

Belize Tennis Association - History and Legal Status

The sport of tennis started to be played by expatriates in Belize around the early 1900's. Eventually many locals started to play tennis. The Belize Lawn Tennis Association was formed in the early 1900's and then around the 1970's the word "Lawn" was dropped since tennis was being played primarily on hard surface, and it became known as the "Belize Tennis Association" - BTA.

The BTA is the nationally recognized body responsible for overseeing the development of Tennis in Belize from ever since tennis was introduced to Belize. Tennis players back in the days formed themselves into Clubs, based on which Tennis Courts they played on. There were some tennis clubs with the aristocratic players from Great Britain, but then there were also the St Mary's Tennis Club, The Methodist Tennis Club, the Holy Redeemer Tennis Club, the Newtown Tennis Club, the Pickwick Tennis Club, the Belmopan Tennis Club to name a few. There were also tennis clubs seen in Dangriga, Stann Creek District, in Orange Walk and San Ignacio, Cayo District.

The various Clubs had many of their own members and the Clubs were the actual members of the BTA. The BTA existed in fact and it had its constitution to govern it. It has always been recognized and respected by the tennis world of Belize and abroad as the governing body for Tennis in Belize. In fact, in 1991 Belize, via the Belize Tennis Association, became a member of the International Tennis Federation, which is the internationally recognized body for the development of tennis throughout the world. Whilst the BTA existed in fact, it was not until the year 2011 that the BTA can be said to exist in law when it formally gained legal status by registering with the Belize Companies Registry and becoming incorporated as a non-profit association.

The BTA's Executive Council is made up of all volunteers who love the sport and are committed to contributing; but in reality, as a non-profit Association we depend on the Belize Olympic Association, the ITF, and corporate and individual sponsors for financial contributions to assist us with programs and events.

The BTA has been making strides to rebrand and to bring its Bylaws (Articles of Association) in line with the needs of these times. We just confirmed our new logo and the BTA is now welcoming individual members. We are enthusiastic about introducing more persons to this wonderful sport. One way we are trying to accomplish this is to offer tennis in primary schools. Further we offer a Junior Tennis Initiative program consist of daily training of youths with the help of ITF and of the Belize Olympic Association who pays for a coach from our sister country of Cuba.

Tennis is as sport that promotes discipline, focus, excellent health, friendships and so many other positive attributes.

There is a need for more coaches, more facilities, more events, and we want more players. There is so much more we want to do and we welcome volunteer work and financial contribution.