



Turks & Caicos Islands Tennis Federation

Press Release

Mini Tennis Comes to TCI Schools

Providenciales, November 21, 2009 – The Turks & Caicos Island Tennis Federation (TCITF) has completed training of the Government primary school PE teachers throughout the country. From Provo right through to Salt Cay, PE and Early Learning teachers have been taught the basics of teaching mini tennis to their young students.

Mr Edgar Howell, Director of Education, approved this training for the teachers when approached by the TCITF some months ago. Art Forbes, chair of the TCITF and Tanis Wake-Forbes, secretary of the TCITF, held meetings with Mr Howell and Mr Alvin Parker of the Sports Commission and offered to provide training and equipment to the Government primary schools to introduce tennis to the youngsters as well as provide the necessary equipment for the schools' PE classes.

Mini Tennis is geared to children from as young as 4 to 10 or 11 years of age. Mini tennis equipment has been developed to help young children learn to play quickly. It consists of small, short plastic or strung racquets that are lighter so that they can easily be controlled by younger children. The balls are a lower compression so that they travel more slowly and do not bounce as high as a normal tennis ball. The court area is also reduced to fit in with the smaller size of young children. The tennis nets are also lower. The TCITF was able to provide this equipment through donations from the ITF and the Federation also purchased additional equipment to supplement the donated gear.

The Tennis Federation brought in an experienced coach educator and tennis coach Anne Pankhurst and her husband Roy, who is also a tennis coach, to facilitate the training. Anne is well known and respected in coaching, has authored mini tennis manuals and writes for various coaches magazines. She is affiliated with the LTA, ITF and USTA, all bodies who vie for her services. Tanis Wake-Forbes said "We were very lucky to obtain the services of Anne and Roy, who kindly donated their time to training the primary school PE teachers enabling us to bring tennis into mainstream physical education classes".

The Pankhurst's have given the month of November to training the TCITF members, the Sports Commission staff, the staff at the Edward C Gartland Youth Center who now boast a brand new tennis and basketball court made possible by the hard work of Peter Kerrigan, as well as all the government primary schools across the country. Anne Pankhurst said "We are very excited to be able to help the TCTTF get mini tennis into the primary schools in TCI. The enthusiasm we have seen from the teachers and the children in particular, has been tremendous. It has been a real privilege to work with everyone who is making this possible. This is the first step in giving children the chance to play tennis in a format that suits their age and abilities. We are looking forward to helping TCITF take the next step!"

The Federation members along with the Sports Commission staff will provide back up to the primary school teachers and ensure they stay on course with their PE classes featuring mini tennis. After school and weekend tennis will be available to the youngsters at the TCITF National Tennis Center currently under construction on Venetian Road just opposite the National Stadium where the Carifta Games were held. Phase one of the construction is commencing this month and by early 2010 it will be ready to host players of all standards. Till then the Youth Center will step in and offer its court to keep the momentum going with after school and weekend sessions.

Chairman of TCITF, Art Forbes, stated he was delighted with the progress made to date and encourages everyone to learn the sport of tennis which is a game that one can play for their lifetime. The children will benefit from learning racket and ball skills, and the etiquette and discipline the tennis requires. Mini tennis competition is played in teams so young children can also develop appropriate team skills and improve their co-ordination and general fitness level at the same time. He added “we hope to see the older brothers and sisters and parents of the youngsters learning mini tennis also on the courts.”

Rachel Taylor, principal of the Enid Capron Primary School in Five Cays, Providenciales, the first primary school trained, said “It has been more than a pleasure to incorporate tennis more effectively into the Physical Education Program as this will enhance the skills of the Physical Education teacher who will be better able to deliver this aspect of the curriculum in a comfortable manner. Having Mrs. Tanis Forbes and her team assist in the area of coaching clinics and supplying the necessary equipment has already motivated the teachers who have been taught to work with the students in an effort to enhance the overall development of the program. This sport will allow us to tap into and develop the skills of our students, who knows we may have the next Venus Williams of the Turks and Caicos Islands. The Enid Capron Primary Family expresses our sincerest gratitude for this initiative put forth and welcomes the inclusion of any program that will further develop our teachers and students in an effort to maximize their full potential.”

The training does not stop with the government primary schools, as TCITF will turn next to the private primary schools and offer this training, again free of charge, to those schools. After the mini tennis training the Federation will encourage junior development of the sport to 12-18 year olds as well as offer coaching at its new facility for all players of all ages, whether beginners or more established players.

To learn more about TCITF and how you can support their goals please visit the website on www.tcitf.org or contact Secretary Tanis Wake-Forbes on 231-5012 or email tennis@tcitf.org