

USTA Mississippi Mid-Year President's Report

2025 Year End

Submitted by David Kimball, President

- USTA MS Staff has hosted 3 “Red Ball Prize Money” events, one with pros in conjunction with the Annual Meeting/MS Pros Convention, and one before the 18&Over League Championship targeting League Championship participants. USTA MS also has two “Red Ball Beginner Bash” tournaments scheduled in July.
- Partnering with Junior/Community College tennis programs to host a “JUCO WTN Tournament Series,” where each participating college will host a WTN tournament on their campus. This series will give us tournaments in new places, give junior players an opportunity to play college players, and give college coaches the opportunity to scout juniors and get them on campus.
- The national award winning “Tennis for Fun” Adaptive tennis program in Hattiesburg sent 3 participants to the Special Olympics, with one of their participants winning a gold medal in his division.
- Continued to pilot the Scala USTA Flex App, bringing Flex Leagues into 7 new markets in 2025 (Hattiesburg, Laurel, Meridian, Columbus, Greenwood, Greenville, Cleveland) with Vicksburg and Starkville set to come on board in 2026.
- Created a “Tennis Industry Openings” webpage on the USTA MS website to house all tennis industry related job postings in one place (tennis pro job openings, college and high school coaching openings, etc)
- Pledged nearly \$60,000 to public facilities across the state through USTA Mississippi's Facility Grant.
- Did a marketing promotion in all 8 adult local league areas, highlighting the players in each area that played in the most USTA League tennis matches in 2024. One winner in each area was named, and they all received one can of balls for each USTA match they played in 2024.
- Vanita Phinisey's Golden Triangle NJTL was selected to take part in the Net Generation On Court Experience at the US Open, where they will take 24 kids to the US Open to play on the court before the opening match on August 26.
- Meridian CTA was one of only six sites selected in the US (and only the 2nd in the Southeast) to host a US Open Family Day, an event similar to a National Tennis Month event.
- Held our first ever “USTA Mississippi Fall Leadership Summit” in October, which was highlighted by a Board meeting, CTA & NJTL Leadership Workshop, a Pros Workshop, an Adult Local League Coordinator Workshop, a Red Ball Prize Money Tournament, and an Adaptive Coaches Workshop.
- Elected Terrie Gooch of Columbus and Walker Sahag of Madison as the inductees into the 2025 Mississippi Tennis Hall of Fame

USTA Mississippi Treasurer's Report
Allen Hudspeth
January 31, 2026

2025 Budget Overview

- Looking at the 2025 total budget, we exceeded revenue expectations slightly. The increase in revenues was due primarily to some grant funding that ended up not being spent during the year. We also did not send anyone to the USTA National meetings in 2025 resulting in a big, budgeted expense savings. The absence of participants this past year was due to scheduling conflicts and other reasons. Actual payroll expenses were down in relation to what was budgeted for the year due to not having a Marketing person on staff for 3.5 months.
- Overall snapshot of 2025, we exceeded budgeted income by \$12,180.74 and actual expenses were under budget by \$107,318.52. Based on the budgeted income deficit of \$16,024, our net operating income for the year was \$103,475.26.

Investments

- Our investment accounts continue to perform well. We saw 12.8% growth on the equity's investment account with a reported balance of \$1,678,905.95 as of 12/31/25. The fixed income accounts made up of primarily CD's and annuities grew by 4% for the year. The fixed income portfolio balance as of 12/31/25 was \$805,436.50. Our total portfolio investments balance at 12/31/25 was \$2,484,342.45. The asset allocation of our portfolio currently is right at 68% in equity's and 32% on fixed income. We will continue to monitor our investments to make sure we are in line with our policy and will look at other USTA organization investment policies to see if we might need to make any changes that would be beneficial.

2026 Proposed Budget

- Back in November we had our budget meeting, and we went through each revenue and expense item line by line. Based on our meeting, we are proposing no major budget changes for the year and as was the case in the 2025 budget, we are budgeting a deficit of \$16,839. Revenue and expense numbers for 2026 mirror what was budgeted for 2025.
- Looking forward to 2026 and hopefully having strong participation in all our USTA leagues and championships and helping our continued focus on growing the sport of tennis our communities and throughout the state of Mississippi.

Saturday, January 31, 2026

USTA MS Board - Pros Representative Report

The year 2025 saw the greatest changes in the professional tennis teaching landscape. These changes will change the future of our profession for years to come.

- The emergence of USTA Coaching. The USTA launched their own Tennis Professional Certification program complete with website, online classes, levels of certification, insurance both personal and facility, discount of equipment and this is just the beginning. With the full weight and support of the USTA behind USTA Coaching this will prove to be a game changer and it will inevitably continue to grow as a force in our industry.
- PTR has now officially moved to its new location at Saddlebrook Florida, gained a new CEO in Martin Van Daalen, launched its new learning products and is preparing to move forward both nationally and internationally.
- The RSPA spent its first full year with a new name and implemented an inclusive racquet sport identity. This again has already changed the traditional name of Director of Tennis to Director of Racquet Sports thus challenging each of us to reevaluate how we want to perceive our positions and identity moving forward.
- William Forman and the MTA initiated a new program to attempt to bring together high performance coaches and students in hopes of building a stronger platform for the success of our top junior players and those who aspire to become collegian players.

With all of this movement in just 12 months we will all be challenged with how we individually choose our paths forward. However, this provides many more positive opportunities for each and every teaching professional within the state of Mississippi.

WELCOME TO A NEW WORLD!! 2026

PINEBELT

USTA Mississippi

Area Director Reporting Sheet 2025

In your area, have there been any new tennis facilities, new courts built, courts renovated or talk about building new courts in 2025?

Tatum Park is scheduled to have some renovations. Jones County completed a new tennis / pickleball facility. Hattiesburg Racquet Club added some pickleball courts in 2025 but no tennis courts were lost.

Have any locations taken away existing tennis courts to build pickleball courts or painted pickleball lines on tennis courts in 2025? Any talk you hear of pickleball lines or facilities that might be being built in the future? Hattiesburg Racquet Club added some pickleball courts in 2025. Northeast Park in Meridian has six new pickleball courts under construction. The project will be completed as soon as warm weather arrives.

Are there any new tennis pros, tennis coaches, or providers in your area that have made a positive impact? Pete Mazzella at NE Park Tennis Center is making a positive impact by adding more programs and opportunities for existing and new players. Sara Mazzella is making an impact by offering more opportunities for JR. players. Sara has also become involved with our CTA to help grow community tennis. Anthony Hiatt made a large donation of new and used tennis equipment, shoes, and clothes. Items were distributed to the Meridian High School tennis team.

Does the trend in participation in tennis seem to be improving or declining in your area?
(i.e. club individual membership is high, more or less league teams than in the past, clubs are starting their own internal programming, etc...)

Participation in USTA leagues is about the same. Northeast Park Tennis Center will continue to offer social league play throughout the year. Meridian CTA will host free "Grow the Game" events in the spring and summer of 2026.

Southeast High School started a tennis team for 2026. Northeast Elementary school started a tennis program during their P.E. class. This program was started via Jay Pacelli, director of community development USTA Mississippi.

Meridian CTA will continue to offer a free high school play day this summer for new and existing jr. players. We are currently looking for a person to organize a NJTL out of Northeast Park Tennis Center.

What are some of the tennis highlights in your area? (i.e. new programs or initiatives, standout high school teams, USTA adult or junior teams that stand out, players achieving success, etc)

Northeast Park Tennis Center had an extremely successful year with highlights being host of the USTA 65 an Up State tournament and the U.S. Open Family Day. Meridian (Toni Jackson) and Hattiesburg (Lori Duke) accompanied three adaptive athletes to the USTA Southern Adaptive Championships in Chattanooga TN. Toni and Lori are planning opportunities for Meridian and Hattiesburg adaptive athletes to play with and against one another. We would love to collaborate with other areas in the state. We would love to assist anyone wanting to start an adaptive program in Mississippi.

Any coaches, players, captains, or providers that stand out that you think should be nominated to be recognized or for an award? I would really like to thank pro, Pete Mazzella for all of his hard work at Northeast Park Tennis Center. Pete is really the heart of our tennis community. The Pinebelt district is extremely proud of our award winners for 2025.

Danielle Black LLC for the state. Amelia Huddleston #1 captain in the state. Scott Therrell, Wheelchair. Meridian CTA (Toni Jackson). Congratulations to all of the Pinebelt winners.

I want to recognize Donn Hand as volunteer of the year. She continues to make Northeast Park Tennis Center a premiere tennis center. Donna works to make our park beautiful and she keeps the facility in tip top shape.

Any other tennis news, highlights, or need to know items from your area? The Pinebelt district is excited to host the following tournaments in 2026: Hattiesburg will host the Mississippi State Singles Championship Feb. 28th-March 1st. Meridian will host the 65 and up championship April 17-19, and Hattiesburg will host the annual Tri-level championships.

Meridian CTA plans to host another Family Day in August.

Thank you to everyone at USTA Mississippi for your continued support!

2025 Northeast MS Area Director's Report

Prepared by: Mark Robbins

Juniors

- JTT participation was down in 2025 (307 participants) compared to 2024 (363 participants). Ready to Rally was in down in 2025 (144 participants) compared to 2024 (179 participants). The CTA helped host a benefit tournament for St. Jude in memory of Sadie Downs. Sadie was a JTT player from Mooreville High School. She passed away on June 11, 2024 from a cancer at age 18.
- Junior Team Tennis: 307
 - Spring: 71
 - Summer: 210
 - Fall: 26
- Ready to Rally Beginner Programs: 144
- Sadie Downs St. Jude Benefit Tournament: 62
- 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 \$5,735 in tennis booster club payments and captain incentives.
- We offered Ready to Rally beginner programs in every county in our area.

Adults

- Susanne Lindsey has been hired as the new adult league coordinator. We are thankful for Daniel Pounders for serving in that role for several years a leading a great increase in adult league participation.

Facility Upgrades/Position Changes

- Booneville High School completed building 6 new tennis courts.
- The City of Pontotoc completed a project adding more restrooms and locker rooms to their 8-court facility.
- Houston High School is in the process of building 6 new tennis courts.
- The City of Saltillo resurfaced their 4-court facility.
- Daniel Pounders is now the director of tennis at Rob Leake Park in Tupelo.

Awards

- Land Magruder won MTA's Dorothy Vest Male Player of the Year.
- Tupelo Parks & Recreation won the team tennis event of the year.

2025 Tennis Programs and Events - Tri County MS area

Summary

This report provides an overview of tennis participation, programs, events, facility developments, and recognitions across multiple leagues and communities during the 2025 period. The data reflects continued engagement in structured competition, social leagues, youth development, adaptive tennis, and community-focused initiatives. Participation levels remained strong across most program areas, with notable growth in recreational and entry-level formats such as Red Ball Tennis, Tennis Apprentice and Junior Team Tennis programs.

League Participation Overview

Adult League Participation

USTA Adult League Participation

USTA Adult League participation showed a modest decline in 2025 compared to the prior year. Total participation in **2025 was 5,272 players**, down from **5,582 players in 2024**, representing a **5.5 percent decrease**. While participation levels remain strong overall, the decline highlights the importance of continued outreach, player retention, and flexible league formats to sustain adult engagement.

Ready to Rally (RTR)

The Ready to Rally (RTR) program demonstrated steady participation across multiple locations. In the most recent reporting period, RTR recorded **221 participants across 15 locations**, compared to **257 participants across 14 locations in 2025**. This reflects a consistent level of engagement and geographic reach, with minor year-over-year variation in participation totals.

Junior Team Tennis (JTT)

Junior Team Tennis (JTT) continued to serve as a cornerstone youth program. Current participation included **740 players across 77 teams**, compared to **638 players across 67 teams in 2024**. The increase in both participants and teams indicates strong interest in team-based junior competition and continued program expansion.

Social and Recreational Leagues

Social leagues played a key role in providing accessible and community-oriented tennis opportunities. Participation across these programs included:

- **Chicks for Vick:** 56 participants
- **Castlewood's Tennis Rookie League:** 23 participants
- **Castlewood's Tennis Apprentice:** 12 participants
- **Brandon Tennis Apprentice:** 4 participants
- **Clinton Tennis Apprentice:** 30 participants
- **Ridgeland Tennis Apprentice:** 25 participants
- **Florence Tennis Apprentice:** 17 participants
- **Reservoir YMCA Tennis Apprentice:** 17 participants

- **Tennis Apprentice Playoff:** 20 participants
- **Ekolu League:** 205 participants

These programs collectively supported new-player development, skill progression, and social engagement, particularly for adult and beginner players.

Fondren First Thursdays (Neighborhood in Jackson)

Fondren First Thursdays took place **every first Thursday from March through December**. Events involved setting up portable nets in a parking lot and hosting informal red ball play, emphasizing accessibility, visibility, and community engagement.

Red Ball Tennis Events

Red Ball Tennis events continued to serve as a highly visible and approachable entry point for new and casual players.

Competitive Red Ball Money Events

Several organized Red Ball Money Events were held at local facilities:

- **River Hills (January)** – Held during the annual meeting
 - 13 teams
 - *Pro Division:* 1st place \$600, 2nd place \$350, 3rd place \$300
 - *Amateur Division:* 1st place \$400, 2nd place \$250, 3rd place \$150
- **Parham Bridges (June)**
 - 12 players, 5 teams
 - 1st place \$350, 2nd place \$250
- **The Club at Township (October)**
 - 12 players, 6 teams
 - 1st place \$288, 2nd place \$192

These events blended competition with a social atmosphere and helped attract players who may not traditionally participate in league tennis.

Adaptive and Special Events

Mississippi Wheelchair Tennis Tournament

The Mississippi Wheelchair Tennis Tournament was held at **Brandon City Courts** and featured **28 athletes**. The event highlighted ongoing efforts to provide inclusive tennis opportunities for athletes with disabilities.

Nationals Participation

At the national level, representation included an **18s team** and a **4.5 Women's** competitor, **Sarah Buffington**, demonstrating competitive pathways from local to national play.

Facility Development

Significant investments were made in tennis infrastructure during the reporting period:

- **Madison Ridgeland Academy (MRA):** Construction of **8 new tennis courts**
- **Madison County School District:** Development of **12 new tennis courts**
- **Parham Bridges Tennis Center: 4 new tennis courts planned – LafleurEast Foundation**

These additions expand access to quality facilities and support long-term program growth.

Competitive Tournaments

Callen Cup (Huntsville Alabama)

The Callen Cup featured **8 players** across multiple age divisions:

- 35 and over (3 players)
- 45 and over (2 players)
- 55 and over (1 player)
- 65 and over (1 player)
- 75 and over (1 player)

Ozaki Cup (Junior) (Rome, Georgia)

The Ozaki Cup is a regional junior tournament showcasing top players from **nine states**. The top three girls and top three boys in the **12s, 14s, 16s, and 18s divisions** are selected. **Ten players from the Tri-County area** participated, reflecting strong junior development within the region.

Awards and Recognition

Several individuals and programs received recognition for their contributions and achievements:

- **Family of the Year:** Noel Brantley (
- **Junior Tournament of the Year:** River Hills, Level 5 – Dave Randall
- **Powers Moore Sportsmanship Award:** Hannika Witherow

Conclusion

Overall, the year 2025 reflects a healthy and diverse tennis program season, supported by strong participation numbers, expanded facilities, inclusive programming, and recognition of excellence. Continued emphasis on entry-level formats, youth development, and community engagement is expected to sustain and grow tennis participation across all age groups and skill levels.

USTA Mississippi
Area Director Reporting Sheet 2025
SOUTHWEST

In your area, have there been any new tennis facilities, new courts built, courts renovated or talk about building new courts in 2025?

SW Community College built 8 new courts in 2025. They are located in Summit, MS which is about 5 miles north of McComb. SWCC has revived its Mens and Womens tennis programs and plans to be competitive in the JUCO ranks immediately as they have brought in the maximum foreign players.

Have any locations taken away existing tennis courts to build pickleball courts or painted pickleball lines on tennis courts in 2025? Any talk you hear of pickleball lines or facilities that might be being built in the future?

One tennis court was converted to pickleball courts in 2024 and one in 2025 so we have lost 2 in Brookhaven in 2024-2025. The McComb club (Fitlife) converted 2 courts to pickleball in 2025 so we have lost 4 courts in the last 2 years.

Are there any new tennis pros, tennis coaches, or providers in your area that have made a positive impact?

None

Does the trend in participation in tennis seem to be improving or declining in your area? *(i.e. club individual membership is high, more or less league teams than in the past, clubs are starting their own internal programming, etc...)*

Since the SW District is made up of multiple small towns, the primary participation comes from Brookhaven, McComb and Natchez. I haven't been to McComb or Natchez lately, but Brookhaven seems to be trending upward in the number of young children participating. We have approximately 250 kids participating in Team Tennis which consists of 8-18 year old children.

Women's USTA teams are about the same as they have enough teams to have local league matches with 2 – 4 teams in each rating level.

Men's tennis has declined as there is only 1 18s 3.5 team and 1 55+ 3.5 signed up for 2026. It's still early but I do not anticipate any additional men's teams.

What are some of the tennis highlights in your area? *(i.e. new programs or initiatives, standout high school teams, USTA adult or junior teams that stand out, players achieving success, etc)*

Brookhaven High School won the Class 5A state championship in May of 2025 and should be a favorite to win Class 5A again in 2026. As noted above, there are a lot of kids participating in team tennis and this has helped in creating an interest in school tennis.

Any coaches, players, captains, or providers that stand out that you think should be nominated to be recognized or for an award?

None

Any other tennis news, highlights, or need to know items from your area?

None at this time. I am still waiting on a response from the area tennis professionals for their input.



MISSISSIPPI

The Nominating Committee has submitted a slate of nominees for four Area Director positions for the 2026-2027 term that will be voted on during the Annual Meeting by the Member Organizations' representative. That slate is as follows:

The 2026-2027- Area Director nominees:

Coast:	Robbie Wrigley
Southwest:	Mitch Rayborn
North Central:	Sonia Kusek
East Central:	Ryan Akers

In addition to the Area Directors, there is 1 Presidential appointee nominated to serve a two year term:

Beth Gordin