

# TennisPro®



The International Magazine for PTR Tennis Teachers and Coaches

June/July 2023



Women in Coaching

The impact of female coaches  
on female athletes

Important Life Lessons Youth  
Learn Playing Sports



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## TENNISPRO®

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# For the Record

We are excited to dedicate this issue of TennisPro to all the hard-working, passionate, and knowledgeable women tennis coaches and professionals around the world! Our 3,000+ women coaches worldwide are vital to PTR's success, their students, and growing the game of tennis – thank you!

With each passing year, PTR has dedicated more time, money, and resources to improving the career pathway for women tennis coaches. We just don't write and talk about it; PTR actually has tangible results to show that we are "All-In" when it comes to supporting women coaches. Here are just a few examples.

## PTRW Summit

Last September, I had the honor and opportunity to attend the first annual PTRW Summit at the world-class IMG Academy. The Summit was filled with excellent speakers dealing with issues very important to women professionals. While the topics provided knowledge for the participants to grow on and off the court as well as how to navigate through the barriers that exist, the ability to network and share experiences was HUGE. PTR hosted a closing dinner at the luxurious Legacy Hotel, and the participants solidified the relationships that were established during the weekend. There was a bonding that took place, which was special.

The PTRW Summit is set again for IMG Academy in Bradenton, FL, on September 23 – 25. The Summit is limited to the first 75 people that register. So please make sure you book your spot for this worthwhile PTRW Summit.

## PTRW workshops

Throughout the year, PTR conducts several PTRW workshops and programs. The PTRW Empowering sessions are three hours in length and provide regional access. The next one will be during the first week of the US Open in NYC. PTR also offers the PTRW Because We Can program created to recruit and retain women coaches in our industry. We plan to conduct PTRW events with various USTA sections. Internationally, PTR Italy has hosted PTRW events.

## PTRW presentations

The most recent PTRW presentation was held at the ITA Coaches Conference in Orlando, FL. This was the first time the ITA had hosted a PTRW event, and there were almost 50 college coaches (women and men) in attendance.

The most visible support PTR provides for our women coaches is our volunteer board and our staff. The leader of the PTR Board is Lynne Rolley, and the PTR Vice-Chairman is Delaine Mast. In terms of staff, 50% of the PTR staff are women. PTR also has a large percentage of women in high-profile areas, such as Coach Developers, Award Winners, Symposium presenters, etc.

PTR has always promoted women coaches because we know the profound effect they have in growing the game of tennis and Making a World of Difference.



**Dan Santorum**

CEO/Executive Director



## TENNISPRO®

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# Member News



## HEAD COACH

MEN'S & WOMEN'S TENNIS

### LEE UNDERWOOD

Lee Underwood is the HEAD coach at Barton College in North Carolina. He has been a PTR member for 30 years and a college coach at Edinboro University prior to Barton College. Recently he was honored for outstanding wins while at Edinboro. Way to go, Lee!



### SUSAN COURTRIGHT

Our recent Assistant Coach Workshop at Franklin Athletic Club in Southfield, MI was absolutely incredible! A big shoutout to Susan Courtright from the USTA for putting this together and to PTR Coach Developer, Vanda Shadigian for leading the course.

### MARY ZAVARALLA WALKER

Shoutout to PTR member Mary Zavarella Walker and her tennis classes at Bloomington Parks, Recreation & Cultural Arts for celebrating Coronation Saturday in style! From the "custom" red ball, orange ball, and yellow ball crowns to the delicious cinnamon scones, everyone had a great time.

### NEW PTR COACHES

Congratulations to all the new PTR certified coaches! We had a great time at the recent PTR Level 1 workshop at Mills Field Tennis Courts in Saint Johns, FL, hosted by Heather Diegan and led by PTR Coach Developer, Federico Mas. It's always inspiring to see so many passionate and dedicated coaches taking the next step in their coaching journey.





# UPCOMING EVENTS



## AUGUST 28-29-30-31

NEW YORK CITY

SIMON GALE - CHRIS GALE  
DR. MARK KOVACS  
LINDA LOW - SARAH MCQUADE  
CARL MAES

## PTRW *Coaching Summit*

 **IMG ACADEMY**

SEPTEMBER 22-24 | BRADENTON, FL

*Confirmed Speakers*

LINDA LOW - SARAH MCQUADE - MARLEY WOODS - MARGIE ZESINGER - LISA PUGLIESE-LACROIX  
JUAN HERRERA - SARAH KADI - DR. NEERU JAYANTHI - JO WALLEN



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# Member News



## RADHIKA VENKATA

Radhika Venkata piloted a program on behalf of the PTR Foundation for National Tennis Month. She partnered with USTA NorCal and PTR. It was successful not just on the court, but off the court as well. They hosted a free clinic on Sunday, May 21st and around 25 players participated. A big thank you to PTR coaches Keith Adams and Joe Hermann for volunteering their time and making it fun for everyone. It was a great experience for us at the PTR Foundation as we strive to make tennis available to everyone.



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# Member News



## MARVIN TYLER

Congratulations to another one of Slammer Tennis World's Junior players from Land O Lakes Florida. She played in her first USTA Junior circuit 12U green ball tournament on Saturday June 3rd, 2023 in Orlando FL and won second place! As a PTR Coach I am so proud of her!

"Women can have everything. Reach for the stars. Plan the journey. Bring passion and style—humor and wisdom. Our world needs uncommon women designing their lives and gracefully moving forward."

Lynne Rolley,  
PTR Board Chair

## LEVEL 1 COACHING BOSTON

Our President and CEO, Dan Santorum, was in great company at the Italian Tennis Open! Present here were ATP's Juanjo Martin, FITP Symposium presenter Nick Saviano, PTR International Director Iñaki Balzola, WTA's Mike Anders, and PTR Director for Italy, Germany, Austria, and Switzerland Luciano Botti.

## LEVEL 1 COACHING BOSTON

Congratulations to the coaches for completing their Level 1 Course at Sportsmen's Tennis & Enrichment Center in Boston, MA. Thank you to our gracious host, Marton Balla and to our PTR Coach Developers, Carole Waite, Gavin Glider, and Kyle Beyond for making this workshop such a success!

## LONG ISLAND HEALTH

Congratulations to the coaches for completing a successful workshop at Long Island Health

& Racquet in East Setauket, NY. Special thanks to our host, Tito Perez, for providing a great learning environment and also serving as our expert Coach Developer.

## COACH KEVIN JACKSON

Congratulations to Coach Kevin Jackson and the Lady Highlanders on their fourth conference championship win! As the head coach at Cairn University and a PTR/PTR/PPTR triple threat member certified in all three racquet sports, Kevin has been an instrumental leader for the team. With nationals on the horizon, the Highlanders are poised to continue their winning streak under Kevin's guidance. At the end of the season, Kevin plans to retire and pass on the reins to his trusted assistant coach, Gregg Fanus. Additionally, Kevin's daughter, a former player on the team, recently gave birth to his first grandchild.



# Member News

## FITP

Inaki Balzola, Toni Nadal, Dan Santorum, and Luciano Botti were in attendance at the FITP International Tennis and Padel Symposium in Rome, Italy, along with 2,500 other coaches and PTR members! Coaches had the opportunity to learn from some of the best in the biz, including Iñaki, Toni, and Dan. What an incredible event!

## BRETT BRANNON

Congratulations to PTR Coach, Brett Brannon and his team at Greenville University in Illinois for winning their conference yet again! In his 22nd year as head coach, Brett has led the men's team to their 2nd straight SLIAC Conference title and the first 20-win season in school history. Best of luck to the team as they compete against the UMAC Conference champs for a spot at Nationals!

## ATP/WTA

PTR President and CEO, Dan Santorum, gave a 3-hour on-court presentation at the ATP/WTA Pro Course during the Miami Open to 11 new PTR members who are former/current ATP and WTA players. PTR Board Member, Mike Barrell, also delivered on-court and classroom presentations to the players.



## JODY BINGHAM

PTR Jody Bingham (head coach) & John Board (assistant coach) took Central Hardin high school girls to its first ever 3rd place finish at the Kentucky High School State Tennis Championships in Lexington, KY. JOD



## JESSE GLADIS

Jesse Gladis' team ended the year with a 21-5 record, won their 5th straight region championship in a row, won the Lower State Championship, AND took 2nd in state this year! They used Penn ProMarathon Balls stamped with PTR all season: Coincidence or luck?

# **PTRW** *Coaching Summit*

**SEPTEMBER 22-24, 2023**

**IMG ACADEMY – BRADENTON, FL**

The PTRW Coaching Summit is returning to the renowned IMG Academy in Bradenton, FL, September 22-24.

We invite all coaches (men and women), Head Coaches, Directors of Tennis, Club Managers, etc., to join us as we focus on topics such as working with female athletes, gender bias, empowering women, and how to apply concepts within your clubs and programs.

*"PTRW has been a bright light for me! I've met a wonderful group of women who inspire, support, motivate and connect with me!"*

*Sue Adams*

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# SPEAKERS



**LINDA LOW**  
PTR Education Consultant



**SARAH MCQUADE**  
PTR Education Consultant



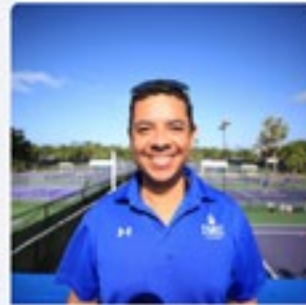
**MARLEY WOODS**  
PTR Coach Developer



**MARGIE ZESINGER**  
Head Of Female Tennis, IMG



**LISA PUGLIESE-LACROIX**  
Love Serving Autism, Founder



**JUAN HERRERA**  
Director Of Operations, IMG



**SARAH KADI**  
High Performance Coach



**DR. NEERU JAYANTHI**  
Sports Medicine Physician



**SEVERINE TAMBOREO**  
High Performance Coach



**JO WALLEN**  
Sr. Director, National Campus

## *Topics Include*

How to train a junior female tennis player  
and keep her healthy!

The Importance of Representation

Gender Bias

Female Technical & Tactical Elements

... and more!







# Important Life Lessons Youth Learn Playing Sports

By Delaine Mast

Team Sports have helped to define the person I have become today. Whether it's tennis, pickleball, basketball, or softball-it's all more enjoyable when you are part of a TEAM. That's one reason that I started Impact Team Tennis and now Impact Team Pickleball where men and women are represented equally in the field of play, but it also promotes equity among all members of a team. It gives people of all ages the opportunity to get healthier while also experiencing that unique level of support and commonality that comes with being part of a team.

Parents often encourage children to get involved in a sport to keep them active and for social interaction. They might not realize it, but playing sports also provides many impactful life lessons that can be useful to their children, even when they are grown up and on their own.

## **Sports Teaches Social Skills**

A team sport puts children in a group where they can hone their social skills by observing how teammates interact with each other, offering a wealth of experience to help them learn the best ways to work together with others.

## **Sports Fosters Cooperation**

On a team, everyone has a part to play to achieve success. You must learn to follow the plan and perform what's expected of you to build a cohesive and successful team. When your team

is depending on your efforts, you can't "not feel like" participating. You learn to help others and others help you.

## **Sports Gives Children Their Own Community**

Being a part of a team gives kids a sense of belonging, a feeling there are others they can depend on and who depend on them. This feeling of "fitting in" and being a part of a community helps to strengthen self-image and provides a support group for other areas of life.

## **Sports Teaches Resilience**

An individual's sports performance isn't the same from day- to-day. Sometimes you hit the target like a pro and other times, you just can't get a win no matter how hard you try. These ups and downs teach kids that no one is perfect all the time and helps them to develop ways to improve their performance - always an important life lesson.

## **Sports Teaches Kids How to Lead and How to Follow**

Being involved in a sport teaches children how to follow the directions of their leader and how to lead others. These skills will be important to their life and work in adulthood.

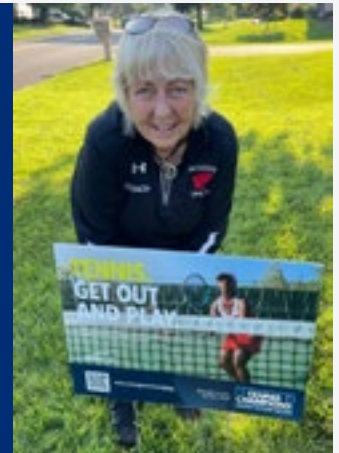
## **Sports Improve Body Image**

Broadly, playing sports gives children

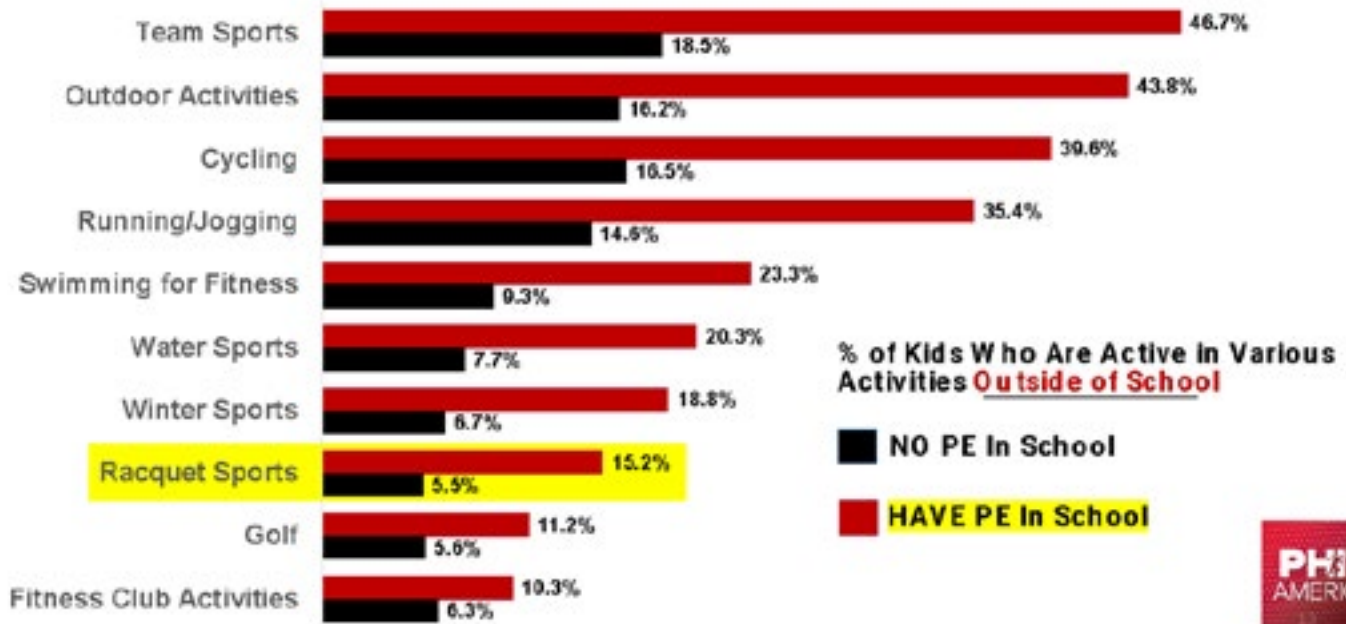


## Team Sports Promotes Equality

FACT: 96% of 'Corporate-Level female executives grew up playing sports. Today, only 30% of girls play sports on a regular basis.



## SCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS CREATE MORE ACTIVE KIDS OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL







the exercise necessary to make their bodies stronger and improve their health. It also provides them with information about where and how to improve more specific areas such as strength, control, and accuracy. With this information, they can set more targeted goals and achieve better physical conditioning and performance, which creates more self-confidence.

### Sports Helps with Mood Regulation

Playing sports isn't just fun; it can help prevent depression. Physical exertion releases endorphins—feel-good chemicals—in the brain. So does the camaraderie of being part of a team.

For example, a problem shared is a problem halved. Being part of a group helps mitigate the pain of a loss. At the same time, you shouldn't take your disappointment out on teammates. You learn to modulate

your moods to accomplish the group's goals.

Just as commiserating can lessen the impact of a loss, sharing the exhilaration of a win can make you feel better than a solitary unshared victory; you pump each other up.

### Sports Teaches It's Okay To Make Mistakes

No matter how good you or your team are - mistakes happen. Being part of a supportive team helps you to quickly pull yourself together, forgive yourself, learn from your mistakes, and bounce back.

Engaging in a sport isn't just about having fun. The many challenges it offers allow young people to explore their emotions and insecurities, improve their self-confidence, and enhance their mental health. These healthy coping skills may prevent

resorting to dangerous ones such as alcohol abuse or drug abuse. PHIT America, the national charity that is helping improve the physical and mental health of children through physical activity programs, is introducing kids to sports through four in-school programs - AMPED, PLAY TENNIS, PLAY PICKLEBALL, and PLAY GOLF. Learn about these programs at <https://www.phitamerica.org/programs>.

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#### Delaine Mast

Tennis Central NJTL Executive Director  
Impact Team Tennis Owner, CEO  
PHIT America Impact Schools Director

McCaskey Varsity Men's and Women's Coach  
Tennis Industry High School Coach of the Year  
Tennis Industry Grass Roots Champion of the Year  
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PTR & USPTA Certified Teaching Professional  
International Tennis Hall of Fame Education Merit Award  
International Tennis Hall of Fame Family of the Year  
Eve Kraft National Community Service Award  
USTA Middle States Tennis Hall of Fame  
Dick Green Community Service Award  
Delaine Mast Award-established by Billie Jean King



# Women in Coaching:

Reflections on the emerging career opportunities in the tennis industry

by Rita Gladstone

One of the joys of coaching young children is fielding their wonderful, curious questions. How old are you? Do you like your job? Are you the boss of this place? Kids are inquisitive and, often, eerily perceptive.

"Coach Rita, did you always want to be a tennis coach?" is one question that I often get asked and it always gets me thinking about my role, and the larger role of women coaches in our sport.

The answer? Not really. As the youngest of four siblings and the only girl, being involved in sports was pre-determined; I had no choice and joyfully did all I could to keep up with my multi-sport playing brothers. My fondest memories come from many backyard football, baseball and soccer games. I knew from the time I was three years old that playing sports would be my lifelong passion and pursuit, but coaching wasn't an initial aspiration.

A family move to Florida when I was 10 paved the way for my introduction to tennis. Over the next 14 years, I competed as a junior, played collegiately at South Carolina (Go Gamecocks!), and enjoyed a short stint on the ITF women's circuit, the rung below the WTA tour. When my playing days were over, I was highly motivated to pursue work in a field other than tennis. After a few years away from the sport, my re-entry to the sport and my coaching journey started out of circumstance: I was a mom of two young children. The motivation was to simply get out of the house and bring in a little more income; the flexibility to work part-time was the kickstarter to getting back on the court. The experience of introducing kids to tennis is what has kept me coming back for more ever since.

The beginnings were humble, to say the least. My "club" consisted of two courts courtesy of the local homeowner's association; my "clients" were the children of fellow moms in the neighborhood; and





my “coaching” programs fit into two-hour blocks—just long enough to leave my kids at home with a babysitter or have them tag along, if needed. I didn’t have a teaching methodology or mentor in those early days, but rather, trial and error was my approach. I brought energy, and a genuine desire for kids to learn and enjoy the sport. While I was “teaching tennis,” I wasn’t a teaching professional. A turning point came in 2006, when I had the opportunity to attend a USTA National Trainer Faculty Workshop. It completely transformed how I taught the game: player-centered, games-based and without “lines, laps, or lectures.” As a member of the National Trainer Faculty, I joined a community of coaches who inspired me to grow and develop. Most impactful? A large number, approximately half of my fellow trainees, were women. Seventeen years later, I view that experience as a springboard to promoting tennis as well as a platform to attract women to our sport: as players, coaches, and leaders in the industry.

As I reflect on my initial entry into coaching, it’s rewarding to see the evolution and opportunities for women who want to make a full time coaching career a deliberate pursuit. Aspiring coaches today have the resources and support to enter, and most importantly, stay in the industry. The Women’s Tennis Coaching Association, in partnership with the USPTA, and PTRW are two notable examples.

In my current role as a head professional at the USTA National Campus, I’ve been able to see this evolution first-hand since the facility’s opening in 2017. The National Campus’ first director of tennis, Kathy Woods, made an intentional effort for the campus to be a model facility with an equal ratio of male to female coaches. She was a role model as a woman leader within the tennis industry, and served as a great motivation as I moved into a leadership position.

Over the last six years, many positive changes have been implemented at the National Campus to encourage a new generation of female coaches and leaders in the tennis industry. Our current director of racquet sports, Simon Gale, has continued to enhance the work model for coaching to be a viable career path for young coaches, both women and men, who are considering the industry.

- The implementation of a five-day work week to prioritize a work/life balance for all across the industry.
- An Increased ratio of full-time vs. part-time coaching positions.
- The development of a coaching pathway with opportunities for professional development and growth.
- A partnership with the USTA Fellowship in Tennis Coaching & Leadership to attract a new, diverse generation of coaches. This year’s class includes 16 fellows, split evenly between women and men.

Currently, the USTA National Campus has women in many of its leadership roles, including its senior director Joanne Wallen, as well as three of the five head professionals. As tennis participation continues to grow, the development of female coaches is vital to meet the demand. The positive changes here at National Campus can be a springboard for other facilities to follow.

But perhaps the most encouraging sign that these efforts are starting to make an impact surfaced in a recent conversation I had with a father of an 11-year-old girl in our high-performance program. Her father shared with me that, yes, she aspires to improve her ranking and eventually play in college, but after that? “What she’d really like to do is coach.”



**Rita Gladstone** is a Head Tennis Professional at the USTA National Campus in Orlando, Florida. In this role, Rita leads programming in the Nemours Family Zone with over 400 players participating weekly. As a speaker, she has presented at numerous conferences, including the PTR Symposium and USPTA World Conference. She is certified by both the Professional Tennis Registry (PTR) and United States Professional Tennis Association (USPTA). Rita played her college tennis at the University of South Carolina and also competed professionally.





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*Taylor Fritz*



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# The impact of female coaches on female athletes

By Maria Lopez

Female athletes are worthy of seeing people like them coaching the sport they love to play. They are worthy of being empowered to pursue a path and a future career in coaching. In many instances, sports has taken big strides in gender participation and creating more opportunities for the female athlete of today, making it possible to have better exposure, sponsorships, and an equitable prize money. Next up is the shift of female coaching just female athletes; they should be coaching male athletes as well.

As participation in sport increases, and athletes become more experienced, we need to evaluate why the system turns their interest away from

coaching. I believe interest is driven by opportunity, and when looking at the percentage of women in coaching, it is important to recognize that unlike their male counterpart, women do not currently have a dual career pathway to coach both genders. In the sport of tennis, athletes hire and fire their coaches, and in most cases, this decision is made by the parents of younger players. This is different from other team sports where players who are part of a team at almost every level will not have that choice and can potentially have more exposure to coaches from different genders. At the professional level only a handful of female coaches are hired by the players to coach on tour. In my opinion this decision travels down the pyramid of different



levels, as other young athletes only associate male coaches to be the most competent, when even in some cases, some are hired over female coaches without any type of coaching experience or education.

The social construction of what it means “to coach” is linked to the stereotypical behaviors and ideologies that are associated with men and masculinity (assertive, tough, confident, powerful). This is different from what female athletes currently

believe the behavior from their female coaches to be (motherly, caring, nurturing); creating conflict between respect and competence when coaches do or do not display those behaviors.

The reality is female coaches matter in sports just as much as their male counterparts. They are competent, ready, and passionate about what they do. They are also assertive, tough, confident, and powerful. They can also be nurturing, caring and a mother figure if needed. Female coaches will





## The reality is female coaches matter in sports just as much as their male counterparts. They are competent, ready, and passionate about what they do.

help to continue to challenge stereotypes about leadership, for both male and female athletes, and it will provide visibility for the next generation. – “If you can see her, you can be her”.

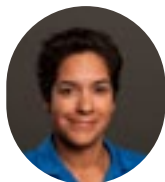
I personally grew up playing the sport that I loved never having the opportunity to be coached or mentored by a female coach. In fact, I never actually envisioned myself coaching or believed I could pursue a career in the sport I loved so much. I often wonder how different my experience would have been, not just as a player but as a coach had I had a female leader paving the pathway for me. Would I have dreamed about using my talents and experiences to inspire others instead of stumbling upon it? Would I have embraced all parts of me, instead of trying to fit in a box that was not built for people like me?

I do not have the answer to those questions, but I do have the ability to use my voice now and speak out loud. I can educate myself and others, and despite what the world thinks, I can and will continue to lift other girls and women up. To take pages from other people’s books, to learn from those who are living that truth. Since working at

WeCOACH, I have had the opportunity to learn and be inspired by other iconic female coaches of other sports such as Dawn Staley. She has an ability to speak openly about this, and how empowering her use of her online and written platform is to inspire other female coaches and coaches of color.

The impact female coaches have on female athletes will allow them to be inspired by someone that looks like them. To believe that they can continue to teach, mentor, and inspire others to follow in their steps, something they have done throughout their playing careers. To change the narrative, to lead, and most important to truly live in a world where little girls can grow up to do whatever they dream to be: Without judgement or barriers and filled with opportunities and others who look just like them.

We have the power to lift each other up as coaches, as players, and as a sport. We are the future.



**Maria Lopez** is currently the Director of Member Experience, Engagement & Inclusion at WeCOACH, an organization dedicated to recruiting, advancing, and retaining women coaches in all sports and levels through year-round professional growth and leadership development programs. She has over 18+ years of tennis coaching experience at all levels of the game, with twelve of those years at the collegiate level, with her most recent stop as the Associate Head Coach at Boise State University where she helped implement a vision of excellence through community outreach, alumni engagement, player and program development, revenue generation, and fundraising, as well as driving and collaborating on DEI initiatives for the athletics department.







# Balancing Motherhood and Coaching

An interview with Margie Zesinger

The journey of balancing motherhood and coaching is not without its challenges. Women in tennis face societal expectations, the pressure to excel in both roles simultaneously, and the lack of adequate support systems. It's easy to feel like a failure. However, by prioritizing self-care, setting realistic expectations, and seeking out supportive networks, these challenges

can be overcome. Recognizing that balance is an ongoing process rather than a destination is crucial, as it allows women to adapt, grow, and find their own unique path.

Here is advice from new mom and coach, Margie Zesinger, on how she does it:



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## Do you have any advice for women hoping to start families or advice for moms with young children who feel like they are failing?

The same advice we would give to our players is the same advice we need to receive as moms: Keep your mind where your feet are physically. This means staying present in the moment both at home and during your time on court. If you need to decrease your hours or extra time you spend within your career to increase your passions and become more present and engaged while on the court coaching, that's ok. A successful career in coaching, after all, is not based on the hours put in but it is defined by your level of passion.

## How do you build a support system?

Working in the tennis environment, we often focus on our relationships with the players, but players come and go. The relationships with our co-workers are the most important, whether it's to give support during maternity leave or life in general. However, building a support system within my work environment took time; several years in fact. When I decided I wanted to become a mom, I prepared and put systems into place at work to smooth the transition during my maternity leave. I needed to know I could step away at any point. To do this, I first had to build relationships, trust, and respect with my co-workers. Having this support system in my career led me to be

more relaxed and present during my time as a mom. It means at any point I can delegate specific roles to others and utilize their strengths when I am not able to be there.

### How can WE change the industry?

I am a big believer in Female Coach Mentorship. Wanting to become a mom or being a mom is an opportunity to mentor and give back to another up and coming female tennis coach in the industry by guiding and teaching them your skill work so they can step into your role at any needed time. We can't do this alone, and in fact, we are NOT alone.

### Any parting advice?

The importance of having your own

identity and role outside of being a mom and what you hope your children learn from being a successful tennis coach in a typically male-dominated field: I found a career that is not a job, it is a passion. As a mom this is what we hope for our children to find as well.

Blending motherhood and coaching in tennis requires intentional efforts to build a strong support system, maintaining individual identity, and embracing the transformative power of female coach mentorship. It is through the collaboration of colleagues, the celebration of individuality, and the commitment to mentorship that women can excel as mothers and coaches, leaving a lasting legacy for future generations. As we continue to champion these values, women in tennis will find the empowerment and balance they deserve, inspiring others to do the same.



**Margie Zesinger:** During her coaching career, Margie has coached top 10 world junior ranked players, some of whom have gone on to win Eddie Herr, Orange Bowl and Junior Grand Slam titles. She has experience coaching junior females through their pro careers, helping them win their first professional titles and reaching their career highs in WTA rankings. Margie has also worked with female players who have won NCAA Division I singles titles. She has also coached full-time at the ITF pro-circuit level and the WTA tour and has worked alongside some of the best American junior females at the USTA and Team USA National camps.





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# INTERVIEW

## From Karen Castiblanco and Emma Wells

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### What has YOUR role been for paving the way for women in tennis/your experience along the way?

**Karen Castiblanco:** The truth has not been an easy road; we have come a long way in terms of the presence of women in certain positions in tennis, however, there is still a long way to go. I have had the opportunity to be a coach of Colombia youth teams, to be a coach in the Grand Slams Juniors and captain of COSAT teams. I currently have my tennis academy in Colombia and I always try to hire female coaches. There was a time when out of 4 tennis coaches in my academy, 3 were women coaches. If we manage to get more support among us, I think we will advance more in equal opportunities.

**Emma Wells:** I have held a variety of roles in the tennis industry, in working in both the public and private sector and furthermore have worked in the USA, Australia, across Europe and am now based in the UK running two clubs, and in Coach Education being Director of PTR for the UK and also a LTA Primary & Secondary Course Tennis Tutor.

In terms of environments I have worked with players and organisations in the most need in Sierra Leone across to teaching members of the Royal family so have definitely experienced both extreme sides of tennis!



### Who do you see as some pioneers and trailblazers in women's tennis?

**Karen Castiblanco:** I think that worldwide we have some coaches who are pioneers in our role like Mary Pierce, Judy Murray and Conchita Martínez. At the South American level, we have coaches who have played a fundamental role like Roberta Burzagli from Brazil, Mariana Díaz Oliva from Argentina; and director of professional tournaments as well, such as Mercedes Paz in Argentina, Mónica Velez in Colombia and Macarena Miranda in Chile, to name a few of the many women who are being benchmarks to improve women's tennis and the participation of more female coaches worldwide.

**Emma Wells:** There are becoming more and more trailblazers in women's tennis in different areas of tennis. I look at Severine Tamborero from Tennis Canada, Michele Krause in her global delivery of Cardio Tennis, Emma Doyle who is a personal role model and mentor for me, there are also many upcoming female coaches developing into club leaders and owners. In the UK there are new initiatives to promote Girls Tennis which is empowering more role models in the form of both male and female coaches, hopefully to inspire the next generation for more females in tennis.



From a player perspective I believe in the UK Emma Raducanu has become a great role model for younger players and will continue to inspire more girls to play tennis. Looking internationally I love the intensity and work ethic of Maria Sakkari, who I think defines passion, hard work and grit!



## **The impact of women's tennis in society: how has it influenced gender equality in sports and beyond?**

**Karen Castiblanco:** Without a doubt, women's tennis is the most popular and most watched sport of the genre worldwide in all sports. Great references such as Serena Williams, María Sharapova, Martina Navratilova and Billie Jean King have contributed to the gap with men's tennis decreasing and with other sports in the female branch increasing. Also, for women's tennis to have an influence beyond sports, it is necessary to get involved in issues beyond sport, which can influence women much more.

**Emma Wells:** The effect of the role models and many more worldwide are chipping away at being a positive influence on gender equality in tennis, however there is still a long way to go! There is still a massive lack of women in leadership roles both on the participation and also performance tennis side.



## INTERVIEW: From Karen Castiblanco and Emma Wells

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### What are some of the most significant moments in women's tennis history?

**Karen Castiblanco:** I think that without a doubt the most significant moment was the creation of the WTA in 1973 led by Billie Jean King, from then on the players gradually began to have many more opportunities to make a living from tennis and be professionals; as well as the moment in which the four grand slams distribute the same money for men and women.



### The role of female coaches in women's tennis

**Karen Castiblanco:** I feel that there are more and more female trainers who have trained and studied and are eager to continue growing; but nevertheless, we still do not have the support of federations or the same opportunities that players can offer us to hire female coaches. Let's start from below: If you see the World Junior Under 14, where the 16 best boys teams and the 16 best girls teams participate, and the same in the Billie Jean King Cup Junior and the Junior Davis Cup, how many female coaches are there? There are really very few, but it's not because there are no women coaches, it's really that we still don't have the support and trust of the institutions that manage tennis in each of the countries.

If we go to the next level, to the junior grand slam where the top 100 boys and top 100 girls are participating, how many of them have female coaches? There is still a lack of confidence, perhaps from the parents of the athletes or from the athletes themselves in hiring female coaches. And if we go to the next level, if we talk about the top 100/200 WTA players, how many of them do they have in their staff of female coaches? Why don't the women players themselves hire women coaches? I think that is where we could start to make small changes so that there is more presence of female coaches at different levels.

**Emma Wells:** The role of female coaches is to offer a role model to girls coming into the sport, however I am a strong believer that male coaches by adopting their coaching style are hugely influential in women's tennis too. Having female coaches as physical role models is important as it's the first impression and relatability, however delving deeper ultimately it is just the coach that needs to connect with the player and have the correct level of emotional aptitude to do so.



### What impact do female coaches have on female players?

**Karen Castiblanco:** I Will speak from my experience as a former professional player; throughout my career I had many coaches who I learned from and all of them and they shaped me as a player and also as the coach I am today. However, I had a female coach, Mariana Diaz Oliva from Argentina, who I feel today was the one that was my motivation to be a coach; seeing how she raised a family, led a tennis academy and trained professional players made me think that I could do it too. I feel that women are more detailed in many things and taking it to high performance sports, the details are what make a big difference, including communication skills to develop a better sports project; in addition to all the experience and learning that we have from the circuit and the training of players, just like a male coach.



## INTERVIEW: From Karen Castiblanco and Emma Wells

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### **How does the experience of having a female coach differ from having a male coach?**

**Karen Castiblanco:** I speak again from my point of view and experience, having had the opportunity to have male and female coaches in my career. From the sports field (training, quality, demand, planning), I felt exactly the same in each of the training sessions and competitions, but I did feel a great difference in communication with the female coaches, in how they understood me, in how I expressed myself and in how they told me.



### **The future of women's tennis**

**Karen Castiblanco:** I would love to see in the next few years more female leaders come to the surface in the tennis world globally and by small changes and increased support levels whether it is role models, mentorship or appropriate initiatives I believe this will continue to evolve in time. What changes or advancements do you anticipate for women's tennis in the years to come?

**Emma Wells:** I would love to see more support for women to feel empowered in leadership roles and head coach roles in clubs, whether it's identifying areas to build confidence for these women to allow them to feel comfortable and supported.



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# FOURTH OF JULY *Silent Auction*



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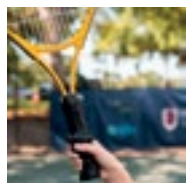


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