

Region VII Recap '08/09 & plans for '09/10

ATLANTA

'08/'09 was an excellent year for Atlanta paddle, with more events, players, sponsorships and play than prior years. We began in October with a Kick-off party at the now famous Whale Bar (at Steve Gareleck's private court), targeted toward the best tennis players in Atlanta. Some 60 guests were treated to happy hour, food, a paddle raffle, the PPL sticker challenge and the premier of the "Dawn of Paddle" video, directed by Rem Reynolds and starring Andre Janasik and Paul Mancini.

On November 1st Brian Uihlein, Scott Mansager, Mike Rahaly, Rod Workman and Mark Fischl came to town for an Exhibition and clinic which attracted 150 people or so, at the new platform venue at Cherokee Town Club. To advertize the event, we made another video trailer which was a hit. During the event, we did a "teach the teachers" session for local pros who are preparing to offer platform tennis lessons to players, as well as a sponsor's breakfast.

A week later we kicked off the 4th season of play for the PPL, which we started 3 weeks earlier than prior years, which turned out to be the right call. Even in Atlanta, by November people are ready to switch to paddle. We also added 4 more matches to the week's schedule, for a total of 16, including week/day and weekend play, despite the loss of a court at Piedmont Driving Club. As well we added 2 teams for a total of 6, and changed the format of play to be more flexible to player scheduled. The changes were well received which resulted in League play up by about 30 percent this season. We had a total of about 150 players paying to play, including non club members who pay a fixed guest fee.

In mid-January we held the 4th Annual Peachtree Invitational, which this year became an National Ranking Tournament. We had an oversubscribed draw of 26 teams, representing 8 states. It was a 2 day event as always, with a party at the Lauer's including a prize raffle and Wilson paddle.

Our League Championship Feb 28th capped the season with 64 players competing all day long, team against team to determine the season winner, which was won by the Sandy Springs, expansion team.

We will again do a season end survey to help guide our League plans and recruitment strategy for next year.

Our strategic plans are focused on:

1. New court projects; Druid Hills, Dunwoody Country Club and Racquet Club of the South, plus Piedmont Driving Club
2. Driving up the plays at Cherokee through more effort focused on women & couples
3. Getting kids on the court

4. More “points of light” – more people taking an active role in driving ideas and events and initiatives
5. PI Tournament for 2010 – either Jan 16/17 or Jan 23/24
6. League Championship – Sat Feb 27th