

By **Bill Parsons** Vice Chairman, Seven Oaks CDD



Tennis Courts at Seven Oaks

Clay Courts Make Them One of the Best in the Area



Residents at Seven Oaks have access to five clay courts that many players who use them consider the courts to be some of the best in the Tampa Bay Area. One of the reasons that the residents like them is the way that the courts were constructed and are maintained.

When the courts were built in 2003, a subsurface irrigation system was installed instead of a less expensive conventional sprinkler system. The subsurface reservoir system provides a continuous water supply for the clay when needed -- due to the Florida temperatures evaporating the water in the clay. The water in the reservoir is replenished with use of a timer that determines when water is added to the reservoir. This system is far superior to the above ground irrigation systems that saturate the surface with water so it will seep into the clay. This makes the courts unusable for a period of time and affects the playing characteristics of the surface due to the constantly changing moisture content.

Not only do the courts have high end construction but they are also extremely well maintained. Every few years, the CDD top dresses the five tennis courts to add back clay lost due to the environment and constant use. See the photos to the right showing the surface being top dressed in January/February 2016 by Welch Tennis Courts, Inc. at a cost of \$45,000. Here's the process used:

- The tape lines that were nailed down were removed.
- A scarifier was used to remove the top surface.
- Any low areas that may collect water were patched.
- A spreader was used to add the resurfacing material.
- The court was rolled to smooth out the material added.
- New line tapes were installed.

In addition to periodic maintenance such as described above, the courts require daily maintenance. Larry Way, who is one of the CDDs five maintenance personnel, is only assigned to the clubhouse with the tennis courts being one of his primary maintenance responsibilities.

Every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, he reconditions the courts by using a rake and Aussee sweep. He does court 1 from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m., courts 2/3 from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m., and courts 4/5 from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. Once a month, Larry uses a scarifier to break off the hard clay. Then, he uses a roller to compact the clay and keep the tape lines pressed flush with the clay. In addition, he monitors the courts daily to insure that the amount of water being added to the subsurface containers is adequate. He can tell by the color of the clay.

The clubhouse staff is constantly looking for ways to improve the tennis courts. Recently, they purchased five new benches and new awnings.

One of the benefits of being a resident at Seven Oak is the use of these courts is "free". However, the phrase "There is no such thing as a free lunch" that I heard for the first time while taking an Economics 101 course in college applies. The CDD assessments that are added to all Seven Oaks homeowners' yearly Pasco County property tax bill is the source of funding for the tennis courts. See CDD assessments on next page.

The tennis courts are open 7:00 a.m. - 9:30 p.m. Monday - Saturday and 7 a.m. - 8:30 p.m. on Sunday. To prevent damage to the courts and/or the players when it rains, the tennis courts are closed if there are puddles on the courts or if water drips from the clay when squeezed.

Tennis Courts Top Dressed



Bags of Har-Tru green clay are stacked in clubhouse parking lot.



"Dead" material scrapped into piles are removed from court.



The new Har-Tru green clay is spread over the tennis courts



The contractor nails down new line tapes on all the courts



Larry Way uses a roller to insure nail heads are at tape surface



Rohan Singh, professional tennis instructor at Seven Oaks, provides tennis instructions to Ethan Nelson, a resident at Seven Oaks.

Since the tennis courts are constantly used by the residents, the clubhouse has established a reservation system. To reserve one of them, residents can call the clubhouse (813-907-7987) - see photo on this page. The tennis court policies are at www.SevenOaksLife.com. Here are some of the policies concerning the reservations system:

- There is one 90 minute maximum reservation time permitted per access card per day.
- Court reservations may be made up to one week in advance.
- Residents reserving a tennis court **MUST** be a player on the court at the reserved time.
- Reservation will be cancelled if the player and their party do not arrive within 10 minutes of the beginning of reserved time.

As a convenience to the residents using the courts, the clubhouse does sell a container of three tennis balls for \$3.50. It also rents a tennis ball machine @ \$5.00 for 1 1/2 hours. They also maintain a "Contact List" so residents can contact other residents to find partners. The list contains the following information: name, email address, availability, and rating (i.e. 1.5, 2.0, 2.5, 3.0, 3.5, 4.0, 4.5, 5.0, 5.5, 6.0, 6.5, 7.0). When updated, the list is emailed to all the residents on the list.

About 8 years ago, a group of women at Seven Oaks who played tennis occasionally formed a group and started playing tennis every Tuesday and Thursday (see photo below). Currently, the group consist of

about 12 women who live at Seven Oaks and 4 non Seven Oaks residents. They not only range in age from the early 50s to late 80s, but they also have a wide range of tennis abilities where some of them compete in leagues. They have played on most of the tennis courts in the area and rate Seven Oaks tennis courts as one of the best.

For residents at Seven Oaks who want to learn how to improve their tennis game, the clubhouse has a contracted tennis instructor, Rohan Singh (see photo page 4). For the past 5 years, he has provided instruction to all age groups at Seven Oaks to include children as young as 4 years old. Rohan is a member of the United States Professional Tennis Registry (USPTR). He brings excellent credentials to Seven Oaks as he has trained with past and former Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) and Women's Tennis Association (WTA) professional tour players. He has helped students gain admission to the collegiate ranks in National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) tennis. His abilities must be in the genes as his family has competed in prestigious tournaments such as Wimbledon and served as coaches at many levels including The Davis Cup. Some of the adults that he instructs at Seven Oaks are competitive at senior level tournaments.

Rohan has played at some of the best tennis courts in the Untied States to include most of the ones in our area. He rates the ones at Seven Oaks as "second to none". No mater whether you are an experienced tennis player or a beginner, the tennis courts at Seven Oaks are a real benefit for residents. Give them a try.



Brittany Velez, part-time employee at the clubhouse, takes a tennis court reservation from a Seven Oaks resident over the phone



Four members of the Women's Tennis Club (L-R): Peggy Pusateri, Sheryl Ballinger, Julie DuFaux, and Gail Tavana

CDD Assessments Source of Funding for the Tennis Courts

Although the CDD assessment on the tax bill appears as one amount, it is actually two separate assessments. One is the bond assessment while the second assessment is for the operations/maintenance.

Bond Assessment

The bond assessment is to repay the funds that the developer (i.e. Crown Community Development) used to build the infrastructure at Seven Oaks. The infrastructure would include roads, storm water system, parks, clubhouse, and the tennis courts. Therefore, the homeowners are effectively paying for the cost of construction of the tennis courts in this assessment.

O & M Assessment

The second assessment is for the operations and maintenance cost of the infrastructure at Seven Oaks. This would include cost such as the district manager, engineer, attorney, contractors (landscaping, pool maintenance, road resurfacing/repair, etc), and salaries to include both clubhouse and maintenance personnel. It is this assessment that the homeowners pay that is used to operate and maintain the tennis courts.

Amount of Assessments

The assessments are based on the size of the lot and which one of the three bonds that was used to develop the infrastructure around that lot. For example, the amount of the assessments for homeowners in Edenfield with 40 ft lots in bond 2003A is \$1,451.95 that includes \$542.59 for the bond assessment and \$909.36 for the operations and maintenance assessment. The homeowners in Copperleaf with 80 ft lots in bond 2004A is \$2,957.44 that includes \$1,138.72 for the bond assessment and \$1,818.72 for the operations and maintenance assessment.