

2018-2019 APTA Junior Report- submitted by Patty Hogan

The anchor of APTA Junior paddle has always been the Viking Junior Tour Level 1 Events. All Tour events are run by enthusiastic teaching professionals who put many volunteer hours into their events, all of which include the following:

- The APTA offers online signups for all Viking Tour Events.
- The APTA offers email marketing to promote events and offers recap and pics every Tuesday following an event.
- APTA approved formats are used to guarantee at least 2 hours of play.
- National ranking points are awarded to all teams.
- All players receive a tournament favor and Winners and finalists receive prizes
- Food /snacks etc provided for all players.
- All events cost \$40/player.
- Our ranking system will go live next season with Ranking Points earned updated within a week of an event.

In addition to the Jr Tour Events, The APTA also offers Level 2 and Level 3 events, first introduced 3 years ago and now supported by our “FIRST SERVE” initiative.

The Level 2 Events have become the stepping-stone needed to get more kids playing paddle by offering low key, less competitive events with modified rules. The cost is less, the time commitment is less, the stress is less but the fun doubles for newer players and their parents. Playing singles continues to be an option during Level 2 Events as a great way to include players of different ages and playing abilities.

The “1st Serve” initiative continues to support Level 3 Events which are Free introductory events for kids under 12 mostly, taught by enthusiastic Pros who focus on teaching the kids the basic rules with some modifications to make it easy to learn and more fun! (2 serves, 2 bounces, four players starting point from baseline, singles)

The last piece of the Junior puzzle supported by the APTA’s 1st Serve Initiative and the one gathering tons of momentum is High School Paddle. Huge programs are ongoing in Chicago, Philadelphia and now NJ. Chatham High School was the first school in the country to make paddle a Varsity sport and that has helped pave the way for the first ever NJ State Paddle Tournament which included 100 boys and girls from 9 different High Schools.

The APTA’s support of the pros until a school can become self-sufficient has been a game changer for growth! High School aged kids, many of whom had never seen paddle played, are now able to learn the basics of the game for free in a fun and social environment.

So with the High School piece in place in 3 states, we will be reaching out to every Regional President this spring to offer our support in the hope of eventually getting high school paddle played in every region. In addition, we will continue our efforts to get more traction for college play. We have one successful effort going in NC thanks to former board member Rich Green, who is now in his second year of helping organize a group of players from Duke University. Thanks to APTA funding to pay for court time, about 16 players have been active during this school year.

The highlight of the APTA Junior Season was the US Junior Nationals with 216 players battling it out in late February. The event includes lunch, a family tailgate, 2 favors for every player and a Jr Nationals game room, most of which is possible possible thanks to the ongoing generosity for four years in a row from Viking of course but also from Court Pro, Total Platform Tennis, Reilly Green Mountain and from the NJ Men's Platform Tennis Association and the NJ Women's Platform Tennis League. I think the total is up to over \$23,000 which keeps the event a fairly low-cost event for all the players.

Our Tour events are self sufficient but our Junior Introductory events and our High School effort our two biggest growth areas) and hopefully this year, college play, will need ample APTA financing to continue to grow.

I am hoping the board votes to increase the Junior budget to \$15,000 for next year to help grown The Junior Game.

APTA Juniors by the numbers in past 3 years

of players in Jr Nationals in 2017- 154

of players in Jr Nationals in 2018- 176

of players in Jr nationals in 2019- 216 from 7 different states

of APTA Jr members in 2016-2017- 341

of APTA Jr Members in 2017-2018- 397

of APTA Jr Members in 2018-2019- 450