

2023 Northeast MS Area Director's Report
Prepared by: Mark Robbins

Juniors

- JTT participation was up 25% in 2023 (320 participants) compared to 2022 (255 participants).
- Ready to Rally was up 9% in 2023 (198 participants) compared to 2022 (181 participants).
- Junior Team Tennis: 320
 - Spring: 52
 - Summer: 179
 - Fall: 89
- Ready to Rally Beginner Programs: 198
- The NECTA gave out \$20 per summer JTT player to each player's high school tennis booster club. The CTA also gave \$5 per player to JTT captains for spring, summer, and fall seasons. In total, the NECTA gave out \$5,180 in tennis booster club payments and captain incentives.
- Ready to Rally beginner programs were offered in every county in our area.

Adults

- Adult league participation was up 13% in 2023 (1,615 participants) compared to 2022 (1,428 participants). We had numerous non-sanctioned leagues and tournaments in 2023 where the numbers were not included in the USTA counts.
- Bubble League 2023 (Jan - Feb 2023 - 166 participants)
- Wings and Strings Tournament (April 2023 - 82 Participants)
- Doubles Ladder League (Spring-Early Summer 2023) 134 participants
- Adult Singles Ladder League (Fall 2023 - 62 participants)
- Junior Singles Ladder League (Fall 2023 - 31 participants)
- Joes and Pros Tournament (October 2023 - 60 participants)

Facility Upgrades

- The Blue Spring Park at Belmont and BNA Park in New Albany resurfaced their courts in 2023.
- The city of Amory's courts were damaged by the tornado in March 2023 and are in the process of being restored.
- Iuka has completed a multi-sport complex that includes two indoor courts.

East Central Area Director's Report:

- Our last two MTA Volunteer of the Year Award winners are from Webster County, Rob Turner last year and Randee Jernigan this year.
- Rob and Randee have combined to coordinate and grow USTA Jr Team Tennis in the area, produce over 100 USTA members (from Webster County alone). They coordinate the entire Golden Triangle USTA Jr Team Tennis League, which also has teams from Kosciusko, Starkville, Columbus, New Hope, West Point.
- For the second consecutive year, Rob Turner hosted a "College Showcase" for the area high school tennis players, with the event being in Webster County. Rob invited college coaches from around the state to this event, which serves as a recruiting showcase event and opportunity to connect players to colleges. My granddaughter Kayleigh Griffin attended and later signed with one of the colleges.
- Sylvia Viljoen of Kosciusko won a scholarship to get certified by PTR (Professional Tennis Registry). Sylvia started a new Ready to Rally program and new Jr Team Tennis teams in Kosciusko.
- Starkville CTA and Starkville Community Foundation are collaborating to raise funds to resurface the Starkville High School Tennis courts and will soon reach their goal. They are advocating with the school and city to NOT convert those tennis courts to Pickleball courts OR have Pickleball lines.
- Vanessa Shaffer, high school coach in Starkville, taught a Tennis Apprentice class in Starkville for Adults with thirty new players. Vanessa is also involved with securing grant funding to get Starkville High's courts resurfaced.
- Vanita Phinisey, president of the Golden Triangle NJTL, won the Special Event of the Year Award for her "Battle of the States" tournament in Columbus. Vanita is also successfully running one of the state's best NJTL's out of Columbus High School.
- The Men's and Women's tennis teams have been in full swing at Mississippi State University.

After multiple calls and emails, I was unable to contact Julie Tompkins or Billy Gips for additional information.

Submitted by,



John S. Brown
East Central Area Director

MTA Area Director Report – Jackson Area

Annual Meeting January 17, 2023

Submitted by Oscar de Leon Area Director

In 2023, the Jackson area held the following adult league tennis programs:

- **Adult Spring**
- **Adult Mixed**
- **Adult Tri-Level**
- **Adult Combo**
- **Adult Singles League**
- **Adult EKOLU League**

Adult Spring League participation showed a slight decline from 2022. The total number of participants in 2022 was 2030, and total number of participants in 2023 was 1924, a percentage decrease of 5.2%.

Participation for the different adult leagues is provided below, with percentage changes over 2022 levels provided. Tri-Level and Combo leagues showed slight increases while Mixed and Singles leagues had reduced numbers.

	2022	2023	% change
Adult Mixed	788	710	-9.8%
Adult Tri-Level	832	855	3.2%
Adult Combo	1639	1670	1.9%
Adult Singles League	314	242	-22.3%
Adult EKOLU League	(no play)	198	
Ladies Day League	45	202	
Cathead Corporate	(no play)	207	
Team Singles Tournament	6	38	

Social Leagues:

Tri-County Triples	3
Fertile Ground Points and Pints	52
Brandon/Castlewood's Tennis Apprentice	34
Brandon Tennis Apprentice	1
Castlewood's Rookie League	27

Overall there was an 6.7% increase in adult participants among all the league offerings.

Total Adult Participants	5722	6103
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Jackson had strong representation in state and national tournaments. 3 separate groups represented Mississippi at Nationals, that were held in Orlando and Scottsdale AZ.

This group included;

Virginia Walcott	- 4.5	55's
Bradley Fulton	- 3.0	18's
Emily Nunnelly	- 5.0	18's

The Tri- County Junior Team Tennis program also had another strong year with a total of 1370 players participating in Ready to Rally (RTR), Junior Team Tennis (JTT) and Team Challenges (TC). This was a slight 3.7% increase from 2022 participation.

Participant breakdown follows:

RTR	257 Participants	14 Locations
JTT	638 Participants	67 Teams
TC	475 Participants	

In other news:

Tri-County- National Junior Tennis & Learning

The National Junior **Tennis** and Learning (NJTL) network offers youth development to organizations that offer free or low-cost **tennis** and education programming. The program provides instruction, equipment, and resources for scholarship programs. There are 5 NJTL Chapters that exist within the Tri-County area:

- Friends of Battlefield Park NJTL - Venecca Green
- Ace 2 Deuce NJTL - Lupercal Jones
- Jackson Community Tennis Project NJTL - Neal Robinson
- Toss n Serve Tennis NJTL - Akeelah Sartin
- Operation Reach NJTL - Tasha Myers

This is the largest number of chapters and participants Tri-County has ever had.

Pinebelt Area Director Report
Mindi Selman
Year End 2023

Lamar County has two new tennis court projects underway. The first is a joint venture between Lamar County School District, The City of Hattiesburg, and the Lamar County Board of Supervisors. Eight tennis courts, along with eight pickleball courts were recently completed off of Warrior Drive in Hattiesburg. While the courts, fencing, and lighting are complete and ready for play, the parking lot and bathroom facilities are still in the building phase. For the time being, plans to build a clubhouse and public restrooms are on hold; however, portable buildings will serve as temporary substitutes until additional funding can be secured. Weather permitting, the complex is planning to open by the end of February 2024, just in time for the spring high school and USTA League seasons. The second Lamar County tennis project is located in Sumrall. Dirt work is finally underway for eight hard tennis courts with expected completion of courts, decks, and a clubhouse to be no later than July 1, 2024.

On November 1, 2023, Kamper Park reopened to players after undergoing renovations which included new lighting, new overlay, and new nets and windscreens. The number of tennis courts was reduced to four to allow for the addition of four pickleball courts.

Canebrake Country Club opened their new tennis and pickleball facility with eight hard courts and four clay courts on December 26, 2023. While this facility is private, it will host USTA league matches and tournaments and will free up use of public courts during prime time high school and league usage.