Artesia – called “City of Champions” because of its 32 state high school football titles – is giving hundreds of youngsters a head start on future tennis glory.

Instructor Tim Palmer is going into Artesia’s five elementary schools over four weeks in November and December to conduct “Introduction to Tennis” classes for the entire third grade – 280 students.

The program consists of two half-hour sessions in the school gym, using portable nets and orange (low-pressure) balls.

Classes start with bounce warmups – down, up, up alternating sides, and bounce lift (aka self-rally).

The first class covers forehand and backhand; the second focuses on volley and serve, using progressions for each.

Both sessions end with a fun activity – a bounce relay race in the first, “crazy tennis” in the second.

“It’s a challenge to pack everything into 30 minutes,” Palmer said. “You have to keep it moving fast.”

Palmer started going into schools when he lived in Atlanta, Georgia. “PE teachers in both cities embraced the concept,” he said. These coaches assist him during the classes.

The introduction to tennis serves as a recruiting tool for after-school classes which run year-round.

Palmer welcomes any questions about taking tennis into schools.

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