

Men's Travel League – Commonly Asked Questions

An important part of the GEPTC partnership with the Glen Ellyn Park District is participation in the Chicago Platform Tennis Charities (CPTC) travel leagues. GEPTC is represented by 14 men's teams and four women's team and over half of the Park District platform tennis members play travel matches along with their local Glen Ellyn play. For players new to the sport or considering joining a travel team for the first time, here are some answers to frequently asked questions:

What is the CPTC? - The CPTC is a group of over 30 different park districts and private clubs sponsoring teams and hosting matches. There are 34 different men's leagues with 330 teams in total and over 2,400 players.

How Does the League Work? - Play is held from approximately October 1 to March 1 with playoffs and championships thereafter. Play is held once a week, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, or Thursdays depending on the league your team is assigned. Each team is assembled around like skills, set by a paddle tennis ranking system. The teams are labeled by a USTA tennis term (i.e. level 6.0) and Series number (Series 1).

What Series Level Should I Play At? – Most players start at a lower level and progress higher each year with experience. A general guide to levels is as follows:

- Series 1 through 3 (6.0 to 5.5) – Very experienced platform player who has played tournament level play and /or success at college level tennis
- Series 4 to 7 (5.0) – Player has excellent shot anticipation, regularly hits winners, can execute all different aspects of game with consistency and uses serves as a weapon
- Series 8 to 12 (4.5) – Experienced competitive 4.5 tennis players are usually in this level. Varies play based on opponents skills, can handle pace, and has mastered court positioning and footwork
- Series 13 to 17 (4.0) – Dependable player with teamwork skills in doubles, consistent work in the corners and can lob and volley on a dependable basis. Average tennis players fall here, and talented new players to the sport frequently start at this level
- Series 17 to 21 (3.0 and 3.5) – Good players who lacked dependability or variety in one or two key elements of the game
- Series 22 and lower – Player is learning game, familiar with basic positions, can maintain a rally and can control the ball. Many new players begin league play at this level

The best way to assess your skill level is to hit balls with an experienced GEPTC player. If you need help finding one, drop an email to geptcinfo@gmail.com and we will connect you with a player. Also, Mark Cunnington is our club pro and 30 minutes with him can be very helpful in assessing your level of play. He can be reached at Gepaddlepro@gmail.com.

The league is very competitive but also has a very social, fun element as well. GEPTC members have a collective responsibility to maintain the integrity and sportsmanship of the game of paddle...to represent Glen Ellyn in such a manner to ensure it remains a favorable place to play matches...and to, at all times, conduct ourselves in a sportsmanlike manner for the enjoyment of the sport. All players are to be held accountable for their own personal actions and words and as part of a travel team agree that the GEPTC can take suspension actions against a player if these principles are not adhered to.

How Much Commitment of Time Will Travel Need? - Most teams are comprised of 12 players, and each team fields four matches (8 players) per week. You will be expected to be available for at least 75% of the matches for your team. Half of the team matches are home matches in Glen Ellyn and the other half across the Chicagoland area, most on the north shore and western suburbs. Some Glen Ellyn teams play only against other west suburban teams. Play begins at 7 p.m.

Is There a Financial Commitment to Play? – In addition to your annual fee to the Glen Ellyn Park District, league players pay approximately \$275-300 annually for league fees (includes court rental, APTA membership, balls, playoff and championship awards). Players also pay for the cost of food and beverage for hosting matches. This varies by team but usually averages about \$200 - \$250 per year per player each year.

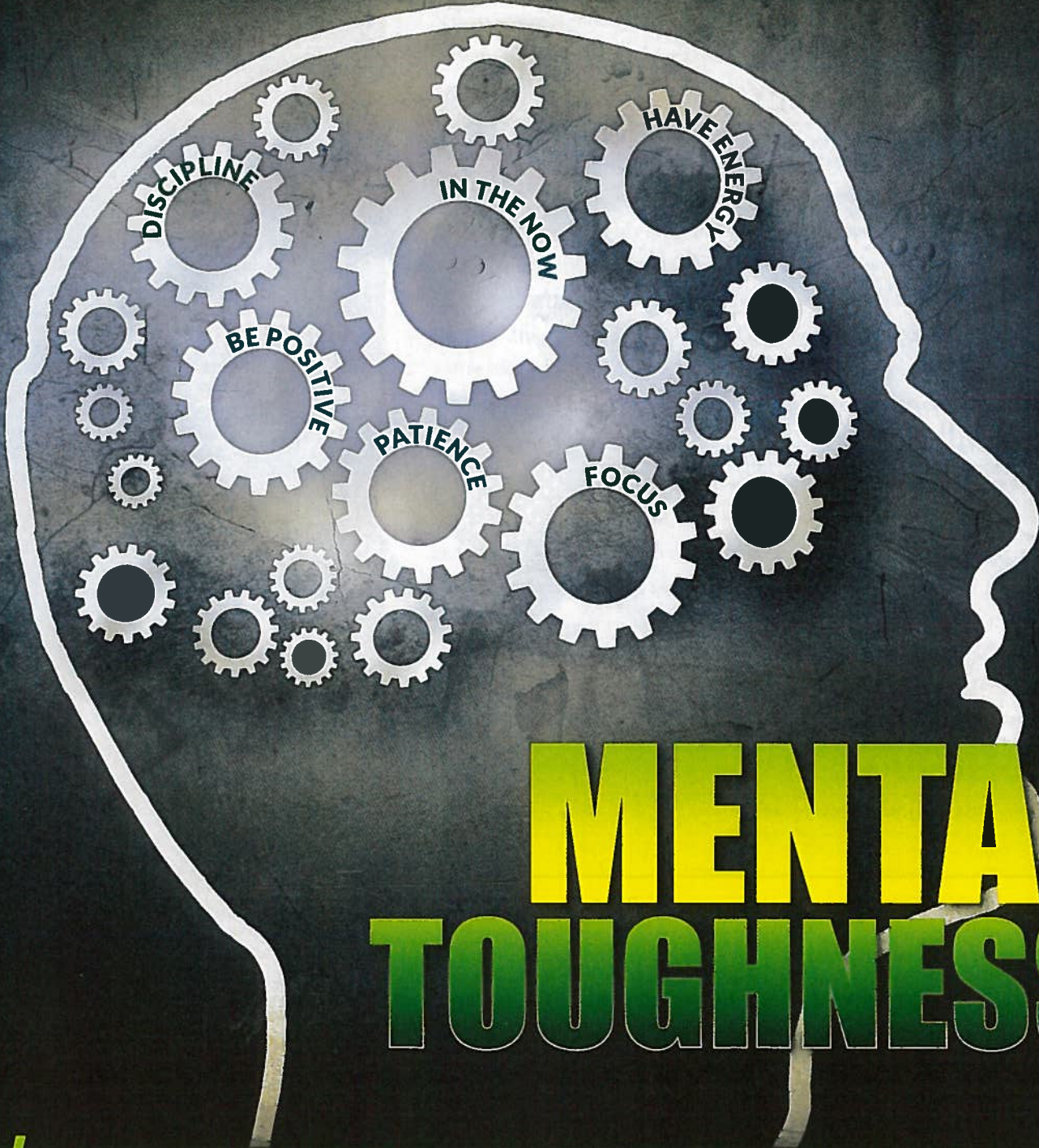
Are There Any Other Options to Travel League? – The Park District hosts a house league with play on Monday nights. Many of the players on current travel teams started in the house league.

Hope you find this helpful as you look at expanding your platform tennis experience.

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PLATFORM

TENNIS MAGAZINE



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APTA OUTREACH

A DECADE OF GROWING THE GAME

The APTA's "Grow the Game" program offers grants and no-interest loans to public-access facilities around the country. Here are reports from The Midwest, Regions V and VI.

THE MIDWEST

2011 GRANTS



Homestead Country Club Prairie Village, Kansas

With help from an APTA grant, Homestead Country Club installed two courts and offered affordable seasonal memberships to area players. They've added two more courts since.

Kansas City Men's League commissioner Brett Gamso said, "The new courts allowed the Kansas City league to expand from 64 to 96 players to 128 players. HCC now has the most courts in Kansas City, 77 members in the league, and have been the host site for the KC Open since 2011."

Kevin Kowalik, Athletics Director at Homestead, reported on the unique Kansas City league format. "The first half of the season is King of the Hill format. Foursomes of like level play 8-game pro sets with each person. The player with the most games moves up a court; the one with the least moves down the next week. The second half is team play. Two captains run a schoolyard pick until all players are chosen. The team with the most points wins. The losing team pays for the year-end party."



Glen Ellyn Park District Glen Ellyn, Illinois

Mike Graham, President of the Glen Ellyn Platform Tennis Club, explained, "Before 2011, there were two courts (purchased used) and a trailer. The demand was overwhelming. Tremendous fundraising by the original 120 players (Graham included), coupled with the Park District's contributions, went toward a new hut and two new courts. The APTA grant gave the endorsement the club needed, showing our elected commissioners that we had backing from a national organization." Now five years later, the GEPD again can barely keep up with the demand of over 300 players and is expanding to a six-court facility this spring.

Graham said, "We demonstrated that platform tennis was the most popular adult program across the entire range of Park District activities in the village (a western suburb of Chicago). We have a strong community that happens to be very generous. We have proven that the revenue from the two new courts will enable a pay back on the investment in just six years."

Graham continued, "I think what sets our facility apart from others is the camaraderie and community of the members. There is rarely a time when players simply leave after a match. They stay to talk, the hut has toys for kids to play with during their parents' matches, as a group they volunteer time at food banks, and families rent the hut on holidays. As a Park District, we don't have fire pits, wet bars, and other amenities, but we do have the warmth of over 300 people sharing a great platform tennis experience."

2012 GRANTS



Deephaven, Minnesota

There isn't a club name in the title before Deephaven, Minnesota because there isn't a club there. But for the resilience of a few key people who live in this small town (pop. 3,600), a suburb of Minneapolis on Lake Minnetonka, there wouldn't even be courts.

Jim Elvestrom is one of those key people. A financial advisor and member of the Deephaven Park Committee, he was introduced to paddle at a private club. In the corner of the town park, there was one municipal paddle court that had become unsafe to play on. Elvestrom heard that a club in the area had two courts that were defunct, found out about the APTA grant program, got buy-in from the town, and cobbled together two "better" courts out of the three, with help from friends and professionals. The courts now have lights and heaters, a huge step forward for the program.

The town contributes about \$4,000 a year for upkeep, and the members raise about the same amount at their annual tournament. The number of players at Deephaven's bare-bones two courts has grown from the original hardy 25 players to a healthy 120 women and men. Their next dream is to add a hut, which will be very helpful during the Minnesota winter.

Elvestrom said, "We are extremely inclusive. When people drive by and stop in and ask about the game, I hand them a paddle and get them on the court." For more on this intrepid platform tennis community, go to www.platformtennis.org.

2013 GRANTS



Glenview Park District Glenview, Illinois

Glenview Park District platform tennis can't seem to stop growing. During the first season of paddle tennis, the club's memberships were almost double the district's projections. At last count, they had 13 men's teams and six women's teams in the Chicago leagues. They are planning to add two more courts soon.

What started them off well was their award-winning clubhouse for golf and paddle tennis at the Glenview Prairie Club. Chuck Balling, Executive Director at the Glenview Park District, said, "It was extremely rewarding to work cooperatively with our residents, loyal golfers, paddle tennis enthusiasts, and dedicated board to create this one-of-a-kind, year-round facility."

The APTA grant helped the club in tandem with their fundraising efforts to create a high-quality public-access facility that continues to impress and flourish.



Lake Bluff Park District Lake Bluff, Illinois

Following the example of most park districts throughout the greater Chicago area, Lake Bluff PD wanted and needed to

increase the number of courts to keep up with demand. They have been at capacity since 2013 and were maintaining 155 memberships for three courts; almost all of those members play in the Chicago leagues. The Park District revenue has increased a great deal due to platform tennis.

Eric Moran, Racquet Sports and Facility Services Manager at LBPB, reported, "Although we are a Park District, we have that small club atmosphere where everyone knows everyone. This atmosphere is what makes our adult socials so extremely popular that they reach the maximum (with a waitlist) almost every time! We have needed to expand and add a fourth court for over five years. Through the tremendous fundraising efforts of our club members and support from the APTA, CPTC, and the Park District, if everything goes as planned, we should have the fourth court installed before this summer!"

2014 GRANTS



South Barrington Club South Barrington, Illinois

The South Barrington Park District had one court and a sad hut before they came to the APTA for a grant. With town support and fundraising and the APTA's help, the SBPD rehabbed the hut, created a two-court facility, and attracted more league players. They aren't stopping there.

Jay Morgan, Executive Director, South Barrington Park District reported, "We have grown from two to five Series teams with 60 men this season, and plan to join the women's league next year. We are adding a new 1,800 square-foot combo paddle and outdoor tennis hut and two new courts this summer as well."



Springfield Park District Springfield, Illinois

If you are geographically challenged, Springfield is located in southern Illinois, much closer to St. Louis, Missouri, than Chicago, and doesn't get to take advantage of the Chicago area proliferation of players. After an unfortunate fire, coupled with under-serviced courts, Springfield Park District came to the APTA for help in repairing their four courts and hut.

Member Brian Windisch said, "The grant money from the APTA went to great use. We were able to do a lot of upgrades to the four public courts we have. We had all the courts repainted, screens repaired, light issues taken care of, and new heaters for our two top courts. On top of the improved play and being able to attract some new players, after a two-year hiatus, because of court concerns, we were able to host the Springfield Open Tournament."

Because membership is still lower than SPD would like, instead of league play they schedule competitive matches two times a week so that every skill level is accommodated. The men are taking advantage of this, but the women's numbers remain low.

Windisch reported, "Although our hut is on the smaller side, it has been a great spot to hang out waiting for a match and watching other good matches being played. We have our APTA membership banners hanging proudly on the wall." ■

The APTA encourages all potential public-access facilities to submit grant proposals for new or used courts and supporting buildings. Find all the necessary info on the Grow the Game page on www.platformtennis.org.