



## The September 2008 Newsletter

Well the season we call 'Summer' for nostalgic reasons is over. There's no getting away from it - the weather was awful and it was very hard to get the enthusiasm to get on court. Still, hope springs eternal, etc, and we have some very exciting events kicking off in the club. All you need to fill those Autumn evenings is in the following pages, so check it out.

### Coaching News and developments

You will no doubt recall the letter we sent out to all members about two months ago which outlined the coaching initiatives we were going to launch in the Club. Just to recap briefly and to put in context some of the other news in this newsletter, the main changes we announced were as follows....

Our head coach **Kieran Galvin** has agreed going forward to focus on adult coaching in the club, as we have identified the need to run both coached and non coached events to give all levels and groups in the Club an opportunity to play competitively and to develop their game at the same time. Kieran will also be available as before for private coaching, and we'll cover that elsewhere in this newsletter also.

But in terms of club-sponsored coached events, the structure will be that the Tennis Committee will publicise the event, sign up participants for the duration (typically 4-6 weeks) and collect the fee for the series on the first night. The club will then let Kieran know who to expect, and will reimburse him for the coaching associated with that event. If it's rained off we'll let the players know that in advance and schedule a replacement session at the end of the series. We believe this will work to everyone's benefit, free Kieran up to deliver the coaching, and will put the onus on the club to respond to members' needs and requests.

The first list of club-sponsored events should come out in the next week, and will cover the period up to Christmas. We will add events to the initial list of 'offerings' as we go along, listen to requests for additional sessions (assuming there is enough demand) and in return we'd look to you the members to respond by taking advantage of these coached sessions, and by only signing up for events for can attend regularly. This will all be covered in the imminent Tennis Committee 'release' but in outline terms the initial club-sponsored sessions will be a mens and ladies progressive doubles event which should offer pointers to form for the Winter league, a morning progressive doubles or pyramid event aimed at ladies who play Charity Leagues, and a weekly night-time event for social players . We want to get these events to run successfully before expanding the 'offering'.

In addition to this, for Adults Kieran will run a small number of private group events where he will agree the fee upfront with the participants and collect the fee directly himself. These will also be covered in the upcoming announcement, but will certainly include a cardio tennis event, and an introductory weekly session for new members and beginners . So we hope that between the club-sponsored coached events and Kieran's private offerings there will be plenty to get adults out and actively playing. Of course we would also intend to offer non-coached events for adults and these will be organised through the Tennis Committee. A very successful singles round robin for adults has been running through August, and that's another example of what we can deliver. With any luck the perennial favourite Turkey event will begin toward the end of October or early November, and that also usually sees a great number of members on court. So plenty to look forward to and watch the notice-boards for sign up sheets....

# Our next tournament! Sign up now....

As we keep trying to bring you new and innovative events to participate in, we had this idea to run a competition that would be a bit 'different' and which might bridge the gap to our eventually having an open tournament in RTC. And so the Rathgar 'Semi-Open' was born! And now it's time to sign up....

The basic idea is simple - we have a doubles competition, two classes, A and B, and one side for men and one for ladies. The twist - you need to find someone that is NOT a club member as your partner. Think about it - either through the leagues, personal friends, our proximity to places like Brookfield, Templeogue, Riverview, our 'friendly' relationship with St Marys, etc - you must know someone that plays in another club. So get in touch with them and convince them to partner you and lets have a bit of fun for a change.

There are entry forms in the reception area, entry per duo costs a very reasonable 10 euro and the closing date is next Saturday, September 13th, Matches will take place in the week commencing September 20th and we'll have a finals day and a BBQ (indoors our outdoors) on Saturday September 27th. So come on - get those forms in - and do support us as we try for something a bit different for a change.

## Charity begins at home

As you probably know, RTC has a great tradition in the Ladies Charity Leagues and has on many occasions triumphed, but more importantly (in this case anyway) is the taking part. The way players are graded is slightly mysterious to the average layman, but there is currently a sheet which explains it all on the board in the club, beside the sign-up sheet.

The leagues themselves begin on the 6th-7th of October, and it's definitely a case of the more the merrier. So do sign up if the matches are at a time that suits you, and if you need further details we're sure that Sheila Marron will be happy to act as a contact point in this regard.

## Pressure!

As activity levels in the club start to pick up again, this will create pressure on courts. Is a good thing in one sense, but it does mean we'll all have to plan when we play a little better, sign in when we come down, and the bottom line is : dont expect to play for more than an hour at peak times (ie 7pm to 9pm, Monday to Thursday. If you put more than one hour into the lights, after your hour is up people are quite entitled to challenge you. So lets all be reasonable, try to share the resource, and look to expand the court usage to nights like Friday and the weekend....If you play at 9pm you will probably be able to play on a bit after the 'official' 10pm closing time, but lets all try to use the courts as intelligently as possible. Once we get the adult program finalised we'll begin to put out a weekly calendar to help with this.

## Hospice Coffee Morning in RTC

As we all know the Hospice organisation do amazing work and their annual coffee morning happens on Wednesday September 24th at 11.30am . This will be hosted by the usual ladies group that come together on Wednesday mornings, but they'd be very happy to welcome extra participants to support this worthy cause. More details about this are on the notice-board in the clubhouse so do come down and check it out.

## Leagues....

The Senior (over 35) leagues have now started and RTC have two mens and two ladies teams in action. It's early days yet so we'll hope that some of the teams contend for the playoffs. Due in part to last minute holidays being taken we do need some subs for these teams so if you are called upon please do get your kit on and wear the shirt with pride. Speaking of shirts, for new members particularly we do have polo shirts and sweatshirts on sale in the club with the logo on show. So if you want to buy one, talk to Frank in the office. Finally the next league up, starting in mid October, will be the floodlit league which is played on Monday and Tuesday nights, so we'll get the sign up sheets for that on the board in due course.

## Junior Tennis - It's all kicking off....

The other half of the coaching announcement outlined to members how we had decided to initiate a club-sponsored Junior coaching 'drive' to try to bring a new level of enthusiasm to this area and to offer members a real reason to stay with the club. For a while we had been aware that many of our junior members had tended to move on to other clubs and this - in particular - was something we wanted to reverse. We could also see that a number of RTC juniors ended up playing league tennis for other clubs, which gave us food for thought.

So, as previously announced, we launched a club-sponsored junior program with our own alumnus **Mark O'Neill** coming back to us from Riverview to drive this. We are pleased to say that demand has exceeded our wildest expectations and we are all set to kick off the program this coming week. All the classes are full - including some extra ones we had to put on - and even at that we are aware that we have some unfulfilled demand.

We apologise at this stage to those who couldn't get in or get the time-slots they wanted on this occasion, but we see it as key to run the initial term very formally as it will set the template for future terms. It will also enable us to 'tweak' the overall program and perhaps bring in some further initiatives thereafter. So don't despair - we're anxious to meet all demand as soon as we can. The Junior Committee have been run off their feet getting all this together but they certainly deserve a collective vote of thanks for their enthusiasm and organisation to date.

Separate newsflashes will go out as the Junior program develops so do keep an eye out for e-mails and text messages. And do try to get everyone to their respective classes on time - it makes life easier for everyone concerned.

Obviously the above has been a massive undertaking to get off the ground and has taken up most of the energy on the Junior side of things. However the Junior leagues are also upcoming, and trials have been taking place to decide who should play on what team for the club. Further Junior events to complement the coaching will also be outlined shortly and publicised appropriately. The one thing that is obviously vital in all of this is communication, so if for some reason you are not getting the e-mails or text messages that you think you should be, don't just sit there! Make inquiries and ensure we have the most up to date information available for contacting you.... This is especially important for letting people know if events are rained off (and as we know, it does rain rather frequently in Ireland....)

# Improve!

Not really a command, more of an aspiration. But we all do get better with coaching and while the club can and will organise coached group adult sessions with Kieran Galvin, there is absolutely nothing to stop two or four people getting together, going to him, and saying - 'we'd like to line up four weeks where we play each other, and you tell us what we're doing wrong'. Kieran is open to this, and also probably will have more availability now for 1:1 coaching. So if in the past you felt you couldn't get a regular slot, or the time you wanted, go and have a word with him now and see if he can fit you in. It's probably fair to say that no-one ever got worse from coaching.... Kieran is reachable on 086-2100440 or wander down and have a chat to him on Court 10.

## Etiquette - back to the basics...

With more court pressure, more activity and more people wandering around, it's probably time to reiterate the basics. And lest we forget, to get to the **back courts** could you please walk around the outside of the courts and come in the gate on the back of court 8 - see the new signs we have put up.

### Anyway, the brief refresher....

**DONT** - Walk across behind people who are playing, wait instead. **DONT** - litter and leave bottles and other stuff on court. **DONT** lose the head, scream, curse, throw racquets. Have you ever seen Roger Federer do that? Channel your energy (this is starting to sound like 'Desiderata'). **DONT** lose patience with people whose balls keep rolling onto your court, they're not doing it on purpose. **DONT** hit the ball wildly at the nets after you miss that shot - someone will get hurt eventually.

And **DO** be patient, considerate, pick stuff up on court and put it in the bin, and if someone is misbehaving, tell them courteously what they are doing wrong. Thanks in advance!

## Into the final set...

All the odds and ends that come to mind - The **practice wall** is still in our thoughts and we're working our way through the last bits of red tape. With any luck we'll start clearing the site in the next month or so. If you have not as yet paid your **subscription** it's still welcome, so please get that in to us and we will get your access fob working again asap. If you change your **e-mail** or contact details please let us know also - we are increasingly using the technology to keep members informed. We do apologise again for having to defer the **exhibition match** last Friday at the last minute due to the floods - the courts would have been too dangerous to play on. But we hope to reschedule in the next few weeks and we'll tell you as soon as we have a new date. And that -as they say - is that. Lets get out and keep playing....