

# USPTA'S TENNIS ACROSS AMERICA™

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***Good for you, great for the game***

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**U**SPTA's Tennis Across America™ is different than other free lesson programs because its focus is gaining recognition for USPTA-certified professionals. Tennis Across America™ began in 1990 as a way to increase the player base, and hundreds of thousands have been reached. At the same time, USPTA members can piggyback local promotion of their own programs and businesses on the national publicity campaign administered by the World Headquarters. It's the perfect opportunity to enhance *your* grassroots programs *your way*.

## **Your Tennis Across America kit contains:**

- Ideas for optional activities
- A sample lesson plan
- Promotional tips that will help you publicize your event
- A colorful poster for promoting your event (provided in the March issue of *ADDvantage* magazine)
- Press information. Fill in the appropriate blanks on the public service announcement and press release (photocopy or create your own) and deliver them to newspapers and television and radio stations.
- A free lesson sign-up sheet
- A form to register your event with USPTA
- Grant information (located on our Web site in the USPTA Foundation section)

***Tennis Across America is a national program that is celebrated in May, George Bacso Month.***



**T**ennis Across America is a great opportunity to increase lessons, pro shop sales and exposure for you, your staff and your facility. The options are endless – put your imagination to work.

## Suggested guidelines

### Run a 90-minute clinic

Introduce yourself and your staff to the participants. Briefly discuss USPTA and how it promotes tennis at the grassroots level through the three segments of Tennis Across America:

- Tennis Across America
- Tennis Around the World
- Tennis Across America multicultural clinics

Point out tennis' lifetime benefits and how your teaching programs can help improve players' skills.

The depth of your clinic will depend upon the skill levels of your participants. Your clinic may include juniors and adults with various skill levels. The sample lesson plan is ideal for social-level players. It is designed to get the students playing quickly while having fun. For more advanced players, you may wish to incorporate a drill format.

### Review the clinic

Allow 10 to 15 minutes to review the points discussed in the clinic and have a question-and-answer session. Explain the importance of regular practice and offer practice tips, such as how to use backboards and ball machines. This is a good time to distribute information on lessons, clinics and pro shop merchandise. Perhaps you can also take this time to explain your USPTA certification and how it benefits students.

### Optional activities

#### **Conduct a free demo**

If your facility has a pro shop, you may wish to conduct a free demo session to encourage clinic participants to try new products. This would also be an excellent time to have a pro shop sale, since most shops are fully stocked with spring and summer goods.

#### **How about Little Tennis<sup>®</sup>, Cardio Tennis or ...?**

Add a little excitement to your events by doing something different. For example, plan a Little Tennis clinic and invite parents and children to participate or stage a Cardio Tennis demonstration to introduce fitness to your members who are aerobic enthusiasts. Other events could focus on junior players or adults. Why not try and go a step further and have your members bring a guest to participate in a member-guest clinic? This way you reach out to possible new members. There are many things you can do to change your Tennis Across America clinics from year to year. Remember, by holding a Tennis Across America clinic you are helping to not only build your programs, but also you are helping to spread the game of tennis to new, current and former players.

#### **Run a social round robin and serve lunch**

Assign each player a number and begin with social round-robin doubles. Play may be divided into men's and women's doubles. This is a great public relations opportunity. Have the teaching staff socialize with the participants and offer advice and tennis tips.

Your social program can include a reasonably priced luncheon or cookout at the courts. This is an opportunity to show off your facility's amenities.

### Other programming options

#### **Share the effort and rewards**

Combine efforts with other professionals. Hold the event at a facility that will open to the public. Have each professional run a different activity on each court and rotate participants at regular intervals. Each pro can provide literature about his or her programs, letting participants choose a follow-up program according to location, availability and rapport with the professional.

#### **Go on the road**

Take your free clinic to a community event, such as a health fair, that may be held in a city park with courts or enough free space for a children's short court.

#### **Private clubs can participate, too**

At a private club, promote a free clinic to members who don't regularly use the tennis facility or ask tennis players to bring a nonmember friend to a special clinic and social. Also, the Tennis Across America theme can be used for an event other than a clinic, such as a tournament.



The following lesson plan is based on a series of progressions to help tennis professionals handle clinic participants with varying degrees of tennis experience and ability. However, all players should not be expected to make it through every step of each progression. While this lesson plan concentrates on the forehand groundstroke, many of the same progressions may be used to teach the backhand. The lesson should last approximately 90 minutes.

\*If you would like a more detailed sample lesson plan, please contact the World Headquarters at 800-USPTA-4U.

**I. Introduction (2 min.)**

**II. Warm-up (5 min.)**

**III. Ball-handling drills (10 min.)**

- A. Bump-ups
- B. Bump-downs
- C. Bump-ups with a bounce

**IV. Forehand basics (8 min.)**

- A. Demonstrate the grip.
- B. Practice self-feeds with the nondominant hand.
- C. Explain contact point and the length of the backswing and follow-through.
- D. Have players drop-hit balls from 5 feet from the net, from the service line and halfway between the service line and the baseline.

**V. Toss and hit (10 min.)**

Have pairs face each other across the net, each standing inside the service line. Place targets midway between the net and the service line.

- A. Teach players to feed to one another by controlled toss.
- B. Have one partner toss and the other hit the ball back, using controlled toss and hit and then switch.
- C. Let the players take two steps back and then try to rally with one another using the same gentle taps again.
- D. When players reach the service line, have them start points with a self-drop and rally until they miss. If players can get five in a row, move them farther back.
- E. Have players count consecutive hits as partners or hold a contest for most consecutive hits.

**VI. Play mini-tennis (8 min.)**

**VII. Serve (25 min.)**

- A. **Trap** – Students extend their arms, reaching their racquets upward, use an underhand toss and trap the ball against the fence as it reaches its peak. Discuss proper grip.
- B. **Tray** – The forearm and palm of the hand are laid back so that the racquet face is in the position of a tray carried above the head of a waiter.
- C. **V position** – The elbow is high with the racquet hung back from the wrist (almost in back-scratch position).
- D. **Full serve** – Racquet drops behind the back, making a loop before coming forward to trap the ball as it reaches its peak.  
Note: Students may not progress to a full serve in this lesson. Throughout the service lesson, ask them to use the service motion closest to the full serve with which they have success.
- E. Use the step of the service motion progression with which the students are most comfortable (e.g., the trap, tray, V position or full serve).
  - 1. Throw at the target
  - 2. Shadow a serve
  - 3. Serve at the target

If players do not hit the target with the serve, have them continue to throw, shadow and then serve. When they hit their target, players should take one step back and repeat the sequence. Note: If the toss is keeping players from having success, have those players return to the toss and trap the ball as in the first serving practice drill.

- F. **Target game (5 min.)** – Let the players at the net and the fence serve every ball. They must make one of every two serves (in the service box or in the target area) in order to take a step backward.

- G. **Scoring game (5 min.)** – Again, half the players are on the service line facing the net and half are facing their targets on the fence from 6 feet away. Explain the tennis scoring system, and then have players play a game. Players should get two serves for each point. If they make their first or second serve, they win the point. If they double fault, they lose the point. Without alternating from deuce to ad court, have players keep score for an entire game.

**VIII. Serve and return (10 min.)**

Place two players on each end of the court. The four players each serve once and return once before the whole group is replaced by four more players. The goal of the returners is to get the ball back, aiming for the middle of the court. Points should not be played out. Those waiting may want to shadow the serve or return.

**IX. Doubles play (10 min.)**

Place a doubles team on each baseline. Again, each player should have a chance to serve (each should get two chances at a successful serve) and return. This time, the points should be played out. After four points have been played, bring new doubles teams onto the court.

Be sure at this point to promote your follow-up program, such as Little Tennis, member-guest events or Cardio Tennis programs. This is a critical time for these players. If they do not continue through some type of follow-up program, many will not continue at all.

**Additional notes:**

**Breaks**

- 1. Offer breaks between the forehand and service portions of the lesson. Have half the class break while the other half plays more mini-tennis, and then switch.
- 2. Offer another break after the service lesson and before practicing the serve and return. Have half the class serve, return and play out the points while the other half breaks, and then switch.



**T**ennis Across America is an excellent opportunity to promote tennis as a fun means of physical fitness and to generate publicity for you and your facility. Whether your event is for the public or for club members only, the following steps to promote your clinic can help ensure its success:



## Promotional checklist

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- ✓ Organize committees or solicit pros to assist with various aspects, such as public relations, refreshments and invitations to local dignitaries.
- ✓ Contact local VIPs or dignitaries, such as city council members, the mayor or local celebrities, and invite them to your clinic. Make one of them an honorary chairman, which would provide good photo opportunities for advance news releases and encourage greater publicity through local media.
- ✓ Contact local volunteer groups, such as the Boys Club, the Girl Scouts, community tennis association, high school coaches or the local chamber of commerce, to help organize the event and to increase the number of participants.
- ✓ Ask your facility, CTA, coaches or local parks and recreation department to donate racquets and tennis balls for participants who can't provide their own. If local contributions aren't enough, contact USPTA.
- ✓ Compile a local media list of daily and weekly newspapers, television and radio stations, regional tennis publications, community newspapers and Web sites, as well as contacts at the USPTA national office. You may also wish to include the chamber of commerce, the local tourism bureau and school newspapers. Be sure to gather information regarding deadlines, too.

Your media list should include the names of contacts for:

**Newspaper:** Sports editor, tennis writer, lifestyle editor, photo editor

**Television:** Sports director, news director, assignments editor

**Radio:** News director, sports director, community program hosts

**Internet:** Editors and directors for newspaper, TV, radio and independent Web sites with local and/or event calendars

- ✓ Send a news release to those on your media list announcing the event. Type the appropriate information in the blank spaces on the sample news release provided, or create your own. If you write your own news release, remember these basic rules: The release should be typed and doublespaced; provide your name and phone number where people may reach you for more information; number and label each page; and check for proper spelling and that all facts are correct.
- ✓ Send a public service announcement to the television and radio stations on your media list. You may use the sample public service announcement provided or create your own. If you write your own, follow the same basic rules for news releases and be sure to include the length (30 seconds or 60 seconds) of the announcement for programming purposes. Remember that public service announcements are much shorter than releases for print media.
- ✓ Encourage local soft drink bottling companies, snack distributors and restaurants to gain public exposure by providing free or low-cost refreshments for participants during the event. Hold drawings for donated prizes.
- ✓ Encourage your students to invite friends and family to participate in the event.
- ✓ Display the poster and sign-up sheet included in this packet at your facility or other locations where people will see them.
- ✓ Appoint three people to take photographs of your event and send copies to the local newspaper, the USPTA national office and to other tennis-related publications. Remember to identify those in the photo (from left to right), the location of the event and the host professional. Also, be sure to include your name and phone number and mention that you are a USPTA Professional.
- ✓ Create a follow-up news release with information on the attendance, location, pros who participated and any notable happenings. This release should be sent to those on your media list within 24 hours of the event (preferably the day of the event). Try to write the release before the clinic, so that you may simply fill in the details at the end when time is more pressing.



# NEWS RELEASE

UNITED STATES PROFESSIONAL TENNIS ASSOCIATION, INC.  
World Headquarters, 3535 Briarpark Drive, Suite One, Houston, TX 77042  
713-97-USPTA (978-7782) • fax 713-978-7780  
800-USPTA-4U (877-8248)  
e-mail: [uspta@uspta.org](mailto:uspta@uspta.org) • [www.uspta.com](http://www.uspta.com)

CONTACT: \_\_\_\_\_  
(name)

\_\_\_\_\_ (phone)

\_\_\_\_\_ (date)

## Free tennis lessons offered through USPTA's Tennis Across America™

\_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ will be part  
(club/facility) (city)  
of the nation's biggest tennis event in May that will involve thousands of players hitting countless tennis balls, according to  
\_\_\_\_\_, tennis professional at \_\_\_\_\_.  
(pro) (club/facility)

The 21<sup>st</sup> annual USPTA Tennis Across America™ program is sponsored by the United States Professional Tennis Association. The events will be free to the public and will feature an instructional tennis clinic. Beginners and advanced players, both juniors and adults, as well as those who have never played tennis before, are invited to \_\_\_\_\_  
(club/facility)  
\_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ beginning at \_\_\_\_\_ to participate in this nation-  
(date) (time)  
wide tennis event.

"Millions of Americans have already discovered that tennis is an enjoyable way of keeping fit," said Tim Heckler, CEO of USPTA. "Through this event, we hope to show millions more that it can be fun for them, too, and that tennis is a sport for life."

USPTA is the world's oldest and largest nonprofit organization of tennis-teaching professionals. Tennis Across America is designed to promote tennis as a means of exercise and fun, bringing new players to the game and former players back to the courts.

For more information on USPTA's Tennis Across America, call \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_  
(name)  
\_\_\_\_\_, or contact the USPTA World Headquarters at (800) USPTA-4U. Information about the nationwide program and  
(number)  
player tips are also part of USPTA's Web site at [www.uspta.com](http://www.uspta.com).

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713-97-USPTA (978-7782) • fax 713-978-7780  
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## PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

TIME: \_\_\_\_\_ :30

CONTACT: \_\_\_\_\_  
(name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(phone)

Join the fun \_\_\_\_\_ for a free Tennis Across America™ clinic at \_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

\_\_\_\_\_. The event, sponsored by the United States Profes-  
(club/facility)

sional Tennis Association, will be held from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.  
(starting time) (ending time)

Be among the thousands of players hitting countless tennis balls in this 21<sup>st</sup> annual nationwide celebration

of the sport for a lifetime. Contact \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_.  
(name) (phone)

for more details.

USPTA is a nonprofit organization of tennis-teaching professionals.



# REGISTER! REGISTER! REGISTER!

**C**reated expressly to help grow the game, **USPTA's Tennis Across America™** is for **new** players looking for a fun, social way to exercise, **current** players who want to play more and **former** players who would like to get back into the sport.

## What is Tennis Across America™?

Sponsored by the United States Professional Tennis Association – the world's oldest and largest organization of tennis-teaching professionals – Tennis Across America is an exciting instructional grassroots program consisting of three segments:

- Add a little excitement to your events by doing something different. For example, plan a Little Tennis clinic and invite parents and children to participate or stage a Cardio Tennis demonstration to introduce fitness to your members who are aerobic enthusiasts. Other events could focus on junior players as well as your adult players. Why not try and go a step further and have your members bring a guest to participate in a member-guest clinic? This way you reach out to possible new members. There are many things you can do to change your Tennis Across America clinics from year to year.
- **Free clinics** held during the month of May at public and private facilities across the nation
- **Multicultural clinics** to introduce the sport to groups that do not normally have the opportunity to play

**USPTA's Tennis Across America brings the sport to nearly 150,000 players each year.**

- **Follow-up programs** to provide players with an opportunity to pursue their new enthusiasm for tennis

## Who can run clinics?

Any USPTA professional or tennis enthusiast who wants to help grow the game can participate.

## Why register?

USPTA promotes Tennis Across America through national advertising and publicity campaigns. Calls to USPTA from the public are referred to local pros and clinics nationwide. The public also can find a list of local events at [www.uspta.com](http://www.uspta.com).

## Division awards

1. Member participation in TAA counts toward the annual Division of the Year Award.
2. Plaques will be awarded to the three divisions that recruit the highest number of participants in Tennis Across America.
3. Plaques will also be awarded at the World Conference to the three divisions with the highest percentage of members participating in this program.

## Register for USPTA's Tennis Across America!

To register your event, return the form below to USPTA or sign up on the Internet at [www.uspta.com](http://www.uspta.com). Your registered clinic earns your division points toward national USPTA awards and helps promote your event. Event information will be accepted all year long; however, only those clinics registered before July 1 will count toward division totals for the purpose of the USPTA Awards Program.

Yes, I will participate in USPTA's Tennis Across America as a/an  host professional  assistant

Name \_\_\_\_\_ USPTA member  yes  no Member number \_\_\_\_\_

Contact number \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Date of clinic and time \_\_\_\_\_ My clinic/social will be open to  the public  members only

Facility name \_\_\_\_\_ Multicultural  yes  no

Street address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Facility phone \_\_\_\_\_

The following people will assist at my event:

\_\_\_\_\_ USPTA member  yes  no Member number \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ USPTA member  yes  no Member number \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ USPTA member  yes  no Member number \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ USPTA member  yes  no Member number \_\_\_\_\_

USPTA World Headquarters, 3535 Briarpark Drive, Suite One, Houston TX 77042

**Questions?** Call 713-978-7782 or 800-USPTA-4U, fax 713-978-7780 or send e-mail to [sports@uspta.org](mailto:sports@uspta.org)