

Tennis Ball Recycling

3 Steps to a Successful Program

Thank you for making the commitment to keep used tennis balls out of our landfills. A successful program can be simple and low cost to manage. Your tennis players and community will certainly appreciate your efforts.

1. Courtside Presence

Most tennis players have an ingrained habit of tossing used balls in their tennis bag; a full bag gets emptied at home, and then, most likely, into the garbage. The key to changing players' habits is to have **immediate access to a recycling bin**. Right off the court unwanted balls are properly discarded – just like we can do for bottles and cans. By hanging bins near a court exit (multiple bins if multiple exits) and at eye-level, the idea and the act of recycling tennis balls is compelling, and convenient.

2. Promote the Program

Recycling tennis balls is relatively new - most tennis players are not aware that there are eco-friendly ways to discard used balls. The good news is that most players want to recycle rather than simply throw balls away. Educate your members and constituents about issues surrounding used tennis balls, about the new trends of reusing them, and then what you are doing to promote recycling. The ways to do this include:

COLLECTION BIN DECAL: Highlight your efforts by adding your logo and message directly to the bin

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Use your newsletter & social media to alert your community about the life and death of a tennis ball, the industry's plans and your plans to start recycling, and how each player can help.

3. Collect. Reuse. Recycle.

COLLECT: Monitor the bins so that they do not overflow. Depending on court usage and number of bins provided, needing to empty them may range from three weeks to three months. The collection process is easy - emptying the bin is a snap, and storage until the balls are ready for reuse or recycling takes up little space.

REUSE: Used tennis balls can be reused within your community. Schools often request used tennis balls for desks and for after-school programs. Tennis balls may be requested by assisted living homes (though new walkers are now made with rubberized bottoms, so this application is fading); and may be offered to animal shelters (however, chewing tennis balls is not good for dogs' teeth). There are great, creative ways your community might reuse tennis balls, so making your community aware that you are collecting balls is helpful.

RECYCLE: There are two options for shipping balls to be ground and recycled into new surfaces:

Tennisballrecycling.com This organization is taking used tennis balls to be ground up and used as a component in the sub-surface of new tennis courts. These courts are then sold as an environmentally green product. Once a box of 200 or more is full and sealed, generate a pre-paid shipping label online at www.tennisballrecycling.com; there is no shipping cost to you. You then take the box to the nearest FedEx location.

Project Green Ball PGB is a non-profit organization that takes used tennis balls to be ground up and used as a component in playground surfaces and equestrian turf surfaces. These surfaces are donated to charities and programs for disabled children. Currently there is not a free shipping option to send balls to Project Green Ball, so the cost has to be shouldered by those sending the balls.