



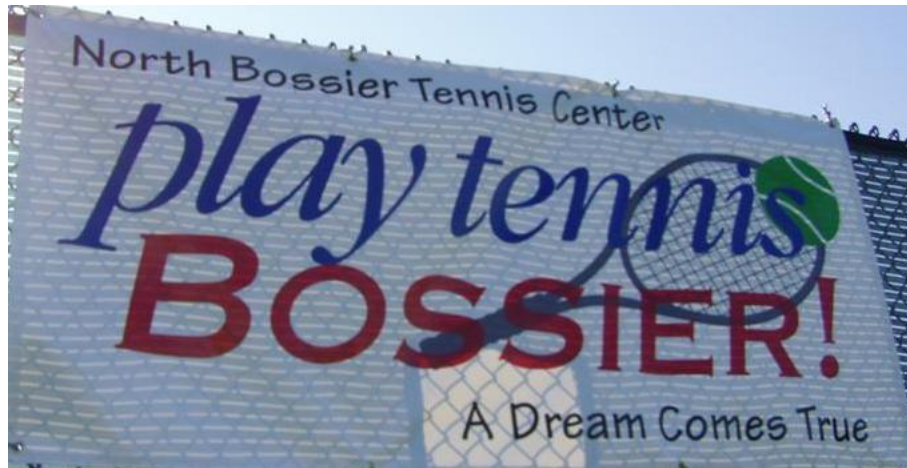
History of Play Tennis Bossier Organization

Background: For many years, Bossier City was a football, baseball sports oriented community with only a few run down tennis courts spread throughout the city with no organized play or instructions. In 1976, a doctor built the Bossier Racquet & Swim Club in north Bossier with 6 hard courts and 4 soft courts and it became very successful for many years. The club changed hands a couple of times and began to slowly go downhill due to poor management and in August 2003 the current owner closed the doors.

Play Tennis Bossier Organization - Phase 1: Shortly after the closure of the Bossier Racquet & Swim Club, a group of players met to discuss their options and decided to make a presentation to the Bossier City Council to request the city purchase the facility and make it a public facility. The players decided to call themselves Play Tennis Bossier. The presentation was made at a council meeting in October 2003 and the council said they would take it under consideration and vote on it at a later meeting. It was voted down, but the idea of a brand new facility on city, parish and school board owned land surfaced, with Play Tennis Bossier leading the charge.

To bring public awareness and keep the pressure on the government officials, the Play Tennis Bossier players built a web page http://www.bossiertennis.org/playbossier_old/ that contained a long list of supporters and comments from many players. In June 2004, a tennis fund raiser was held at Querbes Tennis Center in Shreveport and the funds raised went to purchase Play Tennis Bossier t-shirts, bumpers stickers, and yard signs that were placed along busy streets and in neighborhoods. Go to: <http://www.bossiertennis.org/promo.pdf> to view promotional items.

After many months of negotiations and planning sessions between the Play Tennis Bossier and the city, school board and police jury officials, an agreement was reached to build six hard courts, six soft hydro courts along with a clubhouse in the 53 acres that was to be called North Bossier Park. The city was to contribute the major portion of the funding up to \$1,000,000 with the school board contributing \$100,000 and the police jury doing all of the road construction and site preparation with in-house resources. Due to costs, they had to reduce the size of the planned clubhouse which resulted in a less than desirable clubhouse. Construction began in 2005 and the grand opening was held on June 29, 2006.



The above banner was posted on the tennis center entrance on opening day and what a day it was. After many months of hard work by the Play Tennis Bossier organization, our motto "A Dream Comes True" finally did come true. For a video photo story of the grand opening, go to: http://www.bossiartennis.org/bossier_opening.wmv

Play Tennis Bossier Organization - Phase 2: Prior to the opening, Bossier City hired Elana Engleman as the tennis pro to manage the tennis center and she has continue to build tennis in the area and the number of players that have been introduced to the game of tennis has been tremendous.

In just over 4 years of the grand opening, tennis had exploded in Bossier. In that short time, Bossier Tennis Center was named one of 18 tennis centers in the United States to receive the prestigious USTA 2007 Outstanding Facility Award. The Center was also awarded the Louisiana Tennis Association (LTA) Member of the Year award. Also in 2007, head pro Elana Engleman, was named the LTA Professional of the Year, and the LTA Educational Merit of the Year. She also was the awarded the Southern Tennis Association 2007 Educational Merit of the Year.

USTA League tennis has been a big part of the growth at Bossier Tennis Center and on most week nights, all of the courts are being used for league play. Many Bossier teams have won the Louisiana state championships, as well as the Southern championships and one team has won the National championships. What a great accomplishment in just over 4 years!

During the latter part of 2007, the Bossier Tennis Center received a lot of publicity in the local newspapers and TV due to the above listed accomplishments and the Play Tennis Bossier organization felt the time was right to begin working on getting a larger clubhouse and additional courts. The organization began working with the political bodies and Elana the Mayor's office and the Bossier Parks and Recreation Department providing justification for a larger clubhouse and additional courts. We also created a new web page for the expansion efforts -

<http://www.bossiartennis.org/playbossier/>

The organization had another fund raiser tournament much like they did in 2004. This tournament was called Play Tennis Bossier Expansion and was held on November 1, 2008 at the Bossier Tennis Center and was a huge success. Several city council members visited and saw the enthusiasm of the players that were participating, both young and old. They also realized that the small clubhouse was not adequate and we believe that on that date, we won their approval for the expansion. On April 21, 2009, the city council passed an ordinance approving \$1,400,000 for the construction of a new clubhouse and 6 new clay hydro courts. Construction was started in October 2009 and was completed in July 2010.

Play Tennis Bossier Organization - Phase 3: The Play Tennis Bossier has completed their main mission which was to have a high quality tennis facility in Bossier City. Mission completed but we are going to continue being active in supporting the Bossier Tennis Center. In a couple of years, we may need additional courts and we will be there to help secure them. In the meantime, we are going to be active in the following areas:

- a. A annual charity fundraiser tournament.
- b. Support junior players
- c. Encourage more minority participation
- d. Actively introduce Quick Start tennis
- e. Research implementing a tennis/education program for disadvantage youth

Conclusion: The Play Tennis Bossier is a grass roots organization that was formed in 2003 after the closure of the Bossier Racket Club to petition the Bossier City Council to build a large public tennis complex. The organization has remained active since that time and due to the direct efforts of this organization has resulted in a 53 acre park called the North Bossier Park that now contains the North Bossier Tennis Center with a high quality clubhouse, 12 soft hydro courts, 6 hard courts, all courts lighted, walking trails, soccer fields, and a large children's playground that allows handicap children to enjoy as well. Other recreation activities are being planned for the park.

Without the Play Tennis Bossier efforts, there would be no tennis courts and there would be no park instead it would still be gathering dust on some "to do list" on a government shelf. We also believe that our organization could be a model for other cities across the country on how to secure tennis courts for their cities.

[Click here to return to the Bossier Tennis Center Web page.](#)