

# ontario tennis



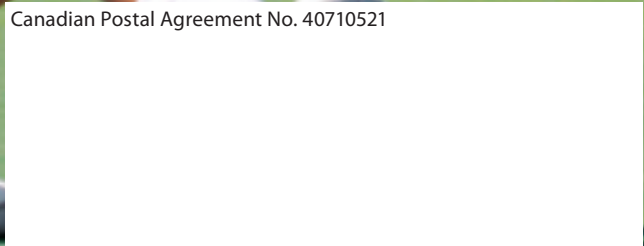
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## ontario tennis

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## In praise of tennis clubs.

This year the OTA celebrates the 90th anniversary of its founding at a meeting in Barrie (See feature on pages 6 and 7). But the history of tennis in Ontario dates back well beyond the founding of the OTA.

The Toronto Lawn Tennis Club, was founded in the mid 1870s (I've found sources quoting 1874, 1875 and 1876) and, although others claim the same distinction, it is probably the oldest tennis club in North America. Isadore F. Hellmuth was a founding member of the TLTC, the winner of the first International Tennis Championships held there in 1881 and a co-founder of the London Lawn Tennis Club with Charles Hymuth, the first President of the Canadian Lawn Tennis Association, founded in 1890.

Private clubs, many of which are still flourishing today, were the bastions of tennis in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Where there were no private clubs, tennis was played through the generosity of those individuals who had private courts and allowed others to play on them.

Tennis courts on public property started to appear in the 1920s. Where the municipality and local enthusiasts worked together to form a club, tennis flourished. Where clubs were formed, membership fees were collected, committees were elected and activities such as lessons and tournaments were organized. The club and its members took responsibility for the care of the courts, for encouraging volunteers to assist in the running of the club and to provide programming, both on and off the courts, that met their members' needs. In other words a sustainable organization was developed. When the popularity of tennis ballooned in the late sixties and early seventies, the concept of the community club was already established in Ontario. Large numbers of public courts were built and community clubs formed. The number of clubs we see celebrating their 40th and 50th anniversaries today is evidence of this.

Today, Ontario is extremely fortunate to have a highly developed network of tennis clubs. The OTA has more than 200 member clubs, the majority of which are community clubs operating on public property. Ontario has roughly twice as many tennis clubs as the rest of Canada combined. Community clubs have demonstrated for more than half a century that tennis is not an elite sport but is accessible and affordable. Of course, individual clubs and their membership numbers will vary with the demographics of the area in which they are located, the quality of the executives they elect and the choices of programs they run. Although clubs may go through lean times, very few community clubs fold or close. The O.T.A. recognizes the important role clubs play in the success of tennis and targets its services to support its members, the tennis clubs.

Statistics indicate that the popularity of tennis is on the rise again. There are still a lot of public tennis courts in Ontario that are not supported with a club structure and which, due to growing pressure on municipal taxes, are not well maintained. It might be time for clubs to look at expanding their capacity by adding or adopting additional courts and for new clubs to be established, especially where the community is not already serviced by a tennis club. Why clubs? Because clubs have been shown to work and to last.



## Where is the Parent in Coaching BY DAVID PHILLIPS

It's impossible to deny the centrality of parents in the development of tennis players, whether recreational or professional. From taxi driver to cheerleader, planning aficionado to investor, parents form the bedrock of their children's success. However, they remain an "absent present" in coaching certification and player development models. Ever present yet often excluded, they are the ultimate stakeholders in the production of more and better competitors.

So how do we currently attend to their multiple roles?

There certainly is no absence of "advice" for the "parent as team member" role. TPA Course Facilitator of the Year, Wayne Elderton, has countless articles that address the role of parents and the value of a team approach to development ([www.acecoach.ca](http://www.acecoach.ca)). Judy Murray's [www.britishtennisparents.com](http://www.britishtennisparents.com) is a comprehensive resource from the perspective of "a professional tennis mother". Most recently, the TPA Parent Seminar hosted a panel of national

coaches and TC performance experts who shared valuable insights and sport science information.

However, attention to and inclusion of the role of "parent as primary coach" is less obvious. We most certainly cannot deny their existence, the most obvious example being the "father as coach of his professional daughter". From the idealized Jimmy and Chris Evert, to the domineering Jim and Mary Pierce, to the celebrated Williams sisters, each of these parents, regardless of method, produced results that most parents (and their "children come athletes") seek. Their journeys provide us with anecdotes and examples – though no clear system approach is obvious.

In Canadian coaching certification, this specific role is not yet fully addressed in curriculum or in the player development model. The time has come for us to clearly define a path for your development that includes features such as family and child psychology, financial planning and sport nutrition at home.



Perhaps it is also time to rethink our development models to include your participation. I welcome your experiences and suggestions as together we move this initiative forward.

However, regardless of which role you choose as an involved parent, the advice of Dan Gould, in Development of Psychological Talent in US Olympic Champions, best sums up the role of parents: "The importance of ... teach(ing) values such as hard work, optimism and a 'can do' attitude seem paramount...emphasize the attitude, 'If you are going to do it, do it right'... model a hard work ethic, hold high (but reasonable) expectations and standards...and emphasize a 'stick to it and follow through on commitments' attitude."

## Miele Cooks up a New Challenge BY MICHAEL CVITKOVIC

Miele Ltd. is cooking up more than their typical list of sleek appliances and highly engineered customized kitchens. Through a five-year partnership with Tennis Canada, Miele has substantially increased its involvement in tennis at all levels. Under the leadership of President Jan Heck, Miele has committed to a gold sponsorship of the Rogers Cup in Toronto and an official team sponsorship of the Canadian Davis Cup and Fed Cup squads. What's even more exciting for OTA members and Toronto tennis enthusiasts is the creation of the newly minted Miele League Challenge.

League play is a hallmark of many successful tennis nations because it helps attract and retain new players to the sport. It also provides an opportunity for members at all levels of proficiency to play and compete on a regular

basis. Jan was a participant in such a city league challenge in his home country of Germany and knows that a similar system could flourish in Canada.

The first phase of the Miele League Challenge includes hosting some of Toronto's top league championships teams during the final weekend of Rogers Cup with special activities throughout the year, a live Web cast and prizes scheduled for participants. Players can see their standings, share pictures and enter contests on the league microsite. These premier Toronto leagues, with approximately 7,000 organized members, will be showcased in the first two years of the Miele League Challenge: the Intercounty Tennis Association (ICTA), the Toronto Men's Tennis League (TMTL) and the Toronto Ladies Tennis League (TLTL). All three

of these leagues have a strong foundation of clubs, tradition of excellence and league members, with the TLTL dating back as far as 1929. All three leagues' participants will also be eligible for ongoing benefits and an opportunity to win a grand prize in the newly created Miele League Challenge on-line contest.

The Miele League Challenge will be officially unveiled this month in Toronto with the goal to roll out nationally in subsequent years. The concept is another display of commitment by Miele to provide quality tennis programming across the country. In addition, this also displays the healthy partnership with the OTA, leagues and Tennis Canada in the efforts to see top city tennis showcased, promoted and prosper. Stay tuned for more information.