



Tennis Nova Scotia welcomes everyone to tennis

WHEN YOU HEAD OUT ONTO THE court at Sobey's Atlantic Tennis Centre, you will always feel welcomed – thanks to Tennis Nova Scotia's Tennis Everyone program, which was created in 2022 to welcome all people to tennis and break down barriers they face when accessing the sport.

Whether you're someone who uses a wheelchair, or a newcomer, a senior citizen or a Black Nova Scotian, you will find athletes of all ages, abilities and backgrounds are represented on the court.



SOBEYS ATLANTIC TENNIS CENTRE,
NOVA SCOTIA

Canada

This project is funded by
the Government of Canada



This is our wheelchair problem in motion. Our staff working with new wheelchair tennis athlete at our outdoor court.



This was red and orange ball girls tennis program by Girls Leading Girls Tennis at Sobey's Atlantic Tennis Centre. Many new girls and newcomers introduced to Girls Tennis.

“The thought process behind Tennis Everyone was that tennis is often seen as a high-class sport that is suited to the affluent – particularly white males,” says Brad Lawlor, Chief Executive Officer of Tennis Nova Scotia. “We needed to show that tennis was for everyone.”

In 2023, this incredible program was able to flourish thanks to funding from the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association’s Reaching Each and Every One: A Community Sport Intervention program. This program, which was funded by Sport Canada’s Community Sport for All Initiative, seeks to remove barriers and increase sport participation rates for equity deserving groups across Canada.

Tennis Everyone serves participants in the Muslim and Black communities, newcomers, girls, and those who play wheelchair tennis. Lawlor says the funding has helped support Tennis Everyone in many areas – including the cost of equipment, and renting indoor and outdoor facilities.

But he says the funding also supported an overlooked, but significant, aspect of tennis: the hiring and training of coaches who are, themselves, members of these equity deserving communities.

“We’ve been trying to bring in trained instructors that may not look like your typical white male tennis instructor,” Lawlor says. “When you put a female instructor in place, more girls will feel welcome to participate – and that’s exactly the same with different ethnicities. If we have a Black

Nova Scotian instructor, we will have more Black Nova Scotian athletes involved.”

However, Lawlor says many of these potential instructors face financial barriers to accessing leadership and coach training. The funding, Lawlor says, covered this significant cost, and allowed the program to hire coaches from within these communities – which was key to welcoming athletes of various backgrounds, ages, and abilities.

“The reality is when we reach out to a person who comes from an underrepresented community, the first thing they say is ‘I don’t have the money to do the training,’” Lawlor says. “This funding has allowed them to get the training, which allows us to populate the programs. It was the final piece of the puzzle for us to actually make a meaningful impact on our programs.”

He adds that the program has made significant impacts on its young participants and new coaches – helping build friendships, and fostering teamwork, resiliency, self-discipline, and self-esteem.

“This funding has really and truly done a lot for us. It’s allowed us to pivot very quickly, and be able to help people in programming that we couldn’t have helped in the past,” Lawlor says. “We just didn’t have the funds to be able to assist them with programming, instructor time, facilities, tennis rackets, and equipment and balls. But now, we can. This funding has been a huge help to our organization and the sport in Nova Scotia.” 🍁