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**The President's advantage**

BY ROBERT RUBEL  
PRESIDENT, USTA TEXAS

Presented by:  
[texasstennis.com](http://texasstennis.com)



**HARD TIMES MEAN HARD WORK**

Although it might not be politically correct to bring up the challenges we are all facing this year and beyond, I am compelled to do just that. I believe our economic condition will affect many, if not all of us, in the coming years. That being said, when did the prospect of hard work ever prevent us from facing these challenges? I believe our Texas

spirit, the can do attitude that we share, will carry us through these difficult times. We will have to make many hard choices over the next few years, but let's not stop being thankful for what we have. The USTA and the US Open are in good financial shape, which means the 17 sections, including Texas are in good shape. We receive half our section funding from US Open proceeds, the other monies are from dues, sponsorship, and other sources. We need to use these funds prudently to grow tennis in our State. This is one of the driving forces behind the Community Tennis Association (CTA) expansion plan we started over two years ago. I am pleased to report we have made tremendous progress in this area. The main goal was to align USTA league programs under a qualified CTA. This plan allocates excess funds for local tennis programs to grow the game. Thanks to all that have helped in this initiative.

I believe we can continue to grow our sport, even in these difficult times. We have almost 53,000 members in our section. I would ask, why can't we grow this to 100,000 members by 2020? As part of my 2020 vision plan for USTA Texas, I propose we take on the challenge, think long term, and put in the hard work over the next dozen years. What other crazy ideas might I have? Why can't every school district in Texas adopt the USTA quick start format at the elementary level, and the USPTA Little Tennis teaching program? Our Tennis Service Representatives help educate our schools about these programs along with other section staff. Why do we need these programs? To accelerate the learning process for our future tennis stars! These new formats and programs are the best thing to happen for tennis in years. The one ingredient that is consistently required is parental involvement. We need to support our children early on in their development of athletic skills, social skills, sportsmanship, and fun. The other ideas for my vision relate to no cut high school programs, alternative tournament formats for adults and juniors, and collegiate team tennis, in which Texas leads the nation! Will you join me and embrace this vision? Together, we can make Texas the premier section of the USTA!



**TEXAS SECTION**  
**FEBRUARY**  
**2009**

# Kenny Mc's corner

BY KEN McALLISTER  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, USTA TEXAS SECTION

Presented by:



## STUFF WE HAVE TO DO

Recently, we had to make a decision that affected a league team's place in the standings from first to fourth place. Naturally the captain of the team was upset and said we – the USTA Texas – obviously weren't adhering to keeping the game fun for everyone as it says in our marketing. She also felt that by enforcing the rules, we were accusing them of cheating. She brings up a good point that should be addressed, which is the flip side of our "fun" sport.....RULES.

Our staff loves calling the team who wins to tell them the good news, and we do not look forward to giving the others the bad news. In this case, a self-rated player won three matches strongly above the level of the league in which she played. The automatic rule is that all her matches are forfeited, thus the team suffered. It was sad because she inadvertently broke the rule. However, the more important thing was that it was unfair to the other teams and thereby we enforce this rule.

The rules, not already established by USTA, are put together by our volunteer committees. They work long hours to make certain the rules are fair and give our participants as level playing fields as possible. The role of the staff is to enforce these rules, and we are held accountable by those committees. The members of these committees are usually participants, parents, or coaches themselves.

Another example of a strict rule is the one that gives no leeway for not meeting entry deadlines into Junior Major Zone tournaments. After much study of the situations and requirements for these tournaments, the Junior Tennis Council made the decision. Although it has been tough on busy families or close deadlines between tournaments, on balance it puts everyone consistently with the same expectations. Note that other tournaments may have the flexibility to extend deadlines for various reasons, but those are not section decisions.

Discipline and grievance is definitely an area of stuff that we have to do. Believe it or not, there are folks who keep tennis from being fun and fair. I believe that one of the strengths of tennis is that we require our players to call their own lines and treat their opponents with respect. However, many believe that this is either a weakness or an opportunity for the less honest among us. Our system is simple: if a dispute involving bad sportsmanship, dishonesty, or the breaking of rules is not resolved at an event, then our players have the option of filing a grievance, which is available at all our sanctioned tournaments. After the receipt of a grievance in our office, we begin the investigation through witnesses and statements from all sides of a conflict. Then a volunteer Discipline and Grievance Committee reviews the information and makes a decision that could go from dropping the grievance all the way to suspending a player for a period of time. There is also an appeal process described in our Standing Orders that insures fair treatment.

There are many other examples of this "stuff", but the main point of this article is to show that we cannot always keep things fun. However, we always try to make our rules to fairly treat everyone in order to maximize the fun.

Often I have been challenged to disagree with a rule because it does not seem to make sense. As one person put it, "a good leader stands up for his constituents". As with our staff, I do not always agree with every rule, but I am responsible for enforcing all of them. When we disagree with a rule, we advise within the processes of our volunteer committees. Many changes have been made that way. However, with the complexity of our very large programs here in Texas, our volunteers are exceptional in having the fairest, most consistent rules and guidelines and all of us are very proud of that.

# Junior news



## 2008 USTA Texas Section Jr. Team Tennis Fall Championships

### INTERMEDIATE DIVISIONS

John Newcombe Tennis Ranch, New Braunfels  
November 15-16

The Intermediate Divisions of the Fall 2008 Jr. Team Tennis Texas Section Championships were held at the John Newcomb Tennis Ranch were a huge success.

A big Texas sized thank you to all the players, parents and coaches who made the journey to compete in the fall championships. The weekend was awesome as teams traveled all the way from the Panhandle to the Valley for a chance to win a championship.

The weather was amazing and the tennis was even better, as all the team matches were close and every player tried their very best for their teammates.

Congratulations to our Champions in the 18 and Under Intermediate division the Lubbock Purple Cobras and to our Champions in the 14 and Under Intermediate division, the NETT Tennis Soldiers.

A special thanks also goes out to John Newcomb's Tennis Ranch and there incredible staff. From all he players, parents and coaches thank you for being fabulous host for this weekend. We look forward to being back in May!



*Sportsmanship Award winners Luke Penny  
East Texas & Rachel Bynum  
Amarillo 18 U INT*



*Sportsmanship Award Winners Danto Odell  
Lubbock & Molly Chapman  
Corpus Christi*



*14 Int Champions NETT Tennis Soliers*



*14 Int Finalists MCTA Walden Athletic Club*



*18 Int Champions Lubbock Purple Cobras*



*18 Int Finalists Lubbock Mustangs*

**ADVANCED DIVISIONS**

Waco Regional Tennis & Fitness Center  
November 22-23

The 2008 Fall Section Championships held Advanced division playoffs at the Waco Regional Tennis & Fitness Center.

For the second weekend in a row, teams from across Texas brought there champ and super champ players to compete for a section title. It was another excellent weekend with outstanding effort and solid performances by all the players.

Players were treated to an educational player party at the Texas Sports Hall of Fame in Waco, where they learned about

Texas' rich sports history.

The weekend concluded on Sunday with some very competitive play for first and second place in each division.

In the 14 and under Advanced division taking 1st place was the Austin Dream Team finishing ahead, in total games won of the Dallas Eagles Landing team. In the 18 and under Advanced division the Al Kruse Corpus Christi team won first place over the Walden Lake MCTA team, edging them out in total games won for the championship.

Thank you to all the players, coaches and parents who helped make this championship weekend super special.



14 Adv Champions Austin Dream Team



14 Adv Finalists Dallas Eagles Landing



14 Adv Sportsmanship Austin Megan Ziots Dallas & Josh Haggar



18 Adv Champions Corpus Christi



18 Adv Finalists MCTA Walden



18s Adv Sportsmanship San Antonio Carson Kiefer

# Austin Teams Finish 2nd, 3rd and 4th at JTT Nationals

Two teams from Austin finished second and fourth, respectively, at the 2008 USTA Jr. Team Tennis 14 & Under Advanced and Intermediate National Championships, held at the Mobile Tennis Center in Mobile AL, Oct. 23-26, while a third team finished third at the USTA Jr. Team Tennis 18 & under National Championships held Oct. 31-Nov. 2.

The Austin Advanced team lost to a team from Grand Forks, ND in the Championships, by a score of 43-40.

The Austin Tennis Academy Dream Team is coached by Brian Notis and roster includes: Morgan Barnhill, Brittany Brewster, Josh Hagar, Brooke Hughes, Austin Mayo, Maggie O'Meara, and Liam Woolley-MacMath.

"Our kids had a great time this weekend at the tournament and they came here to win," said Brian Notis, Team Coach. "They fought hard and we congratulate the Northern team on their win."

The intermediate level team lost to a team from the Pacific Northwest Section in the third place match, by a score of 53 to 40.

The Austin Tennis Academy Aces is also coached by Brian Notis and roster includes: Alesandra Burak, Jessica Clouse, Smrithi Hariharan, Jaxon Immler, Weston Jezek, Neel Kumar, Meghan O'Malley, and Jon Yonge.

The 18 and under team from ATA is coached by Kendall Brooks, finished the 2008 USTA Jr. Team Tennis National Championships with a 4-2 mark. They were led by players Blair Jones, Charlie Shin, Claire Cahill, Conor O'Rourke, Esteban Kaufmann, Hailey Posas, Jeffrey Offerdahl, Jonathan Stockdale, Mary Bain and Taylor Shamshiri.

"Finishing third in the nation is not too bad for our first time here at the national championships," said Brooks. "Our kids played well the entire weekend, and I'm really proud of them. In our last match, we were down four games going into that final mixed doubles and pulled out the victory."

The team began championship weekend in Mobile with round-robin flight play on Friday and Saturday, beating teams from Brunswick, ME; Honolulu, HI, and Virginia Beach, VA while losing only to the eventual national champions from New Albany, OH.

After advancing to the semifinal round based on their percentage of games won (209-135, .608), ATA fell to the Moore Lake Marauders of Minneapolis, MN, 53-36, on Saturday afternoon before topping the host-city Perry's Gang team for third place on Sunday.



**14 and under Advanced, 2nd Place**  
 First Row (L to R) Josh Hagar, Morgan Barnhill, Maggie O'Meara, Brooke Hughes.  
 Back Row (L to R) Coach Brian Notis, Daniel Howell, Liam Woolley-MacMath.



**18 and under Advanced, 3rd Place Texas**  
 Coach Kendall Brooks, Conor O'Rourke, Taylor Shamshiri, Blair Jones, Katie Cahill, Claire Cahill, Jeffrey Offerdahl, Charlie Shin and Jonathan Stockdale



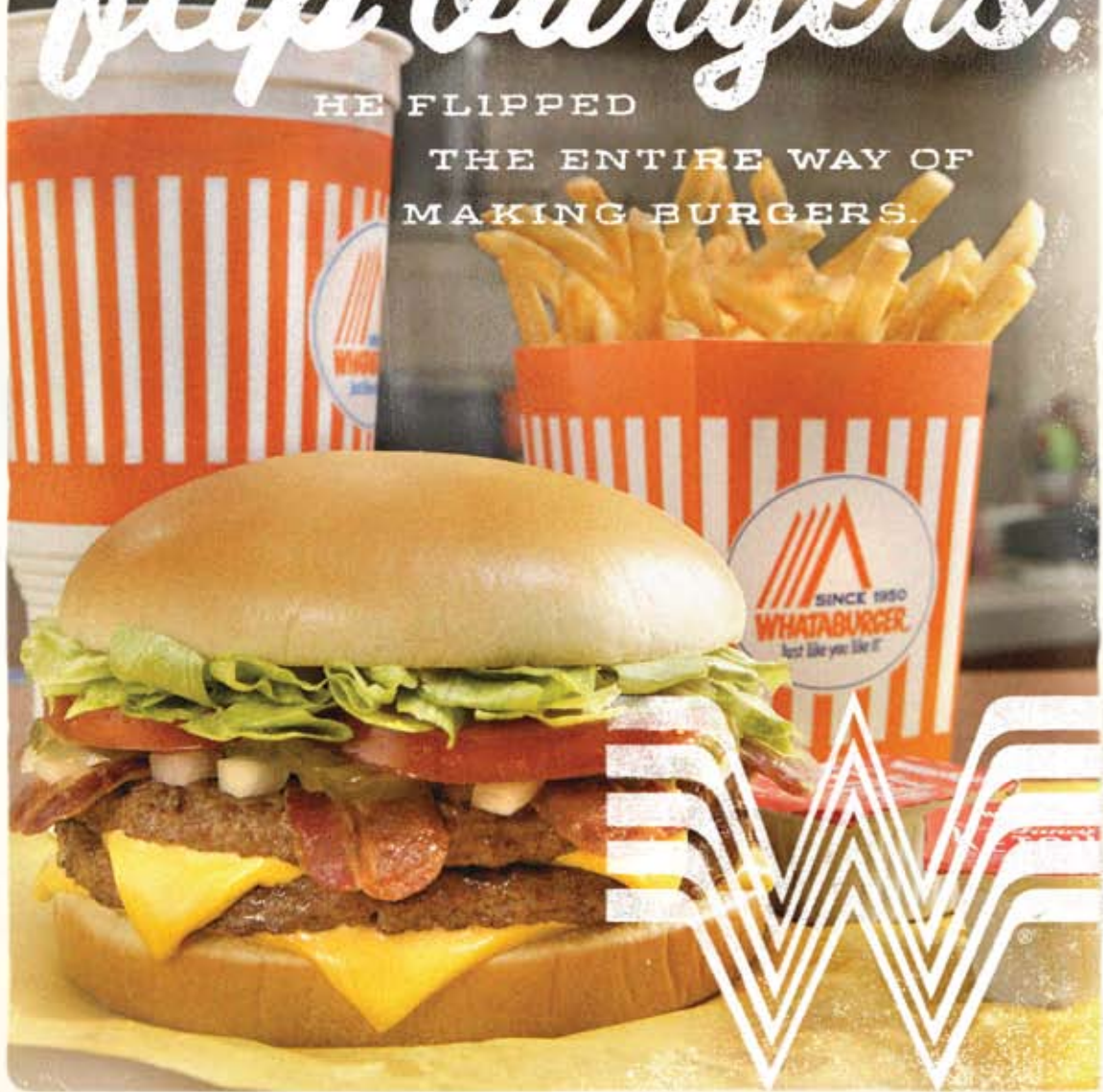
**14 and under Intermediate, 4th Place**  
 (L to R) Coach John Schoenmakers, Jaxon Immler, Neel Kumar, Meghan O'Malley, Jon Yonge, Smrith Hariharan, Jessica Clouse



HE DIDN'T JUST

# flip burgers.

HE FLIPPED  
THE ENTIRE WAY OF  
MAKING BURGERS.



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# Adult/Senior news



## SAN ANTONIO, ARLINGTON HOST INTERSECTIONAL TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS

For the first time, the state of Texas played host to both the Women's and Men's USTA Senior Intersectional Team Championships. These are team events for players over the age of 35 that are the best in the country for their event.

The Texas Section's own Larry Eichenbaum was the tournament referee for both events.

This year's women's tournament was held in San Antonio at the McFarlin Tennis Center. Over 280 women made their way to the Alamo City for a week of exciting tennis and sightseeing November 10-16, hosted by the Texas tennis and Education Foundation and the San Antonio Tennis Association.

The San Antonio Tennis Association was a great co-host providing hospitality to the ladies every day, including coffee, cookies and bananas at the tournament desk. They also assisted with the margarita welcoming party.

Teams from Texas fared well at the event, as the Women's 45, 55 and 65 teams all finished second and the 34's finished fourth. The 45 and 55 teams fell to Southern in the finals, 3-2, while the 65's fell to Southern, 2-1, in the championship match.

The recently awarded 2008 USTA National Facility of the Year, Arlington Tennis Center, along with the City of Arlington, hosted the Men's event, November 20-23.

This first time host really provided a great atmosphere for the players and their families. Each day a beer and cheese bar were set up in the afternoon. The Saturday evening banquet was held at the Legends of the Game Museum at the Texas Rangers Ballpark in Arlington. City Councilman Jimmy Bennett was the MC of the event, which also attended by City of Arlington Mayor, Dr. Robert Cluck.

On the courts, Texas took home the Randy Gregson Cup as the overall team winner for the first time. USTA Southern won this prestigious Cup the last six years.

Texas was able to capture team titles in the Men's 35, 55 and 65 divisions. All three of these teams went undefeated in round robin play. The Men's 75 team finished second behind Southern. Our 45's team was unable to play because not enough teams showed up for the event.

Congratulations to all that attended and thank you for representing Texas.

### 2008 Texas Women's Intersectional Roster

*(Listed in alphabetical order)*

#### WOMEN'S 35 & OVER

Susan Bryson, Julie Cass (Capt.), Kristin Hess, Beverly Bowes-Hackney, Nancy Hilliard and Michelle King.

#### WOMEN'S 45 & OVER

Vickie Buholz, Sue Whiting, Gayle Prejean, Kathy Vick, (Co-Capt.), Tina Whiteman and Shelly Works (Co-Capt.)

#### WOMEN'S 55 & OVER

Carla Baker, Sue Bramlette (Co-Capt.), Jan Mauldin, Hilary Marold (Co-Capt), Barbara Sasser and Rox Ann Schanzenbach

#### WOMEN'S 65 & OVER

Gayle Howington, Kathy Langer, Helga Lukacsy, Mary John Lynch (Capt.), Kathie Meyering and Chris Smith

#### WOMEN'S 75 & OVER

Margaret Canby (Capt.), Carol Cofer, Rose Marie James and Frances Ryan

#### WOMEN'S 80 & OVER

Lovie Beard, Darlene Gifford, LouCille Scoggins

### 2008 Texas Men's Intersectional Team Roster

*(Listed in alphabetical order)*

#### MEN'S 35 & OVER

Colin Cohen, Anders Eriksson, Brian Notis, Travis Rich, T.J. Tisdale (Capt.) and Michael Wesbrooks

#### MEN'S 45 & OVER

Alex Behar, Tres Cushing, Tridib Goswami (Capt.), Peter Markes, Paul Vishnesky and Val Wilder

#### MEN'S 55 & OVER

Tommy Connell, Kimm Ketelesen, Lawton Park, Aubrey "Lucky" Frazier, Jerry Thomas (Capt.) and Ross Boling

#### MEN'S 65 & OVER

Richard Andersen, Mickey Martin, Geof Grant, Dick Landenberger (Capt.), Fernando Velasco, Gene Waters and Bob May

#### MEN'S 75 & OVER

T. C. Chang, Scott Denison (Capt.) and James Shepherd



**2008 Men's 35 Championship Intersectional Team**  
Standing left to right: Brian Notis (Dripping Springs); T.J. Tisdale, Captain (Plano); Anders Eriksson (Austin); Colin Cohen (Austin). Kneeling: Michael Wesbrooks (McKinney); Travis Rich (Rockwall)



**2008 Men's 55 Championship Intersectional Team**  
From left to right: Tommy Connell (Katy); Ross Boling (Laredo); Jerry Thomas - Captain (Rockwall); Kimm Ketelesen (Tyler); Aubrey Frazier (Willis); Lawton Park (Houston); Larry Eichenbaum, Referee



**2008 Men's 65 Championship Intersectional Team**  
left to right: Fernando Velasco (Austin); Micky Martin (Dallas); Dick Landenberger, Captain (Dallas); Richard Anderson (Houston); Geof Grant (Fort Worth); Gene Waters (Temple); Bob May (Houston); and Larry Eichenbaum, Referee.

# Kathy Langer

The Chair of the USTA Texas Section Communications Committee, Kathy is also an avid player who this fall represented the United States in Turkey, playing on the Althea Gibson Cup Team at the ITF World Championships that reached the finals before falling to South Africa. One of her biggest duties for the USTA is as Chair of the National Adult/Senior Competition Committee.

**Tell us a little more about your national committee.**

**KL:** The Committee is in charge of all Category I national championships in age groups and surface tournaments. The Category II's we also schedule. They are sanctioned by the sections, but we put them on our calendar and take care of them and work with the tournament directors.

**For people who have never played one, tell the what kind of experience they can expect should they decide to enter.**

**KL:** Some people think you have to qualify for them. You don't. You only have to be in the right age group, whether it be from age 30 to 90. There are four surfaces: Clay, Hard Court, Grass and Indoor. They are also held at some of the most prestigious tennis club across the country that you would likely never have a chance to play at otherwise.

I just returned from one at the La Jolla Beach and Tennis Club, right on the beach. Not a bad place to relax between matches.

I will be going to New York and Forest Hills, with all of its history. It's fantastic to play on the grass and know

the players who have played there. Those experiences are just hard to replace.

**When did you begin playing tennis?**

**KL:** When I was 33. I took a college course in it but didn't play it until my kids were in school and I had to teach a course, so I figured I better learn. So I started at a club, it was in the early 70's, when the indoor clubs were starting in Ohio. I took clinics and went from there. I played my first national tournament when I was 45.

**What sports did you play before that? You are obviously very athletic.**

**KL:** I actually majored in Physical Education in college and softball was my sport. I played shortstop and was a fast pitcher -- past when I was playing tennis even. My daughter and I even played on a team while she was in college.

**How long have you been a Texan?**

**KL:** 26 years.

**Back to your national committee, what are your priorities to accomplish for senior and adult tennis?**

**KL:** The thing we are trying to do is create tournaments that players really want to go to. This year our emphasis has been on the player. We are not forgetting the tournament director, who makes it happen. Our committee looks at the tournament director and the player as a team and we are all working to make the tournament the best for all involved.

Seeding is especially important. That has been a big goal because of the point system. If we do our jobs right as far as seeding, then the ranking list becomes more accurate.

**What else does Kathy Langer do outside of tennis?**

**KL:** We have a house on the Yellowstone River in Montana, just about 35 miles north of Yellowstone National Park. We can fly fish right off the lawn. We have a campfire right on the river where we have parties. We have a picture window in our living room with the best view. It is like living art because the river flows by, you see fishermen, floaters, you see horses grazing, mountains and storms coming in. Then off of our deck the Absaroka Mountains are right there.

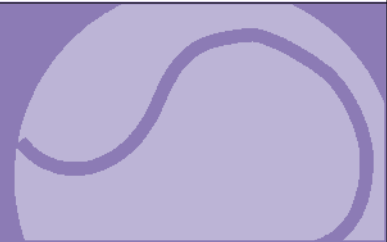
I also have four grandkids, one a junior in college, one almost twenty year old and two little ones. I have two daughters, one in Dallas and one in Washington State.



**League**  
news



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GOLF & TENNIS



## 2008 USTA Texas Section Super Senior Championships

November 22-23 • College Station

The 2008 USTA Texas Section Super Senior Championships were held in College Station November 22-23. It was a great weekend of tennis for those who competed despite a challenge from the rain that delayed matches for several hours on Sunday.

Sam Hopkins' 6.0 Super Senior Men swept San Antonio for their title. In the 7.0 Super Senior Men, Keith Pate captained the Waco men to the title. They defeated Houston, 2-1 in the championship. The 8.0 Super Senior Men from Corpus Christi edged Fort Worth for the title. Martin Davis was the captain.

On the ladies side, North Houston, captained by Shirley Donaldson, won the 6.0 Super Senior championship. They defeated College Station in the Finals. The wild card team from Austin, led by Elizabeth Merrick, defeated Waco for the 7.0 Super Senior Ladies title. Shirley Coleman's San Antonio 8.0 Super Senior Ladies defeated Southeast Texas for their championship.

Midland won the 7.0 Super Senior Plus title with an undefeated round robin record. Billy Schultz was captain. Dallas captured the 7.0 Super Senior Plus title in a narrowly fought round robin. The Dallas team was once again led by Harry Klein-Smith.



6.0 Ladies Super Senior



7.0 Ladies Super Senior



7.0 Ladies Super Senior Plus



6.0 Mens Super Senior



7.0 Mens Super Senior



7.0 Mens Super Senior Plus



8.0 Mens Super Senior



8.0 Ladies Super Senior

## Three Texas Teams Finish Second

*6.0, 7.0 and 8.0 Mixed Doubles Bring Home the Silver*

Three Texas teams from San Angelo, Amarillo and Dallas, representing the USTA Texas section, finished second at the Adult Western Mixed Doubles at the USTA League presented by Chrysler National Western Mixed Doubles Championships held at the Gold River Racquet Club in Gold River, Calif. and the Broadstone Racquet Club in Folsom, Calif., November 21-23, 2008.

The San Angelo 6.0 team lost to a team from Fresno, California, 3-0 in the Championship match. Earlier in the day, the San Angelo team defeated a team from Rosemead, California, 3-0, in the semifinal round. They advanced this far by compiling a 4-0 record in their flight during round-robin play contested Friday and Saturday.

The San Angelo team was captained by Tobin Lefler, features Steve Motl Jennifer Clark, Jennifer Moore, Brian Narvid, Lora Narvid and Danielle Harrison, and plays at the College Hills Swim & Racquet Club. "We had a great run," states team captain, Tobin Lefler. "It feels goods to finish second in the nation. We're all really good friends"

The Amarillo 7.0 team lost to a team from Seattle, Washington, 2-1 in the Championship match. Earlier in the day, the Amarillo team defeated a team from Overland Park, Kansas, 2-1, in the semifinal. They advanced this far by compiling a 3-1 record during round-robin play.

The team was captained by Gerry Jubang, features Christopher Bowling, Christi Bowling, Brianna Guerra, Tawna Haggard, Sara Johnson, Theresa Jubang, Randall Lamb, Scott Nickson, Darby Norman, Koby Otto, Saul Reyes, Charlie Rittenberry and Jeannie Robbins, and plays at the Amarillo Tennis Center. "We're the second best team in the country," states team captain, Gerry Jubang. "We beat the Seattle team yesterday but couldn't today. It was a great match."

The Dallas 8.0 team lost to a team from Seattle, Washington, 2-1 in the Championship match. Earlier in the day, the Dallas team defeated a team from Honolulu, Hawaii, 2-1, in the semifinal round. They advanced this far by compiling a 3-1 record in their flight during round-robin play.

The Dallas team was captained by Shana Lazarine, features Donald Allen, Celesta Caldwell, Rebecca Dugger, Christine Dvorsky, Annie Furr, Dencil Johnson, Megan Kline, Cliff Lazarine, Hai Nguyen, Phy Pham, Charles Rasor, Mike Robinson, Keith Robinson and Suzi Walker, and plays at the High Point Tennis Club. "Omigod, this is great," stated captain, Shana Lazarine. "We've got a great team. I'm sorry we're going to have to split up next year. I'm so proud of everyone."

The USTA League Mixed Doubles is for men and women 19 years of age and older. Teams are formed by combining the two player's individual NTRP ratings. The team's total rating must equal: 7.0, 8.0, 9.0 and 10.0. The total NTRP rating cannot exceed the level of the team (i.e., 7.0 team could be a combination of two 3.5 players, one 4.0 partner and one 3.0 partner or one player a 3.0 and partner a 3.5). Play format consists of three doubles matches.



6.0 Finalists - San Angelo



7.0 Finalists - Amarillo



8.0 Finalists - Dallas

# Thank You, Sue



The Super Senior Section Championships was also the last event for longtime Texas League Coordinator Sue Johnson-Maurer. Sue has been the face of League Tennis in Texas for 23 years and will be dearly missed. Sue has always listened to the players and made them feel as though League Players were the most important people on the planet.

From the entire Texas Tennis Family, Sue, we would like to thank you for everything you have done promoting tennis, but most of all for being such a good friend. We hope that you enjoy your retirement with Fred and getting to focus on playing the part of "grandma". We will miss you.

## Texans Named to National Positions

The Texas Section would like to congratulate and thank our former president and new section delegate, Ben Eshleman and his lovely wife, Nancy, for all you have done for Texas Tennis!

We would also like to recognize Carol Welder, former USTA Texas President, who has been named as a Director at Large on the national USTA Board. She will be joined on the board by Tommy Ho, from Houston, who has also been elected to the national USTA Board as an elite athlete. Ho has joined the Texas Section management committee. Tara Snyder of Dallas was also named to the USTA Board as an elite athlete representative.

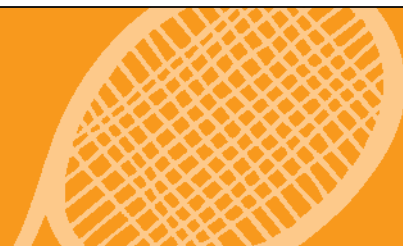
Lars Rosene will continue to serve on the national USTA nominating committee and will chair the section nominating committee the next two years.

The section welcomes new management committee members, Emily Schaefer, Vice President of Recreational Tennis and Frank Kelly, Vice President of Competitive Tennis. Returning management members include: Dr. Alfredo Trevino, Vice President of Administration; Joyce Dreslin, Secretary; and Dan Barta, Treasurer.



# Bert Cole

inducted into the Texas  
Black Sports Hall of Fame



The USTA Texas Section's own Bert Cole was inducted into the Texas Black Sports Hall of Fame on December 6th during the 13th Texas Black Sports Hall of Fame Banquet and Auction in Dallas.

Cole was inducted into a remarkable class for 2008 which included: Tony Hill (Dallas Cowboys), Kevin Williams (Dallas Cowboys), Arron Wallace (Oakland Raiders), Richmond Webb (Miami Dolphins), Coach Arthur James (Former East Texas University Football Coach), Cynthia Cooper-Dyke (Houston Comets Guard & Olympian), Vicki Minor (Texas Southern Swimmer) and Edward Roby (Texas Southern football player).

Cole has been instrumental in growing the Dallas Slam Jammers into one of the premier NJTL Programs in the country during her six years with the Dallas Tennis Association. Dallas has won the National NJTL Chapter of the Year three of the last four years under Cole.

Children and their families had an opportunity to meet the athletes have photos and autographs taken with the honorees. In addition to the public recognition of these sports figures at the annual Banquet, the Hall of Fame's objectives are to collect and preserve objects documenting the history of the Texas African-American athlete, create a permanent exhibition on the subject, and to develop educational programs that benefit both children and adults. Proceeds from the Banquet and Auction benefit the education programs and exhibitions of the African American Museum in Dallas.

The Texas Black Sports Hall of Fame (TBSHOF), housed at the African American Museum, was established to chronicle the sports history contributions made by African Americans. It was established in 1996 to honor coaches and athletes of high character and athletic achievement, who are either Texans by birth or by athletic participation (collegiate or professional), and who have made recognizable contributions to African American culture and/or history. The general public submits the nominees, and a panel of judges (including sports/media journalist) makes the final selection.

You can learn more about the African American Museum at [www.aamdallas.org](http://www.aamdallas.org).

*Bert Cole receiving her 2007 Clinician of the Year Award from the USTA Texas Section*





**THIS IS WHERE FRIENDS  
BECOME TEAMMATES.  
THIS IS MY LEAGUE.**

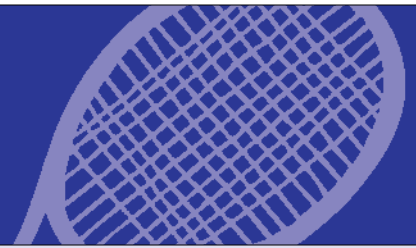


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# The Good, the Bad and the Snarky



If The New York Times is “All the News That’s Fit to Print”, then to many, the world of the blogosphere may represent everything else. Don’t get me wrong, I read several blogs with frequency and there are certainly many reputable bloggers out there, but you have to be smart enough to separate the wheat from the chaff, as they say.

The Texas tennis world is no different, as several excellent tennis blogs have crept up in the past year across the state. During the past year, I have followed these blogs at times. The three most popular: Houston, Dallas and Austin area blogs, all have become extremely popular and the authors of each do some amazing research.

I have been particularly floored by the depth of the research, including some amazing notes on teams NOT in their own areas when doing pre-Sectional predictions. Fans and players have also become addicted to these sites as their traffic has exploded.

Unfortunately, where there’s a blog on a topic people are passionate about, there’s potential for disaster in the comments on the blog.

This has also been the case with the Texas tennis blogs. Several times throughout the year, whether it be related to teams getting players DQ’d or not getting DQ’d or players not getting into a particular tournament or even Red Benzon (a popular punchline on the Houston sites and personal friend), the blogosphere has been torched with some of the most insane conspiracy theory rhetoric that would make Oliver Stone blush.

I mean, I get it. People love their tennis. They are passionate about their league teams. That’s great. Heck, that’s good for business on our end here at the Texas Section office. Unfortunately, sometimes in the heat of the argument people post whatever comes to mind, as if it were the gospel. You can feel their passion, bravado or frustration within their posts. Unfortunately, many of those posting comments have no idea where the truth lies.

“Anything about ratings gets people interested”, mused Dallas blogger Cary Bazan when we spoke recently about his most popular posts.

Bazan started his blog after captaining his team to the 2007 Section League Championships. While researching the teams in his bracket via Google, he kept coming across the Houston blog. The idea interested him and the Dallas blog was born.

The best thing about the various blogs is they seem to have their own style. While Houston’s blog has a very clean look up front and is backed by the great research the comments can get rowdy in an instant, as is usually the case when ratings or sandbagging are the topic du jour.

The Austin blog on the other hand is more about the tennis and effuses the demeanor of its author, Anthony Tatu, a longtime captain.

Bazan tries to keep the Dallas blog somewhere in the middle.

“I like playing with pictures”, adds Bazan. “When there’s a tense situation, I usually just post a funny photo and it seems to lighten up the atmosphere.”

So please, I welcome you to check out the blogs, although just remember at times they are not for the faint at heart.

## The Big 3 Austin Tennis Blog [austintennis.blogspot.com](http://austintennis.blogspot.com)

Maintained by Anthony Tatu, an attorney for the state in his “real job”, Tatu’s site is known for having great recaps and interviews and is a bit more subdued than the other two sites. “There’s a lot going on in Austin,” says Tatu, “and I just thought it was a good way to promote tennis in the area.”

Tatu recently interviewed new Austinites John Roddick and Grant Doyle. This article was so popular that another popular blog, [zootennis.com](http://zootennis.com), picked it up.

## Dallas League Tennis Blog [dallasleaguetenis.blogspot.com](http://dallasleaguetenis.blogspot.com)

As the name says, it covers the league scene in Dallas. But according to creator Cary Bazan, who has recently recruited several friends to help out, they hope to expand to talk about all tennis across the Metroplex.

“I want this to be a collective Dallas tennis blog, rather than just Cary’s tennis blog”, adds Bazan.

## Houston League Tennis Blog [houstontennis.blogspot.com](http://houstontennis.blogspot.com)

The Godfather of the Texas tennis blogs, this one started it all. Greg Dwyer’s was an immediate hit and continues to have great traffic. Not for the faint of heart, the comments go from the hilarious to the offensive. One thing is for sure, these people have their opinions.

“Anything about ratings or tanking can really spark people’s animosity,” states Dwyer. “It’s tough deciding what should be deleted, but I tend to draw the line when things get nasty and personal.”

Dwyer draws the analogy between the blogs to those who follow college football recruiting.

“Some people are more interested in assembling rosters, as opposed to actually playing,” says Dwyer.

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