



# The Racket

## President's Alley

We are so close to opening that the excitement is palpable. Our court contractor, Midwest Sport Surfaces, is completing pre-season maintenance so that we're ready to open (weather permitting) on or about Monday, May 15th. We will keep you posted as to the opening. Our staff is installing windscreens and nets, and cleaning to ensure that everything is ready for the big day. The Member Experience Committee has developed another great calendar of events that offers many fun ways to play tennis and connect with fellow players. And we will greet our broader tennis community with freshly resurfaced courts on the public side.

As you know, Dee Shively has agreed to return as our Interim Manager; she will step in on a part-time basis. Because Dee's time at the Club will be quite limited, we ask that you try to direct most Club-related inquiries and comments to other staff members (and me) to allow her to fulfill her responsibilities and other commitments.

The rest of the staff will look very familiar! Angie and George are both returning, along with Duncan, Curtis, Jack, Tom, Gabe and Kendall. We are also happy to welcome our newest LPTA staff member, Adam. Everyone is already working to get things off to a great start.

The Board has been meeting and discussing lots of future projects and initiatives, such as improvements to the locker rooms, installing a pergola and other sun protection, building pickleball courts (don't worry, we are not going to take away any tennis courts!), and potentially lighting some courts for evening play.

Now that member renewal has wound down, we hope to extend invitations to join LPTA to as many as 25 new members from our waiting list. I hope you will all join me in welcoming them into our tennis community.

See you on the courts!

All the best,

*Ben*

Ben Rose, LPTA President

## 2023 LPTA Events: Some Tried and True, Some Brand New

The Member Experience Committee (MEC), headed by Jill Silberg, has been hard at work during the off-season and is excited to bring two new events to the Club for the 2023 outdoor tennis season. This is in addition to such favorites as the season-long challenge leagues, weekend tournaments, revamped weekly drills, Club picnics, and more.

New for 2023 is the LPTA Team Tennis Cup. It is a season-long tournament in which four teams of up to 12 players each will play on one Friday evening per month over three months. It is designed to be a fun, social tennis experience open to players at all levels. This is a great way for new members to meet people and feel part of the LPTA community.

**New for 2023 is the LPTA Team Tennis Cup... a fun, social tennis experience open to players at all levels.**

You don't have to commit to playing in every match as only six players from each team will compete in doubles matches each month. Teammates who aren't playing are encouraged to come cheer on their team and enjoy Bacino's pizza and beverages following play. Each team's wins will be tallied and, at the season's closing picnic, the first-place and second-place teams will face off, as will the third-place and fourth-place teams. Dates of play are Fridays, June 23rd, July 21st and August 18th. The finals are on Saturday, September 30th.

**Mark your calendar for the inaugural Member/Guest Tournament... and let your favorite tennis friend know now so you can plan to attend.**

Also, mark your calendar for the inaugural Member/Guest Tournament, led by Rush Howell. The round robin-style tournament will take place during the afternoon and evening of Friday, September 22nd, and the afternoon of Saturday, September 23rd. Let your favorite out-of-towner (or in-towner) tennis friend know now so you can plan to attend.

The Member/Guest will feature flights for all playing levels. A team entry fee will cover dinner on Friday and light snacks on Saturday, cash prizes for the winners, and plenty of fun tennis and socializing for all participants.

You can sign up on the YourCourts website for these new events and the many other tennis and social events that have proved popular over the years. Watch for sign-up notices and deadlines in the LPTA morning email.

## Take Note of the Season's Most Important Dates

**New Member Welcome Night** - Monday, May 15, 5:00-7:00 PM. Six courts, 5:00-6:00 PM. Rain date: Monday, May 22.

**Season's Opening Picnic** - Saturday, June 3, 12:00-2:00 PM. Bacino's catering, DJ, and Live Ball on four courts.

**Singles Challenge Ladder, Singles Invitational and Mixed Doubles League**, - season-long Intra Club Leagues begin Sunday, June 4.

**Women's Travel Team Matches** - Three courts will be used every Monday between June 5 and July 31 (except July 3), 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM.

**Tuesday PM Drill Groups** - June 6 to August 15 (except July 4). USTA 3.6-3.9, 5:00-6:00 PM. USTA 4.0+, 6:00-7:00PM. Rain make-up date: August 22.

**Thursday AM Live Ball Drill Groups** - June 8 to August 17 (except July 6). USTA 4.0+, 7:00-8:00 AM. USTA 3.0-3.9, 8:00-9:00 AM. Rain make-up date: August 24.

**Men's Doubles Tournament** - Saturday, June 10, 8:30 - 11:00 AM, 11:00 AM - 1:30 PM, and 3:00-5:00 PM. Sunday, June 11, 8:30-11:00 AM.

**Sunday PM Drill Groups** - June 18 to August 27 (except July 2, 9 and 23). USTA 2.5-3.0, 4:00-5:00 PM. USTA 3.1-3.5, 5:00-6:00 PM.

**Women's Round Robin and Social** - Wednesday, June 14, 5:00-7:00 PM.

**LPTA Team Tennis Cup** - Friday, June 23, 5:00-7:00 PM. Bacino's pizza/cash bar, 6:30 PM.

**Women's Doubles Tournament** - Saturday, July 15, 8:30-11:00 AM, and 1:00-3:00 PM if necessary. Sunday, July 16, 8:30-11:00 AM.

**LPTA Team Tennis Cup** - Friday, July 21, 5:00 - 7:00 PM. Pizza/cash bar, 6:30 PM.

**Mid-Season Picnic** - Sunday, July 23, 11:30 AM - 2:00 PM. DJ, cardio tennis on four courts, stringing seminar by Andy Korn, with raffle for free stringing.

**Men's 60+ Sizzling Sexagenarians Doubles Tournament** - Wednesday, August 2.

**Mixed Doubles Tournament** - Saturday, August 12, 8:30-11:00 AM and 1:00-3:00 PM. Sunday, August 13, 8:30-11:00 AM.

**LPTA Team Tennis Cup** - Friday, August 18, 5:00 - 7:00 PM. Pizza/cash bar, 6:30 PM.

**Singles Invitational** - Round of 16, Saturday, August 26. Quarterfinals Round, Saturday, September 2. Semi-Finals Round, Saturday, September 9.

**Women's 60+ Round Robin** - Wednesday, September 13, 5:00-7:00 PM.

**Member/Guest Tournament** - Friday, September 22, 1:00 - 7:00 PM, with snacks and dinner, and Saturday, September 23, 12:00 - 5:00 PM (including finals), with snacks.

**Season's Closing Picnic** - Saturday, September 30, 12:30 - 2:30 PM. Beginning at Noon: finals of Intra Club Leagues, Singles Invitational, LPTA Team Tennis Cup, and more.

## Meet Your 2023 Season Tennis Pros



**Raul Esquerra** was a top ranked junior, competing in national tournaments from age 12, playing in such noteworthy tournaments as the Orange Bowl. He played collegiate tennis for nationally ranked Cal State and then DePaul University, where he also lettered in track. Raul has played International Tennis Federation events on the Senior Tennis Tour. He has taught tennis at various Northshore clubs and was most recently a tennis pro at Chicago's Saddle & Cycle. Raul was part of José María "Pepe" Arenas' team during last year's US Open. Pepe is one of the most versatile and respected coaches on both the ATP and WTA tours. Raul holds BS degrees in Finance and Economics as well as an MBA. He was a Senior Vice President in the cyber security organization of a major financial institution, building a global team and directing the establishment of operations in Asia, Europe and the Americas. He has held senior roles in renewable energy companies that both designed and built large-scale photovoltaic power plants in the U.S. and Europe. Raul lives in Evanston. Tel. 312-438-6014.

**Jeroen Stedehouder** was born and raised in The Netherlands. His father began teaching him the game of tennis at the young age of 6. When he moved to the United States at the age of 16, his high school coaches recognized and nurtured his gift and passion for tennis. Jeroen played in the men's singles final at the Tennis State Tournament in Texas as a senior in high school. He attended Texas A&M University and earned an MS in Financial Mathematics and Electrical Engineering. Upon graduating, he worked as a quantitative analyst and commodity trader in Amsterdam and Singapore. After several years, he moved to Chicago where he runs two businesses. In addition, he has found joy in coaching tennis for the past three years. "You only live once, but you get to serve twice." - Unknown. Tel. 312-813-6580.



**Joe Shmigelsky** has played tennis for nearly 20 years and is the captain of a USTA 4.5 18&O men's team that, in 2022, won state championships and represented the State of Illinois at sectionals. He has taught tennis for nearly 15 years, and is experienced with juniors, beginners and advanced players. Joe's philosophy is to focus on the fundamentals and court strategy to further develop the player's game. Joe has taught at LPTA since 2020. Prior to his time in Chicago, Joe played men's USTA 4.5 in Minnesota for 5 years, and played on the University of Wisconsin-Madison Club Team for 4 years. "Teaching the game to others and sharing lessons with others continues to be a joy," he says. Tel. 608-215-5092.



**Joey Salerno** has been coaching tennis for 30 years and is an experienced competitive player as well. He grew up in Omaha, Nebraska, where he maintained a top 3 ranking throughout his junior career and was also highly ranked nationally. At Junior Nationals, Joey beat eventual French Open Champions Michael Chang and Jim Courier. He played tennis at Tyler Junior College where he was on the National Championships team and an All-American. He transferred to the University of Nebraska and was All Big Eight his junior year before transferring to the University of Alabama for his senior year. Joey played 4 singles and 1 doubles to complete his college playing career at Alabama. He became the Assistant Coach there and helped lead the team to its only NCAA quarterfinals appearance in school history. Joey has been in Chicago for 20 years working with high-performance juniors as well as adults at various playing levels. He has worked locally at Midtown, Lakeshore and McFetridge. Tel. 312-771-9403.



## LPTA to Test Tennis Ball Recycling this Season



Used tennis balls that end up in landfills take 400 years to decompose. Recycle Balls in Vermont has been collecting balls from tennis facilities and individuals for years, keeping 10 million balls out of landfills to date. The ball material is reused to make tennis court surfaces, horse riding arena footing, and children's playgrounds. The company is currently experimenting with turning tennis balls into building materials such as stucco.

LPTA members Joe Tedino and Betsy Berry are spearheading the collection of used balls at the Club. Look for green bins like the one pictured here outside the clubhouse and next to the public courts. After your game, drop your used tennis balls in the bins. They will be collected and shipped to Vermont for recycling.

If you would like to help, please contact Betsy or Joe.

## Last Year's Survey Shows High Member Satisfaction

About 45% of the total LPTA membership participated in the 2022 year-end survey, which was conducted exclusively online. Hard-copy satisfaction surveys will be available this year, at the end of September, with the intent of getting greater membership input. Of those who responded, most were members fewer than 10 years. Approximately 44% were members who have belonged to the Club five or fewer years, and approximately 32% have been members between five and 10 years.

Overall, membership is very satisfied with the LPTA experience. Members commented that being part of this "hidden gem" and interacting with "wonderful members" was part of why they love LPTA. An impressive 91% of respondents indicated that they are "likely" or "very likely" to renew their membership.

Among the areas that were rated highly on a scale of 1 to 5 were:

- Staff courtesy and professionalism, with an overall satisfaction rating of 4.72 out of 5.
- The newsletter received an overall rating of 4.55.
- The morning email rated 4.75.

The only Club offerings that were poorly reviewed were the weekly drills. Approximately 63% of 2022 survey respondents indicated that they did not participate in the drill groups at all. The survey's overall finding is that the drill groups need to be divided by USTA player ratings and those ratings need to be enforced for player satisfaction and safety.

To that end, a subcommittee was formed during the off-season to brainstorm and come up with a better structure. Its recommendations were submitted to the Membership Experience Committee (MEC) for fine tuning. This season the following changes will be implemented: Drill groups will be one hour in length. There will be six weekly drill groups offered this season. All will be organized by USTA player ratings. Four will be traditional drill groups and two will be Live Ball drills. Live Ball is a fun and fast paced doubles-style game designed to keep players moving. Our pros will lead a Live Ball demonstration at the Season's Opening Picnic on Saturday, June 3rd.

If you are interested in joining a drill but don't know your USTA rating, you can arrange with Dee Shively, Interim Club Manager, for a complimentary rating session with one of our pros. The daily morning emails will inform you about signups for drills and other member activities.

The tournament opportunities offered to the membership are very popular, as are the season's three picnics. Members love the catered and food truck offerings (as opposed to the pre-COVID potluck style), and other features such as the DJ help liven things up.

Comments from new members indicated that most felt somewhat lonely during their first season at the Club. Research out of the University of Kansas (Hall, 2018) suggests that it takes 10 hours of personal engagement in a leisure activity (such as tennis) for a person to feel someone else is an acquaintance. That's roughly five social doubles matches with the same people. The Membership Committee is supporting each of our current member ambassadors in their work with a new member all season long to ensure that the new member is getting to know other LPTA players.



## Friends Play On, Indoors and Out, Throughout the Winter



Top left (l-r): Kathryn Brown, Pam Wyne, Tamara Beeler and Susan Quandel at East Bank.  
Top right: Bob Fisher, Sandy Feinglass, Sandy Klein and Larry Yellen at Tam.  
Bottom left: Erin Malley, Karen Jaffe, Lynne Peckham and Julie Oslan at Lakeshore.  
Bottom right: Marjie Killeen, Katrina Kash, Karen Jaffe and Jan Elegant in Naples, Florida.



## LPTA Members Turn Out in Force at Indian Wells



Kristine Prugh (l-r), Gary Silberg, Jeff Elegant, Jan Elegant and Tracey Gau took in some high-quality tennis at the 2023 edition of the BNP Paribas Open in March.



Alyson Ryan sported a wide-brimmed hat under the desert sun. She enjoyed the company of Todd Martin, a former top-10 player who recently stepped down as head of the ITHF.

## Tennis Odds and Ends



Get in your tennis cardio workout while helping to give struggling immigrants access to higher education, on Saturday, May 13th: <https://dmebukefoundation.org/product-page/>

The International Tennis Hall of Fame has new leadership. Former player and preeminent broadcast commentator Patrick McEnroe is taking over from Todd Martin as the ITHF's new President. Dan Faber is the organization's new Chief Executive Officer, following 10 years as Chief Executive of the USTA Foundation. The ITHF, in Newport, Rhode Island, is currently showcasing *Transcending Tennis: 50 Years of the WTA*.

Serena Williams is going to be a mom again. The 23-time grand slam singles champion announced her second pregnancy ahead of May 1st's Met Gala in New York City.

It's National Tennis Month this May and the USTA is celebrating across the Mid-West: [https://www.usta.com/en/home/stay-current/midwest/play-tennis-midwest.html?cid=23nationaltennismonth\\_20220403\\_chem\\_brsec\\_owsec\\_ctevt\\_se=mw\\_endcid](https://www.usta.com/en/home/stay-current/midwest/play-tennis-midwest.html?cid=23nationaltennismonth_20220403_chem_brsec_owsec_ctevt_se=mw_endcid)

Britain's Emma Raducanu will miss both the French Open and Wimbledon as she recovers from multiple surgeries. The 2021 US Open champion is undergoing procedures to correct bone injuries in both hands and a minor procedure on an ankle. The time off will see Raducanu fall outside the top 100 in the rankings.



## REMINDERS

LPTA Communications: The email addresses used to communicate with members are [member@yourcourts.com](mailto:member@yourcourts.com) (Club management), [info@lptachicago.com](mailto:info@lptachicago.com) (LPTA membership), [treasurerlpta@gmail.com](mailto:treasurerlpta@gmail.com) (dues and billing). Please make sure you put these in your address book/contact list to prevent Club emails going to your spam folder.

*The Racket* Submissions Deadline: We welcome submissions from members! The deadline for the next issue (June 2023) is Friday, May 26. If you have articles or photos for *The Racket*, please submit them through this [link](#). We are using this form to make sure that we don't miss any emails from you, save our in-boxes and have all of our content together in one place. Thank you!

## LPTA Board of Directors

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Kathryn Brown

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**Interim Club Manager** - Dee Shively

**Facilities and Grounds** - Duncan Stephen

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