



# CASE STUDY

**DELIVERING LTA YOUTH START  
WITH LTA BIG TENNIS WEEKENDS**





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## Delivering LTA Youth Start with the Big Tennis Weekends

LTA Youth Start and the Big Tennis Weekends are highly effective programmes in supporting venues and coaches to provide young children and young families with a positive first experience in tennis. The LTA encourages venues and coaches to come together to deliver both initiatives in a joined-up fashion to have maximum impact in growing tennis participation at your venue. Below is a case study of how one venue has achieved success by delivering both programmes together.



**A BIG POSITIVE OF A BIG TENNIS WEEKEND IS THAT IT'S A GREAT WAY FOR BOTH PLAYERS AND PARENTS TO GET TO MEET AND CHAT WITH THE COACH**

**Matthew Hillman**  
Head Coach

### WHO ARE YOU?

Matthew Hillman, Head Coach Kings Norton Tennis Club

### WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO RUN A BTW EVENT & LTA YOUTH START COURSES?

When I first started at Kings Norton Tennis Club, we only had a couple of active junior players taking part in coaching at the club. I thought one of the best ways to immediately increase the number of active junior players, especially new children to the sport, was through running LTA Youth Start courses, formerly Tennis For Kids (TFK) courses. In order to encourage children in the local area that were interested in playing tennis to sign up for my course I decided to link the start of the courses alongside a BTW Open Day.

A big positive of a BTW is it's a great way for both players and parents to get to meet and chat with the coach before the course starts. I believe one of the most important things when it comes to getting players engaged and continuing to play after the course finishes, is the relationship both the player and parent have with the coach. If it is a strong and positive relationship then you are much more likely to keep the player engaged in the sessions and they are more likely to continue playing at the club upon completion of the course. School visits are a great way to attract lots of children to a course or venue, but the Open Day itself is important when it comes to selling the club and the coach, and getting to know the families.

### HOW DID YOU GO ABOUT PLANNING THE EVENT / COURSES?

I attended a couple of club committee meetings prior to the Open Day where we discussed publicising the Open Day leading up to the weekend, along with each person's responsibilities during the day. This also helped inform the club about my intentions in regards to running some LTA Youth Start courses, and getting their permission in terms of when the courses will run, how many I will run and asking about non-members fee's. I was fortunate as the club were happy to allow the players to attend the course without paying the normal non-members fee for players on the coaching programme.

We planned the event 2 weeks before the start of the LTA Youth Start courses, making sure it did not land on a bank-holiday weekend, during a half term or a holiday. The club then agreed what they would do at the Open Day, in terms of advertising the club and their membership, and I started organising the Open Day and on court activities, and the LTA Youth Start courses.

### **HOW DID YOU PROMOTE YOUR EVENT / COURSES?**

Firstly, I uploaded all my LTA Youth Start courses and BTW on to Clubspark. I also decided to run our Family Cup during the afternoon of the Open Day, to try and attract more families, which in turn would hopefully encourage more children to play and take part. It also helped provide more structure to the Open Day, where we had a morning of games and free play, and then an organised activity for everyone to take part in during the afternoon.

I printed some Open Day flyers and with help from the club distributed them to local schools, community centres, scout groups and at the local Farmers Market. We also used Social media - Twitter, Facebook and website advertising.

To support the promotion, I also ran a school roadshow at a local school, seeing all year groups, with 2 classes in each year for 30 minutes each. I handed out both flyers to try and encourage as many children from that school to attend the Open Day.

Finally, I sent emails to all current members of the coaching programme, and members of the club. I invited them to come along to the event, and encouraged them to bring friends, whilst also advertising the LTA Youth Start courses.

### **WAS IT SUCCESSFUL?**

The Open Day was a huge success, especially in regards to filling the LTA Youth Start courses. Over 50 people attended the Open Day, and we had 11 pairs enter and take part in the Family Cup. Within 2 days both the LTA Youth Start courses were full. I also had 3 other players that were on the waiting list and three further juniors sign up to other sessions, such as tots and teenage sessions.

Once the LTA Youth Start courses were completed, 15 of the 20 players continued playing at the club and signed up to my coaching programme, using the follow-on offer of £25 off the next half terms worth of sessions.



**WE HAD A MORNING OF GAMES AND FREE PLAY, AND THEN AN ORGANISED ACTIVITY FOR EVERYONE TO TAKE PART IN**

**Matthew Hillman**  
Head Coach





## HOW DOES AN LTA BIG TENNIS WEEKEND EVENT HELP YOUR CLUB?

1. It can bring a lot of people down to the club at the same time, creating a buzz and good atmosphere
2. It gives children and parents an opportunity to try and experience the enjoyment of tennis before signing up
3. Get to meet and build a relationship with the coach before they start the course
4. You can sell LTA Youth Start courses, and answer questions much more easily than via phone or email
5. Attract players friends and family members (if you can get a group of children that know each other before they start, much easier to build the group and retain all of the players)
6. Allows players to meet others, make them feel part of the club, and help retention.



## ANY TOP TIPS?

1. Run the Open Day at a good time. Avoid Bank Holidays, half terms and school holidays. Run it close to the start of your LTA Youth Start courses but allow for enough time for people to sign up and for packs to arrive. At least 2 week is good, but not too far in the future as you want to keep the interest and excitement from the Open Day and the arrival of the LTA Youth Start packs the children receive.
2. Advertise well and to a lot of people. The more people that hear about the event, the more will turn up. Flyers to schools and social media are great. The best way is linking the two, and getting the schools to advertise your event on their website, social media and newsletters.
3. Get all the family involved at the Open Day! The parents that get involved with their children are much more likely to see the benefits of tennis, and see how much their child enjoys it, and therefore are much more likely to sign them up. Even watching from the side of the court is much better than sitting inside the clubhouse.
4. Have organised activities during your Open Day. Having a structure of activities for children to take part in is more fun, gets players and parents more engaged, looks better and is more enjoyable for the people taking part. You can always have a free play session available on one of your courts for the event.
5. Make sure you record attendee's, and get their contact details. Once you have their details, make sure everyone is contacted within 24 hours of the Open Day finishing. In an ideal world, people should be able to sign up for everything on the day, without having to leave the venue. However, make sure you still email and/or text all attendees reminding them of your offer and courses within 24 hours, or they are most likely lost.



**GET ALL THE FAMILY INVOLVED AT THE OPEN DAY! THE PARENTS THAT GET INVOLVED WITH THEIR CHILDREN ARE MUCH MORE LIKELY TO SEE THE BENEFITS OF TENNIS**

**Matthew Hillman**  
**Head Coach**