

FLORAL PARK  
RECREATION  
TENNIS  
HISTORY



## **FLORAL PARK TENNIS**

Although the “Golden Age” of tennis in the United States and Floral Park has long passed, the three har-tru and one hard court still find residents of all ages enjoying serving, returning, volleying and having a fun time at the Recreation Center.

On weekends forty years ago you would find a half dozen cars queuing up as early as 6:30 AM to get one of the three hard courts when the park opened at 8:00 AM. Whereas doubles play has become the match of choice the last 10 years, from the 60’s to the 90’s the game was predominantly singles play. Players received an hour of playing before the courts would turn over. A player getting off at 9 AM frequently would try to get a second match at 10 AM.

In the early seventies, a new breed of player appeared on the scene. This group was composed of teachers, firemen and policemen who had time to hone their skills and develop into highly skilled players. It then became hard to get a court weekdays from 3:00pm to 5:00pm. Players began to seek their own level of play and a small group of resident’s band together to put an organized element in place for tennis playing Floral Parkers. Frank Kennedy, Jim Krug, Jack Brown and Dick Wenthon met at Koenig’s Restaurant and laid the foundation for Floral Park Tennis Ladder.

A book was kept and the winner would enter the opponent, date and score. Players could challenge at least 5 rungs above. If the challenger was successful, he would replace the looser who would drop down one rung. According to skill levels, for men there was 3 ladders, A, B and C with as many as 30 players on each ladder. For women, there was an A and B ladder. The ladder was for singles play only. It was with great pride when players either held or ascended to the top of their respective ladder.

With the growth of the ladder liability became a concern. With Jim Krug working for the Recreation Center Jim lead the way for the Village to run the tennis ladder, ceremonies, and monitor the court usage. Jim also expanded play by adding small one day tournaments, one a month, during the summer months.

The end of the season Awards Ceremony has been held in many locations and with both grand and small fanfare. During the Golden Age of tennis play, players and spouses gathered at Village Hall for a night of refreshments, dancing and socializing. The highlight of the night was the presentation of Awards to the Fall Classic winners. Numerous locations served as site of the end of the season awards including the New Hyde Park Inn, the Shelter House, and the park stage area in the playground and more recently in the Recreation Pool Building. Winners and runner-up have received a wide variety of awards from trophies and tee-shirts and hats to tennis balls and trophies. Categories for the Annual Jim Krug Tennis Classic has now expanded to 15.

In 1983 and 1984 the Championships were radio broadcasted on WBAU by Doug Miles. Doug was a Sports Director, Newscaster for WBAU and also a Parkie. Doug was joined by color commentator Pete Castellanos, also a Parkie. WBAU was owned by Nassau Community College.



The Tennis courts have also evolved and moved over the years. The tennis courts were once located on the site of what is now Field #2 next to the Shelterhouse. The tennis courts were moved to the street side of the Shelterhouse and the three courts were made out of asphalt.

During renovations in 1983 a fourth court was added next to the basketball courts. The courts became unplayable with any type of mist or drizzle and had to be rolled or closed. After a review by the Recreation Committee and the Village board, the courts converted to a clay like surface called har-tru. This type of surface creates less stress on the joints and was welcomed by players of all levels. The courts require early morning sweeping and lining, mid-day and night watering and are machine rolled and lined.

*Our Friends will be forever missed.*

To our dear departed friends on the courts.

We often sit back and think about the years that have passed us by. We remember the happiness and joy that was shared. We think of the laughter, the smiles and the fun we had. Although it brings us great comfort and happiness to walk down memory lane. It reminds us that without you, our courts will never be the same.

Alex Viespi

Bob Johnson

Bob Marsico

Charlie Weiss

Don Malstrom

Eddie Horn

Frank Gallino

Frank Kennedy

Gerry Dunbar

Harvey King

Jack Brown

Ken Meyfohrt

Jack Brown

Jim Krug

Karen Krug

Margie O'Brein

Pat D'Imperio

Pat Reilly

Ron Murphy

Russ Leo

Tommy Marron

Tony Aliono

Walter Puck

Dr. Joseph Massaro