

Dear Parents:

With the Fall semester quickly approaching, we'd like to announce several exciting changes taking place in our Junior programs starting in the Fall Session. Please refer to the attached file to additional details and layout of the new pathway.

1. **A new composition of groups.** Starting in the Fall, all Junior classes will fall into four pathways:
 - **11 and under:** Young players who are on the red, orange, and green balls progression.
 - **Junior Development:** Players who are new to tennis or need to further develop their skills in order to move into other pathways or aspire to play recreationally.
 - **Transition:** Players who are either transitioning into yellow balls and/or aspiring to become competitive tournament players.
 - **High Performance:** Players who are already participating and excelling in competitive play and have strong fundamentals.
2. **The name of most classes will change.** This will make our pathway easier to understand and create a more consistent terminology across our entire junior offerings.
3. **Re-arrangement of age parameters for the classes.** In most cases, we adjusted the ages to give players more time to master the necessary skills that will better allow them to be successful at the next level.
4. **New levels will be created.** This will be done to better group the players based on their skills, age, and other relevant aspects.
5. **A new method to rate players will be adopted.** Our junior players will no longer have a numeric rating associated with their level; instead, they will be rated according to a class. This will simplify the process for players and parents. Additionally, this change can help players to steer away from the focusing on outcome-related goals, such as going from 2.5 to 3.0; instead we would like them to focus on acquiring skills. For example: John Smith, 10 years old = Green Plus rating.
6. **Classes will now have a very specific set of competencies.** Going forward, the players must learn/master specific skills and concepts to in order to move to the next level. This will ensure that the players learn the necessary skills needed to be successful. This should help to minimize the confusion as to why some players move up and others don't. These competencies will be shared with parents and players, in the form of text and videos.
7. **A new evaluation system will be established.** This will provide specific feedback to parents and players, as to what are the priorities for that player (areas he/she needs to focus on the most) and how to improve on them.
8. **Periodic parent/pro meetings will be held.** This will help to set a foundation as to how the classes will be run, provide a better understanding of where the player currently is on the pathway, and get everyone on the same page prior to the beginning of the session. These group meetings will discuss progress and provide suggestions on how the parents can assist with their child's tennis development.
9. **Some classes (formerly Feed the Feeder and Academy 3.0/3.5) will be increased to two hours on court plus 30 minutes of off-court fitness.** This will provide more opportunity to work on fundamentals without sacrificing point playing.
10. **A new format of class offering and scheduling will be applied.** Classes will be offered on certain days of the week. This will allow us to hold the level more consistent and keep similar caliber players training together. Offering the same level every day often dilutes the class as players are spread out across multiple days.

11. **Offering regular match play opportunities for Red Plus, Red Elite, and Orange players.** Starting in the Fall, the majority of players in the 11 and under, Transition and High Performance pathways will have regular match-play opportunities to continue developing their game.
12. **The creation of classes dedicated to players who never played before.** These groups will not only help to ensure novice players are comfortable with their class assignment, as other students have the same age range, skills and knowledge base. This will also allow more experienced players to continue working with similar caliber students.
13. **The increase of on-court coaching during Match Play.** This can boost the player's experience and maximize learning the players as they receive feedback in between points or games.

As some of you already know, back in December we added our new Head Professional, Joao "Jay" Pinho to our Team. Since then Jay and the staff have worked diligently to not only shape our classes but also to develop a comprehensive set of adjustments to our programs, as listed above.

For additional information regarding Jay's background and deliveries, please visit <http://joaopinho.usptapro.com/default.aspx/MenuItemID/351/MenuGroup/ProHome06.htm>

Our new offerings will be aligned with the USTA's new initiative, Net Generation, which among many other things, will help programs across the country to systematically grow and develop players the right way (by having them master skills in a progressive and fun way). All these changes have the potential of taking our programs and players to new heights. **We expect our programs to sell out quickly, so please act as soon as the registration opens. Within the next few weeks, we'll be sending another email detailing your child's program registration information.**

In the meantime, if you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact us at ntcprograms@usta.com (for registration and scheduling questions) and pinho@usta.com (for any other questions regarding the changes in the programs).

Sincerely,

Whitney Kraft
Director of Tennis
USTA BJK National Tennis Center Staff

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