

EGLINTON FLATS WINTER TENNIS CLUB

SPRING NEWSLETTER

April 7, 2021

First Service Tennis Management

Everyone at First Service Tennis Management (FSTM) is wishing you and your families the best of health during the 3rd wave of the Covid-19 pandemic.

What a challenging season 2020-2021 turned out to be for Eglinton Flats Winter Tennis Club (EFWTC). Right at the start we faced an unprecedented situation relative to previous years:

- (1) Tennis is one of very few Covid-19 friendly sports. As such, more people than ever wanted to play tennis since they were shut out from their regular fitness activities. This created a wave of new members who had never belonged to a tennis club before and required additional customer service. Demand was so high that our Prime time memberships had sold out by October 15th and Non-Prime memberships had sold out by October 28th.
- (2) There was a huge increase in the number of members playing singles as opposed to doubles. We had many young people joining who wanted to play more hours per week than the average member in previous years. Prime time courts were often selling out in under one minute.
- (3) Work from home gave many members the opportunity to play tennis in the daytime. It was almost as hard to get a court during Non-Prime time as it was during Prime time. With the exception of 10 pm courts, Non-Prime courts were selling out in just over one minute and the 10 pm courts would be gone within 20 minutes.
- (4) Usually all 4 people for a doubles game would try to book online as opposed to 1 or 2 in previous years and they would often still strike out. For singles play, almost always both players would try to book the court. Consequently, more players were on the web at 7:15am / 7:30am than in previous years. The extra load from more users caused many members to get frozen screens.

In hindsight, we were not prepared for the changing characteristics of the market. All indoor tennis clubs in the GTA experienced the same court booking problems. The silver lining is that we have a unique opportunity to learn from this past season and reset ourselves to try and solve the 4 problems listed above. It is an opportunity we may never have again. So, we gave it a lot of thought and have come up with the following solutions for next year:

- (1) We just simply cannot handle the load of memberships submitted between Labour Day and September 30th anymore. Moreover, the Junior Academy requires significant administrative work. In order to better manage the demand for membership, the goal is to distribute the workload over the summer. We will thus encourage members to **join on or before June 21st** in order to take advantage of our early registration incentive on all memberships (excluding Juniors).
- (2) To improve the court booking situation, the only solution is to drastically reduce the number of Adult and Senior members. We will reduce the combined number of Adult and Senior members so that on average, disregarding Junior Academy courts, Round Robin courts and courts for group lessons, all such members will be able to play the equivalent of 2 hours of singles (where 1 hour of singles = 2 hours of doubles) per week. Please note, the average equivalent of 2 hours of singles per week includes PCT, House League matches and privately arranged lessons, but does not include Round Robins or Shot Selections published group lessons. This drastic reduction in the number of members should also reduce the number of PCT courts being reserved. Our combined count of Adult/Senior members will actually be 20% less than the combined count of the 2019/2020 season. If court demand next season still results in dissatisfaction among members,

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we will implement a maximum equivalent number of hours of singles that any member can book. We are hoping to avoid this.

- (3) Because Non-Prime Courts were selling out almost as quickly as Prime Courts, it no longer makes sense to offer a discounted membership to those who only use the club during Non-Prime Hours. So we have eliminated Non-Prime Membership. We raised Prime time court fees by \$4.00 per hour and Early Bird court fees by \$2.00 per hour but kept Non-Prime court fees the same, which should greatly reduce the impact of eliminating Non-Prime Membership to those who only play during Non-Prime time.
- (4) We are planning to change our custom made court booking system to an off-site hosted off the shelf system. Because the new provider has hundreds of customers, their infrastructure will have far greater bandwidth. We believe that the large bandwidth will stop the frozen screens experienced by some members. Also, wider bandwidth will allow all courts (prime, non-prime and early bird) to go on sale at the same time. This will also help with (2) above. Moreover, the **court booking time will be changed to 8:30pm** since we have heard from many members that early mornings are a pain. Because almost every tennis club in North America has their court bookings in the morning, an 8:30pm booking time will further ensure adequate bandwidth. If 8:30pm proves unpopular, we can easily change it back.

We are sure that every member is aware of the 4 week province-wide shutdown from April 3 to April 30. This means no club tournament and no Junior Fun Day this season. With the health of our members in mind FSTM will not hold a season end party.

We would like to officially announce that Andrew Hent is our new manager. Owen Pellew, our manager for the previous 8 years has been training Andrew during this difficult time. We want to thank Owen for a spectacular job as we have been very fortunate to have him guiding our club with his business and tennis background. We wish Owen well in his future endeavours. We would also like to thank all of our current staff for their efforts during this challenging season. The extra work and Covid-19 procedures (especially working with off-site payments with a computer system that was not designed for off-site payments) took much patience. But these great team players hung in there and did their best. Hats off to them! Finally, plans are in the works with the City to resurface the tennis courts before next season.

Membership, PCT and Court Fees

Please find enclosed your 2021/2022 Membership and Permanent Court Time (PCT) forms. Because we found the average number of hours wished to be played each week is now higher than historical levels, we have made significant cuts in the number of memberships, causing increases in Adult, Senior and Family membership fees. We have added an increase of \$20 to Junior memberships. Moreover, EFWTC was never assessed property tax until 2017. We never increased our membership fees to cover this additional annual burden until now. Thus, some of the increase covers this annual tax burden while the remaining portion makes up for the large decrease in the number of Adult and Senior members. Our court fees are going up from \$14/hr to \$16/hr during Early Bird times and from \$24/hr to \$28/hr during Prime times. Non-Prime Court fees remain unchanged at \$20/hr. Because court fees were raised for Early Bird and Prime time, PCT was also increased for these periods. PCT rates are unchanged for Non-Prime time.

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Eglinton Flats Junior Tennis Academy

COVID-19 rules limited the number of participants in the Junior Tennis Academy. We sold out every spot this year. We attribute the successful sellout of the Junior Academy to the excellent program put together by Mike Thomson and his team of tennis professionals plus the recent success of Canada on the International tennis stage (Bianca Andreescu, Felix Auger-Aliassime, Denis Shapovalov, etc). Programs are available for all levels of juniors from beginning tots to top performance national players. We are delighted to see so many motivated juniors in our Junior Tennis Academy continuously working on developing their skills. Perhaps the next Bianca Andreescu or Denis Shapovalov will come from the Eglinton Flats Junior Tennis Academy!!! The Progressive Tennis teaching techniques have proven to be highly valuable and motivating to the tots and beginning students.

COVID-19 Pro-rated Refunds/Credits and Renewals

We now know that we cannot reopen this Spring. Consequently, out of the 212 days planned for winter tennis, members missed 159 days. We are going to be giving credits towards your 2021/2022 membership based on the number of days lost beginning on Monday November 23rd. Membership credits less a \$35 administration fee are as follows:

Full Adult Membership	\$324.25
Adult Non-Prime Membership	\$234.25
Full Senior Membership	\$301.75
Senior Non-Prime Membership	\$226.75
Junior Membership	\$91.75
Family Membership	\$744.25

Refunds for the 2020/2021 House Leagues and the 2020/2021 Junior Academy will be mailed out this summer. Current members in PCT groups will receive emails on or before April 15 telling them how much their PCT will be next season and the membership credits that can be used by each of the members in their group. Cheques for the prize winners of the ladder will be mailed out after the season is over. The last day of the ladder will be deemed to be November 22.

Please do not mail or email us membership funds or forms without first receiving an invitation email/mail from us. Membership renewals will be taken by groups in the following order:

- (1) Players in existing PCTs, membership is guaranteed between Fri. April 16 & Sun. May 9;
- (2) Renewing members – will be processed on a first come first served basis starting Mon. May 10;
- (3) 2019-2020 members will be processed on a first come first served basis between Mon. May 24 and Sun. June 6; and
- (4) Everyone else will be processed on a first come first served basis beginning Mon. June 7;

Renewals can be completed online (unlike past seasons) or manually as in the past. If done manually, your registration date/time will be deemed to be noon on the day your letter is stamped by Canada Post or the later of the date/time of the etransfer confirmation email or the email receipt of your membership form. If the letter/governing email is before the first day for the group, it will be deemed to have been received at 1:00pm on the first day for the group. No “It got lost in the mail” or “I sent it to the wrong

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address (Eglinton Ave.)” excuses will be accepted. Please do not send us any membership/PCT funds until you receive an email from us inviting you to renew your membership.

Our more complete and efficient online court booking/payment system offers members the ability to pay for memberships/courts online and for management to issue full or partial refunds. So, before the first day for renewal for groups (1), (2), and (3) above, an invitation e-mail will be sent to each member of the group containing a link to our new system enabling him/her to sign up for next year’s membership. We will email members of each group unique online links together with specific pro-rated amounts (see above Table) and a how-to tutorial document for the online system at least one week prior to opening up registration for that group. **Please consider the online option if you wish to renew your membership.**

Our website will be updated shortly to make it clear to group 4 that the new membership forms will be posted under the “Downloads” link beginning Monday June 7th as well as a link to join online.

If you do not wish to become a member next year, please email us a refund request and please include your full name and mailing address in the email and we will mail out a cheque to you.

Manager’s Message

I’d like to take this opportunity to thank Owen for training me, Debbie for setting up our many club programs, and the professional desk and maintenance staff for their help during this compressed season. Many thanks to Esteban, Debbie, Jarka, Susan, Margarita, Violeta, George, Aruna and Dwight. Thank you to Mike Thomson and his professionals for their support.

August Newsletter and Programs

Our August newsletter will outline in detail the many programs that will be offered at EFWTC for the 2021/2022 season. Expect to see the many successful programs EFWTC offers to once again be made available. These programs include the Weekly Doubles Round Robins (Mixed, Social, Mens, Womens), Doubles House Leagues, Singles Ladders, Tournaments, and the free first week of tennis with free NTRP rating. A full complement of teaching programs will be made available by our Tennis Director, Mike Thomson. Thank you again for your understanding during this difficult and extraordinary season. We look forward to implementing our planned improvements and hope for a full, uninterrupted 2021-2022 season.

Sincerely,

The First Service Tennis Management Team