Serving Up a Good Game

By Pamela Brill | January 20th, 2015

Offering top-notch tennis facilities for members of all types and skill sets has netted great results for the Army Navy Country Club.

For the Army Navy Country Club (ANCC) in Arlington, Va., tennis is serious business. The property not only offers a tremendous variety of courts that can be reserved for different types of players and abilities, but the breadth of tennis programs clearly differentiates the club from others in the area.

“We like to stay cutting-edge,” says Joe Wang, Assistant General Manager and Director of Tennis. “Our [tennis] pros are high-caliber, and we are consistently evaluating how to improve our facility.” Having just undergone a major club-wide renovation, the ANCC is now giving its members plenty of new reasons to take notice of its rapidly expanding tennis operation.

![ANCC’s Arlington, Va., campus completed a $58 million clubhouse project this summer, which included a renovated practice facility and outdoor tennis court layout.](image)

Thoughtful Layout

This past summer marked the culmination of a $58 million clubhouse project that included a new clubhouse, a redone golf practice facility, and a redesigned outdoor tennis court layout at the club’s Arlington campus (a second campus, with additional recreational amenities, is located in Fairfax, Va.).

“Our main play takes place on our 14 HydroCourts,” explains Wang. “They’re easier on the joints and knees than an asphalt court.”

Wang touts the American clay, country club-standard courts for their health benefits, as well as for their environmentally friendly design. “Because HydroCourts need to stay watered, they use underground irrigation, so that water is constantly being evaporated. The result is 60 percent less water usage,” he notes.

Two outdoor Deco Turf courts feature hard surfaces used primarily by older junior members. “These are for more serious members playing on amateur surfaces,” explains Wang. For players ages 10 and under, eight QuickStart courts are also available. “The shrunken-down dimension allows young kids to get into long rallies,” Wang adds. “It makes the game more fun and interesting, and there’s less frustration.”
The location of the tennis courts on the ANCC property is unique, Wang notes. "The majority of them sit directly behind the clubhouse; traditionally, there's a golf finishing hole behind them," he explains. Open fencing also looks more aesthetically pleasing, as does a show court with stepped seating for exhibition matches.

In addition to the courts themselves, the ANCC boasts a full-service tennis pro shop; staff office; the Stars and Stripes Café, which provides food- and beverage services for tennis and golf; a group fitness room for stretching and warm-up exercises; and practice-wall facilities for both indoor and outdoor play. A complimentary ball machine can be reserved upon request.

**Progressive Programming**

Using these top-notch facilities, ANCC's tennis programming helps to set it apart from area tennis clubs. The juniors program includes over 150 kids year-round, and boasts 14 different clinics at eight different levels. "I've been with the club 12 years, and our program has matured to the point where former juniors are now joining as members," says Wang. "Alums of our program are coming back as counselors in the summer."

For adult tennis players, Wang likens the programming to a tennis resort, offering something for everyone. On the roster are weekly and specialty clinics, along with a weekly inter-club league comprised of 120 participants. "Members can call us whenever they like and we'll pair them up with another player," he explains. Adult tennis club members currently total 1,100 players, with 500 of them playing twice weekly. A ladies' club league features seven different teams, with 14 players per team.
RECREATION PROFILE
Army Navy Country Club
Location: Arlington, Va.

Opened: 1924

Total Members: 7,000

Golf: 54 total holes of championship golf, with 27 each at the Arlington and Fairfax locations

Tennis:
- 14 outdoor Har-Tru HydroCourts (10 lit for nighttime play)
- 2 outdoor Deco Turf II hard courts
- 8-court outdoor QuickStart
- 10-and-under junior training facility
- A year-round indoor tennis center with 6 Deco Turf II hard courts
- A full-service retail tennis pro shop and stringing-service facilities
- On-site locker room and shower facilities
- Practice courts and walls
- Complimentary ball machine use

Fitness: 4,000-sq. ft. facility includes cardiovascular and strength-training equipment

Aquatics (Arlington Campus):
- L-shaped 50-meter Olympic pool (minimum depth of 4') with a diving well
- Teaching and youth pool (2.5' to 3.5')
- 6" beach front to 18" deep wading pool
- Heated adult-only pool

Aquatics (Fairfax Campus):
- Z-shaped pool with diving well, lap lanes, play area, and teaching area
- 0" beach front to 18" deep wading pool

To keep the tennis program in tip-top shape, the ANCC relies on a dedicated staff of 150 full-time, year-round employees—six of whom are full-time tennis pros. Wang requires that these instructors not only be certified and experienced, but they must possess strong leadership skills and the ability to communicate effectively. In fact, some of the instructors advertise their own services, such as lessons, on the club's website.

During the busy summer season, the staff is supplemented by six to eight additional part-time counselors, and two tennis pros who assist with the burgeoning kids' programming. "Our pros are high-caliber, and the explosion of our juniors program is a great example of how well we're doing," notes Wang.

Moving Forward

Even with such substantial growth, ANCC does not rest on its laurels, but consistently re-evaluates how to improve its facility. "We're one of the most active tennis communities in the area, and we rely upon the combined expertise of our staff, Board, and committee to steer us in the right direction," says General Manager Patrick King.

Currently on the agenda is budgeting for LED lighting in the indoor facilities, which would enable the club to reduce its annual energy bill to $50,000, a 40% savings. In the future, the club's two outdoor hard courts, which were built directly adjacent to the indoor tennis center, could benefit from overhead coverage. "Managing our overall growth continues to be a challenge," says Wang.

To cover the costs for such projects and to add more capital to existing funds, ANCC will be hosting two charity events this June. The annual Tennis Charity Pro-Am for Thanks!USA provides scholarships for children of members who are on active duty. In the last seven years, the program has raised more than $220,000, averaging around $30,000 per year.

The second event, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation D.C. Chapter's Celebrity Tennis Gala, attracts more than 100 people each year, focusing heavily on the Congressional, lobbying and corporate sectors. This initiative has grown considerably in the past 29 years, with the event raising $400,000 or more in the most recent years. For the 30th anniversary celebration, the Celebrity Tennis Gala is moving to a new location, with an anticipated fundraising target in 2015 of $500,000. "Both events show our commitment to our community," says Wang.

As ANCC continues to expand, King pays close attention to its membership, both current and future. "We are still learning what the full potential of the club is," he says. "We are becoming more and more family-oriented." The average age of membership has gone from 66 ten years ago to 55 today, and those who are now joining tend to be in their mid-40s with two kids, King says.

And having been recognized as a 2014 Platinum Club of America for the first time, ANCC is showing no signs of slowing down anytime soon. "It has been quite a ride," enthuses King.
ANCC's Arlington, Va., campus completed a $58 million clubhouse project this summer, which included a renovated practice facility and outdoor tennis court layout.

Six Deco-Turf II hard courts are available for use in ANCC's year-round indoor tennis center, which also houses a pro shop, the Stars and Stripes Cafe, a group fitness room, and a practice wall.

Patrick King, ANCC's General Manager, notes that the club's average member age has dropped from 66 ten years ago to 55 today, encouraging the club to make its facilities more family-oriented.

ANCC's 25-court facility offers year-round indoor, outdoor, and evening-lit play, including 14 HydroCourts and eight QuickStart courts.