



Vancouver Tennis
& Racquetball Center

VTC Monthly Times

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Vancouver Tennis Center
5300 E 18th St, Vancouver, WA
(360) 696-3123

MAY 2010

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Registration for Summer Camp with Greg Patton now open for Juniors and Adults.
- Ladies Flights: May 3rd, 10th, 17th & 24th .
- Girls 4A HS Districts May 14th & 15th.
- Girls 1-A HS Districts May 21st.
- No Saturday Jr. Lessons May 1st, 15th, 22nd or 29th.
- WA 3A HS State Tournament, May 28th & 29th. No Men's Day, Jr. Lessons or Jr. Team Cup.
- Memorial Day - May 31st. No Junior or Adult Group Lessons.
- GS #2, French Doubles entry deadline May 31.

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City of
VANCOUVER
WASHINGTON

Member Spotlight: Dennis Nielson ~ Player, Coach, and Innovator ~

By: Laurel Cripe

For Vancouver Tennis Center

Dennis Nielson says that while tennis is not the "be-all, end-all", it can give you a focus in life and be a great clearinghouse for your mind. If that's true, Dennis must have a very clear mind, because his current VTC court time includes hitting on the ball machine from 6:45 to 8:00 am every weekday, playing doubles 3 or 4 times a week, and singles 2 or 3 times a week. The only significant time he can remember missing playing was 4 months a couple of years ago when he pulled a calf muscle.

Dennis and his wife, Eileen, have been members of VTC since they moved to Vancouver from Bend, Oregon in 2000 to be closer to family. Dennis spent 27 years teaching and coaching tennis and basketball at Bend High School, taking home 2 Girls' Team Oregon State Championship trophies and 3 individual state Girls' Doubles titles. Prior to his time in Bend, Dennis coached basketball and tennis for 10 years in Santa Barbara, California.

Dennis didn't start his own tennis playing career in high school, where he played baseball and basketball, as he says at that time tennis wasn't considered a sport that a self-respecting male athlete would play. He is a self-taught player, who improved his own game by watching and studying tennis in order to be a better coach. His most recent tournament victories came in April, when he won both the Men's Singles and Doubles titles in the 70's age group at the Amber Senior Classic, playing down from his regular 75 age group. Dennis & Eileen are headed south in May, for Dennis to compete in the USTA National 75 Outdoor Hardcourt Champi-

onships at Rancho Santa Fe, California. Dennis previously has won a USTA bronze ball in the doubles at the 75 National Indoors, and a silver ball at the 75 National Outdoors.

And while Dennis is no longer coaching high school teams, he is still getting in plenty of teaching. He & Eileen spend the winter in their 5th wheel trailer at Caliente Springs RV Resort in the Palm Springs area, which has 2 lighted tennis courts. Dennis offered to start tennis programs for the RVers at the "55 and better" resort, and has grown his programs to have 20 or more players out every morning doing drills, and his phone list of active tennis players in the RV community has grown to include over 90 players. Dennis can easily keep tabs on all those players, as the Nielson's 5th-wheeler is parked adjacent to the tennis courts, fulfilling his long-time ambition to have a tennis court in his backyard. After years of watching virtually all the matches that Dennis coached and played, Eileen, who teaches water aerobics at Caliente Springs, took up tennis several years ago, and says Dennis is a very patient teacher.

Not content with filling the courts with tennis players in the mornings, Dennis created a program he calls "Softennis", to get previous players and new players out on the courts in the afternoon. Softennis is similar to the Quickstart program used at VTC for the juniors, using foam balls and decreasing the size of the court. Because Pickleball, a game played with solid paddles & a wiffle ball on a badminton-sized court, is so popular in the area, Dennis incorpo-



rated some Pickleball rules into Softennis. When visitors at Caliente Springs ask where they can play Pickleball, Dennis routs them into Softennis. He says one of the advantages of Softennis is that with the foam ball, there is no intimidation factor, so different abilities and the women & men can play together.

Dennis & Eileen feel very fortunate to have a life they thoroughly enjoy, and though invited by friends to try other places and activities, they have no desire to change what Dennis laughingly describes as "living in Nirvana"!

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MONTHLY DUES!**

Sponsor a nonmember and get 1 month free dues

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Ask the VTC Front Desk Staff for details or contact Robbie at 759-4446 for more information

This is an on going referral promotion. No expiration date and no limit

~ COACHES CORNER ~

Crush that Sitter!

by *Kevin Eby - VTC Professional*

Most coaches will tell you to do a split step before every volley. It makes you lighter for a second and enables you to change directions quickly. Some coaches prefer to think of it as more of a "touch and go" than a split step. Most of the time this is sound advice, but not on a sitter.



If you see a floater, get up to the ball as quickly as possible to put it away. Doing a split step here just delays contact with the ball, which gives your opponent more time and requires you to volley from a deeper position on the court. That's not good.

1. If your opponent hits a floater, don't delay contact with a split step.
2. Move up to the ball quickly.
3. Using your forward momentum, NOT A BIGGER BACKSWING, move forward and crush that sitter!

~ FITNESS CORNER ~

Todd Anderson—Personal Trainer

Ending Tennis Elbow



Tennis Elbow afflicts many players sometime over their tennis career. People tend to use more shoulder and wrist to strike the ball instead of using a rotational movement. By developing a strong core and rotating through the ball you can minimize the stress on your elbow.

A few exercises done 3 to 4 times a week can develop a stronger core. Crunches, planks and lower back extensions are great,

Senior 8.0 Mixed Team Update— So Close at Nationals!

The VTC Senior 8.0 Mixed Team, represented in Florida by Donna Haw, Jim Hopkins, Sue Edmonds, Art Roper, Lynn Annett, Vince Scopacasa, and Greg and Linda Conn, battled through rain delays, heat and humidity, and defeated the eventual national champions, but came up a few tiebreakers short of playing for the national title.

In their first 2 round-robin matches, the VTC teams came up a few points short in all 3 of the 3rd set match tiebreakers they played, leaving them with an 0-2 record. In their last round robin match, VTC came back strong, with Greg & Linda at #1 and Jim & Sue at #3 winning third set tiebreaks, to defeat the previously undefeated team from

the Middle States Section. The Middle States team moved on to the semifinals by having lost fewer games than the other two teams in the bracket, and eventually defeated Northern California to

win the National Title.

VTC team captain Greg Conn notes that winning 2 of those first 3 match tiebreaks would have given VTC the best record in their section, sending them into the semifinals. The extremely close nature of all the matches underscores what an achievement it is for



Front: Donna Haw, Sue Edmonds, Lynne Annett Middle: Linda Conn, Jim Hopkins, Vince Scopacasa Back: Greg Conn, Art Roper

any team to make it to nationals, and what outstanding successes those banners displayed around the VTC courts truly represent!

Grand Slam Summer Camp Registration



Featuring: **Greg Patton!**

NCAA Coach of the year in 1997, and coached the St. Louis Aces WTT, including Andy Roddick and Anna Kournikova.~

July 18th-22nd, 2010

**Ages 7-18 years old
Rookies to Champs**

Call or go online to register now!

www.vancouvertenniscenter.com

360-696-8123

It's Not Just for Kids!

**Adult event with Greg:
Wed, July 21 6-8:30pm
Register at the front desk!**

but add some rotational movements to mimic your tennis stroke: a right elbow to left knee crunch movement, side to side movement with a medicine ball while lying back on a stability ball and cable pulls while practicing your forehand and backhand.

In a few weeks of adding these moves to your workout regimen you should begin to notice less pain in your elbow.