



Name of Case Study

Henleaze Lawn Tennis Club, Bristol BS6 7X

The development of a **Walking Tennis** membership

What did we do?

Henleaze Tennis Club became involved with **walking tennis** through Heather Forrest (a level 2 LTA Accredited coaching assistant and committee member) showing an interest and attending a taster session during the Bristol Walkfest in May 2019.

Heather took this idea back to the committee who embraced the idea and agreed to trial this new format. The Club is now offering a walking tennis membership of £15 for 6 months to allow individuals to stay on after the coached session to practice.

Project Description

As a Club they wanted to explore ways of retaining older members who had hung up their rackets and to also offer something different to a wider audience and thereby engaging more with the local community.

As result, Walking Tennis fitted this objective and within 4 months the programme is now well established with the Club offering a Walking Tennis Membership option with organised weekly walking tennis sessions

How did we do it?

We agreed a start date, then we promoted the new initiative with a leaflet drop using the "walking tennis" template and also advertised in the local magazine Henleaze Voice.

Once started the timing of the weekly sessions has been consistent early morning on a Wednesday worked well for the majority of participants as well as the coaching team.

The coaching programme has been based on developing the session dependent on the individuals present, demonstrating what is possible given time and patience.

Anne Dickins (Daytime membership coordinator) and Heather Forrest have worked well together to ensure the programme has become embedded into the life of the club.

In October the Radio Bristol team who present the "Ali Vowles Sports Store" went to the Club. To hear the interview please click on:

[BBC Radio Bristol - Ali Vowles Sports Store - 23 October 2019](#)

Top tips?

- Look at the demographics of your area and club
- Are older members possibly not renewing their membership?
- Discuss with your Committee and Head Coach and consider the benefits

- Ask a key club member to take responsibility for coordinating and marketing the sessions.
- Work with the Walking Tennis Academy (WkTA) team to make a sustainable model
- There is an introductory starter pack for clubs and coaches with all the information a club will need to initiate a walking tennis programme.
- Be prepared to run taster sessions.
- Include in your Open Days.
- Ensure there is a strong emphasis on socialising and fun
- Use WhatsApp to encourage attendance, and to inform about weather and social events
- Understand and get to know the people who attend as they may have a hidden long term health condition

Christine, who attends this group and also the session at Downend and Frenchay Tennis Club said:

'I have Fibromyalgia and a frozen shoulder. I used to play badminton and go swimming but both activities seemed to exacerbate my condition and my joints really ached, walking any distance was agony. I played Tennis 50 years ago at school and would never dream of randomly going to a Tennis Club but I saw these walking tennis sessions advertised and I thought I'd give it a go.

I was so pleased that I did as I have found it a lot of fun and my health has definitely improved and it doesn't hurt my joints which is great. I feel more confident and I'm walking better plus I love being outdoors- a win, win!

It has been a great way to socialise and meet new people – it is lovely to play with others that don't look down on you or get frustrated if you are not that good. The exercises in the sessions are very helpful. The membership is great value and I like to stay on and play after the coaching. It is a very friendly club.'

Heather, LTA Accredited Coaching Assistant, said:

'We are very proud of the development of Walking Tennis at Henleaze and we see it as a great addition to our membership offer.'