



Center Court

NOVEMBER 2022

Fundraisers Continue for Ivan Smith While in Recovery



BTC members gather around a poster of Ivan Smith after completing a successful tournament in his honor on August 18th.

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There is a fundraiser for Ivan Smith in North County at the Rancho Santa Fe Tennis Club on December 3rd from 2:00 – 5:00 p.m. There will be two exhibition matches beginning with a singles match pitting **Brandon Nakashima** against **Marcos Giron**, followed by a doubles match with **James Blake**, **Zachary Sadvja**, **Brandon Nakashima** and **Marcos Giron**. The cost is \$150 per person which includes the exhibitions, hors d'oeuvres and drinks. Scan the QR code to make a donation or visit, <https://gofund.me/a71d4139>.

Message from the President of Balboa Tennis Club Dr. Gary L. Smith



From budgets to technology including all of the health guidelines, I'm sure every BTC member has faced a continuous stream of challenges on a daily basis. These same concepts are of course, applicable to the operations of the Balboa Tennis Club. Approaching the completion of my first year as President, it is important to acknowledge the outstanding job Janene Christopher (past President) and Ruben Carriedo, who both served on the Board for over eight years. Their leadership and numerous essential qualities greatly contributed to the success of the club during this time period. The current Board is fortunate to have Vice President Andrew Macfarlane, Treasurer Michelle Ford and valued member M.A. Hillier agreeing to another term. Newcomers Maegen Demko and Mario Suarez, along with Todd Linke, were voted in for the next term by the club members. Being able to work with a great team of Board Members, in the past and present, along with Club Director Colleen, is a very rewarding experience.

In everyone's daily lives, we are all tied into emails, texts and technology. It is so easy to forget that we need to take time to talk to each other. As a Board, we are constantly striving to do a good job of communicating with one another while also interacting with our membership which is very strong at 1600 and over 400 people on the waiting list.

As you know, Griffin Tennis has retired. The service and devotion provided to the membership for many years, was indeed, exceptional. We were fortunate to obtain the services of HJKventures, with Hiromi Sasano at the helm, along with Pro Shop Manager Cami Gill, the teaching pros and stringers. It is fundamentally important to have a vision to be able to inspire and motivate all of us as a Board, to work together and accomplish the goals we put forward. With Colleen's stewardship, we've completed the transitional requirements with respect to Route 6 Cafe and HJKventures. The Board continues to emphasize people skills, interrelationships, and other qualities to bring out the best in others.

My son, Ivan, remains hospitalized in Texas, from getting hit in an auto accident while driving to his college tennis practice on 04/05/2022. He's working hard and making good progress. The support and compassion given to Ivan will always be remembered and appreciated. Throughout our lives it is important to never forget, "everything that matters is right in front of us."

2023 US Open Giveaway

To culminate Balboa Tennis Club's 100th birthday celebration, Balboa will be hosting a round robin tennis tournament, picnic, raffle, followed by the drawing for the winner of the 2023 US Open tickets. The date will be sometime in May. The opportunity drawing for the two tickets to the US Open will be on sale from February 15th until the day of the tournament and picnic. Tickets will be \$25 each or 5 tickets for \$100. The winner of the tickets will receive:

- Round trip airfare for 2 from anywhere in US to New York
- Hotel accommodations for 2 people for 3 nights from Friday 9/1 to Monday 9/4
- Unlimited round-trip transportation between hotel and the US Open daily
- 2 tickets to the President's Box for day or evening session (catered lunch/dinner included)
- 2 tickets to Arthur Ashe Stadium for day sessions 2 days of the tournament
- 2 Balboa commemorative long sleeved t-shirts
- US Open swag

This opportunity drawing is a fundraiser for Ivan Smith (son of Balboa Board President Gary Smith) who was severely injured in a horrific car accident in April 2022. The proceeds will go towards purchasing a wheelchair accessible van for Ivan. For more information contact M. A. Hillier at tennisma@cox.net or 619-884-8911.

Club Director's Report

by Colleen Ferrell



As a 17 year Club Director of Balboa Tennis Club, I can make one very consistent statement. "There is never a dull moment at BTC." This year of "coming up for air" after two years of COVID-19 conditions, has presented many highs, lows, challenges, accomplishments and countless hours of appreciative members playing the great sport of tennis.

With 1600 members and a waiting list of 400 that continues to rise, there is a reason tennis at BTC continues to thrive. The demand to play at an accessible, active and well-maintained facility is evident. Fortunately, the Club signed another three year lease with the City of San Diego to keep providing TENNIS ONLY until 2025.

Many thanks to a supportive Board of Directors, caring BTC employees, a new staff of tennis pros and tennis pro shop management who really care about providing the best experience possible to enhance tennis at the Club. Welcome back Geoff Griffin as a teaching pro and thank you for your 34 years as Tennis Director at BTC.

If you think about Balboa Tennis Club being in existence for 100 years, the current phase is really only a small segment of the whole story. The Club turned 100 years old on June 19 in the middle of the National Open. No big celebration yet, but definitely a realization that we are all part of something special – like playing at a club that has had incredible, competitive and recreational tennis played for a century. Every day you get to play this great game at our Club is a bonus. Enjoy the ride – win or lose – and be appreciative for the blessing. Tis the season for giving thanks and being grateful.

Coaches Betty and Linda Making an Impact on OLP Players



Betty Muzquiz-Gillespie and Linda Milburn

The two enthusiastic coaches of Our Lady of Peace Junior Varsity Tennis Team assume dual roles at BTC by being members who love to play and coach as well. Betty Muzquiz-Gillespie is in her second year directing the OLP JV team, along with first assistant Cooper, her beautiful golden retriever. This year Linda Milburn, a retired elementary school teacher, joined forces with Betty and Cooper to provide a platform of success for the girls to achieve their goals on the court. They finished the season with an admirable 10-1 record.

The OLP Varsity and Junior Varsity players have utilized the Balboa Tennis Club courts for over 20 years. These are their home courts since the school, located in the North Park area, does not have courts of their own. They play matches which run from September – November and conclude their season with CIF competition. The Junior Varsity team provides an important role in developing players capable of moving up to the Varsity level and then hopefully on to other local competition.

There are 14 players on the JV team who want to be good and aspire to play on the varsity team next year. "There are all types of personalities," says Betty. "Most of them listen to instruction and when they get it, I see a smile and the 'light bulb goes off' when they apply what they learned."

Linda credits one of her former coaches at Mesa College – Narelle Pettee – for inspiring her to pursue this endeavor. "She was calm, made tennis fun and also had the skills and knowledge to help us improve," she said. "I want to help these girls love tennis and see how far they can take their own games." Linda also admires Coach Betty for tutoring her through the first year of coaching. "She is incredibly organized and amazing." Betty responds by saying, "I receive great joy in coaching JV tennis."

Both coaches believe in fostering good sportsmanship. They expect respect from the players in every way and "winning is a bonus." With supportive parents who truly care about the OLP girls and their opponents as well, it's a WIN-WIN for everyone involved with the program.

BTC Pro Shop Stringers



Carlos Xavier Hernandez DLT - Carlos was born in San Diego and raised in the Imperial Valley. He began playing tennis in the summer of 1982 after growing up playing baseball. Carlos played high school tennis for Vincent Memorial and college tennis for IVC and Southwestern College. He attended San Diego State University and earned a B.A. in Physical Education Teaching. He started his racquet stringing career while working at a Pro Shop in the Imperial Valley. Carlos also worked for Oshman's Sporting Goods as a manager, while training and teaching employees how to string racquets. For nine years as a USPTA professional, Carlos was a tennis instructor for the South Bay Junior Tennis Program that was located on the Southwestern College campus. He is getting back into what he loves doing: running a pro shop, stringing racquets and eventually teaching tennis again.



Chris Barrera - "Hi there! Chris Barrera here. I'm a special education teacher, and also moonlight as one of your stringers in the pro shop! I started playing tennis at Mission Bay High and have been a stringer for the last 4 years. I have a lot of love for the San Diego tennis community: I have met many friends, been fortunate to serve as a former high school coach at High Tech, and currently serve as the President of the San Diego Tennis Federation. My favorite shot is the down the line backhand and favorite current players include Shapo, Tiafoe, Azarenka, and Ostapenko."



Max Solonga - Max came back to San Diego after being gone for 6 years and has returned to work at Balboa Tennis Club as a racquet stringer in the Pro Shop. He's worked in the tennis and fitness industry for most of his life, but says he's always had a love for tennis racquets. Because of this affection for the game, switching racquets every month would be a normal thing for Max! A couple of memorable moments in Max's tennis life is being able to string for Serena Williams in the Bay Area when she was building a home there and also being the tennis fitness trainer for up and coming tennis professional Brandon Nakashima in his junior years. Max is a certified racquet stringer with master racquet technician level, USPTA and tennis fitness certified.

Save-A-Life Education at BTC Pays Off for the Third Time



Colleen Ferrell and Don Schwimmer

Director at Balboa Tennis Club 17 years ago. The scenario was just like the classes she attended with staff and other club members when offered at BTC. All the steps were automatic from practice and luckily a happy result. The member left BTC with a pulse.

Recently, the member – Don Schwimmer – came to the Club to thank Colleen and Eddie – the homeless man who alerted the Club Director that there was an issue. Don recently had a new valve put in and is in recovery mode. He hasn't been cleared to return to 100% activities, but is taking long walks and has played a little bit of tennis. He will be seeing the doctor soon and hopes to get full clearance.

Right place at the right time with the proper training and equipment helped save Don Schwimmer's life. FYI the Club's AED is located in the Reservations Office on the shelf.

On 8/31/22, one of the members at Balboa Tennis Club went down on court 19 with cardiac arrest around 12:30 p.m. Colleen the Club Director was alerted about the situation from Alex at Reservations and the homeless man who sleeps on the bench above court 19. When she arrived on the court with the AED in hand, the victim was grey, unresponsive and not breathing. His tennis partner was pounding on his chest. She opened the AED, pulled up his shirt, put on the pads and let the machine read. Colleen told everyone to stand back as a shock was administered and then a few gasp breaths from the victim occurred. The machine told her to start doing CPR including rescue breaths and compressions. She kept this up until the Paramedics came – which seemed like FOREVER, yet for at least 10 minutes. Paramedics finally came and took over. A follow up from the tech who read the AED information said it was a classic cardiac arrest case. The victim had no pulse for 56 seconds while the machine was reading his heart. Then within seconds after the shock, his heart started up again, like rebooting a computer.

Such a high to SAVE-A-LIFE!!! Colleen is lucky to be 3 for 3 in the cases she has tended to since starting as



A Fearless Tennis Event at Balboa Tennis Club took place on Sept. 22, 2022. Internationally acclaimed Sports Psychology Consultant Jeff Greenwald spoke along with BTC Tennis Director Hiromi Sasano (far left) on how to improve the mental game of tennis.

Pictured with Jeff are organizers Orit Ostrowiak (second from left) and Christine Loehr (right) in front of the ornate gate designed by former BTC President Janene Christopher.

Tennis – A Pandemic Discovery for Michael Sutton



Michael Sutton

During the COVID-19 pandemic, tennis playing increased exponentially due to the “safe” aspect of the sport, which allowed play without close exposure to others. BTC member Michael Sutton is one of those lucky people who discovered tennis in 2020 and has grown to embrace the sport in two short years. “I love to play tennis, compete and be outside,” he says. “It’s like being a kid again.”

Michael didn’t know much about tennis prior to the pandemic other than taking a class in high school and watching Sampras and Agassi on Sports Center when he was younger. There was a time when he purchased a cheap racquet and played recreationally at a local apartment complex, yet never took the sport seriously.

As a native San Diegan, Michael grew up in East County, attended Valhalla High School and played mostly baseball and soccer in his youth. He attended San Diego State University, studied psychology and graduated in 2015. He immediately segued into real estate by getting his license and then signed with a brokerage firm, earning a grand total of \$700 his first year. Seven years later, he is now in the top 1% of all agents in San Diego.

As a hard-working man with great success in the business world, Michael found that he needed some breaks away from the office. He started out at BTC by hitting against the wall, taking some private lessons and joined as a member at the onset of the pandemic. “I’ve met a lot of great people at the Club and made tennis

friends,” he said. After two years, Michael continues to progress. He now watches the majors and is a big fan. “I love the game,” he says. “It’s my favorite thing to do.”

Michael expresses equal passion for business as well. He has two core beliefs that have helped him build a team of seven as part of Sutton Real Estate Group, which is currently focusing on rebranding and relaunching. “My success is found through others,” he says. “I focus on other people to provide value. I get to help people find their dream home and get paid.”

As a business owner who works tirelessly seven days a week, Michael discovered tennis to be a perfect outlet. “The game provides great joy in my life after working so much,” he says. “I see myself continuing to learn and grow with the game. I hope eventually to be a good player.”

Cami Gill – New Pro Shop Director of Sales and Operation



Cami Gill

Cami joins Balboa Tennis Club as the Pro Shop Director of Sales and Operations. Cami began playing tennis at a young age and has maintained her love and passion for the game ever since. As an avid 4.5 player, she has played in GLTA, USTA tournaments and leagues for more than 20 years and has served as captain of multiple teams (USTA (4.5/5.0) and WTT (9.0)). In the SD Aviator’s inaugural year, she was recognized as the top sales director and worked with most tennis clubs and pro shops in the San Diego area. She has served as a board member of the San Diego Tennis Federation and as tennis coach for Gompers High School girl’s and boy’s tennis teams. Cami has been stringing racquets for 8 years and has in-depth first-hand knowledge of most strings on the market. In addition, she has tried and tested most tennis products and racquet brands and is committed to bringing the best products to BTC’s pro shop.

Cami graduated from the University of Houston with a BS in Engineering and later earned a Master of Business Administration. She worked in corporate management for 25 years with experience in engineering, information technology, business management and consulting in Texas, Hawaii and California. Cami

currently runs her own property management company and consults small businesses on their start-up, growth and general operations. She looks forward to bringing her tennis industry experience, education and business background to Balboa Tennis Club as she expands the products and services available to players.

BTC Junior with Pro Ambitions - Jun Dilmaghanian



Jun Dilmaghanian

The obvious question when interviewing the son of BTC Tennis Director Hiromi Sasano relates to the pressure of becoming a “great one” like his Mom. Being the offspring of a former pro who played the tour for three years, achieved a world ranking as well as winning the National 40 Singles Championships for the last five years, could create angst in some children. “I’ve started beating her,” he says “Yet it’s still close.” As for the pressure to succeed, Jun says, “It’s a good thing.”

So far he is thriving, with a true desire to go pro by 18 or 19 years old. “I like to train,” he says. “I’m practicing hard and we’ll see where it takes me.” Jun enjoys playing tennis with friends, practicing, competing and traveling to tournaments. He currently has a UTR ranking of 8.40 and has begun playing ITF adult and junior competition in Mexico to get ranking points. According to his Mom, Jun does his own scheduling, enters the tournaments, sets up practice sessions, books his own flights, hotel arrangements and pays from his own pocket. “Not many 15 years olds take this initiative,” Hiromi states.

In terms of mental toughness, Jun rates himself “above average.” The higher level of competition he is playing will certainly test his skills. To endure physically on the court - another key component of success – Jun partakes in circuit training and lifting. “I’m working on getting stronger,” he says.

Jun started playing tennis at age 5 and by 8 years old, he segued into using the same double handle racquet Hiromi uses that works quite well for her. “I feel like I get more reach and length,” he says. “The balls off the racquet give a different type of spin.” Another benefit for Jun is the fact he is a lefty, like the pro he models his game after – Rafael Nadal. Jun’s best shot is his forehand, followed by his serve. “I want to continue to develop an all court game,” he says.

Jun currently participates in the BTC Junior Development Program under Coach Rafa Martinez. He says the clinics provide “good energy” for kids who are serious about their tennis and want to take their games to the next level. “The pros emphasize being mentally strong and not showing any negative emotion on the court.”

For now, Jun is checking all the boxes on his path to pro tennis. As a 10th grader who takes classes online to train more at tennis, the road ahead looks promising. Like the pros tell him in clinics, “one point at a time.” In life, “one day at a time.”

Girl’s 16/18 Nationals at Barnes Tennis Center



The Billie Jean King Girl’s 16/18 Nationals in early August featured some of the best up and coming talent in the world. BTC hosts early rounds of the tournament with the finals all being held at Barnes Tennis Center. Looking on from the sidelines are BTC members Irena Hukari, Tom Bost, Michael Avila and Linda Olson. The finals photo shows sponsor Billie Jean King watching the action from above.



**BALBOA
TENNIS CLUB**

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Club hours of operation:

Monday - Friday 8am – 9pm

Saturday & Sunday 8am – 8pm



Thank you to Referee Larry Calder and Tournament Director Hiromi Sasano on a successful 2022 San Diego Metropolitan Tournament. Entries increased for all BTC Tournaments in 2022 and hopefully this trend will continue into 2023.



BTC member Allison Turner showed up incognito in her costume to play a doubles match on Halloween. Cooper tagged along with his mom – Betty Muzquiz-Gillespie – showing off one of his many costumes.