

Tennis evangelist lives in eye of controversy

By Elson Irwin
Tribune Sportswriter

They call him Dan, the Tennis Man. He's an evangelist, of sorts ... a purveyor of unorthodox tennis ideas that rub staid old tennis bluenoses the wrong way. He's a self-proclaimed medicine man with an elixir of life for a game which hasn't changed, he says, to suit the temperaments of today's player or adapt itself to the young learner such as other sports have done.



DAN, THE TENNIS MAN

He's to tennis what P.T. Barnum was to the circus. He leads his carnival wagon of ideas around the country in an effort to put forth some thoughts the U.S. Tennis Association would just as soon not hear.

He's Dan Young and whether you think of him as Saint Patrick or the Pied Piper of Hamelin, he has some followers who believe he's on the right track.

Or the right court ...

What he'd like to see developed is a program for youngsters such as has been developed for baseball (Little League), soccer and many other sports.

Call it a "graduated method of tennis" — starting youngsters out on the elementary school level with smaller-sized courts and smaller equipment all the way around.

He would like to allow tennis to take the place of some silly games such as four-square, eight-square and hop-scotch, none of which tends to stand anyone in good stead further on down the line. Not many young adults playing hopscotch these days, heh?

He believes that with a smaller court, the net wouldn't appear so formidable, and a smaller tennis racket would eliminate the necessity for the two-handed shot which has come into common usage among the younger set.

The youngsters would, he hopes, become addicted to tennis instead of drugs.

He has also devised some teaching methods for other groups:

- He favors the use of more dividing fences or nets on public courts to eliminate the fear most beginners have of hitting the ball into someone else's court.

- He believes tennis can be a way of developing motor skills for people who are otherwise physically or mentally handicapped. ("Tennis is a game where a handicap — not being able to hear — would at times be a real advantage.")

And, he has some ideas for the professional game as well.

- He would eliminate the "two-serve" idea.

He says the tennis serve is like the drive in golf. Hit one over the fence in golf and they penalize you two strokes. If the tennis player misses, they give him another chance.

It would set up some "mystery" for the game. The opposing player wouldn't know what was coming, the hard or the soft stuff. The hard server would be taking a chance with his cannonball if he didn't have a second serve to fall back on.

Young is for anything that would speed up the game, make it more interesting, more intriguing.

A Billy Dee Williams look-alike, Dan the Tennis Man is sometimes called "The White Tornado" (he always teaches in long, traditional white trousers). You'd think because he is so innovative on other levels, he would teach in Saran-wrap, but no, he lets his racket and such props as a ukelele, a raw egg, a pair of scissors, a sickle, a blindfold, a nerfball, a table tennis paddle, a shoestring and an umbrella (even a comb) do his talking as well as his teaching.

He has been here in San Diego for about a year, but he has barnstormed across the U.S. on his crusade for tennis's physical, mental and social benefits for all (even trying to get captioned TV instructions for the handicapped).

Just think: The hearing impaired playing tennis.

"I don't have an American Express card so nobody knows who I am. That's why I carry this, and this, and this," pointing to an array of props in his tennis bag.

You may have seen him on television. He has appeared on all the local channels and on the syndicated PM magazine.

He has established the National Tennis Teachers College where he does his thing at 5726 El Cajon Blvd. Even his telephone number tells you something about him. It is 58-COURT.

BASELINE BANTERINGS: The Corona-Tennis Center Open continues this weekend and both the top men's and top women's seeds have advanced into the semifinals. Tony Trear and Karen Peterson

SAN DIEGO CHRYSLER LE BARON SERIES STANDINGS	
Men's Open	
1. Michael Chang	16
2. Andy Gordon	16
3. Carl Chang	16
4. Jon Leyer	14
Brian Turner	14
6. Peter Placek	11
7. Francois Monnar	11
8. Scott Del Mastro	11
Lionel Leger	11
10. Jay (James) Meyer	11
Brian Patno	11
12. Dave Andrews	11
Peter Hermann	11
Kelly Mountain	11
Sean Wade	11
Brent Zimmerman	11
Rolando Zuniga	11
18. Van Barnes	11
Steve Chambers	11
Doug Fatta	11
Brian Harrington	11
Greg Hing	11
Tim Kramm	11
Derek McMahon	11
Fred Morris	11
Alan Sarkin	11
Mark Woodard	11
Stan Wootan	11
"A" Men's	
1. Dan Young	11
2. Maurice Jackson	11
3. Francois Monnar	11
Stan Wootan	11
5. Eric Doan	11
Stan Hurton	11
Jon Lewis	11
Jay (James) Meyer	11
9. Nick Caesar	11
Meng Fong	11
Berry Gooff	11
Rene Troxler	11
"B" Men's	
1. Fred Johnson III	11
Ron Wether	11
3. Mark Todd	11
4. Charles Bischoberger	11
Jim Coleman	11
Tim McGrath	11
Eugene White	11
8. William (Bill) Bauer	11
Mac McKairan	11