

The Trentonian

By David Foster / For The Trentonian – August 26, 2013

TRENTON — The capital city is offering more than just tennis courts for residents to play on, they are serving up a nationally recognized facility.

Last week, the United States Tennis Association named the Junior Champions Tennis Center at Cadwalader Park one of the three best large public courts (11 or more courts) in the country.

The public facility has seven full-size hard courts, 14 junior courts and is in the process of constructing a two-story pavilion.

"Great tennis facilities like the Junior Champions Tennis Center help us to grow the game at the grassroots level and we are proud to recognize them for their ongoing impact on the sport of tennis," said Kurt Kamperman, USTA chief executive of community tennis. "The Junior Champions Tennis Center has embraced many of our tennis initiatives, especially 10 and Under Tennis, introducing thousands of new players to the sport each year."

In total, 19 facilities were recognized nationally and Junior Champions was the only one on the list from New Jersey.

They were judged on overall layout, court surface and lights, ease of maintenance, accommodations for attendees, aesthetics, graphics, amenities, and the facilities' participation in the USTA programs.

But the capital city facility wasn't always so appealing and sprawling.

In September 2011, the current version of the courts were unveiled after the city contributed \$100,000 in capital funds and secured \$400,000 in grants for constructing the nation's largest junior short court lined tennis facility in the United States.

Both the Mack and Palmer administrations worked on the initiative.

"Considering the courts were in disrepair for so long, we're really happy about the public/private partnership between the city," said Rob Howland, executive director of National Junior Tennis & Learning of Trenton. "It took a very long time and a lot of resources from the organization and all the involved parties to make it happen."

NJTL of Trenton, a nonprofit that operates the facility, is raising funds privately for the proposed pavilion on the site, which will then be gifted to the city.

The USTA has also provided funding and is doing continuous work at the site with the NJTL of Trenton.

The NJTL of Trenton just completed its summer program, which more than 600 children participated in.

"It's not only tennis, but academics are also provided at the park," Howland said.

The fall program for youths, adults and families begins on Sept. 9.

Adults pay \$10 for a lesson of 90 minutes with an instructor and children can pay the suggested donation of \$50 for the whole fall program.

"For both adult and youth, if someone can't pay and provides proper documentation, we're not going to charge them," Howland said.

The Junior Champions Tennis Center will be honored for its excellence in construction and renovations at a function at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in New York City on Sept. 1.

All winners will receive a plaque, an all-weather sign, a one-year complimentary USTA membership and certificates of recognition.

"My administration recognized early on that residents, especially our children, needed access to 21st century facilities so we set out to deliver just that," Mayor Tony F. Mack said in a statement. "We recognized that access was only part of the equation with the other being quality. This facility, like so many others we've completed, addresses both access and quality while encouraging residents to engaged in an active and healthy lifestyle."

To register for the fall program and get more information about the Junior Champions Tennis Center call the NJTL of Trenton at 609-341-1698.

The Times

By Ann LoPrinzi / For The Times – September 21, 2013

Trenton's bright star was at first singles, where Nu-Keremi Kermah, whose nickname is "Q," figured out how to get back in the match after dropping the first set and won the Tornadoes only point in a third set. Both players were experienced and hit well-placed shots with pace, but Kermah's love of the game and ability to troubleshoot and change things up was the difference.

"I struggle in the beginning just adjusting to how a players hits. She hits a lot of short balls. I'm more of a long-ball hitter so I had to adjust and come to net and hit my approach shots to win points," said Nu-Keremi. "I had to learn how to control my ball placement. She gets everything back, so I had to place my balls in the corners and give her variety."

Kermah will be missed by coach Connie Richardson, who describes her game as smooth but aggressive. She is senior class president, participates in numerous school activities, takes honors classes, and was chosen for Girls' State. She has honed her skills with the NJTL of Trenton for six years and is grateful for not only what she has learned through them, but for supplying her with rackets and sneakers. She feels lucky to live across the street from the courts and calls it her second home. And she feels she has improved greatly.

"High school tennis has been a way to practice and adjust to different players. There are so many different types of player. I used to love just hitting with power, but that wasn't really helpful. I've learned how to keep my ball in play and I improved my serve. My serve was horrible. Now it's my favorite shot."

Trenton's ability to win points on any court is a challenge, but Kermah has scored a moral victory already for her team by winning three matches this season.

Schwartz alluded to the toughness of the skirmish.

"We did have some nice battles, long two-and-three-set matches. We were fairly evenly matched. We played smart, though and came out on top."

The Times

By Ann LoPrinzi / For The Times – October 6, 2013

The 10th Anniversary Capital Cup, a fundraiser for the NJTL of Trenton, took place last weekend at Trenton Country Club. No weather issues this time around, and it had the most-ever participants, with 120 players across six divisions. For \$100, players received breakfast and lunch and a player gift courtesy of Prince Sports. In addition, they could bring two guests free of charge to the family dinner extravaganza. More than 200 people came out to watch the finals and awards/honoree presentation.

A highlight was honoring Albert Stark. NJTL president Beth Deitchman and USTA president and chairman Dave Haggerty were on hand to help honor the community leader. A newly-created Albert Stark Sportsmanship Award was announced, and it will be given annually to a deserving NJTL participant. The first recipient was Nu-Keremi Kermah. The Trenton High student and class president gave an emotional speech about what the program has meant to her and said that, because of the NJTL, 17 colleges and universities are recruiting her.

Stark's compelling speech reminded attendees that everything was secure and comfortable right there, but that the NJTL kids that live in Trenton face a very different reality and that the NJTL programs help those kids overcome those challenges and have an impact.



(L TO R) – DAVE HAGGERTY, NU-KERMANI KERMAH, ALBERT STARK