



USTA NORTH CAROLINA

PANDEMIC PODCAST

League players connect tennis community during pandemic through podcast

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Erin Conigliaro and Carolyn Roach found a creative way to connect the tennis community during the COVID-19 pandemic: storytelling.

The two USTA league players, who met while playing tennis at the Hasentree Club in Wake Forest, NC, teamed up to create the Second Serve podcast. Second Serve provides advice to beginning players, discusses adult recreational tennis and features interviews with special guests.

"Most of the other tennis podcasts out there are hosted by true tennis experts, who have played most of their life or are interviewing those that have," Carolyn said.

"We are just a couple of moms who have played a lot of recreational tennis at the lowest levels and have good stories to tell."

Neither of the podcast hosts had previous experience producing podcasts but picked up the skill as a result of missing their tennis friends while social distancing.

"My favorite part has been learning new things from the podcast," Carolyn said. "I especially enjoyed the episode where we interviewed adult tennis players who started Triangle Tennis for Equality, which is an organization that promotes equality on the tennis court."

On the segment with Triangle Tennis for Equality, the women spoke with minority teammates and opponents to generate a larger conversation about how to help end discrimination and racism.

"We are constantly surprised by how much we learn from each other and from our guests each time we record an episode," Erin said. "Hearing other people's stories makes you realize we are all more similar than we are different. Playing a competitive sport doesn't always bring out the best in people but it does make life - and our podcast - interesting."

When starting the podcast, the pair thought their audience would only consist of teammates and close friends. Instead, their stories have reached far more tennis players and fans with over 100 people tuning into the very first episode.

"We have been shocked that the podcast has had over 1,600 downloads from 120 different cities," Erin said.

Although the Second Serve podcast was originally intended to be a fun project for quarantine, Erin and Carolyn are having more fun than expected. They plan to continue telling tennis stories for many episodes to come.

The Second Serve podcast is available to stream at <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/second-serve/id1510471758>. You can also stay in the loop with Erin and Carolyn on the Second Serve Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/secondservetennis> podcast.