

## **Friends of Newton Tennis Webinar**

### **Topic: Garden City Junior Challengers Webinar**

#### **Quick recap**

David Fish (former Harvard men's varsity coach) and Sophie Wax (co-captain of Tufts University women's team) hosted a webinar on the importance of parental involvement in tennis, with a focus on nurturing lifelong activities in children through social fitness and fair play. They introduced a panel of experts who shared their insights on the game, emphasizing the value of learning through interaction and experience. The panel also discussed the significance of developing individuality and creativity in children through sports, and the importance of supporting and fostering a love for the game.

#### **Next steps**

1. Sophie will be in touch with all the parents for the inaugural event details on June 13th at the Charles River Country Club.
2. David will collaborate with Dickie to develop new tools and concepts to help kids understand the fundamentals of tennis.
3. Tom Friedman (president of The Friends of Newton Tennis) will coordinate with Sophie to ensure a smooth execution of the inaugural event and gather feedback from parents afterwards.

#### **Summary**

David Fish and Sophie Wax hosted a webinar for the Friends of Newton tennis, focusing on the Garden City Junior Challengers and parental involvement. They were part of a panel of experts including Dave Fish, Sophie, and Dicky Herbst, who shared their insights on tennis. David emphasized the importance of learning through interaction and experience, and introduced the concept of the "buddy bench" for enhancing understanding. Sophie, a multiple sport athlete and tennis player, was tasked with overseeing the program alongside David, aiming to create a welcoming and low-stress environment for beginner and novice players. Dickie expressed his excitement about connecting young, under-played tennis players with experienced ones. David praised Tom Friedman's efforts in creating such programs for the city of Newton, while Thomas highlighted the benefits of starting tennis at a young age and using the brain in playing any game.

## **Passion, Choice, and Supporting Children's Activities**

Thomas and David discussed the importance of passion and choice in developing lifelong activities in children. They emphasized creating an environment for children to learn and establish peer-to-peer relationships, with David pointing out the unique benefits of tennis for children. They also talked about supporting children after they've participated in a tournament, with David advising against asking why they didn't perform better and instead suggested asking questions that could help them improve.

## **Social Fitness in Sports: Coaching for Success**

David and Dickie discussed the importance of social fitness in sports and the impact of their coaching methods on their athletes. David emphasized that his focus as a coach at Harvard was to instill empathy, respect, and strong interpersonal skills in his team, which he believed would lead to success both on and off the court. Dickie shared a memorable experience from his own athletic career, highlighting the importance of social interaction and understanding, even in the context of competition. Both agreed that the goal of their coaching was not just to produce winning athletes, but to build well-rounded, confident, and competent individuals.

## **Emphasizing Fair Play and Independent Thinking in Tennis**

David emphasized the importance of fair play and independent thinking in tennis, arguing that these values are essential for the development of strong and capable individuals. He criticized the practice of "gaming the system" and avoiding challenging matches, which he called a misguided strategy that only serves to hinder progress. David advocated for a balanced approach to competition, in which players should aim to improve their skills by playing with opponents of varying levels, rather than focusing solely on winning or avoiding loss. He also highlighted the significance of integrity in the sport, particularly in the context of making calls on the court.

## **Sophie's Love for Tennis and Program Focus**

Dickie asked Sophie about her love for tennis, to which she responded that it's the sport that has taught her the most patience and perseverance. Sophie further explained that she finds the game enjoyable as it presents challenges and requires full effort. Dickie agreed with Sophie and emphasized that the focus of their program is on social fitness and team building, rather than just the results. Sophie's role as a co-captain at Tufts was also acknowledged, highlighting her leadership skills.

## **Developing Creativity in Children Through Sports**

David emphasized the importance of developing individuality and creativity in children through sports, rather than focusing on perfection or standardized performance. He expressed his team's intention to help parents understand the best ways to support their children, and to foster a love for the game.

## **Conclusion**

Thomas informed that the inaugural event Junior Challenger was scheduled for June 13th at Charles River Country Club, where further discussions would take place. David also paid tribute to Isadore Singer, former Newton resident and lifelong tennis player, whose memory the Junior Challengers honor through a grant from the New England Tennis and Education Foundation.