



YSU TENNIS TEAMS GET NEW HOME COURTS

The tennis center on Ford Avenue will host both the men's and women's teams. Photo by Jordan Boitnott/The Jambar

JORDAN BOITNOTT

Youngstown State University's men's and women's tennis teams were looking forward to their seasons prior to COVID-19. Despite the cancellation of all fall athletics, both teams are taking advantage of the newly constructed tennis center on Ford Avenue, just one block from Fifth Avenue.

Vasilis Vardakis, a senior marketing management major on the men's team, said the tennis center is one of the best facilities he's ever seen.

"The facility is amazing. They did a great job. I have traveled around the world, around Europe, and I haven't seen something like that," he said. "I can tell you that we are really close to Ohio State. Our facilities are about the same, but I like ours better."

Senior electrical engineering major and men's team member Joao Garretto said the tennis center will put YSU ahead of the curve when they recruit new players.

"In our conference, no one has a facility like that. It's a big asset for new recruits," he said. "When you have a facility like that, it's so big because players know they can play year-round and have all the necessities they need to be good."

Garretto said the tennis center is a testament to YSU's dedication to the sport.

"By investing and making a facility like this, they are investing

in tennis long-term. They really want to develop new players and take YSU tennis to the next level," Garretto said.

The center serves as a permanent home to the tennis teams who struggled with limited access to practice courts last year.

"We were traveling every day. Either traveling to Boardman or somewhere outside of Youngstown," he said. "With it being so close we will have more time to practice individually and as a team. It being an indoor facility is great, too, so we can practice year-round and not have to rely on other places."

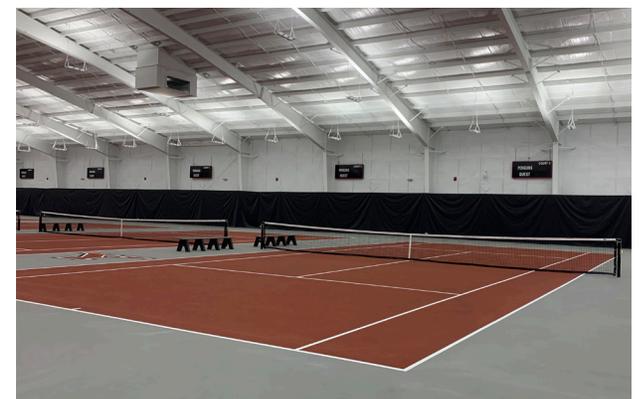
Men's tennis head coach Ulises Hernandez said the tennis center can also be used by students for recreational activities, but there is no known date of when it will open to the public at this time. He said he's excited about this season, especially in regards to how many players are returning.

"Everyone is coming back from last year's team, except for one person. Having our exact same roster with our three new freshmen will be great with the experience we have," he said.

Hernandez also said the men's team will have an option to play in tournaments held outdoors that are still trying to be scheduled.

Mickael Sopol, women's tennis head coach, said this year's team shows immense potential.

"I think we have a very, very strong team this year. I liked where our chemistry was at the end of last year," he said. "We have a team that could contend to win the entire thing and win the Horizon League."



Among the features are eight brand-new courts for the players. Photo by Jordan Boitnott/The Jambar