



## Message from the Executive Director – Jim Boyce

This time every year I start to get hopeful that we will all soon be playing tennis outdoors and this year is no exception. In fact, I noticed at one of our member clubs, Kew Gardens in Toronto, that several members didn't let the cold weather stop them from playing outdoors all winter! That's the good old Canadian spirit!

While it has been cold outside, things have really heated up inside at the OTA. We're busy with final preparations for the annual OTA AGM – April 11th at the Rexall Centre. Invitations were recently sent out to member clubs and we have already received RSVP's from many of you. The OTA AGM is your chance to tell us how you feel about what we do. If you haven't replied yet – please let us know ASAP if you or a member of your executive will be attending. If you need more information about the AGM, email Gulshad at [ota@tennisontario.com](mailto:ota@tennisontario.com). This year's meeting promises to be a very informative and interesting affair. We'll be



reporting on how some of our new initiatives from last year, such as **Raise the Net**, **Capital Kids**, **the National Bank Roadshow** and our **Digital Strategy** plan, have performed and how we foresee them growing in the future. We will be hi-lighting how the "**Club Strong**" component of Raise the Net can help you run your club even more effectively. We will also be reporting on the first **Tennis Rocks! Festival** and inviting your club to send some junior teams to this year's event at the Rexall Centre in May.

The OTA is very excited to be launching a brand new website at the AGM as part of our **Digital Strategy** initiative. Our website has traditionally had about 40 million page views and over 1.1 million unique visits each year. The new-look website will have more functionality and in-depth information than ever before and, along with our increased social media activity and outreach programmes, we fully expect to raise those numbers considerably.



Of course, no website is worth anything unless it excites people and has strong call to action messages – in this case, inviting readers to become players, and players to play more, and enjoy playing more. We have noticed a significant increase in tournament play, particularly amongst juniors over the past season. The recent Ontario Junior Indoor Provincials had a record 495 competitors! There has been a groundswell of new junior programmes for even younger kids and an increase in questions from parents asking how they can get their children into the game. It is a good time for tennis in Canada and in Ontario. With Milos, Eugenie, Vasek and Daniel continuing to perform at the highest level on the world stage, it is important for the OTA to capitalize on this

and get more new players out to your clubs and to help develop the next generation of great Canadian champions.

One final note... believe it or not, the OTA is just 3 years away from celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2018. This province has been instrumental in the growth of tennis in Canada and continues to lead the way. As we get closer to that anniversary, we will be planning special events and will also try to look back through old records and pictures and share them with your members. If you, or your club, have any significant anniversaries or historical records you would like to share as we move forward towards 100, we'd like to hear from you. Your history is our history! Just call our office or email us at [ota@tennisontario.com](mailto:ota@tennisontario.com).



**Have a great tennis season!**

## Player Development Update – Kartik Vyas

The Ontario Junior Indoor Provincial Championships were recently held at several locations across the province. The tournament featured some of Ontario's, and Canada's, top players. Over 495 players competed in the U12, U14, U16 and U18 events. The Junior Indoor Provincials are an important tournament, weighing heavily as part of the Team Ontario selection process. Those players who were successful in making Team Ontario recently began competing in the Indoor Junior Nationals and will play many other important events throughout the year. This "Juniors" are the largest indoor Provincial Championships in Canada. The results were as follows:



### **U12 Girls**

Champion: Daria Tomashevskaya

### **U12 Boys**

Champion: Marko Stakusic

### **U14 Girls**

Champion: Ariana Arseneault

### **U14 Boys**

Champion: Liam Draxl

### **U16 Girls**

Champion: Brintha Ramasamy

### **U16 Boys**

Champion: Ivan Mitric

### **U18 Girls**

Champion: Maria Patrascu

### **U18 Boys**

Champion: Sean Huynh

Thanks to host clubs Cedar Springs Health and Racquet Club, Burlington (hosted by ACE Tennis), White Oaks in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Parkside Tennis Club in Windsor, the Veneto Tennis Club in Vaughan and the Ontario Racquet Club in Mississauga.

As mentioned, The Junior Indoor Nationals began last week with the U12s in Calgary and the U16s in Montreal. The U14s and U18s are underway in West Vancouver and Markham, (Mayfair East and Parkway) respectively. Go out and see some of Canada's best young players in action. Team Ontario leads the way with over 60 competitors! Go Ontario! For complete draws and results, [click here](#).



**Junior Outdoor Provincials Update** As was mentioned in the last edition of TCC, Kew Garden Tennis Club; longtime host of the Junior Outdoor Provincial Championships underwent a member referendum to determine its role as host of the event moving forward. The membership was asked if they wanted to continue to host the tournament in the same way they have in the past, (i.e. for two consecutive weeks) or to alter its hosting duties in one of three ways; host it for one week each year instead of two, host it for two weeks every other year or stop hosting it for the foreseeable future. The results of the referendum were announced in February, with the

result being that Kew will host the event for one week each year, beginning in 2015. Hence, Kew will be the primary site for the U14 and U18 categories between June 23 and 28. Locations for the U12 and U16 categories are being finalized and will be announced shortly. While the OTA is disappointed that it will not host the tournament both weeks at Kew, it respects the member's decision and thanks the club for its significant contribution to the growth of the event since it first hosted the event in 1948, and it looks forward to again hosting some categories there moving forward.

While on the subject of OTA tournaments, we are always looking out for new clubs that are interested in hosting OTA sanctioned events. With the recent surge in the popularity of tennis in Ontario, the OTA has seen an increased number of registered competitive players, (particularly juniors) and an increased appetite for tournament play at all ages. Why not look at hosting an event at your club. We have a new tournament software programme that makes it easy and our events can actually help your club's bottom line. For more info on hosting, contact Andrew Chappell, [achappell@tennisontario.com](mailto:achappell@tennisontario.com).



...finally; a reminder that the OTA would like to ask you to encourage your adult membership to consider playing in our OTA-sanctioned Adult category tournaments. There's a level of competition suitable for every player. We have A, B, and C categories for club level players, an Open category for national level players and a thriving "Seniors" division featuring age categories ranging from O35 to O80! All a player has to do is register as an OTA competitive player on our website, [www.tennisonario.com](http://www.tennisonario.com) and sign up for any of our numerous events. Players who compete in these events enjoy friendly competition and they definitely sharpen their skills, even if they don't win.

### ***Membership and Coaching – Jay Neill***

As I write this, the calendar says it is spring but the weather outside says something a little different. Here's hoping that we are in for a warm up very soon so your clubs can get open for what promises to be another great outdoor season. I am sure that your club executive has been very busy planning for your 2015 outdoor season in order to make this happen.

As you now know, the OTA AGM is set for April 11 at the Rexall Centre in Toronto. Your club has recently received all of the details on the event (and has hopefully registered for the event). We look forward to seeing those who have registered at the AGM.

We are currently finalizing our plans for our annual OTA Day. It will once again be held at the Merchant of Tennis locations in Toronto and Oakville as well as on-line across the province. The NCTA also has some OTA Day plans for Ottawa area clubs with Kunststadt Sports on May 16. Please stay tuned to your e-mail as once the details are finalized, they will be circulated to you.



This is a reminder the OTA is once again proud to have Wilson as our official tennis ball in 2015. Please use Wilson for all of your club's tennis ball needs. You can click [here](#) to get all of the details of the program (including the rebate program).

As far as coaching certification goes, much of our 2015 schedule has now been finalized. Please feel free to let your members know that they can click [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 contact me ASAP to register. You will learn a great deal and have fun while taking one of our certification courses.

I look forward to working again with all club executives to help make 2015 the best year ever for your tennis clubs! Please feel free to contact me at [jneill@tennisonario.com](mailto:jneill@tennisonario.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/Sahaj Jayanth/John Wins-Purdy***

The OTA schools programme is entering its final months and is booked solid for the rest of the year this year – we have seen record numbers of teachers and students as they look to tennis as a great, fun and safe sport to introduce to their kids. If you are a teacher or school administrator and you want the OTA to visit your school – please feel free to contact David Lea at the OTA. As mentioned we are booked up for the remainder of this school year so call Dave ASAP for the fall. Also, if you would like to join Dave as a volunteer for a school visit, just let him know.

This time every year we look to get some of the keener students integrated into the OTA club system. It's the best way to keep them playing. We would love to introduce students and teachers to neighbouring tennis clubs and try to integrate them into the club system. Please contact us if you would like to be put in touch with schools and welcome new young players to your club. Contact me at [dlea@tennisonario.com](mailto:dlea@tennisonario.com) 416-514-1121, if you have any questions about Community Tennis.





Last year the OTA helped Wilmington Tennis and Toronto Parks and Rec launch the **Sunshine Project**. Headed up by Carolynna Gabriel, the Sunshine Project delivered its first year grass-roots tennis programme to 300 youth in the North West part of Metro. Funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Canadian Tire Jumpstart and Tennis Canada, Wilmington will again be offering an after school tennis programme. As was the case last year, lesson costs will be income-gated. This years event kicked off and the programme also offers starter racquets and balls for the children, as well as a free membership to local clubs. For more info on the Sunshine Project or to see how you can get involved, please visit [www.sunshinetennisproject.com](http://www.sunshinetennisproject.com).

Now that the better weather is around the corner, the OTA will be shifting its focus from schools to Community events. Touring around with The National Bank Roadshow, featuring the Pizzaville Smashcage, we have already started our outreach programme towards communities and clubs across the province We recently set up at the Ontario Heritage Trust event at the Mattemy Centre and have already booked several community dates including the Waterfront Festival in Mississauga, the Gravenhurst Parks & Rec. showcase, a Pan Am Games lead up event in Toronto and the Ontario Open in Ottawa. Contact Ely Schwartz, [eschwartz@tennisontario.com](mailto:eschwartz@tennisontario.com) if your club has a major event or if you know of any Community events in your area this season. Let's get more kids and families into tennis!



As we enter into the second year of our Raise the Net programme and continue to deliver information about the National Long Term Athletic Development initiative, we also want to let our clubs know that we have made several improvements and additions to our Club Strong material. Now, all of the information that was formerly on a Google Docs platform has been migrated to our new website. As well, we have added several significant documents that we think will be of interest to you. Note for Member Clubs: Beginning Monday, April 13<sup>th</sup>, Member Clubs will be able

to access CLUBSTRONG by logging in through [www.tennisontario.com](http://www.tennisontario.com). Details will be sent to all clubs after the AGM on April 11<sup>th</sup>.

Also, a reminder that we will continue to book your club volunteers into our Officiating and Instructor courses. Call me to see how your key club volunteers who are interested in being certified as a referee or coach can qualify or visit [www.raisethenet.com](http://www.raisethenet.com) to learn more.

To date, I have already booked quite a few Raise the Net/Club Strong visits but certainly still have some openings, so feel free to contact me to book a day at your club. As part of these visits, I would be more than happy to bring along the National Bank Roadshow, featuring the Pizzaville Smash cage for any of your club's significant events. Contact me at [sjayanth@tennisontario.com](mailto:sjayanth@tennisontario.com).

## Ottawa Update

Plenty of action planned in the Ottawa region this spring! First off – planning and registration for the 2nd year of **Capital Kids** is underway. Capital Kids provides free lessons and equipment for kids 6 to 12 in city parks across Ottawa. We have expanded from 4 to 7 locations this year and expect to reach over 1200 kids. The programme will run from May 4 until August 30. New locations include: Rivierain Park, Col. By High School, Tanglewood Park and Owl Park.

**Little Aces** is set to kick off April 12 and has over 40 kids registered so far. Beginning in May the programme will be expanding its spring session with 2 new locations; Barrhaven Tennis Club and Col. By High School.

The **City of Ottawa** has expanded its rec. tennis programme this year. There are more lessons for kids and adults on city courts in areas that are not serviced by clubs. Hopefully this will lead to more people developing an interest in the game and seeking out our clubs to enhance their new-found skills.





On the competitive front, the NCTA region has already scheduled 22 **Future Star** events for the season, up from 14 last year. There is at least one U12 – U18 event scheduled every weekend from May to mid-September.

Finally, we have booked 9 **NCTA Smash Cage** events so far this spring and are looking to add your club to the list! Thanks to Kunststadt Sports for helping us out with this. If you'd like to book a smash cage event, contact John Wins-Purdy, [john.winspurdy@gmail.com](mailto:john.winspurdy@gmail.com). For more info on tennis in the Ottawa area, click [here](#).

### Communications and Marketing – Peter Malcomson

As is the case every year about this time, OTA Marketing is getting ready to spin into action with its core programmes as well as a few new initiatives; all designed to enhance your members' tennis experience.

First up is an update on our **Digital Strategy** initiative. As mentioned in previous issues, the OTA was fortunate to get a grant from the Ontario Government to help it upgrade its existing, and add new, digital communication channels. The first important announcement is that the OTA is launching a **brand new website!** The site will be debuted at the OTA AGM on April 11th. Its user-friendly design will enhance the on-line experience of tennis enthusiasts across Ontario, whether they are recreational, social or competitive players... or just fans of the game. It is visually stunning and contains many new and exciting features as well as easy-to-use navigation tools. New features will include bold imaging, updated social media conduits, enhanced video and web streaming capabilities, interactive blogs and surveys, and much more. Be sure to check us out at [www.tennisontario.com](http://www.tennisontario.com) on April 11th and let us know what you think!



As well, we have expanded our Social Media reach through increased use of our Twitter, Instagram and Facebook platforms. The number of followers continues to rise steadily and we plan to get our clubs and players even more engaged through innovative outreach initiatives and contests that will include our partners. We feel strongly that in order to maximize our impact on players, especially our younger members, it is critical that we continually use social media effectively. We'd like to encourage you to visit our social media sites, ask your members to do the same

and friend, follow and tweet us as often as you would like! Let's get social! As well, don't forget to encourage your members to sign up for SPIN our weekly e-newsletter. Information and links to all of our electronic media platforms can be easily found on our website at [www.tennisontario.com](http://www.tennisontario.com).



Next up is the **National Bank Roadshow**. We are entering into our second season with the **National Bank** as the Roadshow's title sponsor. We are looking forward to sending our tennis ambassadors across the province to visit member clubs and community events, adding some fun and excitement to the day's activities. National Bank will again be promoting their **On the Ball** programme, an initiative that has played an active role in

improving the classroom environment for children by donating recovered tennis balls to various school boards and schools across Ontario and Québec to use as chair slippers. Last year saw the bank collect and donate its 1,000,000 ball! The National Bank Roadshow can feature a number of different elements including the **Pizzaville Smash Cage**, (and a second Smash Cage in the Ottawa region), racquet demos, **Raise the Net** physical literacy presentations, Kids Tennis, prizes and more. For more info on how to book a National Bank Roadshow stop at your club, click here, but hurry – dates are filling up fast.

We are pleased to announce the second annual **Tennis Rocks! Festival** will take place May 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> at the Rexall Centre. The event will again be co-hosted by the OTA and the **Inter County Tennis Association**. After a successful launch last year, we hope to make this year's festival bigger and better. The centerpiece of Tennis Rocks! is the **"Junior Team Tennis Championships"**. As well as a different date, the





event will have some format changes designed to increase participation and ramp up the “fun factor”. This year, the junior tournament will be divided into two “one day” events and will include separate girls and boys divisions. Saturday the 23<sup>rd</sup> will see U14 and U18 “rec” teams play in a no elimination full day competition. Sunday the 24<sup>th</sup> will include U14 and U18 Open competition and a new U10 boys and girls combined “Kids Tennis” event, featuring modified courts and/or balls and equipment. The event will again be a non-elimination competition. The festival will also include a host of other activities on Centre court and around the grounds, including skill games, the Pizzaville smash cage, entertainment, prizes, sponsor involvement, hospitality and more. Make sure your club fields a team or two - and be sure to invite all your members to come out and enjoy. Click [www.tennisontario.com/Outreach/TennisRocksFestival](http://www.tennisontario.com/Outreach/TennisRocksFestival) for a Tennis Rocks! Festival overview and for a Junior Team Tennis Champions info package and signup sheet. The deadline to sign up is May 10<sup>th</sup>.

Over the past couple of years, the OTA has offered a service to our member clubs known as Screenscape which featured programming produced by **OTA TV**. The Screenscape system is a virtual TV network that is designed to entertain and inform your members. Beginning this spring there are some significant developments that have made this service even more attractive to clubs. First of all, we have partnered with Tennis Canada and rebranded the service – it is now known as the **Canadian Tennis Network, (CTN)**. Secondly, it is now offered **free of charge** to all member clubs. Finally, the club can now receive the feed via an easy to use Plug & Play device. All your club needs is a flat screen TV and internet wifi. The programming will be available 24 hours a day. Content will be produced by Tennis Canada, OTA TV and will also be “borrowed” from numerous local, national and international tennis content producers. It will feature tennis news and highlights, the latest OTA and Tennis Canada information and periodic live local tournament webcasts. It also allows you to provide up to date **club content** – with the potential to **actually increase club revenues**. To order your device now, or for more information, contact Peter Malcomson, [pmalcomson@tennisontario.com](mailto:pmalcomson@tennisontario.com) 416-504-1102. For a club benefits page, visit [www.tennisontario.com/Marketing/TelevisionNetwork](http://www.tennisontario.com/Marketing/TelevisionNetwork).

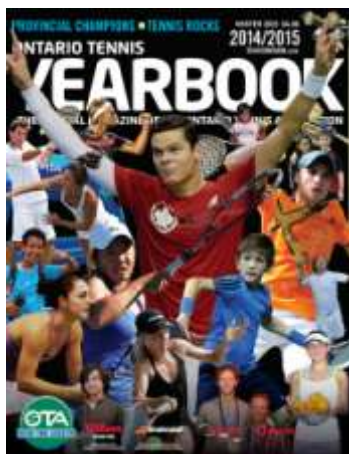


Another initiative we will be launching very shortly is **#GetontheCourt**. #GetontheCourt is a multi-media programme designed to increase awareness of the benefits of playing tennis. Thanks to the aforementioned Digital Strategy grant, the OTA will be producing videos designed to excite both players and non-players, with the end goal of encouraging them to either start playing or to play and enjoy tennis more often. They will appear on social media, TV, CTN and

on the web including [www.tennisontario.com](http://www.tennisontario.com) and our Youtube channel. It will also be made available to other content producers. It is important for all of us in the tennis community in Ontario to capitalize in the increased interest in the sport that Milos, Vasek and Genie have created. Increased participation in tennis will help to keep our clubs healthy. Beyond the TV “spots” the OTA will be introducing #GetontheCourt contests, posters, t-shirts, swag and hopefully, in partnership with a sponsor, a regular #GetontheCourt TV vignette series that can be picked up as programming. Stay tuned for more information shortly.

**The Club OTA cards** are back again this year – we recently sent a supply to your club for distribution to your members – there’s going to be great deals on **Rogers Cup tickets**, **Toronto FC**, **the Merchant of Tennis** - and many other sponsors and partners. This year’s deals will launch May 15th. Thanks in advance for all your help in handing the cards out and encouraging your players to sign up on-line. This year, several of our clubs actually decided to use the Club OTA card as their official member I.D. Watch out for an **app version** of the card soon! As mentioned in previous issues of Tennis Club Connection, if you know of a retailer or business near your club that might be interested in putting an offer on the Club OTA card, get them to contact me.





Finally, our magazine “**Ontario Tennis**” offers the best coverage of the tennis scene in the province. As you are aware, for the first time ever, one of our issues, the Yearbook, was an on-line only edition. We promoted it heavily on our website, on social media and through you, our club network. The on-line format allowed us to produce extra written and pictorial features. Future on-line magazine plans are in the works. We will be printing “hard copies of the magazine for the rest of the year to distribute to your clubs and players homes. Make sure your club is receiving the proper amount of magazines and remember to tell your members that it can also be accessed on-line on our website. I would be interested in your comments pertaining to the idea of expanding the coverage of our magazine on-line. Also...feel free to let us know if your club is having a significant tournament or event – we’ll do our best to cover it. As always, feel free to contact me at [pmalcomson@tennisontario.com](mailto:pmalcomson@tennisontario.com) if you have any questions or comments. **Have a great season!**

**Did You Know...?**

... that Daniel Nestor has been in 6 French Open Men’s Doubles finals – winning 3?

... that the first match ever played at the Rexall Centre Stadium Court was an opening round Rogers Cup match between Andre Agassi and Tommy Haas in 2004?

... that total prize money on the ATP tour will surpass \$100 million for the first time in 2015?

**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, visit [www.tennisontario.com/Client/bios.aspx](http://www.tennisontario.com/Client/bios.aspx)

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