



YORKSHIRE TENNIS

Case Study:

Rowntree Park Tennis Club, York

Junior Initiative 2025

Club setup & philosophy

Rowntree Park Tennis Club is run entirely by volunteers & is responsible for the management & upkeep of 6 hard courts in the park close to York city centre. We have a membership of around 200 people and a Club Committee of 11 members.

Our Club philosophy is that tennis is for everyone irrespective of means, age & ability & we work hard to engender a welcoming & inclusive spirit.

The Club redeveloped its Club House in 2024, funded 50:50 by the Tennis Club & York City Council. Once building work had been completed, volunteers from the Club decorated the interior to make it a welcoming space.





The Club House has been an invaluable resource for our Junior activities in 2025 offering toilets, a kitchen, social space & equipment storage.



Above: the Lord Mayor of York officially opens the redeveloped club house in March 2025

Junior Project Objectives

The objective of the Junior project 2025 was to give children aged 10-14 years the opportunity to play tennis for free at our club in a supervised, safe, sociable and friendly environment. We also wanted to focus on introducing more girls to the sport recognising that girls were under-represented in tennis nationally as well as the national drop-out of girls with all sports amongst this age group.

Tennis is often only accessible to children whose parents can afford to pay for court hire (or membership) and relatively expensive equipment. Schools struggle to offer tennis because they lack the facilities required & the necessary specialist knowledge and equipment required to coach it.

The Club's objective for 2025 was to blow away these barriers and get lots of kids playing tennis in weekly Junior Club Sessions at our club at zero cost to them.

The Club Committee was conscious that by attracting a significant number of juniors accompanied by parents and/or grandparents to the Junior Club Sessions, it was important to have a defibrillator available in case of a coronary emergency. The nearest defibrillator was more than 1 mile away on Bishopthorpe Road.

Outcomes

A huge thank you to Yorkshire Tennis for their financial support (grant of £1,000). Also our Club Coach Jill Le Pla and all the Club volunteers who made the following possible in 2025. An incredible achievement!

● Coaching in Schools

During April & May 2025, our Level 3 Club Coach Jill Le Pla reached out to 6 York schools.

Jill delivered 10 hours of coaching for free in each school to girls in Years 5, 6, 7 and 8 :

- Westfield Primary School (school with a pupil premium rate of over 34%)
- Hob Moor Primary School (school with a pupil premium rate of over 44%)
- All Saints Secondary School
- Millthorpe Secondary School

Jill also did shorter refresher sessions with Badger Hill Primary School & Fulford Secondary School in York.

In 2025, Jill has undergone the LTA training to become a registered schools tutor. As part of these in-school sessions, Jill also provided guidance and support for the teachers on the delivery of tennis. As an ex-teacher and SENCO herself, Jill has a number of years prior experience of delivering teacher training within schools.

● Competition Day – Secondary

40 girls from the 3 Secondary Schools above were then invited to a brilliant competition day at our Club on Friday 27th June 2025. Medals and mementos were given to all children who

attended & free drinks & snacks were provided by the Club. 10 adult volunteers from the Club helped Jill to supervise the event.



Above: our coach Jill Le Pla gives guidance to the girls during Competition Day



Above: Club volunteers decorated the courts for this special occasion



Above: a pleasure to see the youngsters interacting and loving their tennis



Above: a refreshments area was set up for the children to recharge their batteries between matches



Above: the girls from Fulford, All Saints & Millthorpe Secondary Schools with our coach Jill Le Pla



Above: Club volunteers who helped with the Secondary School competition day

The event attracted local newspaper ('The Press') coverage:

THE PRESS

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Rowntree Park Tennis Club hosts free coaching for girls

3RD JULY OTHER SPORT EDUCATION HEALTH LEISURE SPORT YORK

By Nadia Jefferson-Brown
Senior Reporter
[@NJeffersonBrown](#)

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A YORK tennis club welcomed secondary school pupils to its courts for a fun morning of free coaching and healthy competition as part of its campaign to attract more youngsters to the sport.

Link below to the York Press article:

[Rowntree Park Tennis Club hosts free coaching for girls | York Press](#)

- **Competition Day – Primary**

31 girls from the 3 Primary Schools were invited to an incredible competition day at our Club on Friday 4th July 2025. Medals and mementos were given to all children who attended & free drinks & snacks were provided by the Club. 10 adult volunteers from the Club helped Jill to supervise the event.



Above: Coach Jill Le Pla sets the scene for the day's competition



Above: Coach Jill Le Pla guides the girls on match play



Above: Club volunteer Oliver gives guidance





Above: Club volunteer Mariella hands out medals to the girls



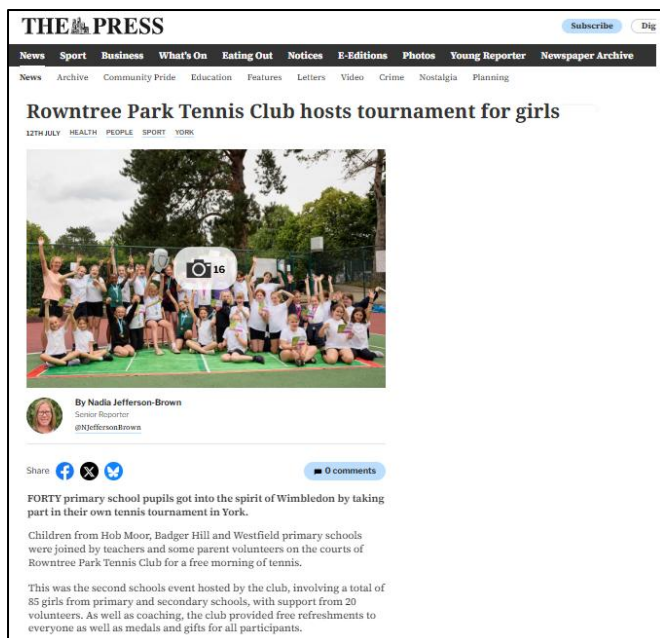


Above: the girls from all 3 schools celebrate a fabulous day



Above: our Club volunteers supporting the Primary School event

Once again, the event attracted local newspaper coverage:



Link below to the article on the York Press website:

[Rowntree Park Tennis Club hosts tournament for girls | York Press](#)

Weekly Junior Club Sessions 2025



All of the girls from the 6 Primary & Secondary schools were invited to attend weekly Thursday Junior Club Sessions at our Club. Additionally, boys from all the schools were invited. These sessions were delivered free of charge to the children and the Club provided rackets where needed. Each week, 4 Club Members helped our coach Jill Le Pla supervise the sessions.

These sessions happened every week right across the spring, summer and autumn from **1st May until 23rd October 2025** and were attended by an average of 32 children each week.

The Thursday Junior Club Sessions ran:

- 4pm-5pm – girls only
- 5pm-6pm – boys & girls together



The Junior Club Sessions continue **throughout the winter of 2025/26 free of charge** to the children every Saturday afternoon.

Junior Team

Before the 2025 initiative started, Rowntree Park Tennis Club did not have a Junior setup in place.

After many weeks of Junior Club Sessions, our Coach Jill Le Pla identified 11 juniors who showed a particular aptitude for playing tennis and taking in coaching and tactical advice.

As a result, an additional specific weekly Team Practice session was established in September and continues throughout the winter on Saturday afternoons. The sessions are free of charge to the children.

This autumn, Jill our coach organised Junior Team matches against local clubs: York Tennis Club, Poppleton Tennis Club & Wheldrake Tennis Club. Our Juniors performed excellently. This has given them valuable match experience and the chance to develop their tactical awareness in a real match situation. The Club Committee provided tennis shirts with Club logo free of charge for the children to wear.

Our coach Jill supported by the Club Committee is actively talking to other Clubs already about **setting up a Junior League in York** starting in 2026. Jill and Rowntree Park Tennis Club want to be the Club taking the lead in this initiative. We will be researching funding opportunities in early 2026 to support the launch and development of this League.



Above: Rowntree Park Junior Team who played against York Tennis Club



Above: Rowntree Park Junior Team who played against Poppleton TC

What did the parents say?

Across 2025 we have received very positive feedback from the parents of children who have attended our Junior initiatives. Here are some examples of that feedback:

- “The tennis sessions have been truly inspiring for my daughter. The coaches have been professional, engaging, and wonderfully supportive - far more than I could have hoped for! We are deeply grateful for this opportunity. Thank you so much.”
- “It’s great that you are providing free sessions to children who may not otherwise have been able to try tennis. Many thanks”
- “We have been so impressed with the fantastic coaching offered by Jill and the supporting coaches at Rowntree Park. My daughter has really enjoyed attending the sessions and I’ve been able to see her confidence and skills improving week by week. The way Jill interacts with the children is brilliant - keeping them all engaged and motivated and taking the time to give tailored feedback and support. This is a welcoming and accommodating programme and a real asset to the tennis club.”
- “She has really enjoyed the sessions, thank you for the amazing opportunity. She goes to York High School and so far hasn’t had any opportunity to play tennis.”
- “These tennis sessions were exactly what we were looking for around our area that my children could meet and play tennis with other similar age children. They enjoy the sessions for being social in the fresh air while playing tennis.”
- “He has really enjoyed your sessions and his interest in tennis has grown as a result. We play at Rowntree Park most weekends now too and it’s lovely to see his skills and confidence in the game improve and how we’re managing longer and better rallies.”
- “I think it’s been great. Freddy was a little nervous about joining initially but has really enjoyed the sessions and would welcome opportunity to play more. I think the volunteers have played a

big part in making the project a success in terms of encouraging and settling all those who have participated. A big thank you from Freddy and I to all those who helped make this happen.”

Defibrillator



The Club purchased a defibrillator in March 2025. This is a heated unit attached to the exterior wall of our Club House. It is accessible to tennis players, supporters and the public alike all year round and reflects the fact that the Tennis Club cares about the people who come to our lovely Park.

Plans for 2026 & beyond

2025 has been an incredible year for Juniors coming to our Club, enjoying fresh air & exercise, socialising with other children in a safe and friendly environment and enjoying some excellent tennis coaching and competitive matches.

The Club Committee and Jill Le Pla our coach are already planning an even bigger Junior initiative for 2026 including further **outreach to more local schools and the engagement of additional LTA qualified coaches**. There are schools which contacted us after seeing the 2025 newspaper coverage and who have proactively said that they want to be involved in 2026.

Furthermore, our coach Jill is reaching out to other clubs with the aim of establishing a York Junior League in 2026. This will be with the full support of Rowntree Park Tennis Club.

We as a Club are determined to increase the opportunities for children to play tennis in York and to ensure that cost is never a barrier for them. We have built significant momentum in 2025 and we are determined to get many more kids playing the game we love in 2026.

Thank you again to Yorkshire Tennis for the Small Grant of £1,000 which made this 2025 initiative possible.