



After School Tennis

Every day, the USTA and its partners help kids learn not just the sport of tennis, but self-confidence, sportsmanship, and the habits of an active, healthy lifestyle. Promoting and developing after school tennis opportunities for all students is a top priority for the USTA because:

- Every child should have the opportunity to engage in healthy, lifelong activities in a safe and supportive environment with their peers.
- "Playing tennis is an excellent way to engage kids in regular physical activity to help them live longer, healthier lives." - American Heart Association
- High-quality after school programs keep children safe and produce life-changing, lasting benefits, including healthier lifestyles, improved social skills, and enhanced academic performance.
- Giving students the opportunity to be on a team with friends and representing their school can provide a positive and memorable experience that will benefit them long into adulthood.
- Participating on a school team creates well rounded students, develops leadership and teaches responsibility, discipline, teamwork and cooperation---skills every student should be encouraged to develop.
- Tennis players score higher in vigor, optimism, and self-esteem, and lower in depression, anger, confusion, anxiety and tension than other athletes and non-athletes. (Dr. J. Finn and colleagues, South Connecticut University)
- Teens who do not participate in after school programs are nearly three times more likely to skip classes than teens who do participate. They are also three times more likely to use marijuana or other drugs, and they are more likely to drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes and engage in sexual activity. (YMCA, USA, March 2001)

Everything you need to get started

The USTA has created an extensive package of resources to make starting a tennis program easy and enjoyable for after school program providers and organizers. Gaining basic tools for organizing and/or conducting tennis programs can be as easy as visiting www.usta.com/schools. You can access a downloadable school tennis organizer kit, materials on best practices, games, activities, coaching tips, practice plans and match formats.



Game Plan for After School Tennis Programs

Offering a team tennis program is the best way to attract students and it allows them to play tennis with friends in a safe and healthy environment. No previous tennis experience is required for program organizers or coaches and the USTA can help with training, funding, and start-up materials. Furthermore, for locations that do not have access to tennis courts, the league can be played on blacktops, cement multi-purpose courts, or gymnasium floors using modified court boundaries, transition tennis balls, and makeshift nets.

Similar to other organized youth sports, fees should be charged to ensure the program will be self-sufficient. Fees can include the cost of a racquet and transition ball for each child, t-shirts, awards, fliers, team photos, site fees, administration, insurance, etc. For in-depth information on USTA Junior Team Tennis and National Junior Tennis League program offerings, contact your local USTA Section office.

Key action steps for getting after school tennis programming underway:

1. Identify schools that will feed into the after school program.
2. Create a flyer promoting the after school team tennis program and host a registration/kickoff event.
3. Recruit parents and volunteers to serve as organizers, coaches, and site leaders.
4. Acquire some basic training - this can be as easy as visiting www.usta.com for downloadable coaching tips, practice plans and match formats. USTA Recreational Coaches Workshop are also available for rookie coaches and organizers to learn fast and easy ways to introduce tennis to children. Workshop dates and locations are available at www.usta.com/rcw.
5. Get to know the P.E. teachers, parents, and personnel of the schools and distribute information.
 - a. Offer to assist with P.E. classes (demonstrate short court tennis or portions of the new school curriculum*)
 - b. Conduct an assembly and promote the kickoff event/registration day
 - c. Host a field trip for schools at your facility
 - d. Attend monthly/quarterly parent teacher meetings (if offered)
 - e. *Assist with a USTA School Tennis Teacher Training
6. Conduct the registration/kickoff event and begin the season!

**For maximum results, it is recommended that each school contacted be involved with the USTA School Tennis Program, which offers teacher training, user-friendly lesson plans, and equipment loans to schools. Kids are introduced to tennis in the P.E. classes, which transition into the local Junior Team Tennis League and/or NJTL/After-School program.*



For more information on local USTA support including training, grants, and access to discounted equipment for after school programs contact your section school's coordinator. Information available at: www.usta.com