



**May 1, 2020**

## **TPA Insights and Perspectives**

We continue to remain optimistic that the courts will start to open up within the next couple months, and we need to be prepared for when this does happen. With that said, Danny DaCosta (CEO of OSTEN & VICTOR Alberta Tennis Centre, which is a public facility with membership in AB) and Wayne Elderton (Tennis Director at the North Vancouver Tennis Centre which is a public facility run by the District of North Vancouver), with support of several other club leaders in Canada have worked together to develop the following ([Facility Planning document](#) and [Re-opening in Phases Plan](#)) on how to navigate through the various phases of opening of your club. These resources can both be used as a template, and can be tweaked based on your club's needs and municipal guidelines.

If you missed our previous emails, our goal with these articles is to provide our coaches and professionals with a compass to ensure that when we do get back to our new normal, we will be prepared and have the necessary tools and ideas to provide the best possible experience for our stakeholders. To view last week's article, [click here](#). All past and upcoming articles are on the homepage of the TPA website, under "Latest Resources & News".

This is our third week of providing informative and in-depth Q & A's from some of Canada's TPA leaders in clubs/Academies. The series is called "Insights and Perspectives", and asks leaders about their actions and initiatives taken to date along with their impacts, as well as delving into valuable insights and strategies they are pursuing for their club, staff and members/players. This diverse group is comprised of a cross section of private, municipal, bubble, and commercial clubs and academies from across Canada.

Our hope is that in sharing this diverse industry knowledge from across Canada with our TPA membership, we will be better equipped for the challenges to come and for the new journey ahead. We hope you agree. Lastly, In addition to the following interview, Tennis Canada's VP of High Performance, Louis Borfiga, has shared his perspective on what it means to be a good coach. Take a look at the article [here](#).

### **Tennis Professionals Association**

The Tennis Professionals Association (TPA) is a member-based association dedicated to growing the profession of tennis coaching throughout Canada. The TPA was developed by Tennis Canada for Canadian Certified Instructors, Coaches, and Club Professionals. The TPA's mission is to support members in their contribution to the growth of tennis in Canada. For more information, visit [www.tpacanada.com](http://www.tpacanada.com).



### **Inquiries:**

Ryan Borczon [rborczon@tenniscanada.com](mailto:rborczon@tenniscanada.com)

Nicole Artuso [tpa@tenniscanada.com](mailto:tpa@tenniscanada.com)

### **This week, we will be featuring the following TPA Members:**



#### **Geoff Bower**

Geoff Bower is the Director of Tennis at Bayview Golf & Country Club. He is a Tennis Canada certified Coach 3 candidate, Professional level 1 certified coach with the Professional Tennis Registry and the United States Tennis Professional. Geoff is also an active member of the Tennis Professional Association and a provincial coach for the Ontario Tennis Association. Geoff is also a member of Wilson Advisory team. In the fall of 2013, he travelled to Jamaica to be the Head Coach for Serena and Venus Williams Charity Clinics.



#### **Robby Ménard**

Robby Ménard is the Founder, Head coach of the Ménard et Assoc. Tennis Academy. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Physical Activity Sciences. Robby is a Tennis Canada Coach level 4, and has trained athletes including Eugénie Bouchard, Simon Larose, Stéphanie Dubois, Taha Baadi and Leylah-Annie Fernandez. Robby is a tennis analyst on Canadian television (RDS) with a specialty in advanced statistics.



## **1. How has the Covid-19 virus pandemic impacted your Club/Academy?**

**GB (Geoff Bower)** – All tennis pro's (3) and office staff (3) are temporary laid off. Managers (me) are still getting paid their salary and have to go into club 2-4 days a week to manage reception. E.g. receive any deliveries etc.

**RM (Robert Menard)** – The club is closed, so club pros and Academy' coaches have no more incoming revenue, except the 2000\$ a month from the government.

### **a) Are you still processing monthly membership/Academy fees or have you put them on freeze? Will the time/program be extended or will refunds be issued?**

**GB** – we completed our junior winter program so no refunds. Members are still paying memberships fees. Parents haven't been billed for spring junior program that was to begin March 23, 2020.

**RM** – We are offering all clients 100% of their fees in credits. By law in Quebec we have to give back the money they've already paid if they want it.

### **b) Did your Club/Academy continue compensating employee and independent contractors, or lay them off?**

**GB** – We only have employees (no contractors). The club is providing a supplement program so all staff on EI receive 85% of their income.

**RM** – In the winter, the club is the actual employee and I am the manager; in the summer I am both! The club has just put all employees on the government programs and have not helped any other way.

### **c) Are you currently initiating any club maintenance/cleaning work at the facility during this shutdown?**

**GB** – Club maintenance team has been cleaning and sanitization the facility.

**RM** – GREAT opportunity. We did half of the court resurfacing (\$100,000 investment) and we will do the other half later.

### **d) Are you currently reviewing your Tennis Department/Academy processes and procedures, schedules, lesson plans, changes in delivery of program?**

**GB** – The downtime give us the opportunity the review all these areas and how we can improve.



**RM** – Of course, we are challenging ourselves! We are investing and doing innovation in 2 fields: getting more specific in mental training for athletes and advance stats for junior with interesting people from Australia.

**e) Who are you receiving guidance from?**

**GB** – Colleagues, club leaders, TPA and our General Manager, who is taking direction from our Board of Directors.

**RM** – Myself. Reading new and different materials, as well as getting information from other academies to see what they are doing and looking at specialists in different fields.

**f) For those with domes, what is the plan for take down this Spring? (Given that labour workers are unavailable and restricted).**

**GB** – The take down of bubbles are on hold until the province lifts the non-essential service ban. If this the ban goes into July/August, the club will most likely not take (2 bubbles & 6 courts) down this year. Bubble take down and spring court maintenance is \$60,000. The Board and Finance committee will make the decision what to do.

**RM** – N/A

**2. Communication is crucial for an effective and efficient business operation, and now during a pandemic, even more so. What methods and frequency are you using to communicate and engage?**

**a) Your members/players/parents**

**GB** – Tennis members receive weekly “Tennis this Week” video and email from me. I host a weekly Facebook live Q&A with experts in the tennis industry. My daughter and I send weekly challenge videos. Our coaches have weekly check-in with their students and help keep them engaged. The GM also sends a weekly update to all members.

**RM** – We’ve had conferences in both French and English on a variety of subjects.

**b) Your staff**

**GB** – We have a team WhatsApp group. We have zoom meetings. I check in and communicate with them regularly. I share with them positive and inspirational messages/videos. I give them weekly manger updates.

**RM** – Weekly zoom meeting on many subjects, including financial and mental training for them.



### **c) What has the response been like?**

**GB** – The team really appreciates the contact and connection.

**RM** – Rather positive for the moment, but in 2-3 weeks we will see there is great financial stress on coaches. Parents are going nuts with active kids at home.

### **d) Have you already, or are you now considering online, virtual technology?**

**GB** – Every week our head Pro (Brett Cooper) and I have 4 zoom meetings with members. Members are really enjoying it. Great chance for members to connect and share how they're doing. Club managers have weekly Zoom meetings.

**RM** – Zoom

## **3. Marketing for your Club Tennis/Academy business is an ongoing and creatively challenging process at the best of times. During this time of uncertainty, what are you doing now and planning for in the near future with respect to:**

### **a) Summer rec/HP Camps**

**GB** – members' received our summer camp brochure in February. Members can register online or on the club calendar for Recreation and HP Camp

**RM** – We are using this opportunity to create better marketing content and getting great testimonials. We are investing in smarter communication.

### **b) Unique programming/training**

**GB** – It's challenging to plan for programming because I think the government restrictions will be determined that for us over the next 6 months. I'm working on a Post-Covid Reopening Plan (3 Phases). Our members will be pumped to return to the courts and having a plan to deal with the levels of restrictions will be very helpful.

**RM** – We do not know how tennis will be once we get back - will it be accepted? Only singles? 4 on a court? How to handle balls? We are planning for all options.

### **c) Welcome back club member/players initiatives**

**GB** – I want to get our coaches back teaching so I'm considering a lesson package (1 month offer of 10 lessons for price of 8) Given the restrictions (e.g.no doubles) private lesson should be attractive for members.

**RM** – The adult department will be VERY different because will people have the money to get back to tennis first.



#### **d) Community outreach program**

**GB** – the club donated \$2,000 to food banks when the club closed mid-March. Bayview is hosting Philpott Woman's Invitational (Jan. 2021). Our focus will be on the Philpott charity but would be open to doing something to support our industry Post-Covid.

**RM** – TBD if we survive this! Of course, I want to be part of a lobby group to promote tennis at the provincial and federal level.

#### **4. What advice and guidance would you offer your tennis coaches and professionals as employees/independent contractors for now and over the next two years to assist them in their career?**

**GB** – Pre COVID, we had weekly team meetings. My focus with our team is grow and improving everyday as people. The better people we are, the better team culture and increased member experience. Each week they share "above and beyond" experiences with members. I remind them we are very lucky to do what we do. We play an important role (don't take it for granted) and make impact on people's lives. Develop relationships with other coach's and industry leaders. The better people the team, the better team culture and increased member experience. I emphasize the extra 5-10% work (off court without being paid) that will separate you from others.

**RM** – More questions than answers: We need to rethink on many level how to make money for them. Can they reach their potential by doing certain homework for their clients? It's not clear, but this could happen again... how can we prepare for this?

#### **5. What do you feel are the biggest challenges and opportunities for your Club/Academy and our Canadian Tennis Industry over the next 2 years? How can the coaches/professionals play an active and important role?**

**GB** – Opportunities are to continue learning and using the new tools that I've learned over the past 6 weeks (zoom, Facebook Live Q&A, instruction videos) it's given me a chance to catch up and connect with colleagues, reach out and develop new relationship with people in our industry. It's an opportunity to show your members/students that when times are tough you're there for them. Think outside the box and find ways to connect with members/students. We can play an important role by working on improving ourselves and becoming better people and coaches.

**RM** – Tennis Canada will not be the same organization at all, therefore we will have to work together to find a way to be an attractive sport, maybe more democratic. Growing the game will be THE KEY for the tennis industry. I think we can go after the US and European market and attract High Performance clients.