

# COURT MONITOR

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Michigan High School Tennis Coaches Association Newsletter

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## Super Clinic Delayed By Super Bowl

As most of you already know the 2006 Detroit Tennis Workshop has been pushed back to February 24th and 25th. Some other event wanted this time slot so Bob Wood and Gary Bodenmiller agreed to an alternative date. The 30th Annual Detroit Tennis Workshop will feature Rodney Harmon, Johan Kriek, John Powless and others as featured speakers. The clinic also features the MHSTeCA Hall of Fame banquet. Gary Bodenmiller of South Lake, Jack Davis of St. Johns/Ovid-sie, and Marty Snoap of Lakewood will be the Class of 2006 honorees.

There is still time to attend this years clinic. Registration at the door is available for \$125.

## MHSTeCA Web Page a Valuable Resource

If you have spent any time on-line checking out other organization's web pages you undoubtedly know that the MHSTeCA web page is second to none. Bruce Grotenhuis does an absolute fantastic job keeping us up to date on Michigan High School tennis. Make sure you check out the following to bring some extra recognition to your program.

- \* All-Academic Tennis team
- \* Distinguished Service Award
- \* Assistant Coach of the Year Award
- \* MHSCA Coaching Award 15/20/25/30/35/40
- \* Century Club
- \* Quarter Century Club

All of this information can be accessed at

[www.mhsteca.org](http://www.mhsteca.org)

## Back In The Saddle Again

After a fifteen year layoff I am happy (???) to once again be in charge of the MHSTeCA newsletter. Hats off to Jim Lever for all the time and effort he put into the production of the newsletter. Kudos also to Ed Waits for his many past, current and future contributions. Coach of the Year articles are courtesy of Coach Waits. Hopefully I can continue to produce the newsletter up to the high standards set by former editors.

Well dare all youse guys down der. If ya have sum info for me to put inta da newsletter jus send er up nort. Oops! Sometimes the Yooper in me slips out. I am sure you will see examples from time to time. Any info you have for the newsletter or comments about past articles, send them to Rich Trombly at [braves10s@charter.net](mailto:braves10s@charter.net).

I am looking into the possibility of e-mailing the Court Monitor. The newsletter would be an Adobe Acrobat Reader format. Hard copies would be sent to those without e-mail addresses. Stay tuned for further info.

If you would like to contribute an article for publication in a future newsletter it will be gratefully accepted. I look forward to hearing from you.

Rich Trombly  
Gladstone Tennis  
Court Monitor Editor

# Girls' Tennis Coaches of the Year Selected

## Jim Hanson Novi Division 1

Jim Hanson asserts that the 2005 Novi Girls Varsity Tennis Team was one of the best squads that he has coached during his 22 years at the school. "We had a veteran team with nine returning letter winners, good senior leadership, and quality players at each flight," he says. He is also proud of the fact that the kids not only did well on the court but in the classroom where their average 3.76 GPA earned them MHSTeCA All-State Academic honors.

As is his custom, Jim challenged the team with a very competitive schedule and was delighted to see that the players improved as the season progressed. The Wildcats were 7-0 in the Kensington Valley Conference, a record which included a 7-1 win over state qualifier Brighton. They also won the conference tournament to clinch their 10<sup>th</sup> consecutive KVC championship (shared three times with Brighton). Their overall record, 9-2-1, included notable wins over Northville and West Bloomfield while playing regional champion Farmington Hills Mercy to a 4-4 tie. Their only losses were to state champion Ann Arbor Pioneer and perennial power Ann Arbor Huron. Perhaps the highlight of the season was a strong 7<sup>th</sup> place showing at the state tournament where Jim says "we played our best tennis of the year." Jim's 2D made it to the finals (a school first-ever accomplishment) and his 4S, a ninth grader, was a semifinalist.

Jim's overall record with the varsity girls team is 209-54-9. His teams have won 15 conference championships, two regional championships, and have made five state final appearances over the past two decades. The best Bulldogs' best finish at the state tournament was fifth in 2003.

In addition, Jim has coached the boys varsity team at Novi High School for the past 11 years, an era in which his teams have won 8 conference championships, captured 2 regional championships, and made five state tournament appearances. Named MHSTeCA Boys Coach of the Year in 2002, he is especially proud of the fact that he joins area COY recipients Brian Martin of Brighton (2004), Judy Jagdfeld of Hartland (2001) and retired Hall of Fame coach Bruce Grotenhuis of Howell (2003) as recipients of MHSTeCA honors that reflect well on the quality of tennis that comes out of their conference.

Jim started his tennis coaching career at Livonia Clarenceville where he coached the boys team for 14 years and the girls team for two. This means that he has spent 36 years on high school tennis courts. "Working with players who want to improve, to be a part of a team, and have fun playing tennis is priceless," he says.

A good year? Yes. A great career to date? Undoubtedly. A girls coach of the year plaque should take its rightful place next to the boys honor he received three years ago.

## Bill Riggs Allen Park Division 2

"I've bounced between the middle school and high school [in Allen Park] for ten years," said Bill Riggs. "The group that just came through I started working on as 7<sup>th</sup> graders. I could look out of my class window and see the gym classes. I looked for the athletic girls and tried to convince them to try tennis. Some did. I am glad."

"This is the best group of girls I have ever coached," he continued. "They are the smartest and most focused group. They put in their time in the off-season and did the things necessary to make them champions. They were determined to be league champions. They did it. They wanted to go to the state finals. They did it (twice). They wanted to win a regional championship. They did it. They wanted to be known as the best team in school history. They did it."

Typically self effacing, Bill not only credits the kids for his success but also his mentors. "Ed Froshieser was my coach (in high school) and we hit it off from the beginning," he said. Froshieser, who eventually became a school board member, was the one who convinced Bill to take the Girls JV tennis job, thus in effect launching his public school teaching and coaching career. Ron Pascuzzi, Bill's coach during his senior season, allowed him to work with the tennis team in the spring while Bill was finishing college. Between helping with the basketball team and the tennis team, he was hooked. Law school's loss became Allen Park school system's gain.

There were only 8 girls on Bill's first JV team but that number quickly grew in ensuing years until Bill took over the varsity. That year, 60 girls signed up. Bill needed help and found it in the person of Hall of Famer Mike Hairabedian who had retired from Inkster Cherry Hill but welcomed the chance to stay in the game with limited responsibilities and pressure. Mike (a coach of 39 years who gave Bill his first point penalty when Bill competed in high school for Allen Park) stayed with Bill for eight season and together they took a struggling program to one which captured the league championship five times. The Jaguars went to the state finals for the first time in 1998 and Bill consistently kept 60 girls in the program, fielding two JV squads.

Bill also credits area coaches John Shade, Jan Gottlin, Tim Coleman, and Al Kaye as valued friends and colleagues. "I wanted to surround myself with the best coaches and put a plan together to compete and maintain a level of excellence," he said. "Since Day 1, I have modeled my program after Grosse Ile's."

All of the above are former coaches of the year. They may have influenced Bill but they, in turn, applaud the enthusiasm and effort that he brings to the program. The adjective they often used to describe him is *passionate*. There is little doubt that he deserves to join them as an equal.

## Jan Gottlin Riverview Division 3

"I model what I do after what she does," says J.R. Muniz, the former coach of the year from Riverview Gabriel Richard. "After every match she gathers her players around her for a debriefing. Everybody listens."

Often enough, they hear abundant praise from a highly qualified, experienced coach, even though at times the outcomes have been disappointing. Although Jan Gottlin's team won a Saturday tournament this past season, they finished third in the conference and third in the regional. But a recurring comment made about Riverview's coach over the years is that "she is the same gracious person, win or lose." And over 23 years of coaching, she has done plenty of winning.

That's because even though she has scaled back her efforts a bit, Jan still does the extras. She hosts a kick-off camp at the beginning of each summer with area high school coaches Jerry Escheck, Al Kaye, and Barb Myler to get kids playing all summer, an effort which, in effect, provides a feeder system for the high school program. In addition, she co-hosts another kick-off camp with Allen Park Cabrini's Al Kaye just before the August season begins, thus providing a jump start for the upcoming campaign. She is still on staff at the Fairlane Racquet Club. Teaching physical education and health at Riverview High School enables her to keep an eye open for talented athletes.

She also serves in the metaphorical sense: she ran both the conference and regional tournaments this past fall, has served on the state seeding committee for the past two years, and is on the MHSTeCA board of directors. In other words, Jan brings tons of knowledge and experience, together with two previous coach of the year awards (Girls, 1993 and Boys, 2001) to the job.

But even after two decades, there is always something new. This year, it involved her 1S senior, Margo Souchock, who as a star softball pitcher, injured her throwing (and serving) shoulder to the point where she had to have surgery. Determined to retain the first singles position that she held during her junior season, Margo spent hours on the ball machine and took lots of private lessons at Fairlane in an effort to learn how to play left-handed. Sure enough, she kept her position, providing not only an inspiring example of determination for teammates but enabling those teammates to play below her, thus increasing their chances of winning.

"I lucked out," said Jan of Margo and other squad members, four of whom are in the top seven of the school's senior class academically. But colleagues know that the reason for Jan's success is far from being a matter of luck. This is a lady who has led her teams to the state tournament 12 times, won three conference titles, and captured two regional championships (neighboring Grosse Ile has played a significant role in preventing the acquisition of more). Described by her peers as being "always very professional," she adds a third coach of the year plaque to a very impressive resume.

## Joe Marazita Niles Brandywine Division 4

The small enrollments of Division 4 high schools make it difficult for tennis coaches in many districts to field 12-girl squads. When they do, 4D teams often consist of weak players with little or no experience. Herein lies one of several reasons why Joe Marazita's program at Niles Brandywine is so impressive. This past fall, his No. 4 doubles team not only went undefeated but didn't lose a set until the state tournament; furthermore, neither kid had ever picked up a racquet prior to his summer program. "It helps me teach the basics and allows for the really dedicated to improve their game at the varsity level in the fall," he says of how he spends the warm weather months.

Apparently there was considerable dedication in Niles this past year. Brandywine girls had won conference and regional titles, and qualified for state in the 2004 season but then graduated eight all-conference seniors. However, this year's contingent delightfully surprised their coach by going 13-0-1 and capturing two Saturday tournaments, the Albion Invitational and their own Bobcat Invitational. They then went on to win the conference crown and qualify for state (they missed taking home the regional trophy by one point). The Bobcat 1D team was named all-state and the entire squad will receive our association's All Academic Team Tennis Award with a 3.32 GPA.

In truth, Joe should be getting used to this success. Over 10 years of coaching the girls at Brandywine, his kids have put together a 108-17-5 record, despite the fact that they practice and play at a public park four miles away and his van has to serve as the team equipment shed. He credits two of his daughters, one of whom is his assistant coach, with providing valuable assistance in the summer. After all, his girls played for Brandywine but Joe, who coached the boys for three years, didn't take over the girls team until the previous coach had accepted a new job outside the district. He liked the girls program better than coaching boys because of the weather, the turnout, and the positive attitude of the kids.

Joe came to the job as a proven entity. He was a proficient player, having grown up in Buchanan with tennis courts across the street. He played 1S for Buchanan for four years and then received a tennis scholarship at Northern Michigan University where he graduated in 1979. Furthermore, his last Brandywine boys team finished 7<sup>th</sup> in the state.

"He does a good job in an area that wouldn't be good without him," said one coach. This is a succinct definition of a coach of the year. To be sure, Joe belongs in this elite group.

## Ellette Nyman Kingsford Division 4

Ellette Nyman grew up in Iron Mountain where she played high school tennis for famed coach Phyllis Laurila, herself a MHSTeCA coach of the year (2000). She attended Phyllis' tennis camps every summer but then left the area after graduation from high school in 1985 for Sun Valley, Idaho to work at the famed ski resort. As an avid ski racer (she was ranked in the top 25 in the nation at age 15), "I thought skiing was going to be my thing."

As it turns out, she was wrong. When Ellette returned to the Iron Mountain/Kingsford area in 1994, she became involved once again in tennis. It started when she was asked to play doubles in the local adult league by Sue Tirschel, one of the best players to have played tennis in the UP and Ellette's crosstown rival from their high school days. It was an opportunity not to be missed. Another came when Phyllis, who was still on the scene at the time but about to retire, asked Ellette to manage some of the local events, the adult league, and the sanctioned USTA tournament. At about the same time, Sue, who had been coaching the Kingsford girls team, was about to move out of the area. In other words, the stars were in alignment.

The rest is successful history. Under Ellette's leadership over the past seven years, the Kingsford girls program has grown from 18 participants her first year to 48 this past season. "My goal has been to have more girls on the field for introductions at "Meet the Flivvers Night" than the varsity football team," she said. "This year we did." Appropriately, this year's slogan on the backs of the team's T shirts was "I'm the reason you have to practice harder."

"Four years ago the seniors on this year's team came out for tennis," Ellette continued. "To say that these girls couldn't play tennis is an understatement, but this group of young ladies turned out to be some pretty good tennis players. They went to every tennis camp offered, subbed in the adult league, and with much encouragement played in the local tournaments. Every one of those girls that stuck with it made varsity for at least two years, received post-season recognition from the UP tennis coaches, and went on to win the Team UP title this year."

Ellette credits this growth and improvement to the community schools summer tennis program run by Kingsford High School's boys coach, Mark Shanks, who is Ellette's unpaid assistant coach. Ellette runs a tennis camp with Escanaba's Denny Lueneburg. She also co-ordinates the adult league and is tournament director for the USTA Sanctioned UP Jr. Open Tennis Tournament each July and has served as Mark's assistant boys coach at the high school for the past four years.

In other words, Ellette builds high school tennis teams by utilizing the most tried and true method: get them to play throughout the summer. The results have been impressive: 63 wins as against 20 losses, one conference title, and one UP state championship.

Although Ellette has received acknowledgement as UP Coach of the Year three times in the past, it's time for her to widen her sphere of recognition to include a MHSTeCA coach of the year award.

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