

ADVANTAGE

Official Newsletter of the USTA/PNW Tennis Officials Organization
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Notes From The Editor

By Dave Muhich



Greetings everyone! I hope you all have been having a great summer so far (even though the weather is only now starting to feel like summer for those of us in Seattle ☺). Included in this month's newsletter are 2 articles from Sheila Banks and Barb Farnsworth, who both recently attended the USTA National Chair Academy in Hilton Head, SC. This training session, which is run by the USTA Officiating National Office, provides a great opportunity to learn chair umpire technique from the best chair umpires in the world. If interested in learning more about this school, please contact John Rodenberg.

As I look ahead to the remaining events in the PNW this summer, there is still plenty of great tennis ahead of us, including the PNW Open, WA State Open, and Odium Brown Vancouver Open, which recently released an entry list that includes former Top 20 players Sebastien Grosjean and Xavier Malisse. I hope that all of you are able to get out and see some of the best tennis to be seen in our neck of the woods over the coming few weeks, and to those of you working or attending the Odium Brown in a couple weeks, please track me down in the officials' room and say hello...I am always eager to meet my fellow PNW officials and hear your stories. See you on the courts!

National Chair Academy: An Amazing Learning Experience.

By Sheila Banks

How many times can one say, "What an amazing leaning experience" and "to be taught by the very best" and yet those are the words that keep coming as I describe my experience during the National Chair Academy in Hilton Head, South Carolina in late May.

When I learned of my selection, I immediately contacted Dave Muhich who had attended the National Chair Academy two years prior and was invaluable in preparing me for this experience. He pointed out that this would be an **ULTIMATE CHALLENGE AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITY**, as we would not only be in the Chair at a Women's Professional 10K event, but responsible for calling all the lines as well.



The first session was off court and here we learned technique from Rich Kauffman, USTA Director of Officials, Lois Huggins, USTA Chair of Officials, and Woodie Walker, who all have had years of chair

experience at major events throughout the world. The first full day was spent in the chair for a total of 4 games during a noncompetitive match, after which we were mentored by Steve Ulrich and Norm Crist, who always delivered that feedback to us with a positive approach.

Each of the 20 attendees then had an opportunity to chair four complete matches during the remainder of the week, with more comments from Steve, Rich or Lois following each match. Here it is critical to be able to accurately evaluate your performance, as it is only by recognizing mistakes as well as improvements that one can become a better chair official. This was definitely the time to be humble.

At the end of the day, being able to see the calls will become easier with more actual chair experience. We learned to get ahead of the call, eyes must become still, and then "trust your gut" on the close calls - you know it works.

I would also recommend a minimum of three years of ITA chair experience before attending the Chair Academy as this will offer you the opportunity to "build on your experience" rather than building while there.

Thanks again Dave for helping to prepare me for this amazing learning experience.

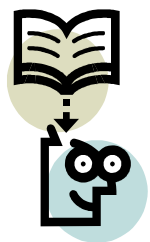
Editor's Note: You are more than welcome Sheila. I'm glad to see that you had as great an experience at the academy as I did.

National Chair Academy

By Barb Farnsworth

When I decided to join the ranks of Professional Tennis Officials five years ago, it never occurred to me that I would be sitting here watching a Wimbledon match between Roger Federer and Leyton Hewitt and I would KNOW THE UMPIRE of that match. Yes, Norm Crist is the official on this match and less than a month ago, I was receiving instruction from him, along with countless others. How lucky can one be to have that opportunity? And all because I asked...

The opportunity to attend the National Chair Academy came as a surprise to me. Living in Spokane makes it quite a challenge to climb the "ladder of advancement" in the tennis officiating world. However, my willingness to attend clinics, travel to officiating opportunities and ask questions when I didn't understand something have helped my advancement immensely. And let me tell you, it has been well worth the effort.



When I started officiating tennis, I had already officiated volleyball for 30 years. However, tennis is a different animal, and I have found our Northwest Tennis Officiating organization to be of immeasurable help. From John Rodenberg, our leader and the person who really has helped me be on track, to my mentor, Ivar Hussa, to Tony Anegon and Carl Bergquist, our assignors who provide us opportunities to work to our fellow umpires, everywhere you look, there are people to help you advance and become a better umpire. All you have to do is ask and learn.

From the first tennis meeting I attended, I thought it would be so much fun to attend Chair School. It took me a couple years to get comfortable officiating college matches and being in the chair, but once that happened, I REALLY wanted to attend Chair School so I could improve more. Every time we had a meeting, I asked John Rodenberg how I could do that. Every year, he would tell me I just needed to keep getting experience and it would happen. Sure enough, this year I applied (which one does online at the USTA website, with a recommendation from your Board Chair) and was accepted, along with Sheila Banks (another of our experienced and wonderful NW tennis officials). To say I was excited would be an understatement...

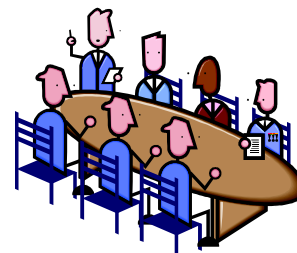
Traveling to the National Chair Academy in Hilton Head, SC was exciting. I re-read the chair information and the rulebook several times, trying to prepare so I could make the Northwest proud.

However, nothing can really prepare you for being a Chair in a professional match. We watched our teachers and mentors, Rich Kauffman, Lois Huggins, Woodie Walker, Steve Ulrich and Norm Crist, all who have years and years of experience at the top level of tennis, took as many notes as we could, worked our matches and received our feedback. I have never been given the opportunity to learn so much in such a short amount of time. I emerged from the Chair Academy a much more confident and skilled Chair Umpire. It is an opportunity I will be forever thankful for and would hope many more of our officials from the Pacific Northwest would get to experience. All you have to do is work hard to prepare yourself, and then ask...

PNW Officials' Committee

By John Rodenberg

Your PNW Officials' Committee is back up to its full numbers. Those committee members are:



- Bill Haskin, OR, Southern Oregon USTA Assignor
- Carl Bergquist, WA, Western Washington USTA Assignor
- Dave Muhich, WA, Newsletter Editor
- Ira Moss, WA, Washington Shadow Assignor and Tennis Times Column Writer
- John Costic, OR, Oregon Shadow Assignor
- Lois Ker, BC, Tennis BC Director and BC USTA Assignor, Member of Sub Committee for Complaint/Discipline
- Perry Hines, OR, Northern Oregon USTA Assignor, Northern Oregon ITA Assignor, PNW Sectional Trainer/Evaluator
- Reini Vanderheyd, WA, Supplies Coordinator
- Sam Sambrano, WA, Recruiting and Diversity Coordinator, Member of Sub Committee for Complaint/Discipline
- Steve Halberg, OR, UO ITA Assignor
- Tony Anegon, ID, Vice Chair, Eastern Washington ITA Assignor, Chair of Sub Committee for Complaint/Discipline
- Victor Kollock, WA, New Officials Applications and Class Coordinator, Data Base Administrator
- John Rodenberg, WA, Chair, National Officials' Committee Member, UW ITA Assignor

If you have an interest in assisting or learning what any of these volunteers do, please contact me.

ADVANTAGE is the Official Newsletter of the PNW-USTA Officials Organization. **John Rodenberg**, Contributing Editor and **Dave Muhich**, Managing Editor. Send comments to tennisracq@wa.net and davemu21@hotmail.com. **We're** committed to deliver you the "ADVANTAGE" when it comes to officiating in the PNW Section.