

TennisPro®



The International Magazine for PTR Tennis Teachers and Coaches

September 2024



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TennisPro Editorial Offices
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ADVERTISING Caitlyn Fries
 caitlyn@ptrtennis.org
 phone 843-785-7244

ptr@ptrtennis.org
 www.ptrtennis.org



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For the Record

It is with great enthusiasm that I share an exciting announcement regarding the future leadership of PTR.

After serving as interim CEO, I am pleased to introduce Peter Hurley, who will be assuming the role of PTR's new CEO this month. Peter brings a wealth of experience and a dynamic vision that aligns with the growth and future of racquet sports coaching.

I am also thrilled to share that both PTR and PPR are experiencing tremendous growth. Over the last year, our organizations have seen a remarkable 20% increase in combined membership. Notably, PPR has reached an astounding milestone of 10,000 members, a testament to the expanding interest and participation in pickleball coaching worldwide.

This month, we are also celebrating the opening of our new office at Saddlebrook Resort in Wesley Chapel, Florida. To commemorate this milestone, we will be hosting a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Tuesday, September 24. This new facility will serve as a hub for our continued growth and innovation across all racquet sports. In addition, PPR is launching its new Level 2 Certification Workshop, designed to provide even more in-depth training and professional development for pickleball coaches.

For more information on the upcoming workshops and events at both PTR and PPR, please visit our websites at www.ptrtennis.org and www.pprpickleball.org.

Thank you for your continued dedication and support. We are excited to embark on this next phase together and look forward to all that we will accomplish as a community.



Karl Hale

Interim CEO/Executive Director



TENNISPRO®

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Member News



JEFF CHANDLEY, DIRECTOR OF RACQUET SPORTS AT ATLANTA ATHLETICS CLUB, TO RETIRE

Atlanta Athletic Club announced the retirement of Jeff Chandley, the Director of Racquet Sports, after 16 years. Jeff's passion for tennis, leadership, and commitment to excellence have left a lasting impact on the club.

Some highlights of Jeff's achievements include:

- Serving as Fitness Director (2009-2011) and leading the pool complex renovation.
- Bringing Professional Tennis back to Atlanta and AAC in 2010, hosting legends like Pete Sampras and John Isner.
- Expanding our tennis program from 60 to 166 teams and growing our teaching team to six certified professionals.
- Developing the Tennis 101 & 201 programs, introducing over 350 players to the game.
- Creating the Tennis Life Cycle Plan for comprehensive tennis development.
- Overseeing the construction of the Pickleball Stadium Facility.

Jeff's dedication has been recognized with many accolades, including PTR's Georgia Member of the Year in 2017.



LEVEL 1 WORKSHOP - NEW CANAAN, CT

PTR Level 1 Workshop in San Jose, CA at San Jose Swim & Racquet Club. Hosted and run by PTR Coach Developer David Panconi.



REC COACH WORKSHOP - NEW ORLEANS, LA

PTR Rec Coach workshop in conjunction with USTA. The host was Cee Jai Jones and the PTR Coach Developer was Tomas Catar.



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REC COACH WORKSHOP

LEVEL 1 WORKSHOP

LEVEL 2 WORKSHOP

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The PTR Certified Coach creates an environment that fosters positive tennis experiences, provides opportunities for relative success, and develops a lifetime love for the game.

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Member News

From Empty Courts to a Community

by Cate Crandell

Batesburg-Leesville, SC might not be a town you're familiar with. It's tucked between the big cities of Atlanta, GA, and Charleston, SC, and home to just over 5,000 people. Here, in this quaint rural setting, PTR member Mark Bothwell has transformed tennis.

You see, just eighteen months ago, the concept of tennis in Batesburg-Leesville was virtually unheard of, with the local racquet community having only one registered player. Now, thanks to Mark's efforts, that number has grown to be over 100!

Mark, now retired, once volunteered in the local school district's mentoring program. He saw a need for accessible and affordable tennis and retrained as a coach certified by the USTA. He

began by offering 600 free tennis lessons and providing loaner racquets and balls, dedicating each day to nurturing the sport in his community. What started with introducing tennis to children in the mentoring program quickly grew to include people of all ages, from 6 to 60+, across the town and its neighboring areas.

This not-for-profit initiative, sustained entirely by donations, is more than just free lessons and equipment... It's a community effort focused on more than just profit. Under Mark's leadership, plans are in motion to further enhance the local facilities. A new public tennis and pickleball complex in the works which will have modern amenities such as restrooms

and lighting, paved parking, and a covered pavilion for community gatherings.

He says the feedback from the community has been overwhelmingly positive! Participants enjoy the fun atmosphere and appreciate the program's focus on character-building. Mark's ambition goes beyond just teaching tennis; he's committed to instilling lasting values and making a profound, positive impact on the youth and the wider Batesburg-Leesville community.



CALL FOR MEMBER NEWS

Share your latest successes in teaching or playing the sport we love! Send an email to cate@ptrtennis.org with your member news (pictures or videos are always welcome), and we'll share it with the rest of the membership in the next issue of RacquetsPro Magazine!

Member News



LEVEL 1 WORKSHOP - BELLA VISTA, AR

PTR Level 1 workshop in Bella Vista, AR at Bella Vista Tennis Center hosted by Jake Shoemake and the Coach Developer was Kelli Russell- Holmes.

LEVEL 1 WORKSHOP - PHILADELPHIA, PA

PTR Level 1 in Philadelphia, PA at Legacy Youth and Education. Our host was Sanjin Kunovac and the PTR Coach Developer was Marley Woods.

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GAME CHANGERS

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NEW PRODUCT

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- Easy set up and take down.
- Rolls up easily and can be stored in a carry bag (included).

LEARN MORE 

ONCOURT OFFCOURT
GAME CHANGERS



Lessons From 12 Mighty Orphans

by Kim Bastable

You, as a leader and coach in the world of racquet sports, could very well change the life of your students. You have that power! The people you teach may not always tell you of your impact, nor will they make a Hollywood movie about it. Despite not seeing multiple lives change from hopeless and lost to inspired and hopeful, like in the movie, you need to take your job very seriously.

Sports experiences can be very powerful, but many racquet professionals don't take the job seriously enough. They just show up (sometimes late) and give average energy, viewing their "job" as just teaching a better

stroke instead of using the sport as a tool to change a life.

Since I'm a teacher, I'd like to give everyone a summer assignment that will improve the profession of racquet sports professionals and enhance its impact on the world! Everyone reading this should watch the movie "12 Mighty Orphans" as soon as possible and send me a LinkedIn message about its impact on you. I look forward to hearing from many of you. I assign this "task" because it could be the most impactful movie I have ever seen. That is a big endorsement.

Here are several powerful messages I took from the film:

- The impact a coach can have on the lives of youth is immense, important, and needed.
- The impact that sports experience, in general, can have on lives is immense, important, and needed.
- Teamwork, camaraderie, and peer encouragement can literally change lives in a huge and positive way.

Watching "12 Mighty Orphans" seriously inspired me. As the educational leader of the Director of Racquet Sports courses and programs at the University of Florida, it gave me greater energy to take my role of building leaders more seriously because everyone gets better when the leader gets better.

- Club programs run more smoothly.
- More players get positively impacted.
- Programs provide a better customer experience.
- People tell others about their positive racquet sports experiences.
- Students grow confidence and physical health through being on the court.
- People find friends.

Poor leadership causes pros to feel overworked and underpaid, fails to innovate and add new ideas, doesn't maximize court usage, creates competition among pro staff members, sees a revolving door of unhappy staff, and causes countless other avoidable, harmful conditions. When the leader doesn't lead well, players don't fully benefit from all that the racquets culture can provide. Worst case, they leave.

At UF, we use a curriculum created by great leaders in the industry to educate current and future leaders on the finer

points of leadership. Few people are born with a clear set of leadership abilities. The skills and habits for good leadership need to be learned. UF's curriculum creates an environment for learning the skills and behaviors needed to become a great racquets leader. Although it's an online course, there are plenty of ways to interact with peers and learn from and discuss ideas with others.

In our courses, we review the concepts of where the industry is today and the challenges of having multiple racquet sports under one roof, as well as the facilities and operations challenges of aging and new clubs. We discuss the technology of today and applications that are constantly changing, which a future director might need to use to keep people active and engaged in their program. We discuss culture building, hiring and firing, and how to have good and hard conversations with employees because that's the job of a leader. We cover financial record-keeping, how to read a report, and understanding budget variances that will affect decision-making. We discuss sales and marketing and how to get the word out about programs to drive people to your club, ready to invest their hard-earned money in a racquets game. We also discuss the customer's experience and how important it is to know what the customer sees, hears, and experiences from the time they see your social media and stop on your webpage to the time they step on your court.

The job of a leader is to manage all of that at a high level, hire and train staff, and make the customer have a blast and want to come back. However, although most racquet singles players are good at "execution" skills, their real skill need, once they become



a leader, is to “delegate” and “inspire” those they lead. Tennis players who become leaders can no longer “just do it”; their relationship-building skills and strategizing skills become far more instrumental than doing the tasks themselves. Delegation and how to empower others are skills that are deeply discussed in the curriculum.

PTR Certified pros at Level 2 can become a “Certified Director of Racquet Sports” from completing the UF Director of Racquet Sports Certificate course. It’s the next step in the career of a pro, from days on the court spreading skills to days “off court” running a facility and leading the culture and staff. This “next step” education has already equipped over 50 pros toward leadership, and many

have secured Director positions that pay more and provide more responsibility.

Remember, it’s time to do your assignment and watch “12 Mighty Orphans.” Don’t forget to watch all the way to the end and read what happened to the characters from the film, which is a true story, in the years following the movie. Doctors, fighter pilots, hall-of-fame careers, and more. It’s incredible what impact coaches and a sport had on the lives of the people in the movie. Go watch, realize your impact, and then send me a LinkedIn message telling me how you are going to take your career and your impact to the next level. I can’t wait to hear from so many of you!



Kim Bastable is the Instructor for the University of Florida’s Director of Racquet Sports Certificate Course and has over 50 years of experience in tennis as a player and coach. She earned NCAA All-America honors as a Gator player and holds a B.S. in Finance from UF. After a varied career in banking, sportswriting, and tennis coaching, she now leads UF’s Professional Tennis Management Program and focuses on coaching coaches. Kim also teaches within UF’s master’s program and consults with youth athletic programs to build Athlete-Centered cultures.

DIRECTOR OF RACQUET SPORTS CERTIFICATE COURSE DETAILS

- Online and self-paced, study from anywhere, while you have full or parttime job
- Apply anytime; admitted students have 1 year to complete the course once admitted. Through dedicating 4 hours a week, students will complete the course in 6-7 months.
- Application requirements:
- PTR Level 2 certification; or in the process of upgrading from Level 1
- 5+ years of full-time industry work experience, with 2 years in a supervisory role preferred
- A current or former boss or similar person who will provide a written recommendation
- No bachelor's degree is required.
- No fee is required to apply. Once admitted, Course cost: \$2,695
- Upon completion, students will submit completion certificate to PTR for Level 3 status of "Certified Director of Racquet Sports"



UF MASTERS OF SPORT MANAGEMENT WITH A SPECIALIZATION IN DIRECTOR OF RACQUET SPORTS DETAILS

- Online, study from anywhere; semester-based courses
- Program requires admission to the University of Florida, which requires a Bachelors' degree with a 3.0 average for the final 60 hours of coursework
- Program involves earning 36 credit hours from UF's top-ranked Sport Management master's degree program
- 6 course hours are specifically related to Director of Racquet Sports
- 30 course hours are in subjects such as Sport Finance, Sport Management, Sport Law, Event Management, Research Methods, Coaching, Psychology and similar subjects.
- The application for admission deadline occurs 3 times annually, with student admitted in fall, spring and summer semesters
- Total cost for the Masters is around \$21,000 (financial aid is available)

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Being Open to Opportunity: How KK&W Changed My Life

By Jon Sarosiek and Bryan Fox

It was an offer with no strings attached—a quick 30-minute meeting that I thought was no big deal. What could be the harm? It was merely a preliminary conversation to explore my professional status, future aspirations, and perhaps see if the executive search and consulting firm Kopplin Kuebler & Wallace (KK&W) could provide any advice or direction. Little did I know how profoundly my life was about to change. Accepting Jonathan Sarosiek's generous offer led me to realize my professional dreams and brought personal fulfillment and happiness!

Every year, when the PTR Symposium approaches, I prioritize attending. The opportunity to connect and collaborate with industry peers is both invigorating and rejuvenating. I've learned that the key is to stay open—embracing new knowledge and continuously expanding our understanding helps us improve. With years of experience behind me, I felt prepared to take on the next level of leadership in the racquets industry. So, why not take advantage of the opportunities provided to us as PTR members, like a complimentary 30-minute consultation with the best in the industry—KK&W?

Amid our busy routines, it can be challenging to see the full scope of our professional journey. KK&W's thorough and extensive search process allowed me to learn more about myself in a short amount of time than

I ever imagined possible. After my initial conversation with Jon, I decided to refine my skill set and enhance my profile in the industry. I had done the work but needed guidance on presenting myself effectively to top professionals and prestigious clubs in the country. I revamped my resume, carefully crafted candidate questionnaires, executed a compelling cover letter, updated my LinkedIn profile, and assembled an extensive portfolio to qualify for highly sought-after positions. Although I knew the competition was tough, I was committed and ready for the long haul. However, just a few months after my initial conversation with Jon, an opportunity arose.

Jon informed me about a job opening at Lake Shore Country Club in Chicago, prompting me to ask the big questions: Is this the right fit? Considering the club culture, the team, and the organization, and whether I wanted to work in member equity clubs or other sectors within the racquets industry was crucial. After a thorough investigation of this opportunity, I am incredibly grateful to Jon for taking the time to talk to me. I am thrilled to have aligned with the best GM and team at Lake Shore Country Club. I have fallen in love with a city I might have otherwise overlooked. By staying open to possibilities, listening to the experts, and humbling myself, I wake up every day thinking, this is heaven, and I am grateful I get to do this.



The advice I would give? Identify your own personal and career goals, seek advice and perspective from knowledgeable people who are genuine and care, invest in yourself, and keep trying to do the little things and

details to achieve what you want to achieve! To start, we have some outstanding resources through the PTR at our disposal that you need to take advantage of. Keep growing and learning each day!



Jon Sarosiek is certified by the PTR, PPR, PPTR, one of first 200 professionals that were certified in three racquet sports. Sarosiek is also certified as an Elite Professional by the USPTA, and works as a search executive and consultant within the racquet sports and fitness/wellness industry with Len Simard, who is the lead search executive and consultant for the racquet sports and fitness/wellness division of KK&W. Additionally, Sarosiek currently serves as the Head Racquet Sports Professional at Farmington Country Club, in Charlottesville, Virginia. Farmington Country Club is perennially recognized as a "Platinum Club of America". Previously, Sarosiek was the Director of Sports & Wellness at Boar's Head Resort, and also served as the Director of Tennis at Wintergreen Resort.



Bryan Fox is a native of Dubuque, Iowa and currently the Director of Racquets at Lake Shore Country Club. Bryan's passion for people and his unwavering commitment to service and ethical practices define his professional ethos. With a career spanning over two decades, Bryan has experience across all sectors of the racquet sports industry. His journey has taken him across the country from grass roots operations to camps and clinics with legends of the game, culminating in his role at the prestigious member equity club that he proudly calls home. Returning to the Midwest, Bryan has found a deep affinity for the Chicago area, where he remains involved in the racquets community through various organizations and a distinguished network of industry professionals.

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How Managers and Dir. of Racquets can synchronize their efforts, communicate effectively, and plan for operational efficiency...
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PTR Membership Now Includes Access to Quality Benefits and Resources

By The team at ICBA

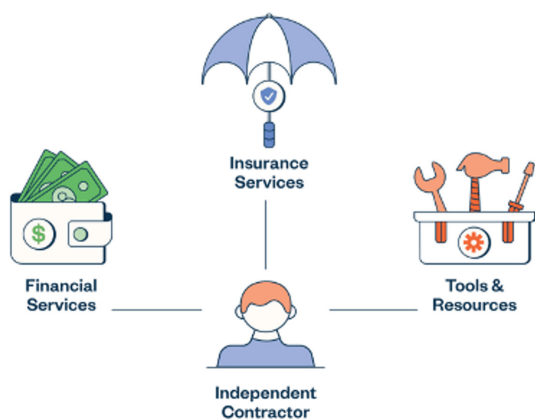
INTRODUCTION TO THE ICBA

Founded in 2002, the ICBA (Independent Contractors Benefits Association, Inc.) is a non-profit community made up of over 275,000 independent contractors. The ICBA empowers members with access to the quality benefits, resources and tools

needed to become or continue to operate as independent contractors.

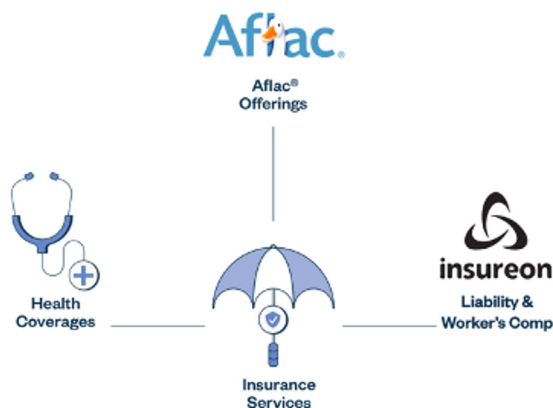
The ICBA leverages the buying power of its large membership base to negotiate competitive group programs with the largest insurance and benefit providers in the country. It has a full range of financial

services, insurance services and tools and resources that equip independent contractors for success managing expenses, budgeting, tax planning and finding affordable health insurance. More details can be found at www.ActivateBenefits.com



INSURANCE SERVICES

The number one concern of most independent contractors is finding access to quality, affordable health insurance. This is especially true for many PTR members as they struggle to protect their income from unexpected medical expenses and other emergencies. The ICBA offers a wide range of insurance products with quality, affordability and choice not found elsewhere.



Health Coverage Options

Basic Health Plans from Axis Insurance:

These low-cost plans partially reimburse common medical expenses such as doctor visits, hospital stays, prescriptions and telehealth services. With monthly premiums starting at less than \$100, these plans are extremely popular as either stand-alone options for healthy individuals or as Gap plans paired with major medical coverages to address high deductibles and co-insurance amounts for those expecting high annual healthcare expenses.

Short-term Health Plans from eHealth:

These major medical type plans bridge gaps in health coverage and offset medical costs for a defined period of time, typically six to twelve months. They are ideal for those who have just lost coverage, are waiting for other coverage to begin, are waiting to become Medicare eligible, or are without health insurance outside of open enrollment.

Major Medical Plans from HealthSherpa:

These traditional, robust medical plans cover healthcare costs ranging from routine doctor visits to treatments for serious illnesses. Major medical plans cover pre-existing conditions and are a must have for anyone with medical issues that require regular monitoring, prescription medications, and treatment for flare-ups. Open enrollment occurs at the end of each year from November until mid-January.

No matter where they are in life, PTR members can select health coverage based on their specific circumstances, from the most affordable solutions to comprehensive coverage for major medical issues. The ICBA offers a variety of plans to tailor exact coverage at the most affordable price for each PTR member.

Aflac Supplemental Product Offerings

The ICBA's partner for supplemental health offerings is Aflac, the most recognized insurance provider. Aflac offerings can help pay for services and out-of-pocket expenses when one is sick or injured that regular health insurance doesn't cover. These supplemental plans include:

Dental and Vision Insurance: Pays cash for the preventative and diagnostic services, basic services such as fillings and extractions and major services like crowns, bridges and oral surgery

Accident Insurance: Covers expenses outside of typical medical policies and expenses outside of hospital bills when injured.

Cancer Insurance: Provides cash benefits for medical and non-medical expenses after a cancer diagnosis.

Critical Illness Insurance: Offers additional protection for substantial medical expenses of severe, life threatening diseases that may not be covered in a standard policy.

Supplemental insurance not only pays for unreimbursed medical expenses but can cover lost wages, transportation related to the health conditions, and expenses for essentials like food, housing, and childcare during recovery.

Small Business Insurance

Many PTR members operate as a small business and have requirements to have business insurance. Understanding the necessary categories of coverage and where to find them can be challenging. Sorting through whether you need liability,

property, business owner insurance and worker's compensation depends greatly on the specifics of the size of the business, the state location and how business is conducted.

The ICBA has partnered with Insureon, the #1 independent marketplace for online delivery of small business insurance to address this need. Insureon evaluates one's risks, offers advice based on unique needs, prepares fast quotes with pricing from many carriers and can bind coverage instantly. Proof of coverage can immediately be given to clients or prospective clients.

FINANCIAL SERVICES

Once proper insurance coverage is secured, most independent contractors look for resources to improve their business operations and manage their finances. The ICBA has explored options and negotiated services to help its contractors with their financial needs.



Banking Services with Lili Bank

Independent contractors need to separate their business revenue and expenses from their personal income and living expenses. Separate recordkeeping not only facilitates accounting and tax preparation to determine



business cash flow and financial health but also helps in building business credibility, credit history and may offer liability protection. Lili Bank addresses the specific banking needs of independent contractors. Free accounts are available with a free Visa Business Debit Card, free overdraft protection, free ATM, free expense tracking and tax savings tools. Additional services such as invoicing, bill pay, and accounting services are available with business growth.

Tax Support – free and paid

Paying taxes as a contractor is different from paying taxes as an employee. Contractors must consider setting aside enough from their revenue to pay self-employment taxes for Social Security and Medicare as well as income tax. Making quarterly estimates is a must to avoid penalties and interest. Knowing what to do can be a challenge to someone new to independent contracting.

The ICBA website offers an abundance of free content to guide contractors in paying taxes and keeping up with tax law changes that might affect contractors.

Paid advance tax support through the Contractor Advantage Plan (described below) includes tax return preparation, tax advice and assistance with IRS tax audits when needed.

Financial Education, Credit Counseling and Student Loan Support

Contractors look for ways to plan their financial future and find resources to address problems like credit card debt or student loan debt. The ICBA has accumulated resources for contractors to execute on their financial plans and find help if there are bumps in the road.

TOOL AND RESOURCES

Without the support system of a traditional employer, PTR members face business and personal challenges that they must handle independently. The ICBA strives to be the go-to resource for all things independent contractors and is constantly evaluating new tools and resources to help contractors at work and in life.



Contractor Advantage Plan from Legal Club

What if you had one source to support you for all your accounting, tax, legal and financial issues? The Contractor Advantage Plan does just that for independent contractors. It provides access to a network of professionals with the expertise to advise on these issues and can provide expert discounted service for complex problems. Additionally, it offers Remote Tech Support to resolve hardware and software issues with your computer, handheld devices, and printers.

Discounts & Savings

All contractors want discounts on the products and services that they use everyday at work and at play. Through the leverage of its more than 275,000 members the ICBA has negotiated discounts on office products, travel and entertainment that provide great savings through its preferred pricing. And the ICBA is continually exploring new savings opportunities to find discounts based on member requests.

News & Insights

The ICBA Toolbox has the latest contractor news, best practices, and useful resources; all curated to support the life and work of independent contractors. It includes articles, guides, checklists and handbooks to inform and educate on important issues, improve their business practices, and enrich their personal life.

TAKE ADVANTAGE

Through PTR's partnership with the ICBA, PTR members now have access to a wealth of benefits and resources designed to support their professional and personal lives. This collaboration ensures that PTR members can focus on what they do best—coaching, instructing and promoting racquet sports — while the ICBA supports their insurance, financial, and business needs. Be sure that you visit the ICBA offerings at www.ActivateBenefits.com and take advantage of this new partnership.



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WITH



PTR & GRSA UNITE, PROVIDING THE TOOLS TO IMPROVE YOUR FUTURE

It's no secret that **PTR** has been taking care of coaches across the globe with initiatives and incentives that provide education, support, and continuous innovation in order to give their members the best tools for success. For this reason, the union with **GRSA International** as global certification and education partner is a step forward in helping coaches not just know more about the stringing process, product knowledge and science behind stringing, it's also possibly provide a new income stream.

We all know that seasons change, business goes up and down and it's always good to have other options to help us earn a living. Knowing more about stringing, the tech behind the service and how it benefits players, will essentially help provide an even more in-depth service to your clients. Knowing why a ball reacts differently with certain strings, tensions, combinations of string, string patterns and more just adds to your professional all-round service, if we add to the fact that you can also re-string rackets, then you're definitely on to a winner.

In this first stage of the partnership, **GRSA** are offering a very special introductory offer to all **PTR** members. As an active **PTR** member, you can sign up to **GRSA's** business membership for €99 and receive 2 online courses absolutely free. You'll be able to start from the beginning, getting the base knowledge of how to string a racket and move up to a more advanced level.

These courses are online and valued at over **€300**, this also includes a certification exam.

If this weren't enough, until Sep 15th, 2023 and exclusive to **PTR** members in the US, the first 500 to sign up for this amazing offer will also benefit from a special string and accessory pack from **HEAD** valued at over \$80! If you'd like more information about this great deal, you can contact **PTR** through normal channels, or you can visit the **GRSA** website and click on the **PTR** banner.



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Logo your Racquet

by Ken DeHart



Ken DeHart, the Director of Racquets at Alpine Hills, developed a passion for tennis during his freshman year at Campbellsville College in Kentucky. Over his extensive career, he has held prominent positions across the United States, including Director of Tennis roles at Sequoia Swim & Tennis, Woodmont Country Club, Maryland Farms Racquet and Country Club, Sea Pines Resort, and Beverly Hills Country Club. Ken's dedication to the sport has earned him numerous accolades, such as USPTA Master Pro, PTR International Master Pro, and inductions into both the USPTA NorCal and PTR Halls of Fame. A competitive player himself, he has won gold medals at the World Senior Games and the Bay Area Senior Games, and continues to inspire and educate players and coaches worldwide.

On the pro tour, you usually see a logo, an ink stenciled design; Head, Wilson, Yonex and etc. on the strings of the tour players racquets.

Here are 4 reasons why you should logo your own strings.

1. Endorsement

The pros are often paid or receive product for using a particular racquet or string. Their prize money for tournaments is awarded based upon your actual wins in each tournament. To improve their base pay, the pros negotiate contracts with companies to play with their product. For racquet or string companies, this is a great visual way to advertise a company's product. The more players that use the product and logo the strings the better the mass marketing hit for that company.

Now, most of us are not going to receive financial rewards for displaying a company's logo on our strings. But, if you have a passion for that company, it is a cool way to display your loyalty. Send pictures to the company displaying your racquet with logo strings and ask for free strings? Probably not going to work but you never know.

2. When to restring your racquet

Players often restring their racquet only when the strings break. However, most of the time the strings have outlived their youthful feel. Strings have a life, especially the poly strings of about 20-

30 hours of play time. Multifilament strings stretch or begin to unwind from use. These strings actually are several strings twisted together to make one string. As you play, hit with power or spin, the outer strings start to break off or become "fuzzy". That is a pretty visual reminder that it is time to restring. Adding a logo to your strings will serve as a reminder that it is time to replace your strings before the tension has dropped so low that they no longer resemble the strings you initially had with the new string job. Several club players love to wait to restring until the string actually breaks because it is cool to say "I broke a string". The string tension had actually changed several matches before then and you were playing with strings at a totally different tension.

3. Wear Pattern

The logo on the strings will begin to fade as you play. The fading will indicate the location of where you are contacting the ball on the strings a majority of the time. Hopefully the wear or fading pattern is in the center of the logo and not out toward the frame. Servers are often a little above the center so you may have a taller than center wear pattern as well.

4. It Just Looks Cool!!!

I may not play like a pro but my racquet logoed makes me look just like the pros. Secretly, I bet my racquet is proud to have a logo on its strings as well.



Working with Coaches to Teach the Mental Side to Players

by Dr. Michelle Cleere

I've been working with coaches for years to help teach the mental side to players. While I think it's always good to educate, it is hard to tackle the factors that are not exactly our forte. Coaching the mental side of sport can be a challenge when your specialty is coaching the physical side. And, let's face it, there's only so much time in a practice to do everything that needs to get done.

My goal is to educate and develop simple, effective mental training tools that coaches can use and incorporate into teaching

physical skills as part of their program. Incorporating these two skills at the same time is a great way to see how they work hand in hand, and when and where the magic happens.

With a growth mindset, I am always conscious about how I can continue to grow and develop my presentations and workshops in a way that is simple and applicable for coaches. Coaching mental and physical skills can be a challenge because it's not typically what players

or coaches are used to; however it is fast becoming the most important part of my work. I realized this when I watched the results of my second presentation during an on-court talk in the UK during Wimbledon.

SCOPE OF PRACTICE

As a sport coach, your scope of practice is to coach the physical skills. You probably know a lot about nutrition or physical therapy, however most of the time it may not be your specialty as is teaching physical skills and the science behind it. As would be the case with mental skills.

I get that training athletes on mental skills is not your expertise nor should it be. However, since mental skills are so critical to the success of your job and your athlete's success, it is critical that you have an understanding and some tools for helping athletes with their mental skills. There are ways to teach the mental side that aren't outside of your scope of practice and that are different than what I do daily with elite performers.

ROLE MODELING SPEAKS VOLUMES

I started a second presentation in the UK talking about being a good role model because if you don't do anything else to educate the mental side to players, you can model the thoughts and behaviors that elicit optimal athletic performance.

What does that look like? It starts the moment you walk onto the court or field and doesn't end until practice ends.

- The number one goal is to get to know your athletes as people. That carries a lot of trust and respect that'll go a long way.
- A big part of showing confidence is in

having positive body language – head up, shoulders back, and walking tall. A slight upturn of the corners of your mouth are always good too.

- You can model resilience by bouncing back when things don't go your way.
- Internal motivation is important and can easily be obtained by getting your athletes to think about developing their own small, realistic practice goals.
- Help athletes develop more positive language around their abilities – I can't do this right now, but if I keep working, I will get better.
- Promote effort, intent and growth; instead of promoting winning, zero mistakes, and perfectionism
- Show that you are having fun at practice and allow your athletes to have some fun.
- Get out of the habit of telling and in the habit of asking and allowing your athletes to be part of the decision-making process.

WHY IS ROLE MODELING HELPFUL?

This makes coaching easier for you because your athletes will be more bought in. They will feel empowered and they will take responsibility for their growth and learning. Athletes also flourish and want to be in environments where this kind of coaching exists. The #1 reason people play sports is fun. #2 is to be social. #3 is to learn a new skill.

In this process, they don't want to be bystanders, they want to be participants so if you can figure out how to make that happen via role modeling, you've already made a huge impact. Players will always look to their coach for 'the right thing to do.'

This may sound like a huge challenge, or maybe not, but this is what being a professional in any field requires. I understand that there are days when other things in life are happening and impact us in a negative way. This makes it harder to be the role model you know you should be, but learning to compartmentalize is again good for you and for your athletes.

TAKING IT TO THE COURT

The second part of my presentation in the UK took mental skills to the court to teach the mental side of play in the moment. I taught a couple of easy drills that help to specifically train mental skills. One was specific to focus and one for negativity. I used volunteers to teach a couple of variations so coaches could see the drills and see the development and change in mentality.

As part of this, I talked about my Beating the Tennis Demon System – pre-performance routine, pre-serve routine, and a between point routine. This demonstrates how important it is to train the brain to be a competitive athlete, how the demons pop up to sabotage in these areas for tennis players, and ways to begin to train them on what to do in these critical moments.

I took the coaches through some ideas and ways to help them help their athletes develop the necessary routines. As I was talking through this in my first presentation, a coach asked me, aren't routines specific to each individual? Good question and the short answer is YES but that doesn't mean that tennis coaches can't start to help tennis players understand these moments and understand what to do with these moments.

EVERY PRACTICE SHOULD INCLUDE

Make sure to include and teach the mental side to players in practice.

Every practice should include fun, socialness, and learning. Some coaches seem to think that fun and being social can't exist in a learning environment, but in fact they are a necessary component of learning. People learn much better when these elements exist and on a consistent basis.

I frequently hear, my child doesn't play like she practices. Yeah that's because many coaches don't think enough about the differences between practicing and playing a match. Teach the dynamics of how practice and a match are different and incorporate more deliberate practice into what you are doing.

For example, thinking about technique is important in practice but it's not an important part of playing a match. In a match, there should be very little thinking. In practice, a tennis player can make mistakes and correct them and practice the growing serve technique over and over but that can't happen in a match. Unfortunately, coaches don't talk enough about that difference, so overthinking happens in a match because a tennis player hasn't been taught not to think in a match.

Bottom line, we should do what we do best and instill that into our players. The physical side of sport is, of course, very important. And, the mental side of sport is SO critical to your success as a coach and your athletes' success, there are some small things you should do to create a positive, confident, resilient environment.



Last note, observation is a critical skill for a coach. Observe and when you see something, stop practice and ask questions about what is happening? What is the athlete thinking? How are they feeling? Be confident and flexible enough to think critically about how to train your athlete through that moment.

TEACH THE MENTAL SIDE AND MAKE THE MAGIC HAPPEN

Start small. Try one thing and build from there. It really is magic when a player gets both aspects of physical and mental skill to work together in practice, and more exciting in a match.



Dr. Michelle Cleere helps top athletes, musicians, and executives in competitive fields unlock the power of the mind and create the mental toughness to be the best. She gives her clients the mental tools to deal with performance anxiety, gain more confidence, and build resilience. She offers a FREE 30 minute consultation for PTR members. [Click here to Learn more!](#)

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