

Tennis West

Community Open Day Manual

Your guide to planning and hosting the perfect day



Table of Contents

<i>Reflection</i>	3
<i>Overview</i>	3
<i>Objectives</i>	3
<i>Benefits</i>	3
<i>Planning</i>	4
<i>Aim</i>	4
<i>Target</i>	4
<i>Roles & Responsibilities</i>	5
<i>Committee</i>	5
<i>Coach</i>	5
<i>Support</i>	6
<i>Tennis West</i>	6
<i>Tennis Australia – Free Tennis Days</i>	6
<i>Photo Consent</i>	6
<i>Welcoming First Impressions</i>	7
<i>Capture & Convert</i>	8
<i>Promotional Ideas</i>	9
<i>Social Media Tips</i>	9
<i>Post Event</i>	10

Reflection: What is your Community Open Day?

If it's just about putting up a few posters around town and then preparing some tea/coffee and some biscuits, then don't bother! There has to be a genuine, widespread desire throughout the club to open the doors to new members and the community, not just to invite your existing members or launch your season. Commitment and enthusiasm are prerequisites to have a great open day. Don't try without them. Got that? Then, let's get going:

Overview

Planning and hosting a Community Open Day is a clever way for your tennis club to connect with local schools and communities. It is the perfect opportunity to extend a warm welcome to both existing and potential players, and to showcase your club programs and activities.

This manual provides an outline of steps and strategies that clubs and coordinators should take into consideration when planning your Community Open Day to ensure you are best positioned to leverage all opportunities.

Objectives

- To promote the club as a welcoming, inclusive and thriving community hub
- To promote tennis club programs, services and offerings within local communities so as to attract new participants
- To provide a fun, social day of tennis at clubs for existing members, new members and non-members alike
- To encourage people of all ages and tennis-playing standards to participate in a fun, free day of tennis

Benefits

- **Participation attraction:** It will attract new participants to your club and motivate existing members to retain their membership
- **Community goodwill, credibility and recognition:** Encouraging people to take up a healthy, social interest improves the community image of your club. Promoting the sport of tennis within the local community as "a game for life".
- **Competitive edge:** Community involvement and the publicity generated by a Community Open Day may give your club/centre/coaching business a competitive edge of other local sporting clubs.

Planning

To run a successful Community Open Day, it is vital that everyone at your club is enthusiastic and involved in the planning and decision-making process.

It is a good idea to hold a meeting with your club committee, coach and other key representatives to make sure there is adequate support for the event before you commit. Circulate this “Community Open Day Manual” before the meeting for everyone to learn more about what the event will entail and allow them to make an informed decision about taking part.

Once you have the club’s support you’re ready to start planning!

Aim

Before you start, have a think about what you want to achieve out of your Community Open Day. This will help you ensure you choose activities and promotional strategies that are most relevant to your target audience. Your club may have a specific aim, for example:

- Recruit more participants to the club’s program or events
- Recruit more participants to the club’s Friday social play competition

Or a more general aim such as ‘to encourage families to our family friendly Community Open Day’.

Target

Now that you know *what* you want to get out of our event, be clear about *who* you want to target. Families, students, singles or beginners? Whoever you decide to target, ensure you:

- Reach the right audience
- Give them a great experience on the day
- Keep in touch

At the end of this manual is an “Aim/Target” worksheet which will assist you in working through your goal and target.

Roles & Responsibilities

Committee

There are a number of roles during the planning stage and on the day that need to be taken care of. Ensure you have a clear plan of who will be doing what so all tasks are covered and that your committee members feel involved in the process. Consider the following:

- Who will plan the overall event
- Who will plan and coordinate each of the activities
- Who will promote the event
- Who will greet / register attendees of the Community Open Day
- Who will 'sign up' new participants to your club
- Who will organize the morning/afternoon tea / BBQ etc
- Who will MC if applicable
- Who will organize equipment loans if applicable
- Who will organize signage on the day
- Who will take photos
- Who will manage the budget

Coach

Coaches are often the face of the club and spend the most time there. It is important if your club has a Coach that they are actively involved on the day. Responsibilities may include:

- Run or coordinate ANZ Tennis Hot Shots activities
- Mingle with attendees and speak with parents about participation options for their children
- Mingle with attendees and speak with individuals about participation options available at the club
- Run a "Return the coach's serve" activity
- Ensure information about coaching timetable/options at the club is available and up to date

Support

Tennis West – Participation Leaders (PL) <https://www.tennis.com.au/wa/clubs/participation-leaders>

It is important to advise your Participation Leader (PL) about your Community Open Day and planned activities. Your PL can assist with ideas and best practices, provide advice on local marketing to your community and can support by sharing any social media promotional activities.

Also speak with your PL about the possibility of borrowing equipment and signage to assist you on the day.

Tennis Australia – Free Tennis Days

Any club who is affiliated with Tennis West can take part, and you will have the support of both your local area's PL and Tennis Australia throughout the entire process.

By registering your event you will gain access to a range of different resources to ensure your Free Tennis Day (Community Open Day) runs smoothly, and attracts as many people as possible.

On registration, clubs will receive a merchandise pack complete with giveaways and promotional items to enhance their Community Open Day experience.

For more information and to register, visit: <https://www.tennis.com.au/hostafreetennisday>

Photo Consent

Taking photos or videos at your events are a great way to publicise your club's activities, and people often like to see photos of their community having fun together. However, you should make sure the people you are photographing know they are being photographed and understand how the images will be used. Remember that people might have their own reasons for not wanting themselves or their children to be photographed, and it is important to respect this.

The below website provides some important considerations for sports clubs when acquiring and displaying images of children and young people on social media, websites, online, in publications or other mediums.

http://play-by-the-rules.s3.amazonaws.com/Resources/R040_Taking_images_of_children.pdf

You will find an 'Image Consent Poster' in the appendix which you can use to display at the entrance and around your venue to advise attendees, along with a specific consent form you can use when taking photos of children.



Welcoming First Impressions

Think back to when you first visited a club, when everything and everyone was unfamiliar. Newcomers to your club may feel uncertain about how to dress, behave and what reaction they will receive when they walk through the door for the first time.

It is important that your club acknowledges this and actively seeks to provide the best possible first impression to newcomers in order to alleviate that uncertainty and ensure visitors feel welcome, in turn viewing the club experience as a positive one and developing the confidence to return. Here are some ideas on how to achieve this:

- Ensure your event is marketed as “open for all” to encourage new-comers
- Appoint members to greet people, offer to show them around the club and tell them about the activities on offer
- Appoint members to mingle with people during the day and actively invite them to return. These members should inform visitors about opportunities for future involvement at the club
- Ask members to keep an eye out for people who arrive alone. Make an extra effort to have a good chat with them and perhaps even invite them for a hit
- Have a stand or table with a member present to hand out club brochures and answer questions
- Organize a follow up event. This could be a social evening, trivia night or beginners’ morning. It’s a good idea to organize this before your Community Open Day so you can promote this follow up event on the day.
- Provide an opportunity for people to socialize and relax. You want your club to be an enjoyable place to spend time, even when you’re not playing tennis.

It is also important to make your club welcoming and inclusive to people who traditionally have not accessed tennis. Indigenous Australians make up 2.5% of our population, 19% of our population is living with a disability, 26% of the population were born overseas, 16% of the population are aged 65+ and up to 11% of Australians may identify as LGBTI+.

Developing strong, inclusive participation initiatives will provide huge opportunities to grow your club.

Some ideas to help your club be inclusive and accessible to everyone in the community:

- Include images of disability and diversity on your club website and in your communications
- Fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags
- Invite people from different cultural backgrounds to participate, volunteer or provide food at your Community Open Day
- Consider partnering with a local Indigenous or Multicultural program provider
- Contact your local council with regards to Seniors Groups that you could partner with

Capture & Convert

Memberships at your club are an important source of income and provide individuals and families with a great sense of club identity and community.

However, this notion is changing and people are looking at memberships with more scrutiny, asking about value for money, and looking for new ways of “joining in” without a solid commitment. We encourage clubs to evaluate their current membership models and club offerings and to establish choices to suit changing needs and different wants.

On the Community Open Day your club potentially has a captive audience to “win over”. It is a great chance to be creative by offering new initiatives or some “one off” deals that whet the appetite for the longer term, and to start establishing communications with potential members.

Some ideas to convert people on the day to sign up include:

- Recording of key information of attendees for further follow-up, invitation or promotional communication
- Waiving a percentage of normal fees for membership on the day
- Creating special offers for different categories of membership
- Acting upon a commitment to your coach that gives the coach free court hire if he/she signs up all his/her clients as members
- Adding incentives to register on the day such as free club shirt or sponsor driven prizes
- Ensuring you have plenty of information flyers and membership forms available to capitalize on expressions of interest
- Extending an invitation to all non-members to come along to a subsequent social tennis opportunity
- Offering free or discounted court hire for attendees on the day
- Free or discounted drink at the club house when paying for court hire
- “Loyalty card” for casual court hire – eg: Pay for 5 court hire, get the 6th Free
- Following up attendees via email, phone call etc to thank them for supporting the event and to remind them of future participation opportunities

Promotional Ideas

- Contact your Participation Leader to discuss some of your ideas
- Involve your club coach and his/her assistants and ask him/her to hand out flyers to their coaching clients
- Contact local Primary and High Schools to place advertisements in newsletters and place flyers on notice boards. You could also contact Tennis West's Schools Development Coordinator to find participating Partner Schools
- Drop a flyer in local letterboxes
- Contact the local newspaper and place an advertisement or use the free "What's On" section
- Send a media release to the local radio/TV station
- Write an article for your local newspaper and attach some photos of your club
- Place promotional posters on the windows and noticeboards of local businesses (with permission)
- Place a flyer on the club noticeboard
- Send an invitation to your local MP and council/shire
- Send invitations to your existing membership base and encourage them to bring a 'non-member' friend
- Invite local identities to take place in an exhibition match
- Liaise with other local community groups (fire brigade, local government, Rotary, Lions Club etc) who may wish to be involved
- Contact local businesses for some product to use as prizes in exchange for some signage / cross-promotion
- Promote via club website and social media channels
- Create an "Event" on your Club's Facebook page for your Community Open Day and ask members to 'share' to reach a wider audience

Tips for Social Media

- Set goals: know what you want to get out of your social media so you can use it accordingly.
- Your Facebook/Twitter/Instagram page is only as effective as you make it: don't just set it up and expect things to happen, you need to use it effectively for it to be effective.
- Stimulate the conversations: Ask questions in your posts to engage your member base and stimulate conversations between the club and its members.
- Integrate communication: use social media in addition to other methods of communication; keep the club email and newsletter, and use social media to increase the quantity and quality of communication.
- Be unique and keep updating regularly: keep in contact with members, make them aware of events, achievements and results.
- Post multimedia material: people are moving towards listening and watching rather than reading.
- Participate with other pages: Find related pages and start actively commenting on those pages' posts. This will build relationships between clubs and widens your audience reach
- Don't just post for a specific age group: diversify your posts so there is 'something for all'

Post Event

After all of your hard work has paid off and you have run a successful open day it can be tempting to relax and put the event to the back of your mind until next year's planning. However, don't stop now! There are a couple of key activities that should take place after your event to set you up well for the following year.

- **Show off your hard work!**
 - Take those photos and videos from the day, and display them on your Club's social media pages and website. You may reach an audience that did not make it on the day but are influenced into checking out your club by the sheer amount of fun you exhibit!
 - Send a couple of key photos and a short write up to your local newspaper
- **Contact your attendees.**
 - You have now hopefully reached a new audience within your community. Now is the time to continue your contact and keep that relationship warm. Follow up your event with everything you promised while it is fresh in their memories; thank them for coming, send any additional information, invite to future club events, membership options
- **Debrief the event.**
 - Gather your committee and discuss what worked really well and where there are areas where you could improve for the next Open Day. Be honest with yourselves, remember, this is not personal criticism, you are working towards a better event next year for all involved.
 - Make sure notes are taken and saved somewhere for when the time comes to plan next year's event.
- **Thank your volunteers! (And any other VIP's – Mayor, Council Member, Prize Donors etc)**

Without your volunteers your event wouldn't happen, so take the time to thank them properly. A little appreciation goes a long way.
- **Contact your Tennis West Participation Leader!**
 - We love to hear good news stories and examples of successful and innovative Community Open Days!
 - If you feel your event wasn't so successful, speak with your Participation Leader for advice about next year.
 - Tennis West has Volunteer Thank You Certificates that we can send out for you to personally thank your hard working Community Open Day Volunteers