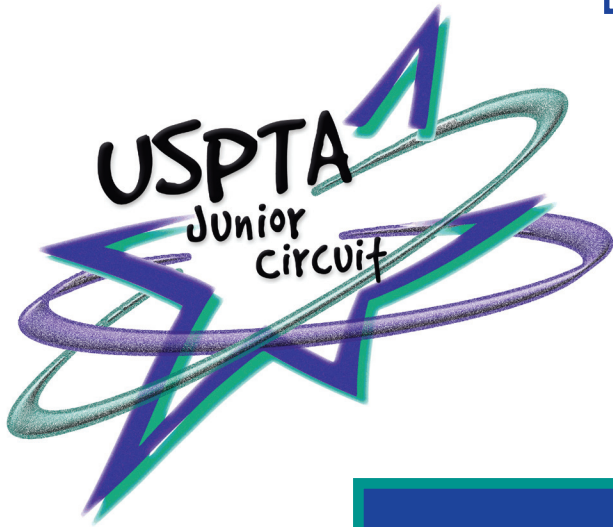


The USPTA

Junior Circuit™



Tennis teachers are challenged each season to create new and exciting programs that will entice junior players and increase action on the courts. The USPTA Junior Circuit will not only increase play, but it will also build a revenue source and create valuable public relations exposure for USPTA professionals. The excitement generated by the program will also result in recognition for host facilities and build enthusiasm for the sport throughout the community.

The USPTA Junior Circuit was conceived and developed by teaching professionals to fit the specific needs of their students and cities. Like all USPTA programs, this activity is designed to give ultimate control to local teaching pros. So, in addition to promoting and increasing local tennis activity, the entire program is controlled by local pros, who know what will work best in a particular location or for a distinct group of customers.

Best of all, it places no requirements or restrictions on tennis teachers or on the beginner competitors. This program provides beginner players with opportunities for competition. It's about fun and camaraderie. The aim of the program is to make it easy for anyone to participate, including teaching pros, junior players, parents and entire communities.

The program guide on the following pages will explain how the USPTA Junior Circuit works, provide some ideas for implementing the program and outline the benefits to the entire tennis community.

What is a USPTA Junior Circuit?

A USPTA Junior Circuit is a series of tournaments created to introduce lower-level players to competition and allow them to prepare for higher-level competition. The keys to tournament success are flexibility and local control.

Key elements for a USPTA Junior Circuit include:

- A series of tournaments – The number of tournaments should be based on what will work in a particular community.
- Tournaments that target lower-level competitors or recreational players – Advanced players already have a sanctioned tournament schedule, but the average recreational junior doesn't. A USPTA Junior Circuit will give many more juniors the chance to compete for the first time and help them prepare for high-level competition, if they choose to advance.
- Local events in one city or within a metropolitan area – Novice tennis players and their parents won't have to travel far or incur a great deal of expense.
- A point system that will reward players – such as 2 points for entering, 2 points for main draw wins and 1 point for consolation draw wins. This is the immediate reward system. By using a point system, not only do you reward the first- and second-place and consolation winner with a trophy, but also all the players begin to track their points and point standings.
- A "masters" and playoff system – Top players would qualify for a masters tournament at the end of the circuit and the top players from each masters competition would qualify for a divisional playoff.

Where is a USPTA Junior Circuit held?

Any facility is OK if it fits the needs of the players and teaching professionals hosting the event. The choices include country clubs, park and rec centers, tennis centers and schools.



Court space at most facilities probably won't be an issue for a new circuit tournament. However, as a circuit grows, additional courts outside the host site will be required. When multiple sites are providing courts, this means more juniors are participating and tennis is growing in your area.

When should a junior circuit be held?

The USPTA Junior Circuit can be held any time of year. It can be scheduled to accommodate school schedules, other tennis events and indoor versus outdoor seasons, or timed to coincide with a special celebration in a particular locale. Sample schedules include:

- Every Saturday in the summer – Schedule one-day tournaments throughout the summer if that is best for your area.
- One weekend per month – Let each tournament in the series pick its best weekend for the series, or schedule each tournament on the same weekend each month. For example, the first, second or last weekend over several months.
- Use an existing tournament schedule – There are many junior tournaments in tennis calendars across the country. Your tournaments will have greater participation and make more money if you coordinate with other junior tournaments instead of scheduling them to conflict with others. You'll also draw attention to your junior circuit if it's convenient for players and coaches alike.

Who runs a junior circuit?

Teaching professionals control every aspect of the program. As circuit coordinators or tournament directors, tennis teachers are in a position to promote their services, their facilities, their teaching skills and tennis.

Hosting a junior circuit tournament gives professionals the chance to promote tennis in their communities and seek sponsors for the

events. Teaching professionals in one area can combine their efforts to create a first-class event that will result in fantastic public relations opportunities and an increase in tennis at their facilities and throughout their city.

A pro can hold a series of tournaments at his facility, or coordinate a series that travels from one facility to another in a local area. The important thing to remember is that pros can gain notoriety in their own communities by hosting and promoting positive tennis experiences for junior players, parents and others who help out or just watch the fun.

Running a USPTA Junior Circuit – from A to Z

Whether you prefer one-day events or a tournament that is played over a weekend, it's important that teaching pros use a format that has worked in the past. Any format can be modified to fit the particular needs of a community or facility.

In one USPTA division, the USPTA Junior Circuit features on-court coaching, which allows players and coaches the opportunity to communicate and discuss strategies during a match. This unique concept creates more drama and adds to the fun. Also, depending on a community's tennis interest or a club's size, it may be a good idea to start with a small circuit and build it into a larger event each season or year.

Some professionals prefer to host their own junior circuit and opt to hold tournaments on successive weekends beginning in the spring or fall seasons. If a facility has an established junior program, this works well because of the larger pool of junior players and potential competitors.

Creating and then maintaining player enthusiasm is an important key to the success of a junior circuit. Remember to post promotional information well before a circuit is set to begin and then continue hyping the event by posting point standings and any highlights of the action. Also, using the same format for each tournament in a series will be easier on both the event coordinators and the players.



Building on a USPTA Junior Circuit success

USPTA Master Professional Randy Mattingley ran a USPTA Junior Circuit in Texas. He introduced the idea of running these events as a national sports marketing program that would promote USPTA and increase junior-level play at the grassroots.



Below he explains how he runs a circuit and offers insights into how other Texas-based circuits operate.

Since our goal is to attract new tennis players and their tennis parents, we run one-day tournaments. The participants really appreciate the convenience of being able to get their tennis in without it taking up the whole weekend.

The circuit has become so popular in our area that most, if not all, USPTA pros at clubs and the city parks host the events. Even the high school tennis coaches have joined in the effort. Because local professionals support this concept, we can offer our kids the opportunity to compete every weekend in the summer without having to leave town.

We offer girls' and boys' competition for 10s, 12s, 14s, 16s and 18s. The format includes an eight-game pro set in the main draw and a six-game set in the consolation round.

Players are awarded 2 points for main draw wins, 1 point for consolation wins, and 2 points for entering and playing a round. The point system motivates players to participate, and it provides more than just an incentive to win. Every player who participates gets points in addition to the trophies that are presented to the winners. The point standings rank every active player, even if they never win a match. Everyone is rewarded, which is one of the most valuable aspects of the junior circuit program.

Tips from Texas Division junior circuits:

- The Lubbock circuit uses one entry form for all tournaments. One form reduces costs, promotes all the tournaments, explains the details and is both convenient and recognizable to children and their parents.
- The Abilene circuit consists of three tournaments, each held in the consecutive months of August, September and October at the same facility.
- In Houston, each club sets its own tournament date throughout a particular season. Each facility usually runs its tournament from Friday through Sunday and plays two out of three sets.
- Corpus Christi pros use a separate but standardized entry form for each tournament. Tournaments are usually held the fourth weekend of every month.

Below is a quick checklist to help you plan a USPTA Junior Circuit. More information about some of the more detailed projects follows this list.

USPTA Junior Circuit checklist

- ☑ Outline a plan for the USPTA Junior Circuit at your facility or in your community
- ☑ Set up a meeting with potential tournament directors to discuss and determine:
 - Event
 - Format
 - Schedule
 - Fees and expenses
 - Awards
 - Coordination of draws and point standings to and from the coordinator
 - Potential sponsorship
- ☑ Contact potential sponsors
- ☑ Design and print entry form
- ☑ Contact coaches and pros to promote events
- ☑ Send out entry forms
- ☑ Contact local newspaper
- ☑ Contact awards company to arrange for trophies for each tournament at reduced rate
- ☑ Run the first tournament
- ☑ Get draws for determining points earned by players
- ☑ Send results and photos to newspaper
- ☑ Print and post point standings (and pictures) on regular basis (i.e., weekly, monthly) at every host site
- ☑ At the end of the circuit, contact top players for a masters tournament
- ☑ Make notes throughout season on changes and corrections for the next circuit
- ☑ Set up a tentative schedule for the next season



Extra events extend USPTA Junior Circuit season

Create excitement with invitational tournaments

After the regular junior circuit is complete, add to the fun by hosting a masters-level tournament. Invitations can be sent to the top eight or 16 players in each age category. The host pro and his assistants can also call those players who qualify to extend the special invitations.

The same format used for the circuit can be used for the invitational tournament. Pros can make it special by presenting nicer awards and adding special player favors.

Organize divisional or state playoff tournament

The best reward for a great season of tennis is a true playoff. If a division, region or state offers several junior circuits in various locations, a playoff scenario can be created that will really heighten the competition and the opportunities for fun.

A playoff requires that pros from different areas communicate with each other to set up a playoff tournament. To organize the event, pros might follow the guidelines below:

- Decide on a host city and site – This may be a challenge based on the number of teams invited.
- Invite each local circuit to send a team – Each team could have as many as 20 kids, if you have two boys and two girls represent each age group from the 10s to 18s.
- Set the format – Find a fun, team-building format that will require the kids to depend on each other. This means less emphasis is placed on individual results.
- Make it fun – Offer a karaoke contest, a skit, or something that gets all the kids together for good clean fun.

Playoff format used in Texas

USPTA member David Davis of Abilene has made it possible for hundreds of kids each year to take their first tennis trip for the purpose of competing in a state-level playoff. He has organized these trips since 1992.

As the number of circuits has grown, so has the size of the Texas Gran Prix Playoffs, held at T-Bar-M and Newk's Ranch in New Braunfels each year. Juniors qualify through their local circuit tournaments and then the local masters tournament. The Texas Gran Prix Playoffs are a great incentive for players statewide to participate regularly in their local events.

All 14 junior circuits in the state (as of 2001) are invited to send a team for the weekend tournament. Each team is comprised of two players from each division: boys 10s, 12s, 14s, 16s, and 18s; and girls 10s, 12s, 14s, 16s and 18s (20 players). The teams are divided into two flights (A and B) that play a round-robin format. Each round is one, six-game set, no ad, with a 12-point tiebreaker at 5-all.

The state playoffs run Friday through Sunday. After Saturday's matches the teams are treated to dinner and participate in various activities, such as a team karaoke contest. On Sunday the final round of competition takes place, with the top team in flight "A" playing the top team from flight "B." The second team in each flight plays each other and so on.

During the weekend, kids see for the first time how big tennis can be and get a totally new level of enthusiasm for the game. Every participant has a great time and leaves with a T-shirt that has USPTA across the front. The public relations value created by the event for USPTA and its members is priceless.

Why a USPTA Junior Circuit?

There are an abundant number of good reasons for implementing a USPTA Junior Circuit. First, teaching pros can promote themselves and their programs. Then, there's the great potential to create a revenue source for both the pro and his facility. There are also great benefits for the participants. Lastly, tennis itself gets a big boost from this program as it grows and becomes a community-wide event.

Public relations value

The USPTA Junior Circuit, like other USPTA programs, is designed to recognize the importance of local USPTA tennis-teaching professionals and the role they play in growing tennis in their own communities. The junior circuit concept can be used to emphasize the importance of quality lesson programs and a teacher's role in preparing juniors for competition.

Also, don't forget that delivering this type of program enables USPTA members to promote their credentials, including their USPTA certification level. It's a great way to educate club members about the skills tennis teachers should possess to provide quality tennis programming for the entire family.

So, in promoting this or any other program, be sure to use the USPTA name.

A USPTA Junior Circuit promotes a teaching professional to:

- Players
- Parents
- Sponsors
- Club members
- Other USPTA professionals
- The community

Promotional exposure can be achieved through various means, including entry forms, posters, newsletters, local newspapers, and radio and television stations. Also, a club Web site or a personal Web site can be a means through which pros promote themselves and their USPTA Junior Circuit.

Randy Mattingley uses his club's Web site to promote his city's USPTA Junior Circuit. Each week players can log on to get their draw and match times or check the point standings. The site gets a lot of hits each week and his tennis page gets more exposure for other tennis activities at the club or in the area. Visit the site at www.lubbockcc.org/Tennis/lubbock_junior_circuit.htm.



Revenue source

Although public relations value is very important to any program and teaching professional, the key to a specific program's success is its ability to financially sustain itself and create a revenue source for the pro and his or her facility.

Below is an example of an income and expense statement for a tournament director of a typical junior circuit event. Fees and costs will vary at each tournament site. However, as the chart below demonstrates, a tournament director can earn more than \$400 for a one-day event. The events may start out small, but with a little promotion and time, the rewards will multiply.

Sample USPTA Junior Circuit income & expense worksheet

Categories		Costs	Income	Expenses	Profits
Entry Fee	150	\$10	\$1,500		
Sponsorship			\$200		
Awards	8	\$21		\$168	
Balls	48	\$3.25		\$156	
Court fees	16	\$25		\$400	
Printing	1	\$40		\$40	
Site directors	2	\$90		\$180	
Circuit fee	150	\$2		\$300	
Favors & prizes (donated)				\$0	
Totals			\$1,700	\$1,244	\$456

If a professional is ambitious and takes on the hosting responsibilities of an entire circuit, he or she can realize additional profit. Not only will other clubs and facilities pay a "circuit fee" to you for the use of your facility during each tournament, but you can build revenue into the player entry fees over time. For example, if a pro runs as few as seven tournaments over a designated season, he can build in as little as \$1 into each entry fee to create additional revenue.

To begin a new circuit, a coordinator may choose not to add the extra \$1 or \$2 until the second or third season. This way, a circuit builds revenue as it gains in popularity and attracts more players.

Remember, sponsorships can offset tournament and circuit expenses and many local businesses are willing to support athletic activities for junior-level players. Teaching pros are encouraged to use their sales skills to build up their programs and attract sponsors.

Local USPTA control

Teaching pros have control of every aspect of the program, which is a very attractive benefit. Whether a pro runs her own tournament series or coordinates a circuit with other pros in the same city, the fact remains that pros schedule the events, determine age categories, set the format and publish entry fees. Everything can be modified based on local preferences.

Additional benefits of a USPTA-controlled program include:

- USPTA ownership – which translates into flexibility for all teaching professionals
- Revenue – which means USPTA members can earn income for themselves and for their clubs
- Facility recognition – The USPTA Junior Circuit will build junior programs by attracting new players and providing more activities
- Exposure for teaching pros as leaders in the tennis community – Many more members should be encouraged to run these programs for the experience and valuable publicity
- Visibility of USPTA – The public relations value to USPTA will translate into wider recognition of not only the Association, but also its members and their credentials by tennis players and the general public
- Improved relationships among teaching professionals and coaches – Running a junior circuit will allow pros and coaches to communicate and work together to improve tennis in their local areas. Middle and high school tennis coaches are a valuable resource for helping to promote circuits or to recruit as tournament directors and hosts.

Player benefits

Players and their parents benefit from the convenience of the local competition offered by a USPTA Junior Circuit. Because it's designed for the novice or "non-qualified" competitor, it allows local pros to determine age and level categories that will enhance a player's tournament experience and provide incentives for him to consistently participate.

The Junior Circuit also prepares players for more advanced competition at sanctioned tournaments or USTA-level competitions, if that is their goal.

Other player benefits include:

- A natural progression from advanced 10 and Under Tennis players to non-qualified competition of a USPTA Junior Circuit
- Regular competition for juniors
- Immediate reward system through a point system
- Limited travel time for local events
- Low-cost fun for the family

So, get out there and host a USPTA Junior Circuit!

The many professionals who have already instituted versions of the USPTA Junior Circuit say it is one of the most enjoyable and productive programs they run. It accomplishes many goals and offers numerous benefits to all the participants – players, USPTA pros, parents and communities.

Tennis is perhaps the biggest beneficiary of the circuit concept. As USPTA members deliver the program to communities throughout our country, they will introduce tennis and healthy competition to hundreds of thousands of young players. Tennis enthusiasm will then grow and support a multitude of businesses that make up the tennis industry.

It's important to remember that the USPTA Junior Circuit was designed with the teaching pro in mind. It promotes the skills of certified professionals and ensures their status within the industry as the delivery system to the sport's millions of players.



Sample entry form

Lubbock USPTA Junior Circuit



The junior circuit tournaments are designed to make competitive play accessible to Lubbock-area juniors. These one-day tournaments will be held on Saturdays.

Events:

Singles age divisions:

Boys 10, 12, 14, 16 & 18 **Girls 10, 12, 14, 16 & 18**

(Minimum of four players to hold an event. If there are not enough entries, players may be moved or divisions may be combined.)

Age eligibility:

Age eligibility is determined by the age you will be at the end of the month of any given tournament. Any qualifier for a masters tournament or the Gran Prix Playoffs must meet this age requirement. Players qualified for championship must play up one division. Players qualified for super championship must play up two divisions.

Format:

The format will be no ad scoring with an eight-game pro set in main draw and a six-game set in consolation. Players are guaranteed two rounds.

Awards:

Awards will be given to first and second place and consolation winners.

Schedule/site location:

June 8 Frenship High School

June 15 Lakeridge Country Club

June 22 Lubbock Country Club

June 29 McLeod Tennis Center

July 6 Coronado High School

July 13 Trinity High School

July 20 Lubbock Country Club

July 27 Lubbock High School

Aug. 3 Lubbock Country Club

Aug. 10 JCT Masters

Sept. 27 Gran Prix playoffs in New Braunfels
- Sept. 29

Entry fee:

The entry fee is \$12.00 and must be in the hands of the circuit coordinator by the entry deadline which is 6:00 p.m. on the Tuesday prior to each tournament.

Point system:

2 points Entering and completing at least one round of a junior circuit tournament

2 points Each win in the main draw of a junior circuit tournament

1 point Each win in the consolation draw of a junior circuit tournament

Junior Circuit Masters tournament:

Top sixteen players in each division will be invited to participate in the masters tournament at Lubbock Country Club on August 10.

Texas Gran Prix Playoffs:

Top two players from each division will be eligible to represent the Lubbock team in New Braunfels for the Texas Gran Prix Playoffs September 27-29, 2002. This state playoff is open to non-qualified players only.

Entry:

Enter online at www.lubbockcc.org by completing the entry form and using a credit card for payment. Entries may also be delivered or mailed to the Lubbock Country Club Tennis Shop:

JCT Coordinator
3400 Mesa Road
Lubbock, Texas 79403
(806) 762-3430

Players **MUST** send a completed entry form with the entry fee for **each** tournament. Entries **MUST** be in the hands of the circuit coordinator by 6 p.m. on Tuesday prior to each tournament. **NO ENTRIES WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THAT TIME.** Players are encouraged to enter well in advance. **DO NOT** rely on U.S. mail. Late entries will not be accepted.

FREE T-SHIRTS:

Each player who participates in the circuit will receive a FREE T-shirt. Limit one per player.

Name: _____ Birthday: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Home phone: _____ Office phone: _____

Amount paid: \$ _____ ☐ Cash ☐ Check Division: _____

Medical release: I hereby consent to emergency medical and/or hospital service that may be rendered by or at accredited hospitals by appointed physicians in the event such need arises in the opinion of a duly licensed physician.

Waiver and indemnity agreement: Acceptance of my entry in these events is without responsibility of any kind by the tournament or any entity sponsoring the event. I do hereby for and on behalf of my heirs and legal representatives RELEASE and forever discharge the tournament, officers and representatives, the sponsoring entities, or by third parties, which injuries may be in any way related to my activities during these events and any period traveling to and from the events described and all such claims are hereby waived and released and covenant not to sue therefore. I have read and understand the foregoing release and indemnity agreement.

Parent's signature: _____ Date: _____

Draw sheet

