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TENNIS: LeagueTennis.com brings players together

By **TOM BEHRENS**
Chronicle Correspondent

- **What:** LeagueTennis.com , a Web-based service to help tennis players find playing partners on available courts
- **When:** League sign-up for the upcoming fall season ends Oct. 5, while league play starts Oct. 7 and lasts for five weeks.
- **How much:** The seasons are five weeks and cost \$25. Boys & Girls Clubs of America receives \$5 of the registration fee and \$1 every year after that.

For more information, visit the Web site at www.LeagueTennis.com .

The use of the internet by businesses has long been known as a means to reach a bigger audience. An organization known as LeagueTennis.com, whose physical location is in Sandy Springs, GA, is one of the newest entities to use the Web as means of reaching people, in this instance, Houston tennis players.

LeagueTennis.com describes itself as a flexible tennis league, providing a format for players to schedule their matches at a convenient time and place. There are four leagues a year.

Through access to the league's Web site, players can find other players in their neighborhood and with comparable skill levels to schedule matches.

Betsy Heagle, Managing Partner & CMO of LeagueTennis.com describes how the Web-based scheduling program works.

"Basically you get to schedule tennis on your terms, schedule your matches at your own times," she said. "When you log on to the Web site and create a profile you select your home court. Out of your five matches(over five weeks), either two or three matches will be at your home facility and the other two or three will be at an away facility.

"We match you up with partners of your skill level and the zip code or area that you live in town. For example, if you are playing in Memorial Park you probably are not going to play an opponent from The Woodlands."

Many of the Houston Parks & Recreation tennis courts are already busy with USTA and other leagues. For example, in Memorial Park, the concern is whether or not there'll be enough availability for even LeagueTennis.com matches. But, anticipating this, Heagle visited with Emily Shafer with the Houston City Parks Department about tennis court availability.

"In the off peak times Parks & Recreation courts would be available," said Shafer. "We already have existing leagues using our courts in the evenings, but during the day we have available space.

"Availability on Saturday and Sundays depends on the number of tournaments. If there are no tournaments, usually the afternoons are a little less busy on the weekends. Courts will be booked and I think that will be one of their challenges in trying to enter the market."

LeagueTennis.com organizers say where to play is only restricted to the limitations of knowledge of local courts of the players who sign up.

"Any individual player, or two players for doubles, who sign up, chooses their own facility," said Tricia Reeks, Managing Partner and COO. "Subdivision or neighborhood courts are choices. High school and college courts, private club membership courts are options."

Finding courts should not be a problem. League sign-up for the upcoming fall season ends Oct. 5, while league play starts Oct. 7. There are league openings for singles, doubles and mixed doubles. The seasons are five weeks and cost \$25.

In an extra bonus, Boys & Girls Clubs of America receives \$5 of the registration fee and \$1 every year after that.

According to April Anthony, Director of Development for Corporate Southeast, Boys and Girls Club of America does not have a national tennis program, but does have local clubs that run tennis programs.

"It seems to be a new sport for the young kids now," said Anthony. "The money will be used to carry out our mission to 4,100 clubs across the nation."

"We are excited to work with LeagueTennis because we would love to have something like this in our future. We are also talking with the USTA to see how we can partner with them as well."

More information about LeagueTennis.com is available at www.leaguetenis.com.