Thanksgiving week junior tournament in Artesia

Once a youngster has been introduced to the basics of tennis through beginners' lessons, he or she is ready to experience competition.

A dozen Artesia elementary- and middle-school students from summer and fall lesson programs took part in a youth tournament November 25.

Their weeklong school break for Thanksgiving freed them to play in the Tuesday morning event.

Here's how it worked:

Venue: Matches took place at the Mack Chase Athletic Complex on its 10 newly resurfaced courts.

Format: Timed 20-minute singles matches with no-ad scoring. A blast from an airhorn signaled the start and end of matches. The player leading at the end was the winner. All entrants were guaranteed two matches.

Serve rule. Most of the players served from the baseline; the youngest could serve from the service line. If neither of his/her serves landed in, the server moved to the service line and made an underhand toss into the proper box. There were no double faults.

Court monitors: This is a key element for such a tournament. Two adult players and four high school players filled the role, making sure the competitors served from the correct side, called their own lines, said the score before each point, exchanged congratulations at the end, etc.

Exhibition: Two of the high school varsity players gave a two-game exhibition prior to tournament play.

Awards: Winner, runner-up and losing semi-finalists received a medal on a ribbon. All players received a gift bag containing various tennis-related items.

Refreshments: Water, juice boxes, granola bars.

Buoyed by the success of the fall tournament, Artesia Tennis Association is planning more opportunities for competition during the school district's two-week Christmas break and one-week spring break.

See you on the courts!