



## Issue 16 – Winter 2015 - 2016

### Message from the Executive Director – Jim Boyce

It's hard to believe that the 2016 outdoor season is around the corner – for many parts of the province, it doesn't even feel like we've had a winter yet! This time of year at the OTA, as we ready for another summer season we also take time to reflect on the previous year, to see what the highlights were and what needs to be modified or improved for next season.

On the competitive player front, the OTA sanctioned a record number of matches – over 22,000 – in 2015. The number of registered competitors rose by approximately 150, to over 2,200. We sanctioned events in over 60 member clubs. A special thanks to all the clubs who host our sanctioned tournaments – we couldn't do it without you! The level of play, in every category from U9 to O85 has been tremendous, whether it was in a provincial, national or international competition. Of course everybody knows about Milos Raonic and his ascension in the world rankings, Gabriella Dabrowski and Carol Zhao's Pan Am Games gold medal and also Daniel Nestor getting to the Australian Open doubles final, but there have been other notable achievements from Ontario players as well. Of particular note, I would like to recognize two of the provinces most promising junior competitors; **Bianca Andreescu** and **Denis Shapovalov**. Bianca, a 15 year old from Mississauga burst on the international scene two years ago when she won the prestigious Les Petit As, a U13 tournament in France. In 2014, she won the Orange Bowl U16s in Florida and repeated the feat in the U18 division in 2015. Bianca won several other prominent tournaments and was part of Canada's bronze medal team in the Junior Fed Cup. She is currently ranked number 3 in the world junior rankings. Denis won the Indoor Nationals in 2015 and went on to have a successful summer competing in high level ITF Junior and Open events. In the span of a few weeks in the fall, Denis partnered with fellow Canadian Felix Auger Assilimie to capture the US Junior Open. A few weeks later, Denis anchored the Canadian team as they won the Junior Davis Cup! And, just recently, he won his first pro singles tournament, a \$10,000 ITF Futures in Florida. He is the first player born in 1999 to win an ITF pro event. Denis has an ATP open ranking of 799. Often, when I am asked what the OTA does, among other things, I point to the results of the above-mentioned players, and many others, all of whom gained invaluable experience and competition through our comprehensive competitive structure.



Another notable highlight for 2015 includes the first-ever **mini Rogers Cup** competition, run in partnership with **Rogers** and **Tennis Canada**. Over 30 clubs and 700 juniors took part in this fun event. Plans are underway for this so let us know if you would like to get your club involved. As well, we were fortunate to obtain a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation for our Freedom 50 programme, an initiative to encourage people over 50 to stay active through tennis. As well as the new projects, 2015 saw the OTA continue to promote tennis to juniors and adults through programmes such as Raise the Net, Capital Kids, Kids Tennis and our schools initiative.

Looking ahead to the summer season of 2016 and beyond, the OTA is planning several significant initiatives to build on the recent increase in play levels in this province and to help our member clubs enhance the playing experience of their members. Of note... **2018** marks the **100th anniversary of the OTA!** Plans are underway

to celebrate this significant milestone and to position the organization for bigger and better things in the future. Stay tuned for more information soon! In the meantime, thanks to all of you, and your volunteers and staff, for contributing your time and effort to make tennis more accessible and enjoyable for players across Ontario. Without you, our programmes would not be possible.



Finally, I would be remiss if I did not mention the untimely passing of one of the OTA's greatest volunteers and friends **Gus Morhart**. Gus died in his Florida home in December of last year. He was a fixture at junior and adult tournaments across Ontario (and Canada) for years. Several generations of kids who played at our Junior Provincials and other events benefitted from Gus' kindness and generosity. Gus worked tirelessly behind the scenes at many OTA events, delivering tournament supplies, umpire chairs (many of which he constructed), trophies and even players; and never asked for anything in return. He truly loved the game, and was one of Canada's greatest tennis ambassadors. The OTA bestowed their Distinguished Service Award to Gus in 2007 and prior to his death, the OTA board decided to rename the Ontario Open in his name in 2016 to further honour him and recognize all he had done for tennis. A celebration of his life is being held on February 25th. He will be missed!



### **Player Development Update – Kartik Vyas**



The 2015 competitive year was fantastic. We had a record number of matches in a year, (22,000), a record number of entries in a single junior tournament (580), the overall level of play was amazing and encouragingly, we noticed more young players (U8-U10) playing than ever before. This last fact points to the growth of tennis amongst young players across the province. Families are looking at the recent Canadian players' success in international competition, the safety of the sport, the emphasis on physical fitness and its inclusiveness with respect to gender and ethnicity as great reasons to get their kids involved. Many clubs reported an

increase in junior programming in 2015. It is important that the OTA continues to offer competitive play for these kids; giving them the opportunity to compete, hone their skills, and to learn the importance of good sportsmanship, respect for fellow players, officials and the game itself.

Many junior and adult players who played local and provincial events in Ontario last year went on to distinguish themselves in national and international competition. Our Junior Team Ontario players again won the national team competition and almost every junior final had Ontario players in it. Many of you are aware of the recent success of junior players Bianca Andreescu and Denis Shapovalov on the international junior stage, (and at the adult level for that matter), but they are not the only Ontario juniors achieving success abroad. Ontario had many players compete in the 2015 "Florida Swing", (Little Mo, Eddie Herr and Orange Bowl). A quick look at many international ITF events will reveal many Canadian flags beside players' names – and quite a few of those are from Ontario. As many players rise through the ranks, they are going on to successfully gain scholarships in US Universities or playing on Varsity teams across Canada. As usual, Ontario was also well represented at national and international senior competitions, including the World Championships. The OTA feels that it is important to create an environment in which our players can improve and achieve success. These players often go on to be ambassadors for the sport at their clubs and inspire fellow members and the next generation. All this would not be possible without the generosity of those OTA clubs that host our events and the pros who mentor and teach our juniors how to play, behave and compete. Providing venues for our tournaments and hosting our players is fundamental to the continued growth of the game. Thank you to those clubs and pros who hosted in 2015. If your club is interested in hosting an OTA sanctioned tournament, please contact Andrew Chappell, [achappell@tennisontario.com](mailto:achappell@tennisontario.com).



Looking ahead to the 2016 season (which is already well underway), we expect another great year on the competitive side. We have added more Open (pro) tournaments with increased ranking points and prize money and, with the help of sponsors such as Miele, we will be opening up the Mixed Doubles category by offering a "Century Mixed Circuit" – more details to come shortly. Of course, we will have junior events virtually every week of the year and we hope to add a few more adult events as well. The increased number of tournaments has resulted in an increased demand for officials. The OTA is always on the lookout for new officials at all levels. If you know of someone in your club who might be interested in training to become an official, please have them contact [ota@tennisontario.com](mailto:ota@tennisontario.com). Finally, we are also pleased to welcome **Penn** as the new **Official Tennis Ball** of the OTA. The Pro Penn Marathon will be used exclusively for all sanctioned OTA tournaments.



## Membership and Coaching – Jay Neill

As I write this on what is a record breaking day for high temperatures across the province, here's hoping this is a precursor to an early start to the 2016 outdoor tennis season. I am sure that, as always, your club executive has been very busy planning for this season. 2015 was a very good year in this portfolio for several reasons. We had record high attendances at several of our events, including our AGM and Presidents' Day.

As far as coaching certification goes, 266 people took our Tennis Instructor course (or upgraded their existing certification by taking the next certification level). Much of the 2016 schedule has now been finalized. The newest feature is that Tennis Instructor course registration is now done on-line. Please feel free to let your members know that they can visit [here](#) to view all of the various course levels, dates, locations and other pertinent information. Many of our courses fill quickly so anyone who wishes to register for a course needs to do so ASAP. You will learn a great deal and have fun while taking one of our certification courses. And don't forget – if your club is looking for staff, you can post positions free at [OTA Job Line](#). Just email your job description to [ota@tennisontario.com](mailto:ota@tennisontario.com) with the Subject "Job Line posting".



The details of the club insurance program will soon be ready for distribution to our clubs. Please make a note to check your e-mail for this package by mid February. As you may now know, the **OTA AGM** is set for **April 9** at the Aviva Centre in Toronto. Your club will soon receive all of the details on the event, including how to register. We look forward to seeing those of you who do register at the AGM.

I also look forward to working again with all club executives to help make 2016 the best year ever for your tennis clubs! Please feel free to contact me at [jneill@tennisontario.com](mailto:jneill@tennisontario.com) if you have any questions on club membership. I will be happy to answer them for you.

## Provincial Development News – David Lea/Ely Schwartz/Ziad Halabi/John Wins-Purdy

Our Raise the Net (RTN) programme continued over the fall and winter with a couple of major indoor community events. Once again, we set up the Pizzaville Smash Cage and disseminated Long Term Athletic Development information at the Gentlemen's Expo at the Metro Convention Centre in September. It was a huge success with over 100 people engaged per hour. People of all ages and gender came to the cage trying to impress whoever they were with. It was a very fun attraction with multiple groups coming back over and over again to try and beat their record. We saw close to 3,000 people over the 3 days.

We also brought the Smash Cage and RTN info to the ZoomerShow, an event for people aged 50+. The event went well, there were a total of 20,000 people at the event, at least 3,500 people were exposed to Raise the Net and our new Freedom 50 programme, (see more info below). Pamphlets and brochures were given out and information on how to get involved in tennis at the club level was explained and encouraged.



With spring just around the corner, the OTA's 2016 edition of the Summer Tour Clinic's and "Dave's Drop – Ins" are starting to book up for this season. You can book one "Clinic" format, or a combination of the "Hitting", "Theme Doubles" and our most requested clinic "Pro Doubles". The Tour features a free two hour clinic, Babolat Racquets, Penn Balls and Rogers Cup Weekend Qualifying Tickets, "The Men are in Town"

We are already booked to travel to the four corners of the province ! E-mail and tell us if you see one of our vans on the road or at an event near you! Please call or e-mail David Lea at [dlea@tennisontario.com](mailto:dlea@tennisontario.com) or 416-514-1121 to book a tour event.

We are excited to inform you that the OTA has recently received support from the Government of Ontario to engage adults age 50 and over in the game of tennis. This new programme is called **Freedom 50** and the objectives are:

- ✚ Tennis Participation (via clinics, events, workshops and OTA clubs)
- ✚ Volunteerism, Recruitment and Training
- ✚ Healthy Eating and Sport Safety



We have appointed Rick Bertozzi as the OTA Freedom 50 Coordinator to lead this programme. In this capacity, Rick will be looking to recruit a Freedom 50 Ambassador from each club. The Freedom 50 Ambassador position is a volunteer position and this individual would serve as the link between their club and the OTA by providing information and feedback (at each Club's discretion) to the OTA Freedom 50 Coordinator.

This newly-created role will evolve and change as we start to discuss the programme with the Freedom 50 Ambassadors. Initially, the position will involve:

- ✦ Providing best practices for adults in this age group
- ✦ Direct communication with the Freedom 50 Coordinator and other Freedom 50 Ambassadors
- ✦ Suggesting changes to the Freedom 50 Ambassador role
- ✦ Participating in teleconferences chaired by the Program Coordinator along with other Freedom 50 Ambassadors to share ideas to grow tennis among this demographic.

#### Please Note:

1. Participation in the Freedom 50 program is optional and there is no deadline should a Club decide to participate at a later date.
2. The Freedom 50 Ambassador position is not a mandatory requirement for each club and is on a volunteer basis only.
3. The Freedom 50 Ambassador should have their club's Board/Executive approval and will always be accountable to the Club Board/Executive.

If you are interested in becoming your Club Freedom 50 Ambassador, please contact Rick Bertozzi at [rbertozzi@tennisontario.com](mailto:rbertozzi@tennisontario.com). You will receive an acknowledgment and a meeting will be set up by the spring with all Club Freedom 50 Ambassadors to discuss next steps. We look forward to hearing from you!

#### **Ottawa Update**

The National Capital region had a very busy 2015. There were increases in programme participation across the board. The Capital Kids initiative saw 1,478 participants in 7 locations, up from 770 in 4 locations in 2014. The 2016 target is 1,600 participants in 10+ locations. The Little Aces school programme had over 6,800 participants in 37 schools and the Little Aces League had 290 registrants at Carleton, Rideau, TCWO, Barhaven and Craig Henry. Thanks to all the clubs, volunteers and staff for hosting this exciting league. We introduced Drop in events and the NCTA Smash Cage to the region – thanks to Kunstadt Sports for organizing and running Cage events. If you would like to book a smash cage event for your club this outdoor season contact John Wins-Purdy, [john.winspurdy@gmail.com](mailto:john.winspurdy@gmail.com).



There was also an increase in the number of OTA sanctioned tournaments in the region in 2015, particularly in the junior categories. The total number of entries in the 24 junior regional tournaments was up over 300 in 2015, to a total of 1,575. The Future Stars events were particularly popular, as was the Roman Cup with over 560 entries. We recently hosted the U10 Future Stars awards ceremonies at the Ottawa Athletic Club. Of note, the region will be hosting the 2016 Senior Nationals in August and of course the Ontario Open.



On the membership front, 2 additional clubs joined the OTA, bringing the total to 19 member organizations for the region. Thanks to all the clubs for their continuing support! For more info on tennis in the Ottawa area, click [here](#).



## Communications and Marketing – Peter Malcomson

OTA Marketing has been busy this winter preparing for the 2016 season. Many of the initiatives we executed last year will return again this year with some new twists and we will also add some new programmes. Tennis is enjoying increased interest and growth in Canada with several significant breakthroughs for Canadian players over the past 12 months; particularly on the junior front. We would like to capitalize on this interest to drive participation levels and general awareness of the sport across the province. Below are some of the initiatives that will be in place for 2016

### Sponsorship Update

The OTA is pleased to welcome **Penn** tennis balls as the “**Official Tennis Ball of the OTA**”. Penn is the best selling tennis ball in North America. The four year deal with Penn, (which is owned by Head) will see all tournaments sanctioned by the OTA using the Penn Marathon tennis ball. This long lasting ball has already proven to be popular with competitive players and coaches. Penn is offering a great rewards programme for all of our member clubs. Take a look at the pricing and special offers [here](#).



We are also pleased to report that we have renewed our agreement with the **Merchant of Tennis** to again be the “Official Retailer of the OTA”. This new five year deal will see not one but two Player Appreciation Days and other great incentives for our member club players. The Merchant of Tennis has always been a great supporter of grass roots tennis.

Thanks also to our other sponsors for their continuing support again for 2016; **Babolat** as the “Official Racquet, String, Apparel and Shoe of the OTA”, **Racquet Guys** as “Official Court Equipment Supplier of the OTA”, **National Bank**, “Title Sponsor of the OTA Roadshow”, **Miele**, “Proud Supporter of League and

Senior Tennis, **Pizzaville**, “Presenter of the Smash Cage” and **Rogers**, sponsor of the “mini Rogers Cup”

### #GetontheCourt

Last year the OTA launched a new campaign - **#GetontheCourt**. We ran television spots during several ATP and WTA telecasts and posted them on the OTA TV Youtube channel. As well as running the commercial, the OTA executed a social media contest in which the winner received a free lesson on Centre court at the Aviva Centre. The #GetontheCourt theme will be renewed in 2016, with new contests and sponsored events. Watch out for details soon on the OTA website and social media.



### Mini Rogers Cup



After a successful 1st year, the mini Rogers Cup will again take place across Ontario in the weeks leading up to this year’s Rogers Cup. The OTA will again organize mini Rogers Cup team events at member clubs and academies. Last year’s mini Rogers Cup included approximately 30 regional club level team tournaments which led to an exciting finals day (click [here](#) to view finals day video) and a visit to Centre Court at the Rogers Cup for the winners. Our hope is to increase participation this year to include over 1000 kids and 50 clubs or academies. Details on the entire campaign will be available soon. Make sure your club gets involved!

## National Bank Roadshow

2016 will be the third season for the **National Bank Roadshow**. Our ambassadors visited over 60 clubs and community events in 2015 and bookings are already underway for this season.

National Bank will continue to promote their [On the Ball](#) programme, an initiative that has played an active role in improving the classroom environment for children.

The NB Roadshow will again feature a number of different elements including the **Pizzaville Smash Cage**, (and a second Smash Cage in the Ottawa region), **Babolat** racquet demos, **Raise the Net** physical literacy presentations, **Kids Tennis** demos, prizes and more. To book a date at your club email [ota@tennisontario.com](mailto:ota@tennisontario.com) and type "NB Roadshow" in the subject line.



## Tennis Rocks Festival



The third annual **Tennis Rocks! Festival** is scheduled for Saturday, May 28th at the Aviva Centre, home of the Rogers Cup. The event will again be co-hosted by the OTA and the **Inter County Tennis Association**. The centerpiece of Tennis Rocks! is the "**Junior Team Tennis Championships**". In 2015 there were 36 teams from around the province playing in a friendly competitive environment. This year will see the addition of a U10/U12 category to add to the U14/U18 division. Other activities include skill games, the Pizzaville Smash Cage, prize giveaways and hospitality on Centre court and around the grounds. We will be announcing details for next year's

festival shortly so stay tuned.

## Canadian Tennis Network

The OTA, in partnership with Tennis Canada will again be offering the **Canadian Tennis Network, (CTN)**; a virtual TV network that is designed to entertain and inform your members. It is **free of charge** to all member clubs and is delivered via an easy to use Plug & Play device. All your club needs is a flat screen TV and internet wifi. The programming is available 24 hours a day with content being produced by Tennis Canada, OTA TV and also obtained from local, national and international tennis content producers. It features tennis news and highlights, the latest OTA and Tennis Canada information and periodic live local tournament webcasts. There is also the opportunity to place your own club's content on the system. For a club benefits page, click [here](#). To view CTN demo reel, click [here](#). To order CTN for your club or for more information, contact Peter Malcomson at [pmalcomson@tennisontario.com](mailto:pmalcomson@tennisontario.com) or call 416-504-1102.



## CLUB OTA



Over the past 3 years the OTA has distributed over 90,000 **Club OTA cards** to our clubs and academies. As mentioned in a previous issue, in addition to offering deals on several attractions, some clubs have utilized the Club OTA card as their official club member I.D. We recently launched an "**app version**" of the card for Apple and Android devices in partnership with Love Courts. The OTA will develop a unique id code for each club and provide it to your executive or management. As members join, your club can provide them with the code which will allow them to go to the app store and download a Club OTA Card app at no charge. Their **unique** Club OTA membership card will appear on their mobile device. We will send more info shortly and will ask you to let us know what you think about the possibility of offering the app as an alternative to printed version of the card. For those clubs who wish to continue to use the hard card version, we will be sending cards for distribution to new members. We will send the number of cards which represents 20% of your 2015 membership total unless otherwise notified. As always, we ask you to contact us if you know of a retailer or business near your club that might be interested in putting an offer on the Club OTA card and app.



## Tennis Ontario Magazine

The OTA is currently working on the 2015 Yearbook issue of “Ontario Tennis”. As was the case last year, this will be a digital issue only - available on-line on our website. Once the issue is posted, we will send you notification and a link that you can forward to your membership and post on your club website. We will again be publishing four issues this year – the Yearbook will be followed by a Spring issue in April, a Summer issue in July and a fall issue in September. Like the Yearbook, the Fall issue will also be a digital only issue. We are currently researching platform options for digital which will allow increased interactivity and video imbedding. For the Spring and Summer issues please let us know if your club is receiving the proper amount of magazines and again, remember to tell your members that it can also be accessed on-line on our website. The OTA will be turning 100 in 2018 so we have already begun researching our history and the history of the sport in Ontario, with the idea of publishing a special addition of the magazine. If your club, or any of its members, has historical documents artifacts or photographs pertaining to the history of your club, or the game in Ontario, we'd love to know about them. As always, feel free to contact me at [pmalcomson@tennisontario.com](mailto:pmalcomson@tennisontario.com) if you have any questions or comments.



### Did You Know...?

... that Daniel Nestor won his 1000th career match in January 2016?

... that Roger Federer has on-court career earnings of \$97,855,881?

... that Serena Williams has on-court career earnings of \$75,360,291?

### Would you like other executive members at your club to receive the TCC newsletter?

If so, simply send an email with a list of contacts to [ota@tennisontario.com](mailto:ota@tennisontario.com) and put the word “newsletter” in the subject line. If you have any comments you would like to make to the OTA feel free to contact anyone at the office or email [ota@tennisontario.com](mailto:ota@tennisontario.com) . For a staff directory, click [here](#).

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