



Serving Up Success

THE MANY BENEFITS OF TEACHING CHILDREN THE SPORT OF TENNIS

TENNIS IS KNOWN AS “the sport for a lifetime” among those in the industry and die-hard fans alike. It’s difficult to find a sport that matches tennis for both its physical and psychological benefits. While it’s never too late to start playing the game, the benefits particularly aid youngsters and their physical, emotional, and mental development.

Like many sports, the game boosts coordination and motor skills. But what makes tennis so unique is the demand for flexibility, balance, cardio, and strength all at once—all things necessary for strong bones. Early on, kids learn the art of anticipation by exercising the judgement of ball speed, which boosts tactical thinking and brain development at an early age.

Mental strength, alertness, and responsibility are also constantly tested on the court. Tennis forces players to react fast, think critically, and problem-solve with every stroke. Emotionally, the game aids in the development of confidence, focus, and self-esteem, all while improving social skills, interaction, and sportsmanship.

Tennis prepares kids for life on and off of the court. A local organization, the Barrington Area Tennis Association (BATA), believes just that and promotes the

development of tennis as a means of healthful recreation and physical fitness in the area.

“Our youth programs are designed to provide the most important benefit, which is fun,” says Mary Beth Bowman, founder and executive director of the Barrington Area Tennis Association. “We introduce children as young as five years old to the game through the United States Tennis Association’s 10-and-under curriculum, where children learn by


playing with little or no standing in line. Our young players use balls, rackets, nets, and courts sized-right to their age and ability. The immediacy of tennis skills success is incomparable—when kids see they are successful, they want to continue to learn and enjoy doing it.”

Bowman notes that there are often no umpires or referees for most tennis matches, which has, in fact, resulted in positive outcomes. This is especially true for BATA’s middle school team league in which sixth-through eighth-grade boys and girls of varying skill levels come together each week to compete.

“The kids are forced to call their own lines, keep score fairly, work together, and use the honor system amongst each other, which goes a long way,” Bowman says.

While BATA’s primary objective is to provide more playing opportunities for existing tennis enthusiasts, the organization finds that building community through tennis and shaping values of kids through the game has become the most rewarding aspect.

Playing tennis doesn’t require a team and it is one of the only sports that allows families to play together. With plenty of public courts in the area, kids, parents, and even grandparents can get in the game.

“Tennis offers a wide range of transferable skills that are invaluable—skills I hope the kids carry with them into their future.” 

Kelsey Sopchyk is the public relations coordinator for the Barrington Area Tennis Association, a not-for-profit volunteer organization that promotes youth and adult tennis through lessons, leagues, and tournaments in the Barrington area. For more information, visit www.BarringtonTennis.com or call 312-965-6001.

