



## FALL 2023

The mission of the USPTA Board of Directors is to grow tennis and to facilitate the success of all USPTA Pros. This newsletter is one tool we employ to fulfill our mission. Therefore, our newsletter provides information, tips, and resources to help you succeed and grow the game of tennis.

### LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT — ANDY ZODIN

Dear Intermountain Pros-

It is the final time as your President, that I will wish you a happy and healthy holiday season. The time has come for Tom Van de Hey and myself to step aside for the new leadership team, with Karl Jones as President, and Leanne Palmisano as Executive Director. Tom and I could not possibly be more confident that they will continue to keep Intermountain strong and vibrant, as we go into 2024 and beyond.



I would personally like to again thank all of you for the incredible support you all have shown over the past 6 years, allowing me the honor of a three-term presidency. I'm so proud of what we have accomplished as a team, during this time. Our relationship with the USTA has been strong and productive. Our relationships with one another have been, as well. Our reputation on a national level has never been better than it is right now, and that is a testament to how well we have worked TOGETHER.

Thank you again, from the bottom of my heart for allowing me the honor of doing what I have done for the last 6 years. And thank you Tom Van de Hey and Rob Scott for your leadership and support during these years. The two of you, above all else, are the reason we are so strong right now. And with Karl, Leanne, and an incredibly capable Board stepping in on January 1st, USPTA Intermountain will forge ahead positively and productively.

Happy Holidays to all of you and your families!

With great humility...

Andy Zodin  
Director of Tennis, Columbine Country Club  
President, USPTA Intermountain Division



## **Changes to the USPTA Intermountain Division**

- ◆ Andy Zodin steps down after three terms as President
- ◆ Tom Van De Hey retires after nine years as Executive Director
- ◆ New Board of Directors
  - ⇒ President - Karl Jones
  - ⇒ Regional Vice-President - Matt Helm
  - ⇒ Treasurer - Laurie Lambert
  - ⇒ Secretary - Ginger Phillips
  - ⇒ Vice-President - Marshall Carpenter
  - ⇒ Vice-President - Dan Maccanello
- ◆ Rob Scott elected to National USPTA Board of Directors
- ◆ Kevin Theos (USPTA National Board Member) moves to Intermountain Division
- ◆ Leanne Palmisano hired as Executive Director after retiring from Crestmoor Swim and Tennis Club

### **Longtime USPTA Member Steps Up**

Following the retirement of Tom Van De Hey, Leanne Palmisano has stepped up to become the next USPTA Intermountain Executive Director. Her background includes thirty-three years as the Director of Tennis at the Crestmoor Swim and Tennis Club. A former college player and college coach, her skills in programming, budgeting, and building community relations make her a good fit for the position.

Her certifications in tennis and pickleball are current in today's marketplace and finally she just received the Bud Robineau Award in appreciation for her service to the Colorado tennis community.

As you can see, the USPTA Intermountain is fortunate to have Leanne.

# ***Save The Date!***

**Intermountain Divisional Conference**  
**Feb 20-22, 2024**

## Matt Helm, Colorado

### 2023 USPTA World Tennis Conference

I always come back energized after attending a USPTA World Tennis Conference. This year's conference in Orlando was the same. There were so many great speakers that shared their passion for the sport of tennis whether it was an on-court or classroom style presentation. What I also found so valuable this year was the opportunity to spend time with others from our Intermountain Division.

I believe we all work so hard that we often do not have much time to get together while we are doing the day-to-day grind at our clubs. I enjoyed eating meals together, having drinks, racing cars at Andretti racing with Tom Van De Hey, playing pop a shot basketball in the hotel game room with Leanne Palmisano, and celebrating Gonzo receiving a national award and getting a picture with Chrissy Evert.

Aside from the fun, I also learned a lot about how other clubs operate and got a lot of great ideas from the many conversations that were had during the 4 days. I highly recommend attending a world conference when you can. Reach out to your boss or club manager and urge them to support your continued and required education through the USPTA. You can pretty much knock out your three-year education requirement at one world conference.

In the meanwhile, our Intermountain Virtual Conference is just months away. This is a great opportunity to support our division, our speakers, and the variety of topics that will be presented.



Matt Helm  
USPTA Intermountain Vice President

## Leanne Palmisano, Colorado

### USPTA WC in Orlando



Leanne Palmisano  
Incoming Executive Director



## DISTRICT UPDATES

### Ginger Phillips, Colorado

#### Denver Tennis Park Learning Community

Earl Reed, of the Positive Coaching Alliance, certified 37 coaches and 9 USPTA coaches at his presentation at Denver Tennis Park on Friday, November 10. The Double Goal focus of Striving to Win while Teaching Life Lessons was another of the ongoing presentations provided by the Denver Tennis Park Learning Community, free of charge, to add to coaches' ongoing education.

The next free presentation will be on Sunday, Dec. 3 from 2:30-5:30:

#### Play Facilitators Workshop

Player-Centered approach to working with beginner players of all ages.

Contact Kristy Harris at USTA to sign up for this at [kristy@coloradotennis.com](mailto:kristy@coloradotennis.com).

There will also be another presentation on Monday, Jan. 16 from 10 am-12 noon, presented free of charge to all coaches:

#### DU Coaches Clinic

DU Tennis Coaches Drew Eberly, Paul Wardlaw

Contact Mike Phillips at DTP to sign up for this at [mikephillips6060@gmail.com](mailto:mikephillips6060@gmail.com).

Ginger Phillips  
USPTA Intermountain Secretary

### Scott Potter, Montana

#### Montana Fall

Fall is a busy time of the year in Montana with the USTA Montana Annual Meeting, Watson Children's Shelter Tennis Pro-Am, and the indoor season getting underway at our seven indoor facilities around the state.

USPTA members Brad Knutson, Scott Potter, Dirk Baker, and Devon Sikora all serve on the USTA Montana Board of Directors (Annual Meeting October 21 & 22) and help with the mission of this organization to promote the game of tennis in Montana. Thank you for serving on this board and growing the game.

The 13th Annual Watson Children's Shelter Tennis Pro-am was held October 5-8, 2023 at Peak Health and Wellness in Missoula. Thirty-two local, regional, and former ATP/WTA tour professionals converged on the racquet club to partake in a live pro-auction, junior pro-am, pro-pro winner-take-all tournament, and a four-round pro-am tournament over 3 days.

It was a great weekend with a total of \$160,000 being raised for Watson Children's Shelter serving the greater western Montana region. Planning for 2024 is already underway and everyone looks forward to hearing the dates for 2024.



Scott Potter, Director of Tennis  
Peak Health and Wellness  
District President Montana  
[scott@peakmissoula.com](mailto:scott@peakmissoula.com)

### Karl Jones, Nevada

#### Be Mindful How Close You Are to the Net

Closing the net is an important skill in doubles but consider these questions:

*Are you willing/able to run back and retrieve a lob?*  
If yes, then close tight to the net, if no, stay within a few feet of the service line.

*How effective is your volley? Is it low and does it penetrate the court?*  
If your volley gets you ahead in the point, look to close. If it's slow and high, be careful closing at all.

*How effective is your opponent's lob?*  
If your opponent has lobbed you successfully 2-3 times then hold off closing too tight to the net.

Always move forward to meet the volley, but how far you close depends on variables. Lastly, remember that lobbing is a tactic and the match is already lost if your mindset goes negative. Stay away from the trap that it's not "real tennis." It is real tennis and incredibly effective if you are closing the net with reckless abandon. So, embrace the chess game that is tennis and adjust your positioning to crack the code in front of you.

Warmest Regards,

Karl Jones  
Director of Tennis  
theclubatrollinghills.org  
kjones@theclubatrollinghills.org

### Josh Cossitt, Wyoming

#### Evolutionary Factors of the Modern Forehand

The modern tennis forehand is a powerful and dynamic stroke that has become a crucial weapon in the arsenal of professional players. Over the years, the forehand has evolved significantly, incorporating new techniques and technologies to maximize its effectiveness on the court.

One of the key developments in the modern tennis

Continued next column

forehand is the use of topspin. Topspin is a type of spin that causes the ball to rotate forward as it travels through the air. This spin allows players to hit the ball with more pace and control, making it difficult for their opponents to return. The topspin also helps the ball to dip in the court after bouncing, making it harder to attack.

To generate topspin, players employ a more pronounced upward swing path. By brushing up the back of the ball, players create the necessary spin to produce a heavy topspin shot. This technique not only adds power, it also improves consistency, as topspin helps to keep the ball in the court.

Another crucial aspect of the modern forehand is the open stance. Traditionally, players used a closed stance where the feet are parallel to the net. With the rise of faster-paced games and the need for quicker footwork, the open stance has become more prevalent. In the open stance, the front foot is positioned slightly towards the net, allowing players to rotate their hips and shoulders more efficiently, generating more power and enabling them to hit the ball earlier.

In addition to technical advancements, equipment has also played a significant role in shaping the modern forehand. The development of lighter and stiffer rackets has allowed players to generate more power with less effort. The larger head sizes provide a larger sweet spot, increasing the chances of hitting the ball cleanly and reducing mishits.

Furthermore, use of polyester strings has become widespread. These strings offer greater control and durability, allowing players to hit the ball with more spin and pace without compromising on accuracy. The combination of modern rackets and strings has revolutionized the forehand stroke, enabling players to hit the ball harder and with more precision than ever before.

The modern forehand also emphasizes the importance of footwork and balance. Players are now more aware of their positioning on the court, allowing them to get into optimal position to strike the ball. This improved footwork enables players to generate more power and hit the ball at the peak of its bounce, taking away time from their opponents and putting them on the defensive.

Overall, the modern tennis forehand has evolved into a formidable weapon that combines power, spin, and accuracy. Topspin, open stance, advanced equipment, and improved footwork have all contributed to the development of this stroke. As the game continues to evolve, it will be fascinating to see how the forehand evolves further and what new techniques and technologies emerge to push the boundaries of this essential shot in tennis.

Josh Cossitt  
USPTA Wyoming - District President

## 2.5 Initiative Winners

22 years ago, I was a young mom with two small kids and had just moved to Idaho Falls from Mesa, Arizona. I was in a new town, with new neighbors, and was suffering from postpartum depression. When my neighbor asked if I would go with her to weight lifting classes at our local fitness club, I decided to give it a try. After a few months, we saw a sign advertising Adult Beginner Tennis Lessons, which looked like fun, so we signed up! Five weeks and five lessons later, I was having a blast and wanted to keep playing. I received a phone call from a USTA Coordinator asking if I wanted to play competitive tennis and if I would captain a team. I answered with a whole hearted yes. I met friends, was getting exercise, was outside in the sunshine, and it wasn't long until the postpartum depression was just a memory.

I started playing tennis a couple of times a week while my kids were in school. I always wanted to be on the court! I started helping with junior lessons, officiating our local community tennis association and eventually got USPTA certified. I had found my calling. I loved having flexible hours and loved teaching. It's been 22 years and I'm still on the court. Now, I'm the instructor teaching the Adult Beginner Class. Helping other people find the same joy in tennis that I have is the highlight of my day.

Several years ago, I was introduced to the 2.5 initiative. I know most teaching pros are only interested in the high performance students, but the heart and growth of USTA lies in the 2.5 and 3.0 levels. I participated in the 2.5 initiative in 2023 and was rewarded with an all-expense paid trip to the USPTA World Conference in Orlando, Florida. I spent four days learning about every aspect of tennis, including skills, games, drills, mental health issues, inclusivity, empowering women, new equipment, software, food, fun and friendship. The conference was an amazing experience and one that I hope will make me a better teaching professional. Did I mention that I got to meet Chris Evert??

One of the things I love about tennis is that it is a lifelong sport. It is a game that can be enjoyed by people of all ages and fitness levels, and it is never too late to start playing. Tennis can provide a fun date night, new friendships, increased fitness and agility, mental alertness, stress reduction, and is proven to add years onto a person's life. Tennis can even give a young mother a much needed outlet and a new career path.

Participate in the 2.5 Initiative. Celebrate 2.5 players, encourage them to play for fun, play for competition, and play for health. Find ways to combine games and drills for all ages and skill levels. You will be helping others, your community, the USTA, and most of all, yourself!

Jenell Lester

The 2023 USPTA World Conference was simply...amazing. From the very large, beautiful, and accommodating Rosen Shingle Creek Resort, to the knowledgeable guest speakers, to the "extras" provided by the USPTA, the experience during the week was spectacular. It is always good for the soul to see familiar, friendly faces (and meet new ones) who are always perfecting their tennis craft. Just being in the presence of such great tennis professionals it is easy to absorb their enthusiasm and expertise. I have pages and pages of notes from various drill sessions, junior development workshops, nutrition and physical development discussions, and a character development forum. All of which I have shared with my colleagues at the Denver Tennis Park. WE ALL BENEFIT!

Another huge benefit of the World Conference was the ability to network at various meals provided by the USPTA ☺ with tennis professionals and vendors all over the country. Many of which I am still in contact for a variety of reasons, including employment opportunities, tactical drills, and new ways to structure tennis programming.

The true highlights of the week were listening to Brian Gottfried and Chris Evert. Brian Gottfried's session included encouraging time-tested techniques that still should be taught to current players, i.e., the backhand slice, while giving tidbits of tennis history and fun/entertaining stories of his days as a junior and on the tour. I loved the Q&A with Chris Evert moderated by Steve Flink. From discussing her early days on the tour, playing with all-time greats, and her coveted friendships, it was (for me) a nostalgic and historical tour of 1970's and 80's and our beloved tennis pros who are still icons today. "Chrissie" is certainly one of a kind and her genuine humility and kindness was more than evident.

Thank you USPTA Intermountain for the opportunity to attend the 2023 USPTA World Conference. It truly was a splendid week to remember. I plan to make the World Conference an event I attend every year.

So thankful...

Ed Anderson

## Do Tell

Please share your tennis knowledge and tips with Intermountain Pros. Simply write an article and send it in a Word doc or text in an email along with pics to Tom Van De Hey: [tomuspta1@gmail.com](mailto:tomuspta1@gmail.com).



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