



The Iceberg

It takes more than 3 or 7 players to make a winning tennis team and build a consistent quality program. The starting eight or eleven may win the match, but it takes the entire program year in and year out to win championships and be respected by your opponents. Key participants include the parents, coaches, boosters, administration, family, friends, coaches and local professionals. Any program that is worth emulating is much like an iceberg and you only are able to see the top of it such as the top player or doubles teams that stick out above the waterline. As we inducted members into our current ring of honor who will those players be in the future?

Having coached for two decades in a top program “outsiders” fail to see the strong base which the rest of the *program/team* is built on. Sometimes it is the fourth doubles team undefeated record, or the team that constantly pushed them during the year for their position. Perhaps it is the team spirit displayed when cheers and encouragement are yelled out to a player during a close three setter. Outsiders do not witness the practice where players compete in a drill to perfect their 2nd serve. The dedication a program has when “no one is watching” determines the iceberg’s strength. We all want success. Yet there are no shortcuts to any place worth going. This analogy reminds us each person’s contributions are important to the program. Through this process the iceberg lifts a little bit higher out of the water each practice, each match, each fundraiser, each lesson, each tournament, etc. Teamwork, competition, and cooperation among all the factions make the base stronger and push the iceberg out of the water. To do that, takes the *entire* team, its supporters and resources so that weekend tournaments, conference, sectional and state titles may be realized.

The warrior Sun Tzu in 400 B.C. wrote not of icebergs, but said “All people see these tactics whereby I conquer, but what none see is the strategy and effort out of which victory is evolved.” Many will only see the top of the iceberg and recognize the victorious player(s). What most will not understand is what it took for those members to achieve success. Such as how a parent took them to tournaments almost every weekend, or when the 20th ranked player brought water out for the team on a hot day. These “outsiders” never witnessed the time when the best player on varsity took the time to mentor a freshman and how she blossomed and played on varsity the next year. When you are asked to do something remember the big picture and this metaphor of the iceberg.

After the last match is played, the sports writers and fans will only be talking about the players above the waterline. We all know though that the real winner is everyone whose sacrifice and dedication made that moment possible in all of its complexity.

Player Name: _____

Player Signature: _____

