

43 Programming, Teaching, Socials and Member Retention Ideas
Compiled by: Todd Upchurch, RSPA Master Tennis Professional

1) 24 Hr Marathon

submitted by: Bunny Bruning

The Idea:

For a charity donation, I conducted a 24 hour lesson marathon.

Started at 9:00 am on a Friday and ended 9:00 on Sat

Every hour was booked

Took pictures, made a storyboard, and raised \$3300

2) Dinner on the Courts

Submitted by: Pete Petersen

The Idea:

A charming dinner party on the tennis courts on a warm summer night.

The center court or pro court is converted into an outside dining area by the use of large potted plants, such as palms, or portable folding dividers. Music to fit the demographic of the members is provided. Hard courts are power washed. Soft courts are covered with heavy tarp. Using a 1/2 court illustration, the head table is by the net and other tables are spaced around the court. White table clothes and flowers are on the tables. The host is the tennis committee for appreciation of various member recognitions. Committee members or a corporate sponsor underwrite the expenses. Dinner menu is by member survey.

3) Music Day

Submitted by: Kevin Caccia

The Idea:

We have Music Day for our Middle School, High School, and Academy groups once every couple of months. The juniors bring in CDs and MP3s to listen to thru a stereo during clinic. Each junior will get a turn to play their music. Having Music Day gives the juniors several benefits. First, it breaks up the monotony of drills. Second, the juniors are more relaxed when they drill and compete. Third, it gives the juniors something to look forward to.

4) Intracub Doubles Activity

Submitted by: Sammy Giammalva Jr.

The Idea:

We have a Wednesday night Men's and Women's Intracub Doubles Play. We e-mail our membership, and they respond by Tuesday at 5:00. This time cushion allows us to fill in so we have groups of 4 players. If we get players after this time, they are on the waiting list unless we need them. We set up courts by their level, and each player plays a set with each player on their court. They report the scores, and we use those scores for next week's court assignments.

We had 56 players participate last week. We struggled getting 4 players when we started this free member service, and it has grown each week. Our members love it, because they can always get a competitive game without the hassles of organization. It helps member retention, increase activity, and also helps us communicate upcoming events to our more active membership base.

If a player no-shows more than once, they are not allowed back into the play. It has happened twice with us, and they understood as we explained it was not fair to the other three players on their court. Everyone else respects our time and the other member's time.

This service takes relative very little time - 2-3 hours/week - and really adds a lot to our club. We have delegated to our Front Desk manager, but after I helped organize the courts with her until she learned the levels of our players.

5) Rallyball Club

Submitted by: Joe Capobianco

The Idea:

For the last 10 years, I have given each student under 16 the chance to rally with me 10-500 times, depending on the age. They each get 5 minutes in the lesson to achieve this. If they do, I cut the tennis ball in half and the student signs their name, date, and how many rallies were hit. I take the signed half and display it in the front counter in the tennis shop. It creates enthusiasm with all the students to achieve this goal and they get to keep the unsigned half as a souvenir. Also once they meet their first goal, they get to rally longer to get another ball cut in half.

6) The Hustle Trophy

Submitted by: Joey Hall

The Idea:

Buy a "cool" tennis trophy and use it as incentive for some advanced groups. Give it a name like "THE Hustle Trophy" and give it to the kid that gives the best overall effort that day. They take it home and have to bring it back for the next practice to be won all over again.

7) Mommy & Me

Submitted by: Todd Upchurch

The Idea:

We combine an early afternoon preschool age kids class with a women's Cardio class. Normally held right after preschool dismissal, we have all members start together with some fun warmups and then divide up for 50 minutes. Kids start with fun tennis games and skills and adults with full Cardio class. We bring them back together for the last 10 minutes to have "competition" with other Moms and kids. Tennis ball sandwich, balloon bump up, etc. Always had 7-8 "teams" each week for class.

8) If the Shoe Fits

Submitted by: Punam Kersten

The Idea:

Have a special on tennis shoes where when you buy a pair of shoes you get a 30 minute private lesson included in the sale of the shoe. Offer the lesson at a "dead time" not prime time. The player must take the lesson within a week of the purchase. This is a great way to get players on the court at your facility. It gives you a chance to sell your tennis teaching skills for future lessons!

9) Family Night w/ Quick Start Tennis

Submitted by: Patrick Kearns

The Idea:

This is an event that we held at our club this past summer. It's your basic Adult Round Robin with kids also involved with quick start tennis. We also had a cook out next to our tennis courts and had the teaching staff also cook the burgers and hot dogs. We finished the event with the kids coming up and watching their parents play in a one point tournament. For the one point tournament we had men on one half of the draw and women on the other half and the top man played the top women. We charged 20.00 per person for the adults and 6.00 per child. Our rule of thumb with this is to not charge any family higher than two adults and two children. So the most any one family can be billed is 52.00. We run this event starting at 5:30 and play until dark. This charge included tennis, food and beverages. We have done this event twice this past year and each time we have had over 50 people come out to the event. It's a fun event for families to be able to come out with their kids and be able to play tennis with other families.

10) Derby Day

Submitted by: Todd Upchurch

The Idea:

Adult social held on the Saturday of the Kentucky Derby. Members competed as teams with their spouses and played round robin matches. We made a large peg board and laid it flat on a table near the food and drinks. Each team had their horse (we cut out paper horses and attached them to a small wooden stick). As they played and won games, we moved their horses forward in the race until we had a winner. During the event we watched the Kentucky Derby and teams chose a horse in the race to win. If they guessed correctly, we moved them forward 3 spots. We had mint juleps and food for the event. Always sold out.

11) Hired Gun

Submitted by: Todd Upchurch

The Idea:

2 day Men's event where we played golf on Friday and tennis on Saturday. The Hired Gun was a local tennis pro that we paired with the members. They competed together on both days and we flighted the teams based on the member's level. Teams received points based on how much they beat their handicap in golf and number of games won in tennis. After tennis on Saturday, we grilled out and handed out prizes. Many of the teams in the top flight had side competitions going on and it made for a very exciting tennis day. Always sold out.

12) Free Monthly Tennis Tips

Submitted by: Marc Blouin

The Idea:

Provide members with a FREE monthly tennis tip. Example: "poaching for doubles success!" - Use this theme for a one hour clinic around lunch time for your members and guests. Typically, the Director of Tennis will lead the clinic - he/she should then use the Junior Director, League Director, or other staff pros to conduct the clinic. Have a sign-up deadline/RSVP - maybe two to three courts worth (6:1 ratio) and give back to your club/facility while promoting your great staff and programs!

13) Unique Scoring Tournaments

Submitted by: Todd Upchurch

The Idea:

We wanted to promote our Men's and Women's social play outside of league matches. Organized a Tuesday night Men's night on 4 courts. We had 16 men sign up and compete in doubles. They would play 32 total points (each person serves 8 points) and then move up or down a court based on which team won and split partners. It always guaranteed good matches in the later rounds. Would play 4 rounds which took about 1.5-2 hours to complete. Members would pay \$10 to play each week and I ran the event. At the end of the night, the player with the most points would win \$30, 2nd place would win \$20 and 3rd place would win their \$10 back. Used the remainder of the money to buy refreshments and pay the staff. Became so popular, we had 2 separate times at 6:00 and 7:30 pm to accommodate 32 players on 4 courts. The club that I started this weekly event still runs it to this day.

14) "Cardio Tennis Camp"

Submitted by: Paul Bartholomai

The Idea:

Off Season Program: PSST's version of Boot Camp:

Take advantage of the down time in between seasons at PSST with our "Cardio Tennis Camp"

The program consists of 4 hours of cardio tennis classes.

We schedule this event at different times of the day, Monday through Thursday: early bird, 6 or 6:30 AM; mid morning, 9:30 AM; and one in the evening, 7:00 PM. Members and guests can sign up for the whole week at a discounted price or for individual sessions (dates).

This program has been very well attended and has helped us fill up our schedule during the slow times of the year.

15) Junior Camp Bring A Friend Day

Submitted by: Dave Neuhart

The Idea:

During our summer Junior Tennis Camp we always have candy day on the last day of the week (Friday). So we started a bring a friend day on Thursday for them to bring a friend for no charge that day. They get excited and we push candy day the next day so they pay to come that day and then about 75% then sign up for the next week as they had so much fun the week before. It has helped to boost our numbers in camp.

16) Mentor a New Player

Submitted by: Dave Neuhart

The Idea:

We have regular Adult clinics here and we wanted to boost the participation of new players to get into the game. We realized our best marketers were our own members who are already participants. So we said if you bring a brand new player to the "Never Played Before" clinic and came with them, the clinic was free for both of them and the regular player received another clinic of their choosing free. Then they are responsible to mentor them until they are a regular player. So after that new player came 3 times as a paying customer, they received another clinic free. We also encouraged the regular player to keep attending the beginning clinic at no charge if they wanted to help out. We found this also encouraged that player to be a regular volunteer for other programs.

17) Never Touched a Racquet Clinic

Submitted by: Dave Neuhart

The Idea:

This is a simple idea that is helped out by the title. By saying Never touched a racquet, beginners or new-comers feel like it is just for them. We use other regular players to help with the clinic and it also fosters volunteerism. We do very basic and simple drills to get hand eye coordination and early success.

18) Stroke / Specialty Clinics

Submitted by: Kendon Warren

The Idea:

When times might happen to be slow at your facility (no team drills or clinics), offer specialty clinics on particular strokes / strategies.

Around the Holidays, for example (Xmas & Hannukah), offer 60 or 90-minute clinics (once or multiple times per day) focusing on a particular stroke or strategy.

Examples:

Mon: Groundstrokes

Tue: Volleys

Wed: Overhead & Serve

Thurs: Teamwork / Communication

Fri: Offensive / Defensive Play

Offer different levels: 2.0-3.0, 3.5-4.5, 4.5 & up for each clinic so friends and teammates can work together on their games.

19) Themed Tennis Camps

Submitted by: Kris Carter

The Idea:

In the summer I teach themed tennis camps to junior players who participate on swim team. The camps are set up so the times work out for the groups to come either before or after their swim practice for one week. (Monday-Thurs with Friday the rain day) Most age groups received two weeks of camp opportunities.

Themes I have done in the past include Tropical Tennis, All American Tennis, Tennis Fiesta, Pirate Party, etc. The themes include games that relate to the theme (ex: hit stacked buckets with a little water and plastic fish for Tropical Tennis, hit piñata with candy for Tennis Fiesta) and at the end of the camp they receive themed prizes.

20) Make Teaching a "Moving Experience"

Submitted by: Ken DeHart

The Idea:

As you are teaching, be sure to change the position you feed the balls from, the side you are feeding from, the depth you are feeding from and the kind of spin you are using to feed to the students.

If you feed a ball to a player in the deuce court and tell them to return the ball cross court to your ad court, the next ball you feed should come from your deuce court and not from your first feeding position. That would be very unrealistic and the student would get a false sense of how to manage the ball when they are in actual match play.

If you are at the net and volleying balls back to a student on the baseline, be sure to keep your feet moving as you volley back to them. Your movement is important as that creates the distraction they would see with an opponent at the net in actual match play. By moving your feet, you get a workout as well and this will help you to not get so stiff by the end of your teaching day.

When it comes to picking up the balls, use your legs and not the basket. You and the student do "split and pick up" to exercise the hamstrings, quads, glutes and groin. These are the exercises a personal trainer would recommend for a tennis player and charge you \$80 an hour - you can do it on the court for free. This exercise is a great way for the instructor to get their own workout in and not have to go to the gym at the end of the teaching day.

21) Family Tennis Class

Submitted by: Gaylene Winters

The Idea:

I initiated, at Glendale Community College, a Family Tennis Class for parents and their children. The parents enrolled in a .5 credit class and the children, ages 4-12, enrolled in a \$25 non-credit section.

The class was held for 1 hour 15 minutes on Saturdays for 12 weeks.

Teaching the parents and children together had several advantages:

- The parents developed proper technique along with the children.
- This proper technique could then be reinforced during the week with parents helping children AND vice versa.
- The children enjoyed seeing their parent(s) struggling to learn new information. Parents and children achieved success together.
- I was able to evaluate parent/child relationships and give helpful advice to the parents on ways to improve the effectiveness of their tennis time with the children.

I have been pleasantly surprised to see that the parents seemed to enjoy the class even more than the children. This may have been because the parents' self confidence was elevated as they learned to play better because their technique had improved. I feel that they also began to understand that this quality time with their children was a step towards having better quality "family time" together.

I used a variety of tools and games learned at USPTA conferences and from the "Little Tennis" book.

22) Be a QUICK Teacher

Submitted by: John Robinson

The Idea:

While teaching tennis lessons, create a "quick" style whereby the dead time is at a minimum. If you rush your student by keeping a quick pace throughout the lesson, then they will retain more and feel that they've received more value for their money. Also adds to the amount of things you can work on in that hour.

23) Run With Them

Submitted by: Rob Carver

The Idea:

Anytime you do a team vs team scoring game the losing team does a moderate running drill. Do not become like Elvis the fat tennis pro! Run with the losing team. This eliminates complaints and the pro stays in Shape!

24) Serve Technique-Watch TV

Submitted by: Todd Upchurch

The Idea:

Serve returns are the 2nd most important shot in tennis after the serve. We found that players were having difficulty preparing for the service return. I came with the idea of telling them to "watch TV" when returning. The receiver would draw a "box" over the server's head where the contact was made to pick up the ball as early as possible. Made for an easy visual for adults and kids.

25) Summer Camp Format

Submitted by: Bernie McGuire

The Idea:

We just finished a 5 day summer camp at Hammond School for rising 2nd-5th graders. The camp was from 9-12 noon Mon-Fri. Each day we had a

theme of the day that was inserted at about 10:30 for about 45 minutes.

This theme was at a great time to break up the on court work. The themes we used for this camp were:

Monday-Tennis History-I brought in a couple of old wood rackets (real old), a Jack Kramer, my old high school racket, a T2000, an original Prince and told a little story about each one.

Tuesday-Video Day-we showed the campers the Rick Macci video of the 5 year old hitting groundstrokes and that caused a lot of excitement.

Wednesday-Picture Day-we took action shots and still shots (with the 5 foot tennis rackets-1 wood and 1 Wilson) of all the campers to be printed and put in their folders for graduation as well as emailed to parents.

Thursday-USTA.com day-we went into a classroom with a large screen display and pulled up USTA.com and explained some of the different subjects that could be viewed. We showed two things of high importance: 1) how to find tournaments-especially Rising Stars (Novice) and 2) video of the pro's strokes under game improvement.

Friday- Test Day-a simple 10 question test (multiple choice, true/false, and one fill in your favorite tennis professional-(Federer got most of the votes-I received 2) see a copy of the Bernie's most 2009 test below.

The campers were given a folder that included: the test, pictures, certificate, a court diagram listing some shots and some of the subjects that were covered over the week.

26) PCTV

Submitted by:

Robert Allen Gibson

The Idea:

Do not just teach tennis! Teach life's Lessons! These principles (PCTV) below apply to anything you do including tennis but focus on them as you teach and you will improve your game as well as your students 10 times faster. Helping them learn line upon line, principle after principle, one-step after another, both consciously and subconsciously.

Preparation

Is the ability to see what it takes to do something and gather everything necessary together to be ready to actually do it. As Professionals, we know footwork, conditioning, discipline, balance, timing, practice, strategies, tactics, mental confidence and mental fortitude, commitment, love, sacrifice, knowledge, faith and many other factors make a great tennis player. This being our jobs to teach and prepare our selves and students to have fun learning life's principles and truths so that they can make this world a better place and improve the game of tennis while doing it.

Concentration

Is the ability to stay focused on what it is you are doing. As professionals, we try to teach the students to concentrate on the things they will have control of watching the ball to the point of contact where they will have control and influence over its direction, spin, speed, flight and power. After warm-up deciding on the strategy for the match, opponent, court surface and weather conditions, and before the start of a point and between points concentrating on the vision and tactics to work out and implement our strategy knowing the opponents weakness. Then making full circle with concentration on the ball to start the next point.

Timing

Is the converging of multi things to a specific juncture in an environment simultaneously. As professionals, we know that training cycle help us perform or reach our peak in the finals, timing of the grip of the racquet, and being in the right place at the right time all give us greater power and life principles that takes into the history books.

Visualization

Is the ability to create a mental image. Before a point, they should see the point play out in their mind before they start it. If, people, cannot see themselves playing professional they will not make it professionally. However, I hope we are sharing and developing the picture that you can have fun and live a happy and healthy life by playing and learning tennis

and life's principles through tennis for a lifetime at any level you Achieve.

27) Prizes at Tennis Socials

Submitted by: Chuck Gill

The Idea:

We used to have a problem with players getting too serious at our tennis socials, which are really just ways for players to meet each other, greet new members, meet their neighbors, etc. When we used high scores for prizes, it took away from the "social" aspect of the game.

Now I "semi-jokingly" tell all of the players that if they play well with each other, at the end of the event, they will be entered into a drawing for gift certificates, which will be raffled off.

At the end of the event, just before the BBQ, I gather the group and thank them for their participation. I list every player with a number (which is totally at random) and ask another member, (usually my committee chair) to "pick a number between 1-52" (or whatever the number of players)...

They pick #29 (or whatever) and then #29 gets their certificate, and THEY (#29) get to pick the next number. It proceeds until all of the certificates are gone. Usually someone will pick a spouse or a neighbor or a friend, or on occasion a jerk that they really don't like...at any rate it is a great way to ad-lib some great one-liners, get a few laughs, etc. It also keeps the emphasis on fun and social and keeps the players from getting too serious during play. Have a trustworthy participant or staff member around to look over the list and verify that you are not cheating. When the first 3 numbers drawn are the members who take the most lessons...YOU WILL BE TOAST!!!!

I typically give away 6-8 \$25 certificates per event, which can be used for shop purchases or applied toward clinics and lessons.

28) Friday Night Rock'n Roll Mixer

Submitted by: Toby Fasth

The Idea:

The Friday Night mixers were going slow at the club so I decided to add music to spice things up. The response has been great, we had 64 players at the last event, and we had to turn people away because of the lack of courts. I have found that the key is not to overdo it and have the event too often. The atmosphere is totally different with loud music, we even had a fundraiser tournament where the sponsors wanted music throughout the tournament. We supply beer and soft drinks to all players, and we make sure we don't run out, free babysitting is also provided. The key to the event is the social aspect, it is not about winning, it is all

about having a good time with friends and good music.

29) Ladies C Theme Tournaments

Submitted by: Jeff Dudacek

The Idea:

These monthly C tournaments are one day tournaments. They are held on days when the league is not playing. The format is 16 doubles teams, using the compass draw, play four sets of tennis. Lunch is served before the final round. Depending on the theme, they will dress accordingly. Awards are given to all the finalists (private lessons, drills, ball machine etc.). We also have door prize drawings (discounts, flowers from the tables, hats, theme prizes etc.) everyone loves to be a winner. This format gives the player plenty of tennis with their partner, they meet new players all in one day, and it is a change from the basic round-robin.

30) End-of-Season Junior Tennis Awards Banquet

Submitted by: Dave Kozlowski

The Idea:

There is nothing more rewarding than seeing all of your junior tennis players, with whom you have just spent the entire summer, having the time of their life at a tennis social gathering. For many summer tennis programs the Junior End-of-the Season Awards banquet can really be the social highlight for a lot of recreational players as everyone receives a certificate award. Through the years I have tried a number of different activities to meet everyone's needs and interests to make this event as entertaining as possible. Here are a few ideas that have been most well received.

After taking digital stills of every junior player who was on the court for the summer, we assembled a CD disk which was displayed as a slide-show on a giant screen with the classic song "I had the Time of My Life" starting the luncheon. Each child loved seeing himself or herself with stories being shared about each one. At the end of the luncheon each junior had a personal take-home CD to share with family and friends who were not in attendance.

As lunch was being served a fun-tennis trivia contest took place with everyone receiving 2 to 3 gifts each.

After lunch a major Wii Tennis Tournament took place. Believe me, it was as competitive as the Finals in Kalamazoo as many of the kids show their Wii skills.

The highlight of the outing was our "SPIN CHAMPIONSHIPS". With a jumbo 8-player draw sheet posted, each junior was given a personal draw sheet. The kids then choose a Spin Championship player they predicted to win. Their selected choices were next collected.

Here's how the "Spin Championships" tournament was conducted. Four (4) racquets had a picture and name of each of the 1st round opponents on each face of the frame. The tournament is conducted as a "spin of the racket" game with the winner of each match determined by the player (picture/name) that is facing up after the spin.

With tremendous excitement and eagerness throughout the room, every one of the juniors watched to see if his or her player's picture would come face up and win that round. It was as if each of the kids was witnessing the thrill of being at a legalized Las Vegas casino for kids.

The Spin Championships game was then played as a normal tournament with quarterfinals leading to semifinals, finals and eventual winner. Two (2) racquets were used for the semifinals with the opponent's picture and name on opposite faces of the racquet. The finals obviously were conducted with one (1) racquet and opposing players on each face. Then the culmination of tournament took place with a championship spin to reveal the tournament champion. Of course all of the children who choose the winner of the tournament became contest winners themselves.

31) "SERVE - A - THON"

Submitted by: John McWilliams

Tennis Across Montgomery Is an annual event I started 13 years ago to raise funds for the Family Sunshine Center in their fight against child abuse and family violence.

This year's event raised \$38,000 plus, which includes the Serve-A Thon and Corporate Sponsors. The Serve-A-Thon is an Idea that I had to raise funds for this worthy charity. Each server (tennis players and non players) get friends, family and associates to sponsor their fastest serve.

Participants will serve 5 balls into a larger than normal service court (marked by cones). The fastest serve of the five will be used to compute the pledge amount. Sponsors may pledge \$.10, 25, 50, 75, \$1.00 for each mile per hour served. For example, if the participant serves 70 mph and a sponsor pledges \$.50 per mile the total donation will be \$35.00. This simple idea has raised thousands of dollars over the 13 years the event has been held. It has drawn the attention of the local media is featured by the local TV, Radio and Newspapers every year. Also my slogan of "Serve an Ace Against Child Abuse" has been very popular.

In addition to The Serve-A-Thon, each year I conduct a clinic to introduce the game to the less fortunate boys and girls who can't afford to take lessons. Each participant is given a "T" shirt and is treated to a lunch donated by local restaurants. I have a staff made up of fellow USPTA professionals, coaches and tennis players who donate their time. The clinic draws 65 to 80 boys and girls each year. My quote in the local news media of "by putting more kids on the courts we take more kids out of the

courts" has caught on.

Tennis Across Montgomery is part of the USPTA's Tennis Across America and the combination of the Serve-A-Thon and Clinic has exposed the game to thousands and at the same time raised thousands of dollars for a top charity in my area.

32) Transition to USTA Teams

Submitted by: Bill Smith

The Idea:

Assemble a group of aspiring USTA team players who are of a 2.0 to a 2.5 NTRP. Place them on teams as though they were going to compete on the interclub level. Have the pros at the club (or even a few strong players, if there are not enough pros to accommodate the teams) coach the teams. Show them how to warm up; prepare for matches; and play a schedule of matches within their own league. This will give the players an orientation toward interclub league competition, and may allow them to make a comfortable transition to that level of play.

33) Junior Developing Tennis Ladder

Submitted by: Mike See

The Idea:

Include play in junior group lessons. Begin a junior tennis ladder with beginners as soon as players can serve

Beginners: Play two games and a one point tie breaker.

Advance beginners: Play a set and a tie breaker, first to win seven points, win by two.

Intermediate and above: Play a set and a ten point super tie breaker. The preliminary results form a one set ladder.

Finally, a ladder with two sets and a super tie breaker will follow this System.

34) A "good grip" On Your Clientele

Submitted by: Harold Henderson

The Idea:

When restringing a customer's racquet, I always put on a new overgrip.

I do the same during lessons when I see wear on their grip. By buying in quantity the cost is minimal, especially compared to the value of goodwill.

35) Customer Lesson Package

Submitted by: Glenn M. Campbell

The Idea:

I offer different lesson packages: customer prepays for package.

1 hour private lesson, 1 hour ball machine use, 1 free racket stringing, 1 hour free court time practice.

1 hour private lesson, 1 hour ball machine use, 1 hour free court time practice.

1 hour private lesson, 1 free racket stringing, 1 hour free court time practice.

4 - 1/2 hour private lessons, 1 hour free court time practice.

8 - 1 hour clinics (2 clinics a week), 1 free 1/2 hour private lesson.

Sales package - 1 hour private lesson free every time you refer 3 new players and they take a lesson.

36) New Member Orientation

Submitted by: Gordon Collins

The Idea:

For all New Members or Prospects, I recommend scheduling them for their initial hit during a busy time at the club. If possible, you want to schedule this hit when other players of the same level/rating are playing - and on a court next to them. That way, during the initial hit, you can introduce the prospect/Member and set up a few quick games - Right Away! The chance of keeping the Member for a long time or the recruitment of a prospect can be greatly increased if the initial "hit" is orchestrated properly!

37) "Play the Pro"

submitted by: Jim Monk, Tennis Director

The Idea:

Objective(s): Lesson revenue, Building pro staff/member relations, Ensuring the necessity for staff to keep their playing skills polished, Member respect of teaching staff.

What it is: Any member can challenge the pro to play one set i.e. 8 game pro set, and if the member wins they do not pay for the pro's time. If (when!) they lose, they do pay.

If you have a large staff of varied ages, you make make the challenge age appropriate if necessary. Or you may designate one of your staff as "The Man or Woman" for challenges. The members who pursue this opportunity will appreciate the "possibility" of bragging rights, and not paying.

38) Introduce A Friend to Tennis Day

Submitted by: Chuck Reisig

The Idea:

It is very simple have an event in which a current player invites a non tennis playing friend. You run progression drills in which the current player helps teach the new player.

Keep it simple or make a big deal out of it with lunch and prizes.

39) WHAT DO YOU DO FOR YOUR STUDENTS

THAT IS VALUE ADDED?

Submitted by: Notes from the 2007 LA / MS Chapter workshop roundtable

- Play tennis with the members.
- Low cost beginner programs.
- Have the member help you string their racquet. They learn what the skill involves.
- Serve as a match making service or lesson making service. Help get people to play with or help put a group together if someone is concerned about the cost of lessons.
- Give a grip or dampener away with a string job.
- Watch your students play matches.
- Set up matches for junior players.
- Offer overnight stringing if you have a machine at your house.
- Offer lesson package deals.
- Never held a racquet free clinic?
- Show sincere interest in your students. Know what is going on in their lives and what the big events are.
- Have a special fund to offer a free mixer for your adult members.
- Offer 10% off in the shop when it rains. It becomes a bonus for your students to get rained out instead of a drag.
- Call the student the day before to remind them of their lesson coming up tomorrow. (Helps you too in case they cancel you can fill that time).
- Buy them a beer or soft drink and have one with them if it is last lesson of the day. You become part of their group.
- Give them your business card with the time and date of their next lesson on the back.
- Train your staff to call the member by name when they come in the pro shop.
- Video a stroke they are having difficulty with at no charge and let them see what you see.

40) Reward the Supporter

Submitted by: Paul Bartholomai

The Idea:

Each month I am going to choose a member who has had an impact on the tennis program at the club.

After I select the winner, I will send that person a personal thank you card and a gift, such as free 3 month membership for the ball machine club, string job, grip or a 30 minute private lesson.

41) Lesson Opening Lists

Submitted by: Neil Witherow

The Idea:

At the end of each week, I send out an e-mail to my students with open times for the coming week, and those students who don't have a set weekly time, or want extra lessons, can reply if they want the time. Also, if I get a cancellation, I can send out an e-mail rather than getting on the Phone.

42) It's In the Details

Submitted by: Heather Silvia

The idea:

Have a challenge ladder posted in your breezeway to motivate your academy juniors.

Whenever awards are given out, have the sportsmanship award the biggest and the best to prove its importance.

Have pictures of events posted up and e-mailed out to those who attended the event.

When you have away teams come to your facility, have a welcome flyer with the team's name on it.

Give all of your teams a sportsmanship/etiquette tip and a rule to focus on at all practices.

Make three phone calls a day to members that you haven't seen in awhile.

Give your academy kids fun quizzes and tests on scoring, distance of the court and tiebreakers.

43) Lesson Cancellations

Submitted by: Neil Witherow

The Idea:

To avoid problems, I explain our lesson cancellation policy to new students, which is that we charge the student half of their lesson fee if he/she cancels on the same day, regardless of the reason. This accomplishes 2 things:

1. Many students get mad if you charge them the whole amount, even if it's their fault that they missed the lesson. They seem to be okay with charging half.
2. This reduces lame excuses and lies about why he/she missed the lesson, to try to get out of being charged.