



# NORTHERN EXPOSURE

MAGAZINE

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MARCH 2014



**Alexis Nelson**  
St. Paul, Minnesota



16s Singles Junior Orange Bowl Finalist  18s Singles USA Winter Nationals Champion

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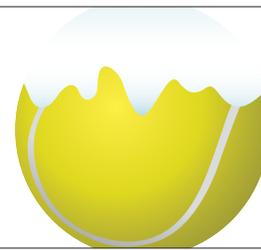
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## Junior Player Alexis Nelson

### History In The Making



It has been a history-making three months for 15-year-old **Alexis Nelson** of St. Paul, Minn. First, a runner-up finish at the International Orange Bowl Tournament in Plantation, Fla. Then, winning the USTA Girls 18s Winter Nationals in Scottsdale, Ariz. Next was becoming No. 1 in the country in Girls 16s – not just for USTA Northern, but the entire United States. Finally, she received an invitation to join five other elite junior girls February 7-9 as part of the U.S. Player Development Fed Cup Camp when the United States played Italy in Cleveland, Ohio. And many believe, this is only the beginning for the shy and soft-spoken Nelson, as she has become the first junior girl from USTA Northern to achieve any of these incredible accomplishments.

Nelson's amazing run first started in December at the Girls 16s International Orange Bowl Tournament, which features the best junior players from around the world. She opened the singles tournament with a 6-1, 6-4 win over **Fatima Bizhukova** of Russia. She then bageled Ecuador's **Camila Romero** 6-0, 6-0, before beating **Jaelyn Switkes** of the United States 6-4, 6-3. In the quarterfinals, she upset 12th-seeded **Nandini Das** of India 7-5, 6-0 and then took out fourth-seeded **Lisa Ponomar** of Germany in the semifinals 7-5, 4-6, 6-4. In the finals, the unseeded Nelson lost a heartbreaker, falling to 14-year-old **Charlotte Millette-Robillard** of Canada 6-0, 1-6 and 6-4, but not before she gained the attention of everyone in attendance including Millette-Robillard.

"She is a great player and competitor," Millette-Robillard said. "She really fought well, and played amazing. I wasn't surprised that she'd come back and play that well."

Nelson, who also advanced to the doubles quarterfinals, was not intimidated by the international players going in, but more the switch from the indoor hard courts she has to practice on every day in Minnesota to the outdoor clay courts of the tournament.

"I had played the 14s Junior Orange Bowl the previous year and reached the quarterfinals, so I was confident in my ability to compete with the international players," Nelson said. "Going to outdoor clay courts was a bit of a challenge. I was surprised at first, but felt more and more comfortable as the matches progressed. Winning the first couple rounds gave me a lot of confidence and I played some really close matches in reaching the finals. It was a great experience and I learned a lot."

Nelson, who is a sophomore and attends school online, then traveled to Arizona for the USTA Winter Nationals where she played Girls 18s. She opened the tournament defeating **Lauren Pickens** of Owasso, Okla. 6-2, 6-0. She took out four more players before moving on to the semifinals where she beat **Emma Higuchi** of Los Angeles, Calif. 4-6, 7-5, 6-3. Finally, in the championship, Nelson upset top-seeded **Chloe Ouellet-Pizer** of Chapel Hill, N.C., 6-3, 6-4. Ironically that day, Ouellet-Pizer was

offered a wild card into the qualifying draw of the Junior Girls Draw in the 2014 Australian Open.

"I played well at Winter Nationals," Nelson, who also advanced to the doubles finals in Arizona, said. "The first few matches were a little shaky getting used to the sun and wind, but my main goal is to always compete hard and know when I leave the court I have given it my best effort. Getting to, and winning the title, was special because I avenged a previous semifinal loss (Higuchi) and then had to beat a really consistent player (Ouellet-Pizer) in the final."

Nelson's magic carpet ride continued on January 29 when she became ranked No. 1 nationally in Girls 16s and then was one of six girls (and the only one not from Florida) invited to the Fed Cup camp.

So what has changed in Nelson's game leading to her incredible success?

"My coaches (including her dad, **Dave**, who is her primary coach) and I haven't made any drastic changes in my game, but instead have been trying to add a few more elements and improve on what I have," Nelson said. "I firmly believe winning matches doesn't always depend on the 'skill' of the player, but rather on their ability to compete and troubleshoot what is happening on the court. Playing practice matches has really helped me a lot with that aspect of my game."

Once a relative unknown on the National scene, Nelson is trying to adjust being on everyone's radar screen. Even in USTA Northern, she flew under the radar somewhat because of the early success of good friends and fellow 15-year-olds **Ingrid Neel** and **Jessie Aney** of Rochester, Minn. Neel, who now trains most of the year at **Nick Bollettieri's** IMG Academy in Bradenton, Fla., and Aney, who was the 2010 *Sports Illustrated* Sports Kid of the Year, received most of the attention, which was how Nelson liked it.

"The only thing that will really be different for me now is the ranking and the seeding," the 2012 USTA Northern Jerry Noyce Junior Sportsmanship Award winner said. "I'm still considered an underdog a lot of times, but I have friends, family and coaches who believe in me and support me all the way."

So what is next for Nelson during her meteoric rise? Only time will tell, but Nelson is keeping it all in perspective.

"I am incredibly honored to be representing the Northern Section, and it is great that I am able to share my success with other tennis players from the area because they have helped me so much," Nelson said. "It's nice to achieve the #1 ranking, but I really just want to keep getting better and continue to improve. I still believe there are so many areas of my game I can improve. My coaches remind me of this all the time. For now, I am going to just keep practicing and sticking to my routine."

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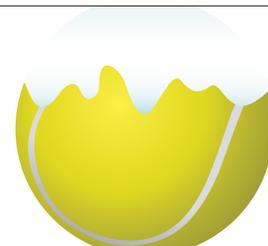
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## Baseline Tennis Center

Named 2013 Municipal Facility of the Year



The University of Minnesota's **Baseline Tennis Center**, under the direction of **John Pratt**, was named the 2013 Municipal Facility of the Year by *Tennis Industry* magazine. The facility was honored as part of the magazine's 2013 Champions of Tennis and becomes the first collegiate facility to win the award.

Home to the University of Minnesota men's and women's tennis teams since 2002, Baseline Tennis Center features 22

courts – 10 indoor and 12 outdoor - and has hosted Big Ten, NCAA and ITA events and championships.

It has also served as the site of the 2008 and 2012 Paralympic Training Center, the 2011 National Public Parks Tennis Championships, the 2004 Transplant Games of America, Division III and junior college programs, high school tournaments and many junior and senior events. It will also host the tennis competition for the 2014 Minnesota State Senior Games and the 2015 National Senior Games.

The facility is home to over 20 USTA tournaments, 170 USTA League teams and over 3,000 League matches a year. It also plays host to the US Open Northern Section Qualifying Tournament, the University of Minnesota Tennis On Campus program - who has won the last 10 USTA Northern Section Championships – and USTA Junior and Adult Tournament, USTA League and Jr. Team Tennis Section Championships.

Baseline Tennis Center was named the USTA National Organization Member of the Year in 2009 and was a USTA Outstanding Facility Award winner in 2008.



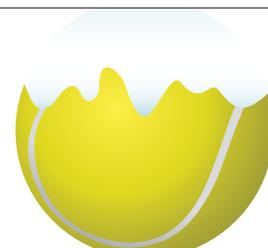
## Spring Fling Mixed Doubles Tournament April 5



Register now for the **2014 Spring Fling Mixed Doubles** event Saturday, April 5, at Life Time Fitness – Lakeville from 6-10 p.m. Play will be at the 6.5, 7.5, and 8.5 levels. Registration fee is \$30 a person and you do not have to be a USTA member to play. To register, visit [www.northern.usta.com](http://www.northern.usta.com). Space is limited so sign up today as the first three events filled well before the entry deadline! For more information, contact **Lisa Mushett** at [mushett@northern.usta.com](mailto:mushett@northern.usta.com) or at (952) 358-3282.

# Rochester's Eric Butorac Advances

## To Australian Open Doubles Finals



**R**ochester, Minn., native and former Minnesota state champion and Gustavus Adolphus player **Eric Butorac** had the greatest two weeks of his tennis career as he and partner **Raven Klaasen** of South Africa advanced to the finals of the 2014 Australian Open men's doubles championships.

In the end, it was not the perfect conclusion to the fairy tale as the duo lost to Poland's **Lukasz Kubot** and **Robert Lindstedt** of Sweden 6-3, 6-3 in the finals, but according to Butorac it still hasn't really hit him that he played in a Grand Slam final.

"I don't think it has still sunk in that we made it all the way to the final," Butorac said. "It was a weird experience playing that deep into the second week. On TV, it seems as if the whole event is building toward the final Sunday, but on-site, it really feels like just another match in the sense that the café, locker rooms and player's lounge are all like a ghost town."

Butorac and Klaasen, who only started playing together four months ago, opened the tournament by beating sentimental favorites Lleyton Hewitt and **Patrick Rafter** of Australia 6-4, 7-5 in the opening round.

"When the draw came out, I had to check it four times to make sure what I was seeing was correct," Butorac said in an interview with **Justin Gaard** on KFAN Radio in Minneapolis. "**Patrick Rafter** in Australia is as big as **Michael Jordan**. He is a hero here so playing against him was huge. There were 15,000 people in the stands cheering against us. Actually, that match really helped as once we got past that match, things did not seem so tough."

Next they took out 15th-seeded **Jamie Murray** of Great Britain, who won three ATP doubles titles with Butorac in 2007, and **John Peers** of Australia 6-4, 6-4.

In the third round, Butorac claimed his biggest tour win to date as he and Klassen upset the **Bryan Brothers** 7-6 (9), 6-4. The loss marked the first time the six-time Australian Open and defending champions had not advanced past that round in Melbourne since 2003. In fact, the Bryans had played in nine of the last 10 Australian Open finals.

"I had only beat Mike and Bob once before and I have stopped



Photos by Martin Skobnik

counting the losses," Butorac said. "They are the best in the world, and I am a realist, so I actually had booked my plane ticket to come home on Sunday (Butorac and his wife, **Maggie**, became first-time parents on December 13 with the birth of their son **Jack**). Raven really helped that match because his innocence that we could beat them helped me forget about the past losses and believe we could beat them."

Butorac and Klaasen have been beating a lot of teams the last four months including winning the **Kuala Lumpur** tournament in November for their first win as a team (Butorac has 14 ATP doubles titles with seven different partners in his career). How did this duo become one as Butorac is currently living in Boston, Mass., and Klaasen in Cape Town, South Africa?

"Yeah, it makes it hard to practice," Butorac joked. "But we found we speak the same language – English and tennis. We both understand the game at a high level and we can breakdown our opponent's weaknesses."

That tennis knowledge helped in the quarterfinals when they took out 12th-seeded **Treat Huey** of the Philippines and **Dominic Inglot** of Great Britain 6-7, 7-6, 6-4. At 3-4 in the third set, Butorac was serving and down 0-40, before saving three break points and eventually winning the game. Butorac and Klassen then broke and served out the match.

"The quarterfinal was the trickiest match for us," Butorac said. "We were on a back court and it was windy. We were nervous about having a letdown after our big win over the Bryans. To get through that match, especially after saving those three break points, it let us know that we deserved to be this far in the draw."

The unseeded duo continued its incredible run by defeating eighth-seeded **Daniel Nestor** of Canada and **Nenad Zimonjic** of Serbia 6-2, 6-4 on Rod Laver Arena in the semifinals. Nestor and Zimonjic have won multiple titles together and are regarded as the second-best doubles team in the world besides the Bryans. It was then on to Butorac's first-ever Grand Slam final.

"I received this overwhelming support from everyone back home, I actually had to turn my phone off," Butorac said. "From the Rafter-Hewitt match through the final, it was such an amazing experience."

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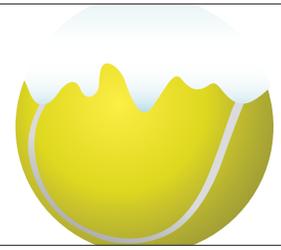
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# Junior Tennis

Update



## Section Training Center Applications & Videos Due March 3

USTA Northern is taking applications for the 2014 Junior Sectional Training Camp (STC) for players born from 2001-03. Players will be evaluated by video submission, USTA Northern ranking and player record. The videos should be no more than two minutes in length and should encompass all strokes, preferably in a play/point environment. Videos are due no later than March 3 to **Pat Colbert** at colbert@northern.usta.com. No videos will be accepted after March 3.

Section Training Camps are an opportunity to receive High Performance coaching in a great competitive environment. There will be a Level 1 camp (April 25-27 at Life Time Fitness - Lakeville) and a Level 2 camp (September 19-21 at the Rochester Athletic Club). Twenty-four kids will be selected for the Level 1 camp and up to 24 for the Level 2 camp. Selection for the Level 1 camp does not automatically guarantee selection for Level 2.

For more information about the Section Training Camp, please contact **Pat Colbert** at colbert@northern.usta.com.

## Hayley Haakenstad and Caitlyn Merzbacher Win National Open

**Hayley Haakenstad** (Chanhassen, Minn.) and **Caitlyn Merzbacher** (Eden Prairie, Minn.) won the doubles title at the 2013 Girls 16s National Open at Life Time Fitness - Lakeville.

Haakenstad/Merzbacher, seeded #2, upset top-seeded **Cameron Corse** (Baltimore, Md.) and **Christina Zordani** (Lake Forest, Ill.) 8-5. Haakenstad/Merzbacher were down 5-2 before winning the next six games and the gold ball.



Caitlyn Merzbacher and Hayley Haakenstad



Zoe Klass-Warch and Libby Rickeman



Cecelia Obetz and Monterey Knewtson

## Congratulations To All January Level 3 Champions

Congratulations to all of the Level 3 Tournament winners in January. The girls played at Baseline Tennis Center, while the Boys played at Life Time Fitness – Lakeville.

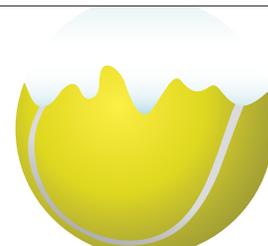
### GIRLS

- 18s Singles:** Alexis Nelson (St. Paul, Minn.) def. Jessie Aney (Rochester, Minn.) 6-4, 6-3  
**16s Singles:** Sophie Reddy (Edina, Minn.) def. Jordan Kopfer (Eagan, Minn.) 6-2, 7-6 (4)  
**14s Singles:** Kylie Mullaney (Edina, Minn.) def. Meagan Brown (Elk River, Minn.) 6-4, 6-1  
**12s Singles:** Monterey Knewtson (Fargo, N.D.) def. Nicole Copeland (Edina, Minn.) 6-2, 6-1  
**18s Doubles:** Aney/Nelson def. Summer Brills (Mounds View, Minn.)/Caitlyn Merzbacher (Eden Prairie, Minn.) 8-4  
**16s Doubles:** Zoe Klass-Warch (St. Paul, Minn.)/Libby Rickeman (Wayzata, Minn.) def. Hayley Haakenstad (Chanhassen, Minn.)/Chloe Hall (Prior Lake, Minn.) 9-7  
**14s Doubles:** Taylor Kopfer (Eagan, Minn.)/Evann Welty (Wayzata, Minn.) def. Taylor Jackson (Savage, Minn.)/Samantha Nichols (St. Paul, Minn.) 8-6  
**12s Doubles:** Knewtson/Cecelia Obetz (Minneapolis, Minn.) def. Taylor Gill (Wayzata, Minn.)/Aily Hietala (Duluth, Minn.) 8-2

### BOYS

- Boys 18s:** Joey Richards (Minnetonka, Minn.) def. Josh Gearou (Zimmerman, Minn.) 6-2, 6-2  
**Boys 16s:** Nick Beaty (Wayzata, Minn.) def. Jackson Allen (Shakopee, Minn.) 6-0, 6-1  
**Boys 14s:** Sebastian Vile (Rochester, Minn.) def. Davis Lawley (Fargo, N.D.) 6-4, 6-1  
**Boys 12s:** Hunter Heck (New Brighton, Minn.) def. Gavin Young (Apple Valley, Minn.) 6-0, 6-1  
**18s Doubles:** Richards/Jesse Sprinkel (Minneapolis, Minn.) def. Charlie Adams (Wayzata, Minn.)/Maxwell Olson (Edina, Minn.) 8-6  
**16s Doubles:** Jason Howard (Rochester, Minn.)/Brady Kenyon (Grand Forks, N.D.) def. Allen/Beaty 9-8 (5)  
**14s Doubles:** Tristan Fjelstad (Bloomington, Minn.)/Nikita Snezhko (Plymouth, Minn.) def. North Knewtson (Fargo, N.D.)/Lawley 8-2  
**12s Doubles:** Heck/Ryne Reger (Edina, Minn.) def. Joe Mairs (Edina, Minn.)/Young 9-8 (4)

# Adult Leagues & Tournaments Update



## League Players: Change To 10-Minute Default Rule

The Twin Cities Leagues Committee (TCLC) met in December to review the results of the USTA Northern League Player Survey regarding matches not finishing in the allotted court time and discuss potential solutions. That feedback revealed a consistent issue with matches starting late, finishing late and in some cases, needing to be finished at a later date. This causes problems for the players involved, those waiting to use the courts, as well as the facilities hosting USTA matches.

Given the clear issue with matches being completed in a timely manner, the TCLC voted in December to pilot a change to regulation 2.01C(2) Twin Cities Area Ten (10)-Minute Default Period for the 2014 Winter Season. The current regulation states: In local league competition, players failing to arrive on court, ready to play ten (10) minutes after the scheduled time of their individual match are in default. Players who arrive late but within the ten (10) minute default period are allowed a five (5) minute warm-up. **The amended regulation now states: In local league competition, players failing to arrive on court, ready to play at the scheduled start time of their individual match are in default.**

All players will be required to be on court or ready to enter the court, prepared in every way to play (shoes on and tied, pre-match stretching complete, water bottle full, etc.) at the scheduled start time of their individual match, or a default will be called. All players will still receive their 10-minute warm-up as under the current regulation but there will no longer be a "grace period." You may not reduce your warm-up time if you are late.

For more information, please contact **Kelley Okerman** at [okerman@northern.usta.com](mailto:okerman@northern.usta.com).

## Registration Open For 40 & Over Mixed and ONE Doubles in Twin Cities

Registration is now open for both Mixed Doubles 40 & Over and ONE Doubles (formerly known as NTRP Doubles) in the Twin Cities. The play season runs from March 31-May 11 and teams can expect to play four to six matches. The deadline to register for both leagues is March 7, 2014.

Mixed Doubles 40 & Over is a six-week league and teams choose their home court location. Three doubles positions are played in each team match; 6.0 and 8.0 play on Monday evening and 7.0 and 9.0 play on Thursday evening. This league now advances to a USTA National League Championship in Surprise, Ariz., in November of 2014. If needed, the USTA Northern Sectional



Championship will be June 13-15, 2014, at a location to be determined.

ONE Doubles is the new name for what was formerly NTRP Doubles in the Section. All ONE Doubles matches in the Spring season will be played at the Baseline Tennis Center in Minneapolis so grab 2-4 of your best tennis-playing friends and register for this FUN, easy doubles league. Each team plays only one doubles position each week (hence the new name and logo); women play on Tuesday evening and men on Wednesday evening. You must play at your current NTRP level (i.e. – a 4.0 can only play at the 4.0 level). This is a great opportunity for those affected by the Move-Up/Split-Up rule to play together once again. Don't forget the National Invitational Championship for this league is played in Indian Wells, Calif., during the BNP Paribas Classic in March of 2015! The USTA Northern Sectional Championship is December 5-7, 2014, at a location to be determined. Note: For players interested in playing ONE Doubles outside of the Twin Cities area, please contact your Local League Coordinator or **Nancy Lundberg** at [lundberg@northern.usta.com](mailto:lundberg@northern.usta.com) or at (952) 358-3286.

For more information about either league, contact **Kelley Okerman** at [okerman@northern.usta.com](mailto:okerman@northern.usta.com).

## Qualify For the 2015 Senior Games At Baseline Tennis Center

Save the date as the **Baseline Tennis Center** will play host to the 2014 Minnesota Senior Tennis Games August 7-8, 2014. The 2014 State event serves as the qualifying tournament for the National Senior Tennis Games which is scheduled for July 5-15, 2015, also at the Baseline Tennis Center.

Age groups are 50-54, 55-59, 60-64, 65-69, 70-74, 75-79, 80-84, 85-89, 90-94, 95-99, 100+ with singles, doubles and mixed doubles available in all categories. Participants should register according to their age as of 12/31/14.

Registration for the 2014 Minnesota Senior State Games needs to be done online at [www.mnseniorgames.com](http://www.mnseniorgames.com) by July 11, 2014, or postmarked by July 5, 2014. The \$40 registration fee includes up to 5 events (track and field is considered 1 and so is swimming). There will be an \$5 fee for each additional event.

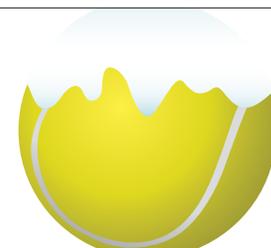
Minnesotans have had great success in the tennis competition at the National Senior Games as in 2013 Bloomington's **Charles Supplee** and Minneapolis' **Ray Ranello** won the gold medal in 90-94 doubles in Cleveland, Ohio. Supplee also won the silver and Ranello the bronze in 90-94 singles. St. Paul's **Ruby Rott** took home the silver medal in 80-84 singles. Over 800 people competed in tennis at the 2013 National Senior Games and Baseline Tennis Center is hoping to host more than 1,000 players in 2015.

For more information, contact [seniorgames@2015goldengamesmn.org](mailto:seniorgames@2015goldengamesmn.org).

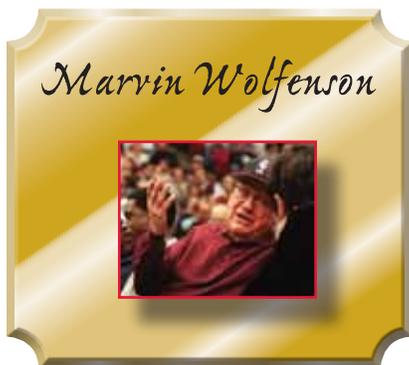


# Northern Mourns

## Death of Four Passionate Tennis People



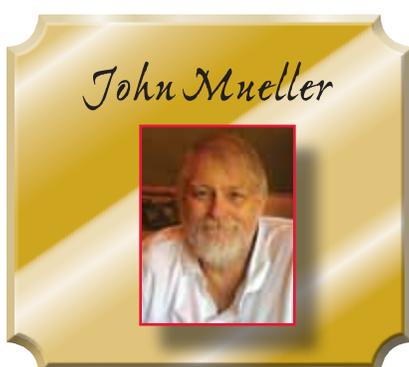
**U**STA Northern has lost four members of its family since December who were passionate tennis people and helped promote and develop the game of tennis each and every day. They all served in different ways to grow tennis and all will be greatly missed.



USTA Northern Hall of Famer **Marvin Wolfenson** died December 21 in California after a lengthy illness at the age of 87. Raised in Minneapolis, Wolfenson was active in sports and earned all-city honors in baseball and basketball at North High School. Upon graduation, he was drafted into the

U.S. Army where he served in the 1st Cavalry 82nd Field Artillery in the Pacific Theater in WW II.

He and life-long friend and business partner **Harvey Ratner** were the co-founders of the Northwest Athletic Clubs in the Twin Cities area and single-handedly brought indoor tennis to Minneapolis-St. Paul. Although better known for bringing the Minnesota Timberwolves to the Twin Cities as the team's original owners and building the Target Center, Wolfenson and Ratner were huge supporters of tennis at both a grassroots and collegiate level. The USTA Northern Community Service Award is named after Wolfenson and Ratner.



Long-time tennis player, coach and volunteer **John Mueller**, of New Hope, Minn., passed away on January 9, 2014, after a long battle with diabetes. He was 65.

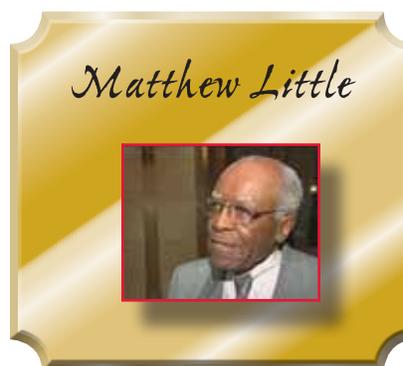
Mueller played number one singles at Augsburg College, before serving in the Army and then coming back to play in the top

spot at St. Cloud State. He started his teaching career as the Tennis Director at Golden Valley Country Club, and later served as a tennis pro and tennis director at the Northwest Athletic Clubs. He also was the boys and girls tennis coach at Armstrong High School in Plymouth, Minn.

He took tremendous pride in being the unofficial historian for the USTA Northern Hall of Fame, spending countless hours researching tennis players from the Section. He was a three-time Chair of the Hall of Fame Committee and responsible for induct-

ing a long-list of deserving men and women from around the Section into the Hall.

Showing his continued love for the Hall of Fame, before his death Mueller asked that in lieu of flowers, all donation be sent to USTA Northern (designated for the Hall of Fame), 1001 West 98th St., Suite 101, Bloomington, MN 55431.



Long-time tennis player **Matthew Little** of Minneapolis died on January 26, 2014. Little was 92.

Little was a life-long tennis player and a member of the Senior Tennis Players Club and the Martin Luther King Tennis Buffs.

He was born in Washington, N.C., in 1921. He attended college at North

Carolina A&T, and after college, joined the segregated U.S. Army. He served overseas before returning to the U.S. and moving to Minneapolis. He was a long-time leader of the NAACP and worked with political leaders and government agencies. He was elected five times to the Minnesota State Executive Committee, four times to the Democratic National Convention and another four times as an elector from Minnesota as part of the U.S. Electoral College.

He received the Human Rights Award from the Minnesota Human Rights Commission, the Democratic Party's Hubert Humphrey Award and the Urban League Outstanding Civic Service Award. He received an honorary Doctorate Degree of Law from the University of Minnesota.

He was married to **Lucille Bryant Little**, also an avid tennis player and supporter, and had five children, 15 grandchildren and five great grandchildren.



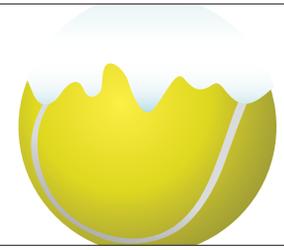
Long-time league player and captain **Lynda Schweich** succumbed to cancer on January 29, 2014. Schweich, of Lakeville, Minn., was 55. A 3.5 player, Schweich and her husband **Mark** have played on and captained numerous adult, senior and mixed teams over the years. During that time,

Lynda played on multiple Section champion teams and advanced to Nationals. She and Mark also played adult tournaments in the Twin Cities area.

# John Mueller...

## We Will Miss You

by Greg Lappin



It is great to be able to experience the unique events that happen to us once in a lifetime.

To see Halley's Comet streaking across the sky, or to share with someone that elusive hole-in-one we all dream about each time we hit the links.

Or to experience the friendship of a truly good person... such is the case for all of us who knew **John Mueller**.

John passed away at age 65 on January 9. He was a "larger than life" personality in our tennis community for 45 years. He played number one singles at Augsburg College before serving in the Army, only to return and play the same position at St. Cloud State.

He possessed tremendous athletic abilities. He could serve in the 120's with a wood racquet. He also had great reflexes and "quick hands." Did you know he played goalie for the Augsburg Hockey team too? And, if anyone hunted grouse with John, you were always amazed how he got two shots off before you even got the gun to your shoulder.

His tennis business career stretched across a wide spectrum. He began by serving as the Tennis Director at Golden Valley Country Club for over a decade in the 70s and 80s. John advanced from a tennis professional to the Tennis Director for the Northwest Athletic Clubs. Later in life, he coached both the boys and girls tennis teams at Armstrong High School in Plymouth, Minn.

One "hobby" John took on which reflected the way he approached anything in life was to be the "Unofficial Historian" for the USTA Northern Hall of Fame. In addition to serving as the

Chair of the Hall of Fame Committee for three terms (he would have stayed longer except USTA Northern had a three-term limit), John spent countless hours researching dozens of people involved with tennis in a wide variety of ways. He took tremendous delight when he unearthed a great player from the past decade or even century. His love of tennis history over the years within the Section was endless.

While this was a valuable service John provided to USTA Northern and to tennis, he understood life is much more about relationships than recognition. John's legacy was that of good friend, helpful mentor and man of principle. His work ethic was second to none, as was his passion for the game of tennis and his respect for all people both in and out of the game. Although he should have received numerous awards over the years and has more than earned a place in the USTA Northern Hall of Fame, he wanted none of it and insisted if we even thought about surprising him with an honor, he would get up and walk right out of the room. That was John.

The ripple effect he had upon people's lives is too numerous to list. When coaching women's daytime leagues at the Northwest Clubs, he created a huge following. When coaching his high school players, he earned their respect. When hiring staff, he gained their appreciation. John... we appreciate your fast wit, your genuine caring for all people, your constant upbeat attitude and your fun sense of humor. You leave behind a large number of people who are better off because of their interaction with you. You took care of a lot of people. I truly hope God is now taking care of you.

## Anonymous Donor Makes \$5,000 Donation In Memory Of John Mueller

There is no doubt that **John Mueller** touched many people over his 65 years of life, but maybe none more than a lifelong friend, who wishes to remain anonymous, that donated \$5,000 in his memory to the Park Rapids Community Tennis Association in Park Rapids, Minn.

The donor first came into contact with Mueller when he was serving in Thailand during the Vietnam War. While there, John was teaching and playing tennis on the military base in addition to his Military Police duties when a mutual friend of the two back in Minnesota sent some Davis wood rackets to the base. They remained good friends for over 40 years.

Wanting to grow the game at the grassroots level like John did when he spent his summers teaching tennis in the parks, the donor was looking for a Community Tennis Association that "had a small budget, but a big heart for tennis." Park Rapids had exactly that with eight tennis courts in town and an annual budget of about \$1,700. Also, John's brother, **Bill**, and sister, **Laurie**, live there with their families and John used to relax by hunting and fishing at a cabin that belonged to John's grandmother in the area.

"We were very excited when we heard about the donation in John's honor," Park Rapids Community Tennis Association Board Member **Barb Thomason** said. "We keep thinking about all of the

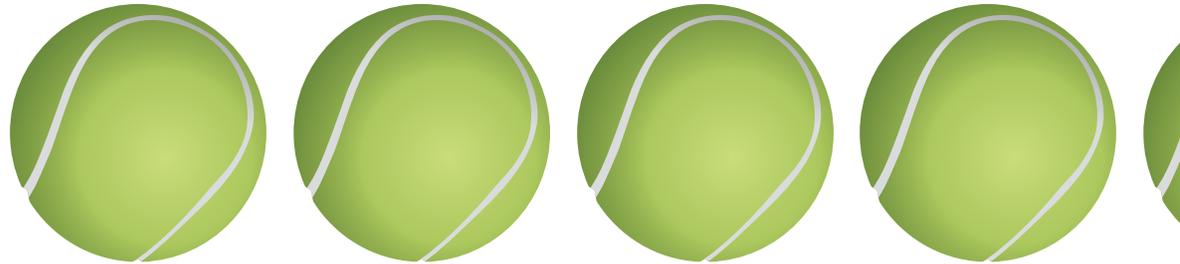
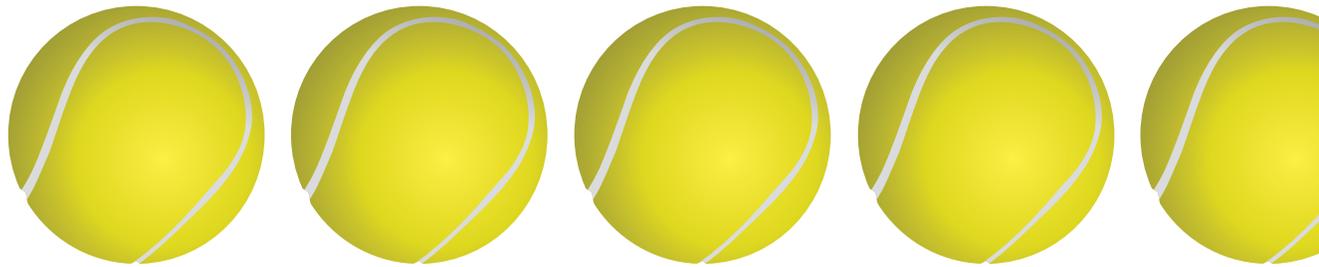
possibilities this could do for tennis in our community. Perhaps the next US Open champion will come from Park Rapids!"

One of the top priorities for the Park Rapids CTA is continuing to fund the boys high school tennis team in making it a vital school sport. The group runs its own leagues and would like to expand those offerings, while continuing to provide trainings for those who work with their school and summer recreation programs. The group also hopes the money will help them preserve their courts. Recently, the City of Park Rapids and the CTA refurbished four of their eight courts and added blended lines to two courts. They also maintain all the landscaping surrounding the courts and, with the help of the high school team, repair the courts when needed.

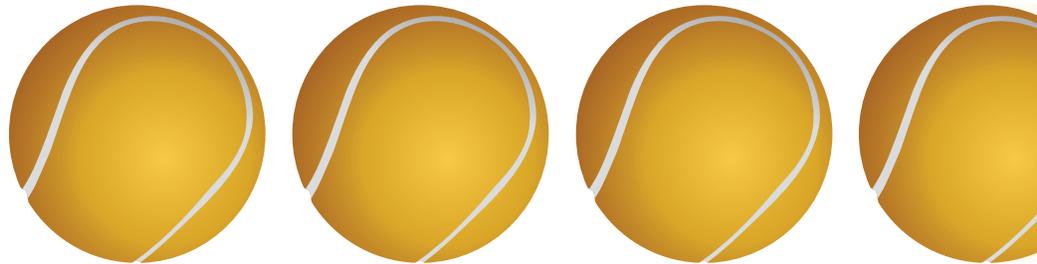
One area both the donor, who is a special education teacher, and the CTA hope to develop with the new funds is inclusive programming for those from lower income neighborhoods or with special needs, specifically working with Heartland Homes and Hubbard County Developmental Achievement Center. John's younger sister, **Heidi**, lives in a group home and **Laurie** works at Heartland Homes.

"John's spirit is his laugh, smile, joy, encouragement, friendship and his love of tennis," the donor said. "This donation to the Park Rapids community will help that spirit live on for years to come."

# YOUTH TENNIS



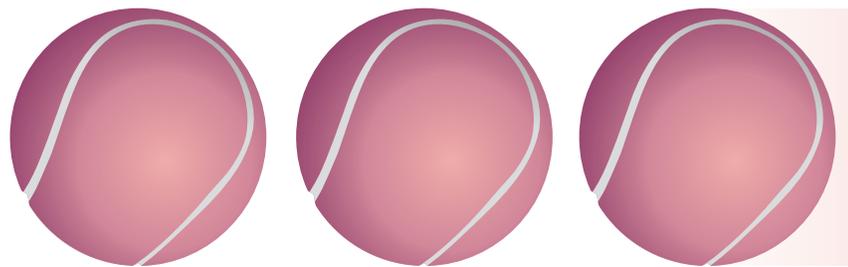
NORTHERN



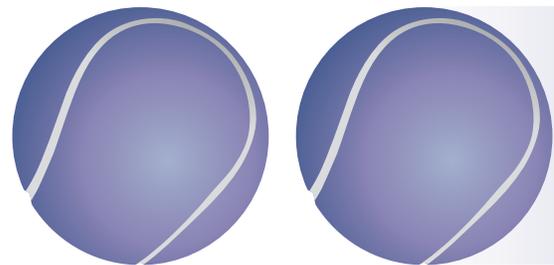
A USTA Serves Special Report conducted among high school students showed that, when compared to non-athletes and participants in many other sports, young people who participate in tennis get better grades, devote more hours to studying, think more about their future, aspire to attend and graduate from college, and have lower suspension and expulsion rates.

### Did you know...

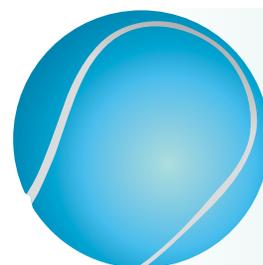
- Tennis is a unique catalyst for educational advantage as tennis players spent more time doing homework, and were more likely to report receiving "A" grades. A full 48% of students in the report have an "A" average and 81% say they will attend college.
- Tennis players had significantly lower rates of suspension from school and other disciplinary measures than participants in other sports and non-athletes. In fact, 73% have never been sent to the principal's office.
- Educational advantages among tennis players occurred across all socioeconomic levels.
- Adolescent tennis players are well-rounded as participation rates within extracurricular activities and community involvement were higher among adolescent tennis players. Indeed, 82% volunteer in their communities.
- Tennis contributes to adolescent health as tennis players reported lower rates of unhealthy behavior such as drinking and smoking, and are less likely to be overweight or become obese.
- Adolescent participation in tennis varies by race/ethnicity and gender, as well as across geographic regions.



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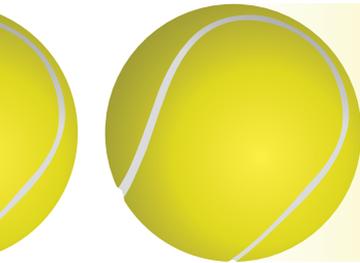
**FUN & ORGANIZ**  
For those kids who can  
opportunities encourag



### COMPETITIVE TENNIS

These opportunities are for those kids who...  
• **Middle & High School Tennis** – Middle school and high school tennis teams play a critical role in representing their school. This opportunity teaches responsibility.

# IS PATHWAY



## SCHOOL-TIME TENNIS – NO COURTS REQUIRED!!!

**Physical Education Classes (K-12)** – As part of its mission to promote and develop the growth of tennis, the USTA is dedicated to introducing tennis to children of all ages in schools across the country. The USTA provides the training and resources necessary to implement the program and relies on dedicated teachers, coaches, and administrators like yourself to put the program into action.

- No Tennis Courts Required
- Free Teacher Workshops
- Easy-to-Follow Curriculum
- Deeply Discounted Equipment & Grants For Qualifying Schools
- Assistance for courts and lines on your school grounds
- Much, much more

[www.usta.com/schools](http://www.usta.com/schools)



## OUT-OF-SCHOOL-TIME TENNIS

You are not limited to only playing tennis in P.E. class. There are many Out-of-School-Time Tennis opportunities which promote positive youth development through high-quality wellness and enrichment programs outside of normal classroom hours with no tennis courts required. Some opportunities available include:

- **Kids Tennis Clubs** – Allow kids to “sample” tennis in a social or group environment.
  - **Before/After School Programs** – Before- and After-school spaces are critical to both the physical and educational development of our youth.
- They also provide a safe haven for kids when many parents are still at work. Tennis can be a part of this safe haven with before- and after-school programming.
- **Recess Time** – Paint tennis lines on your playgrounds, put out modified tennis equipment and watch as kids gravitate to playing tennis during recess

[www.usta.com/schools](http://www.usta.com/schools)



## TENNIS FESTIVALS

Tennis Festivals are an exciting way to showcase the sport to kids as they experience first-hand how tennis is sized right for age and ability levels. Introduce kids and families to this lifetime sport so they can seek out additional play opportunities.

[www.northern.usta.com/Juniors/10\\_and\\_under\\_tennis/festivals/](http://www.northern.usta.com/Juniors/10_and_under_tennis/festivals/)

## AT THE COURTS

Improve your tennis skills using age- and ability-appropriate equipment through local programming, practice or informal play.

[www.youthtennis.com](http://www.youthtennis.com)

## ORGANIZED PLAY OPPORTUNITIES

When serve, rally and score, the USTA has developed fun and organized play opportunities to encourage further development of youth tennis players.

- **Play Days** – Play Days are designed for various levels of players to participate in a fun, low pressure, setting without the threat of elimination while encouraging the development and enhancement of skills.

[www.youthtennis.com](http://www.youthtennis.com)

Who are ready to take the next step into competitive tennis.

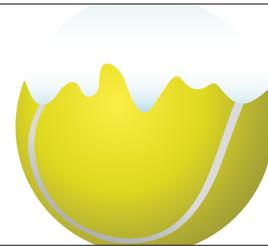
College and High School Tennis Leagues and Clubs are instrumental in achieving competitive success. The USTA can assist schools in organizing intramural and interscholastic programs to attract students by focusing on the inclusive nature of team sports. No-Cut programs are growing tennis by allowing students of all abilities to join a team. Community helps create well-rounded student athletes, develops leadership and

- **Jr. Team Tennis** – USTA Jr. Team Tennis (JTT) is the largest junior recreation tennis league in the country for kids ages 8-18. As the players grow into their skills, the format is adapted to best meet their needs. It is a combination of practice and match-play with an emphasis on skill development, fun, teamwork and friendly competition.
- **Junior Tournaments** – Tournaments supplement existing tennis programming and provide valuable match-play experience that you cannot learn in practice.

[www.northern.usta.com](http://www.northern.usta.com)

# Community Tennis

Update



## How A Community Tennis Grant Helped Eau Claire YMCA Set Up Play Days

It is amazing what a little help can do, especially in the area of funding to get an idea off the ground. The **Eau Claire YMCA Indoor Tennis Center** in Eau Claire, Wis., saw the benefits first hand as it received a Community Tennis Grant of \$900 from USTA Northern last March to run a Play Days Series, and the results have been immediate according to Tennis Center Director **Matt Boughton**. *Northern Exposure* caught up with Boughton to talk about his Play Days Series.



prizes, including the Youth Tennis Starter Pack.

**Q. How many kids participate in your Play Days?**

**A.** We average between 6-14 kids each time, and we are really hoping to double that number this year by going to 13 schools in the area with our staff and equipment to introduce more kids to tennis.

**Q. Have you seen an increase in participation for each Play Day you have done?**

**A.** We see larger participation numbers during the winter months, and they are continuing to grow.

**Q. Do the same kids come back or do you see new faces?**

**A.** Each time we host a Play Day we see at least one new face. The regulars are starting to bring friends with them.

**Q. Have you seen improvement in the kids who come regularly?**

**A.** We have seen a lot of improvement from the kids. They are able to play longer and more controlled points.

**Q. How important has the relationship with USTA Northern been in getting the Play Days program off the ground?**

**A.** Without the assistance of the USTA Northern and the trainings/workshops that they offer, this would not be happening. The workshops and networking opportunities they offer have been invaluable to our tennis community. We have also been able to talk to other facilities, like the **Rochester Athletic Club**, and learn from what they are doing and what has been successful for them.

**Q. How many Play Days do you run a year?**

**A.** We are hosting 13 Play Days this year. We host them the second Friday of every month, and in March, we will host an additional Play Day on March 3 to coincide with World Tennis Day and Tennis Night in America.

**Q. What special things do you have for your Play Days?**

**A.** We give every participant a bag tag and pizza. During the Tennis Night In America Play Day event, we will give a free youth-sized racket to the first 15 people in attendance. In November of 2013, we did a drawing and gave one lucky participant a Youth Tennis starter pack including a portable net, two rackets and 12 red balls.

**Q. How did the grant from USTA Northern help you in getting the Play Days Series going?**

**A.** The funding from USTA Northern allowed us to get this program off the ground. We were able to purchase all of the necessary equipment (which is essential). It also allowed us to offer the first few Play Days at no cost to the participants and give out some amazing

## Register For Partner Resources Webinar March 6

Want to make sure you are in the loop on the best and most popular partner resources through USTA and USTA Northern? Join **Sandy Smith**, Director of Membership, and **Christine Nickels**, Director of Community Tennis, for our Top 10 list on Thursday, March 6, from 6:00-6:30 p.m. Reserve your seat now at <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/848526969>. Space is limited.

## Congratulations January Community Tennis Grant Recipients

Congratulations to the following communities who received Community Tennis Grants in January. The next Community Tennis Grant deadlines are March 1 and May 1. For more information, visit [northern.usta.com](http://northern.usta.com) under Funding & Support and Grants or contact **Christine Nickels** at [nickels@northern.usta.com](mailto:nickels@northern.usta.com).

- **Altoona Middle School** in Altoona, Wis., received \$1,510 for the start of an after-school program. The program, for 35 fourth and fifth graders, started in mid-February and will continue through March.

- **InnerCity Tennis** in Minneapolis received \$1,500 for the development of a strategic marketing and communications campaign, along with a branding strategy.

## InnerCity Tennis & Fred Wells Receive USTA Serves Grants

USTA Serves, the national charitable foundation of the USTA, awarded \$450,000 in grants to 40 organizations that provide tennis and education to underserved youth and people with disabilities in January including to **InnerCity Tennis** in Minneapolis and the **Fred Wells Tennis & Education Center** in St. Paul. InnerCity Tennis received \$22,500, while Fred Wells was granted \$20,000.

## Attention North Dakota Schools: USTA Northern Is Coming to Your Area in April

USTA School Trainers will be on the road in certain parts of North Dakota the week of April 1 and have a limited amount of openings to come to your school to do a Teacher's Workshop and/or PE Class Sessions. To set up a workshop or schools session in your area, please contact **Carolyn Kramer** at [kramer@northern.usta.com](mailto:kramer@northern.usta.com) or at (701) 238-1515.

# LET THE PLAY BEGIN!

Events are for all ages and levels and the whole family can get active and have fun.



## HOST A TENNIS PLAY EVENT IN MARCH!

Spring and summer are coming fast so get the ball rolling on tennis programming in your community by hosting a Tennis Play Event in March!

All event hosts in March receive a FREE Celebration Pack with banners and prizes, as well as FREE online marketing materials courtesy of the USTA.

USTA Northern is also offering up to \$150 in marketing assistance for those providers hosting a Tennis Play Event for the first time.

Register your event today at [YouthTennis.com](http://YouthTennis.com).

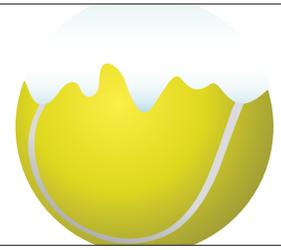
For more information about play events, marketing grants and more, contact Lisa Mushett at [mushett@northern.usta.com](mailto:mushett@northern.usta.com) or at (952) 358-3282.





# abc123 Tennis Launches

## Innovative Youth Tennis Program



**a**bc123 Tennis in Eden Prairie, Minn., is on a mission to transform traditional youth tennis instruction by merging tennis activities with the fundamentals of reading and math.

**Patricia Theriault** developed the concept for abc123 Tennis while working as Deputy Director for St. Paul Urban Tennis in St. Paul, Minn., from 2009-11. As Deputy Director, she was asked to teach both reading and tennis skills to her students. Initially, reading was taught in between tennis lessons and at the end of the class. In Theriault's mind, this seemed inefficient and she had a thought, "Why not combine our reading lessons with our tennis activities?" Math was added and abc123 Tennis was born.

In the unique and fun abc123 Tennis program, children learn through cooperative game play and participate in a variety of drills and games that reinforce and teach the fundamentals of tennis along with math, reading and language skills.

Specially designed balls are marked with a letter and corresponding number on each side. Children select a marked ball to count, identify letters and numbers and associate them with words and equations while rolling, tossing, catching, bumping, hitting, running or bouncing the ball.

abc123 Tennis significantly improves tennis skills by promoting fun, participation, stroke development, anticipation, movement, balance, timing, rhythm, breathing, critical thinking and cognitive behavior.

The program uses a flexible lesson plan format so instructors can adjust the program to their students abilities. It includes access to an online Instructor Community with curriculum instruction guides that feature a variety of lessons such as introducing the players, suggestions for warming up, progressions for player improvement (developmental drills) and games that reinforce the

fundamentals of tennis, math and reading.

The new program is being utilized at several locations including Bearpath Country Club in Eden Prairie and Tuckaway Country Club in Milwaukee, Wis.

"The players love it! The parents love it! The instructors love it," **Peggy Niccolai**, Tennis Director at Tuckaway said. "abc123 is a fun program that combines academic and athletic skills that 10 and under players of all abilities enjoy. The skills, games and progressions make it easy for the instructors to plan and improvise their lessons if needed. The parents are all for it – academic skills combined with tennis skills, what a plus!"

The program is also being used at St. Paul Urban Tennis, the very place where the idea for abc123 Tennis began. The non-profit organization brings the sport of tennis to more than 3,000 kids.

**Marc Miller**, the former Executive Director of St. Paul Urban Tennis and former Director of Player Development for USTA Northern, is a strong supporter of abc123 Tennis and their mission.

"abc123 is an amazing program. It should be used by any organization working with children and the development of their academic and athletic skills. The program is built with fantastic progressions that allow an instructor to work with very diverse groups of kids exhibiting wide ranges of academic and athletic skill levels. The cooperative design of the drills, games and lessons encourages and helps build very valuable leadership skills that are rarely addressed in other programs. Kids of all academic and athletic abilities are easily engaged. The kids are challenged with physical activity and at the same time practice their literacy and math skills. This is simply a BRILLIANT program!"

By including reading and math elements into tennis lessons, abc123 Tennis increases player participation. An environment is created where students who typically shy away from athletic programs feel comfortable because academics are as much a focus as learning the sport.

Children need to practice their reading and math skills and keeping kids learning while the classroom teacher is away is important to their development and can be a challenge for parents. abc123 Tennis offers that opportunity and the feedback from parents has been extremely positive.

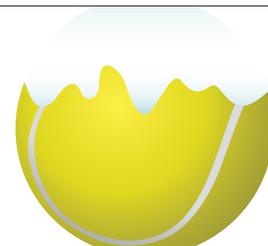
This year, abc123 Tennis will continue to partner with tennis programs and tennis professionals throughout the region to implement their program.

To learn more about abc123 Tennis, please visit [www.abc123tennis.com](http://www.abc123tennis.com).



# Hey JB

## Fail Better



**N**ow and then, “Hey JB” has to get serious. Today, we’re going to talk about failure...and tattoos.

**Stanislas Wawrinka**, newly crowned Australian Open Champion, has spent most of the last two years seriously upgrading his work ethic, closing the gap between himself and the world’s top players, and, evidently, getting pessimistic tattoos. The big one you may have noticed on his left forearm, is a quote from a writer named **Samuel Beckett**.



“Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better.”

Clearly, Stan got himself tattooed with the wisdom of failure before taking down the two best players in the world and winning his first major title. (We’ll deal with that juicy bit of irony in a moment.) What did Stan have to say about it at the time, though?

“It’s a little bit like how I see my life, and especially my tennis life,” said Stan, pre-triumph. “I’ve been playing 10 years...but I only have five titles, so that means there are only five weeks where I’ve finished like a winner.”

First, let us bask in absurdity of a man who has, for a good part of his career, been one of the 20-best in the world at what he does, but openly refers to himself as a loser and intentionally and permanently marked himself with the word “fail.” This is what tennis can do to the minds of otherwise sane people. If Stan were one of the 20-best chefs in the world, he’d have a cable network, a perma-grin and body art many degrees less charming.

Conversely, though, let us also stop to appreciate an elite athlete who is not a robot programmed to emit positive-thinking clichés. I’m pretty sure it’s **Michael Jordan’s** fault, but at some point it became completely unacceptable to admit that you might not win every important game/match/tournament because the moment you utter something like, “Honestly, I don’t know if I can do it,” you have apparently doomed yourself to a life of choking and succumbing to the Confidence-bots when it really matters.

By now, we all know that if you want to succeed in life, what’s important is taking every shred of doubt, fear and unfavorable circumstance that may exist in your reality, systematically deleting it and then projecting that new reality to the world so that it reflects right back on you in a blinding glow of invincible optimism. That’s what champions do. That’s what CEOs do. “Failure” does not belong in the vocabulary, even (and especially) when it actually happens.

But it is on Stan’s body. Permanently. On the arm he’s using to

hold the Australian Open trophy. How did this happen?

Fortunately, the intrepid journalists of the globe were able to dig into Stan’s quote bag and find the hidden positivity in Stan’s seemingly fatalistic worldview.

“Every week, we’re losing except the top four [ranked players]. So that means we have to take positives from that. We need to still try things, we need to still improve.”

Ah, yes. Now it makes sense. “Fail better” is a way to remind him that failure exists to teach

the committed individual what he must do to succeed, to summit the mountain. Stan’s triumph was earned with sweat, commitment and daily affirmations that his work will pay off in Grand Slam trophies if he sticks to it. There is one problem with that narrative: It’s not true.

What if Stan had not won? We, the hopeful onlookers, have constructed his story after the fact, assuming that Stan was full of quiet assurance and that his final breakthrough was rather inevitable - but it wasn’t. He could easily have lost to Djokovic again. He was somewhat lucky that Rafa’s body came undone in the final. Stan himself still admits that he “never expected to win a Grand Slam.” We could (and would) still be assigning the exact opposite meaning to his body ink.

The greatest contradiction, the tastiest morsel of irony in this tale of a major champion with “Fail” tattooed on his arm, is that it’s actually a rare moment of truth in the fantasyland of high profile sports. Great athletes wake up every day and go to work, kind of like you, unsure of how it will all work out. They doubt, they worry, and sometimes they freak out. In fact, because they’re so heavily invested, they might stress more than you do. While Stan enjoys his win, there are 127 players, **Novak Djokovic** and **Rafa Nadal** included, who are trying to figure out why they lost and what they have to do better tomorrow.

Asked about his future, Stan says:

“I’m not thinking at all about that, to be honest. I’m thinking match by match. Tonight, I’m going to enjoy the victory of today because I think it’s important. That’s why I’ve played well over the last year, because I’m enjoying my life, I’m enjoying the tennis.”

Easy for a new major champion to enjoy his tennis and his life, right? Yes, but the above are actually Stan’s words from after his quarterfinal win. They’re just the thoughts of a guy in his second Grand Slam semifinal, with a long record of coming up short, trying his best to not freak out, hoping tomorrow he’ll fail a little better.



# CROSSCOURT

## USTA Northern To Host Member Appreciation Event March 1

USTA Northern will be hosting a free Member Appreciation Event in conjunction with the Minnesota/Wisconsin men's tennis match March 1 at Baseline Tennis Center in Minneapolis. The event kicks off with two Cardio Tennis Clinics (11:00-11:45 a.m. & 11:45-12:30 p.m.) followed by lunch, a chalk talk with Gophers head coach **Geoff Young** and the match. Food, drink and prizes will be provided. To RSVP, please contact **Lisa Mushett** at (952) 358-3282 or at [mushett@northern.usta.com](mailto:mushett@northern.usta.com) and please indicate Cardio Session #1 or #2.

## 2014 USTA Northern Yearbook Now Available Online

The 2014 USTA Northern Yearbook is now available online at [www.northern.usta.com](http://www.northern.usta.com). If you would like a printed version of the book, please contact **Cory Haugen** at [admin@northern.usta.com](mailto:admin@northern.usta.com).



## Team Cutie Wins 2014 Love Games; Next Event April 5

Congratulations to Team Cutie, who was the winner of the 2014 Love Games at Life Time Fitness - St. Louis Park. Twenty-eight couples participated in the fun mixed doubles event which was a team competition based on total-games won. Team Cutie finished with 87 total-games won, followed by Team Sweet Pea with 80 total games, Team Hot Stuff (71), Team Be Mine (67), Team Crazy 4U (66), Team XOXO (61) and Team Yes Dear (58). Members of Team Cutie were **Ron Brandon, Galena Rosenberg, Jov Tuplano, Michelle Fredrickson, Prab Perera, Marge Saunders, Crista Gilmore** and **Kevin Fox**.

Dinner and beverages were provided by USTA Northern, while each participant brought an item to share.



## USTA League Player Jo Batty-George Wins Breaking Barriers Award

Congratulations to USTA League player and Fred Wells Tennis & Education Center volunteer **Jo Batty-George** (Minneapolis, Minn.), who received the 2014 Breaking Barriers Award Wednesday, February 5, at the Minnesota State Capitol Rotunda as part of National Girls and Women in Sports Day. Batty-George has been an active volunteer tennis coach for girls in south Minneapolis for many years and is a dedicated youth mentor.



## Mickey Maule Inducted Into Southern Illinois Hall of Fame

The Southern Illinois University Department of Athletics announced its 2014 Saluki Hall of Fame Class, which included USTA Northern member and volunteer **Mickey Maule** of Wayzata, Minn. The six-person class also included University of Minnesota head football coach **Jerry Kill**.



Jerry Kill and Mickey Maule

In 1990, Maule became only the third Saluki in school history win the MVC's No. 1 singles championship, and no SIU tennis player has done so since that time. The league's 1990 Player of the Year and Region V Senior Player-of-the-Year led his team to a conference title and also participated in the NCAA Singles Championship that season. He ranks first in school history in both singles wins (112) and doubles wins (44).

Maule also won the MVC's No. 3 singles and No. 1 doubles championships in 1988. He teamed with **Fabiano Ramos** to post a career record of 48-5 in doubles play.

## Aberdeen Native Doug Smith Inducted Into USTA Missouri Valley Hall of Fame

Congratulations to Aberdeen, S.D., native **Doug Smith**, who was inducted into the USTA Missouri Valley Hall of Fame December 7 in Kansas City. Smith's remarkable record includes working with tennis youth in 35-plus years of teaching, coaching and mentoring high-level junior players in St. Louis, 17 years of service as the MVTA's Junior Circuit Coordinator, his launching of two national tournaments held in the St. Louis area and his 15 years of coaching tennis at St. Joseph's Academy High School where his teams won nine Missouri State Championships during that span. Over 20 of his players have gone on to play NCAA college tennis. Smith started working with kids in Aberdeen, before moving to St. Louis.

## Former ATP Professional Robert Kendrick Wins Lakeville Open



Former ATP Touring professional **Robert Kendrick** (right) won the men's singles final at the inaugural Lakeville Open December 12-15 at Life Time Fitness - Lakeville. Kendrick defeated former Gopher and touring player **Nic Edlefsen** 6-2, 6-2 in the finals.

Kendrick, who was ranked as high as #69 and played in all four Grand Slam championships during his career, lost only eight games the entire weekend. In the semis, he beat **Kevin Kylar** of Winnipeg, Manitoba, 6-0, 6-1. In his opening match against local junior player **Mohanad Al Houni**, (Golden Valley, Minn.) he won 6-1, 6-1 and then defeated **Andrew Ray** 6-1, 6-0 in the quarters. Kendrick took home \$2,000 for winning the tournament.

## Serve Up Some Love To Those In Need



"Serving Up Love" is the mantra for the Northern Tennis Foundation, operating as a part of the USTA Northern Section. The Foundation is an endowment fund that will forever ensure that kids who would otherwise not have access to the sport get a chance to play the game and achieve their dreams. Our scholarships are inclusive of youngsters from all cultural and ethnic backgrounds and encourage kids to reach their highest potential by not only succeeding on the court, but in school and the community as well. By supporting our work, your tax-deductible contributions open the doors to a brighter future for kids that have the desire and passion to improve, but need your help to achieve success. For more information about the Northern Tennis Foundation, or to make a donation, please contact **Sandy Smith** at [ssmith@northern.usta.com](mailto:ssmith@northern.usta.com) or at (952) 358-3288.

## Citizens of the Court Receive Free Racquets From USTA Northern

The Fred Wells Tennis & Education Center's Citizens of the Court from Anderson United Community School in Minneapolis earned racquets for citizenship and good attendance from USTA Northern as part of a Matching Equipment Grant.



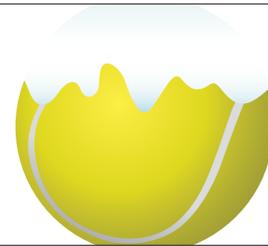
## Dreams in Motion event photo

USTA Northern staffers **Tony Stingley** and **Carolyn Kramer** went to Bismarck, N.D., in January to do a wheelchair tennis clinic for "Dreams in Motion," which introduces different activities to those in wheelchairs. Over 50 players participated in the event, as well as friends and family. The Bismarck media also featured the clinic.



# Twin City Tennis Camps

Doing Big Things in 2014



**E**xciting things are happening on the courts in Minneapolis and St. Paul this spring, summer and fall as Twin City Tennis Camps (TCTC) and Michael Lynne's Tennis Shop have partnered once again, bringing even more tennis opportunities to both juniors and adults and in the form of lessons, camps and tournaments.

Serving over 10,000 junior and adult players since 1999, Twin City Tennis Camps, run by long-time local tennis director and former Big Ten and University of Wisconsin tennis player, **Daniel Nabedrick**, is expanding from two to four locations in the metro area for 2014. Joining traditional sites Golden Valley Tennis Center at Brookview Park in Golden Valley, Minn., and the Plymouth Creek Athletic Club in Plymouth, Minn., TCTC will also host the new Michael Lynne's Tennis Camps at The Blake School – Hopkins Campus in Hopkins, Minn., and the St. Paul Tennis Camps at St. Paul Academy High School in St. Paul, Minn.

"We are very excited about this upcoming season and expanding to the Hopkins and St. Paul locations," Nabedrick said. "Last year, we had over 2,000 junior and adult attendees in our camps and tournaments, and our goal is to reach over 3,000 players and participants in 2014."

Twin City Tennis Camps, whose mission is "moving tennis from a game of skill to a game for life," runs 24 weeks of weekday, evening and weekend camps. There are four levels of camps including Junior High Performance (ages 10-18), Junior Development (ages



5-15), Junior Quick Start (ages 4-12) and Adult Camps (all ages and skill levels including Basics and Beyond: Beginners 1.0-2.5; Skills and Cardio: Intermediates 2.5-3.5; Skills and Strategy: Advanced Intermediates 3.5-4.5 and Warrior Drills: Advanced Competitive 4.0-5.0).

A long-time USTA Organizational Member, TCTC is also playing host to eight USTA Sanctioned Junior Tournaments sponsored once again by Michael Lynne's Tennis Shop and Babolat; is running USTA Jr. Team Tennis

at the Golden Valley, Hopkins and St. Paul locations; and is sponsoring the 2014 Aquatennial Tournament at Canadian Pacific Plaza in downtown Minneapolis in mid-July.

"We are excited to once again partner with Twin City Tennis Camps," **Michael Lynne** of Michael Lynne's Tennis Shop said. "We wanted to do something more for the community and our previous relationship with Twin City Tennis Camps has worked out well for us. We also like the fact that we are helping grow tennis with both juniors and adults and are really excited about the new Blake School location with our name on it."

Registration is going on now for all Twin City Tennis Camps programming with early bird discounts available for spring (deadline is March 15) and summer camps (deadline is April 15). For more information, or to register for all camps, lessons, JTT teams and tournaments, please visit [www.twincitytenniscamps.com](http://www.twincitytenniscamps.com) or call (612) 600-2460.

## Twin City Tennis Camps Donate Tennis Camp & Tournament Series Scholarships; Apply Today

Michael Lynne's Tennis Shop and Twin City Tennis Camps have generously donated the following camp and tournament scholarships to USTA Northern as part of its 2014 Summer Tennis Camps Scholarship Program and hopes this is the first year of a long partnership with USTA Northern in offering these great tennis opportunities.

**Junior High Performance Camp Scholarship:** Receive 11 weeks of instruction Monday- Friday from 8:00 a.m. – 12 Noon at The Blake School-Hopkins location. *Value \$1,700*

**Junior High Performance Camp Scholarship:** Receive 11 weeks of instruction Monday –Friday from 8:00 a.m. – 12 Noon at the St. Paul Academy Campus location. *Value \$1,700*

**Junior Tournament Series Scholarships:** Free entry into all eight USTA Northern Twin City Tennis Camp Tournaments.

*Value \$520*

**Junior Tournament Series Scholarships:** Free entry into all eight USTA Northern Twin City Tennis Camp Tournaments.

*Value \$520*

To apply for any of the Michael Lynne's Tennis Shop Camp Scholarships or Tournament Series Scholarships at Twin City Tennis Camps, please visit the Player Scholarships page under Support and Funding on [www.northern.usta.com](http://www.northern.usta.com) and complete the Tennis Camp Scholarship Application at <http://bit.ly/M5mUmi>.

Deadline to apply for these scholarships, as well as all USTA Northern Summer Tennis Camp Scholarships is May 1, 2014. For more information, please contact **Tony Stingley** at [stingley@northern.usta.com](mailto:stingley@northern.usta.com).

*Note: There is also financial assistance available for junior development camps through Twin City Tennis Camps. Contact Daniel Nabedrick at [dnabedrick@twincitytenniscamps.com](mailto:dnabedrick@twincitytenniscamps.com) for more information or call the Twin City Tennis Camps program office at (612) 600-2460.*



# Play USTA Northern Spring & Summer Leagues!

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Register now for Spring 40 & Over Mixed and ONE Doubles,  
as well as all Summer Leagues in the Twin Cities.



NORTHERN

## Registration Deadlines

40 & Over Mixed and ONE Doubles - March 9

Registration Deadline for all Summer Leagues - April 4



For more information about USTA League Tennis in the Twin Cities,  
contact Kelley Okerman at [okerman@northern.usta.com](mailto:okerman@northern.usta.com) or (952) 358-3287.

For USTA League Tennis outside of the Twin Cities,  
contact Nancy Lundberg at [lundberg@northern.usta.com](mailto:lundberg@northern.usta.com) or (952) 358-3286.

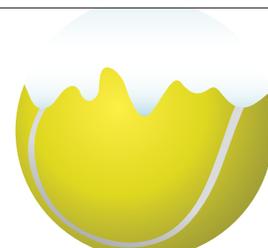
## **Don't Have A Team or Looking for Players?**

Contact Matchline at [matchline@northern.usta.com](mailto:matchline@northern.usta.com) or (952) 358-3285.

# Feeding:

## A Neglected Part of Practice

by Bruce Gullikson



**H**ow do most practice or warm-up rallies start? Answer... by feeding a tennis ball. Yes, I have never met a hungry tennis ball either, but the art of hitting a ball from your hand or drop hitting it to where you want it to go is called feeding. This is a skill that most players are very poor at and may be a contributing factor to why many are not very good at warming up

or practicing. Most tennis pros and coaches would not appreciate their students reversing roles with them, but I have never met one who doesn't appreciate their students having the ability to feed a ball correctly. Everyone can do it with just a few tips and some practice.

**Tip #1:** Position the cart or hopper of balls in an accessible place. This means if a person is right handed they should position the cart of balls of their left side so not to constantly reach across your body. This is the same principle as a right-handed player keeping the balls in their left pocket when playing. Keeping the balls in the correct position can also help with the rate of feeding if a person is practicing technique or doing a cardio drill.

**Tip #2:** Use a continental grip as this will help you control the ball and is also a grip that a lot of players need to practice. The continental grip is the most important grip in the sport since serves, overheads, volleys and slice backhands are all hit with this grip. This will also keep your hand from tiring out and allow you to put as much or as little spin on the ball as possible.

**Tip #3:** Choke up on the racket for control. Especially when you are closer to the net, don't be afraid to choke up on the racket handle. The closer your hand is to the head of the racket, the more control you have. Consequently, you can drop the grip lower on the handle when back toward the baseline. Also, keep your grip pressure light as most players hold the racket too tightly when playing, as well as when feeding the ball.

**Tip #4:** Understand the angle of the racket at contact and where you are

meeting the ball. This may seem obvious, but the ball goes where you hit it. A lot of players are not aware of the racket angle at contact as evidenced when you ask for lobs in warm ups. Often times, it looks as if a person is using a shovel to hit the ball as many warm up lobs are hit with the wrong angle because of the rocket launcher in the feeder's hand, causing the lob to go into the next county.

**Tip #5:** Know the contact point as feeding is also a great time to practice hitting the ball in the right spot. If you cannot drop the ball to yourself and understand where your contact point is, then it will be very difficult to find your ideal contact point when under the pressure of when you are moving and keeping score.

**Tip #6:** You must remain focused. Similar to how you can lose focus during a match, it is easy to do the same thing while feeding. A person does not have to be as intense as a bomb diffuser, but they still need to pay attention to the task at hand.

**Tip #7:** Just like having accurate strokes, feeding requires practice. Place targets and practice hitting to them just like you should be doing when playing a match. The baseline is not a realistic target when playing and should not be when feeding either. Also, practice feeding different heights, spins and speeds as you are trying to simulate match-type situations.

**Tip #8:** Learn to hand feed. Tossing balls from the hand is a great way to get a workout or focus on technique as the feeder or coach is much closer to you. A couple of tips on hand feeding, include making sure not to feed the balls so they land directly in front of you unless you want to do an impression of **Johnny Knoxville** in *Happy Gilmore*. Also, know the difference between a toss, which is underhand, and a throw, which is overhand. Many people who try to hand toss would make Olympic softball great **Jennie Finch** look like a Little League pitcher.

**Tip #9:** Utilize the ball machine or a teaching pro if you are not able to set up the practice situation that you want.

By practicing your feeding, you might find your partners and coaches will be more appreciative, your practices will improve and so will your game!





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