



# TENNIS NWT ANNUAL REPORT 2020



Prepared by Executive Director

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## MEET THE TEAM

### Board of Directors **2019-2020**

President	John St. Louis – Yellowknife, NT
Vice President	Pooja Chugh – Yellowknife, NT
Secretary	Shelley Kapraelian – Yellowknife, NT
Treasurer	Shirley Zhang, Yellowknife, NT
President, Yellowknife Tennis Club	Anna Coles
President, Fort Smith Club	Dennis Bevington
President, Norman Wells Club	Kace Hunter
Director	Slavica Jovic
Director	Nittin Gohil
Director	Spider Jones
Executive Director	Nikola Jovic

### Special Thanks

To all those who serve on the Tennis NWT Board of Directors.

To all the volunteers making a difference to the game of tennis in our territory every day.

## **OUR MISSION**

Tennis NWT is committed to the advancement of tennis in the Northwest Territories by stimulating participation and excellence in the sport at the local, territorial, provincial and national levels. Tennis NWT is dedicated to providing encouragement, support, leadership and opportunity to northern tennis enthusiasts through its many programs.

## **OUR VALUES**

- Leadership
- Accessibility
- Participation
- Innovation
- Integrity
- Collaboration
- Healthy Lifestyle
- Excellence
- Community Partnership
- Teamwork

## **OUR GOALS**

1. Encourage greater participation in tennis throughout the territory
2. Develop and sustain structures that support the development of junior tennis at every level
3. Provide opportunities to increase the number of coaches within the territory
4. Promote the development of new facilities and foster the improvement of existing facilities
5. Partner with organizations throughout the territory to increase the accessibility of tennis

## STRATEGIC PLAN

Develop a four-year strategic plan in alignment with Canada games

Establish a strategy for the development of new tennis clubs.

Develop and implement a junior development program in alignment with clubs

Promote the development of new and existing facilities and foster the improvement of existing facilities and clubs

Increasing the accessibility of tennis in communities



## SPONSORS AND PARTNERS

Tennis NWT is proud to be supported by the following companies and organizations



## YEAR IN REVIEW

Our lives have been disrupted on so many levels and we now live in a time of relative uncertainty that creates challenges when contemplating the future. We were fortunate, that as a sport, the more drastic measures were lifted at a time when our peaking playing period started.

The Tennis NWT Association is immensely proud of immediate and proactive action that was taken to ensure that we could keep as much operating as possible.

Covid-19 aside, we enjoyed another successful year. Membership numbers are up for the 3rd year in a row. This year we had 350 members whereas last year we had 300. Participation in competitions and activities continues to grow. It is heartening to see that we are adhering to our vision for the advancement of tennis in the Northwest Territories by stimulating participation and excellence in the sport at the local, territorial, provincial and national levels.

This can only come about from a vibrant board, our clubs, who are passionate about their sport, their clubs and their members. Thank you to our clubs, and those who volunteer to run them, for working with the board to maintain the momentum.

In 2020 Tennis NWT delivered a year-round tennis program with outdoor activities (May-September) and indoor activities (October-April) in cooperation with the City of Yellowknife. This is especially important for juniors as it provides continuous tennis skill development throughout the full year.

Tennis NWT partnered with the Yellowknife Tennis Club in hiring a Tennis Professional, Jan Martinek from Vancouver. He provided coaching for Tennis NWT at the Junior Beginner/Intermediate/High Performance developmental clinics, and led the Le Petite Tennis Summer Program for 3-5 year olds. As well, he coached 8 weeks of Tennis/Multisport Camp organized in cooperation with the City of Yellowknife. Jan also provided coaching for Yellowknife Tennis Club for ladies and men's clinics.

This year Tennis NWT had 5 assistant coaches that helped with juniors and adults' clinics.

Tennis NWT participated in Get Active Programs and Swim to Survive Events.

## JUNIORS PROGRAMS

The following juniors' programs were delivered for 11 weeks from mid-June to mid-September: Le Petit Tennis, Beginner, Intermediate/Advance, and High Performance.

### Le Petit Tennis

Tennis NWT Association is using Le Petit Tennis (LPT) to get kids engaged in tennis at a young age. LPT is a visual story program to help children of ages 3-5 to discover tennis through a series of engaging stories while travelling across countries and cultures reaching all backgrounds.

#### Active Start

This stage of development is to promote the love of physical activity while laying the foundation for future enjoyment of tennis. Participants learn moving patterns, balance and coordination while having fun doing a variety of physical activities.

#### General Objectives

Instill a love of sport and being physically active by introducing kids to tennis using the appropriate modified progressive tennis equipment.





## **Juniors Beginners/Intermediate/Advance Clinics**

Kids Tennis introduces the sport of tennis in a fun and interactive way and ensures immediate success for young players ages 6-12. Using modified tennis balls, racquets, nets and courts, young players are properly equipped to enjoy rallies and learn the fundamentals of the game early on. Skills are developed much quicker, allowing for an easy transition to full court. Our Junior Program for beginner and intermediate players involved training in all aspects of the game including stroke technique, footwork, strategy, consistency, and match play.

## **High Performance Clinics**

These clinics are for juniors from ages of 10 to 15 who have demonstrated a keen interest in tennis and like a more intense training environment and smaller group ratio. The purpose is to develop higher-level tennis playing skills amongst youth from the North. The goal is to develop junior tennis in Yellowknife and NWT and have a junior team that will participate in Western Canada Summer Games and Canada Summer Games. As well, we would like to provide younger players an opportunity to become certified instructors, which would provide coaching resources for Yellowknife in the future.

## **Juniors Tennis Tournament – August 22, 2020**

### JUNIORS 6 TO 10 YEARS OLD

From left: Araliya Peeris , Daniel-Eli Croft, Taran Jagpal, Vaani Jagpal, Sebastian Bernabe, Elise Auld, Natalia Kuzma, Agasi Balasnsanyan, Valerie Lopez-Sanchez.

Back row Coaches: Jan Martinek and Tamara Jovic



**JUNIORS 11-15 YEARS OLD**

From left: James Smillie, Orlee Duru, Tendesai Mufandaedza, Melanie Messier, Joe Curran, Anna Curran, Rielle Naveed;  
 Back row Coaches: Jan Martinek and Tamara Jovic



sports & recreation YELLOWKNIFE, Friday, August 28, 2020 17

# Tournament time for the juniors

Yellowknife Tennis Club hosts event for beginners and intermediate players

by James McCarthy  
 Northern News Services  
 As summer winds down, we are reminded every day that outdoor sports will eventually give way to those of an indoor nature.

Or so we hope.

The Yellowknife Tennis Club was back in tournament mode on Aug. 22 with its junior tournament for those in the beginner and intermediate programs. The high performance crew didn't participate as they compete in the adult tournaments during the season.

A total of 16 players – nine in the beginner and seven in the intermediate – hit the court to play in a round-robin style of event with the number of games they won. When all was said and done, Daniel Eli-Craft won the beginners

division while Joe Curran was tops in the intermediate group.

Slava Jovic of the Yellowknife Tennis Club said it went as well as it could have, even if the attendance was a bit lower than anticipated.

"Some of the kids may have been nervous about playing," she said. "We have over 20 kids in our clinics – we've had to turn kids away this year – but they may have thought they weren't ready to play in a tournament. We tried to run it the same way we held our clinics this year."

The court set-up for each group was different with the beginners playing half-court games and the intermediate group using the full court. The winner of each game was the first to reach 10 points.

"This is not the end of the clinic season, said Jovic, as

they will continue for at least to the beginning of September, as long as the weather holds out.

The amount of players in each clinic were structured in such a way so guidelines on group numbers were kept, she added.

"The younger kids, those under 12, didn't have to worry about distancing so there was no enforcement of that," she said. "For the older kids, we could only have a maximum of 25 people on the courts at one time, so with four coaches out on the court, we could have 21 kids."

The capped numbers also meant a good coach-to-player ratio, said Jovic.

"Having so many certified coaches out there made it easy for Jan (Martinek, head tennis pro) to be a roaming coach," she said.



Natalia Kazma returns a forehand during the Yellowknife Tennis Club's junior tournament.



Joe Curran prepares to serve one up during the Yellowknife Tennis Club's junior tournament on Aug. 22.

## HIGH PERFORMANCE CAMP JUNE 29 – JULY 3, 2020

Due to Covid-19 this year we organized the High Performance Camp differently. Mornings were for older kids and afternoon for younger kids. We added the following juniors' high performance clinics:

### Smashers

(Ages 6-8; 6:1 Ratio)

This program is designed to teach all the shots in a fun learning environment using progressive tennis teaching methods. A great program for beginners and novice players. Fun, team mini matches played daily. This program was delivered Monday to Friday from 1:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

### Aces

(Ages 8-10; 6:1 Ratio)

This program is designed for beginner and intermediate players. Learn, improve and play. Mini matches played daily with a tournament on the last day. This program was delivered Monday to Friday from 1:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.



## High Performance (10 – 15-year-old)

Tennis NWT ran two-weeks of High Performance Tennis Camp (HP) from **June 29 to July 3, 2020** and from **August 24 to 27, 2020** in Yellowknife. This was for juniors from ages 10 to 15 who have demonstrated a keen interest in tennis and like a more intense training environment and smaller group ratio. The purpose of the camp was to develop higher-level tennis skills amongst youth from the North. This is the fifth consecutive year that Tennis NWT has run a High Performance Camp. The goal is to develop junior tennis in Yellowknife and NWT and have a junior team that will participate in Western Canada Summer Games and Canada Summer Games. As well, we would like to provide younger players an opportunity to become certified instructors, which would provide coaching resources for Yellowknife in the future.





# Sports & Recreation

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## The future of tennis on display

Tennis NWT hosts junior high performance camps



**Avaliya Fox steps into a forehand return** during an accuracy drill during a junior high performance camp run by Tennis NWT at the Yellowknife Tennis Club on Tuesday.

By James McCarthy  
Northern News Services

If you were to ask the young players taking part in Tennis NWT's junior high performance camps this week about what's happening right now, they'll tell you simply that it's good to be out there.

The camps at the Yellowknife Tennis Club wrap up today with several young players between the ages of six to 15 hitting the courts for a week of instruction under the tutelage of coaches Jan Martinek and Tanara Jovic.

Martinek, who's back for his second straight year as the head pro at the club, said the one thing everyone agreed upon was the abundance of hot weather but everyone was still enthusiastic enough to play.

"Lots of kids this year," he said. "I told people that I'm back in the city and to come out. It's good to see so many show up and I think it's because people know me. That initial step of being nervous around someone new is totally gone and it's just fun times since I've been here." Like everyone else who came from the south to work - Martinek is from Vancouver - he had to self-isolate for 14 days upon his arrival before heading out onto the courts.

The players were split into one of three groups for the week: Smashers for ages six through eight; Aces for ages eight through 10 and the high performance group for the 10 to 15-year-olds. The Smashers and Aces were out on court in the afternoons with the focus on learning ground strokes and footwork among other things. Each group played fun matches to wrap things up each day.

The older group focused more on the technical aspect of the sport, mainly because it's the group which could provide the bulk of the team that will head to the 2021 Canada Summer Games in Ontario next July.

If that happens, of course. "That's for the kids who want to get better and compete against other kids and win tournaments," said Martinek.

"They're the ones who want to take it seriously. The kids out in the afternoon are the ones who are up-and-coming. If they stick with it, they'll become good at it."

Martinek also said he can see which ones seem to have a grasp of the sport already.

"Some of them have a good judgment already of where to hit the ball and how fast it is and all that," he said. "It's tough sometimes because you can't tell if they're here because they like it or if their parents signed them up but you can see two different groups: the ones who will continue and the ones that probably won't."

When it comes to the players, the common theme was one of learning how to aim the ball, such as Melanie Messier. She comes from some good racquet sports pedigrees as her older brother, Stephen Messier, is one of the best young tennis and squash players in the territory.

"We learned how to aim and hit the ball," she said.

Tendler Mufson said she liked learning how to serve. "I do overhead," she said. "I learned how to do that. The coaches have been OK."

**"We learned how to aim and hit the ball."**

Melanie Messier

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**Abigail Dowling pulls off a two-handed forehand return** during a junior high performance camp run by Tennis NWT at the Yellowknife Tennis Club on Tuesday.

## NWT OPEN

2020 NWT Open rose to new levels with a record breaking number of participants – over 50 participants from Yellowknife and Fort Smith. A total of 75 matches were played. Here are the results:

<p><b>Ladies</b>                  Winner – Tamara Jovic                  Runner up – Anna Coles                  1:6 7:6 6:4</p>	<p><b>Men's</b>                  Winner - Martin Deschesnes                  Runner Up – Cole Clinton                  6:1 6:3</p>
<p><b>Ladies Doubles</b>                  Winner – Anna Coles &amp; Dawn Keim                  Runner up – Joan Bevington &amp; Jeannie Scott                  6:0</p>	<p><b>Men's Doubles</b>                  Winner – M.D. Mahfuzur Rahman &amp; K M Safat Rashif                  Runner up – Nikhilesh Gohil and Nittin Gohil                  6:4 6:4</p>
<p><b>Mixed Doubles</b>                  Winner – Tamara Jovic &amp; Cole Clinton                  Runner up – Joan &amp; Dennis Bevington                  6:4 7:6</p>	

### Catering

Catering for the NWT Open was provided by Fish on the Bay. We had a sausage party.





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## A comeback for the ages



**Anna Coles, left, and Tamara Jovic** were the finalists in the NWT Open's women's singles division at the Yellowknife Tennis Club Sunday. Jovic came from a set down to win the title in three sets. **At right**, Cole Clinton, left, took on Martin Deschenes for the men's singles crown in the NWT Open on Sunday. Deschenes would come out on top in straight sets.

### Tamara Jovic's win in women's singles highlights 2020 NWT Open tennis tournament

by James McCarthy  
Northern News Services

Tennis is one of those sports where great comebacks are always a possibility.

The women's singles final of the NWT Open at the Yellowknife Tennis Club provided us with one such comeback and it was the definition of snatching victory from the jaws of defeat.

Tamara Jovic defeated Anna Coles in the final on Sunday afternoon in three sets - 1-6, 7-6, 6-4 - in a three-hour marathon but it's how Jovic did it. Coles was up 5-0 in the second set and had Jovic on the ropes but Jovic managed to turn things around to win the second set before clinching it in the deciding set.

Jovic said the turnaround started during the changeover at 5-0.

"Cole (Clinton) was playing on the court next to me and asked if I had

won a game in that set," she said. "That's when I knew I had to do something." Jovic said she started playing a lot to Coles' backhand, which Coles was doing as well, and started employing the lob.

"My backhand is always weaker and I know no one really likes playing lob shots so I started doing that more often," she said. "I started hitting the ball harder and going for it on some shots. I just played smarter."

Jovic wrapped up the win by coming back down from 4-3 in the final set, claiming the final three games in a row.

"Anna told me she had four match points in the second set and I never even thought of that, never crossed my mind that she was that close," said Jovic.

It's the third women's singles title for Jovic and she said it was the hardest one to win.

"I've never come back from that far down," she said. "We've played three times now and

that was the first time we went to three sets."

There were other titles on the line as well, including the men's singles final featuring Clinton taking on Martin Deschenes. Deschenes would come out on top in straight sets, 6-1, 6-3, but Clinton had nothing to be ashamed of, said Slavica Jovic of Tennis NWT.

#### A few tough matches

"He played a few tough matches against Blair Macpherson, Dennis Bevington and Alex Godfrey to get to the finals," she said.

Jovic and Clinton would team up to win the mixed doubles title over Joan and Dennis Bevington of Fort Smith in straight sets, 6-4, 7-6, in a match where Slavica Jovic said both teams fought for every point.

The men's doubles champions this year are MD Mahfuzur Rahman and Kofi Safat Rashid as they took down the father/son

duo of Nitin and Nikhlesh Gohil, 6-4, 6-4, while Coles teamed with Dawn Keim to win the women's doubles crown over Joan Bevington and Jeanne Scott, 6-0.

Slavica Jovic said it was a one-set match due to time constraints; Bevington had to hit the road back home and Scott had other commitments to tend to.

A total of 50 players from Yellowknife and Fort Smith hit the courts over the course of the tournament and Slavica Jovic said the number of participants meant that games would have meant a July 22 start.

But the skies opened up with rain, forcing everything to get underway the following day.

"We were lucky that the weather was good so we were able to accommodate consolation matches on Saturday and Sunday and give participants another opportunity to play if they lost their first round matches," she said.

## OUR COACHES

Tennis NWT would like to take this opportunity to say Thank You to our coaches and to celebrate the positive impact that they had on kids and adults and made their athletic experience enjoyable.

All of our coaches are Tennis Canada "Active Certified Coaches". An Active Certified Professional is:

- A fully certified Instructor, Club Professional or Coach
- A current member of the Tennis Professionals Association
- A professional who meets the minimum requirement for ongoing professional development (every 2 years except for: Instructor - every 4 years and Club Professional 1 - every 3 years)

Despite COVID-19 restrictions we had one of the busiest seasons. Our coaches delivered various clinics every day of the week. Le Petit Clinics (for 3-5 years old); Juniors Clinics (Beginner, Intermediate and High Performance); High Performance Camp; Ladies Clinics (Beginners and Intermediate/Advanced) and Men's Clinics (Beginners and Intermediate/Advance). We were able to provide good coach to student ratio. All clinics had minimum 3 coaches and juniors had 4 coaches. Our Club Pro, Jan Martinek, came back from Vancouver for another season.

From left: Club Pro, Jan Martinek; Instructors: Obed Duru Jr., Anna Coles, Nikola Jovic, Tamara Jovic, Brian Liang and Jean Tuyishime





## EQUIPMENT



Tennis NWT received funding from the City of Yellowknife in 2019 and purchased one self practice board. Yellowknife Tennis Club purchased one self practice board and both were installed in the summer.

As well, as a part of 2020 funding from the City of Yellowknife, Tennis NWT purchased another self practice board for the Pumphouse Courts that will be installed in summer 2021.

## SPORT NORTH AWARDS

### Youth Athlete of the Year – NIKHILESH GOHIL

This award is presented to one male and one female athlete in three age categories: Senior (over 21 years of age), Junior (16 – 21 years of age), and Youth (under 16 years of age) – as of December 31, 2020. These individuals will have excelled in their sport at various levels of competition.

Nikhilesh is 14 and has played tennis since he was 10 years old. Nikhilesh's natural athleticism is very obvious. Nikhilesh embodies the tenacity and motivation any coach hopes to find in any athlete. He competes in junior and adult competition and has won few tournaments. He has competed in both singles and doubles. Nikki represented Team NWT in Tennis at the Western Canada Sumer Games in Swift Current, SK. He promotes sport and fair play. Nikki is a well-rounded individual who is very successful at anything he puts his mind to. Aside from tennis, he also plays soccer and table tennis competitively and was selected to represent Team NT in both of these sports. In addition to his athleticism, he is a high-achieving student who enjoys being challenged academically and also plays the piano as well as the drums.



## **Sport North Active for Life Award - BERNIE BENNET**

This award is presented to an athlete of 55+ years that competes/participates in a team or individual sport in the Northwest Territories. This athlete excels in their sport and inspires the elder generation to stay active for life through sport.

Bernie started playing tennis in 1989, he was 28 years old when he started. Bernie is a self-taught tennis player which is why he developed a different playing style. Throughout his career, Bernie has won 38 single tournament titles in tennis in the NWT. He has represented Team NWT for tennis at the Canada 55+ Games multiple times and won a bronze medal in men's doubles at the Canada 55+ Games in Brampton, ON.

Bernie is also a competitive badminton player and has won 10 NWT Open Men's singles titles. He has represented Team NWT in Badminton at the Arctic Winter Games and won the Open Men's Singles Title in Alaska in 1986. Bernie has also won titles in Alberta in badminton and tennis. Bernie coached badminton at three (3) Arctic Winter Games and the Western Canada Summer Games. Bernie is a two-time recipient of the Sport North Adult Male Athlete of the Year Award because he was hard-working and achieving great results in both badminton and tennis. Bernie is clearly an outstanding athlete. He excels in tennis and inspires the elder generation to stay active for life through sport.



## **2020 CLUB AWARDS**

To celebrate many successes of our junior and adults players and volunteers club awards were presented. Below is a full list of award winners:

### **Most Improved:**

- Hiro Kobayashi (Adult)
- Teresa Martin (Juniors)

### **Most Dedicated (by clinic attendance):**

- Elizabeth Bernabe (Le Petit)
- Marissa Martin & Muhammed (Adults)
- Nubiat (Juniors 6-10s) & Anna Curran (Juniors 11-15s)

### **Most Spirited:**

- Finnley Mackenzie (Le Petit)
- Taran Jagpal, (Juniors)
- Randy Rivers (Adult)

### **Volunteer of the Year:**

- Robert Zonneveld

## AFILIATE CLUBS

### Fort Smith Tennis Club

Fort Smith Tennis Club had 40 members this year. They provided a summer program focused on improving skills. This year they resurfaced the tennis courts. Fort Smith Open Tournament was held but due to Covid-19 there were no out-of-town participants at their tournament. They held a fun doubles tournament over a two-day period followed by a barbecue. As well, pickleball was also played during the season.



### Norman Wells Tennis Federation

Tennis went from historic highs to a most unfortunate decline as members left the community leaving a void that has not been filled. There were challenges due to physical distancing protocols; the season did not start until Phase 2 began. The net was installed and was damaged which impacted the tennis season as there was no alternate net. Windows of the Club House were broken by vandalism; the plywood was already installed which made it easier to protect the club from further damage. No clinics were provided due to the challenges outlined and a lack of interest from the community. They are hoping to offer tennis again next year.

## Yellowknife Tennis Club

The membership was 298 this year compared to 251 in 2019 and 222 in 2018. Clinics were hosted over 12 weeks with Jan as the head coach and 5 assistant instructors. 104 adults participated in the clinics; average of 24-25 men and 26-27 women and 82 juniors. Three tournaments were held, including a new doubles tournament.

New equipment was purchased including one self-practice board, bleachers, new notice boards, and patio heaters for the tennis club deck. This year we also painted the clubhouse door yellow.



Saturday morning socials were very well attended this year. The weather was nice and “YK SnowBalls” group played until late September.



## TENNIS NWT SWAG

This year Tennis NWT purchases hoodies, hats and buffs from Erasmuss Apparel for Board Members, High Performance Juniors Players and winners of Tennis NWT Open Tournament.





## LOOKING FORWARD TO 2021

Positive Culture

Strategic Planning Session

Safe Sport Initiative

Improved Marketing and Communications

Improve Operational Procedures

Updating of Policies

Development of New Clubs in Communities

Club Development Program

Sponsorships and Grants

Another Great Season of Tennis

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