

*November 2021*



# ***Topspin News***

***The official Newsletter of the Santa Fe Tennis and Swim Club***

## **OUR TREASURE**

**If you see the man pictured here at Santa Fe Tennis & Swim Club, please know that he is a very special man that we are fortunate enough to consider our treasure!**

**Jim Parker has won 150 USTA National Championships and has consistently been ranked # 1 in the world in his age group throughout his career.**

**Members of SFT&SC get the pleasure of watching him working on his serve, hitting against the ball machine, and playing or teaching tennis, on an almost daily-basis.**

**If you spend any time interacting with him, you will soon come to understand how much he still loves the game. As good a tennis player as Jim is, he is even a better person. We are so lucky to have him and his beautiful wife, Ellen, here at the club.**



**Please enjoy the following article featuring Jim that was written by Walter Villa and recently run in USTA Tennis Championships Magazine:**



# PASSION PLAY

Jimmy Parker is the most prolific men's champion in USTA senior tennis history. He looks forward to the day when he's not.

by WALTER VILLA

Jody Rush took the first set in his quarterfinal match against Jimmy Parker in the 2019 USTA National Men's 75 Grass Court Championships.

Uh-oh.

"I was thinking, 'What's he going to do now?'" says Rush, who had won the Men's 70 Clay Courts just a few years prior, in 2015. "Jimmy has so many ways to beat you. I wasn't sure what adjustments he would make. But let's just say it didn't turn out well for me."

Rush won just one more game the rest of the match, falling 2-6, 6-0, 6-1 as Parker went on to claim another Gold Slam, grabbing all four USTA national championships in his age group.

Parker, 78, might well be the Roger Federer or Rafael Nadal of USTA adult tennis. When USTA adult national championship play resumed in April from





With Jimmy Parker as captain, (l to r) David Dollins, Donald Long, Parker and Dean Corley won the Bitsy Grant Cup for the United States in 2019, giving Team USA 15 championships in the 26-year history of the men's 75-and-older team event. The following week in the ITF Super Seniors World Individual Championships, Parker reached the singles semifinals and, with Long, the doubles final.

last year's pandemic-forced break, Parker had reached the milestone of 150 USTA national titles, a record by a wide margin in the men's game. He broke the mark back in 2016, with title No. 126. He ended 2019, the last full season of tournament play, as the nation's top-ranked singles and doubles player in the men's 75 age category. He was No. 3 in the world.

Parker captured a national mixed doubles title in January 2020—just before the pandemic hit—allowing him to keep alive his streak of playing in at least one USTA national championship event every year since 1952.

Off the court, Parker has been a leader, too. On Jan. 1, 2018, he became the first president of the National Senior Men's Tennis Association, a group that now has more than 875 members.

The women have had their own organization for more than 40 years, and they, um, urged the men to do the same.

"They told us to get off our butts," Parker says with a laugh.

Kathy Langer, a past president of the National Women's Tennis Organization (formerly the National Senior Women's Tennis Association) was one of those women, and she knew Parker would be the perfect guy to lead the men.

"The guys respect him," Langer says. "He's the No. 1 player, but they don't hate him. They love him, and that's because he's respectful of everyone."

Parker came of age in 1950s St. Louis, a Golden Era of tennis in the River City. During those days, there were numerous star players competing out of St. Louis, including Chuck McKinley, who would go on to win Wimbledon in 1963; Butch Buchholz, who swept the junior Grand Slam events, 1958-59; and Arthur Ashe, a Virginia native who moved to St. Louis because he wasn't allowed to compete against white players in segregated Richmond. All three are enshrined in the International Tennis Hall of Fame.

The women's game in St. Louis was also vibrant, with players

such as Justina Bricka, Mary Ann Eisel and Carol Hanks. All three were ranked in the Top 10 nationally in 1964. Bricka, in partnership with Margaret Smith Court, was a women's doubles runner-up at Roland Garros in 1962. Eisel won the U.S. Nationals mixed doubles title in 1968. Hanks was a singles semifinalist in the 1964 U.S. Nationals.

In 1961, St. Louis also boasted three of the top seven junior boys in the nation: Cliff Buchholz (Butch's younger brother), Ashe and Parker.

Parker says the "secret sauce" for St. Louis tennis in those days was playing on the indoor courts at the National Guard Armory.

"Those were the fastest courts I've ever played on," he says. "These were five wooden courts that were so lightning quick you had to develop a fast game. You had to shorten your motion, attack and go to the net."

"Arthur (Ashe) said he would've never won Wimbledon if not for those Armory courts."

Further aiding Parker was he came from a tennis family. His father, Ward, and mother, Merceina, were accomplished players, and so was Jimmy's younger brother, Larry. The family's love for tennis was so great that they built a clay court in their backyard, making Parker's lifetime in tennis all but inevitable.

In fact, tennis in the Parker family stretches as far back as his grandparents and as far forward as his grandson, Heys, now a budding talent in Atlanta.

Fittingly, 23 of Parker's USTA national titles are in the Father-Son division, either with his father or with his son, Chris.

Parker even married into tennis. His wife of almost 40 years, Ellen, is the daughter of former USTA Texas president Jim Hight.

Tennis was Parker's destiny.

"Jimmy was just a bit short of being U.S. Davis Cup material, which was the top level in the 1950s and '60s," says Rich Klein, a retired lawyer and one of Parker's tennis-playing friends.

Parker, who claimed his first USTA national title at age



15, was an All-American tennis player at Rice University, winning Southwest Conference singles and doubles titles. In 1968, right after earning a Master's degree from the University of Texas, Parker played in the inaugural US Open, taking on No. 3 seed Ken Rosewall in the opening match on Center Court at Forest Hills.

"I was the first loser of the Open Era," boasts Parker, his self-deprecating sense of humor on display.

One month after that, with the Vietnam War raging, Parker was drafted. A beginner pilot at the time, he went into the Air Force, where he spent five prime years. He would go months without even touching a tennis racquet.

"I was against the war," Parker says. "I flew worldwide, but managed to stay out of Vietnam."

Parker returned to civilian life in 1973. He played a couple of tour-level pro tournaments, facing his former juniors partner, Ashe, in doubles at one and Rosewall in doubles at the other. But Parker recognized his game wasn't at that level.

He coached the men's tennis team at his alma mater, Rice, for three years and then became the teaching pro at the Houston Racquet Club, a position he held for more than 30 years.

It was during that time Parker started playing senior tennis, at the ripe old age of 35.

"It was better than sitting behind a desk in an office," Parker says, explaining that he used coaching to help his own game. "I had a preference for hitting live balls rather than just feeding them, and that gave me practice.

"As a coach, I also got to see what worked and what didn't, making me a more flexible thinker. And as a senior player, I never had a 'big name' that I thought I had to protect."

Parker won 97 of his 150 USTA national titles—or gold balls—in doubles. His most successful partnership continues on with Ken Robinson of San Carlos, California. They began 2021 with 39 titles together, second-most in USTA adult tennis history, behind Bob Duesler and Jim Nelson's 59.

How Parker and Robinson met is a story of happenstance. Both their partners had gotten injured, and a helpful tournament director suggested to Robinson, a former standout at the University of Nevada, that he call Parker.

Robinson did just that. But before he could get to the magic question, Parker seemed to read his mind: "Do you want to play?" Naturally, Robinson said yes.

More than 30 years later, the partnership is still going strong.

"With Jim and me, we understand how to play high-percentage tennis," says Robinson, a former airline pilot and the quieter half of the duo. "We don't talk a lot on the court, but we instinctually know what each other is thinking. It just flows for us."

Parker, who now lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico, plays the

ad court, acting as the "hammer" to nail games shut.

Ego—on either side—has never been a problem, and Robinson appreciates how much Parker has valued the relationship.

"One time, we were playing in Seattle, and Jim had gotten to the singles final when he tweaked his back," Robinson recalls. "Jim defaulted from the singles, and we won the doubles. He said, 'We're here to win the doubles.'"

Their triumph in the USTA National Men's 70 Clay Courts in October 2016 is when Parker broke Bob Sherman's record of 125 USTA men's national titles.

Parker has achieved the No. 1 national singles ranking in every age group from 35 to 75. He also has been inducted into four Halls of Fame, including Rice University and St. Louis Tennis.

Part of what has allowed Parker to excel for so long is that he has remained fairly healthy, with the exception of surgery on his serving (right) shoulder in 2002 and a partial replacement of his right knee in 2015.

Besides good genetics and even better fortune, Parker has mastered an all-court game. He has won a higher percentage of his titles on grass than on any other surface—and that goes back to his days at the Armory and his ability to navigate a fast court.

But remember, he also grew up with

a clay court in his backyard.

"One of Jimmy's specialties is his drop shot," Klein says. "You really have to work to beat Jimmy on clay.

"Jimmy doesn't overpower anybody (at 5-foot-7, 160 lbs). But he has a complete arsenal, and he's so mentally tough. If you have a weakness, he will exploit it, and he loves the battle."

Parker also can be a bit devilish on the court.

"Jimmy has an underhand serve he might use once or twice a match, and it's pretty nasty," Robinson says. "One time, I was playing singles against Jimmy, and he uses it for an ace. He hits it short, and it kicks (laterally). I called it out (playfully), and I just walked away.

"You don't do that to your doubles partner!"

They are still best of friends, of course, and Parker plans to keep on adding national titles to his collection.

"When I think back at what I've accomplished, I can hardly believe it myself," Parker says. "I feel proud of the record because it means I've played for a long time, and I've never gotten burned out. The record reflects a certain enthusiasm for playing, and that's what I'm proudest of—that life-long love of tennis.

"But I hope somebody breaks my record someday because that means that guy will have gotten to experience all the fun and satisfaction that I have." ●

Miami-based writer **Walter Villa** has covered Davis Cup ties in North and South America, and is a frequent contributor to ESPN.com, The New York Times, The Miami Herald and Baseball America, among others.

*"I feel proud of the record because it means I've played for a long time, and I've never gotten burned out."*

— Jimmy Parker

# LET CHEF LEONARD TAKE CARE OF THE COOKING GET YOUR COMPLETE THANKSGIVING DINNER TO-GO!

**\*\*Orders must be placed by 11/17\*\***

## Thanksgiving Menu Santa Fe Tennis & Swim Club

### Complete Dinner To-Go

Please Order No-Later Than 11/17/21

Pickup 11/24 from Noon Until 4pm

Roasted Turkey  
w/ Giblet Gravy

Mashed Potatoes

Green Bean Casserole

Homemade Stuffing

Candied Yams

Dinner Rolls

Fresh Made Pumpkin Pie,  
w/ Whipped Cream

\$45 per person



1755 Camino Corrales, SF, NM 87507  
Email: [club@santafetennis.net](mailto:club@santafetennis.net)  
Ph: 505-988-4100





Santa Fe Tennis and Swim Club is seeking a part-time receptionist. The ideal candidate is friendly, compassionate, dependable, honest, self-motivated, technologically literate, has some experience in customer service or reception, and can work independently.

Receptionists are responsible for answering phones, running food orders as needed, taking food orders over the phone, making court reservations, cleaning the lobby, locker rooms, and bathrooms, and assisting members and visitors with questions as needed.

We need to fill Saturday & Sunday shifts, so weekend availability is a MUST; with the possibility of another weekday shift if desired.

For more information and full job description please email:  
[club@santafetennis.net](mailto:club@santafetennis.net)

**Pickleball players this section is just for you! Please send any pickleball info you would like to see in our newsletter to: [club@santafetennis.net](mailto:club@santafetennis.net)**

## **10 Must Know Pickleball Rules:**

1. Pickleball uses an underhand serve.
2. Both the serve and the return of serve must bounce.
3. The first side to serve in doubles pickleball only has one service turn (i.e. serve until the serving team loses a rally); then, each side has two service turns (i.e. each player serves until the serving team loses a rally).
4. Generally, only the serving team can score points, and the serving team switches sides of the court after each point won.
5. The server should call the score loudly before each serve.
6. No volleys are allowed while making contact with the Non-Volley Zone (also known as the Kitchen).
7. Shots after the pickleball bounces are allowed in the Non-Volley Zone.
8. Shots on the lines of the pickleball court are "in," with one exception - the Non-Volley Zone line on the serve is "out."
9. "Out" calls are made by the pickleball players on the side of the pickleball court where the pickleball bounces.
10. If the pickleball hits you (other than below your wrist, such as a finger), then you lose the rally.

# PICKLEBALL PRO TIP OF THE MONTH



By: Christine Wantuck



## Benefits of Pre-Match Warm Up and Post-Match Cool Down

Often, we jump out on the courts and start warming up our strokes ignoring the vital needs of the body. It is imperative to prepare the body for the physical demands of pickleball by doing a dynamic warm-up, which is a series of sport specific movements designed to prepare joints and muscles for athletic performance. A ten-minute routine can improve flexibility and performance while also preventing common injuries. A dynamic warm-up should increase the heart rate, body temperature, and activate the muscles to work more efficiently by moving them through a functional range of motion used in pickleball. There are many exercises to choose from, but you should consult with your doctor or athletic trainer on what warm-ups are best for your fitness level. Here are a few of my favorites:

**Light jog or skipping** once or twice around the court.

**Side shuffles** move laterally on the baseline. Do several times in each direction.

**Karaoke/Grapevine.** Take a side step, alternating crossing one foot in front, then behind the other foot as you side shuffle across the width of the court, twice.

**High knees** raise one knee then the other as high and fast as you can, 10 times per knee.

**Lunges** move across the court adding trunk rotations in between steps if you are able. 5 times per leg.

**Butt kicks.** Bending at the knee, kick one foot back then the other as far and fast as you can. 10 times.

**Jumping jacks.** Jump to a position with the legs spread wide and the hands touching overhead. 8 times

**Hip circles.** Think open and close the door. Stand on one leg, using the net for support if needed, and gently swing the opposite leg in circles out to the side. The leg can be swung out or in; 10 circles in each direction then switch legs and repeat.

**Arm windmills.** Arms to your side and palms down, make small circles forward and increase to larger circles – both forward and backwards – 20 seconds each way.

**Arm swings.** Swing your arms in unison across your body in both directions, 5 times.

Finally, do not overlook the therapeutic benefits of a post-match cool down with static stretches (stretch and hold) while your muscles are warm. What stops many people from properly stretching after playing is the belief they don't have enough time. Realistically a proper cool-down requires only 10 minutes, to help your muscles recover resulting in less overall stiffness and pain. Static stretches should never be painful. Stretch only to the point where you are comfortable, holding that position for a minimum of 15 to 20 seconds. Be sure when you target those muscle groups, used in pickleball, that you stretch equally on each side. Incorporating the pre- and post-workouts as part of your routine, will enhance your overall well-being and help keep you limber, flexible and injury free.



**Christine Wantuck serves as the Pickleball Pro at SFTSC and recently was appointed District Ambassador for USA Pickleball for all of Northern New Mexico. You can schedule a private lesson directly with Christine by calling her at (505) 670-8188.**



---

# ***November Tennis***

---

## **Block Time**

**Anyone who is still interested in purchasing block-time, (a savings of over 15%) please check with the front desk for what is available. There is still plenty of time open to book a court in the bubble on a cold or wet day.**

**Block Time is a 6-week commitment for a regular day and time on the indoor court as well as a commitment to your fellow players who have booked this time. Players must notify their teammates of any changes, withdrawals, or cancellations.**

**Due to COVID-19, a waiver *MUST* be signed by all players wishing to use the bubble/indoor court.**

**Need additional players? Contact the club at 505-988-4100 so that we can assist.**

## **PRO TIP OF THE MONTH**

**By: Ralph Bolton**

**Two quick easy tips to help your tennis! (Although in reality, nothing about tennis is easy.)**

### **Early racquet preparation:**

**First, as your opponent's ball clears the net, turn your torso so that you are looking at the ball from over your shoulder. When his or her ball bounces you should only have to move your racquet forward.**

### **Loose grip:**

**Second, a loose grip will help your racquet accelerate through the ball. No more death grips! When there is an important point try just using your thumb, middle, and ring finger to hold your racquet.**

*SFT&SC Director of Tennis Ralph Bolton has been certified by the United States Professional Tennis Association (USPTA) at the Elite level for 27 years.*

# ***November Tennis***

## **ADULT CLINICS**

***Starting Nov. 15th***

### **Monday Evening Women's Clinic**

**MONDAYS / 5:30pm—7:00pm**

Teaches technique and strategy for players with drills and interactive playing.

*\*\$35 per member/ non-members add \$20 guest fee*

### **Tuesday Evening Men's Clinic**

**TUESDAYS / 7:00pm—8:30pm**

Teaches technique and strategy for players with drills and interactive playing.

*\*\$35 per member/ non-members add \$20 guest fee*

### **Wednesday A.M. Women's Clinic**

**TUESDAY MORNING / 7:00am—8:30am**

Teaches technique and strategy for players with drills and interactive playing.

*\*\$35 per member/ non-members add \$20 guest fee*

### **Wednesday Mixed 4.0 Clinic**

**WEDNESDAYS / 7:00pm—8:30pm**

Teaches technique and strategy for 4.0 players with drills and interactive playing.

*\*\$35 per member/ non-members add \$20 guest fee*

### **Sunday Beginner's Clinic**

**SUNDAYS / 11:00am—12:30pm**

Whether you're a beginner or a rusty player, this clinic teaches the basics of tennis through instruction and drill practice.

*\*\$35 per member/ non-members add \$20 guest fee*



## **Staff/Coaches**

**David Garcia**

General Manager

**Kenneth Beal**

Asst. General Manager

**Ralph Bolton**

Director of Tennis

USTA Elite Pro

(505) 501-0558

**Jim Parker**

Pro Emeritus

USTA Master Pro

(832) 492-4615

**Joe Dorn**

Tennis Instructor

(202) 215-3204

**Christine Wantuck**

Pickleball Instructor

(505) 670-8188