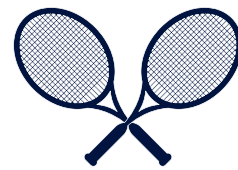


JC Member Feature: Josh Conlin



It's difficult to get to know people virtually. Whether over the phone or on Zoom or Google Meet, everyone has had to adapt to getting to know people through different mediums. However, Josh Conlin is not one of these people.

Conlin's passion for tennis and tennis in Northern California in particular is evident in any setting.

"Tennis is a beautiful sport for a lifetime," he says. "Tennis teaches you a lot about yourself and about other people too. That's what's beautiful about the sport."

Conlin's own father passed away when he was eight months old and his mother remarried when he was still young. That man just happened to be the local pro at the tennis club in Oakdale where they lived and the way he guided Conlin when it came to tennis went on to shape how he raises his own sons and his philosophy on junior tennis.

"He never put any pressure on me at all," Conlin said. "He didn't care if I won or lost, he liked just hanging out with me. I've lost more heartbreakers than you can imagine and won a few, and I love the game still and I'm 53 years old."

Between his three sons, Conlin and his wife have traveled to hundreds of tournaments over the years, but they've made sure their sons are enjoying the game first and foremost.

"I've done a good job as a parent if they're still playing when they're 30, 40, 60 or 70," he explains. "It all gets down to having a good perspective about the game. This game is a long journey."

That's not to say he didn't have some hard lessons instilled during those years though. Conlin remembers a tournament he was signed up for when he was 14 that his parents, both working, forgot to take him to. It was completely unintentional but that got him a date in front of the Northern California Tennis Association by himself where he explained that they'd simply forgotten.

"They suspended me for 90 days or something like that," he recalls. "And Peter Herb, who ran the whole organization at the time, said 'You know, I totally believe you. It's an accident, it happens. But you're being suspended because the other family showed up, drove, and waited and it was a huge inconvenience for them.' That's a lesson. That never happens nowadays."

Stories like that are what make Conlin who he is and close friends like Craig Kardon, who coached the likes of CoCo Vandeweghe and Coco Gauff, have been hearing them for years.

"He starts with 'I've got a quick story for you and 30 minutes in, you're falling asleep,'" Kardon jokes. "In all seriousness, he's kind and passionate about his work. He'll do anything to help people. And he loves tennis, I've never seen a guy who loves tennis more than Joshua Conlin."

That love of tennis and his relationships across Northern California tennis have turned years and untold hours of volunteering for USTA NorCal. Conlin currently serves as the treasurer of the Executive Committee, the chair of the Budget and Finance Committee, the chair of the Junior Council, and is a member of the Employee Relations Committee.

This is on top of a successful lighting business that keeps him busy lighting courts across the United States.

"It's been a huge part of my life and it's still going on," Conlin says. "I've seen it all in junior tennis, and tennis in general."

Whether it's match timing, sportsmanship or costs, Conlin has seen everything and that's why he ultimately got involved to shepherd change in areas he saw through his sons' playing careers. And it's his passion for tennis that fuels all those hours of volunteering.

"A lot of my closest friendships have been established on the tennis court and through tennis," he says. "That's another beauty of the game of tennis."