

Sea Palms welcomes youth to tennis clinic

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Sarah Black has years of experience in introducing youth to the sport of tennis, and she is now putting it to use at newly renovated clay courts at Sea Palms West as the club's new tennis pro.

A USPTA certified teaching professional, Black taught tennis at the University Tennis Academy in Atlanta for five years before making the move to St. Simons Island a year ago. Since then, Black has held youth clinics at Epworth Park through the St. Simons Island Tennis Academy, and now she's taken on a similar role at Sea Palms.

"Sea Palms didn't have a tennis pro, but they have courts, and they just really haven't had any kind of tennis programming in a long time, so I just saw there might be a need for that," Black said. "I'm excited to offer some new stuff, and the members have been excited about it too."

Beginning in March as a way to gauge the public interest in junior tennis lessons, Sea Palms has held a weekly youth clinic every Wednesday from 3:30-5:30 p.m. with one hour session open to prospective tennis players between ages 4-6, and the other for players ages 7-10.

Thus far, the reception has been positive with six to eight kids participating in each clinic, if not more.

Black was a competitive tennis player herself as a junior, and her experience has fueled her desire to develop up-and-coming players from beginner to advance.

"I like teaching kids, the younger ones especially, because you just see them improve so much week to week," Black said. "They just soak up all the information, and they just get excited too. They love being out there and trying new things."

"Just seeing the excitement in their face when they hit the ball over the net; it's cute."

Black's service will likely also go a long way towards improving prep tennis in the Golden Isles as more players jump into the sport at a young age.

Future tennis teams at Brunswick High, Frederica Academy or Glynn Academy may be able to look back at youth clinics as the catalyst for their success.

"That's one of the main things too: growing sports so that our high schools have good teams," Black said. "Starting them out at a young age, so that way they want to keep going, and they have different routes to do that."

Youth clinics are open to Sea Palms members each Wednesday. Summer camps begin in June and are available to non-members and the public. Contact Black at (478) 998-0294 for more information.