



Career Tennis Pros Should Get Certified for Platform Tennis

Bill Mountford, USPTA Vice President

For practical reasons, such as assuring that the best opportunities exist for the most secure and lucrative jobs, USPTA members should consider becoming certified in platform tennis.

Increasingly in the Northeast U.S., and especially around the greater Midwest, the coveted year-round director of racquets positions are going to applicants prepared to coach and manage platform tennis during the cold weather months as well as the traditional summer-time tennis programming and management. In the “old days,” this was surely not the case. Platform tennis would have been an “add-on” responsibility.

The management of drills and clinics, and the organization of teams and events, has striking similarities to the traditional director of tennis roles. It is a skill set that USPTA Elite Professionals will have acquired over time. It is worth noting that search committees at prestigious clubs are looking for more these days. The “qualification” of this certification can differentiate USPTA members from other applicants, or in extreme cases, assure that an applicant will receive consideration.

Mark McMahon, the founder and president of McMahon 10s — who leads searches for some of the most prestigious director positions in the U.S., feels strongly about this topic. He believes that it relates to perception with those doing the hiring. McMahon says, “Employers want to hire a person who is

committed to their profession; someone who has worked to stand out among their peers, in much the same way the employer wants their program to stand out among other programs.”

McMahon and his associates often gather dozens of highly qualified applicants for an attractive job opening. But the question he asks many times is, “Why wouldn’t you do everything possible to separate yourself from the group?” Often these roles become a matter of elimination. The search committees are looking at resumes to assess which applicants do not measure up to all aspects of the prospective job. If you are short in one area but outstanding in most, you might get eliminated before even receiving the opportunity to present yourself.

From a financial standpoint, an increasing number of USPTA members can significantly enhance their income when coaching and directing platform tennis as they have traditionally done with “just” tennis. In northern climates, where platform tennis is concentrated, tennis has a shorter outdoor season. Increasingly, the “best jobs” are going to those applicants who are as adept with organizing and instructing platform programming and responsibilities.

Matt Davis of Park Ridge Country Club in the suburbs of Chicago — who also co-chairs the USPTA Platform Tennis committee, is case in point. He runs clinics

and leagues year-round in the Windy City. Specifically, Davis operates platform tennis programming in Chicago on Wednesday nights through the summer. It is always a social event and creates different streams of revenue.

It is also worth noting, as Davis commented, that “travel platform is really common among the country clubs on the North Shore.” Simultaneously, there are, perhaps surprisingly, fewer men’s and women’s tennis teams that enter interclub competitions. There are regular practices and drills for nearly all of these teams, so it is a virtuous cycle for entrepreneurial organizers.

Based on his personal experiences, Davis advises fellow USPTA members to “get your certification for other racquet sports, especially after COVID, because you will not obtain consideration for top jobs without these designations.”

Our business continues to evolve, and both club managers and search committees are demanding more qualifications from their racquet sports professionals. In these “hotbed” areas for platform tennis, it will become increasingly difficult to get an interview for the most coveted positions without appropriate certification and knowledge to deliver this growing activity.

Becoming certified as a USPTA Platform Professional or Elite Professional is worth pursuing. Please visit uspta.com for more information. While in-person certifications were practically eliminated during the pandemic, they will soon be ramped up, and we encourage all interested members to get platform tennis certified for the 2021/22 season. ★

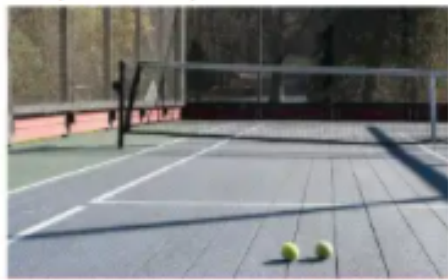


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