



All Star Ethiopian Tennis Project

I would just like to say thanks again to all the people who came and gave money at the fund raising day last year! The projects both at home and abroad really seem to be taking shape now, and there are some very exciting prospects ahead.

The aim of the project in Ethiopia is to kick-start a grass roots junior tennis program, and to give coaches enough ideas to implement and sustain it.



To help start this program, I went out to Ethiopia on behalf of the All Star Ethiopian Project. The day after I arrived, I met a wonderful group of 16 coaches/players who were very passionate about developing tennis in their country but had very little knowledge of teaching young children, and the mini-tennis systems now used all over the world. For the next 2 weeks we worked very closely together with training days and school programs, teaching the coaches how to co-ordinate fun school talent ID sessions and how to develop young players through mini tennis. The coaches were very receptive to this.

The timing of my visit was ideal, because a few weeks before I arrived, an Ethiopian coach named Soloman, who had been coaching Performance tennis in the States for the last 22 years had just arrived back and was very keen to help develop this tennis program in Ethiopia. We worked together for the 2 weeks, exchanging ideas on development and performance and forming a structure for the program, from schools and grass roots all the way up, that we would then present to the tennis federation at the end of my stay.

What feels so exciting about this program for us, is that the parts of the program which the All Star trust will be supporting will bring tennis to less privileged children in Ethiopia by identifying talent and making sure that the structure and contacts are in place so that these children can develop to their full potential, possibly even up to international level.

The athletic ability displayed by these children was incredible, so who knows, with the right development and a structured program, we hope to see some international tennis stars bursting out of Ethiopia in the next 10 years, and it will be your support that's helped initiate the whole project.

In our meeting with the Ethiopian Tennis Federation, at the end of my stay, there was an air of great excitement from both parties and they agreed to support the program in whichever way they could, and re-establish links with the International Tennis Federation.

The All Star Trust has agreed to support the development and training of coaches, equipment supplies necessary to run the grass roots program and packages for selected children to enable them to receive sufficient coaching and equipment.

Ben Jackson