



# Irvington Club News



February 2021



## Notes From the General Manager

Dearest Irvington Club Members,

We are into a new year and I have new hope! I know the strain this pandemic has put on so many and I was hopeful that we would follow the same restrictions as the state of Washington. Unfortunately, the new clarifications came out last Friday and were not even close to being like Washington or what we had in place before. I am told they will re-evaluate every two weeks. As things unfold, we will make adjustments, so please read your emails. I would love nothing more than to see the courts filled again and all of you here!

I continue to cut costs wherever I can, keeping our overhead as minimal as possible. I am devoted to giving our members as much as I can while following the guidelines. Everyone has been great and expressed your appreciation. That means a lot to me and my Team.

I will be putting out more information weekly and feel free to call anytime.

Stay Safe and Healthy,

Barbara

## Our Conversation “Why Racial Diversity Matters”

Listen again and share a review of our zoom conversation

“Why racial diversity matters”

Requests were made to resend and share the conversation that took place via Zoom on January 14, 2021 about why racial diversity in a community enhances the experience for everyone and why understanding our own and others' racial identity is critical to creating a club environment where all are welcome, valued, and included. The presenters focused on best practices, shared strategies on how communities can become more inclusive and can challenge both explicit as well as more subtle forms of racial bias.

**Click on this link to view:**

[https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/TVtk-rQd7xUArWfX97r3HErFnhI3k\\_vWFKqGqA18qpouolfVFImy2MAHd1VBtDa.xUFBWcHYUeBtCvjW](https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/TVtk-rQd7xUArWfX97r3HErFnhI3k_vWFKqGqA18qpouolfVFImy2MAHd1VBtDa.xUFBWcHYUeBtCvjW)

Passcode: c?i=W23=

**Share:** If you are interested in writing a review of the conversation, sharing your comments or wish to continue the conversation, we invite you to do so by letting us know. Send to Kevin @ [khanzlik@irvingtonclub.com](mailto:khanzlik@irvingtonclub.com)

Thank you!

# Calendar of Events

## February

2nd ~ Groundhog Day

15th ~ President's Day

15th ~ Member sign-up for March Jr. Tennis

22nd ~ Non-member sign-up for March Jr. Tennis

## March

12th ~ St. Patrick's Day

20th ~ Spring Begins

27th ~ Passover Begins

28th ~ Palm Sunday



## MLK National Day of Service

Thank you to those of you who volunteered or were involved in some kind of service on Monday January 18, 2021. We asked members to share some of their volunteering:

Linda Paulk shared in her own words how she helped at the beach:

"I spent my afternoon and the next morning hours mourning. Mourning the sight of so much plastic among the ocean flotsam and jetsam washed up on Manzanita's beach. Although the weather was beautiful for beachcombing, it was as depressing as it was eye-opening, becoming acutely aware that all those billions of plastic particles are the norm rather than the exception.

...am going to create a mosaic of some sort with what was gathered and moving forward, do my best to cut down relying on plastic."



The Martinez Griffin family made sandwiches for Blanchet House:



Terry Folen: "It has been super stormy at the coast the past few weeks with some major tide surges (King Tides). This has brought a lot of debris onto the beach. Alisa and I spent this morning picking up trash that had washed up in honor of Dr. King."

**Thank you for volunteering!**

## 2021 Tournament Dates

Here are the dates we have set for this year's tournaments:

The Oregon State Senior Men's Indoor Tennis Championships, March 11-14, 2021

The Junior Club Championships presented by Big League Chew Bubblegum, April 22-25, 2021

The Mixed Doubles Club Championships, May 14-22, 2021

The Irvington Club Open Championships presented by adidas, June 15-20, 2021

USTA Level 6 The Irvington Club Junior Championships, August 12-15, 2021

The 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Carolyn Lumber Tennis Championships, October 3-16, 2021

# From The Tennis Archives

## Celebration of Black History Month

We thought this would be a good time to recognize Marion Blackburn who was a member of the Irvington Club back in the 1970's. Over the years, Marion has done a great deal to open up tennis opportunities for members of the African American community in this area. The following is a profile of Marion's involvement with tennis taken from Mike Stone's excellent book published in 2015 entitled, "PDX 10s - Tennis in Portland, Oregon, 1886 - 1990".

Marion Blackburn grew up in Huntsville, Alabama, a town with two tennis courts but, in segregated society, African Americans weren't able to use them. Blackburn recalls walking by the courts and seeing college professors from Alabama A&M College playing on the clay courts, using starch to mark the lines on the unmaintained dirt courts. Blackburn, seven years old at the time, was allowed to use the courts after the professors were done. But public housing would later be built on the site and the courts disappeared.

Blackburn attended Alabama A&M College (later a university) and was asked to play on a ragtag tennis team. ("Nobody could play," Blackburn laughingly recalled).

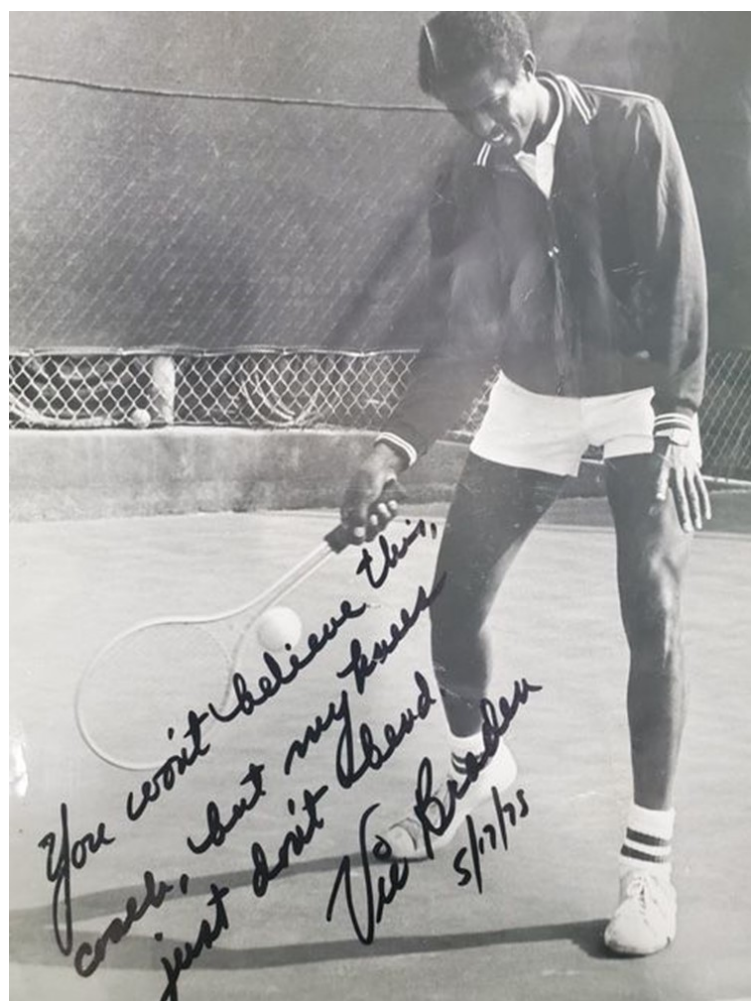
Blackburn moved to Portland in the early 1960's and met Nate Nickerson, an African American player and active member of the Irvington Club, serving on the Board of Trustees and various committees. Nickerson would routinely beat Blackburn. But Blackburn was hooked on the game and credits Nickerson and Jim Jackson with improving his game. He would later play in the Army where he reached a doubles final with a partner from Indiana University. Blackburn returned to Portland and opened a small wood manufacturing plant but tennis was still his passion. He found a small warehouse at John's Landing with a 10 foot ceiling where he opened his first club, Tennis Lessons Inc., with two narrow courts on a concrete floor that were suitable for lessons but not play. Two years later he had more than 200 students in group lessons.

Blackburn saw a trend, he and his staff would do all the instruction and then the players would turn around and join one of the private clubs (Blackburn was a member of the Irvington Club). It was time to open his own club. Building the facility from scratch, Blackburn opened Tennis Town on Beaverton-Hillsdale Highway in 1977, later renamed Raleigh Hills Racquet and Health Club and now the Portland Athletic Club. According to Blackburn, he is the only African American owner of a private tennis club in the country.

During the 1970's and 1980's, Blackburn was a fixture on the amateur Pacific Northwest tournament circuit. He was ranked in the Pacific Northwest 35s for years and won the Oregon State men's 35s numerous times. In 2015, Blackburn still played regularly at his club but his tournament days are behind him. The vacant lot adjacent to the Portland Athletic Club main building has been sold and apartments have been built.

Steve Hall

Chair of the Oregon Tennis Historical Committee



## Walter's Wisdom

### Keeping the Backhand Simple

Having a great backhand starts with having the correct grip. Pros use many variations of the backhand grip. Some way more extreme than others. Observing the pros strike their different backhands and trying to use similar grips at the club level is the difficult part.

Most people are right-handed tennis players so I am going to talk as if the reader is right-handed. Simply do the opposite if you are one of the lucky lefties out there.

For the two handed backhand first make sure your left hand is side by side with the right hand down at the butt cap of the racquet handle. This is important because your left arm is the driving force and pushes your arm through the ball. This allows more extension with the left arm. Your left arm should be close to the forehand grip as if you are hitting a left-handed forehand. Ideal would be making sure your elbows are both close to your body. If your elbows are away from your body, simply bring your elbows together and adjust your left-hand grip so it is more comfortable. [Click here \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6WyMFz4ynl4\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6WyMFz4ynl4) to see the pros hitting the two-hander in slow motion and try to notice the hands placement and elbows at the beginning of the shot through extension.

The one-handed backhand is just as effective and should be hit with both the index and middle knuckle on the top of the grip if your racquet is perpendicular to the ground. At a minimum, keep your base knuckle of your index finger on top of the grip, then you are doing great. The more you move your knuckle to your left, the more the racquet face will close and it will be easier to create top spin, but also difficult to get up on the ball and hit it over the net. You will really need to brush the ball low to high with the strings of your racquet. [Click here \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bNeN2XevGLM\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bNeN2XevGLM) to see some great one-handed backhands.

If your goal is to have a backhand that your opponent can't pick on and win easy points then spend the time making sure you have the correct grips and then repetition, repetition, repetition.

## Get Involved

**The Community Involvement Committee (CIC)** is seeking additional members who wish to join us to help with the work of the committee.

*The Community Involvement Committee will be comprised of a Board member who will chair the committee along with the General Manager and at least two club members at-large. Membership will be for at least two years and longer if members are interested.*

*The purpose of the committee will be to support organizations in our community that members will voluntarily assist with donations or activities. The chair will report the minutes to the Board. The committee will meet monthly or as determined by the Committee Chair.*

**The Social Justice Sub-Committee (SJC)** is also looking for members interested in helping with its work for a one-year or two-year term.

*This Social Justice sub-committee is an **advisory** group and is **not a policy making group**. The subcommittee through the CIC will share its minutes, work and activities planned with the BOT.*

*The committee will exist as long as there is a need for the work. The CIC recommends unanimously that this subcommittee have as broad a scope as possible, and it initially will begin to address the pressing concerns of racial equality but to keep in focus that all areas of diversity and inclusiveness need to be addressed as well.*

If you are interested in joining one of these committees, please email Kevin @ [khanzlik@irvingtonclub.com](mailto:khanzlik@irvingtonclub.com) and identify which committee you wish to work with.



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**Hello friends, family, and community!**


**I have made a big change!**



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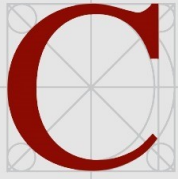


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