

Lessons learnt before, during and after the Good News Tennis Tournament held 25 & 27 June 16

1. This tournament players threatened to withdraw from the tournament if they were not guaranteed challenging competitive matches. Players wanted to know who had entered before they entered. Weaker players requested to play in stronger groups. My first reaction to the crisis was to phone Frans Cronje from Curro for advise. His advice applied to coaches when he said the problem is cyclical and you have to make sure Laerskool Garsfontein provided players each year to feed the system. John Laffne de Jager was empathetic and encouraged me to continue to seek a solution by making the tournaments unique and fun. Annette du Plooy said I must approach strong academies for players. Graham Oosterlig said I must get prizes to attract the top players. I phoned many old Garsies who were at Varsity and asked them to play. Although it was nice speaking only a few showed interest. I made a list of those who promised to consider the proposition and sent an e-mail to all of the strong players. The e-mail published their names and their tennis accomplishments and encouraged them to play. There was one positive reaction to that e-mail. To ensure I did not deceive the two strong players in the tournament I sent out a seedings list of all the players who had paid, said yes or were still uncertain. This was combined with the plan I devised that two players who won their group could progress to the next group on the Saturday. After midnight each day in the last week greater detail of the plan was revealed as I found solutions to the challenges. The three groups were merged by seeding all the players by intuition and not ratings because many of the players were not rated. Near the end I changed the top three seedings according to ratings, tournaments won and intuition. The Platinum group where most of the problems were I decided the 6th match would be a pro-set between the #1&2 and #3&4 and #4&5. As there are only three courts with lights I thought of letting the two promoted players from the lower group rest and go home. I was hoping that ending with matches of strength against strength would let the players feel the tournament was more competitive.
2. A new innovation was to start the green dot ball group an hour later in the winter because it was still dark at 06h00. There are several parents who are reluctant to get up so early and there is always at least one player who withdraws because 06h00 is too early. To make up the time each group only plays 5 matches instead of six. The 15th game ends at 17h00 and then the top 6 in the platinum group plays a pro-set that ends under lights.
3. I believe parents are spoilt by my leniency and do not pay their entry fees by EFT before the time. It is a planning nightmare for me because 48 hours before the tournament I have to phone them again to hear if they are committed, have they read the e-mails and do they know what time their child must arrive at the courts. Some parents then say they have been too busy to do the EFT payment and promise to do so later. Some parents say they will pay at the tournament. Ten percent of parents who promised to pay at the tournament still owe me money today. The reason for early EFT payments is that those parents have committed to the tournament and they lose their money if they withdraw. I am in a vulnerable position because in the current economic climate it is becoming harder each tournament to fill the field. Last tournament one of the groups were cancelled. This tournament the three groups were merged with the only advantage that the enthusiastic players will play more tennis. Those that achieve will play double the matches if they fit enough. When the achievers rest

other players will take their place. Getting replacement players takes organisation and the players sitting out need to be patient as they hope the achievers need a rest.

4. Early in June 2016 I was summoned to the Garsie head of Sport's office to tell him of the Good News Tennis Ministries requirements for a tennis year. I trust he told the head master of how I served the school e.g. arranging four championships per year. To date I have received no feed back.
5. I must still send the draft contract to André van Staden. My daughter does not make time to edit it.
6. I booked the Silver Lakes Dros for a prize giving on Thursday, 8 September (18h00). I sent a concept to everyone on the data base and two families said they would come. In spite of the poor response I want to do the calculations to determine who the prize winners are and publish them before the prize giving. The prize giving must go ahead even if only the bursary winner attends. If there is enough interest there will be a buffet supper so the speeches and prize giving can be given between courses. There will be report cards based on results only which will be handed out and published on the website. It is hoped the 7 ladder report cards will be graphically represented.
7. I have turned down the offer to arrange the Buffelspoort Senior Tournament in September 2016 because I want to make a success of the prize giving. To compile the report cards so that merit prizes can be presented based on results will take up all of my time after 11 July 2016 when the season ends.
8. After the tournament the strong Platinum players appreciated the more competitive format.

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