

**SCTA**  
**Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Bayside Room – Lakehouse**  
**February 1, 2023**

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Board Attendees: Sheryl Tschetter, President  
Tom Wright, Vice President  
Martha Widgen, Treasurer  
Gail Fitzmaurice, Secretary  
Michael Sacks, Director, Membership  
Deb Campbell, Director, Tennis Ambassadors  
Diane Dowling, Director, Events  
Cindy Good, Past President

Board Absences: Greg Pavan, Director, Bucket Brigade/Ombudsman

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**Call to Order: Sheryl Tschetter**

Sheryl Tschetter called the meeting to order at 6:00PM and Gail Fitzmaurice determined that a quorum of the Board was present. Sheryl verified that the January Board Meeting minutes had been posted at the Logo bulletin board, the SCTA website, and emailed in an E-Blast to the members. The January Board Meeting minutes were then approved by the Board.

**Treasurer's Report: Martha Widgen**

Amended December 2022 Treasurer's Report:

Martha advised that two slight corrections were needed for the December report and therefore she presented an Amended December Treasurer's report. There was a motion to approve and the Board voted its approval. The Amended December Treasurer's report is included with these Minutes.

January 2023 Treasurer's Report

Martha reviewed the report for January. There was a motion to approve and the Board voted its approval. The January Treasurer's report is included with these Minutes.

Martha also advised that she had received the WTO Sports Trivia Night Budget from Gail Richards. The WTO expects \$4,750 in income and \$1,845 in expenses. There was a motion to approve and the Board voted its approval.

**DIRECTOR/LIAISON REPORTS**

**Membership: Michael Sacks**

Michael reviewed the following information:

As of 1/31/23, there are 722 members. Last year on this date, there were 721 members. The 2023 budget calls for 750 members, a target which Michael believes will be easily reached. The auto-renew process worked well. One minor glitch was that two of the auto-renew members had moved away but had left their renewal choice set to auto-renew. Since their CAM accounts were inactive, the error was caught and corrected promptly. The online membership directory is up-to-date.

**Ambassadors: Deb Campbell**

Deb reported that all Ambassadors received a list of new members who were self-rated in 2022. The Ambassadors emailed each self-rated member to remind them that participation in Intraclub or a Club tournament requires the member to be Club-rated (Club rating clinics are held monthly). Deb advised she will keep track of the new members and their ratings and plans to meet with the Ambassadors during the upcoming month to discuss the best way to help new members reach their goals.

**Bucket Brigade: Greg Pavan**

Sheryl presented Greg's report as he was unable to attend the meeting. All six brooms Gavin ordered have been placed on courts 12, 2 and 3. The mats were not removed. The removal of the mats will be done by Gavin's staff. Two of the best mats will replace the two worn out mats on court 13. Greg will make labels for the remaining unlabeled brooms. Greg made push/pull labels for the gates on all the courts. All brooms have been lifted off the courts and placed higher on the fences, per Gavin Cox. The torn broom handle on Court 7 has been rewrapped with bicycle tape, compliments of Lab Cyclery. We still need 10 additional brooms for Courts 4, and 13-16.

**WTO: Barb Fluharty**

Barb reported that Angela Bossu-Wolfe has taken on the new position of Co-Chair for WTO. Everything is in place for the Food for Love Event, February 1-9. Your non-perishable food donations and/or cash/checks can be dropped off daily at the Logo building (there will be a box for food and an envelope for cash/check donations). All food and monetary donations will be given to Bluffton Self-Help. If you prefer, you can bring your food donation on Thursday 2/9 directly to the Bluffton Self-Help truck which will be parked in the Mangnolia Hall lot near court 5 from 10AM-NOON. Let's show how much we care about the great service that Bluffton Self-Help provides to the Bluffton community.

Plans are coming along for Sports Trivia Night, Friday 3/31 and plans are under way for Match Point (held on the last day of the Mix & Match Tournament (Sunday 4/30).

WTO will be working with Tom Wright to update the WTO portion of the SCTA website.

**EVENTS**

**Mix & Match Tournament (4/27-4/30) Update: Sheryl Tschetter**

Sheryl reported that Dudley has raised about \$14,000 in sponsorship revenue and there will be discussions on how best to allocate these funds across the great variety of event expenses.

**St. Patrick's Tennis Social (3/11/23): Diane Dowling**

Diane reported that 9 courts have been reserved from 4:00-6:00PM with the tennis format TBD. The Pavilion has been reserved from 5:30-10:00PM. Water, soft drinks and ice will be provided. Food for this event is being priced and a committee is being formed to help with decorations and music. More details to follow!

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Policies & Procedures Update: Sheryl Tschetter**

Sheryl reported that the P&P is in the final stage of formatting and will be ready for presentation at the March Board meeting.

**MEMBER PRESENTATIONS RE: CLUB RATING ISSUE (10 MINUTES EACH)**

Karen Benedict made a presentation on this subject and pointed out that there was confusion regarding the club rating among the Intraclub (IC) participants and the IC Coordinators. She mentioned that there was inconsistency among the IC Coordinators in explaining the club rating to their players. Karen suggested delaying finalization of the Policies and Procedures Manual until the club rating issue is resolved. Her full presentation is included as an attachment hereto.

Debra Murray made a presentation on this subject, explaining that she was on the original committee that made the club-rating proposal to the Board. Deb currently serves as the IC Coordinator for 3.5 Women and is the Tennis Ambassador for 3.5/4.0 Women. Her full presentation is included as an attachment hereto.

**OPEN DISCUSSION/MEMBER SESSION/CLUB RATING**

Two speakers (Susan Kreick and Beth Loach) spoke and expressed their opinions on this topic in the time allotted.

**Motion to adjourn Board Meeting: Sheryl Tschetter**

Meeting adjourned 7:09PM.

**NEXT BOARD MEETING:**

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1, 2023**

**6:00PM BAYSIDE ROOM – LAKEHOUSE**

**ATTACHMENT TO  
2-1-23 SCTA BOARD MINUTES**

**CLUB RATINGS – February 1, 2023 presentation to SCTA Board  
PRESENTER – KAREN BENEDICT**

The objective of our Tennis Club is to create an environment where everyone can learn, improve, compete and have fun with tennis. Intraclub was established for this reason. It was a place where club members could play fun, organized tennis without playing USTA. If players wanted to experience more competitive games against like players, they could join USTA. The members had a choice.

**HISTORY OF INTRACLUB**

In the past, Sun City tennis had a large number of USTA teams. At the height of USTA in our community, I recall for the 55+ season at least 2 Women's 4.0 teams, 2 Men's 4.0 teams, 5-6 Men's and Women's 3.5 teams, and an equal number at the 3.0. Somewhere around 17-20 teams just for the spring. Current numbers have dwindled to about 10. What changed?

Around 2012 there was a very small men's intraclub for 3.5 and 4.0 players. Then COVID hit. Our courts slowly reopened but USTA play was suspended. When USTA was resumed, many members decided they did not want to participate in USTA, but still wanted a place to play within the community with structured tennis competition. The year-around intraclub was born. What was initially established as a small session between USTA seasons has evolved into a large intraclub organization with 456 participants ranging from 2.5 to 4.0.

**CLUB RATINGS**

I asked for this topic to be included on the Meeting Agenda to have an open discussion from the members about how club ratings are handled. Confusion has resulted because out of 456 intraclub participants only 5-7 individuals received an email from their Coordinator to be club rated. All the emails contained different interpretations of the policy. Three of the emails said if they did not get club-rated they could not continue playing intraclub. Two individuals were told if they did not get club rated, they could continue to play in the league but be placed on the sub list. From my understanding, 3 of the individuals quit intraclub. One will get club rated, and one is still deciding what to do. The lack of consistency in notifications suggest a lack of clear direction on how to handle this topic.

**CURRENT GUIDANCE IN THE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES DATED OCTOBER 2021.** The section in the current Policy and Procedures regarding club ratings is very vague and open to interpretation. It states in part:

**a. New/Inactive Members: New member and anyone inactive for more than two years must be evaluated by a Sun City tennis professional before officially qualifying to play in an Intraclub league. This helps ensure new players are placed appropriately.**

**b. Current SCTA members needing or requesting a level change: Any current SCTA member who wishes to or is properly asked to change levels must contact a tennis pro for evaluation.**

In addition, the responsibilities of the Intraclub Coordinator related to keeping records and suggesting players get updated club ratings in the Policy and Procedures read as follows:

**Based on individual performance history (or simply the number of Intraclub participants in each division), make any determinations and communicate a suggestion to applicable players for getting an updated rating and potentially moving up or down to a different division. This suggestion should only be rendered when there is sufficient evidence to suggest this change, or simply too many players to manage in the current division. Any controversy in this regard needs to be communicated to the BOD for resolution.**

**DATA COLLECTED FROM INTRACLUB COORDINATORS:** In my preparation for this meeting, I contacted all the intraclub coordinators (with the exception of Debra Murray who will make her presentation after me) to see how they apply the policy. Surprisingly all but one shared information on how their group is organized, how they play matches, and how they deal with player evaluation. Some told me that they were exempt because they were grandfathered, but I could find nothing in writing about what that means or who is included. Some said they did not or would not be forced issue letters removing players from intraclub. Some said they did issue notices, but still included players on the roster. And some sent letters telling players they were removed from the intraclub play until they were club rated. I asked specifically where they got their guidance. Some spoke to members of the board, some said they read the policy and procedures, and some said they had no written guidance. Some used their own observations or input and complaints from the stronger players in the group who said they did not have competitive matches against the lower-level players.

**One thing came out of the input from coordinators: Each group functions differently and independently from the others (teams, round robin, pulling cards, etc.) and interprets the policies differently.**

**INTERVIEWS WITH INTRACLUB PARTICIPANTS:** In addition to the input from coordinators, I interviewed a random sample of players from each level, both men and women. I was surprised at how candid people were with their comments. Here is the summary of comments about club ratings and player evaluation: Some self-rated on their own, some believe self-ratings are important to intraclub, some think players with injuries or recovering from surgery should be lowered, some complained about the ratings clinic (not watched by pro, put in session with men and higher rated players, not a fair assessment), some said getting a club rating should be an individual decision, some say it is not being done equally across gender and levels, some say it is a universal decision from the new board, some men say their groups do not have to get club rated and their spouse does, some say the mixed messages are confusing to those that just want to play tennis, some say they are so anxious when playing intraclub for fear they will not play well and be removed from the group, and lastly, some players said that the lower level members should be removed from the group so the stronger players have better competition.

**One thing came out of the input from the participants: they all have different opinions and interpretations of the intraclub procedures. Most of this is because all of the intraclub groups function differently, making application of the policies impossible.**

**NEW DRAFT POLICY AND PROCEDURE:** There is currently a new draft of the P&P under review. The proposed language is:

**1. Club Rating Policy (Ensures compliance with the mission of Intraclub) b. New SCTA members and current members who have not played in any USTA or SCTA events, including Intraclub, for two years or more, must be evaluated by a Sun City tennis professional before officially qualifying to play in Intraclub league.**

Proposed language pretty straightforward. It defines clearly written exemptions from being club rated: if you are currently playing intraclub, you are exempt from getting club rated. There are only two requirements for needing a club rating: If you are new SCTA member without a USTA rating or current member who has not played intraclub for 2 years, you need to get club rated. Very clear and specific. Not open to any interpretation by intraclub coordinators, current players, and new members.

**SUMMARY and THOUGHTS** - Does the proposed language in the revised P&P fix the problem? Not necessarily. We do need some sort of evaluation system to help new members and current members find the right fit for their tennis game. We want a balanced group that is fair to all players of like skills and ability. But that should be up to the membership and the intraclub players to decide.

The Board should delay finalizing the new Policy and Procedures until clear, concise, and measurable language can be included in the Club Ratings Section. Simplified language about USTA Ratings, Club Ratings, and Self Ratings should be included with a clear explanation of each.

Or maybe this is a better idea. Remove all the language from the P&P about intraclub and coordinator responsibility. Consider intraclub to function like USTA, with Team Captains and Intraclub Coordinators organizing their groups individually as determined by group consensus. Because one policy does not fit all, have all the intraclub groups individually get together to develop a specific mission statement for their group, identifying how the group will be organized, how data (if any) is collected, how matches will be played, and how to deal with the large range of skill levels of players. The Board will not need to establish policy or get involved, similar to what is done with USTA where the captains select teams and determine how they are organized. The only involvement for both USTA and Intraclub would be to simply schedule court time.

Issuing emails to 1.5% of the intraclub population is not indicative of a major problem. No policy is needed to cover 7 people out of 456. This has been very hurtful to many members. It is unnecessary and irresponsible for any policy to pit coordinators against members and the board against members. In her first Board meeting, our new President Sheryl has promised to work for the membership. I know this issue is of concern to her. Please give her time to work on it.

It is my goal to continue to speak up on issues such as this so the Board is aware of members concerns. I hope you appreciate my efforts. I have presented this issue after doing extensive research with fact-based analysis. I have worked with Gavin to try to obtain rating data. He does not keep any records. I also asked the board for numbers. The board does not keep records or get involved. I have input from the coordinators and players.

Regardless of who has the exact number, we can all agree it is very low. Although small in numbers, this has raised awareness to all members and the board that there is a need for policies that work for the membership. According to data from the board, from 2022 to current 2023 we lost an additional 98 members. That equates to \$4900. That is a significant amount of money we cannot afford to lose. If this trend continues, don't be surprised if you hear discussions of raising the dues or cutting services. We will all pay the price for unhappy members.

My hope is that this issue will energize the membership in participating with the Board to create an organization that is inclusive of all players. I hope that this issue will give us all the strength and wisdom to make the right decisions now and in the future. I hope that future concerns will be discussed in an open meeting and clear communications are provided. Innocent mistakes have been made, and I pray that everyone impacted or involved in these discussions will start tonight by forgiving each other.

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**ATTACHMENT TO  
2-1-23 SCTA BOARD MINUTES**

**Address to SCTA 2/1/23  
Ratings policy  
Deb Murray**

Good Evening!

First, I would like to thank the board members who volunteer on behalf of SCTA!

“Conflict doesn't always mean we have to fight against something to tear it apart. Conflict can also mean we're fighting for something to make it even better and stronger than it's ever been”!

WE ARE BLESSED TO LIVE IN THIS BEAUTIFUL PLACE.

My name is Debra Murray- 3.5W IntraClub Coordinator and Ambassador 3.5-4.0W

Member since 2004 (19 years)

I was asked to speak about the ratings policy because I was a member of the committee who wrote the proposal.

One of the reasons many of us moved here was because of our love of tennis. We have this wonderful opportunity to play in one of the best tennis facilities in the southeast. Other players discovered tennis upon retirement.

TENNIS IS A PASSION for many of us.  
North side- Woods Membership

As community grows, so does our tennis membership - change is inevitable.

How does that look?

In 2020, when USTA leagues were shut down because of COVID, IntraClub saw a large increase. It was becoming more and more evident that accurate ratings were needed. You either had a USTA rating or a self- rating.

An advisory committee was formed of all IntraClub coordinators. The purpose: To establish a means for rating players so as to have fair and competitive play for all, by having a current and accurate rating. We met for many hours.

A proposal was sent to the board that was agreed upon by all committee members. We suggested that any current USTA ratings were verified and therefore valid. We proposed a club rating be established for members who wished to participate in an SCTA sponsored event. For members participating solely in social groups using the lottery, ratings would not be required.

One of the recommendations was that all new/inactive members be evaluated.

We, as a committee, agreed that the evaluation should be done by our professional tennis staff. Since they are paid for their time on the court it was agreed that each player would be charged a small \$5 fee.

This has been largely successful. In my position I have had many new members attend the ratings clinic, if they did not have a current USTA rating. The system has worked. Is it perfect? No. Better than nothing at all...

I know players that are new that were once a 3.5 when they played years ago. Some are that level; some players their level has dropped. Some players have no idea of their level...it is a good starting point.

As we age the reality is many of us are not the player we once were. Speaking for myself, after torn tendons, muscles and surgeries, I am not the player from 11 years ago. I watched yesterday's match of 4 court one USTA players, both teams were from SUN CITY...I cannot hit as hard as those players.

If you are honest, some of you know the same is true for you.

How does that impact SCTA? Only if you are participating in an SCTA activity do you need to have an accurate rating. Anyone can say they are particular level. That does not mean it is true.

Over the years there are players who had bad experiences because they were placed on the court with someone whose level was not accurate.

Good example is Mix and Match- Great length and lots of time is put into making teams even. Perfect NO...Is there an effort on Dudley and his team to continue to refine ..YES

In 2006 The directory stated: As a courtesy to team captains, the club has included either USTA computer rating(u) or self ratings. ALL OTHER RATINGS ARE SELF RATINGS NOT CONFIRMED.

So here we are at another crossroads of SCTA...The good news is that more members are aware that we have a ratings policy in place for the benefit of the entire SCTA community. How do we make refinements?

Where do we go from here?

Are we going to let it tear us apart or are we going to make it better and stronger than it has ever been???