

EDITOR'S NOTE

Clarity and Simplicity

We need to boil down our message to the simple reasons why people should play our sport.

The first few months of the year are always important to this industry. With various meetings taking place, there seems to be an urgency to announce or roll out new initiatives and campaigns, and to get things set up as we march toward prime exposure of the sport at the French Open, Wimbledon and the U.S. summer hard-court season.

For many of us, in the first months of each year we look forward to the release of important participation data and other research on our industry, which will help identify the actions we must take to help the industry grow.



*I was left wondering:
Why should people, including
kids, play tennis?*

But one of the problems we tend to have is our penchant for overanalyzing and overcomplicating pretty much everything—sometimes missing the obvious—especially when it comes to growing this sport. I'm one who truly believes that often, the most effective path to growth tends to be the simplest.

In late January and then again in mid-February, I was lucky to have a preview of some new initiatives coming out to help grow tennis participation. While it all makes perfect sense, and is all extremely necessary, I was left wondering about one simple thing:

Why should people, including kids, play tennis? It's the most important question we need to answer.

In all of the excellent groundwork being done to push this sport to kids and grow our future customers, I'm concerned that we're still not giving people, of all ages, clear reasons why they should be playing tennis instead of other sports and activities. We can have all the great programs and procedures to get people into the game—and we do!—but if we're not giving the public that simple, essential reason why they should be playing tennis, then we're wasting our time and resources. Truth be told, I feel we as an industry have spent a lot of years wasting time and resources, and letting other sports and activities get the drop on tennis.

You've heard this before, but let's try to take this to heart: From an industry perspective, let's make sure "tennis" is our brand, and let's be clear—and simple—about why people should be playing this game.

Peter Francesconi
Editorial Director

Peter@TennisIndustryMag.com



TennisIndustry

PUBLISHER
JEFF WILLIAMS

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR
PETER FRANCESCONI

MANAGING EDITOR
SCOTT GRAMLING

CREATIVE DIRECTOR
IAN KNOWLES

SENIOR EDITOR
ED MCGROGAN

ART DIRECTOR
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SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR
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CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
ROBIN BATEMAN, CYNTHIA CANTRELL, PEG CONNOR, KENT OSWALD, CYNTHIA SHERMAN, MARY HELEN SPRECHER

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS
BOB KENAS, DAVID KENAS

WEBMASTER
GREG RAVEN

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
TIM McARTHUR

EDITORIAL DIRECTION
10TEN MEDIA

TENNIS INDUSTRY
48 W 21st St., New York, NY 10010
646-783-1450
info@tennisindustrymag.com

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR
JOHN HANNA
770-650-1102, x125
hanna@knowatlanta.com

APPAREL ADVERTISING
CYNTHIA SHERMAN
203-558-5911
cstennisindustry@gmail.com

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