

Passion for tennis – Passion is what drives each tennis coach in Arlington ISD and passion is what every Arlington ISD tennis coach wants to instill in every tennis player on his team. Arlington has approximately 500 students in the various tennis programs across the district to which we have the privilege to instill our passion of tennis. With these incredible numbers and with the drive of the students and coaches combined Arlington should be one of the premier tennis districts in the Region and State; however, this is not the case. The reason for the absence of success in Arlington is not due to the desire of the coaches or students, but an absence of a Jr. High School Tennis program.

Tennis is a sport that requires a student to begin as early as possible in order to achieve a high level of play. Muscle memory, more so than athleticism, is the key to being a great tennis player. This can only be achieved by students beginning playing tennis at an earlier age. The earlier a student begins playing tennis the more muscle memory that student will develop. Most Arlington students begin playing tennis and learning correct muscle memory at the age of 14, which is considered old for a tennis player. Many of the current professional players began playing on the ATP/WTA Tour at that age.

Not having a Jr. High Tennis Program has handicapped our success in the past and will continue to handicap Arlington ISD in the future. Here is a list of just some of the 4A and 5A school districts in the North Texas Area that currently have a Jr. High Program:

5A

Allen, Birdville, Carrol, Cedar Hill, Coppell, Crowley, Denton , Desoto, Duncanville, Eagle Mountain-Saginaw, Grapevine-Colleyville, Keller, Mansfield, McKinney, Mesquite, Midlothian, Northwest, Plano, Red Oak and Richardson

4A

Aledo, Burleson, Cleburne, Corsicana, Ennis, Forney, Highland Park, Kaufman and Rockwall

Arlington Schools currently have a hard time competing against these districts, but it becomes much worse when our Arlington Schools travel to the Regional Tournament. Arlington ISD is usually the only district to compete in the Tournament without a Jr. High program. The consequence of not having a program is that Arlington ISD has made it past the 1st round of the tournament a handful of times and has never made it past the 2nd round.

Arlington Tennis Coaches would like Arlington ISD to develop a Jr. High Program in order for our students to be able to compete at a high level. For little cost this program will be able to highlight our district athletically, help our students gain scholarships they currently cannot attain, and boost Arlington's reputation in the State. This program would also allow the high school coaches to begin mentorships with the high school students to mentor the Jr. High students.

There are several options that could meet our goals of tennis Jr. High Program that the above districts employ.

1. Have the students bussed to the High School Campuses to be taught by the current coaching staffs. There are already busses taking students to the High Schools from the Jr. Highs. They would just ride the same bus already in use to cut costs. Having the current coaches work with the students would also cut the cost of hiring more staff.

2. Hire a Jr. High coach to travel to the different campuses. A coach could travel to the different campuses in order to teach tennis. This would cut the costs of hiring a coach at each campus. There are already tennis courts at most Jr. Highs to run practices on.

3. Have the current Head Tennis coach or Assistant Tennis Coach to travel to the feeding Jr. High schools. This would cut the costs of hiring additional personnel.

For very little money Arlington ISD could end the disparity it currently finds itself in. A Jr. High School Tennis Program would not only allow Arlington ISD to compete at a higher level, it would also allow an opportunity for increased scholarships for its players, mentorships, and an increased level of confidence in all of our players. Most of all a Jr. High School program helps kindle the passion for tennis that burns in the hearts of every Tennis Coach.