

Search the newspaper's print archives from 1/1/1987 to the present.

Ads by Google

[Tennis Forehand](#)

Discover the "3 Magic Moves" of the forehand drive with classic topspin
www.webTennis.net/Forehand.htm

[New Tennis Training Aid](#)

By blocking incorrect wrist movements the correct swing emerges
www.TheRacketBracket.com

[Play Amazing Tennis](#)

Improve mental toughness & start playing amazing tennis.
mybesttennis.com/

[Online Tennis Lessons](#)

Online Streaming Video Instruction Directly from the Pro Tour
www.virtualtennisacademy.com

Archives

- [Search](#)
- [Advanced Search](#)
- [Browse](#)
- [About the Archive](#)
- [Search Tips](#)
- [FAQ](#)
- [Help](#)
- [Terms Of Service](#)
- [Home](#)
- [Linking & Online Usage](#)

Document

- Basic
- Advanced
- Saved
- Page Prints
- Help

[Start a New Search](#)

Other Formats: [Page Print](#) [Printer Friendly](#)

Where youth is served Series: SUNDAY EXTRA

[SOUTH PINELLAS Edition]

St. Petersburg Times - St. Petersburg, Fla.

Author: DAVE SCHEIBER

Date: May 16, 2004

Start Page: 14.C

Section: SPORTS

Text Word Count: 543

Document Text

As usual, Jim Courier Court was packed with little kids and teens, all honing their serves and volleys on a recent afternoon at the St. Petersburg Tennis Center.

But there was a bit more excitement this day. The youngsters were busy hitting with the man whose name graces the big sign above, Courier himself.

The former No. 1 men's tennis player in the world and four-time Grand Slam winner had stopped in to offer tips and encouragement at a program that is close to his heart, First Serve - a.k.a. the SPTC Courier's Kids Program.

The First Serve site is one of a dozen in Florida, dedicated to helping underprivileged youth through a mix of education and tennis. The concept is an extension of a program initiated by Arthur Ashe and Butch Buchholz in the 1970s. The United States Tennis Association oversaw it for several years, but now it is privately operated as First Serve Inc., run by Buchholz's son, Trey Buchholz, with plans to go national.

"The main purpose is to make sure these kids get some life skills, that they get a really good sense of self-worth, and an idea of the discipline and goal-setting that it takes to succeed in life," says Courier, whose parents reside in the Tampa Bay area. "If we happen to get some successful tennis players out of the program, that would be a bonus.

"That's not my goal. But having said that, if you've seen the program, it's inevitable that we're going to get some collegiate players out of it and probably a couple of professionals because we're getting to kids at such an early age, and there clearly are some talented athletes here."

Courier heard of the program through his friend Rick Crockett, a former instructor at Harry Hopman's Tennis Academy at Saddlebrook. When Crockett was hired to run the children's program at First Serve 2 1/2 years ago, there were six kids. Today, Crockett and general manager Jackie Keller oversee some 250 kids, playing at all levels, including an elite group that travels to tournaments around the state.

It takes money to offset the travel and competition expenses, not to mention the computers and tutoring offered to the kids, who can do their homework at the center and are expected to keep their grades up.

That's one big way Courier has helped, organizing the Mercedes-Benz Classic at the St. Pete Times Forum in March, featuring such stars as Jennifer Capriati, James Blake and Monica Seles, with proceeds benefiting First Serve.

A partnership also has been formed with the St. Petersburg-based Women's Tennis Association, which sends staff to volunteer as tennis instructors.

"Venus and Serena Williams have had an amazing impact on the sport," says Crockett. "They came through an inner-city program like this, but probably not on as nice courts as these are. I asked some of them recently who their favorite players are, and it was Venus, Serena - and Jim Courier."

For more information, call the St. Petersburg Tennis Center, 650 18th Ave. S, at (727) 823-2225.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction or distribution is prohibited without permission.

Abstract (Document Summary)

Courier heard of the program through his friend Rick Crockett, a former instructor at Harry Hopman's Tennis Academy at Saddlebrook. When Crockett was hired to run the children's program at First Serve 2 1/2 years ago, there were six kids. Today, Crockett and general manager Jackie Keller oversee some 250 kids, playing at all levels, including an elite group that travels to tournaments around the state.

That's one big way Courier has helped, organizing the Mercedes-Benz Classic at the St. Pete Times Forum in March, featuring such stars as Jennifer Capriati, James Blake and Monica Seles, with proceeds benefiting First Serve.

"Venus and Serena Williams have had an amazing impact on the sport," says Crockett. "They came through an inner-city program like this, but probably not on as nice courts as these are. I asked some of them recently who their favorite players are, and it was Venus, Serena - and Jim Courier."

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction or distribution is prohibited without permission.

Other Formats:  [Page Print](#)  [Printer Friendly](#)

Ads by Google

[Dominate the Tennis Court](#)

I used to be slow on the court and swing, until I found this technique
www.TennisStomper.com

[Tennis](#)

Tenis de todas las marcas!
BuscaPé el sitio del consumidor
www.BuscaPe.com.ar/Tenis

[Female Athletes Gallery](#)

Ana ivanovic tennis poster
100% free content & no popups!
www.youngteenidols.com



© 2007 · All Rights Reserved · St. Petersburg Times
490 First Avenue South · St. Petersburg, FL 33701 · 727-893-8111
[Contact Us](#) | [Join Us](#) | [Advertise with Us](#) | [Subscribe to the Times](#)
[Privacy Policy](#) | [Standard of Accuracy](#) | [Terms, Conditions & Copyright](#)