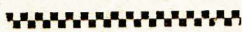


Sports-Go-Round

Tennis Pro Keeps Busy



 **By Charlie Meyers**

Arnie Brown, the man who revitalized Denver's junior tennis program, is not long departed, and already his successor has appeared in the person of Irwin Hoffman, enthusiastic young professional at Green Gables Country Club.

Hoffman, 34, has been teaching Green Gables' tennis players for nine years, not a lengthy career as tennis pros go.

Many of those who suffered while his proteges dominated the recent Metropolitan Junior tournament may feel that he teaches too well.

There are times that Hoffman would almost concur — like the other day when practicing with Nancy Rudd, his prize 9-year-old mighty mite.

"I bet her a Pepsi she couldn't out-volley me," he related. "She proceeded to drive the ball right into my ribs, tearing a cartilage. I could barely breathe for four days and am just now able to sleep nights. It's quite embarrassing."

Such are the perils of a tennis pro.

At the Metro meet, Green Gables had a finalist in every boy's singles division and in two girl's divisions. Hoffman's pupils also made the finals in two doubles events and were playing each other in the finals of both singles and doubles in the boys 10-and-under division.

Requests for Counsel Growing

Tennis players, normally intelligent beings, have quickly equated the growing string of Green Gables successes with Hoffman's dynamic leadership and the requests for his counsel have multiplied both among club members and those outside.

His program has grown from an inauspicious venture which drew only 15 players the first summer to a teeming beehive of 250 participants.

Hoffman agreed to work at \$15 a week in 1957 just so the club would let him get started. Now he employs two full-time assistants, Stanford University varsity player Alan Loeb and Bruce Abramson, No. 3 player at the University of Colorado.

The three work a 14½-hour day and after Hoffman finally gets home about 8:30 p.m., he is besieged with an average of 20 phone calls each night from players and parents alike.

But one quickly gets the idea that he wouldn't have it any other way. Hoffman's exuberance for the game of tennis knows no bounds and carries quite a bit of contagion for those with whom he comes in contact.

Trained Many City Teachers

He has trained most of the city's tennis teachers, including Lennie Berry of Skyline Acres, Dave Hallas of Valley Country Club, Dave Houston of Rolling Hills Country Club, Sandy Rees, who assists at Arapahoe Tennis Club and directs the tennis program at the Jewish Community Center, Art Thompson, Arapahoe assistant, and Eddie Reed, instructor at Bow Mar.

Hoffman is the driving force behind the new Junior Tennis League and has combined with other Green Gables enthusiasts to schedule an invitational junior doubles tournament Aug. 16-20. The tournament will be the first citywide affair ever held at the club.

"We always found it hard to hold a tournament because we have only four courts," Hoffman explained, "but a doubles meet should come off all right. Actually, Denver's young players don't get many chances for serious doubles play and this should be of value in determining rankings."

Green Gables' tennis players get little opportunity for singles play. There is always such a crush of play (youngsters sometimes wait up to two hours to get a court) that doubles are a necessity so that everyone gets to hit a few balls.

Could Use 10 Courts

"We could keep 10 courts busy instead of four," Hoffman states. "Why we had 16 kids show up at 8:30 a.m. for round robin play."

The round robin is a Hoffman device which allows his students to get in a bit of singles play.

"Without it, we couldn't have singles at all," he surmised.

A native of Denver, he won the state prep championship at East High in 1949 and for three years was a member of the University of Denver's conference champion teams.

Tennis actually is but a sideline for Hoffman, whose regular employment is as a teacher of accelerated math classes at George Washington High School, where he began coaching the tennis teams two years ago. The Patriots finished second in the state in Hoffman's first year at the helm and then won the next season.

His opponents wish he'd stick to math.



IRWIN HOFFMAN