



Issue 15 – Summer Wrap-up 2015

Message from the Executive Director – Jim Boyce

As another summer season is in its twilight it is time to reflect on how fortunate we are in Ontario to have so many tennis clubs, big and small, whose tireless volunteers and staff provide the province's tennis players with a place to enjoy their passion. Several OTA clubs have reached milestones of 50 and even 100 years in existence over the past few years. It took groups of forward thinking citizens to come together and commit to starting a club back in those days. The fact that so many of those clubs still operate and flourish today is a testament to the spirit of volunteers who all have a love of tennis and want to share it with future generations. Many of you who are reading this are those people, so thank you to you all!

Speaking of future generations, I'd like to take this opportunity to say a few words about the OTA's junior competitive structure. Over the past couple of years we have seen a steady growth in the number of junior competitors registering to play OTA sanctioned tournaments. This past outdoor season there was a phenomenal increase in the size and variety of junior events across the province. Thanks to the over 50 clubs and academies who hosted our sanctioned tournaments, we oversaw over 300 separate junior events and recorded over 10,000 junior matches! In particular, there has been a significant increase in the number



of U8, U9 and U10 draws. Since the advent of modified equipment and balls as training tools for young players, there has been a noticeable rise in the competency of our youngsters on court. They now have the confidence to enter tournaments at a young age knowing that their skill set and desire will allow them to compete well. The level of play across all age categories is truly inspirational. Providing a foundation of tournaments starting from Rogers Rookie events right up to the 5 star "Provincials" is an important goal for the OTA. Our juniors won 7 out of 8 national championships this summer and record numbers of graduating juniors are getting tennis scholarships in the US. As well, Ontario junior athletes have had significant success in both national and international competition. Of note, 15 year old **Bianca Andreescu** from Mississauga won the U18



Nationals, several G1 ITF events abroad, reached a ITF Futures Open final and was also a member of the Canadian Junior Fed Cup team, (along with **Vanessa Wong** from Toronto and Charlotte Robillard-Millette from Quebec) that recently placed third. On the boy's side, special mention needs to be made of 15 year old **Denis Shapovalov** from Vaughan who also won the U18 Nationals and went on to an incredible victory at the US Junior Open Doubles tournament with partner Felix Auger-Aliassime from Quebec. If that wasn't enough, Denis then teamed up with Felix and Benjamin Sigouin from BC to capture Canada's first ever Junior Davis Cup!

All of these young athletes started to learn how to compete and win by playing in their province's competitive structure – and that is only possible because clubs like yours open their gates and sacrifice members playing time in order to give these kids a place to compete.

Of course, we are not just focused on our competitive player structure; we are also active in many grass roots initiatives that encourage rec level players to play more and new players to try tennis for the first time. Our outreach team spent the summer visiting clubs and community events across the province via the drop in programme and with the National Bank Roadshow featuring the Pizzaville Smash Cage. We also had a second smash cage covering the Ottawa region in partnership with the NCTA. Speaking of Ottawa, the **Capital Kids** initiative introduced over 1400 children to tennis through free lessons and the Ottawa **Little Aces** league had over 100 players in its summer league.

Finally, I am pleased to report that the OTA was successful in obtaining a new 3 year grant from the Ontario Ministry of Tourism Culture and Sport to run a new programme we call **Freedom 50**. It is a three year initiative designed to encourage people 50 and older to try tennis and/or play more. Freedom 50 will be overseen by **Rick Bertozzi**. Rick has been an active tennis player and ambassador for many years. He is currently the president of the InterCounty Tennis Association and has been a volunteer at various community clubs. More details will follow on Freedom 50 shortly.

Player Development Update – Kartik Vyas

The 2015 outdoor competitive season was the biggest in the history of OTA. There were more events, categories and matches played than ever before. The Ontario Junior Outdoor Provincial Championships were held at several locations across the GTA. The tournament featured some of Ontario's, and Canada's, top players. Over 500 players competed in the U12, U14, U16 and U18 events. This "Outdoor Provincials" are the largest outdoor Provincial Championships in Canada. The singles champions were as follows:



U12 Girls

Champion: Dasha Plekhanova

U12 Boys

Champion: Akhil Malik

U14 Girls

Champion: Ariana Arseneault

U14 Boys

Champion: Liam Draxl

U16 Girls

Champion: Layne Sleeth

U16 Boys

Champion: Liam Draxl

U18 Girls

Champion: Natasha Irani

U18 Boys

Champion: Clarke Wilson

Thanks to host clubs Kew Garden Tennis Club, UTSC, Pine Point Tennis Club, Donalda and the Veneto Tennis Club for hosting this year's tournament. For complete results from this event, click [here](#).

Of course, winning the Provincials is a great accomplishment in itself, but doing well in that event also allows our players to be invited to compete in the Junior Nationals. This summer the OTA sent 109 competitors to clubs across the country to test their skills against players from the rest of Canada. I am proud to report that our juniors won 7 out of the 8 age group singles finals and were represented in all of them. For a look at the results for the Junior Nationals, click [here](#).



As mentioned, this outdoor season had numerous events and record numbers of competitors. We have had notable increases in the U8, U9 and U10 categories. Perhaps the junior tournament with the greatest growth was the Roman Cup in Ottawa. In 2012, the Roman Cup hosted 220 junior competitors. This past summer, that number jumped to over 450! Once again the Rideau Club hosted a lion's share of the matches while also hosting over 100 competitors in the Sporting Life Ontario Open at the same time. Thanks to the Rideau Club for their amazing hospitality and also to the Ottawa Athletic Club for hosting many early round matches.

On the Senior player's front, the 2015 Senior Provincials was again a great success. There were over 220 entries and the level of competition was very high. Thanks to the Bayview Golf and Country Club, the Lambton Golf and Country Club and the Mississauga Golf and Country Club for hosting these tournaments. For complete results, click [here](#).



The OTA is dedicated to improving on an already great competitive structure. Our tournaments, for both junior and adult players, allow competitors to sharpen their skills while enjoying competition at all levels. Canada has had some notable international success at the junior, senior and open levels. Players like Sharon Fichman, Milos Raonic, Gabriella Dabrowski and Peter Polansky, all of whom played numerous OTA tournaments, are paving the way for the next generation of stars, such as Denis Shapovalov, (Junior National Singles Champion, US Junior Open Doubles Champ, member of Canada's Junior Davis Cup Champion team) and Bianca Andreescu (National Junior Singles Champion, 3rd place Junior Fred Cup team member, and finalist at \$25K Gatineau Futures). We believe we are on the right track in terms of providing players with a comprehensive and varied competitive structure at all levels. If you are not already doing so, we would like you to consider hosting an OTA tournament at your club.

Membership and Coaching – Jay Neill

I know I ask this question every year at this time...where has the summer gone? I hope your outdoor season has gone very well at your club! If Mother Nature continues to cooperate, there still will be some good days to play outside before the inevitable happens. As far as OTA programs go, our annual Presidents' Day was again very well attended by club executives. It took place on August 10 at the Rogers Cup at the Aviva Centre in Toronto. More than 200 people enjoyed breakfast followed by some excellent women's tennis. Even afternoon rain wasn't enough to diminish the spirits of those who attended.

As far as coaching certification goes, almost our entire 2015 schedule has now been finalized. Please feel free to let your members know that they can visit [here](#) to view our 2015 schedule. I am now working on the 2016 schedule and will post course levels, dates, locations and other pertinent information once it is finalized. Please keep in mind that 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. Club Presidents were also recently e-mailed information on our Bruce Childs Community Club Awards. Your club may have **one** key member of your executive team who has been doing great work for your club for an extended period of time. If this is the case, the OTA would be happy to provide your club with this award. You could then present that executive member with this certificate of recognition at an activity such as your club's AGM.

Please contact me at jneill@tennisontario.com if you would like to receive this certificate. I would like to close by extending a **big thank you to all of our OTA club volunteers**. The OTA never loses sight of the fact that you are the lifeline of our great sport. Without your tireless work, tennis players wouldn't be able to enjoy the benefits this great sport offers us all!

Provincial Development News – David Lea/Ely Schwartz/Sahaj Jayanth/John Wins-Purdy

The "Tour Clinics" had a very successful season travelling to clubs all over Ontario. The participants tried the latest in Babolat racquet technology, participated in active play drills to improve skills and strategic understanding of both the singles and doubles game, with personal tennis game improvement feedback. A, super active, information packed two hours!

The "Club Drop-in" program gave clubs across Ontario the time to talk and ask questions, getting up dates on the all aspects of the programs delivered by the OTA to its member clubs. This program gives all club members, personal one on one time.



Schools Progressive Tennis Programs, are again available to OTA Clubs, please give, Dave Lea call @ 416-514-1121 to discuss your interest, and to get up-dates, on this massive program.

To learn more about our schools programme, take a look at our Youtube video "OTA Schools Program." – click [here](#).

The OTA in partnership with Wilmington Tennis and Toronto Parks and Rec delivered the **Sunshine Project**, for 300 youth in the North West part of Metro again this year. Funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Canadian Tire Jumpstart and Tennis Canada, Wilmington again offered an after school tennis programme, including 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.



This summer was a great season for the OTA with respect to visiting clubs and community events. Touring around with The National Bank Roadshow, featuring the Pizzaville Smashcage, we visited over 30 clubs and tournaments and also attended events such as the Gravenhurst Parks & Rec. showcase, the Toronto Pride festival, 3 Pan Am Games lead up events in Toronto, the Gentlemen's Expo and the Ontario Open in Ottawa. Now that the fall season is upon us we will renew our focus on our schools programme. If your club would like some assistance with getting involved with local

schools, please contact Ely Schwartz eschwartz@tennisontario.com

As we near the completion of the second year of our Raise the Net programme which delivers information about the National Long Term Athletic Development initiative, we want to remind our clubs that we have made several improvements and additions to our Club Strong material. All of the information that was formerly on a Google Docs platform has been migrated to our new website. Note for Member Clubs: Beginning Member Clubs can now access CLUBSTRONG by logging in through www.tennisonario.com. If you require log-on information, contact jjoseph@tennisontario.com.



At this time we would also like to introduce our new Raise the Net Project Manager **Ziad Halabi**. Ziad comes to us from Tennis Canada where he interned in the Player Development department. He organized Rogers Rookie Tour events, Future Stars events, Little Aces Centre Court Walkout at Rogers Cup and the 2015 University National Championships. Ziad graduated from Durham College in 2015 with a degree in Sports Management is an avid tennis player and certified Tennis Instructor from Tennis Canada. Please feel free to contact Ziad at zhalabi@tennisontario.com with any inquiries about Raise the Net or to book an event at your club.

Ottawa Update



The Ottawa region had a very busy spring and summer tennis season. The **Capital Kids** program ran at 7 different locations across the city this year from the beginning of May until the end of August. Our coaching staff of 7 Head Coaches and over 10 youth instructors and a handful of volunteers delivered lessons using progressive tennis nets, balls and racquets for kids age 6-12. Overall, close to 1,400 kids participated in the program, all of which either took 1 or 2 months of lessons, 1-2 per week. Capital Kids provides free lessons and equipment

for kids 6 to 12 in city parks across Ottawa. A new Tennis Development Centre was set up at Carleton with 35 kids participating – ½ of those kids came from the Capital Kids programme.

Little Aces had another great season. 4 different locations ran leagues including at Carleton, Barrhaven TC, Craig Henry TC and the Boys and Girls Club. Approximately 100 kids took part and there will also be fall leagues at Carleton, TCWO and Rideau TC.

The NCTA region has a very busy summer competitive structure with 22 **Future Star** events for the season. Additionally, there were also 10 different events in the U12 – U18 categories – with an event virtually every weekend from of the summer.

We participated in 10 **NCTA Smash Cage** events at clubs around the region this summer. Thanks to Kunstadt Sports for helping us out with this. If you'd like to book a smash cage event for next year or even over the winter if space permits, contact John Wins-Purdy, john.winspurdy@gmail.com. For more info on tennis in the Ottawa area, click [here](#).

Communications and Marketing – Peter Malcomson

The OTA Marketing had an incredibly busy summer this year. Several new initiatives were undertaken and existing programmes expanded and enhanced. There was a concerted effort to enhance our digital platforms including the re-launch of the OTA website, the attainment of more followers on social media platforms and creating and accumulating content for our Youtube channel OTATV1. As well we published 2 issues of Ontario Tennis magazine. Below is an overview of several of the initiatives we executed this summer.

#GetontheCourt

Marketing launched a new campaign - **#GetontheCourt**. A 30 second television spot was created and aired on Sportsnet1 during several ATP and WTA telecasts. It was also posted on the OTA TV Youtube channel, (click [here](#) to view), placed on our Canadian Television Network and linked through OTA social media. As well as the commercial, the OTA ran a #GetontheCourt social media photo contest, with the winner receiving a free one hour lesson on Centre Court at the AVIVA Centre with Rob Steckley, Lucie Safarova's coach. It will take place in the spring of 2016. Click [here](#) to see promotional video.



Mini Rogers Cup



Rogers approached the OTA, (through Tennis Canada), to execute the first ever mini Rogers Cup. The sponsorship included approximately 30 regional club level team tournaments and led to a finals day at Mayfair Parkway August 1. 60 children participated in the finals. Rogers Sportsnet came out to film the event and developed a spot which ran on TV and in the stadium, (click [here](#) to view) The winning boys and girls teams, as well as the finalists,

were invited to the Pizzaville suite at the Rogers Cup and played on Centre court prior to the evening session. The winning teams also each received a \$500 RESP from National Bank. As well, there was a publicity event which included Breakfast Television as well as appearances by Milos Raonic and Genie Bouchard. The OTA was asked to get 25 kids on-site to participate in the event. The entire promotion went well and Rogers is interested in executing it again in 2016. Make sure your club gets involved!



Rogers Cup



The OTA again had a booth and hospitality suites at the Rogers Cup. The OTA hosted guests at their suite in seven sessions. Booth visits were steady throughout the 9 days – particularly on the opening weekend – the OTA distributed 12,500 tickets to clubs for family weekend. The opening weekend was extremely successful for the OTA – many families visited the booth to find out how to start playing tennis, join a club, etc. We had OTA TV playing on the TV screen, information was disseminated on Raise the Net and the #GetontheCourt photo contest. Approximately 2,000 OTA magazines were distributed as well. There were approximately 7,500 exposures at the booth.

National Bank Roadshow

In this, our second season running the **National Bank Roadshow**, our ambassadors visited over 50 clubs and community events. National Bank continued to promote 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. The National Bank Roadshow featured 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, prizes and more. We are already booking dates for next season so feel free to contact us to book a date



Tennis Rocks Festival



The second annual **Tennis Rocks! Festival** was held May 23rd at the Aviva Centre. The event was co-hosted by the OTA and the **Inter County Tennis Association**. The centerpiece of Tennis Rocks! is the “**Junior Team Tennis Championships**”. This year there were 33 teams from around the province playing in a friendly competitive environment. Everyone went away with a prize. Other activities, including skill games, the Pizzaville Smash Cage, prize giveaways and Pizzaville hospitality took place on Centre court and around the grounds. We will be announcing details for next year’s festival shortly so stay tuned.

Canadian Tennis Network

As mentioned in our last issue of TCC, the OTA partnered with Tennis Canada to form the **Canadian Tennis Network, (CTN)**; a virtual TV network that is designed to entertain and inform your members. It has been offered **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. Several of our clubs took advantage of the system and have it running at their club – some have even sold local advertising on it. 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. We are in the process of enhancing the delivery and content of CTN and would like you to consider it for your club. To order CTN for your club or for more information, contact Peter Malcomson at pmalcomson@tennisontario.com or call 416-504-1102. For a club benefits page, visit www.tennisontario.com/Marketing/TelevisionNetwork.



CLUB OTA



The OTA distributed over 20,000 **Club OTA cards** again this season. 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 soft launched an “**app version**” of the card in partnership with Love Courts. Now, a member can go to the app store and download a unique Club Card app. Next season, the plan is to offer the app as an alternative to printed version of the card to those clubs that would prefer a digital version. More information on next year’s launch will be available shortly. 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 published 2 issues of “**Ontario Tennis**” magazine this summer and fall. As always, it is also available on-line on our website. 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. We are currently discussing editorial and design direction for the 2016 editions so feel free to let us know if your club is having a significant tournament or event, or if you have any other editorial content that you might think significant. – we’ll do our best to cover it. 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, we’d love to know about them. As always, feel free to contact me at pmalcomson@tennisontario.com if you have any questions or comments.



Did You Know...?

... that Canada became the 13th country to win the Junior Davis Cup with its win this year?

... that Jimmy Connors was the only player to win the US Open on 3 surfaces; grass, clay and hard court?

... that tennis was a sport in the first modern Olympics in 1896?

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 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 . For a staff directory, visit www.tennisontario.com/Client/bios.aspx

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