

## EDITOR'S NOTE

# Working Together

Improving our delivery system is a key challenge, but everyone must join forces to get people playing our sport.

**M**uch has been made of the USTA's new Accreditation Program for tennis teaching professional organizations. For decades, the two principal teaching pro groups in the United States—the PTR and USPTA—each certified their own tennis professionals. But many in the industry often felt the two groups were focusing their efforts on member acquisition while relaxing their standards for education and certification.



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High-quality teaching pros are considered essential to the growth of tennis, and in this country, improving our tennis “delivery system” is a primary challenge to participation growth.

So, the USTA created a program designed so that professional tennis teaching organizations need to meet certain standards to gain accreditation. The idea is to have consistent, high-quality education and training for those looking to become professional tennis teachers.

As of late May, one teaching pro organization, the USPTA, received its provisional accreditation status and later its full accreditation—which means USPTA members receive a variety of benefits, among them priority listing on the

Net Generation Coach Search website, free Safe Play training and background screen, access to extensive continuing education opportunities, and avenues for marketing and additional exposure. While the PTR has yet to receive provisional accreditation, sources indicate that effort is in the works.

We need to improve and maintain the quality of our teaching pros—and importantly, we *must* bring in younger pros, as more current teaching pros age out. I do, though, need to speak up on a few points.

First, let's stop the “us against them” rhetoric and all start pulling together. Two separate teaching pro groups has, frankly, provided many challenges to actually growing this industry. It's high time we *all* get on the same page here.

Second, as important as it is to raise the standards of all our teaching pros, this accreditation program alone will not save this industry. No one program, whether for teaching pros, consumers or kids, will fix the state we find ourselves in. Plain and simple, we need to get more people playing this sport.

We already have plenty of tennis programs out there. What we need now is a concerted effort to tell consumers *why* they should be playing tennis. Otherwise, this industry will continue to simply spin its wheels.

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