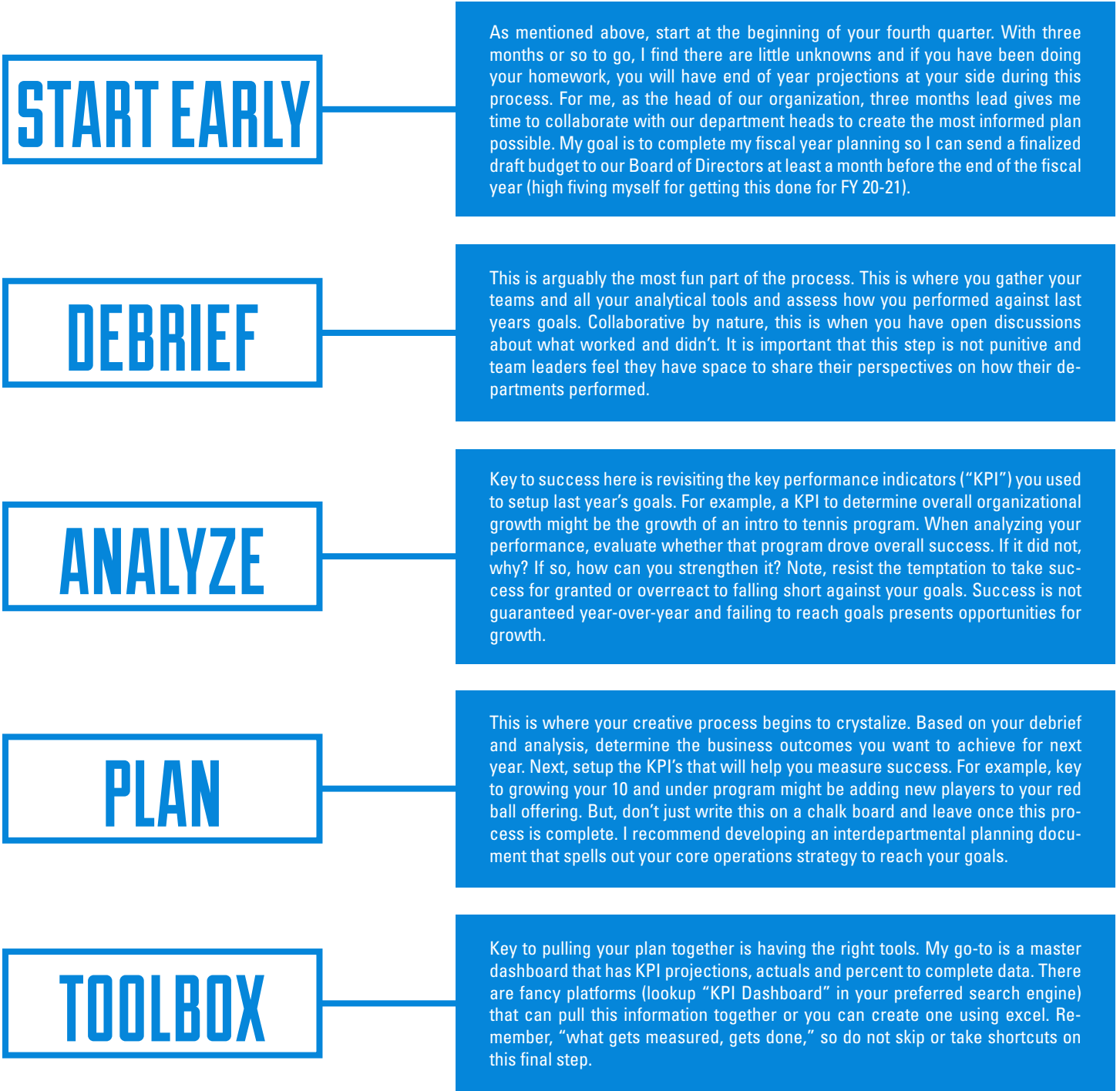


*John was recently named the Chief Operations Officer and Executive in Charge of the Washington Tennis & Education Foundation (WTEF). WTEF, founded in 1955, is located in Washington, D.C. and spread over two campuses, one of which is the site of the Citi Open. Prior to joining WTEF, John was General Manager of the Junior Tennis Champions Center (“JTCC”), a global leader in producing world class junior and collegiate tennis players as well as introducing new players to the sport. John played collegiate tennis at Villanova University, is a graduate of the Howard University School of Law and has over 15 years of tennis industry experience.*

*Presently, John oversees all operations at WTEF. He is tasked with helping chart the long term vision for the organization and executing a methodical plan that is sensitive to the changing landscape of tennis participation and participation in youth sports in general. John, a life-long athlete, proven leader, and innovator, is a recognized speaker on growing the sport of tennis and other relevant industry topics. You have probably seen John at the PTR International Tennis Symposium as he is a frequent faculty member.*

At the beginning of the fourth quarter every year I turn my attention to the highlight of my work calendar: preparing for the next fiscal year! This might sound odd, especially for those who find “admin” a distraction, but for me, it is when I get to be the most creative. Thanks to amazing leadership, I started this yearly tradition as a director of tennis, working closely with my supervisor at the time, Ajay Pant, to analyze the year that was ending and use our conclusions to prepare for growth in the next. I continued this tradition as the General Manager of the Junior Tennis Champions Center, which included overseeing tennis and facilities operations, as well as a significant portion of the capital budget. In my current role, as Chief Operating Officer and Executive in Charge of the Washington Tennis & Education Foundation, I use this same approach to not only manage our departments, but as method of reporting out to our Board.

I think many would agree that our industry needs more time to be creative and this has become my time to make an annual deposit into the growth of tennis. In the era of COVID, this is doubly important, as tennis business struggle to not only bring new players to tennis, but also how to bring players back to their courts. Below is my cheat sheet for planning in 5 easy steps:



For the good of the industry and development as a leader, I recommend carving out time towards the end of each fiscal year to plan for success. Admittedly, this process will take time, but that is okay. You will find that when you give time to debrief, analyze and plan you increase the likelihood of advancing the cause of your tennis business and the industry as a whole. In short, plan now, play later.





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## UPCOMING PLATFORM TENNIS CERTIFICATION WORKSHOPS

<b>October 3 &amp; 9*</b>	<b>Darien, CT</b>	<b>Ox Ridge Riding &amp; Racquet Club</b>
<b>October 10*</b>	<b>Red Bank, NJ</b>	<b>Navesink Country Club</b>
<b>October 24</b>	<b>Long Island, NY</b>	<b>Garden City Country Club</b>
<b>October 24*</b>	<b>Boston, MA</b>	<b>Dedham Country &amp; Polo Club</b>
<b>October 24</b>	<b>Baltimore, MD</b>	<b>Baltimore Country Club</b>
<b>October 30</b>	<b>Chicago, IL</b>	<b>Valley Lo Club</b>
<b>November 6</b>	<b>Philadelphia, PA</b>	<b>Aronimink Golf Club</b>
<b>November 14</b>	<b>Guilford, CT</b>	<b>Guilford Racquet &amp; Swim Club</b>

Johan du Randt, PPTR

*2020 APTA National Champion*

Macie Elliott, PPTR

*2020 APTA National Champion*

Marcela Rodezno, PPTR

*2020 APTA National Champion*

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CREATE

# WILLFUL WARRIORS

WITH WELL BUILT MENTAL SKILLS

by Jason Goldman-Petri



*Jason is the Director of Tennis at DC Adademy in Los Angeles, California. Previously, he was a coach at IMG Bollettieri Tennis Academy and Director of Tennis and Fitness at April Sound Country Club, north of Houston, Texas. Jason formerly served as the Head Coach for Stevenson University, in Baltimore, Maryland, and held numerous other coaching positions. He is a PTR Master of Tennis - Performance, and completed the USTA High Performance Coach program. Jason's book series, Tennis Circuitry: Master the Software of a Professional Tennis Player, is available on Amazon.*



I want you to think back to the last time you played a match yourself. (Warning, for some of you this might dredge up some repressed memories,, I know it does for me).

What was your thought process before the tournament? Did you practice for a month and play a warm up match or tournament? Or were you like most; free that weekend and wanted something to do?

When you were playing, were you able to concentrate on your goals? Or, were you like most; distracted by the prospect of losing to the scrub across the net? (My brain often conjures questions like, "What will my clients think?" Or, "If I lose, I wasted my time when I should have been teaching or with my family.")

And when you were done, did your friends and loved ones ask you if you had fun, or if you felt good about how well you competed? Or were they like most and ask, "Did you win?"

All of these things hint at potential mental pitfalls to which nearly all tennis players fall victim. Little problems like this are lurking everywhere for tennis players and their mental skills. Let's talk about what problems we are up against as tennis coaches and how best we can resolve them.

### Periodization

*Those who fail to plan have planned to fail.*

- Benjamin Franklin

Proper planning of training is called periodization. The elements of this kind of periodization are a training block, a pre-competitive block, and a competitive block (they can have other names, and often do in physical training realms). Without going into too much detail, essentially the training block is where a player is able to work on things in a lower stress environment, where it's OK for them to make mistakes in the name of improving an area that was hurting their performance. Our students need a chance to learn, and turn that learning into solid habits that will function well when they're under pressure.

Many players, parents and coaches either add on too many competitions or only ever drill. Since training is where important changes are made, chasing rankings points and playing tournament after tournament will not be beneficial. However, training blocks can't go on forever either, because eventually our students need to be able to compete as that really is the point of all this.

Why do we often neglect proper planning?

### Reactive Tendencies

You know what no one taught me in school that would have been really helpful? Financial planning. Guess when most people, myself included, realize they need financial planning? When they are already screwed with credit card debt and bad credit. (Someone said I should try cash instead of credit cards, but I am scared of change. Ba-dum-tss!) As a society, we are SUPER reactive instead of proactive. Medicine to treat our ailments instead of proper nutrition and healthy living. Rehab instead of pre-hab. Speeding instead of leaving early. And how do most players decide to sign up for tournaments? By seeing if they are busy over the weekend, and if they're free, they sign up.

Worse yet, if the parent or the player is overly results-oriented, they may go around playing every tournament under the sun trying to improve their ranking. Guess who is no longer going to get a chance to work on things in the low stress environment necessary to make actual meaningful changes? Which of course only fuels the need for more tournaments to get those coveted results... It's a vicious cycle.

What gets in the way of our ability to plan properly?

### The Group Structure of Tennis

The biggest hardship with proper planning is that if your students are playing different tournaments, then they may end up needing different things at different times. It is way easier for a coach to just focus on drilling everyone the same way and to not get involved in the tournament planning, since it could potentially be a lot of work with the way families tend to be busy themselves nowadays. One of the hardest things to do is to break down a group by what stage each is in, and work part of the group in one way, while having the other part of the group doing something different.

### Process vs. Results-Oriented Thinking

*If we put in the work,  
the scoreboard will reflect it.*

- John Wooden

Earlier I mentioned that parents and players can become too results-oriented, which is when our minds focus on the result of our actions. In tennis, this has numerous performance problems. You may often see players miss under pressure because they forgot their good technique/footwork. Since our brains can only entertain a few thoughts at a time, if we're too focused on the result of our actions, then we may fail to execute the action correctly.

It is much better to be process-oriented. Process-oriented is when we think about the actions themselves. Thinking about hitting the ball well or moving our feet correctly has the benefit of helping to make sure that we do what we are working on (which, as a coach, we picked as an area that would lead to improvement), and since it is something that is happening right now, it helps to keep us in the moment. Results of winning or losing the match happen in the future, while the result of my last point is in the past. Neither of which I have control over and both can lead to added nervousness or frustration. Best to stay in the present instead. (Clearly, I need to work on this too as my most recent loss still haunts me).

Why are we so results-oriented?

Because that's what it means to be successful in a capitalist country.

Results are important. Don't get me wrong. But our society emphasizes results to an unhealthy degree. What happens when one kid is making good progress but another kid is as well? You may get the same result against that player and so it seems like a loss, but meanwhile progress was made. We should be setting benchmarks and goals that can be obtained without the need for winning. And ultimately aren't our students going to be far more successful as tennis players if they aren't constantly getting distracted by the results or frustrated by them?

What gets in the way of process-oriented coaching?

### Impatience

The skill building process is a slow one. You will see your student struggle with the same element for a very long time before it becomes solidified and transforms into skill. Parents are impatient and want to see their kids succeed. Coaches are impatient, because oftentimes our success is determined by our students' successes. So we push our kids to 'get it in' and to 'find a way to win' and meanwhile those messages make them too scared to abandon beginner techniques/tactics or under pressure, they revert to what is comfortable, ultimately causing them to hit a hard plateau.

## Skill Based Learning vs. Knowledge Based Learning

*Our clients are not paying us for information,  
they are paying us for transformation!*

- One very smart Goldman-Petri

Although I would love to take credit for that, I actually stole it from my wife Amanda, who talks about it with her business and marketing clients. Very similar to tennis, being good at business is a skill that needs to be developed over time. And just like in tennis, too much information can screw up the skill building process.

"Let's hit crosscourt until you make 10 in a row," is a cue I often hear. Then, as soon as a mistake occurs, "You didn't bend your knees," or, "You didn't put enough spin on that one." And again with different and more instruction on subsequent mistakes.

And while this might be very good feedback on what is happening, it lacks the type of focus and dedication to a change that will lead to a long term skill acquisition. The concentrative powers of the human brain are finite, and realistically we can only work on a small number of things at a time in order for those elements to become ingrained skills. It may seem like a player is not concentrating, but the reality is giving too many things to focus on will create a very knowledgeable player who cannot play well. The truth is these players really are concentrating just on too many things to actually be effective as a player.

Where did this propensity to over instruct come from?

### Our Schooling

In school, we are lectured, talked to, given lots of information, and that's what we believe is good teaching. I took Spanish in school for seven years and while I can say, "Como esta," I am also incredibly unskilled. That's what happens when you try to learn a skill in a knowledge based instructional paradigm. But like speaking a foreign language, playing tennis is a skill. It is far better for us, as coaches, to set up opportunities for our students to turn difficult-to-learn techniques or movements into a habit that will hold up under pressure by testing one element over and over in various scenarios and under increasingly demanding situations. Similar to the Pimsleur Method of learning languages. Pimsleur focuses on a small number of necessary phrases and then slowly expands until you're able to say those phrases well, and understand how to use them in a normal two-way conversation. (Instead of memorizing every conjugation of the verb 'ir' like I did. Unfortunately, "Voy, Vas, Vai, Vamos, Vais, Van" did nothing for my ability to speak Spanish.)

What stands in the way of our ability to do this?

### Expectations

What do parents expect a lesson to look and sound like? Usually parents want tons of 'valuable' feedback. As a parent myself, it is one easy way to tell that my kid's coach isn't snoozing on the job. But while it may feel good in the moment, it's not what brings long term success, and especially success under pressure. Instead we should be pinpointing one key area, hammering it in until it's second nature, and then - and only then - allow our students to move forward. Or as one of my favorite mental coaches likes to say, "We can't practice until we get it right, we must practice until we could never get it wrong."

Put all of these things together and you can see how we might accidentally create the perfect storm of a player who fails to perform well under pressure.

The following are some simple things I have done that have helped my programs become more performance based, and have helped my students tremendously.

1

For low level players, set up your clinics so that they systematically lead to an important competition (higher level players will naturally have more divergent tournament schedules). Tell all the parents that at the end of the session, there is a tournament in town that you want everyone to sign up for (or host it yourself). Now all of your students are on the same macro-cycle and you can plan out their training accordingly (you might even be able to actually go watch your players compete, which we all know we should but often fail to do).

2

Pick a small number of things to work on with your players so that they can really focus on that element and work it until it has become habitual for their next competition.

**PRO TIP** You will almost certainly have to ignore some glaring problems while they do this, and that's OK. There will be more training blocks in the future to tackle those issues.

3

Setting up drills to be process oriented. Say something like, "You are working on X this training block. See if you can do 10 swings in a row doing X correctly. If you miss, that's fine as long as you do X." If that is too easy, you could do something like, "We will keep going until you make 10 with X correctly. If you miss but you did X correctly, you stay where you are in the count, but if you do X incorrectly, even if you make it IN, you go back to ZERO!" This makes getting the ball IN a consequence of doing the process correctly and only a lack of focus on the process sends the student back to the beginning.

4

If you have been paying attention, a big reason we are unable to do this important job is because of uneducated parents. One of the best things I do for myself is fill in the parents on how proper skill building differs from schooling, and what we are working on during the training block. Parents are oftentimes keen observers, having played other sports or even tennis themselves. They WILL see problems with their kid's games.

By explaining your plan of action to them, you may just find that they stop interjecting coaching tips to their kids from the sidelines as much during your lessons and allow you to do your job. Maybe even better, you might just get parents to help reiterate that focus should be on the process when the parent is alone with their child practicing or at a tournament that you couldn't attend.

5

Change the wording of how you talk to players after a tournament, competition, or competitive game in your clinics. Instead of asking, "Who won?," ask, "How did the techniques/tactics we were working on hold up under pressure?" This gives the players a way to be successful that's not tied to winning, and it shows them that you value the change more than the score.

When do most players and coaches decide to work on their mental skills? When they already have major mental issues! Don't be reactive and wait until it's too late to start building proper mental habits. Start planning out your programs to help develop good mental habits today and hopefully you will see that your students start to perform better under pressure.



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October 3	Mesa, AZ	October 20	Port Charlotte, FL
October 3	St. George, UT	October 21	Hilton Head Island, SC
October 9	Neptune Beach, FL	October 30	Memphis, TN
October 9	Bedminster, NJ	November 15	Atlanta, GA

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# Member News



## HONORS

**Arthur Anastopoulos**, 25 year PTR Professional will be inducted into the SC Tennis Hall of Fame. Arthur was MVP and team captain at University of South Carolina where he became one of the school's most accomplished players. He was ranked as high as number six in singles and number two in doubles in NCAA Division I tennis. Anastopoulos turned pro in 1980 and represented Greece in Davis Cup. Arthur competed in the US Open, French Open, and Italian Open. During his career, Arthur worked for the City of Charleston and the City of Macon and was chosen as one of the top 25 tennis directors in the nation. Arthur has positively influenced many tennis players over the past 35 years as a PTR Pro who makes a world of difference.



**Ben Adam** has achieved ANOTHER Master of Tennis designation. That's right, the Master of Tennis Junior Development just wasn't enough for Ben! He also achieved the Master of Tennis in Performance this year. Ben is the Youth Tennis Manager at the prestigious Atlantic Club in Manasquan, NJ and has been a PTR Pro for 7 years. Ben lives by the words "professional development" as he strives to grow more as a coach every day. Ben never stops learning as he attends regional conferences, sectional workshops, virtual conferences and of course numerous PTR Intl. Tennis Symposia. Maybe he'll be going for his 3rd Master of Tennis soon!



## NEW POSITIONS



**Jerry Price**, of West Columbia, SC became the Asst. Coach of Men's Tennis at Anderson University where he works under Head Coach, Joey Eskridge, 25-year PTR Professional.

**Sean Monaghan** has relocated to the HHI area. He is the Resident Pro at Sun City – Hilton Head and Low Country Tennis at Rose Hill.

**Bryan Fox**, certified PTR member, recently moved from California back to his hometown of Lancaster, Pennsylvania to be Head Pro at Hempfield Rec Center!



**Derek Sabedra** was named the Supervisor of Athletics for Dorchester County Public Schools!



You Go Girl! **Megan Foster** of Pittsburgh was recently named Head Men's and Women's Tennis Coach at Washington & Jefferson College, a liberal arts college in Washington, PA. Megan has been a PTR Professional for 28 years and is certified in 2 pathways. She has also served on many USTA committees.

## PTR Welcomes new Corporate Partner KINeSYS Sunscreen

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## NOTABLE



**Louie Cap** just completed his 45th consecutive Boston Marathon! And this year he ran it in 4:45 hours!

That's right! Dr. Ludovit Cap (or Super Louie to those who know him) is a member of the extremely elite Quarter Century Club (QCC) – which is those who have run the Boston Marathon 25+ consecutive years as official, numbered runners.

Of the 159 members of the Quarter Century Club (including 14 women), there are only 95 Active Streak Runners. Of those 95, Louie is extremely prestigious as the 6th MOST CONSECUTIVE Races.

**Marvin Tyler** of Florida and his students at Slammer Tennis World were so happy to be back on the tennis courts when his Summer Camp started back up in August. "I feel real good about being back on the tennis court. We are using social distancing, precautionary measures like temperature checks and keeping the classes small – many are siblings. We are happy to keep the kids and adults safe while enjoying the game of tennis," says Marvin.



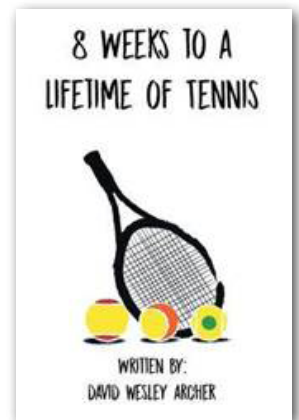
**Siobhan "Coach B" Belloli** with her SCATA Tennis program in Evansville, IN offered a special Pickleball/Tennis Summer Camp this year which was highly successful! "Kids loved the daily pickleball tournaments before tennis camp!" The transition is easier from pickleball to tennis vs. tennis to pickleball which is why I do pickleball first. All 15 kids now love and play pickleball every morning for about 45 minutes. Then we do conditioning, footwork drills and then straight into tennis. The kids look forward to our morning mini pickleball tournament before tennis. The transition is simple and pickleball wakes their minds and feet up so they are ready for their tennis lesson! We have ages 5 to 18 and they all play together. SCATA also has joined forces with One More Ball Kids skills program. Our kids get certificates as they achieve each level 1-10.



**David Archer**, a PTR Pro in Adult Development and in 10 & Under, has a thriving Junior Program in Salt Lake City, Utah. David proves that pros can make a huge income stream from 10 & Under Tennis while helping shape the next generation of

tennis players with sportsmanship, cooperation and a love for Tennis. This July, his club brought in \$24,000 in income from ROG programming ONLY. Over 1500 heads in July in his 10U program.

David started teaching tennis when he was 13 years old, helping his Dad with the High School Tennis Team. Now, 30+ years later, David has authored the book "8 Weeks to a Lifetime of Tennis." David creates a tennis culture that will instill a love for the sport in your students' hearts while boosting club revenue for 10 & Under tennis way beyond what you could have imagined.



**Monique Delatour** of St. Helena Island, SC recently received a grant from the PTR Foundation, shown here with Julie Jilly.

Monique teaches with Public Tennis, Inc. and she reaches many disadvantaged youth in her rural area. Monique brings tennis and structure to the youth and their families, most who don't have any equipment or even proper shoes. Monique received youth racquets, ROGY balls, targets, and tshirts for her tennis clinics. She also received an education grant to attend the PTR's new Level One Instructor Certification which is being piloted online. Anyone wanting to donate slightly used tennis shoes, or equipment will receive a tax-deductible receipt. Of course, monetary donations are also welcome. Email [Julie@ptrtennis.org](mailto:Julie@ptrtennis.org) for details.



**Chris Lewit** does his part to "grow" the PTR Membership. Chris' newest daughter Ocean is shown here in her "Future PTR Member" Tshirt. Chris, a 25-year member, runs Chris Lewit Tennis Academy and spoke at the 2018 PTR Intl. Tennis Symposium.



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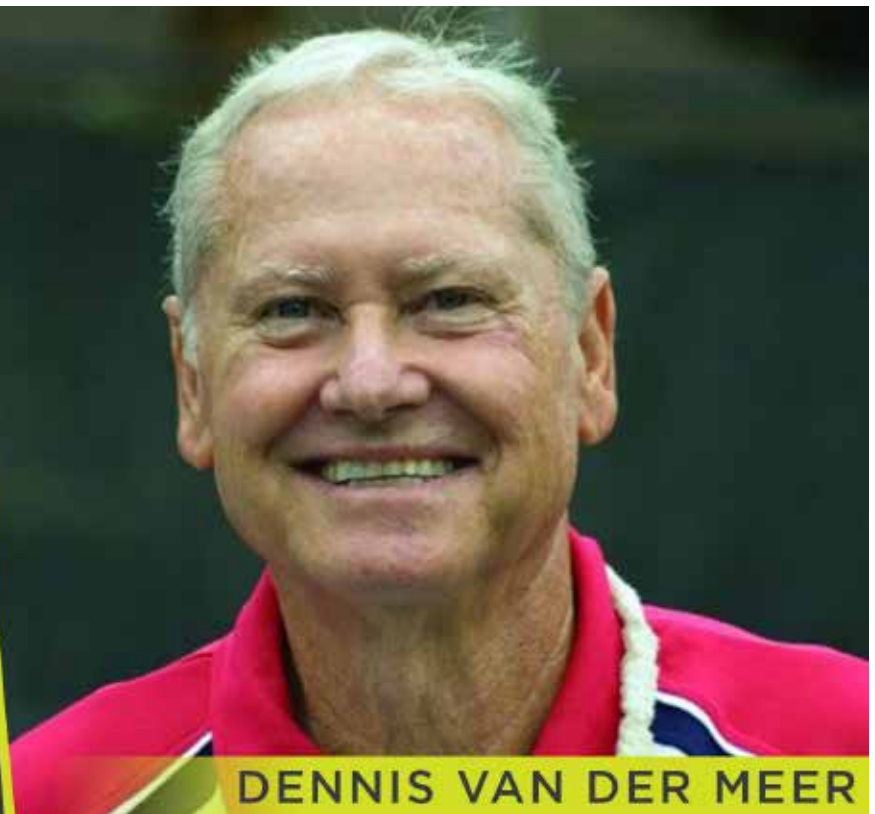




INTERNATIONAL  
TENNIS HALL OF FAME™

**Dennis Van der Meer**  
has been nominated  
for the Class of 2021

CONTRIBUTOR  
CATEGORY



DENNIS VAN DER MEER

## TENNIS' ULTIMATE HONOR

Induction into the International Tennis Hall of Fame is the ultimate honor in tennis, representing a sum of the honoree's achievements and impact as being at the highest possible level in the sport. Dennis has been nominated in the contributor category.

"This year's nominees, players and contributors, have all made a tremendous impact in and around the sport of tennis in their own unique ways, on and off the court," said ITHF President Stan Smith. "All five Player Category candidates have achieved incredible results on tennis' biggest stages - Grand Slam titles, Olympic medals, and topping the world rankings. Dennis Van der Meer's lasting impact is seen in the work of thousands of coaches and teaching pros around the world every day."

*The Contributor Category recognizes a true pioneer, visionary leader, or individual / group that has made a transcendent impact on the sport. This Category is considered once every four years.*

Dennis Van der Meer, legendary coach and "teacher of teachers," was a successful junior player who turned his attention to teaching at age 19 and then spent more than 65 years dedicated to working in the sport. As a young teaching pro, Van der Meer quickly recognized a need to develop a universal manner of teaching tennis in order to grow the sport. He sourced input from the finest tennis educators and assembled manuals and videos on teaching techniques. Van der Meer then set out to standardize group teaching methods and to develop a teaching certification. He was the founder of both the Van der Meer Tennis University and the Professional Tennis Registry (PTR), a leading tennis industry organization that works to educate, certify, and serve tennis teachers and coaches. PTR became the first international tennis teaching organization and it now has more than 16,000 certified members in more than 125 nations.

The Original 9 were also nominated for the Contributor Category. The Original 9 includes Americans Peaches Bartkowicz, Rosie Casals, Julie Heldman, Billie Jean King, Kristy Pigeon, Nancy Richey, Valerie Ziegenfuss, and Australians Judy Tegart Dalton and Kerry Melville Reid.

Nominees for this year's player ballot include US Open and Wimbledon champion and a former world No. 1, Australia's Lleyton Hewitt. United States' Lisa Raymond, winner of 11 Grand Slam titles in doubles and mixed doubles. 2003 French Open Champion and a former world No. 1, Spain's Juan Carlos Ferrero. Sweden's Jonas Björkman, winner of nine major doubles titles and a former doubles world No. 1. Two-time, back-to-back Roland-Garros champion Sergi Bruguera of Spain.

The ballot will go before the Official Voting Group, comprised of tennis journalists, historians, and Hall of Famers this fall. Additionally, the International Tennis Hall of Fame's Fan Vote presented by BNP Paribas will run October 1 – 25, for the Player Category nominees only. Be sure to put in your fan vote at [vote.tennisfame.com](http://vote.tennisfame.com)

# Game, Set, Match

# GENERATION Z

by Carlos Carrera



*Carlos Carrera is a certified PTR Professional and part of the Young Game Changers who presented at the 2020 PTR International Tennis Symposium. He is currently serving as Assistant Coach for the Columbia University Women's Tennis Team, which achieved its highest NCAA National Ranking in school history at #21 during the 2019-20 season. In addition, Carlos is a graduate student at Columbia University, pursuing a Master of Science in Sports Management.*

*Carlos was part of the 2018 and 2019 US OPEN activation with USTA's Net Generation, helping the organization bring over 3000 kids from all over the US to perform an on court demonstration at the tournament. In addition, he has worked at multiple other positions, gaining experience with players of all levels and abilities.*

*Born and raised in Quito, Ecuador, Carlos came to the United States through an athletic scholarship to play Division 1 tennis for Saint Peter's University, in Jersey City, NJ, where he earned Summa Cum Laude honors with a bachelor's degree in Accounting and a minor in International Business and Trade. He was the team captain his Senior year and received the Scholar Athlete of the Year award, for the highest GPA among male athletes.*



The day starts and Josephine, a 17 year old tennis player, reaches for her phone and opens Snapchat. It's the first thing she does every morning. After exchanging a few selfies with friends, she'll scroll through the Instagram feed for a few minutes. The years of Facebook and Twitter are over for the younger generations, who have migrated toward audiovisual apps. Josephine will check her social platforms at least 20 times over the course of her day. Meanwhile, a fierce competition among businesses is taking place in the background as they try to capture her attention. Josephine is our new customer, and sports are experiencing major issues in reaching this demographic known as Generation Z, mainly due to the significant changes in their behavior. Reaching and engaging Generation Z has to be one of our primary goals.

Generation Z has had a consequential impact on tennis, as they have ceased to fully engage, participate in and consume sports in general. It is increasingly challenging for sports to effectively reach, engage and retain the attention of this group. Because of different historical events, interests, characteristics and behaviors, Generation Z has forced organizations to change traditional strategies, and adapt to the different landscape with this emerging market. Failing to reach and grab the attention this demographic early in their lives could be devastating for sports, as it will be increasingly harder to turn them into avid fans. In sports like tennis, it's not only the changes in consumer behavior that affect us, but also the added issues of affordability and accessibility. This article presents recommendations to promote an increase in participation, as well as deeper engagement with the next generation. It can provide a basis for tennis and other sports looking for ways to solve the issue that is affecting the industry.

#### **WARM UP - Getting to Know Gen Z**

To understand how Generation Z is disrupting the traditional traits that have characterized consumer behavior for a long time, it is important to comprehend the different traits and behaviors that pertain to this demographic. Gen Z, also known as iGen, is loosely defined as those born between 1994 and 2010, following the Millennials, Generation X and Baby Boomers. They are digital and technology natives, born with smartphones, tablets and laptop computers in their hands, as well as the innate ability to use the internet.

Major economic and sociocultural events, such as the attacks of 9/11 and the recession in 2008, have influenced the way Gen Z'ers think and behave. Some of the key attributes of the group include shorter attention spans, desire for continuous (positive) feedback, increased screen time, higher anxiety and being less independent. The way they interact with each other has also changed, and they have different aspirations in terms of their free time, careers and lives in general. They prefer digital interaction and consumption of information over real life scenarios, which explains their dependence on apps. As a result, Generation Z behaves differently than every other generation has in the past, and therefore, new strategies have to be implemented to successfully reach and market to them.

Capturing the eyeballs of the next generation has become a major challenge for sports companies, now forced to rethink traditional communication, consumption, content creation and marketing strategies. Being born in a digital-only age, Gen Z consumes most everything through mobile devices. Sports Innovation Lab attests in its article, *A New Age of Sports*, "For younger generations of consumers the smartphone has become a primary device for content consumption. While older generations (35+) remain attached to television for consuming content, Millennials and especially Gen Z consumers prefer to look to their smartphone for content with which to engage."

One of the teens interviewed by Google and Ipsos for research into the

mobile-first mindset said, "Our generation is taking way too many selfies and staying up all night watching videos." The research concurs that more than 70% of them are spending more than three hours a day watching videos on their phones. However, due to their shortened attention span, most of Generation Z are likely unwilling to sit down through an entire sporting event. Even though Gen Z'ers are spending hours every day on their devices, they are not consuming traditional sports content or fully engaging. In contrast, they lean more toward short-format video content in apps, such as Snapchat, Instagram and TikTok, as well as e-sports and video gaming content in platforms like Twitch and YouTube Gaming. The next generation is using technology and consuming video more than ever, so experimentation will be key for businesses to discover what content captures their attention the most.

Overtime is an example of a company that has recognized the opportunity in the market and has successfully targeted and perhaps even created Gen Z sports fans. Overtime labels itself as a sports network for the next generation. In just under three years, the company has reached an audience of more than 6 million followers across all platforms, with a billion unique visitors last year, and more than 250 million minutes of content watched per month. People under age 35 constitute 88% of Overtime's audience. Traditional sports networks like ESPN serve the audiences that grew up using these platforms, however, it's hard for them to satisfy both the older and younger generations, creating a lot of space and opportunity for companies like Overtime.

What has been the key for Overtime to be successful? In the podcast, *Icons & Disruptors* with Maurice DuBois, Overtime owners Dan Porter and Zach Weiner explained that the key relied on fully understanding and quickly adapting to the changes in behavior of the younger generations. Through a process of trial and error, the organization found value in a generation of talented young athletes, who also grew up with smartphones in their hands and have a ton of content, creativity and followers, but were completely invisible to mainstream media. Furthermore, Overtime understood that younger generations care less about facts and metadata, and more about feeling connections and engaging at deeper levels. As a result, Overtime distributes content that speaks to the next generation, featuring amazing young athletes and with a completely different tone and language brought to life through the captions.

It's important to mention that one of Overtime's owners, Zach Weiner, is only 25 years old, which has been critical in helping the company understand how the younger generation thinks and behaves. The company has become a brand that young fans not only follow, but of more significance, users feel passionate about Overtime. The owner's age reflects how important it is for organizations to hire young professionals, whose experience might not be ideal, but who can relate to the behaviors of younger people. During a Sports Management Conference, Jon Leddecki, co-owner of the NHL team the New York Islanders, said that he firmly believes in hiring young professionals. He readily admits that he doesn't know everything, and is willing to surround himself with young minds to help him cultivate younger audiences. In summary, sports businesses, including tennis at all levels, must understand the distinct characteristic traits and changes in behavior of the next generation, and adapt quickly to increase the engagement to turn them into players and fans.

#### **GAME - Reach Gen Z through Participation**

The sports industry has taken a significant toll in terms of youth participation and consumption of sports content. In *A New Age of Sports*, a report by Sports Innovation Lab, data suggests that youth participation in sports is either flat or declining. "Rarely do new studies show participation in competitive sports growing. This creates another challenge for the sports industry as it tries to fill the funnel with new fans. If young people aren't playing the game, they must be finding role models in other areas of entertainment."

According to the 2019 TIA Tennis Participation Report, participation among younger generations has seen a slight increase over the last few years. Despite the minimal growth, the real challenge becomes keeping those players motivated and interested in the sport. As we know, learning tennis can be challenging and may not be as enjoyable compared to other sports. Unless there is a group of players involved, the social aspect of tennis is also partially removed from the equation. As a result, youth players are eventually dropping out, which represents a significant issue for the tennis industry. Players dropping out means we have fewer chances of turning them into avid fans. Failing to turn this generation into avid tennis fans will result in monetary loss, as Gen Z will have the buying power of \$44 billion in the near future. Yes that is right, \$44 billion, with a B.

At the national level, USTA and PTR have increased efforts to address the situation behind the low participation and engagement with Generation Z. Both organizations developed 10 and Under programs, one to entice new players, the other for coaches to understand the nuances of teaching tennis to children. PTR also instituted 11 to 17 certification for coaches working with juniors. The USTA has launched a series of initiatives throughout the years in hopes to solve this problem. In 2010, USTA introduced shorter courts, smaller nets and racquets, and low compression balls. It had little impact during its early stages, as it represented a substantial change for the tennis community and the way in which the sport was traditionally passed along to the next generations. However, it has found success as tennis providers and coaches have come to realize the value behind the new format. The benefits lie not only in skill development, but also in the level of enthusiasm that resulted from the new format, as it makes it easier and faster for kids to learn the sport and ultimately, have more fun.

By 2017, USTA launched an adjacent program - Net Generation - geared toward inspiring young players through continuous efforts to make the game more accessible to parents and kids. The strategy included a website and mobile app to connect parents and kids ages 5-18, with tennis providers, teachers and coaches at schools, parks and clubs.

The 2019 US Open welcomed more than 1,500 youth players from all over the USA to participate in 'Net Generation On Court Demos'. The demo invited Net Generation providers, players and parents from all over the country to showcase their skills and perform a demonstration in front of thousands of fans at the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center. The demos took place minutes before the scheduled matches. Also, one lucky boy or girl got to meet the pro players and perform the coin toss for the upcoming match. The idea behind initiatives like this is to create memorable experiences for the younger generations that will keep them motivated and interested in the sport. I was fortunate to be part of the support staff that organized this activation. Based on some of the players' reactions, I am confident that providing this sort of memorable experience is an effective method to inspire and engage the next generation of players. However, it is strictly geared toward clubs and providers where tennis is already a component of the community, leaving an entire part of the socioeconomic cohort underserved and without any exposure to the sport.

One of the biggest challenges for sports like tennis is the perceived cost and accessibility. Tennis has had a long history of being labeled expensive and elitist due to the cost of the equipment, and high fees for club memberships and lessons. When in reality, public facilities exist all over the USA that offer free or low cost tennis courts and sometimes lessons. With an estimated 250,000 courts, hypothetically the United States can accommodate more than 30 million players. A lot of these courts are part of public facilities and parks that can be accessed usually at no cost, counter to the common belief that tennis is for the wealthy.

The TIA Report also shows that nearly 60% of tennis participants belong to a household with incomes greater than \$75,000 a year. Almost 70% are Caucasian/White. The expensive and elite culture stereotypes has not allowed tennis to fully spread among people of every socioeconomic status and thus, reach broader audiences among Generation Z. It's hard to cultivate interest in the sport for young people who have never been introduced to it. Hence, many kids and juniors who belong to low income households and are from different ethnicities are missing the opportunity to play. Avery Shackelford, a tennis blogger for MyTennisLessons.com, wrote a very powerful statement in one of her articles, "The more children who want to play tennis, the more accessible and affordable this sport can become."

To make tennis more accessible and affordable, it's important to create more opportunities for all members of Generation Z to play. USTA's initiatives have done a tremendous job providing the existing young generation of players with ways in which they can learn the sport faster and have more fun. Also, Net Generation activations have created memorable experiences to deepen the interest in the sport. However, only young players who are already involved in tennis in one way or another, are able to take advantage of these opportunities and experiences. But, what about all those Gen Z'ers who have never held a tennis racquet before?

It will be challenging to fully engage the members of this generation if efforts are not increased at the grassroots level. If sports organizations fail to capture the next generation early on, chances are they will not change their behaviors later in their lives when they become a major part of the consumer market. A great strategy to reach and stay connected with Gen Z is Stage of Aces, organized by a New York based company called MatchPoint Entertainment. This initiative looked to incorporate tennis playing opportunities at events that are heavily attended by members of Gen Z, such as music festivals. Due to their short attention span, the activity incorporated the 10 and Under format, with shorter courts and low compression balls, as well as

a unique activity done at a fast pace powered by upbeat music. The idea was to create a free, easily accessible, and unique experience that they can either watch or take part in with a friend, share the experience on social media, and therefore create a desire to further participate in tennis.

Other sports organizations are also attempting to reach Gen Z by providing free opportunities, further demonstrating the value behind attracting younger generations through increased efforts geared toward participation. The NHL started a street hockey initiative that gives anyone the chance to get involved for free. The New York Rangers partnered with Good Sports, an organization that gives kids the lifelong benefits of sport and physical activity by providing equipment, apparel and footwear to those most in need. The partnership represents a well founded initiative to build younger audiences by incentivizing participation. Other sports organizations could use this as an example when creating strategy to reach Generation Z.

Partnerships and sponsorships with other businesses, brands or professional athletes, can also help create more visibility, awareness and engagement, especially when it comes to athletes or brands that kids already follow.

Another way to reach Gen Z is by targeting schools and colleges. USTA makes an excellent argument for this in Generation Z Engagement Guide. "Gen Z consumers are between 2-19; this covers the full spectrum of the school system. With this in mind, there lies a huge opportunity to create meaningful partnerships with various schools to generate and create in-

terest in the sport. If we are able to secure their interest in tennis in the early stages of their lives, they will be far more likely to remain in tennis later in life.”

Public elementary and middle school students lack opportunities to play individual sports like tennis due to insufficient space and/or equipment, or large class sizes. As a result, offering tennis as part of the physical education curriculum represents a major complication for schools. On the contrary, in sports like soccer or basketball, an open space and a ball are all you need to introduce students to the sport, engaging them earlier in their lives, on a large scale, and at almost zero cost. Tennis targeting Gen Z through the school system goes hand-in-hand with offering more lessons, equipment and scholarships that are subsidized or even free.

In order to increase participation, it is important for parents, kids and coaches to understand the positive impact tennis can have on lives. There is no doubt that every sport comes with great benefits to the overall mental and physical health of the athletes. Tennis however, is a complete discipline that develops good habits and requires dedication, effort, sacrifice and perseverance, but also challenges players to think critically and solve problems. Tennis impacts the physical, physiological and mental aspects, as well as helps on the social side by creating opportunities to meet new people, make friends, and cultivate healthy relationships. Using tennis to address weight issues and mental health (anxiety) problems, or to promote life skills such as hard work, critical thinking, problem solving and discipline, can be attractive reasons for Gen Z to participate in the sport for a lifetime. Creating more playing opportunities, lowering the financial barriers, providing free equipment and lessons, and creating awareness of the sport, will help increase participation and engagement among Generation Z, and will help tackle the cultural stereotype behind tennis.

### **SET - Reach Gen Z through Social Media**

We’ve already established that Generation Z spends many hours a day on their mobile devices, so it is crucial to use social media and mobile apps to reach and engage with them. Gen Z’ers are constantly taking selfies and sharing with friends on Snapchat, scrolling through Instagram, watching short format videos, and even creating and uploading their own content on TikTok or YouTube. Sports businesses have to see this digital interaction as an opportunity to leverage the use of social platforms to connect with the next generation.

Adapting your social media plan and strategies to the changes in behavior of the younger generations is vital, as well as tailoring the content accordingly to each one of the different platforms where Gen Z is heavily active. Tennis coaches and organizations should connect with Generation Z by sharing short format video content, such as tutorials and highlights, in a way that’s unique and relatable. Facebook and Twitter are passé with this group. Social media engagement should be focused on Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube and TikTok where Gen Z’ers spend a lot of their screen time today. But stay alert, because tomorrow new platforms will emerge!

In addition, it’s important to find partners who can help expand your reach and engage larger audiences of Generation Z. For instance, finding non-celebrity influencers and young talented athletes who can share content that promotes tennis, play opportunities, local events, news and more. This allows Gen Z’ers not only to find content that speaks to them, but makes them want to connect and engage. Using influencers or young athletes is a powerful tool, because it is far more relatable and exciting for them.

Social media is so fast moving and critical to reaching the next generation that USTA enlisted KeyHole.co, a company that provides strategies

and analytics. The company helped the USTA and Net Generation in content strategizing that resulted in consistent year-to-year engagement growth, as well as more than a billion impressions on some of their posts. You can read how USTA leveraged social media under Resources/Case Studies on the KeyHole.co website. When done well, leveraging the advances in technology (software, apps, devices, etc.) combined with data and analytics can be substantially beneficial for sports businesses looking to reach Generation Z through new and innovative strategies.

Because Gen Z are digital natives, the efforts should be focused not only at the social media level, but also additional digital areas where they are heavily invested, such as other mobile apps and video games. The opportunities are endless when it comes to leveraging digital platforms to reach them, but one size does not fit all. The strategies must be tailored to each platform and incorporate content that is unique, relatable, and that speaks to younger generations.

### **MATCH - Reach Gen Z through Coaches**

Finally, an important component to successfully and effectively engage and retain Generation Z is to educate coaches, so that we understand this group and learn the proper techniques to keep them motivated and captivated. As coaches, we usually have the first interaction with new players and spend a significant amount of time with them, which represents a difficult task due to the different behaviors compared to previous generations. The unique behaviors of Generation Z, combined with technology advancing at a fast pace, have left coaches with an important duty to understand and learn the necessary skills to deal with this part of the population. In general, it’s challenging to work with Gen Z due to their short attention span, dependence on social media and phones, difficulty solving problems, lack of independence, anxiety and poor ability to communicate in person.

Michael Mignano, a doctoral student in the Institute for the Study of Youth Sports and Department of Kinesiology at Michigan State University, gives some important suggestions for coaches when it comes to working with younger generations.

## **Explain the Why**

With technology and information at their fingertips, Generation Z athletes expect adults to have done their homework. Providing a quick rationale for training methods and practice plans can improve motivation and effort of young people. It also reduces the inevitable ‘why’ questions from both players and parents.

## **Communicate Effectively**

While face-to-face communication is not a strength of Generation Z athletes, coaches and support staff can challenge young players by asking open-ended questions, using text messaging only for logistical communication, practicing face-to-face conversations in team meetings or training, and switching up the methods of communication (i.e., videos, articles and demonstrations) to aid messaging.

## Be Direct

With the shorter attention spans of Generation Z, coaches and support staff can adapt by making their messages more direct at the start and end of training sessions and during pre-game or half-time speeches.

## Focus on Quality Over Quantity

Today's young athletes (and their parents) are more in tune with strength and conditioning techniques, as well as injury prevention. Coaches and support staff can assist by being aware of overtraining and burnout symptoms and using periodization principles when scheduling training and competitions.

## Build Independence

Undoubtedly, Generation Z athletes are more dependent on significant adults than any other cohort in history. By giving players some autonomy, choice, and responsibility, coaches and support staff can give them more ownership and develop skills related to independence. For example, providing opportunities for decision making, critical thinking, and accountability can help athletes with personal and professional development.

## Promote Resiliency

While each generation is considered 'softer' than the previous one, Generation Z is known to have heightened difficulties dealing with adversity. Coaches and support staff can create opportunities for players to cope with adversity and learn perseverance and resilience. Creating pressure and challenging situations in training, along with teaching appropriate coping strategies, may assist Generation Z athletes with how to better handle competitive and personal setbacks.

Being educated about the characteristics and behaviors of Generation Z will help you better understand this demographic and could have a very positive impact on engagement. As a result, coaches should continue to educate themselves in order to adapt to the changes in behavior and effectively engage Generation Z, as coaches' actions and words have a substantial influence over the lives and decisions of young athletes.

Tennis properties and sports organization in general have to understand and adapt to the changes in consumer behavior in order to engage members of Generation Z, as they will become a major part of the consumer market in the near future. It's a difficult task, but certainly not an impossible one, as some companies and strategies have proven successful. For a sport like tennis, the issue goes beyond failing to reach Generation

Z and lies also in the perceived lack of accessibility and affordability to play. On one hand, it's important for tennis organizations to provide more opportunities for Generation Z to get involved through subsidized equipment and lessons, which can make the sport more affordable and accessible to people from all backgrounds and incomes. As a result, this will also help to change the cultural stereotypes that ties tennis to words like elite and expensive, and thus increase participation at all levels. On the other hand, given that Generation Z are digital natives, leveraging social media will be key for sports businesses. In that sense, it's important to understand and adapt content strategies to the different traits and behaviors that characterize this part of the population. In addition, sharing content that is specifically tailored and targeted toward the next generation, as well as partnering with relatable influencers and young talented and creative athletes, are essential to successfully reach and market to this group. Sports businesses should continue to focus on creating more unique and memorable experiences for this generation to get involved in the sport. Once they are exposed to tennis, it is up to the coaches to keep the engagement and motivation at a high level. An interest in the sport that with time could potentially turn into a passion, and ultimately into love. If members of Generation Z participate in tennis, and develop a passion and love for the game, they will likely be engaged for the rest of their lives. As a result, younger generations will win games, sets and matches, but also will win in life, because sports have the power to change lives.



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# 5

## GOOD TIPS FOR INSTRUCTORS

by David Broida



*David has been coaching tennis at Harrington High School, Bryn Mawr, and as Head Girls Coach led his team to the Pennsylvania State Championship in 2016. Prior to Harrington, David served as Tennis Coach at The Shipley School, also in Bryn Mawr, and from 1974-2007, as Upper Merion Township Parks and Recreation Director, overseeing a year-round public tennis program for all ages.*

### 01

#### **Who should pick up the balls during a lesson?**

Tennis is a game of repetition; the more balls your student hits effectively, the faster s/he will learn, and the better s/he will play. So, when the cart is almost empty, leave some balls, set your student up to self-feed, set a goal, such as down the line or crosscourt, and pick up the balls yourself. If your lesson is 60 minutes, make the most of the time by maximizing the number of balls your student hits.

### 02

#### **Do you have a tennis ladder?**

Tennis is about footwork, as much or more than other skills. Getting to the ball and getting into hitting position are functions of good footwork. Have a tennis ladder you can lay on the court, and run drills using various patterns. Your students will make up some patterns on their own. Good footwork can yield great tennis.





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## 03

### **Do your students hit too many practice serves into the net?**

Tennis is about footwork, as much or more than other skills. Getting to the ball and getting into hitting position are functions of good footwork. Have a tennis ladder you can lay on the court, and run drills using various patterns. Your students will make up some patterns on their own. Good footwork can yield great tennis.

## 04

### **Tennis is about learning and fun, but in what order?**

Your students will not learn if they are not having fun. And, conversely, if they are learning, they will have fun. Don't neglect the fun aspect of a lesson. For the most part, your students come to you because they want to learn tennis skills. Mostly, their parents are not forcing them to take tennis lessons. So, to keep your students, keep them happy on the court. They can be pushed to improve their play, they can and should show discipline, responsibility, good tennis etiquette, etc., but this can be accomplished in a congenial atmosphere. The more fun your students have on court with you, the more they will tell their friends about your tennis lessons. Word-of-mouth is still our best recruiting tool, and your students are your best advertising agents.

## 05

### **Are you ready for minor emergencies?**

Keep a few Band Aids in your wallet, a First Aid kit in the trunk of your car. Stock bee sting swabs, an ice pack, an ace bandage; you never know when you'll need them. Are you certified in First Aid, CPR, concussion care? A server can strike his or her partner in the back of the head, and the result could easily be a concussion. Know what to do before you have to know what to do. (A player on the high school team I coach sat out the entire season last fall with a concussion caused by her partner's serve.)



# GOOD STROKES FOR *Senior Folks III*

by Jack Thompson & Dr. David Staniford



*A PTR International Master Professional, and 2015 PTR Professional of the Year, Jack has a graduate background in Exercise Physiology and Motor Learning. During his 36 year career, he has worked as a Head Professional and was Head Men's and Women's Tennis Coach at Catawba College. Currently, Jack is Co-Director of Tim Wilkison Tennis Academies and Co-Director of Nike Tennis Camps, both in Charlotte, North Carolina, and is also Director of Tennis for the City of Salisbury. Additionally, he is the boys and girls middle school Head Tennis Coach at the Charlotte Latin School. Jack is co-author of Power, Speed and Stamina for Tennis: A Complete Guide for the Player and Coach.*



*David has been a professor, coach, administrator and tennis pro for more than 40 years. Growing up in Sydney, Australia, he began his coaching career in the Outback. Coached by the legendary Harry Hopman, David played tennis for the University of Oregon, where he earned his Ed.D. An expert in Movement Analysis, he has taught and coached at every level. A former NCAA Division 1 coach, he has coached several state and national junior champions. He currently teaches and consults with players on movement technique and conducts clinics and camps around the world. Currently a South Carolina resident, David is the Tennis Professional at Savannah Lakes Village where he conducts clinics and team training for seniors of all levels. He is the author of several books including, Natural Tennis and Natural Movement for Children, and writes a syndicated column, Good Strokes for Senior Folks.*

For the past two decades, we have taught tennis clinics together in Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina. During this time, approximately half of our work has involved senior doubles.

Our philosophy has evolved over the years, and the drills and training tips we have developed for seniors have improved the performance of both our recreational and league competitors. Before we get into specifics, let's consider some facts about seniors that need to be kept in mind.

As men age, they lose flexibility - they also lose strength at roughly the rate of 1% per year over the age of 40. Hence, a man 65 years old will be 25% weaker than he was at age 40 (assuming that he doesn't strength train).

Women lose very little flexibility, but their strength decline is more noticeable, since most women, even when young, possess only 50-70% of the upper body strength of a male.

Accordingly, both men and women 55 and over cannot hit as hard when compared to younger players.

As a general rule, both men and women become more susceptible to being lobbed. Indeed, with 55 and over play, the lob often results in an outright winner.

Bending down to reach low shots is problematic for seniors. With men, the issue is reduced flexibility and with women, it's a lack of strength.

Flexibility and strength training can help, but the overwhelming majority of seniors will not use supplemental training regardless of what the pro recommends.

Taking all of this into consideration, we recommend the following for improving doubles play for your senior players.

#### **Don't Miss!**

This means minimizing unforced errors and keeping the ball in play. We suggest starting each practice by counting the number of consecutive groundstrokes players are able to hit. Try this for 10 minutes - every time a player misses, s/he starts a new count in an attempt to beat his/her previous count. If their partner hasn't missed, they can continue adding to their count. A good score for 3.0 players is 20; players 3.5 and up should strive to hit 30 to 50.

#### **Be able to Hit the Ball Slow and Low, as well as Soft and High**

In each practice, players should spend time hitting crosscourt groundstrokes at their practice partners feet (who are required to stay just behind their own service line). In addition, practice should include lobs from the baseline and lob volleys from the service line.

#### **Practice Shoulder High Forehand and Backhand Volleys, as well as Overhead Smashes from the Service Line**

Very little time should be spent hitting these shots close to the net. Why? Because when a point ends in senior play, 75% of the time, two or more players are at the service line.

#### **Develop and Consistently Practice Drop Shots from both the Service Line and Baseline**

A great drill for this has both players at the baseline hitting crosscourt. One player is designated as the drop shot hitter. The drop shot hitter starts the rally and when the other player sends the ball back, the drop shot hitter attempts a drop shot. A drop shot that bounces two or more times before crossing the service line is considered excellent. The drill can then be repeated with the other student serving as the drop shot hitter. This drill can and should be repeated with the drop shot hitter 4 or 5 feet behind the service line and their partner at the baseline.

#### **Don't Miss Returns!**

When playing practice sets, players count how many missed returns are unforced. As senior players ourselves, we both strive to be able to count on one hand the missed returns in a match. We don't always achieve this, but it sure has helped us to develop solid returns.

#### **Position**

Coaches should teach good court positioning to seniors, and this is a lot different than for younger players.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, coaches should emphasize more mid-court play and playing from an offset position at the net (where one player is closer to the net than his/her partner). Generally speaking, this involves teaching seniors who have the ball being played by an opponent directly in front of them (the ball side of the court) closing the net while their partner plays slightly farther back. Doing so aids substantially in being able to cover lobs. Coaches need to design 'game like' drills where seniors work points to achieve good court position. Specific drills to set up winning shots by partners can be made an integral part of every team practice.

#### **Balance**

As professionals we must place more focus on teaching balance as a fundamental skill. Balance is the ability to maintain equilibrium either at rest or while moving.<sup>2</sup> The overwhelming majority of top senior players study their opponents' weaknesses and use guile, disguise and change of pace to get opponents off balance or at least out of their comfort zone.<sup>3</sup> In other words, coaches should focus more on teaching seniors how to force their opponents into errors or weak shots than how to hit outright winners. For example, while warming up for league matches, coaches should emphasize checking out how their opponents move to wide balls and balls hit right at them. Any deviation from good balance, mobility or agility should be noted and should serve as the basis for shot selection during match play.

### Have a Signature Shot

All senior players have a best shot and it should be practiced during every workout. Moreover, when the opportunity arises to use it in a match, it should be hit with confidence. Too often, we see players spend too much time trying to improve a weakness and little or no time on their strength(s). When this happens, the strength(s) decline and the result is weaker overall play.

### Protect your Net Player!

There is a plethora of information on this, but the bottom line is when at the baseline, players must - at all costs - keep their net player out of harm's reach! This means that the job of the baseliner is to hit crosscourt either low or high and deep, and if going down the line, lobbing most of the time. A net player's job is to put the ball away, but s/he can't do that if s/he is constantly having the ball hit at him/her by the opposing net player!

### Practice/Improve Service Accuracy

According to Bill Tym, an award winning coach and speaker, 98% of all tennis players fail to practice their serves. We advise working on hitting serves two times per week. Developing the capability of hitting wide, down the T and into the body gives players a tremendous advantage over their competition.

### Play Practice Sets using 2 Back Formation

While this may not be a team's forte, it should be practiced regularly. Doing so gives a team a secondary means of winning a match and it's sometimes the only option that can keep them in a match.

### ALWAYS Think about Making the Shot at Hand

As simple as this sounds, many players don't do it. Through informal survey, we have found that the majority of seniors - when having to hit their weakest shot - worry about the consequences of missing! NEVER think about missing a shot; always visualize the ball going back in to play!

In conclusion, as coaches, we need to teach players 55 and over much differently than young players. By applying the above techniques, we can coach seniors to play 'within themselves' and thereby enhance their enjoyment and longevity in the game.

### References

1. Staniford, David J. Good Strokes for Senior Folks I. TennisPro magazine. March/April 2013
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3. Boaz, John K., and Staniford, David J., Natural Tennis. Stipes Publishing, 2nd ed., 2010.

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# International Memb

## ITALY



PTR Italy Male Pro of the Year was awarded to **Massimo Ogna**, a PTR Professional in 3 Pathways. He has achieved MAP 5A and is a 26-Year Member of PTR. Massimo is a FIT National Coach.



PTR Italy Female Pro of the Year was awarded to **Cinzia Fabiani**, a 22-Year Member and PTR Professional with the ASD Fabiani Tennisschool.



A 10 & Under Certification was recently held in Marleno, South Tyrol, Italy from August 20 – 23rd.

Luigi Bertino, PTR Italy Director of Education, conducted the course. The 27 participants were assisted by PTR Workshop Leaders, Carlo Alberto Massaro, Jelena Simic, Francesco Foschi and Giorgio Roccato.

The PTR Family makes a new family! Congratulations to Carlo Alberto Massaro (PTR Italy staff and PTR Professional) and Jelena Simic (PTR Professional) who recently got married in Cittadella, Italy. The couple met at their PTR Certification Workshop in Portorose, Italy and have been inseparable since. A few months after the workshop, Carlo went to Jelena's home in Bosnia and Herzegovina and proposed to her in a front of her parents. The couple attended the PTR Symposium on Hilton Head Island in February and Jelena was crowned the PTR Women's Open Champion. Now they are living in Meran where Carlo is working for the PTR Office.



In the picture, PTR Italy crew from left to right: Luciano Botti, David Botti, Michele Marchiodi, Carlo Alberto Massaro, Francesco Foschi, Emiliano Minello and Jelena Simic.

## CANADA



Dany Couture is a 40-year PTR Professional in Ontario, Canada. Dany has been giving free tennis clinics for the past 38 years and now also promoting and teaching Pickleball in Aurora, Ontario, Canada. Dany is a PPR

Dan has been promoting tennis for many years and produced the first TV series called "Tennis, Sport of a Lifetime" with Trillium Cable as part of the Rogers cable network in Canada in 1989. Dan also supports all efforts of the PTR/PPR in Canada.



## CHINA



PTR China Provider, Adams Zhao Ruifeng headed to Xi An Province Aug 1-3rd to conduct another 10 & Under Certification Workshop.



PTR China Provider, Adams Zhao Ruifeng was very busy this summer. Here is the 10 & Under Certification Workshop he conducted July 22-24, 2020 in Haikou, China.



10U workshop conducted by Adams Zhao Ruifeng, July 15-17, 2020 in Nanjing, China.



10U workshop conducted by Adams Zhao Ruifeng, July 2-4, 2020 in Fuzhou, China.



10U workshop conducted by Adams Zhao Ruifeng, July 2-4, 2020 in Fuzhou, China.



10U workshop conducted by Adams Zhao Ruifeng, June 5-7, 2020 in Shanghai, China.

# ASK THE EXPERT

**Q** We are in need of a new ball machine this year, unfortunately a new machine was not in the budget? Any suggestions?

**A** This is a common situation. Clubs should always budget for Annual Preventative Maintenance including a possible replacement parts estimate as well as possible machine replacement if machine is 8 years or older. The lifespan is generally 10 years if properly maintained.

The best solution here is to create a Ball Machine Club. With a Ball Machine Club, customers purchase a pass to use the machine on an unlimited basis, giving them access to the ball machine more frequently without having to pay a per-usage charge. Normally the customers spend money each time they train with the machine, causing them to budget their usage. This means the customer uses the ball machine less and fails to realize the benefits the machine can provide. However, the pay-to-play program still works well in resort areas where customers cannot always find a game.

A demo day, showcasing the value of the ball machine, is the best method for organizing a Ball Machine Club. This demo day should be used as a vehicle for selling Ball Machine Club Passes. It is best for a Ball Machine Representative to run the demo day because that person has been factory-trained on how to give such a presentation and properly showcase the ball machine to the membership. It is very important that you market the demo day well so you can ensure that as many of your members attend as possible.

The Average Annual Single Ball Machine Club Pass is \$200.00. The Average Family Ball Machine Club Pass is \$250.00. (up to three family members) You can run a Special for a Single Pass Rate of 2 Years for \$300.00 with a deadline of the demo day to sign up. If you get 25 people here you have generated \$7500.00. The third year the prices return to normal.

There could also be Equipment Leasing Options. Please contact your Ball Machine Representative or the factory at 800-776-6670.



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