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United States Tennis Association Pacific Northwest Explores Exciting Partnership with Camas High School

A Proposed Joint Project Aims to Expand Year-Round Access to Indoor Tennis Courts for High School Athletes and the Greater Community

Camas, WA – August 14th, 2024 – The United States Tennis Association Pacific Northwest (USTA PNW) and Camas High School are excited to announce the exploration of a transformative partnership. This potential collaboration seeks to repurpose the existing outdoor tennis courts at Camas High School, turning them into a year-round indoor tennis facility that would serve both high school athletes and the broader community.

“The game of tennis is a vehicle that can transform lives; tennis promotes life-long fitness and wellness while instilling leadership and sportsmanship. The game also teaches teamwork, life skills, and builds strong families and healthier communities,” said USTA PNW CEO and Executive Director Matthew Warren. “We are overjoyed at the possibility of widening access for both high school students and the public in Camas to be able to play tennis and promote active lifestyles.”

The proposed project, currently in its development, permitting, and planning stages, envisions covering the outdoor courts that are currently home to the Camas High School tennis teams’ practices and matches. Under this plan, when the courts are not in use by the school district, they would be available for public use, hosting programs and recreational play. USTA PNW plans to apply its successful “community hub” model, already in place at the Vancouver Tennis Center, as a blueprint for the Camas initiative. If all goes according to plan, the project is expected to be completed by Fall 2025.

Adapting to the Elements and Increasing Access

With the increasing frequency of extreme weather conditions, including heatwaves and poor air quality due to wildfires, outdoor physical activities like tennis have faced significant challenges. By converting these courts to an indoor facility, the project aims to remove barriers that currently hinder year-round play. Tennis is a lifelong, no-cut sport that offers unique social, mental, and



physical benefits—according to a recent Mayo Clinic study, playing tennis can increase life expectancy by an average of 9.7 years.

“This is an amazing opportunity for our students and community,” said Stephen Baranowski, Assistant Principal and Athletic Director for Camas High School. “Tennis is one of our most popular sports, with over 90 girls participating in our program last year. The sport’s inclusivity, welcoming all skill levels, combined with our region’s wet weather, often limits our athletes’ opportunities to practice and compete. We are thrilled about the investment USTA PNW is proposing to make in our community. This would be a great way to get even more students of all levels involved, and at the same time, support our varsity teams that have won four state championships in the past three years.”

Addressing Equity Challenges in High School Sports

The lack of indoor court access in Camas not only shortens the high school tennis season but also prevents the hosting of critical competitive events such as district and state championships. The boys’ tennis season in the fall is largely unaffected by weather, while the girls’ spring season faces significant disruption. In 2023, the girls’ season saw only 12 playable days due to inclement weather, highlighting the equity challenges this project aims to address.

Camas School District Superintendent John Anzalone, Ed.D., emphasized the potential impact of the partnership: “Teaming up with a trusted organization like USTA PNW can open the door to lasting change in our community. Offering tennis programs year-round would bring joy and benefits to Camas’s students of all ages, promoting inclusivity and providing a welcoming place for everyone to enjoy the lifelong sport of tennis.”

Kelly O’Rourke, Principal of Camas High School, echoed this sentiment, stating, “As a high school principal, a partnership with USTA PNW is the best of both worlds. An indoor facility, especially given our beautiful but damp climate, makes tennis accessible to many of my students year-round. Additionally, the opportunity to provide a community resource solidifies the importance of bringing partners together for the benefit of kids.”