

## **Minnetonka Tennis Club**

### **New/Returning Student Evaluation Process**

For the past 5-6 years, the tennis professional staff at MTC has been personally evaluating every new or “returning” student that is interested in our junior program. This has been one of the more positive aspects of our program- students are placed in the correct level right from the beginning which has eliminated 95% of any placement issues.

There are three evaluation methods we use:

**Option #1: The 15 Minute Evaluation:** We use this method when there are a number of juniors interested in our program and we need to evaluate a variety of levels of students. We often conduct these 15 minute evaluations when there are no junior lessons going on (late summer/early spring) or there is full attendance in the classes. The process includes a brief “interview” with the junior where we ask a series of questions-“What grade are you in? Have you taken tennis lessons before? What other sports do you play? Why do you play tennis?” These questions are all directed toward the student, no matter what the age-we need to engage the student in the discussion. Following the interview we will proceed to the court where we will hit ground strokes, volleys, overheads, serves and service returns for 7-8 minutes. During this time we may rally and/or play points out against the student just to see at what level (s)he competes. If the player is advanced or between levels, we may “push” him/her during the evaluation; it’s more important to see what (s)he cannot do than what they can. Sometimes we may invite a sibling to help pick up balls on the court however we do not allow parents on the court at this time. Following the hitting session we will sit down with the family and discuss our observations and make recommendations for enrollment. At this time you can really see our philosophy regarding junior tennis instruction, tennis exploration and tennis development. Often evaluations are done back-to-back for 1-2 hours so time with each family is limited to 15 minutes.

**Option #2: Private Lesson:** Often times a student may opt to try an hour-long private lesson (or at times a series of them) to get to know our staff. We can see his/her athletic skills, work ethic, and progress over time. These can be very challenging to arrange in the “peak” indoor months. During these lessons we can give a first-hand account of the student’s progress and effort level.

**Option #3: Attend one of the classes of “approximate level”:** If possible, this is often the best way to evaluate and see how the junior plays against his/her peers. In most cases, the player is more relaxed and will play his/her “best” during the 1-1.5 hour class. Meeting our teaching staff and other kids in the class is another strong attribute of Option 3. Frequently a parent will compare his/her child to the “worst” child in the class not the “best” one. Many parents want their child “pushed” by playing “up” in a class a level above. For several reasons, we do not allow this at our club; we place players at the level that (s)he is at that moment.