



Middle and High School Tennis Programs Guide

Overview

An organizer should work directly with schools to help develop intramural and interscholastic tennis clubs and leagues to build fun, healthy and safe programs for middle and high school students.

Your Role

Anyone can help to start a school tennis club/league: PE teachers, administrators, faculty, teaching pros, parents, volunteers, and/or after school providers (e.g. CTA, NJTL, youth organizations).

Getting Started

Obtain necessary approvals

- Meet with appropriate school administrators (principal, athletic director and PTA/PTO president)
- Check the school system student activity handbook for any rules and regulations
- Get required school clearance for all volunteers
- Determine if the proposed club/league can be a school sponsored and funded event

Set a schedule and a playing area

- Determine the season - consider weather, school terms, court availability and conflicts with other extra-curricular activities and sports
- Identify all public and private tennis courts/facilities located nearby. Tennis can even be played on blacktops, gym floors and multi-purpose courts.
- Obtain insurance to conduct the program as required by school/district. If the league is run under the auspices of the USTA District or Sectional Association, the league is covered by USTA insurance.

Contact area schools to grow the program

- Visit with the school district's administration, athletic department and/or the community relations person to expand intramural programming into district wide league play
- Contact the principals of the schools and visit with the PE teachers
- Attend PTA/PTO meetings and explain the benefits of the program

Train your coaches - Host a USTA Recreational On-Court Training Workshop to teach coaches:

- How to handle large groups of diverse levels of players
- How to Implement a play based approach for beginners by emphasizing play vs. instruction

Establish fees and obtain funding

- Reasonable participant fees sufficient to support the costs of the club/league should be projected and charged
- Expenses may include: A stipend for the coordinator, coaches and assistants, match balls, team t-shirts, transportation, court fees, printing and supplies, and year-end tournament costs such as trophies, t-shirts, and refreshments
- Funding for school leagues may be found through USTA District, Section or National grants
- Student fundraising efforts could include car washes, bake sales, tennis fundraising events and tournaments (e.g. student and faculty or player and parent tournaments)

Organize a first meeting - Review league and/or club rules and policies, schedule of practices, and any other necessary information.

Spread the Word

Obtain permission from the school district's administration office, athletic department and/ or community relations department to:

- Create and distribute flyers and information to students on campus
- Arrange for in school announcements to be made
- Publicize through school newsletters, list serves, posters, and local newspapers
- Make club T-shirts – there is no better advertisement and it's a great way to build team spirit

Play

Host a kickoff event

- Include students, teachers, administrators, and parents
- Consider offering refreshments, awards and prizes

Be flexible in your programming and tailor the match format to your situation.

Consider the following:

- Number of courts or gym space available for practices and matches
- Balance of girls and boys participating
- Level of players involved. Offer multiple divisions such as Varsity, Junior Varsity, and C team divisions to be sure no one is turned away!
- For league play, start small with a handful of teams, whatever is manageable for your first season.

Suggested scoring formats:

- Match format of one set, no-ad scoring, with a set (twelve point) tiebreaker at six games all
- A two court facility – For teams varying in size between 3-9 players each: Play three rounds consisting of one singles and one doubles match each (using a one-set format). This format only requires a minimum of 3 players per team to complete all matches.
- A two court facility – For co-ed teams varying in size between 4-10 players each (World Team Tennis Format): Round 1 = one boys singles/one girls doubles; Round 2 = one girls singles/one boys doubles; Round 3 = two mixed doubles. A minimum of 2 boys/2 girls per team is required.
- A six court facility – 12-24 players on a team fairly evenly balanced between girls and boys: Play 3 boys' singles and doubles and 3 girls' singles and doubles
- A six court facility – 6-12 players on a team with any number of girls and boys: A modified format (Coed Mix & Match Division) may be used with 6 singles & 3 doubles played according to strength

Grow Your Program

- Get kids introduced to tennis in the PE classes, which transition into the school club/league
- Include everyone and sign up to be a No-Cut program (www.usta.com/no-cut).
- Mirror your local high school tennis formats as to gender, team size and season - increased participation at the middle school level means there will be increased participation at the high school level.
- At the end of the season, gather the team to evaluate the program and plan for the next year
- Get kids playing in USTA Jr. Team Tennis, which provides additional competition opportunities (www.jrteamtennis.usta.com)