

# Teaching Professionals



## USTA ACCREDITATION

### Plan of Action

Fully accredited by the USTA, the USPTA is poised to help elevate the standards of how tennis is delivered.

BY PETER FRANCESCONI

In mid-January, the independent Accreditation Review Committee formed by the USTA granted full accreditation to the USPTA. As part of that designation, both the USTA and USPTA have agreed to cooperate on a number of initiatives, with the goal of raising the standards of the tennis teaching profession.

An important condition of this partnership is that the USTA has made a commitment not to get into the business of certifying teaching professionals.

"The USTA has long maintained that we have no interest in being in the teaching pro certification business," says Kurt Kamperman, chief executive of the USTA National Campus who from 2003 to 2018 was the head of the USTA's Community Tennis Division. "Our goal is to attract and retain new tennis

players, and the best way to achieve that is to provide an exceptional on-court experience. Certified teaching professionals are the front line in delivering that on-court experience."

In meeting these new standards, teaching pros from accredited organizations will receive a variety of benefits. These will include priority listing on the Net Generation Coach Search website, along with free Safe Play training and a background screen every two years. Because it's important that those who hire teaching pros be aware of these new educational standards and the Safe Play requirements, a co-branded advertising campaign will be launched this summer to educate both consumers and facility owners and managers.

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background-checked by January 2021," notes USPTA CEO John Embree. "If facilities are going to hire our pros, we want them to be assured that not only are they hiring the best trained pros but they can be confident of a safe environment for all of their customers, especially kids."

Other areas of cooperation include:

- Starting in January 2021, USTA member organization clubs with four courts or more that hire full-time teaching pros will be required to hire professionals from an accredited organization.
- Facilities that run USTA-sanctioned events must have all full-time professionals on staff from an accredited organization.
- The USPTA and USTA will work to drive the next generation of tennis pros to Professional Tennis Management undergraduate and graduate programs, providing a path to a career in the industry. PTM program graduates will be certified from a USTA-accredited organization, meaning in the near-term, they'll be USPTA-certified professionals.
- USPTA professionals will have access to extensive continuing-education opportunities and online education to expand their depth of knowledge and stay up to date on coaching developments.

Embree says the USPTA, together with the USTA, will develop 400 education modules for teaching pros over the next two years. This educational content will be hosted on a platform called Blackboard ULTRA, which hundreds of colleges currently use.

"This will continue to be a great deal of additional work to comply with these high accreditation standards," Embree says. "But it's not just about the USPTA; this is about raising the bar for the whole industry and the long-term health of our sport." ■