



At the Beginning of the Year

Sally Grose is at the heart of a new departure for Norwalk Grassroots Tennis. The former Principal of the Hillspoint School in Westport has



Sally Grose meeting with members of the NGT program

joined our staff as Academic Coordinator. She has obtained consent forms from the parents of our players on our travel team (the "Red" team), and has reviewed their school report cards. The cards reveal that some of the youngsters are having difficulties in some of their subjects.

Sally has met with 3 of the players, their parents and their school counselors and prepared a plan providing extra help through the school. She has been joined by Al Perry, a retired teacher from the New Canaan Country School who has volunteered to offer individual tutoring where needed.

Despite the report cards, some of our kids deny they have problems. Others are content to put off doing anything about them. They are not different in this from kids everywhere. But Sally will have none of it! She is a very liberal, hard-nosed person. She will shape up these kids. We know it!

In Memory of Rich Fogarty



Rich Fogarty, friend of NGT

Rich Fogarty was a most accomplished Darien tennis player who often would spend part of a morning or afternoon with the kids on the courts at Roodner Court. He quickly earned their confidence and affection



Plaque honoring Rich Fogarty at Roodner court

with his engaging, easy manner, and classic strokes.

On a memorable occasion, he invited a group of our players to his family's vacation home in Narragansett, RI following a visit to Newport, and sat around with them, after a swim, to chat about their hopes for the future. The kids were enchanted!

Rich passed away in 2006. A bronze plaque in Rich's memory stands at the foot of our practice wall at Roodner. Last month, also in Rich's memory, his family made a contribution of \$20,000. to Norwalk Grassroots Tennis toward the general expenses of the program. We express our gratitude for this most generous gift, and also for the legacy of Rich's wonderful personality and concern, which has been bequeathed to our youngsters.

Hitting with James Blake

Betty Blake, James' mother, who lives in Fairfield, was good enough to address our benefit dinner at the "Autumn Classic" last September. Betty later mentioned that James was scheduled to appear in December at the Harlem inner-city tennis program for its benefit, and to play with any kids in attendance. Betty invited our program to send some of our players to the event, and arranged for the fee to be waived.

David Kimani took 11 of our youngsters in a Housing Authority van



NGT group with James Blake at the Harlem Armory in December

to the Harlem Armory for James' appearance. They had a chance to hit with James and his brother Thomas, and to watch the two brothers play against each other. On the way down to Harlem, David explained that James had just helped the United States win the Davis Cup. In the course of hitting with James, Ra Ra, one of our 14 year olds, won a point.

"I just beat the World Champ!" Ra Ra exulted. Another of our players noticed that a local



James Blake signing autographs

youngster hitting with Thomas was not very good. "I could beat that kid" he announced. Every ounce of confidence, every exposure to the world outside of Norwalk is precious for these young people. We are fortunate, indeed, to have the interest and support of a family as illustrious as the Blakes to help make these possible.

The New Look for NGT



Readers of the View may have noticed the improved format and layout of our newsletter and recent appeal. It is due to the talents of David Demarest, an advertising agency veteran and gifted graphic designer, who very generously has donated his services to upgrade and integrate all the communications of Norwalk Grassroots Tennis. You will be aware of his influence in connection with communications concerning our upcoming Raffle and Play in May tournament, as well as the Autumn Classic. He has created a logo and new look for our letterhead, masthead and every piece of information we develop.



The recent appeal created by David Demarest that resulted in many new donations for Norwalk Grassroots Tennis.

We hope you like them as much as we do.

Director's Column



David Kimani

We continue to grow in numbers. Last year we saw over 400 children in our tennis activities, the biggest number we have ever handled since we started 13 years ago. Not only have we grown in numbers but the children's tennis has improved. Some of our children are ranked by the USTA New England Section. So far we have 8 ranked youngsters. In December 2007, we played a level six USTA tournament at the Milford Indoor Tennis Club. Our best player reached the quarter finals in the 14-under age group, several others won at least one match.

This year we have entered an additional team in the USTA indoor winter league. The 14 and under team is captained by Jermain Martin Riley and co-captained by Fred Mezidor, The 18 and under team is captained by Antonio Passarelle (who was just admitted to the University of Texas-Arlington) and co-captained by Dimitri Mezidor. Twenty-two youngsters will be playing on these teams—hoping to make it the State Championships in Woodbridge on the 15th of March.

—David Kimani

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS (please mark your calendar)

February 15

Scheduled launch of our new website:
www.norwalkgrassrootstennis.com.

March 1

Play in May raffle tickets available for sale. Win a free trip to London and tickets for two to Wimbledon.



May 3

Saturday 8:30am. Play in May benefit doubles tournament. All levels invited. visit www.norwalkgrassrootstennis.org for more information and sign up forms.

May 3

Saturday 7:00pm. Cocktail party at the Country Club of Darien following the tournament. Awards and Raffle drawing at this event. Info at: www.norwalkgrassrootstennis.org

June 19

NGT member guest doubles tournament (the kids are the "members"), we need you to be a "guest".

September 27

"Autumn Classic" benefit doubles tournament at Weston Field Club.



Shantel Miller, 10, has been with the Norwalk Grassroots Tennis program for 4 years and is the best in the 12-and-under girls blue team.

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