

We Love this Game!

Celebrating
75 Years of
Platform Tennis



PLATFORM TENNIS

Seldom seen on TV or in the pages of glossy magazines, unknown or misunderstood by even the most serious tennis players, platform tennis is alive and well at age 75—and the party is just starting.

Often billed as “the best-kept secret in racquet sports,” players and pros who are passionate about platform tennis are ready to tell their story; to explain why it is they love this game.

With roots in the wealthiest pockets of the United States, the sport now has branched out across the country to athletic clubs and municipalities. Still enjoyed by preppies who love the outdoor winter experience, the sport is winning new fans—kids, seniors, and a growing number of tennis pros who find they can compete at a high level soon after they learn the basics.

Combining the best attributes of tennis, racquetball, and even chess, platform tennis is a sport worth noting, a story worth telling. We hope you agree.

*—Fritz Odenbach, Chairman
APTA Promotion Committee*

Web Sites of Interest

Platform Tennis Organizations and Businesses

www.platformtennis.org (APTA and link to PPTA)
www.paddlepro.com (frequently updated news and player info)
www.bwplatformtennis.com (BulletWorks Platform Tennis)
www.platformtennis.com (Reilly Green Mountain Platform Tennis Courts)
www.vikingathletics.com (Viking Athletics)
www.thepaddlecompany.com (racquet supplier for a variety of sports)

Regional Sites

www.lipta.com (Long Island PTA)
www.mapta.com (Philadelphia PTA)
www.cincypaddle.com (Cincinnati PTA)
www.wppta.org (Western Pennsylvania PTA)
www.cronmueller.tripod.com/springfieldplatformtennis.com (Springfield, IL PTA)
www.reveregroup.com/paddle (Chicago PTA)

Platform Tennis Camps and Clinics

www.platformtenniscamp.com (R.J. Reilly Platform Tennis Camp)
www.paddlecamp.com (Wilson's Performance Paddle Camp)
www.vikingacademy.com (Viking Academy)

This kit was edited and produced by Jacki Brown of BulletWorks Platform Tennis.

2/04



Platform tennis is an American racquet sport enjoyed by thousands of people of all ages. It is the only racquet sport that players can enjoy outdoors in cold weather. This unique appeal attracts people who desire fresh air, competition, and social engagement — all on a chilly winter's night.

The sport is played at private clubs, public facilities, and in backyards at both highly competitive and purely recreational levels. Because it is easy to learn, it is enjoyed by players as young as eight and as old as old bones allow.

The Court: The game is played on an elevated aluminum deck 1/4 the size of a regulation tennis court (a 60' x 30' deck with a 44' x 20' in-bounds area.) The court is surrounded by a 12' high superstructure with taut, 16-gauge "chicken wire" fencing which allows play off the walls, as in racquetball and squash.

The base of a platform tennis court is usually enclosed, allowing for a heating system beneath the deck (propane, natural gas or kerosene.) The heating system melts ice off the aggregate deck surface, allowing athletes to play outdoors in all weather conditions. Most courts have lighting systems for nighttime play. While the official platform tennis season runs from Fall through Winter, the game can be enjoyed year-round.

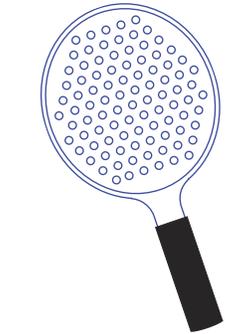
The Rules: Platform tennis is a doubles sport with two players on each side of a 34" high net. Rules of the game are identical to tennis with a few exceptions: only one serve, serves that touch the net are played, and what many consider the best thing about platform tennis — the ball can be played off the screened walls.

The Equipment: Platform tennis paddles are made of a composite material with aerodynamic holes drilled in the head. Paddles are approximately 18" long. The spongy, rubber ball measures 2.5" in diameter. A flocking material on its exterior keeps the ball from skidding.

The Strategy: According to Dick Squires, author of *How to Play Platform Tennis*, "Patience and ball placement are more effective assets than sheer power and speed."

The Name of the Game: Players often refer to platform tennis as "paddle," as in "Are you playing paddle tonight?" With the re-emergence of paddle tennis on the West Coast (basically, a down-sized game of tennis,) this has many people confused. To further the problem, there is paddleball (an urban sport played against a single wall) and padel (much like paddle tennis, invented in Mexico in 1968.)

The Commitment: The American Platform Tennis Association (APTA) and the Professional Platform Tennis Association (PPTA) provide leadership, organization, and support for the sport. Platform tennis clinics and camps advance the skill level on the court. The Platform Tennis Hall of Fame pays tribute to star athletes and innovators. Court and equipment manufacturers expand the sport's horizons. Platform Tennis Magazine and a handful of web sites focus attention on the sport. And a growing number of people are out there playing hard and having fun.





In 1928, two gentlemen from Scarsdale, New York brainstormed ideas for winter recreation close to home. As a result, James Cogswell and Fessenden Blanchard built a 48' x 20' wooden platform which would allow them to play deck tennis almost all of the time, along with badminton on calm days. This little construction project marked the birth of modern-day platform tennis.

In a search for appropriate equipment for the court, 1/4 the size of a tennis court, Cogswell discovered a boxed set of paddles and balls for sale at a sporting goods sport. The wooden paddles and spongy balls were sold to people who played paddle tennis — a sport invented in 1898, and perfected in 1921 by the Reverend Frank Beal as a recreational activity for underprivileged urban youth.

While the new equipment worked well, it wasn't long before the entrepreneurs grew tired of retrieving balls from snow banks; so they surrounded the deck with chicken wire fencing attached to a wooden frame. They began enjoying frequent games, adapting the rules of doubles tennis. Legend has it that during a particularly heated match, a hard-hit ball lodged in the wire mesh. Both an innovator and a natural competitor, Blanchard ran behind the fencing, smacked the ball as hard as he could and called the shot "good." After some discussion, the men agreed that the new off-the-wall rule was a good rule, adding dimension to the game and broadening the skill set necessary for the sport.

At the urging of some of its members, the Fox Meadow Tennis Club became the first club to install a platform tennis court in 1931. The core group successfully argued that, as a tennis facility, the club was shut down for half the year. By adding this new game, the facility was transformed into a year-round sports haven.

In 1934, the American Platform Tennis Association (APTA) was formed to standardize rules and promote the game. Charter members were Fox Meadow, the Field Club of Greenwich, and Manursing Island Club in Rye, New York. All three clubs still have thriving platform tennis programs.

During the 30s, the court was refined by enlarging the platform to 60' x 30', allowing space between deck planks for rain and ice to drain, mixing sand into the deck paint for added traction, and applying even tension to the wire screens. Its popularity grew, and by 1940, platform tennis was featured in Life magazine.

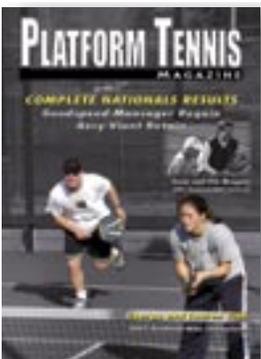
Growth of the sport was steady for the next few decades, with courts being erected at country clubs and in backyards throughout the northeast. Sanctioned tournaments and annual championships provided well-to-do male and female athletes the opportunity to socialize in campy warming huts instead of black-tie ballrooms. For a certain breed, the experience was unparalleled and a true love affair with the sport developed.

By 1970, the all-aluminum court was perfected, enabling a more consistent, high level of play. By 1978, there were an estimated 400,000 players. In 1979, Howard Cosell provided NBC's coverage of the National Championship in Forest Hills, NY. Platform tennis, like tennis and racquetball, saw a significant decline in the 80s, followed by a gradual resurgence in the 90s.

Today, there are an estimated 4,000 courts in the United States, with heavy concentrations in the northeast and midwest. There are over 8,000 APTA members, 17 regional leagues, dozens of certified pros, over 180 sanctioned tournaments, and 24 annual national championship events.

While traditionally a wealthy, suburban sport played at exclusive country clubs, platform tennis is spreading to municipalities, athletic clubs, resorts, and residential developments. Snowbirds are taking the sport south with them to warmer climates. People who play as guests at clubs are realizing that it provides good fun on a winter's night — especially if a court is accompanied by a warming hut for after-the-game social interaction. These people are introducing the sport to new audiences in their own communities.

Celebrity tennis players are turning up on platform tennis courts and shining new light on the sport. Competition within the industry is offering court and equipment buyers more options. A dedicated magazine and a number of web sites are keeping players connected. At courts across the country, there is definite excitement in the air.



"Fox Meadow" by Robert Sticker

APTA

The American Platform Tennis Association is a non-profit organization that governs the sport for its 8,000+ members, which includes individuals, municipalities, clubs and leagues. With an annual operating budget of \$200,000, the APTA sanctions more than 180 annual tournaments, including 24 National Championship events. The organization provides national rankings of its members; maintains the official rules and etiquette of the sport; administers the Platform Tennis Hall of Fame; regulates standards for balls, paddles and courts; manages its web site and pays for the production of Platform Tennis Magazine.

The organization has only one paid staff member, as well as a webmaster and a magazine publisher. All other work is done by board members and other volunteers. Founded in 1934, six years after the sport was invented, the APTA is headquartered in New Jersey.

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PPTA

The mission of the USA Professional Platform Tennis Association is to raise the standards of teaching Platform Tennis and to increase interest and awareness of the sport. By setting standards for the education and certification of platform tennis professionals, the PPTA strengthens and unites the voice and image of its members. The PPTA is an organizational member of the American Platform Tennis Association and is represented on the APTA Board of Directors. The number of PPTA certified pros nearly doubled in 2003, from 33 in January to over 70 at the year's end.

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Men's Doubles: David Ohlmuller/Chris Gambino

Chris Gambino, 34, is the winner of two Men's National Championships and one Mixed National Championship. David Ohlmuller, 34, has won three Men's Nationals, three Mixed Nationals, and one Husband/Wife National Championship. They will be hard to beat in 2004 with a successful season under way.

Gambino was an 18-and-Under USTA Top Ten player competing against Agassi, Sampras, Chang and the likes. Both men were #1 in college tennis—Ohlmuller at Loyola and Gambino at Arizona State. Ohlmuller beat the odds after a 1996 car accident which nearly cost him one leg. He continues to play platform tennis with a metal rod from his ankle to his knee. He is currently the national sales manager for Viking Athletics.



Women's Doubles: Susie Mascarin Keane/Mary Doten

The team of Doten and Keane was a last-minute entry into the 2003 Nationals. Going into the tournament unseeded, their win took many by surprise—the teammates themselves, most of all. Doten's partner of six years was unable to play due to a family illness; so the long-time platform tennis player asked Keane, a newcomer to the Chicago platform tennis league, to join her. While Keane discovered platform tennis just a few short years ago, she has an impressive history on the tennis court, ranking as high as #27 on the pro tour in 1986. She was the #1 junior tennis player in the world at age sixteen, ranked in the top 40 women on the pro tour from 1980—1988 and has wins over Billie Jean King and Zina Garrison. Both women are mothers of three children and absolutely love the game. They will partner again for the 2004 Nationals.



Mixed: Bobo Delaney/John Milbank

Bobo Delaney and John Milbank won the Mixed National Championship in 2002 and 2003. They were runners-up for the three years prior. The team is once again preparing to take on the competition in this season's final tournament.

Delaney, who has been playing the sport for more than 30 years, won one Women's Championship in 1989 with partner Sarah Krieger, is a current Nationals 40s Champion with Patty Hogan, and is a two-time Junior champion. Milbank has an impressive history in a variety of sports, including four wins in the New Jersey State Tennis Doubles Championship. Both players are racquets professionals in New Jersey.



Men's 70s: Bob Brown/Dave Childs

Bob Brown and Dave Childs teamed together for the first time in 2003, mainly because Dave reached age 70 and brother Bill Childs hasn't yet. Bob and Dave won two events in March, 2003, the Senior Men's 70+ and Senior Men's 145+ National Championships. Brown has also won an additional 14 Senior Men's Nationals and Childs has won an additional 13 Senior Men's and Senior Mixed Nationals.

Brown and Childs have been long-time, active supporters of platform tennis, both having served on the APTA Board for many years and having chaired many national championship events. Brown also served as APTA President in 1973-75 and is currently Chairman of the Platform Tennis Hall of Fame. Dave Childs is currently a director of the Platform Tennis Museum and Hall of Fame Foundation.



BULLEWORKS
PLATFORM TENNIS

BulletWorks Platform Tennis

Established in 1998 by Charles (Bullet) Brown, BulletWorks manufactures, installs and services platform tennis courts throughout the United States. The company, originally run from the owner's barn, has grown into its current location in a 5,000 square foot factory in Rutland, Vermont. Gross sales have nearly doubled each year since its inception. Bullet's wife Jacki still runs the office out of the barn and attributes the business's success to the quality, service and value her husband and his crew consistently deliver. **Contact:** Jacki Brown, Business Manager. 888-799-5048. jacki@bwplatformtennis.com. www.bwplatformtennis.com

paddlepro.com



Paddlepro.com is the premier website for the sport of platform tennis. With over 15 million hits from one million visitors per season, it is the most visited website in the sport. Paddlepro.com serves daily news, leagues from around the country, tournament hosting, pro shop, message boards, instruction, a court database and much more. Paddlepro.com works with people from around the world to help develop content to increase the popularity of platform tennis. **Contact:** Bob Considine. 914-837-4000. bob@c3it.com. www.paddlepro.com

Platform Tennis Magazine



Platform Tennis Magazine is the communication periodical of the American Platform Tennis Association. Each issue includes 32-40 pages of instructional articles, player profiles, current events, tournament results and league news. It is mailed to all APTA members as a value-added benefit to joining the association. The glossy, color publication is produced five times a year, from September through April, by Dollard Publishing. The magazine has contributed to an 84% increase in the Association's membership over the past four years (4,500 to 8,300 members.) The magazine was created in 1999 by Wayne Dollard, who continues to serve as editor and publisher. **Contact:** Wayne Dollard, Editor. 412-833-8805. wayne@dollardpublishing.com

Premier Platform Tennis



David Dodge brought his years of platform tennis construction and maintenance experience to establish Premier Platform Tennis in 1998. The company operates from offices in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania and is known for providing creative and efficient solutions for customers. The company's unique vision and expertise to meet overall platform tennis needs extends to building/remodeling decks and warming huts. **Contact:** David Dodge, Owner. 888-303-1822. premierpaddle@aol.com

Reilly Green Mountain Platform Tennis Courts



Reilly Green Mountain Platform Tennis Courts manufactures, installs and maintains platform tennis courts. It is the largest company in the industry, and taps more than 40 years of experience building and maintaining platform tennis courts throughout the country and in fifteen foreign nations. Reilly developed the aluminum court more than twenty years ago and has since built several thousand courts. The patented Reilly All-Aluminum Court is its primary product. **Contact:** Paula Gifford, Director of Marketing. 800-950-5049. platformtennis@earthlink.net www.platformtennis.com

Viking Athletics



Viking Athletics is the leading manufacturer and supplier of platform tennis equipment in the world. Their paddles and balls are used by more players than all other manufacturers combined. Viking takes pride in the fact that they are a major sponsor of the following events and groups that promote growing the sport: The Viking Cup, The Viking Junior Tour, The APTA Junior Nationals, The Professional Platform Tennis Association, and The Viking Academy. **Contact:** David Ohlmuller, Sales Manager. 800-280-1311. daveo@vikingathletics.com. www.vikingathletics.com

Wilson Racquet Sports



A world leader in tennis equipment, Wilson Racquet Sports is also a leading supplier of platform tennis paddles and accessories. The company provides professional caliber products which suit all styles of play and performance. With a staff of over 50 top platform tennis professionals, Wilson is very visible in the sport both on and off the court. **Contact:** Brian Dillman, VP Global Marketing. 773-714-6767. bdillman@wilsonsports.com. www.wilson.com



Boulder Exhibition



Junior Viking



old mixed doubles



tourney 1



tourney 2



Oldtimers



Kids Handshake



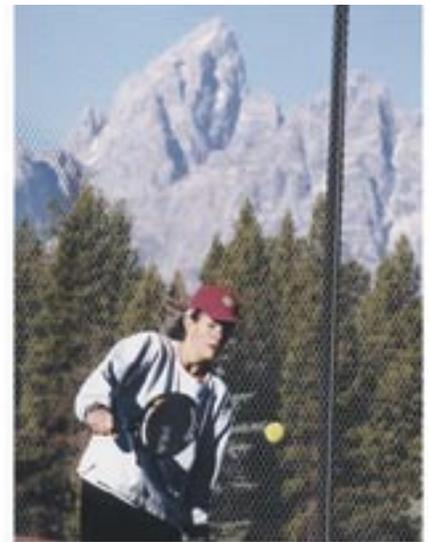
Snowing



Sunset Ladies



Hough and Uihlein



Wild West



Womens Finals



Viant and Aery



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