

The Value of Internships



courtesy Hans Römer

by Hans Römer

A PTR Professional 5A, USTA High Performance Coach, and USPTA Master Professional, Hans is a graduate of the prestigious CIOS Sport College in The Netherlands with a degree in Physical Education. He has been a speaker at several PTR International Tennis Symposia, his articles have appeared in numerous tennis publications, including TennisPro, and he was featured in On-Court with USPTA on the Tennis Channel. Hans currently serves as Director of Tennis at The Dunes Club in Narragansett, Rhode Island.

Back in the 1600s, during the Dutch Golden Age in my native Netherlands, well known painters, such as Rembrandt and Vermeer, didn't become famous upon completion of just one painting. It took them many years of dedication and intense, laborious work under the tutelage of a 'master' who taught them the necessary skills under the so called Master-Apprentice system.

In the Netherlands, and many other European countries, that system - after four centuries - still holds up. Not only for painters, but also across many disciplines, including tennis teachers and coaches! The required internship (hands on) of the certification process plays an integral and important part of the development of aspiring tennis teaching professionals.

These internships are a win-win situation for all three parties involved. Respectively the certifying organization (usually the national tennis federation or association), the mentor (a well established and respected director of tennis or head pro) and last, but not least, the student who is eager to become a successful tennis teaching professional.

Both PTR and USPTA have taken positive steps toward mandatory continuing education (after initial certification), but the current certification process does not require an extended internship. Professional Tennis Management (PTM) programs around the country have also embraced this concept wholeheartedly, and each summer place dozens of young enthusiastic students into internships under the supervision of established tennis professionals. Many of these students are lucky enough to score a longer term internship or better yet, upon graduation - a job!

As seasonal Director of Tennis at The Dunes Club, I have been very fortunate to be one of those mentors. The success of my adult and junior programs, overall member participation and pro shop sales, is a result of the professional and energetic dedication of my youthful PTM interns!

How does this work? First, your facility must be considered and approved as a suitable internship location by one or more PTM programs. Upon approval, PTM Program Directors Mark Tarentino at Methodist University and Derek Ameel at Ferris State University, share your information about your facility with their students, allowing them to research to see if it is a good fit. The next step for the students is to compose and send an email, cover letter and resume to the mentor. In other words, applying for a job, just like in the real world. After reviewing the submitted materials, the mentor conducts interviews with select candidates, often through Skype or FaceTime, and may extend an offer to one or more candidates. PTM provides an agreement, and in my case, I offer the student a very attractive financial package.

The Dunes Club is a seasonal facility that explodes in the summer months from 20 to 200 employees, so it is a tremendous benefit that my club offers housing and two meals per day to my hard working and dedicated interns.

Throughout the summer, I mentor my PTM interns, providing leadership by motivating and challenging, supporting and critiquing, educating and teaching, guiding, advising and, of course, sharing humor. All skills that I would like them to emulate. At end of the summer, it gives me great pride to provide each student with an evaluation covering their performance in a variety of disciplines. My evaluation, combined with their experiences, are part of the requirements to finalize and complete their PTM internship.

In my opinion, to get the most out of this experience, embrace the interns as full members of your staff. Allow them to connect with the members and other related departments, thus giving them room for professional and personal growth. Needless to say, sending them to Court 17 with some juniors, without any supervision, is not what a viable internship should be. With all these valuable experiences, it is no wonder that PTM guarantees a 100% job placement upon graduation. With several internships and a bachelor's degree in their pocket, they enter the tennis industry extremely well prepared. Some are even offered a head pro position right out the gate!

In conclusion, I highly recommend investigating opportunities and possibilities to welcome a PTM intern into your facility. As established professionals, we are all giving back to tennis in a variety of ways (e.g., fundraisers, school tennis, etc.). After extremely positive experiences with both Methodist University and Ferris State University, I view the internships we offer at The Dunes Club as paying forward.

For more information please visit:
<https://www.usta.com/en/home/coach/finding-the-pros-of-tomorrow.html>





VOTE

PTR Board of Directors Ballot

The following people have been selected by PTR's Nominating Committee to serve a three (3) year term on PTR's Board of Directors. You may nominate another candidate to be added to the ballot, as long as 50 other PTR members endorse that candidate. Any additional nominations must be filed with the PTR Board Secretary no later than February 1, 2019. All current members may vote by returning this ballot with signature or vote in person at the Annual Meeting. The election will take place at PTR's Annual General Membership Meeting, February 12, 2019.

Leo Alonso
 Lynne Rolley

Write-in Nominee _____

Your Name _____

Your Signature _____

Ballot must be returned by February 1, 2019 • Fax it to 843-686-2033
 or Mail to PTR, PO Box 4739, Hilton Head Island, SC 29938 USA