

Clubs promote tennis during summer months

By CORINNE ABATT

The bridge table, the shopping trip and the morning coffee klatch may have to move to the background while area housewives flock to the summer tennis clinics for more vigorous recreation.

Traditionally, indoor tennis peaks when the snow falls and wanes when outdoor courts become playable. Club managers view warm weather as promotion time when they can entice newcomers with special rates and relaxed membership requirements.

Just a few years ago, tennis was considered a young person's game. Players geared down to a more leisurely game of golf for a lifetime sport by the time they reached their mid-30s.

But thinking has changed due in part to statements made by Dr. Paul Dudley White, a heart specialist, who came into prominence as a fitness advisor to President Eisenhower. It was sporadic, strenuous activities (such as shoveling snow)—not regular exercise such as bike riding and tennis—that triggered heart attacks.

WITH THAT encouragement, the middle-agers began returning to the courts and much of the summer popularity of tennis-club specials is due to women in their 30s, 40s and 50s.

"Age doesn't have to be a factor in learning," said Jean Blievernicht, who teaches tennis at the Courthouse in West Bloomfield Township. "It's an individual thing. Age may show on the court in terms of stamina and ability to move quickly, but as far as actually learning the game, it has no direct bearing on ability."

There is an occasional complaint from a beginner that the hours and money spent netted little more than frustration and stiff muscles. Tennis instructors and club managers lay the blame right back on the individual.



David Stewart: "A tennis instructor can show you what to do, but he can't hit the ball for you."

Farmington pitcher thwarts Southfield

Lack of pitching depth was a problem for Farmington's American Legion baseball team last summer.

But that problem has been solved this year with the addition of Bob McKenna, a righthander who pitched for Catholic Central High. McKenna has proved himself a valuable addition to Farmington's mound staff this summer.

Last Wednesday, McKenna lifted his Legion record to 4-1 as Farmington defeated Southfield, 3-1, in a District 18 game at Southfield High School. McKenna allowed five hits while striking out eight and walking one in the seven-inning game.

"It was just like always, when he needed the big pitch, he could throw it," said Farmington Manager Wally Christensen. "I'd say that his best pitch that night was his fastball. He has this sneaky fastball, and he gets it over. His control was excellent. He walked only one man."

Farmington, which had four hits, scored two runs in the second inning. Paul Rogind and Randy Meier drew

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"If you want to learn as fast as possible, you have to play every day," Mrs. Blievernicht said. "You should get into a group that meets every day or at least three times a week. I also recommend you not play games to start with. Just get out and practice."

She advocates starting with group lessons. They're more economical and more fun because the beginner will have persons of the same ability level to practice with.

In terms of player volume, the summer specials are paying off. Beverly Hills Racquet Club head pro Dick Potter said the club has more players than ever before: "It's going at the rate of the wintertime schedule."

BEVERLY HILLS HAS a four-week summer clinic, an hour and a half lesson each week, \$30 for the daytime package, \$35 in the evening. Those in the clinic may use the courts for practice at \$2 off the regular rates.

During the day, an hour of doubles doubles will cost each player \$1.50. Even if the four have to split the cost of a \$3 can of balls, it's still a pretty good deal, Potter said. Members of the classes have the use of the club's sauna and whirlpool.

Hans Hafemeister, manager of the South Downs Tennis Club, said that "scores of new members" have joined the club after participating in the summer clinics.

While taking lessons, players have full use of the facilities. "Everything

is furnished except for racquets and, of course, clothing and shoes," Hafemeister said.

Franklin Racquet Club in Southfield has a package of two one-hour lessons a week for three weeks for \$30. Those in the clinic may use the courts at specified times at \$1 per player per hour.

Farmington Racquet Club Manager Edward Ashley said the size of the class has a lot to do with learning to play.

"We have four pupils to one instructor. How could you not learn?"

In addition to the special summer rates for adult beginners, the club has a large children's tennis camp program during the summer. However, at the Farmington club, non-members may use the courts only during lesson time.

OTHERWISE, WHAT'S the advantage of membership?" asked Ashley.

But even with good instruction and small classes, the responsibility for learning still rests heavily with the individual.

"If you want to learn as fast as possible, you have to play every day," Mrs. Blievernicht said. "You should get into a group that meets every day or at least three times a week. It's better to practice 15 minutes every day than three hours once a week."

She warned beginners to stay away from getting into a game situation right away.

"Beginners want to win at all costs, just like everyone else. They'll do anything to get the ball back. But they've not yet formed good tennis habits. It would be much better for them to play points, serve the ball if they know how, play it as though it were a point, but don't keep score. That way they can work on their strokes and not worry about winning."

Courthouse pro David Stewart said that while the biggest member age group at his club is 20-30, more youngsters are coming in all the time. Stewart sides with Mrs. Blievernicht. "A tennis instructor can show you what to do, but he can't hit the ball for you," he said. "You have to go out and practice and just keep hitting the ball."



Staff photos by Harry Mauthe

Beginner Jeanine Berringson already has learned that tennis is not a flat-footed game

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