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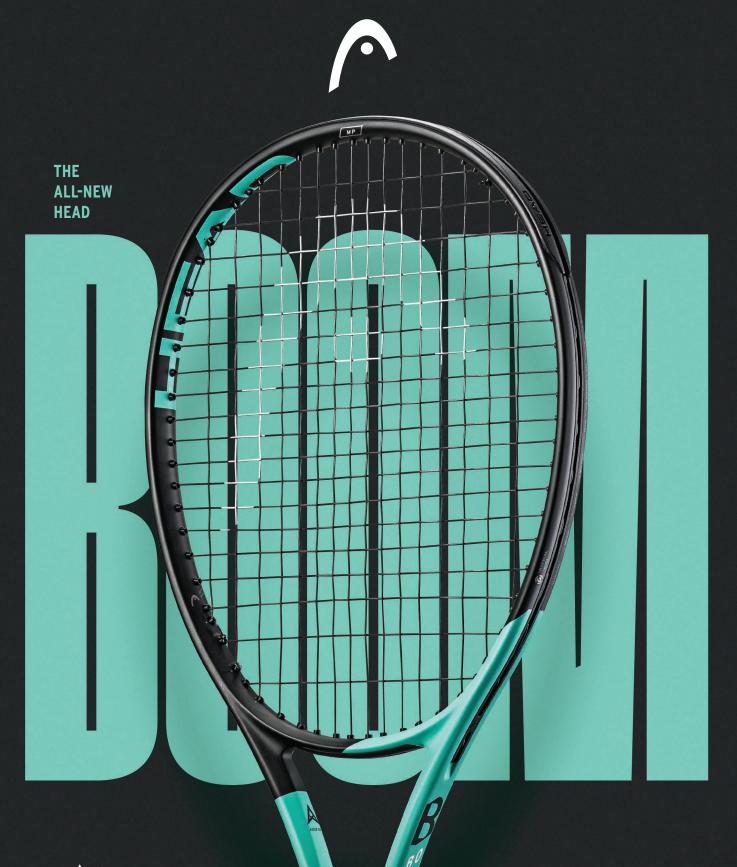
December 2024

The International Magazine for PTR Tennis Teachers and Coaches

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For The Record

As we approach the International Racquets Conference (IRC) at the end of February, excitement is building for what promises to be an unforgettable event.

Last year, nearly 700 attendees from all over the world joined us at Saddlebrook, making it one of our most successful conferences yet. This year, we're aiming even higher, with incredible speakers, over 40 presentations on custom indoor courts, and events designed to combine learning, fun, and connection.

What Makes the IRC So Special

The IRC is about education AND connection. From workshops and presentations to networking in the Member Lounge or chatting at the Trade Show, this conference offers countless opportunities to meet and collaborate with passionate professionals life yourself.

Our CEO, Peter Hurley, has been working tirelessly to create a clear vision for PTR, and you'll see his efforts reflected throughout the conference.

How to Make the Most of the IRC

Before the Event: Follow our socials, emails, and website for the latest updates. At the Event:

- . Claim your badge, attendee gift, and schedule at the registration desk.
- Network in the Member Lounge (Pegasus South) and explore over 50
- vendors at the Trade Show (2/23, 5-9 PM). Enjoy signature events like the Opening Party, Awards Breakfast, . Sponsor Party, and Closing Party.
- Attend presentations on state-of-the-art indoor courts to elevate your skills and knowledge.

The IRC is about learning, connection, and building a global racquets community. We can't wait to see you there!



From the Editor

As TennisPro's editor, I'm always looking for stories and article ideas from our community. Have exciting news or an idea to share? Email me your submissions, and you might see them featured in an upcoming issue of TennisPro.



Cate Crandell - Editor cate@ptrtennis.org



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PTR U10 IVE HK 2024

PTR Master Pro and Hall of Famer Dr. Louie Cap conducted U10 Certification workshop in Hong Kong, China Dec.12-14, 2024. The workshop was held at Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education (IVE) and was organized and superbly assisted by Shepherd Cheung, PTR Hong Kong provider in cooperation with IVE tennis coordinators Koon-On Chan and Benny Tsui.





USTA FAMILY OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to the Patrick family on being named USTA's Family of the Year! With over 50 years of dedication to tennis, Michael and Marsha Patrick have built a legacy of teaching, coaching, and growing the sport, from their home court in Greenville, IL, to high schools, colleges, and pro tournaments. Their sons, Shaun and Josh, have carried on the family tradition, leading as coaches and directors in the St. Louis area.







TENNIS TAKES OVER BEALE STREET IN MEMPHIS!

If you've been to Memphis, Tennessee, you know Beale Street is one of the city's most iconic attractions. On October 26th, tennis made its mark on this historic street! With the support of Paul Goebel (former University of Memphis Men's Tennis Coach), Gwyn Fisher (Chief Economic Development Officer at the Greater Memphis Chamber), USTA Tennessee, Wilson Sporting Goods, and the Memphis Grizzlies, we hosted an exciting beginner tennis pop-up event. Set up in front of the FedEx Forum on the Memphis Grizzlies' opening night, the event featured 10 mini nets, foam balls, and 25" rackets. Over 200 participants, from toddlers to grandparents, joined us to try tennis and enjoy fantastic giveaways from Wilson. A huge thank you to USTA Tennessee for their support in making this event a smashing success for **Tennis Memphis!**



PTR AND THE ITALIAN VICTORY AT THE DAVIS CUP

PTR played a key role in Italy's recent Davis Cup victory through the contributions of several members. Team Manager Michelangelo PTR Dell'Edera, а Honorary Member, has been instrumental fostering PTR's in partnership with the Italian Tennis and Padel Federation (FITP) since 2010, Lorenzo Beltrame, a PTR International Master Pro, supported the team with his expertise in mental toughness, while

Davide Vavassori, a PTR member for 27 years, coached his son Andrea Vavassori, a standout doubles player and US Open mixed doubles champion. These members exemplify PTR's commitment to excellence and its influence on tennis globally. For more details or to share this story, contact us for photos and insights.

(Photo credit: Getty Images for ITF) 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!

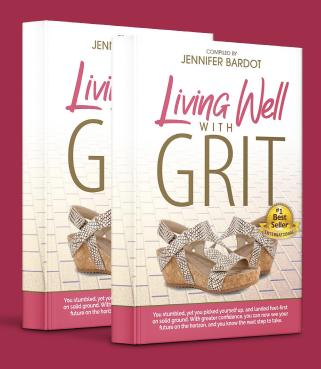
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PTR AD HK 2024 AND Memorable drills hk

PTR Master Pro and Hall of Famer Dr. Louie Cap conducted AD Certification workshop in Hong Kong, China Dec.9-11, 2024. The workshop washeld at Club de Recreio and was organized and superbly assisted by Shepherd Cheung. Louie also conducted Memorable Drills Specialty workshop on December 7, 2024.



BOOK LAUNCH LIVING WELL WITH GRIT Author: Jennifer Bardot

"Living Well with GRIT" just launched in a digital format for you to lean into. The stories shared in this book are all written by women who found a way around (or through!) the roadblocks, picked themselves up, and landed feet-first on solid ground. With greater confidence, they can now see their future on the horizon, as they take their next best step toward LIVING WELL!

In Lisa Frumhoff's chapter, "Pickleball Saved My Life", she shares about her own journey in her life overcoming obstacles and finding her passion and joy again.



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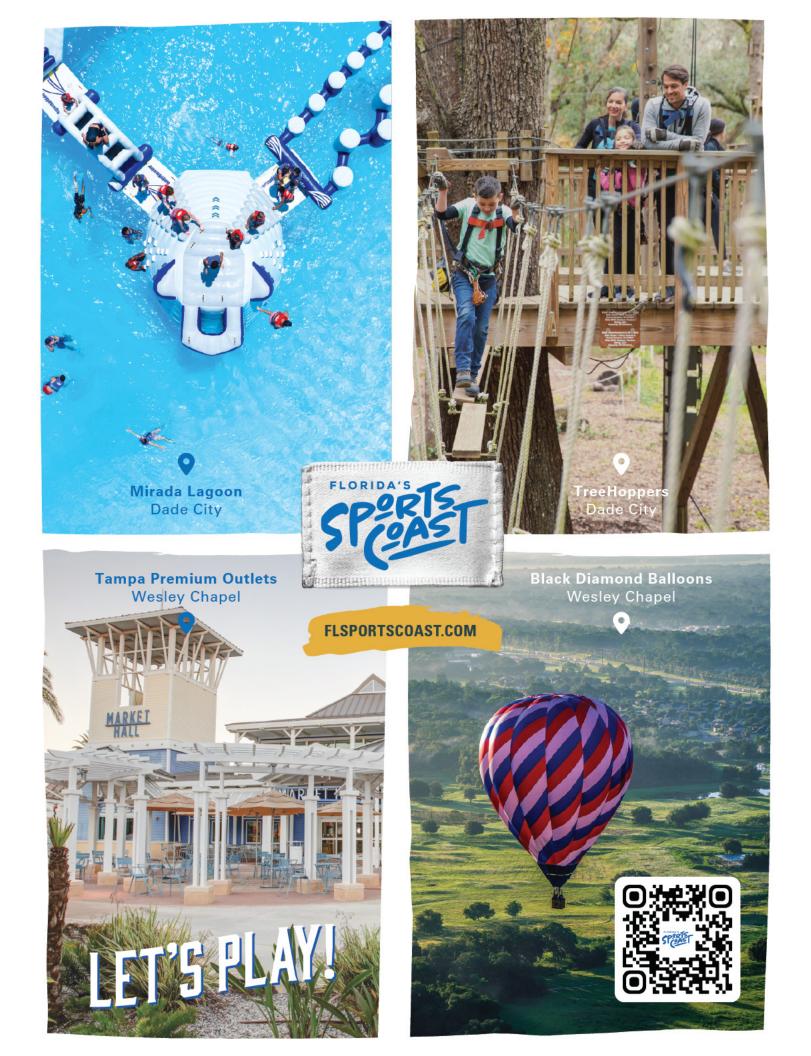
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Defeating "The First Two Opponents - Before you Defeat the Player on the Other Side of the Net"

by Ken DeHart

As you enter the tennis court to defeat your next opponent, you will first face two opponents that you must conquer before you can even begin to win the match against - the player on the other side of the net.

OPPONENT #1 – THE NET

Unless your shots clear the net, you cannot begin to even play the match. The game

you play will be like practicing by yourself or playing golf. You will hit the ball then go pick it up. Doesn't sound like much fun to me?

DESCRIPTION

- 1. The net is deceptive; it is almost transparent in that you can see through it.
- 2. The net is 3 feet high at the center and

grows to 3 feet 6 inches at the net posts.

3. It is distracting because your eyes will always seem to look at the white band at the top of the net. This amazingly seems to direct all your shots to this 3 inch target – which means you seldom get a chance to play the person on the other side of the net.

PROBLEM

- 1. Because 60% of your points lost never clear the net, you end up losing to an inanimate object.
- 2.60% of the time you will have to go pick up our own mistake
- 3. You have a hard time defeating the player on the other side when we give them 60% of their points with no effort on their part.

SOLUTION - CREATE CONSEQUENCES

The next time you go out to practice, select from the following options:

- 1. Any ball hit in the net equals 5 push ups for the striker
- 2. Any ball hit into the net gives your opponent 2 points
- 3. Any ball hit into the net on your service game allows your opponent to become the server and visa versa
- 4. Any ball hit into the net within the first 4 balls of a rally (including the serve and return) equals a game for the opponent

OPPONENT #2 - THE LINES

Once you have defeated the net you will now face your next opponent – the net. Unless you are able to place your shots on or inside the lines designated for serving, receiving and rallying (depending upon whether you are playing singles or doubles) you will never be able to score a point against that "person on the other side of the net". The lines on the opponent's court create a network of options for us to play into. First there are 4 giant squares or rectangles. The two rectangles near the net are 13 ½ feet wide and 21 feet long and the two in the back are 13 ½ feet wide and 19 feet long in which to direct our shots. If we are playing doubles, there are two alleys that are 4 ½ feet wide and 39 feet long to attract our shots. There are also singles sidelines, doubles sidelines, center service lines, baselines, service lines and even a center service hash mark that divides the baseline into a deuce and ad court half.

DESCRIPTION

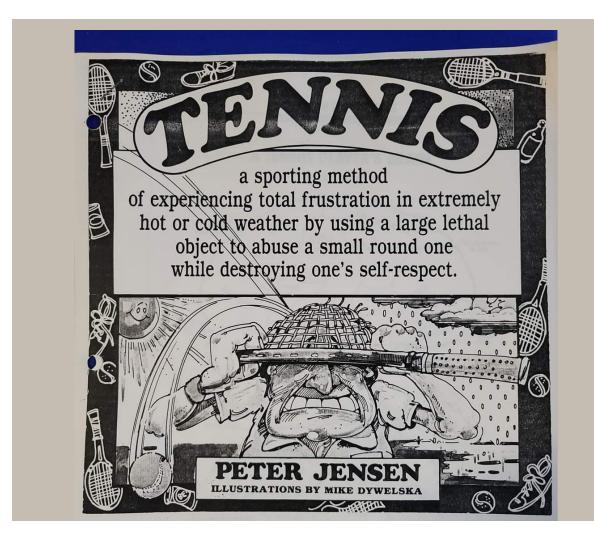
The lines are 2 inches in width and white in color. They mark the boundaries of the court which may be several colors of green, blue or other colors.

PROBLEM

Because the lines are the only targets you can see when you are selecting our target, you will tend to aim for them. They are awfully small targets from so far away while hitting a ball so hard with a small racquet.

SOLUTION – CREATE CONSEQUENCES

- Keep score, minus 1 point for every ball hit into the net and minus 2 points for a shot hit wide of the correct lines and minus 3 points for shot hit beyond the baseline.
- 2. Any shot hit wide of the singles or doubles sidelines allows your opponent to assume the service position and visa versa.
- 3. Any shot hit wide or long equals 5 push ups (not as punishment but to create fatigue in the arms) for subsequent shots.
- 4. Any shot hit wide or long before a 4-ball rally will equal a game for the opponent (the average length of a point for most players is 4 shots at most every level of play.)



Once you have defeated the Net and the Lines you now have a chance of defeating your Opponent on the other side of the net - using your shot selection, speed, cunning and guile. Oh Yes... there is the Monster in Your Own Mind!!!

Good Luck to you, and may you never lose to the net or the lines – only to a better opponent.

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.

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Turning Up the Heat: Creating Useful Pressure Scenarios for Young Tennis Players

By Marvin Hedgepeth

Every year, we look forward to watching the top tennis players in the world compete at the U.S. Open. During the extensive coverage of the action on Arthur Ashe Stadium, we are often shown an iconic silver plaque just prior to the start of the featured matches. The plaque simply reads, "Pressure is a privilege." This statement is the favorite quote of tennis great and social activist Billie Jean King, for whom the U.S. National Tennis Center is named.

It is my contention that pressure is not only a privilege—it is also inevitable in competitive tennis at any level. I'd like to share some insights into how coaches, particularly high school tennis coaches, can create scenarios during practice sessions that give young players more experience playing in the types of pressure situations they will surely face during their matches. Just as each practice session includes low-stress activities such as drills, games, stretching, and rally warmups, there also need to be moments when the tension level is increased.

First, let's examine how pressure situations typically manifest in young players during match play:

- Body language often becomes negative Ex. Slumped shoulders, flailing arms, or throwing/banging the racquet
- Negative self-talk
 Ex. "I can't get my serve in today" or "My backhand really stinks."
- Difficulty focusing and being easily distracted

Ex. Being distracted by movements or conversations outside the court or losing track of the game score

 Exhibiting a tendency to rush between points
 Ex. Rushing to pick up balls from the

previous point or rushing to serve without picking a target

- Worrying or complaining about things beyond the player's control
 Ex. Glare from the sun, windy conditions, or the opponent's style of play
- Footwork suffers

Ex. Feet become frozen, or last-second adjustment steps are not executed before each shot (especially important in outdoor/windy conditions)

- Normal breathing patterns change Ex. Breathing becomes fast and shallow, making smooth stroke production difficult
- Thinking becomes outcome-oriented rather than process-oriented
 Ex. Worrying about the match outcome instead of staying in the moment from point to point



Marvin is a PTR-certified instructor and PTR Century Coach with more than 450 career victories as a high school tennis coach. During his more than 30 years of active PTR membership, he has participated in the Visiting Tennis Professional Program in Jamaica on multiple occasions. Currently, Marvin is the Varsity Boys' and Girls' Tennis Coach at Hampton Roads Academy in Newport News, Virginia.

Conference workshops (2 page spread)

Conference workshops (2 page spread)



Strategies for Simulating Match Pressure During Practice

By Marvin Hedgepeth

What are some simple strategies coaches can employ to simulate match pressure during practice sessions?

TINKERING WITH THE SCORE

- Play 2-out-of-3 set matches starting at 4-4 in each set.
- Play full sets with each service game starting at 0-30 to put extra pressure on the server.
- Play full sets with each service game starting at 30-0 to put extra pressure on the receiver.
- Play sets or tiebreakers where double

faults or missed returns of second serves result in the loss of two points.

- Play full sets with each game starting at 30-30, giving one player game point after the very first point.
- Play sets where the slightly weaker or lower-ranked player begins with a 3-0 lead in games to level the playing field.

ALTERING THE NORMAL SERVING PATTERN

 Play sets where one or both players get only one serve to start each point. This format can help players work on aggressive returns of weaker serves or



help frequent double-faulters develop a more consistent second serve.

PLACING EXTRA FOCUS ON REDUCING SPECIFIC COMMON ERRORS

 Play a set or match in which a player automatically loses the game if they make a second error in the net during any game (excluding first-serve returns).

BALANCING PRACTICE TIME

High school tennis practices are typically only 90 minutes in length. These strategies can be used fairly regularly as they reduce the time required to play full sets, allowing a greater proportion of practice time to focus on pressure situations. This should result in better focus from players and, in the long run, help them become more confident problem-solvers during matches.

Finally, I would caution coaches against overusing these strategies to the point that the pure fun of the game is compromised. After all, if they're not having fun, they probably won't stay with the sport. Be sure each practice session includes adequate elements of just plain fun!



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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.

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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.





Active Coaching for Effective Drills

By Federico Mas

Throughout my career in the tennis industry, I've had the privilege of working with numerous coaches as a Coach Developer for the PTR and addressing a wide range of questions during training sessions and workshops.

Perhaps the most common question I've encountered is, "How do I obtain more drill ideas?" My usual reply to this inquiry is often unexpected. Instead of offering various drill formats, I challenge these coaches to shift their focus and effort toward running a simple drill effectively and in a way that enhances student learning. A drill activity can be as simple as setting up players in lines for hitting practice with feeds or as complex as rally-based drills where players hit across the net, focusing on a specific stroke. While it's always possible to add interesting variations, target placements, or scoring systems, it's crucial to remember the primary purpose of the drill portion of a developmental class: to teach the technical elements of a stroke and help players improve their skills.

To run more effective drills, we must focus less on the complexity or "look" of a drill and more on **active coaching.** Active coaching



refers to the conscious intention and effort a coach makes to aid player learning and improvement. This includes speaking directly and clearly to groups and individuals, pausing to help players make corrections, and providing continuous instruction through varied teaching methods.

The best way to become more intentional with active coaching is through **pausing to teach**. During a pause-to-teach moment, the activity—whether feeding or rallying is stopped, allowing the coach to make deliberate corrections and reinforcements. The goal is to avoid drills that continue for minutes with players hitting balls while receiving little to no instruction. Players need consistent attention and specific feedback from the coach to learn and improve their skills. Pausing the action creates an environment where this is more likely to happen.

Taking pauses to teach also creates opportunities to use corrective techniques

that incorporate kinesthetic and visual components, which are essential for effective learning. Players often need more than verbal cues to understand and execute a task. For example, when working on forehand contact points during a feeding drill, you might pause the activity to allow the player to place their racquet at the proper contact point—beside the body and in front. Holding the racquet there momentarily helps the player review the correct position while focusing on the feel of the arm and racquet placement. Additionally, a close-proximity demonstration by the coach provides a visual cue of the correct movement.

It's important to review and repeat instructions and demonstrations throughout the drill. Pausing briefly during hitting allows the coach to address areas of need and helps players process and retain information more effectively. After ensuring understanding, the drill can resume with further hitting practice. An additional benefit of pausing to instruct is the opportunity to reinforce success. For example, if a player executes a volley with the correct stance and contact point, pausing to highlight their success and offering praise can be impactful. This positive reinforcement motivates students to replicate the desired action.

As the drill progresses, it's necessary to be persistent and address players' needs in an encouraging and positive way. Continue to provide instruction and reminders as required. In addition to group instruction, you may need to give individual attention to players who require extra help. For instance, if a player begins hitting the ball too close to their body, briefly stop their activity to provide a guick demonstration and reminder about maintaining space between the body and the ball. Keep these individual instructions short and concise to maintain the group's flow while ensuring every student receives valuable feedback. A positive tone and frequent praise will ensure students feel encouraged and motivated as they receive continuous feedback.

Narrowing your focus to one or two key stroke elements can also significantly

improve active coaching effectiveness. Choose one stroke and one technical element for your drill, avoiding the temptation to address multiple shots or technical points simultaneously. This focused approach simplifies the task for the coach and prevents players from feeling overwhelmed with too many instructions.

As coaches, we're often eager to find new drill ideas to keep sessions engaging for our students. However, bringing these drills to life effectively requires intentional coaching, effort, and continued practice. Reflecting on your coaching after lessons is a powerful tool for identifying areas for improvement. Consider asking yourself: "Did I narrow my focus to one or two key points? Did I pause to make effective corrections? Did I use varied instructional methods beyond verbal cues?"

Reflecting on and enhancing your active coaching skills will improve the quality of your drills, enabling students to learn new skills, enjoy the process, and achieve success. This, in turn, will contribute to the success of your classes and club programs.



Federico Mas is the Tennis Director at Temple Hills Country Club, part of Invited Clubs. As Coach Developer for PTR for the past 12 years, he has delivered workshops in both English and Spanish. He has been a recipient of the Coach Developer of the Year award and has written numerous articles, tips and class curricula for club programs. In addition to coach education, Federico specializes in creation and enhancement of new club tennis programming. During his career, he has built and directed numerous successful programs in various club settings throughout the Midwest and South regions of the US.

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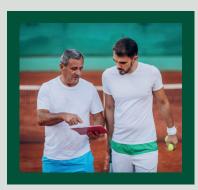


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Training the Brain

By Kelli Russell-Holmes

Director of Programming and Head Tennis Professional, Kingsdale Tennis Center, Bella Vista, AR. PTR Level 2 Coach, Coach Developer and Mentor.

In collaboration with, and edited by Lauren Campbell, Education and Administrative support staff, Kingsdale Tennis Center, Bella Vista, AR. Lauren has an MA in Counseling from Lindenwood University and a Graduate Certificate in Psychology from Mizzou. She holds school counselor and psychological examiner certifications in Missouri.

"Blocking the negative inner-voice before it blocks the players and coaches you are developing."

We have all had players start sessions with phrases like "My serve stinks," "I can't win right now," or "I can't hit that shot!" These types of negative phrases manifest as truths for the player, creating a mental block inhibiting skill development and improvement.

The inner voice is the private voice only you hear. According to Dr. Jim Loehr, from his "The Inner Voice, The Inner Coach" presentation, PTR International Symposium 2020, "The private voice is formatted from other public voices beginning in the womb, and children as young as 5 recognize what the voices are saying in their heads." Children are constantly hearing the multiple public voices of parents, siblings, teachers, and coaches. How parents, teachers, and coaches speak to children will typically form the patterns of self-talk, or the private inner voices, they develop and use when talking and coaching themselves throughout their lives, on and off the court.

By that logic, maybe we as coaches, coach developers, and mentors should reframe our approach to training players' and coaches' brains while training the body to execute technical and tactical skills. If the players and coaches we are working with start developing their personal inner voice inside the womb, then we need to correct the inner voice language and neuropathways already constructed and reinforced by other public voices. Like writing computer programming code, we may have to override the negative language code and rewrite it with a new positive language code.

Before we begin helping our players and coaches rewrite their inner voice language, we as the coach and/or coach developer and mentor need to honestly take stock of our own inner voice as well as our public coaching voice. Is our own negative inner voice reflected in our public coaching voice? Are we sabotaging our players' and coaches' development of a positive inner voice with a public coaching voice that is reinforcing those negative words and images, ultimately blocking the players' allaround skill development?

I encourage all of us to reach out to our peers and coaching mentors for observation, reflective feedback, and support to facilitate a rewriting of our own inner voice and public voice code. Then, continued on-court practice of positive, intentional coaching language with our students becomes essential. From that point, it is imperative we, as coaches, coach developers, and mentors, stop negative self-talk immediately once we hear it in our coaching space.

When we hear negative self-talk in our coaching space, we need to stop the session and facilitate a conversation about the impact that negative self-talk has on skill development, confidence, and overall performance. Then, we need to help the learner restate their message or comment positively. For example, in a recent session on the serve I had with a player who had a hitch in her service motion, she openly stated, "I can't coordinate my arms, so I just stopped trying." A previous coach expressed agreement, and they stopped working on it. What she said and thought was reinforced and manifested itself as truth, blocking her ability to develop the skill.

This past week, she successfully mastered coordinated arm movement on her serve. After intentionally coded positive encouragement from me-that I believed she could do it-while conveying positively that I knew I could help her accomplish the skill, she decided to work through it. We reframed her statement from "I can't coordinate my arms, so I stopped trying," to "Arm coordination on the serve is challenging for me, but I am open to working on it, and I am confident that with your help, time, and practice, I can do it." While working on the serve progressions, I quietly demonstrated multiple times, reinforcing the skills with positive, confident, intentionally coded language, stopping to reframe her own self-talk when necessary. All she needed was someone with a positive, encouraging public voice facilitating her inner voice while working on the technical skill. The

bonus was the trust and rapport-building that took place between player and coach. She trusts me more and now will be open to improving other skills because she has more confidence in my ability to facilitate improvement, as well as her self-belief and ability to execute.

As a coach, every time we speak, we are influencing private inner voices. That private inner voice is our internal coach, likely the coach with the most influence. We can't effectively do our job if our students' inner voice is sabotaging skill development from the start. We must patiently and actively listen to our players' self-communication, communication with other players, and the feedback generated within the player/coach relationship, taking every opportunity to stop negativecoded communication and reframe it with positively coded communication. Players will see positive outcomes in their skill and game development, reinforcing belief in the process and fostering more openness and trust with you, facilitating continued improved skill development.

The private inner voice is the coach we are born with and the coach that is with us throughout our lives and all endeavors. When we as coaches, coach developers, and mentors help our players, coaches, and mentees rewrite their inner voice code, not only are we laying the foundation for more effective tennis skill development, but also a more positive approach to their cognitive reasoning and problem-resolution skills the skills needed to navigate life. Now, we are human-centered coaches, coaching the person first and the athlete second.



Kelli is a dynamic and enthusiastic independent PTR Professional Instructor, and Coach Developer, with 27 years of experience. Her business offers services throughout the state with primary contracts in Central and Northwest Arkansas. Kelli works with the Arkansas Activities Association to develop coach education for all high school tennis coaches throughout the state. She played 4 years of college tennis at Bethel College in N. Newton, KS, winning conference, and district titles in singles and doubles all 4 years, earning degrees in Mass Media Communications, Broadcast Journalism, and History.

Kelli has operations management and training development experience in both the recreation and transportation industries. She is a former Board Chairperson for the Bella Vista POA, facilitating budgets for one of the largest recreational POA's in the country. Also, a former Intermodal Terminal Operations Manager for the BNSF Railway, where she managed operations and developed and implemented intermodal processes for their Southern California terminal facilities.

Kelli's priorities are to continue teaching and coaching players, working with PTR and USTA peers in Arkansas, making tennis the premier high school sport in the state, and growing her coach development knowledge and skills, and coach development partnership with PTR. Kelli won the PTR State Member of the Year Award in both 2017 and 2021, and the USTA/Arkansas Victor Sheshunoff Meritorious Education Award in 2015.

Saddlebrook (Placeholder)

The Mental Game: Use Compete-Learn-Honor to Get the Lizard Brain Back in the Passenger Seat

by Coach Pete Scales, Ph.D., USPTA, PTR

I'm a psychologist certified as a tennis teaching pro by both USPTA and PTR, and a coach for 34 seasons (and counting) of boys' and girls' high school tennis. After all my experience as a competitor and a coach, I can tell you that if you want your students to have more fun playing—and actually increase their odds of winning—teach them to redefine success as **Compete-Learn**- Honor instead of only as binary W-L on the scoreboard.

I came up with the Compete-Learn-Honor[™] approach to coaching and player development many years ago to give me a more systematic way of coaching the mental game. It's very simple. We define success as:





- give 100% effort,

- be an open, curious, and humble learner, and

 by how you act, especially under adversity, honor yourself, opponents, and the game.

Do that, and you're ALREADY a winner!

But like any aspect of technique, conditioning, or strategy, the mental game requires work and reps to get this simple redefining of success to become a true habit that holds up under competitive pressure.

I was a racquet-chucker in tennis when I started out. That would be almost understandable if I had been a kid-but when I began tennis, I was 42 and had a Ph.D. in psychology, no less! And even with all that background and age, I still let the mental game get to me. That's how powerful it can become. It turned around for me one day when a) my wife said she'd no longer play mixed dubs with me if I didn't clean my act up, and b) one of our tennis pros watched me melt down and said, with both a laugh and seriousness, "Peter, you're just not good enough to be that upset!" Thank goodness I laughed and began to better understand what was going on. And that pro is still a family friend!

Our students need to know that our primitive lizard brain, back at the brain stem, is good at detecting emergencies—threats to what psychologists call our ABCs: our sense of autonomy and control, our sense of belonging and being accepted, and our sense of competence. The lizard brain is good at rapidly getting us ready for fight-orflight responses. That was useful when we were actually being chased by saber-tooth tigers, but it's a big overreaction when all you did was shank a ball.

That lizard brain can take over in a split second. The lizard brain is simple everything is life and death. But a tennis or pickleball match is not life and death. Whether you win or lose is not life and death. You are playing a game, not running from a saber-tooth tiger!

Wanting to win is fine and healthy. **HAVING** to win is unhealthy. You can't control or guarantee that outcome. The key for your students to getting the lizard back in the passenger seat is to develop this perspective: Love the Game More Than How You Perform.

An effective way for your students to remind themselves of what they love about playing is to do the **What Do I Love About Playing** Tennis/Pickleball Worksheet. This originally came from the USTA Mental Skills and Drills Handbook, and I adapted it and included it in my Compete-Learn-Honor Playbook. The students write down all the things they love about playing the game, then highlight a few of the key words or phrases they can use on the court to remind them of their love for the game in those inevitable moments we all have when we hate the game.

In all the years I've had my students do this, no one has ever said "winning" was why they play. They say the physical activity, the fun of challenging yourself, seeing yourself learn and get better, the social aspects, being outside, etc. But never "winning."

Then, after practice or training sessions and after matches, have them do the What Did You Learn Today Worksheet, also from *The Compete-Learn-Honor Playbook*—just one or two things they learned. It could be mental, strategic, technical, etc.

There are lots of ways to reinforce this message about prioritizing love of the game and learning, including ongoing reminders to them of this reality: *You are not a better person if you win, and you are not a worse person if you lose.* It is not easy to put winning and losing in this perspective and to truly know that you're not a better person if you win and not a worse one if you lose.

But those two worksheets are easy and funto-do keys to helping your students develop more of a problem- or puzzle-solving mindset that's grounded in their love of the game, instead of just a win-lose mindset.

The irony is this: If you have to win, you have everything to lose, and you'll play tight because the lizard is driving your tennis or pickleball bus.

But if you just want to win and you love the game regardless of how the scoreboard turns out, then you have nothing to lose, because the lizard is now in the passenger seat and you've got the keys back to your tennis or pickleball bus. So you can now play the best you can on any given day, freely. You might win, you might lose. No guarantees of winning, ever.

But you can increase your students' odds of winning by focusing on **Compete-Learn-Honor** and their love of the game instead of having to win. One thing is sure—win or lose, they'll have more fun, and so will you!



Coach Pete Scales is a regular mental game columnist for Racquet Sports Industry Magazine, the National Alliance for Youth Sports, ParentingAces. com, and BetterPickleball.com, a long-time high school tennis coach, and mental game adviser to college tennis teams, and is internationally known as one of the world's leading researchers in positive youth development. Creator of the acclaimed Compete-Learn-Honor[™] approach to coaching and player development, his books on CLH—Mental and Emotional Training for Tennis: Compete-Learn-Honor, and The Compete-Learn-Honor Playbook: Simple Steps to Take Your Mental & Emotional Tennis & Pickleball Game to a New Level—are published by Coaches Choice and available on Amazon.Level—are published by Coaches Choice and available on Amazon.



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Negotiating Your Director of Racquet Sports Agreement: Best Practices for Member Equity Clubs

by Len Simard

As a Director of Racquet Sports, your role is essential in creating a dynamic, engaging program that enhances the overall club experience for members. When it comes time to negotiate a new agreement, it's important to advocate for a compensation package that not only reflects your leadership and expertise but also supports your ability to grow the program and serve the membership effectively. Here are some key considerations to ensure your agreement benefits you, your team, and the club as a whole.



UNDERSTANDING TRADITIONAL COMPENSATION STRUCTURES

Many clubs still rely on traditional compensation models that include the following elements:

- Base salary: Typically, 20-40% of overall compensation.
- Teaching commissions: Often, 60-70% of overall compensation.
- Bonus: Usually 5% of the base salary, discretionary and without clear metrics.

While this model has been the norm, it heavily emphasizes teaching and can limit your ability to focus on broader leadership responsibilities. This often leads to challenges, such as:

Burnout

A heavy teaching load can make it difficult to innovate and grow the program.

Team Development Issues

Overloading your schedule with lessons may reduce opportunities for assistant professionals, limiting their growth and contribution.

Program Stagnation

Without time for strategic planning, programming can plateau, impacting membership satisfaction and engagement.

ADVOCATING FOR A MORE STRATEGIC COMPENSATION MODEL

When entering negotiations, aim for a structure that reflects industry best practices and allows you to lead effectively. Consider these key components:

- A Competitive Base Salary: This recognizes your leadership role and provides financial stability.
- Reduced On-Court Hours
 By limiting your weekly teaching
 commitments, you can focus on strategic
 growth, program development, and
 member engagement.
- Enhanced Teaching Commission Negotiate a higher commission rate for the lessons you do teach.
- Team-Based Incentives
 Include a percentage of your assistant
 professionals' commissions to encourage
 team collaboration and development.
- Performance-Based Bonuses Request a bonus structure tied to measurable growth metrics, such as:
 - Increased participation in lessons, clinics, and social events.
 - Growth in overall racquet sports revenue.
 - Expanded USTA or interclub team participation.
 - Improved member satisfaction scores.

THE BENEFITS OF A MODERNIZED AGREEMENT

A forward-thinking agreement benefits everyone involved:

For You:

It allows you to focus on leadership, strategic planning, and program growth while ensuring financial stability and professional satisfaction.

For Your Team

Sharing teaching opportunities fosters a collaborative, motivated team of professionals.

For Members

Members enjoy diversified programming, improved events, and elevated customer service, leading to higher overall satisfaction.

For the Club

A thriving racquet sports program enhances the club's reputation and boosts membership value.

PREPARING FOR A PRODUCTIVE NEGOTIATION

The end of the fiscal year or other natural evaluation periods is the perfect time to review and refine your agreement. Here's how to prepare:

Highlight Your Achievements
 Gather data on your contributions to the

club, including program growth, member engagement, and financial performance.

Set Clear Goals

Present a vision for the future of the program and show how your proposed compensation plan supports those goals.

Educate Key Stakeholders

Share insights into industry best practices and explain how they can be adapted to enhance the club's success.

Negotiating your compensation isn't just about numbers. Instead, it's about aligning your role with the club's goals and creating a structure that supports success at every level. The best Directors of Racquet Sports are those who advocate for agreements that allow them to lead effectively, develop their teams, and deliver exceptional member experiences. By focusing on a modern, balanced compensation plan, you will set yourself up for long-term success and also help position the club as an industry leader.



Len Simard,

Kopplin, Kuebler and Wallace Search and Consulting Executive PTR & USPTA Master Professional

Len Simard oversees all racquet sports, fitness, wellness, and GM/COO searches for the firm's club clients. Len is an industry leader in racquet facility consulting, performing evaluations, compensation reviews and providing solutions to all types of racquets facilities and organizations throughout the Country. Len has been directing, teaching, and coaching at well-respected country clubs throughout North America for more than 40 years and is regarded as one the country's leading racquets directors and managers. Len has hired, trained, and worked with hundreds of professionals in his career and is extremely proud that more than 50 of his former assistants are leading prominent clubs in the U.S. and Canada.

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Confirmed Speakers



STAN PHELPS

Stan is a Forbes Contributor, TEDx Speaker, IBM Futurist, Certified Speaking Professional[®], and best-selling author of the Goldfish Series. He is also an Instructor for the ANA School of Marketing and Rutgers Business School. A show and tell speaker, Stan empowers audiences to take action that delivers bottom-line impact. He strives to change the paradigm of marketing by encouraging audiences to focus on experiences as the ultimate competitive differentiator. He believes purposeful DX wins the hearts of employees and customers, and differentiation ultimately boosts loyalty, retention, referrals, and results. A masterful storyteller who quickly connects with audiences, Stan has delivered keynotes and workshops for Fortune 100 brands including IBM, Target, Exxon Mobil, Boeing, Caterpillar, Ford Motor, Kroger, Cardinal Health, Walt Disney,

UnitedHealth, Rocket Companies, and more.



ASHLEY OWENS

Ashley Owens, an entrepreneurial visionary, is the co-founder of CourtReserve—a leading platform transforming club management, court reservations, and event programming for racquet sports, particularly tennis and pickleball. Under Ashley's leadership, CourtReserve has grown to support 1,600+ clubs, serving 3.5 million players, celebrated for its innovation, exceptional customer service, and commitment to excellence in the racquet sports industry. With over 15 years of experience in sales and law enforcement, Ashley's strategic thinking and dedication have driven the company's success. In the early years, she and her team, including co-founder Tim Owens, worked tirelessly, managing sales, support, and development while balancing co-parenting and building a platform that has become essential for clubs in North America and beyond.

Ashley's commitment to the sport and its community goes beyond CourtReserve. She and Tim also launched Old Coast Pickleball, their first dedicated pickleball facility, bringing her love for racquet sports to life and gaining hands-on insights into her customers' daily challenges. Based in St. Augustine, Florida, Ashley actively supports women in tech and racquet sports, helping to shape and diversify two historically male-dominated fields.



SUZEE ANDERSON

A seasoned force in the world of pickleball. With a decade of passion for the sport, Suzee brings a wealth of experience as a former top 10 professional player, PPR Pro, and Coach Developer. At the helm of two thriving academies in Utah, boasting 13 dedicated coaches and 29 courts, Suzee's impact on the pickleball community is both profound and far-reaching. Not confined by geography, Suzee has pioneered 10 remote training academies, bridging distances to share her expertise. With a love for teaching and a keen eye for mechanics, she is a true guru when it comes to refining skills and optimizing gameplay strategies. Suzee is not just a coach; she's a strategic warrior on the court, emphasizing an offensive approach to elevate your game.



AARON FOX

Aaron Fox is a seasoned leader in racquets and hospitality management, currently serving as the Director of Recreation at Brentwood Country Club in Los Angeles. With a strong foundation in financial planning and operational efficiency, Aaron manages a \$2.4 million annual operating budget and oversees a team of 30, delivering high-quality services across racquet sports, fitness, aquatics, and wellness. He has driven significant growth in member participation, notably increasing racquet sports engagement by 300% within his first 90 days. Aaron's diverse expertise encompasses strategic planning, program development, and team building, all driven by his commitment to mentorship and effective leadership. His career includes notable roles, such as co-founding the Grips Program, LLC, a player development initiative activated at over 300

facilities nationwide. Additionally, Aaron has contributed to industry knowledge by presenting at major events like the Australian Open Coaches Conference, USTA sectional meetings, USPTA, & amp; PTR Symposiums. With certifications from USTA, PTR, and PPR, and active involvement in the Club Managers Association of America, Aaron continues to build on his expertise in club management, guided by a commitment to member satisfaction, financial discipline, and operational excellence.



GREG LAPPIN

In 1985, Greg conceived of and developed the Flagship Athletic Club, a 19-court multipurpose club in Eden Prairie, Minnesota. In 1993, he developed the Rochester Athletic Club, a 260,000 square foot multipurpose club with 19 tennis courts. Greg served as the general manager and was a minority owner. The tennis program produced a world junior champion; players who participated in all the Grand Slams; Sports Illustrated National Athlete of the Year winner; numerous Division 1 scholarship recipients; multiple state champions. It averaged 2.5 adult teams per year going to USTA Nationals. The RAC was named a USTA Facility of the Year. Greg served as the national tennis director for LifeTime for 2012- 2015 overseeing tennis operations for 21 clubs. Greg authored Tennis Doubles, Wining Strategies for all Levels, a national bestseller.

Greg was elected to the Board of Directors of IHRSA and the TIA. He has served as President for his USTA & amp; USPTA sections. Greg has been a presenter at multiple IHRSA, USPTA, PTR, ATP, WTA, TIA, and USTA conferences. Greg has been awarded the RSI Lifetime Achievement Award; 7 NOVA 7 Awards for leadership program development; The IHRSA Dale Dibble Award; RSPA General Manager of the Year; Minnesota Better Business Bureau Integrity Award



JILL DAVIS

Jill Davis, the Director of Sales and Engagement at CourtReserve, leads both the Sales and Onboarding Teams, facilitating seamless integration for clients into their new accounts. With experience speaking at events involving the RSPA, USTA, and PTR, and overseeing relationships with over 1,600 organizations, Jill has developed key onboarding and training programs that enhance client engagement with CourtReserve's services. As an advocate for technological advancement, her strategic initiatives have significantly improved operational efficiency and customer satisfaction. Jillalso combines her passion for technology with her background in public safety, having served as a first responder and as an educator at a local community college. Her teaching focused on public safety and technology advancements, reinforcing her belief in technology's

power to save lives and improve livelihoods.



MARK BEAL

For more than 25 years, Mark Beal served as a public relations practitioner and marketer for one of the nation's leading consumer public relations agencies developing and executing marketing and public relations campaigns for leading companies and brands around such major sports and entertainment properties as the Olympic Games, Super Bowl, World Series, US Open Tennis and The Rolling Stones. Today, he collaborates with Gen Z as a full-time professor of practice, communication in the Rutgers University School of Communication and Information. Mark's ongoing research of Gen Z has led to keynote speeches to the American Marketing Association, Association of National Advertisers (ANA) and the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) It was Mark's Rutgers students who inspired him to author his first book in 2017, 101 Lessons They

Never Taught You In College, which provides tips to college students preparing for their transition to a career. Media and readers nationwide responded so positively to the book that Mark authored 101 Lessons They Never Taught You In High School About Going To College which was published in 2018. Mark's book, Decoding Gen Z: 101 Lessons Generation Z Will Teach Corporate America, Marketers & amp; Media , was published in 2018 and captured the attention of media, marketers and employers nationwide as Gen Zers were starting to become a focus of corporations and brands. In 2020, Mark co-authored Engaging Gen Z with Harvard University student Michael Pankowski. In 2022, Mark authored Gen Z Graduates To Adulthood . Mark's latest book, ZEO , was published in 2023 as more Gen Zers transitioned from college to their career. The Gen Z books have led to invitations from conferences, corporations, brands, agencies, universities, industry associations and pro sports leagues and teams for Mark to deliver keynote speeches featuring his Gen Z research and insights. Mark also co-authored Career In Transition with Frank Kovacs. To learn more, visit www. markbealspeaks.com



JORGE CAPESTANY

Jorge is one of only 15 people worldwide who is a Master Professional with the RSPA and an International Master Professional with the PTR. Jorge has been named the National Pro of the Year by BOTH the PTR and the RSPA. After having spoken at hundreds of conferences in the US and internationally on group drills, Jorge is now a PPR-certified pickleball coach and has started a pickleball drills website with more than 450 drills. Jorge's unique ability to demonstrate drills that effectively move people around the court and allow them to have fun while still learning makes him an exceptional speaker.



REGGIE SANDERSON

PTR member since 1993 Inaugural PPR member 2020 Former Head Tennis Coach at Saint Joseph's College in Indiana. Reggie is one of the Head Pickleball Pros at the World Famous Palmetto Dunes Tennis and Pickleball Resort in Hilton Head Island. Reggie was our PPR Coach Developer of the Year in 2022 He is one of the most complimented Coach Developers at PPR for his comfortable style and ease of delivery. He makes Coaching FUN and will certainly show that in his presentation here at the Conference.



CARI BUCK

Growing up in a tennis family, it only makes sense that Cari Buck has spent most of her professional career in the tennis industry. To say tennis is in her blood would be an understatement. Born into a tennis family, Cari grew up splitting time between Southern California and Cape Cod where her family ran a summer tennis club for over 20 years Buck is currently the Director of Racquet Sports at the Griffin Club in Los Angeles. She has held numerous positions throughout all areas of the tennis industry, has a wealth of experience in many facets of the industry. She has held positions across the country including Teaching Pro/Tennis Director (in Massachusetts, Florida, Hawaii and California), Inside Sales for a tennis apparel company, Operations at two ATP events (LA Open and Tennis Channel Open), Marketing Manager/Client Services at Tennis

Channel, Director of Marketing for USTA Southern California, and GM for the WTT San Diego Aviators. Cari is certified by both the PTR and RSPA, and has served on both USTA and RSPA National Committees/Boards. She has won many awards and accolades for her work and service in the industry both on and off the court, including USPTA Southern California Pro of the year in 2017, and a USTA Service award for her work with Wheelchair Tennis. But the one that Cari says means the most, was when she and her family won the USTA National Family of the Year in 1985.



TAYLOR TAYLOR

Taylor grew up in Memphis and was a nationally ranked junior tennis player and Division I college scholar-athlete at the University of Virginia. She played tennis for over 35 years and was a teaching professional for almost 20 years. Taylor was introduced to Pickleball in 2017. The inclusive nature, intergenerational allure, and accessibility of Pickleball led Taylor to decide that Pickleball is the perfect sport through which to engage children, adults, and whole communities. Taylor dedicated her energy to combining her passion for sport and her education in Social Work; as a result, she started a non-profit called PickleMania. This organization supports the facilitation of Pickleball for all through programming like "Pickleball with Purpose", a social-emotional learning curriculum based on Adverse Childhood Experiences research in under-resourced communities in

Memphis and the Mid-South. Taylor enjoys competing in tournaments from the Minto US Open Pickleball Championships to Nationals, played at Indian Wells Tennis Center. She is excited about playing Senior (pro and skill/age) Pickleball as of this year. Taylor is certified by the (Professional Pickleball Registry (PPR) as a "Coach Developer" and enjoys traveling teaching people to teach.



community organizations.

LAMAR SCOTT

Has been a certified professional tennis instructor with PTR since 2001. Has served as a PPR Coach Developer over the past two years. Has facilitated over 50 workshops across the country since 2023. Has trained other PPR Coach Developers. Received the 2023 PPR Clinician of the Year Award.Served as the 2022 ALTA President, Will serve as the 2025 ALTA Board Chair, Serves as a professional tennis instructor in the Atlanta area with Universal Tennis Academy (UTA). Giving back to the community is important to Lamar, and he works through pickleball and tennis to be able to give back to the community. He serves on the board of the Atlanta Youth Tennis Education Foundation, and volunteers with such organizations as the Georgia Special Olympics, North America Special Olympics Tennis Championships, PTR Wheelchair Championships, and other



DR. MICHELLE CLEERE

Dr. Michelle Cleere, an esteemed and dedicated Global Performance Coach, specializes in propelling athletes to their peak potential by unlocking the power of their minds and creating mental toughness, allowing them to perform at their best. Her academic background boasts a PhD in Clinical Psychology and a Masters in Sports Psychology. Dr. Michelle's simple yet effective tools have become indispensable resources with coaches sculpting champions. Her impact goes beyond conventional coaching - a bestselling author, a world-renowned speaker, and a revered educator. Dr. Michelle is the creator of the bestselling "Beating the Pickleball Demons." A lifelong athlete herself, she competes in women's doubles and mixed doubles in Pickleball. As a certified PPR coach, her expertise is endorsed by the highest standards.



DOUG CASH

Doug Cash retired in 2005 after a 35-year career as COO of the US Tennis Corporation of America (TCA), managing up to 42 clubs and over 2,700 employees. He now owns CashFlowTennis, a consulting firm that aids tennis clubs and professionals in increasing membership, enhancing programs, and training staff for greater success. His current focus is on growing the number of new tennis players in the U.S. through innovative programs and marketing. A recognized expert in the tennis industry, Doug frequently speaks at conventions in the US and Canada and has trained more Directors of Tennis and Club Managers than anyone in the field. He is a PTR International Master Professional, USPTA certified, and has received numerous awards, including induction into the Midwest USPTA Hall of Fame and Tennis Industry Magazine's Tennis Industry

Service Award.



LISA PUGLIESE-LACROIX

Lisa is an Elite Certified Racquet Sports Professional through PTR and RSPA, as well as an ASHA-certified Speech-Language Pathologist with a specialty in autism. She also holds a PPR Pickleball Certification, expanding her expertise to include this fastgrowing sport. With over 20 years of experience, Lisa has dedicated her career to evaluating and treating children and adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder and other developmental disabilities. Lisa is a former collegiate tennis player at Duke University and a national champion with the University of Florida's NCAA Tennis Team. She brings a unique blend of her extensive tennis background, pickleball expertise, and speech therapy knowledge to teaching racquet sports to neurodivergent individuals. In January 2017, driven by her passion, Lisa founded Love Serving Autism, a 501(c)(3) organization,

at the Palm Beach School for Autism, where she was working as a speech therapist. Love Serving Autism's mission is to enrich the lives of neurodiverse individuals through racquet sports. The recent addition of pickleball classes has expanded the reach and accessibility of the program, offering new opportunities for participants to engage in therapeutic racquet sports.



LISANE SMARTWOOD

Lisane is passionate about empowering those around her and constantly seeks to learn from others. She brings creativity and a personalized approach to her tennis teaching, tailoring her methods to meet the unique needs of each player. Further, Lisane specializes in junior tennis and has consistently fostered significant growth in the programs she has led throughout her career. Lisane earned her bachelor's degree in Professional Tennis Management and Marketing from Ferris State University, where she also played on the tennis team. Currently, Lisane is the Director of Tennis at Wheaton Sport Center in Wheaton, IL. Additionally, Lisane is an active coach for the USTA's Early Development Camps and holds the following certifications: PTR, PTR Mentor, USTA High Performance, Safe Sport and Cardio Tennis 2. She spoke at the Midwest

PTR conference 2024. When not on the court, Lisane enjoys spending time with her family, especially traveling with her daughters, Rachel and Brigitte.



SCOTT MCCULLOCH

With over 25 years of experience as a nationally ranked player, coach, director and executive in the racquet sports industry, Scott McCulloch brings unparalleled expertise and passion to his role as President and COO of Cliff Drysdale Tennis. Scott has honed his skills as an operations, programming and business development expert for over 17 years while leading the company domestically and internationally. A dynamic leader and keynote speaker, Scott is widely regarded as an industry innovator with a forward-thinking approach to the evolving world of racquet sports. With extensive experience in private clubs, resorts, residential communities and public facilities, Scott's strategic vision and deep operational knowledge have made him a trusted advisor and thought leader in the field. Scott is also an active board and committee member, leveraging his

insights and expertise to shape the future of the industry. Whether speaking at conferences or driving growth from within, Scott's commitment to excellence and his ability to inspire teams set him apart as a transformative force in racquet sports.



MICHAEL MAHONEY

Michael Mahoney has proudly been a part of the Midtown Athletic Clubs for over 40 years. He was named National Racquet Sports Director in May 2023. Until then, since 1990, he served as both Senior Vice President and the General Manager of the flagship Midtown Athletic Club in Chicago. Mahoney returns to leading the Racquet Sports business management for all Midtown locations. He will continue to develop Midtown's position as the industry leader in racquet sports programming and cement the racquet sports legacy across all eight of the athletic clubs in North America. Over the years, Mahoney has worn many hats at Midtown and The Tennis Corporation of America (TCA). Mahoney began his tenure with the company as a tennis instructor at the Rochester, NY club location, followed by various promotions, including head tennis

pro, director of tennis, general manager, regional vice president and national tennis director of TCA from 1999 until his appointment to senior vice president in 2010. A past president of the Chicago District Tennis Association, the Chicago arm of the United States Tennis Association, Mahoney is certified by both the Professional Tennis Registry and the United States Professional Tennis Association. He is a graduate of the University of Rochester. During his Midtown career, Mahoney's achievements include: Named USPTA Large Facility Manager of the Year (2009 & amp; 2018), Ranked #1 USTA Chicago District Men's 50 singles division (2010), #1 Men's 55 singles division (2014 & amp; 2018), and #1 USTA Midwest District Men's 55 singles division (2014), TCA Most Valuable Player (2009), Racquet Sports Industry, Champions of Tennis, Private Facility of the Year (2006), and USPTA Midwest Division 2002 Men's 35 division Playing Professional of the Year.



LEN SIMARD

Len Simard oversees all racquet sports, fitness, wellness, and GM/COO searches for the firm's club clients. Len is an industry leader in racquet facility consulting, performing evaluations, compensation reviews and providing solutions to all types of racquets facilities and organizations throughout the Country. Len has been directing, teaching, and coaching at well-respected country clubs throughout North America for more than 40 years and is regarded as one the country's leading racquets directors and managers. Len has hired, trained, and worked with hundreds of professionals in his career and is extremely proud that more than 50 of his former assistants are leading prominent clubs in the U.S. and Canada.



KIM BASTABLE

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 Racquets 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.



AJAY PANT

Ajay is the founder of Karundy – his tennis consulting company that guarantees increased profit and revenue per court. Ajay was the Senior Vice President for Life Time Racquets for seven years. He worked with 130 clubs and managed the largest tennis, pickleball and squash operations in the United States. Ajay is the prior Senior Vice President Operations for the Junior Tennis Champions Center in Maryland. Pant was with Midtown and served as the Cities Coordinator for Arthur Ashe and Nick Bollettieri Cities programs in multiple cities. He is one of only 14 global teaching pros who have been given the highest teaching designation of "Master Pro" by both the United States Professional Tennis Association (USPTA) and Professional Tennis Registry (PTR). He has been awarded "Pro of the Year" by both PTR and USPTA and "Tennis Person of the

Year" by Tennis Industry Association.



DR. ERIK KOREM

I'm a sports scientist with a passion for solving the data-to-action gap that exists in the wearable tech and mHealth space. Prior to founding AIM7, I spent over 15 years working as a sports scientist and a High Performance director in collegiate and professional football. I hold a doctoral degree from the University of Kentucky in exercise science with a research emphasis in how sleep impacts the brain's ability to adapt to stress.





DAVID CHANG

TOM GULLICKSON



expand pickleball globally.

SARAH ANSBOURY

Sarah Ansboury has made a lasting impact on pickleball as one of its first professional players and a leading instructional coach. A Team GAMMA sponsored Pro, she competes on the PPA Tour with her GAMMA Air Bender 10mm paddle, while continuing to grow the sport through her expertise and dedication.

As the former Director of Pickleball at Palmetto Dunes Resort, Sarah helped establish it as a premier pickleball destination. Now, as Managing Director of the Professional Pickleball Registry (PPR), she oversees 10,000 coaches in 14 countries. Sarah has spearheaded the launch of the Level 2 Certification and enhanced Level 1 Certification, while also training international coaches, including those with the Italian Federation, to

NIK SLATER

Nik is the Director of Racquets at La Paloma Country Club in beautiful Tucson, AZ. Nik began her journey with PTR almost 20 years ago when she worked with Dennis Van der Meer. She is a PTR Coach Developer.

A few years ago, Nik became a Dual Impact Pro getting certified in PPR Pickleball as well. Now she is a PPR Coach Developer as well.



MICHELLE CORNISH

Michelle's career in the racquet and sports industry spans coaching, program management, and business development at prestigious tennis and athletic clubs. She also served as Business Development Director for a top tennis, pickleball, and fitness company. Building on this experience, she founded a boutique, community-focused pickleball club to share her love of racquet sports and give back to the industry.

A former junior and Division I collegiate tennis player, Michelle's respect for coaches and leaders inspired her journey to develop programs, players, and coaches. As a certified PPR Coach Developer for Level 1 and Level 2 certification workshops, she is dedicated to mentoring the next generation of pickleball coaches, fostering a strong

sense of community shaped by the incredible mentors she's had in her career.



TOM TADLER

Tom Tadler joined USA Pickleball as a player in 2017 and began his officiating journey in 2018. By 2019, he had advanced to a Level 2 official and became a USAP Certified Referee in 2021. Today, Tom serves as a Registered Referee Trainer, Tiered Referee Rating Assessor, Advanced Training Session Assessor, USAP Head Referee, and a member of the National Association of Sports Officials (NASO). He also plays a key role on the USAP Rules Committee, helping to review and propose annual rule changes based on public feedback. With over 2,100 registered tournament matches to his credit—including professional tours, televised matches, international events, USAP National Championships, the US Open, NCAA team events, charity tournaments, and the Special Olympics—Tom has made significant contributions to pickleball officiating.

He actively trains referees at all levels, both domestically and internationally, as part of USAP's global expansion of its officiating program. Tom has also written for various pickleball publications and podcasts, sharing his expertise and insights. A proud resident of South Florida, Tom is married to a fellow USAP Referee who is also a trainer and Referee Coordinator for USAP tournaments. Though he enjoys playing pickleball, it's often said that he's "a much better referee than player."





DEJAN VUKOJICIC



KAREN RONNEY

Karen Ronney is an award-winning coach, author, speaker, and marketing specialist with a Master's Degree in Professional Tennis Management. With 18 years of high school coaching experience, she holds an impressive 203-73 record, three CIF Championships, and 24 league titles. Recognized as National High School Coach of the Year by the PTR (2025), Racquet Sports Industry (2020), and USPTA/RSPA (2020), she was also honored as the Positive Coaching Alliance's Double-Goal Youth Sports Coach of the Year (2009).

A former NCAA All-Conference singles and doubles player at California State University Northridge, Ronney is the author of Proud Parents' Guide to Raising Athletic, Balanced, and Coordinated Kids, a 34-time award-winning book. She has written for major publications like the Chicago Tribune and San Diego Union-Tribune and now serves as the Director of Marketing for the Southern California Tennis Association Foundation.

Based in San Diego, Karen lives with her husband of 31 years, Doug, and their three daughters, who competed in NCAA Division I, II, and III tennis.





VERNON GETTONE



LIAM SMITH



MIKE WOODY

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JOE WILKERSON

With over 24 years in the health and tennis industry, Joe has a proven record of driving membership growth and advancing tennis programs. From 2003-2017, he held key management roles with Midtown Athletic Clubs and Midtown Health, rising from tennis coach to Regional Tennis Director and later General Manager at Mercy HealthPlex Anderson, a 150,000-square-foot health and tennis club in Cincinnati. From 2017-2019, Joe served as General Manager of the Raleigh Racquet Club, overseeing a 31-court facility with over 1,000 members. Now as Senior Vice President of JTCC, he oversees operations, programming, staffing, and capital projects, and spearheaded the launch of the Learn Tennis Now adult program. A collegiate tennis player at Methodist University, Joe graduated with honors in Business Administration with a focus on Professional

Tennis Management. He holds certifications from USPTA, PTR, and USTA Sports Science.



CARI BUCK

Cari Buck has spent most of her professional life in the tennis industry, a natural fit for someone who grew up in a tennis family. Splitting her childhood between Southern California and Cape Cod, where her family ran a summer tennis club for over 20 years, Cari developed a lifelong passion for the sport. Currently the Director of Racquet Sports at the Griffin Club in Los Angeles, Cari's diverse career includes roles as a Teaching Pro, Tennis Director, Marketing Manager for Tennis Channel, and GM for the WTT San Diego Aviators. Certified by PTR and RSPA, she has served on national committees and earned numerous accolades, including USPTA Southern California Pro of the Year (2017) and a USTA Service Award. Her most cherished honor remains her family's recognition as the USTA National Family of the Year in 1985.



DEAN HOLLINGWORTH

Dean is a seasoned strength and conditioning specialist with over 20 years of experience in the field. As an international speaker and educator, Dean has worked with numerous elite WTA and ATP players, helping them achieve peak performance on and off the court. Currently, he serves as the Director of High Performance at Club CDL in Montreal, where he oversees athlete development and program innovation. Dean's expertise extends beyond tennis, having worked with athletes from diverse sports disciplines. Passionate about advancing the game of tennis, Dean is an active member of the Professional Tennis Registry (PTR) educational team and was honored with the prestigious 2022 PTR Volunteer of the Year award. Dean combines a love for coaching, a commitment to excellence, and a deep understanding of high-performance training

to inspire athletes to reach their full potential.



OIVIND SORVALD



ED SHANAPHY

Ed Shanaphy, CEO of SBW Associates, Inc. and President of BeyondTheBaselines.com, is a leading consultant in the private members club industry. With a B.A. from Duke University and an M.A. from the London School of Economics, Ed served as CEO/ Managing Director of Haysbridge (UK) Ltd., overseeing media operations in London, Sydney, and Dublin. Returning to the U.S. in 2007 after 20 years abroad, he founded SBW Associates, which manages clubs and departments, including BeyondTheBaselines. com, currently overseeing four clubs with 35 employees across four states. Ed also established The Institute of Club Directors, providing education for club leaders. His career includes roles as Director of Tennis, General Manager, and Director of Operations at esteemed clubs, along with consulting for elite establishments such as Jupiter Island

Club and Edgartown Yacht Club. A former President of the Blackheath Rugby and Lawn Tennis Club, Ed played a pivotal role in professional rugby's transition in the UK. He is a member of numerous prestigious clubs, including Quail Valley Golf Club, Beverly Yacht Club, and Waccabuc Country Club.



PATRICIO MINISTRANO

Patricio Misitrano is the founder of Misitrano Consulting, a leading authority in padel and pickleball consulting. With over 20 years of experience as a Racquet Sports Director and Professional, Patricio is a recognized expert in the racquet sports industry. His innovative approach and deep knowledge have positioned Misitrano Consulting as a trusted advisor to clubs and organizations worldwide.

Patricio is also the founder of The Sports Haus, an indoor club in Norwalk, featuring 5 padel courts and 4 pickleball courts. This was the first club in New England open to the public offering these sports. He is a proud member of the United States Padel Association National Teams Committee and a member of the US National Padel Team, further solidifying his commitment to the growth and development of padel in the U.S.



DAVID BOTTI



BILL RIDDLE

Bill is a veteran tennis coach and professional with over 35 years of experience in coaching, management, and tennis media. A High-Performance Tennis Specialist recognized by PTR, USPTA, and USTA, he has led The University of Tennessee Southern's tennis teams to over 200 career wins, coaching multiple All-Americans and nationally ranked players. Bill's media contributions include co-hosting Tennis Talk, producing Serve It Up for Citi Taste of Tennis, and earning the 2020 PTR International Media Excellence Award.

A sought-after speaker, Bill has presented at global conferences, including the Australian Open and Wimbledon. His accolades include the 2021 USPTA Southern Professional of the Year and multiple state and national honors. As a brand ambassador for HEAD/ PENN and adidas, Bill continues to inspire players and coaches worldwide through

camps, workshops, and mentorship coaches and players across the globe.

DR. MARK KOVACS





CARL MAES

Carl Maes is a renowned tennis coach, conference presenter, and international consultant with extensive experience directing programs for governing bodies like the LTA, Norway, Belgium, and Estonia. He leads the PTR's Level 3 Performance Coach Program and holds a master's degree in Sport Science and Kinesiology. Best known for his lifelong work with Kim Clijsters, Carl also served as Academy Director at the Kim Clijsters Academy from 2014 until its closure in 2020. Over his career, he has coached and managed top 100 players, including Elise Mertens, Johanna Konta, Xavier Malisse, Laura Robson, Yanina Wickmayer, Sorana Cirstea, Tamara Zidansek, and Bianca Andreescu (2024). As Belgium's Fed Cup captain, he led the team to the 2006 final. Now based in Sotogrande, Spain, Carl directs the Sotogrande Racket Center and works

as an independent consultant for international players, programs, and organizations.