



## IKE JOHNSON HAS HAD A BUSY 45 YEARS.

The longtime tennis pro and community tennis advocate has taught the game since he first discovered it in the early 1970s.

The New Jersey resident now teaches at parks, indoor courts and anywhere else he can. The place he makes his biggest impact?

The schools.

“Schools are the key to growing tennis,” he said. “We have a chance to reach athletes that normally wouldn’t play.”

The President of Burlington County Tennis Association, Johnson first worked with schools in 1998. Since then he’s trained countless physical education teachers and volunteered to run afterschool programs and tennis assemblies. Johnson also helps match students with playing and educational opportunities outside of the classroom.

“We always try to do something educational to go along with the tennis,” he said. “At a tennis tournament, we’ll incorporate a museum, or spend time at a park. It’s a fun way to learn, and also add in those social skills.”

Through teaching, Johnson has forged unforgettable relationships. His favorite moments are when players he taught years ago drop by the courts to say “hi.” Some are competing collegiately or teaching tennis. Recently, he had a visit from a former student who is studying to become a doctor.

“They keep in touch with me, so I get to find out who’s having a baby and how everyone is doing,” he said. “I love working with the families. I’ve taught four generations of players here in Burlington County.”

## IF YOU RUN A TENNIS PROGRAM, USTA IS HERE TO HELP.

Grants, scholarships and additional assistance are available throughout the year to our tennis providers. This could include equipment packages, money toward a program or various training opportunities.

Learn more by connecting with Middle States at [usta.com/middlestates](http://usta.com/middlestates) or emailing [NetPLAY@ms.usta.com](mailto:NetPLAY@ms.usta.com).

## Don't have tennis courts? No problem.

If you connect with the USTA, we'll help you find a place to play.

Few places utilize space as well as the City Of Reading (COR) Tennis, which implements school tennis programs all over Reading, Pa. COR is in school gymnasiums, local parks and anywhere else they can find space.

Learn more about how to bring tennis to your school, or connect with a local provider, by visiting [NetPLAYmag.com](http://NetPLAYmag.com).

### More specific questions?

Email [NetPLAY@ms.usta.com](mailto:NetPLAY@ms.usta.com) and we'll help you find the answers you need.



# GROWING TENNIS IN SCHOOL



## CHARLIE BELINSKY

**Physical Education Teacher & Coach,  
Holbein Middle School (New Jersey)**

"I met Lori Schwartz (USTA MS Tennis Service Representative) about four years ago when I was working at an elementary school. We built a tennis program there. When I changed schools, we got back in touch. Last year we did a two-week afterschool program to get the kids really into the game. We now run a tennis unit for physical education class in the spring, inside the gym."

### WHY TENNIS?

"It's something the kids can pick up pretty easily. Our school is big on basketball, football and soccer. Tennis is different. It's something they may not have had an opportunity to play if we didn't offer it in the school. It brings in a new population to the game.

We try to do it all step by step and start slow. We work on the forehand volley, backhand volley and establish a feel for the racquet. We teach the rules of the game and tennis etiquette. Sometimes, kids really take to it. We had a student pick up tennis and really love it. Next year he'll be a top player at his high school."



## JOI DEIBLER

**Physical Education Teacher & Coach  
Spring Garden Elementary School (Pennsylvania)**

"I started with lessons in phys. ed class and when I realized there was an interest, I began offering lessons after school. Renee Lentz (USTA MS Tennis Service Representative) encouraged me to start a *Rally Stars* Junior Team Tennis program so the students have a place to play after they have mastered the skills in my class."

### WHY TENNIS?

"Tennis is a lifetime sport. I love that my students can learn a skill in my class and then play a pick-up game with a parent or friend. If they like tennis enough to make it their primary sport in high school, that's great too.

Tennis teaches sportsmanship. When we begin game play, I discuss decorum on the court. Students are required to shake hands at the conclusion of a game. Also, students are learning to achieve competency, so they have to work hard. Finally, the more exercise we can provide for our students, the better.

When you play tennis, you are concentrating on the ball and your opponent, and you don't realize how much exercise you are getting, because you're focused on those external factors. If you are lucky, it's a game you can play until you are very old."

"Tennis is a lifetime sport. I love that my students can learn a skill in my class and then play a pick-up game with a parent or friend." JOI DEIBLER



## EVERYONE LOVES FREE STUFF.

Connecting your school with Net Generation gives you access to it.

Bringing tennis to your school is easier than ever. Plus, connecting with USTA could result in a grant and/or free equipment.

For example, schools that fully register and engage through Net Generation receive 30 free racquets, balls and tape, along with lesson plans and access to other USTA materials.

It's a no-brainer. Learn more at [netgeneration.com](http://netgeneration.com) or by emailing [NetPLAY@ms.usta.com](mailto:NetPLAY@ms.usta.com).