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USTA News

Davis Tennis Club Puts Final Touches on New Clubhouse

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For more than 50 years, the Davis Tennis Club has been the conduit for local racquet fans.

From popular youth lessons and tournaments to team play for net enthusiasts in their 70s and 80s, Davis Tennis club (DTC) has provided a citywide heartbeat that still energizes more than 200 members.

Now, thanks in part to a grant from the United States Tennis Association, the local group is finishing construction on its first full-fledged clubhouse.

"There will be considerable use for the clubhouse, given the number of teams we have playing on any given day," DTC board member Dennis Anderson told The Enterprise. "(From) the really small (players) to a considerable senior presence ... this clubhouse will be able to serve the tennis community."

Originally working from a 10-by-20-foot storage shed, DTC leaders struggled for working room, had virtually no shelter from the elements and had no real office space.

Club President George Haver says the organization decided five years ago there should be a better facility.

"We started the fund raising at that point," Haver explains, pointing out that the first plan was to build an add-on at the existing Community Pool site.

"But from Jim Newman at the city we eventually learned that they were going to tear down the pool building. He gave us an option."

The alternative? Take over the Costume Guild building adjacent to the Veterans Memorial Theater.

It was next to the Community Park Tennis Complex and — once renovated — would provide more than 800 square feet of functionality.

Haver and longtime board colleague Barry Markman agreed that the site would be perfect. With a project coordinator — Chris Dewees — named and Anderson ready to break out the tools, DTC got serious about its new home.

The cost of renovating the old warehouse budgeted out to around \$60,000. While the local club organized social functions, conducted fund raisers and asked for donations, it also sought the help of the USTA.

"We received a 20 percent (gift) from them: \$12,000," Haver said.

"We have had donations from \$5 to \$2,000 to help cover the (rest)," adds Dewees, the DTC treasurer. "We will list the contributors at the clubhouse."



Davis Tennis Club members applaud their new clubhouse



The Davis Clubhouse was taken down to the studs during the renovation.



The new Davis Tennis Club clubhouse was made possible, in part, by a USTA Facilities grant.

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Board members say the facility will be a terrific place come rain or shine.

"We thought it would be nice to have a place where we could take shelter, talk about the matches and (coordinate) tournaments," Haver continues.

"It was in very bad condition," Haver remembers, thinking back to when DTC first took over the building. "We redid the siding, insulation, interior paneling, the roof was shot ... dry-rotted."

Once the all-volunteer project started, anticipation grew. So did the fund raising.

DTC first made sure the theatrical neighbors had a place to stow their lighting, costumes and staging, supplying two storage containers (valued at \$6,000).

Then, Anderson and his crew got to work. Every bit of the construction has been fully funded with only the final stage of the USTA grant due.

"It's gone very well," Markman says.

The city, schools and DTC share responsibility for the 12 courts sitting between the Veterans' Memorial Center and Davis High School.

Davis Tennis Club pays the city \$4,400 annually for use of those courts. Club professional Dale Hersch repays the organization a lion's share of that money to conduct his DTC-sanctioned youth programs.

The club also runs the city's recreational tennis programs and instructional offerings, while making sure amenities at courts throughout the city are aesthetic and functional.

"All the (amenities) you see at the (Community Park) courts have been put there by the Tennis Club," board member Steve Shaffer points out. "The benches, the stands, even the nets ... the wind screens. We're working on other courts within the city, putting in benches, like at Chestnut or Slide Hill."

And now, the new clubhouse will give visiting teams — including prep teams that come to do battle with the Blue Devils at DHS — a place to congregate, stow their equipment, cool down or

escape the elements.

Working on a \$15,000 annual budget, it seems like the Davis Tennis Club could be a role model in showing other agencies how to get more bang for their buck.

Notes: DTC was founded in 1956 by Irene Dempsey, almost at the same time the University Farm School of Berkeley was morphing into UC Davis. "The small but enthusiastic membership from town and gown enjoyed the ball-purchasing discounts provided by the club and soon began organizing tournaments," board member Carolyn Teragawa says. Things took off from there.

In addition to watching its three big tournaments grow annually, in 1977, The Davis Enterprise's own Bob Dunning played Bobby Riggs, then the Clown Prince of Tennis. "Riggs was a complete gentleman, showman and really funny," The Wary I columnist recalls, adding his own take on the DTC: "(The club) has been a great support structure and advocate of the game in Davis. A rallying point. A lobbying organization. (They) have kept tennis at the forefront." Oh, by the way, Dunning beat Riggs.

Visit both <http://davistennisclub.org> and www.davistennisclub.com for information regarding DTC. Individual membership is \$40 annually (\$60 for families). Sally Hosley is the club's female head pro. Hersch (boys) and Hosley (girls) double as Davis High's tennis coaches. Once the project is finished, Haver says DTC will host a grand opening.

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