

# Norcal Xtreme Tennis: Building a Community for Juniors



By Debra Costner

**A**lthough Northern California has a rich tennis history, Jamie Pawid and Julie Leong didn't feel that way when they, as Northern California top-ranked junior tennis players, began touring the nation a few years ago. "All the other players from across the country seemed to have a certain team cohesiveness," said Stewart Toy, Jamie Pawid's manager. Pawid, Leong and Toy wondered why there wasn't more support and pride in the top-ranked young tennis players Northern California produces.

So they decided to take matters into their own hands. In 2009, with the support of Toy and Pawid's father, tennis pro David Pawid, the two girls created Norcal Xtreme Tennis. Their

goal was to promote tennis in the region and build regional pride, unity and identity among players of all ages and abilities. "We felt that there was a unique opportunity to create a 'junior helping junior' environment—a place where our most talented junior players helped mentor and provide leadership to younger, less experienced players who just need an extra edge," said Toy.

To that end, this unique group has set up shop at Harbor Bay Club, providing opportunities for the serious junior tennis player. The group is hosting a weekly high-performance workout clinic at the club every Thursday throughout the summer from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. "I am very excited to hear that Norcal Xtreme Tennis will be offering our top juniors another opportunity to train together. This can only help our juniors take their game to the next



Photo by Kirk Cowan

Anchoring the Xtreme Tennis program, with Coach David Pawid, are L-R: Deborah Lee, Tipper Truong, Melissa Hirsch, Emma Marti, Jamie Pawid, Janet Liu, and Laura Posylkin.

level," said Steve Leube, executive director of U.S.T.A. Northern California.

"Out on the courts of Harbor Bay Club you can feel the excitement of this unique group as they hone their skills, share their latest encounters and mentor younger players. It is refreshing to see the best of the best get together and to enjoy tennis together," said Jennifer Pitzen, director of competitive play at U.S.T.A. Northern California.

The clinics are designed to allow good junior tournament players the opportunity to experience an intense workout session with top-ranked juniors in a fun and relaxed environment. This is also a chance for top junior tennis players to work out and train with their peers. "Nothing motivates kids to train harder and give 100 percent effort than being in the presence of their peers," said David Pawid.

"We have clinics and train together, and we talk to each other. Girls I never talked to before, I know them all now. We're all friends," said Jamie Pawid. Her father echoes her sentiment: "We thought it would be nice if the kids were more united and could support each other, particularly when we're on the road."

The juniors have picked up this ball and run with it. In addition to Jamie, who is ranked #1 in Northern California girls 18's and #55 nationally, there is a significant amount of homegrown junior

Bay Area talent involved in the clinics put on by Norcal Xtreme. Laura Posylkin is currently ranked #2 in Northern California. Janet Liu is currently ranked #3 in Northern California and #87 nationally, and Katya Vasilyev is ranked #5 in Northern California. Boys involved in the clinics include Chris Kipouras, who is currently ranked #3 in Northern California and Andrew Malozsak, who is currently ranked #8.

Man Pham, father of clinic participant Tiffany Pham, explained his enthusiasm for the group: "We come all the way from Elk Grove to attend this high-performance clinic. Where else can you find this many top-ranked players to hit with unless you are paying \$1,000 a week?"

So what is it that makes the group Xtreme? As Toy explains it, "We're bringing up the Y2K generation. They are the extreme generation—they go beyond the traditional and are reaching out for more." Toy sees this organization as part of a legacy that older players can leave behind for the younger generation.

To that end, Norcal Xtreme is utilizing new media to help build the group, including a Facebook page to connect the participants. Additionally, the group will soon launch an interactive community website at [www.norcalxtreme.com](http://www.norcalxtreme.com) that will allow the players to share information and share experiences in a central location.



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- Experience the same training as the top juniors
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PLEASE NOTE: High Performance Clinics are only available to juniors competing in USTA tournament. A player's evaluation is required prior to joining this program.