



MIDDLE STATES

To Promote and Develop the Growth of Tennis
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2014 MIDDLE STATES AWARDS RECIPIENTS

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Community Tennis Association Award: South Philadelphia Tennis Association (PATD)

For Bryan Hughes, the President of the South Philadelphia Tennis Association, the formula is simple: listen to feedback, and work to improve. Since 2010, the South Philadelphia Tennis Association (SPTA) has been positively impacting kids in the Greater Philadelphia through the sport of tennis. Participation has doubled in recent years and parents continue to bring their children back. SPTA began in local schools and, since then, has expanded to daycare centers and preschools. Other sites include elementary schools, parks and community centers. Hughes works closely with the USTA to utilize grant opportunities and available resources to provide his participants with the best experience possible.

Edwin J. Faulkner College Coach of the Year: Jim Holt, Gwynedd-Mercy University (PATD)

When Jim Holt arrived at Gwynedd-Mercy University, he was faced with the daunting task of taking a team without a strong history and transforming it into a conference contender. In his years as the head coach of both the men's and women's teams at Gwynedd-Mercy University, Holt has a remarkable record of 177-39. He has led his teams to five conference championships and 34 of his players have achieved undefeated seasons. When he's not coaching at Gwynedd-Mercy, Holt is working at Touch of Tennis, a program he founded and manages that provides tennis to children with special needs. Holt has a M.S. in Special Education and works as a supervisor/teacher at Wordsworth Academy in Fort Washington, Pa.

Edwin J. Faulkner High School Coach of the Year: Barbara VanBuskirk, Nazareth Area High School (EPD)

Much of Barbara VanBuskirk's time is spent voluntarily promoting tennis in many different capacities. For the past 15 years, one of her main focuses has been coaching tennis. Seven of those years have been as the boys and girls tennis coach at Nazareth Area High School, where she had her most successful season, and set a school record with the girls team in 2014. Her commitment to teaching tennis extends far beyond Nazareth Area High School. She is the tennis director for many community events in the Pocono area and coordinates children, teen and adult programs. VanBuskirk still plays USTA League Tennis and her advocacy for tennis has helped to grow participation in the Eastern Pennsylvania District, Middle States and beyond.

Tournament Director of the Year: Eric Wall (NJD)

2014 brought about many opportunities to participate in tennis tournaments in New Jersey, and much of that was thanks to Eric Wall. A 15-year veteran of directing tournaments, Wall has plenty of experience in hosting a successful tournament. Recently, he's taken that experience and applied it to youth tennis and the 10 and Under theme. In one year alone, Wall had 1,326 participants in 33 USTA sanctioned tournaments, 26 of which were junior tournaments. A strong proponent of 10 and Under Tennis, 17 of his junior tournaments used orange and green dot ball formats. Apart from directing tournaments, he frequently organizes free tennis clinics in parking lots in an attempt to bring tennis to new communities. His commitment to junior development has made a strong impact in the New Jersey tennis community.

USTA Junior Team Tennis Organizer Award: Elyse Baney-Barton (DD)

Since 2005, Elyse Baney-Barton has been synonymous with Delaware Junior Team Tennis (JTT). She manages the Delaware Nightmare JTT teams, which are comprised of more than 60 players in three age categories. In 2014, Baney-Barton's 18 and Under Advanced team won the Middle States Sectional Tournament and advanced to the National Championships in Cayce, S.C. where they earned a team spirit award. In addition to her involvement with Junior Team Tennis, Baney-Barton has spent two years serving on the Delaware District Board of Directors and has been a major influence in the growth of junior tennis in the Delaware District.

Volunteer of the Year: Adult: Nell Matthews (CPD)

When there's something happening in Central Pennsylvania, you can bet that Nell Matthews is involved. Her enthusiasm and love of tennis has helped to grow tennis in her community. Whether she's volunteering for the District Board of Directors (on which she's served for four years) or organizing the Gettysburg Hospital Tennis Tournament, her dedication is making a positive impact. Matthews spent nine months with her husband and daughter in Tanzania, where she brought 10 and Under Tennis equipment and introduced impoverished children to the sport of tennis. Her involvement extends to her playing career as well. She has played USTA League Tennis for more than 10 years, and served as her team's captain for five of those years.

Volunteer of the Year: Junior: Caroline Casey (NJD) and Olivia Warner (AMD)

Caroline Casey is willing to help whenever and wherever she's needed. In 2014, she spent more than two weeks of her summer volunteering her time at the Special Olympics USA Games, which were held in New Jersey. An advocate for community service, she recruited a group of friends to assist her in volunteer activities. Casey is a member of her high school tennis team and her commitment to volunteering is fueled by her love of the game.

Olivia Warner has been a top-ranked player in the Allegheny Mountain District for many years. But it is off the court where she really shines. While most junior players struggle to find time for themselves while going through rigorous training, Warner is constantly filling her free time with helping others. Warner is passionate about helping players reach their potential. She has volunteered at Sectional Training Centers, where she can encourage players. As a young player herself, she utilizes her relatability to the other young athletes.

Media Excellence: Karen Kadlak (AMD)

A freelance journalist for Pittsburgh-based Trib Total Media, Karen Kadlak has been a standout tennis reporter in the Middle States Section for a number of years. She began working at the Beaver County Times more than 40 years ago and, after earning an English writing degree from the University of Pittsburgh, officially began her career in journalism. Today, her reporting covers tennis of all levels ranging from tournament-playing youth players all the way to high schools and local colleges. Highlights of Kadlak's coverage from 2014 includes features on the PNC Men's Futures of Pittsburgh (USTA Pro Circuit) and the University of Pittsburgh's title in the Middle States' Tennis On Campus Championship.

Teaching Professional of the Year: Janice Irwin (AMD)

Janice Irwin began the Upper St. Clair Tennis Development Program more than 30 years ago. Since then, she hasn't stopped her goal of bringing high-quality and enjoyable instruction to players of all ages and skill levels. On any given day, Irwin can be found running programs like 10 and Under Tennis and Cardio Tennis, mixing in instruction for both high-level and beginner players. Best known in the area for her mix of technical skill and positive coaching attitude on the court, Irwin also helps organize numerous free clinics, and is also involved with a charity for wheelchair players. Irwin taught WTA standout Alison Riske from ages 7-17 and is still in touch with her often.

Family of the Year: The Stark Family (NJD)

Over the last several years, the Stark Family has stood alongside tennis and community in New Jersey. Albert Stark's biggest involvement has come through the NJTL of Trenton (NJTLT), where he's served on the NJTLT board and funded numerous initiatives in support of the NJTL and tennis in New Jersey. One of the biggest projects in recent years includes his helping to revitalize the tennis courts at Trenton's Cadwalader Park, which is the largest public junior short court facility in the nation. Rachel Stark and Noah Lilienthal, Albert's daughter and grandson, have also lent a big hand in the community by volunteering with local players.

Tennis On Campus Leader: Mike Kara (NJD)

Rowan University's Tennis On Campus team has only existed since 2011, but under strong leadership has already evolved into one of the most involved and well-run programs in the Middle States Section. In 2014, under team captain Mike Kara, the Rowan Tennis On Campus team featured 30 active players, competing in events throughout the east coast. Last year, the team traveled to the Sea Colony Tennis Center in southern Delaware, the University of Maryland, Mercer County Tennis Center and Villanova University. The team took first place in a tournament at Saint Joseph's University – a major step for the club – and also participated in events off the tennis court, including a team trip to the US Open. The team is involved in at least one community service event each semester, recently running in the Miles for Medals 5k at Rowan.

Tennis Industry Initiative: The Philadelphia Freedoms (PATD)

The Philadelphia Freedoms have been a staple in the Middle States tennis community for years, and in 2014, did even more to help bolster and promote the growth of tennis in the Philadelphia area. The Freedoms involvement in the tennis community is far beyond its yearly summer schedule. On top of bringing world-class players and talent to the area, the team runs community programs, health initiatives and play opportunities throughout the year, including junior circuits, Play Days and special events at schools and parks. Through business relationships and sponsors, the Freedoms help provide free racquets to select groups throughout each summer.

