



Baseline News

A Publication of the Forest City Tennis Club, Inc.

www.forestcitytennisclub.org

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Message from the President



Welcome to the first issue of Baseline News, the Forest City Tennis Club, Inc. (FCTC) newsletter designed specifically for the needs of our Members and participants of our Adult/Junior Tennis Program.

Each edition will include a look at how to improve any aspect of your game, a feature

on a notable member of FCTC and a listing of upcoming events/activities throughout Northern Ohio.

I am very excited about the direction our organization is headed and the success of our Adult/Junior Tennis Program. Special congratulations to Barb Barker, Captain of the Women's 5.5 Combo Team for winning their division Championship. There are many ways to measure the success of a team. The 5.5 combo team was not only successful competitively, but their team spirit and cohesiveness played an integral part of their successful tennis season.

On December 3rd they played Western Reserve and won with a clean sweep (Winning all three

courts). On March 1st and 2nd they will compete in Cincinnati for the State Championship. Good Luck Ladies in the States!

If you are interested in becoming a participant on our Junior Development Parent Subcommittee or other FCTC committees we would love to have you. Your input, thoughts, and opinions are greatly appreciated. If you have an interesting story, suggestions or questions, please contact me at kstrick@sbglobal.net.

Thank You

Kevin L. Strickland





Adrian Barker and Tanisha Welch, Junior Program participants

Top Juniors Nets Slots at IMG Tennis

By Kevin Strickland

The Nick Bollettieri Tennis Academy has produced many of the world's top players, including Andre Agassi, Jim Courier, Tommy Hass, Monica Seles, Anna Kournikova, Maria Sharapova and the Williams Sisters.

The academy was founded in 1978 and was the first full-time boarding school of its kind, dedicated to preparing student-athletes for college within an environment that combined intense tennis training and a specially designed academic curriculum.

In 2006, Forest City Tennis Club, Inc. (FCTC) partnered with IMG to support a pilot project that would enable two of its best juniors to earn a scholarship from IMG at the Academy. FCTC chose Adrian Barker and Tanisha Welch, who were both in their senior year in High School and two of the top players in the FCTC program. The two juniors spent a full week of intense training with some of the best instructors in the US.

Adrian Barker is currently a sophomore at Ohio Wesleyan University on an academic scholarship and one their ten-

nis team. Tanisha Welch is also a sophomore at Youngstown State University majoring in Journalism. She received a partial tennis scholarship and also an academic scholarship.

Both students participate on their college tennis teams and when home on break still help out coaching the FCTC junior tennis program.



Phil Dubsy launches a backhand assault on the ball.

Forest City Open Tournament 2007

By R. L. Render III & Henry Wiley

Memorial Day Weekend ushered in the summer tennis tournament season for the Forest City Tennis Club (FCTC). This year's kick-off had a new twist and established a new partnership with Cleveland State University (CSU).

The FCTC formed a collaborative arrangement with the Howard A. Mims African American Cultural Center and the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Incorporated (Phi Theta Chapter) CSU, Prester Pickett, Center Coordinator/Assistant to the Director of Black Studies and Chad Stephens, Omega Psi Phi CSU chapter president. This union enables the Forest City Memorial Day tennis open tournament to be held at CSU.

On Saturday, May 26, 2007

over 80 participants converged on Magala tennis Courts to compete in the first round of tournament play. Players came from Michigan, Chicago, and all over Northeast, Ohio.

Unfortunately Mother-nature brought rain which suspended play for over an hour. There was no end in sight and this forced Henry Wiley, tournament director, to execute his plan B and move the tournament to the Racquet Club East facility in Bedford Heights, Ohio. This is the home of the FCTC Junior program.

The second day of play reduced the competition in half and the weekend warriors stepped up their game intending on taking no prisoners and making it to the finals on the third day. At the conclusion of the second day of play, the

stage was set for the showdown on Memorial day at Thurgood Marshall Recreation Center Tennis courts, it was between the best players to survive the previous two days of competitive play.

By the end of the day, the competition was over and the results were tabulated. The losers were licking their wounds and the winners were posing in front of the camera with trophies in hand.

Herb Williams and Cornell Allen both FCTC members won the men's 45 and 55 singles event. James Steward from Monroe, Michigan won the Men's Open. Molly Drake, from University Heights, won the Women's Open. Alexandra Kelm, of Cuyahoga Falls, won the 3.5 women's series. Molly and Theresa Drake of University Heights won the women's



Henry Wiley, Tournament Director recording scores.

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doubles. Phil Dubsy of Geneva, Ohio and Jon Delaura of Akron, Ohio, "The Rubber City" was victorious in the Men's Doubles. The Men's 45 Doubles were taken by Herb Williams and Joel Whitworth, both FCTC members. Finally, the Mixed Doubles was won by Tiffany Allison of Chagrin Falls and Dan Mitoff of Lorain, Ohio.

The Forest City Tennis Club was founded in Cleveland in 1912 to increase interest and participation in the game of tennis while promoting basic skill development for both Juniors and Adult players.



Herb Williams (champion) and Burrell Sheilds (finalist) - Men's 45 singles.



Sue Burlage playing in the women's 3.0 competition.



James Stewart on the left and Paul Hammond showing off their first and second place prizes.

Historic Panel Discussion at CSU

By Robert Render III

On Saturday, May 26, 2007 the Howard A. Mims African American Cultural Center in conjunction with Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Incorporated (Phi Theta Chapter) and the Cleveland Treatment Center Let it Ride Program sponsored a Curtis Wilson Colloquium Series Lecture entitled "A Celebration of African Americans in the Sports of Tennis" featuring members of the Forest City Tennis Club, Inc.

The FCTC panel consisted of Kevin Strickland, President; Al Barker, Vice President; Alecia Cooper-Lowe, Recording Secretary; Kali Strickland, Women's Team Captain; Paula Lewis, Assistant Treasurer/Tennis Instructor; and Adrian Barker, former FCTC junior's program graduate and a Sophomore at Miami University.

Prester Pickett, MFA/Coordinator of the African American Cultural Center and Assistant to the Director of Black Studies moderated the discussion. Prester spoke about the meaning of culture which is the legacy that we must pass on

from generation to generation. He said, "Without Culture we are nothing more than a cult."

Mr. Pickett got the discussion going by asking the panelist to tell how they got involved in tennis or share a story about a memorable occasion or event. Kali Strickland jumped right in and talked about how her first tournament experience led to a out of town trip to New York City, where she eventually, met the legendary Arthur Ashe and had a photo taken with him. She said, "I still have that picture to this day."

Adrian said that while he played on the Shaker Heights High School Tennis Team, he and his doubles partner, Maurice Rucker qualified three (3) times as one of the best doubles teams in the State of Ohio. "Once I received the Ohio Athletic Gold Certificate Award and made Player of the Week in the Plain Dealer several times."

Paula Lewis who has served

as a past president of the FCTC held other administrative positions over the years and has played in various tournaments of which she has received a number of trophies, plaques and certificates.

Prester challenged the students to participate in an exercise with the panelist to see if they could convince them to exchange one of their hard

earned awards or other keepsakes for the right price. Adrian was offered \$50,000.00 dollars for his gold certificate and or his medalion, but he turned down the offer. None of the panelist were willing to exchange his or her awards or memorabilia for money or any other inducements.

Adrian recounted an experience that he and his partner Maurice had at an Ohio High School Athletic Tennis Tournament in Columbus, Ohio. They were in the quarterfinals and had lost the first set, but had won the

second set and were tied four (4) to four (4) in the third set.

The line judge made a disputed call against Adrian and Maurice which gave the next point to their opponents. Several other disputed calls that were ruled against them ultimately cost them the set and match. Even though the outcome of the game was ultimately determined by bad officiating, Adrian and Maurice demonstrated maturity and integrity under adverse conditions.

The session ended by each of the panelist discussing why they continued to play the game of tennis. "Their reasons ranged from providing a great physical exercise, opportunity to keep in touch with old friends, good clean competition, and the desire to instruct the next generation of tennis players".

Officers & Executive Committee:

Kevin L. Strickland
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Al Barker
Vice President

Alesia Cooper-Lowe
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Henry Wiley
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Men's Team Captain

Kali Strickland
Women's Team Captain

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Coaches Corner: Tennis Clinics

By Debbie Rhodes



The new in-door season opened the third week of September and the FCTC program continues to grow and attract new juniors and adults. The all volunteer coaching staff met and made plans for another successful year.

One of the ways to measure success is in the enthusiasm the players have for the game. Many of our juniors had winning tournament results this year and our adults are now playing regularly and on teams.

FCTC supports all of our players desire to build their tennis skills through our clinic and also by sponsoring teams that play in the USTA league. This summer we sponsored a 7.0 mixed doubles team, a 3.5 men's team and a 3.0 women's team.

Much of the credit for our adult's success goes to the adult court coaches, Gregg Perrin, Paula Lewis and Jeff Williams. They make it fun and do drills that challenge players to take their game to the next level. Laughter is often heard from the back courts as they run, grunt and jump for balls. Another plus is the friendships that have blossomed as a result of the weekly clinic sessions where players push each other to reach a higher playing level.

In the next issue of the newsletter, look for tips on how to play winning tennis.



A few of our FCTC volunteer instructors from left to right: Al Barker, Barb Barker, Sean Barker, Gregg Perrin, Jeff Williams, and Paula Lewis

Upcoming Events

Tennis Party, February 2, 2008

Start of Third Session Adult/Junior Tennis Program, February 19, 2008