Artesia's three weeklong school breaks have proven to be a great time to get youngsters onto the tennis courts. Though many families use school vacations to travel, enough stay in town that we had good attendance for tennis events at Thanksgiving, Christmas-New Year's and spring break (in March).

An even dozen entries took part in our March 17 practice day and March 18 tournament. As usual for the 3rd- to 8th-grade level, we used the timed 20-minute match format. Players were guaranteed at least two singles matches. Some got a third match during informal doubles play at the end.

Refreshments included cookies with green icing (for Saint Patrick's Day), fruit and granola bars. Players also helped themselves to the national drink of American youth – Capri Sun.

We also offered another popular tournament feature -- the gift bag. Each player received a small sack containing several tennis-oriented items and a Tootsie-Roll Pop or similar treat.



I am always pleasantly surprised at the quality of play in these get-togethers, but I shouldn't be. It stands to reason that a youngster who has been coming to after-school lessons/practice sessions for five months or more – and has played in three competitive tennis events over that span – is starting to play pretty well!

And that makes the coach very happy!

Tim Palmer