

What is Tennis Advocacy and Why is it Important?

Advocacy for tennis involves taking our knowledge and passion for tennis and connecting it to the needs of communities, schools, colleges and local governments. Advocacy is the ability to demonstrate to decision-makers how tennis programs can benefit the community.

This handbook is one of several tools from the USTA and other industry organizations that can help you succeed in engaging with public and private-sector decision-makers in support of tennis at the local level. This engagement will help to harness the public support and resources needed to expand the availability and quality of tennis facilities and programming like yours.

The sport of tennis can be an important part of improving communities, schools, the health of individuals and the quality of life for all. As members of the tennis family, we know how this sport can make a difference in people's lives. As advocates for tennis, our mission is to convince decision-makers in the public, private and non-profit sectors of this to gain their support.

ABOUT THE USTA

The United States Tennis Association (USTA) is the national governing body for the sport of tennis in the United States and the leader for promoting and developing the growth of tennis at every level, from local communities to the highest level of the professional game. A not-for-profit organization with more than 620,000 members, the USTA invests 100 percent of its proceeds into growing the game. It owns and operates the USTA National Campus at Lake Nona, in Orlando, Fla., and the US Open, one of the highest-attended annual sporting events in the world, held at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in Flushing Meadows, N.Y.



The Case for Tennis

Decision-makers in a community are presented with many athletic and non-athletic options in which to invest. As an advocate for tennis, you need to be able to convince others that tennis is an important option. You need to answer this basic question for them: Why tennis?

The answer should not focus solely on tennis as a game. Your message needs to convey how tennis facilities and programs can help solve public problems. Focus on how the sport can improve schools and the community, provide opportunities for youth, spur economic development and improve the quality of life for all residents.

In this section, you will find ideas, tips and assistance to help develop a tennis message that will convey the great role tennis plays in building a better community.

START WITH THE FACTS

You may be presenting to an audience with little or no tennis experience. Some people may have preconceived notions about the sport, such as tennis is hard to access, expensive to play and only found at country clubs.

Fact: More than 70% of all tennis is played inexpensively at public facilities.

Fact: Tennis has historically been a core program for public parks and recreation departments.

Fact: Tennis is a sport that can be learned at a young age and, unlike other sports, played for a lifetime, appealing across all age demographics.

Fact: Tennis is one of the few sports in which you can have three generations being active and playing together, making it attractive to families as well as facilities that seek to create recreational opportunities that appeal across the demographic spectrum.

BENEFITS OF TENNIS

For any tennis advocacy campaign, the general and wide-ranging benefits of the sport will be a central part of achieving your success. Here are a few benefits for players at any age to stress in your presentation:

- Stronger bones
- Reduced stress
- Cardiovascular fitness
- Weight loss
- New relationships

Younger players enjoy many benefits beyond physical activity:

- Teamwork
- Social skills and sportsmanship
- Coordination, agility and balance
- Strategic thinking and problem solving
- Self-confidence

PHYSICAL HEALTH

Tennis is ideal for long-term health benefits. It is the only sport where a person can be an active participant from age 3 to 103. The Cleveland Clinic has called tennis “an ideal sport for a healthy heart.” In fact, playing tennis just 3 hours per week can reduce your risk of heart disease by 56%. A nine-year study of 80,306 British adults, average age 52, reported tremendous benefits for tennis players:

- Risk of death from all causes: 47% lower among those who played racquet sports
- Risk of death from heart disease or stroke: 56% lower among racquet sports players

Tennis players live longer. A Mayo Clinic study of 8,577 Americans over the age of 25 found that playing tennis can extend your life by nearly 10 years, more than three times longer than running:

- Tennis: 9.7 years
- Badminton: 6.2 years
- Soccer: 4.7 years
- Cycling: 3.7 years
- Swimming: 3.4 years
- Running: 3.2 years
- Calisthenics: 3.1 years
- Health club activities: 1.5 years

SOCIAL HEALTH

The vast majority of organized tennis is played as a team sport: adult leagues, middle and high school teams, Division 1-3 collegiate tennis, Tennis on Campus, and Junior Team Tennis.

Tennis creates a network of friends who socialize beyond the court; this is vital today as technology often isolates people. For children and students, tennis teaches important life lessons about working together and working as a team.

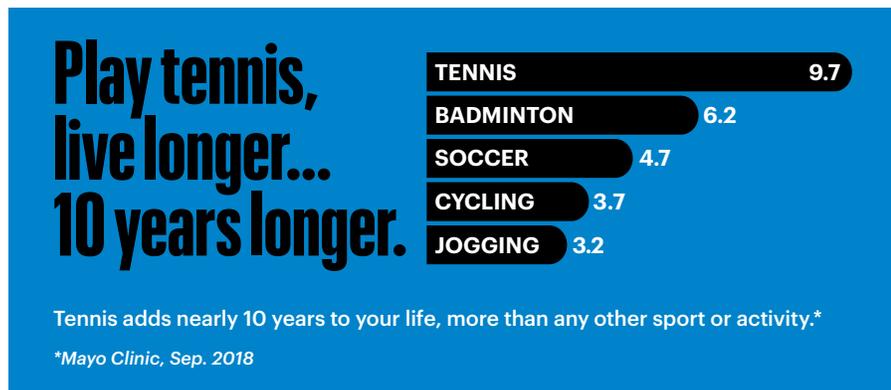
MENTAL HEALTH

Because tennis helps deal with physical, mental, social and emotional challenges, the sport is ideal for helping participants cope with stress. When playing tennis, challenges are ever-present, so individuals become problem-solvers on the fly. From alertness to tactical thinking, tennis helps keep the brain agile and young, and helps to relieve tension.

INCLUSIVE SPORT

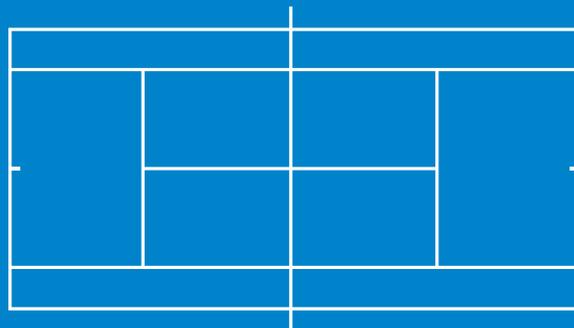
Tennis is an inclusive sport. Advocating for tennis in your community can help increase participation in the sport from both under-resourced and under-represented populations. The USTA's Diversity, Equity & Inclusion strategy is designed to grow and promote our sport to the next generation—and future generations—of fans, players and volunteers. The USTA is removing barriers and creating opportunities wherever it can so that tennis becomes a true reflection of all of America.

Tennis is a game that can be adapted for any mental, physical or emotional ability. There are more than 200 active adaptive programs that welcome and support athletes of all ability levels across the U.S. Tennis is therapeutic for individuals dealing with post-traumatic stress or other mental health issues, stroke survivors, and those on the



Top 10 Reasons to Play Tennis

THE SPORT FOR A LIFETIME



Your Body

GET FIT

Lose Weight, Burn Calories
An hour of singles play can burn 580–870 calories.

According to Oja, et al, Brit J Sports Med, 2016

LIVE LONGER

Playing just 3 hours/week will reduce your risk of heart disease 56%.

According to a 2016 Harvard University study

STRENGTHEN HEART, MUSCLES, AND BONES

Compared to other sports, tennis players have the lowest incidence of cardiovascular disease.

40-year study conducted by Johns Hopkins University

DEVELOP HAND-EYE COORDINATION

Playing tennis involves several skills that all contribute to good hand-eye coordination. You can improve your agility, balance, coordination, reaction time and more.



Your Life

ENJOY FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Great for the whole family no matter what your age. With minimal equipment needed and plenty of courts nearby, it's easy to bring a friend or find one on the courts.

DEVELOP TEAMWORK AND SPORTSMANSHIP

From doubles play to team and league play, tennis develops your ability to communicate and work together.

IMPROVE SOCIAL SKILLS

Tennis outperforms all other sports in developing positive personality characteristics.

According to a study by Dr. Jim Gavin at Concordia University



Your Brain

REDUCE STRESS

Tennis helps you deal with physical, mental, social, and emotional challenges which increases your capacity to deal with stress.

INCREASE BRAIN POWER

From alertness to tactical thinking, tennis enhances the neural connections in your brain. Kids who play tennis regularly get better grades.

According to a 2013 USTA study

LEARN TO SOLVE PROBLEMS

Tennis is a sport that is based on evaluating angles, geometry and physics to get best result, which translates into better problem-solving off the court.

In the late 1990s, several experts proposed that tennis, since it requires alertness and tactical thinking, may generate new connections between nerves in the brain and promote a lifetime of continuing brain development. This was supported in John Ratey's book "Spark." Ratey was quoted in USA Today as saying, "A heart-thumping game of tennis can keep the brain in top shape."

Tennis is Fun! Get Started Today!

Let tennis add years to your life — and life to your years!
Go to USTA.com to find a place to play!