

University Tennis And Sustainability

By Tom Hands





Professional tennis player
Doubles Ranking: 252

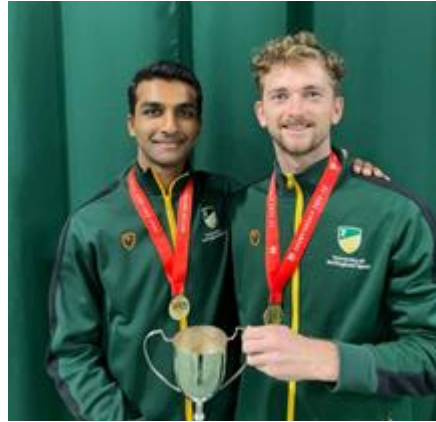




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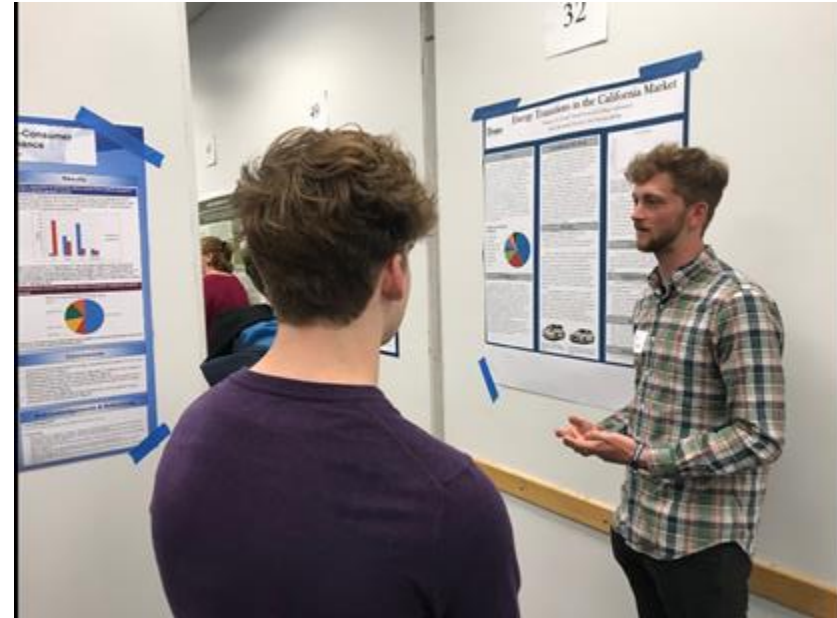


Education





Tennis vs Sustainability



Tennis isn't good for sustainability

- Requires individual travelling, primarily by plane.
- Is an individual sport where players can't afford to look too far past their own professional goals and finances.
- Produces lots of waste like: balls, tubes, grips, strings, shoes etc.





2025



Hands on Sustainability

TENNIS SUSTAINABILITY



What I'm Covering

- Good news on sustainability within the tennis space
- Challenges faced by University tennis
- Making a few suggestions on meeting those challenges

The Good News

Sustainability is being brought into day to day conversation around the world, including tennis.

Positive changes and efforts from governing bodies, tournaments and companies



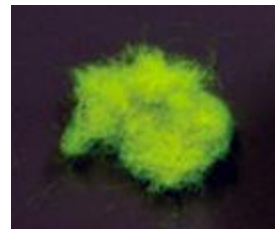
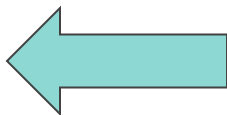
Tennis' Biggest Waste Problem



Balls



Dyuce and Circular ball





US Ball Recycling



Collected
13,000 Balls
in 2024



1000 balls
=
110 kg CO2



Company Packaging Changes



140-238 tons

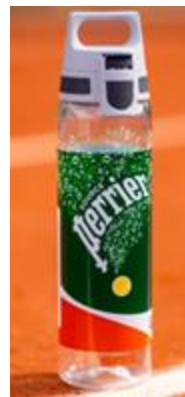


56,000 kg





Bottles





Pledgeball

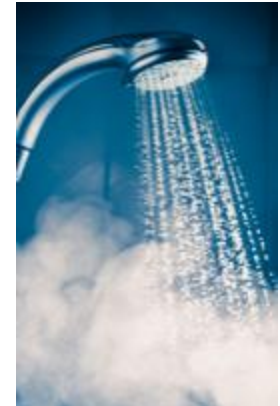
Charity that encourages individuals to make pro-environmental pledges:

- Cycling to work
- Having shorter showers
- Using a reusable water bottle

The incentive?

£ 250 towards a sustainable initiative within the club.

All participants entered into a draw for Queens tickets the next year.










The ATP Carbon Tracker

Introduced to enable players and the ATP to track the travel tour pros do through the year.

Tracking earns them points on a leaderboard.

But collecting data is the biggest pro. Allowing the ATP to see what effects any changes in scheduling are having.



1		Mackenzie McDonald USA	12/20 Tournaments offset	775 Points
2		Alexander Weis Italy	5/13 Tournaments offset	375 Points
3		Ivan Gakhov [Flag]	3/25 Tournaments offset	214 Points
4		Valentin Royer France	1/16 Tournaments offset	190 Points
5		Tom Hands United Kingdom	0 Tms Offset 0/19 Tournaments offset	180 Points

[My Activity](#)[Reset score](#)

How is any of this relevant?



Tour tennis and University tennis are different:

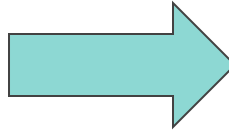
- Less miles travelled.
- No water bottles provided by tournaments.
- Individual vs team events



Challenge 1: Waste

Anything players might leave on court:

- Balls
- Ball tubes
- Grips
- Bottles
- Energy gels/bars



- Balls
- Ball tubes
- Bottles





The BUCs Water Bottle

No longer relying on players to 'do the right thing'.

Giving players a bottle to be used specifically at BUCs matches.

Just the same as how BRITA bottles had to be exclusively used at the big tournaments prior to Wimbledon.





Everybody Wins

- The water sponsor gets exclusive rights to be shown up and down the country at the different university matches.
- The Universities, clubs and League would dramatically reduce the number of single use bottles used.
- The players get a nice bottle they can keep and use when they play and compete outside of university matches.



Challenge 2: Travel

A tough challenge:

- So many different teams traveling to all corners of the countries.
- Each University must play all the others through the season.

Neutral Matches

- Introduce as an option for teams who are geographically far apart.
- Two away teams compete at a neutral site.
- Reduce distance both teams travel..





Challenge 3: Collecting Data

Allows for:

- Tracking changes to see the impact they're having.
- Promotion of strategies that have been successful.
- Progress to be shown over time.
- Sense of achievement.





New Club Committee Role

The Sustainability Coordinator



Responsibilities:

- Keeping up to date travel information for all the teams.
- Once a month post for the Club social media.
- Keeping track of the CO2 from disposable products in the club.

Why it's helpful:

- Can check individual university travel as well as BUCs as a whole.
- Keep sustainability in the minds of those in and around the club.
- Give a holistic view of the club to look for more potential improvements.

In Summary

- A BUCs Water bottles
- Tracking Team Travel
- Introduction of new representative into club committees: The Sustainability Coordinator





Discussion

Take a few minutes, find another University or person to chat about what I've mentioned:

- Would players want and/or keep a 'BUCs water bottle'?
- Could the role cover anything else?
- Would individuals want to fill that spot on the committee?



For questions after today

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