

Greetings!

May is officially National Tennis Month in the United States. USTA's 2026 slogan is "In May, We All Play". The focus of this campaign is to grow tennis by encouraging schools, parks and recs, and tennis facilities to host fun events that introduce new players to the sport and to promote the social aspect of tennis.

We as players know the numerous wonderful benefits of tennis. As we age, let me rephrase that, as I age, I become living proof that tennis players live 9.7 years longer than non-tennis players. (Mayo Clinic).

Last month I spoke of Craig Tiley who will soon become the CEO of USTA National. Part of his plan/goal is to focus on tennis in schools. So, I did a little research on the benefits of tennis on youth development. This is what I found in a 2013 USTA Foundation Special Report:

- Adolescents playing tennis are 20% less likely to be overweight
- Adolescents playing tennis are less likely to smoke and drink
- Regardless of socioeconomic levels, tennis players are at a much lower risk of being suspended or expelled from school
- 48% of youth who play tennis get better grades
- 73% are better behaved
- 81% say they will attend college
- 82% are more community-minded and well-rounded

Tennis provides younger players with benefits that go beyond physical activity: teamwork (learning to say "yours"), social skills, sportsmanship, coordination, agility, balance, strategic thinking (lobbing to get back in the point), problem solving (down the middle solves the riddle), and self-confidence.

At this time, the youth of Kentucky are playing high school tennis. With regionals being played in the next few weeks. If you can volunteer at a high school tennis event or just go and cheer for these exceptional young tennis players, please do so.

And for those of you reading this, who may be a little older, tennis helps get you fit, lose weight, burn calories (an hour of singles can burn 580-870 calories. British Journal of Sports Medicine, 2016). Tennis strengthens the heart, muscles, and bones (compared to other sports, tennis players have the lowest incidence of cardiovascular disease. 40-year study conducted by John Hopkins University). Tennis develops hand-eye coordination. (Playing tennis involves several skills that contribute to good hand-eye

coordination – agility, balance, coordination, reaction time). Plus, the fact that playing tennis just 3 hours a week reduces your risk of heart disease by 56%.

Now, why all this information. I had a tennis player question me as to where I acquired my facts, and that player was right to challenge me. So now you can cite the facts and know you are on your game when you speak to the benefits of our wonderful sport.

Fun Tennis Fact:

The oldest tennis court in the world is still played on today. Between 1526 and 1529, Cardinal Wolsey had the first tennis court erected at Hampton Court Palace. Henry VIII was a brilliant tennis player when he was younger, spending hours on this Court. When his second wife, Anne Boleyn, was seized and transported to the Tower of London, she was betting on a game of tennis. She even complained about not being able to claim her prize! (Verification of this: I was there! Not!)

Enjoy National Tennis Month!

See you on the court!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'John' or similar, written in a cursive style.