

Army Navy Country Club Youths and Juniors Centennial History

July 15, 2024

The 100-year history of young people at Army Navy Country Club (ANCC) is robust. The Club and its membership invested in juniors from toddlers to 16-year-olds from the early 1930s. Junior programs and activities flourished throughout club history. These included some version of:

1. Dances and social programs for juniors.
2. Host Club member juniors, cadets, midshipmen, and their colleagues in tennis and golf.
3. Youth and Junior programs and events in golf, tennis, and swimming.
4. As well as field trips to amusements and such.
5. Short-term childcare during ANCC member-events, dances, and weekend sports activities.
6. Summer Programs like sports camp and other theme days and weeks.

Today, a typical summer hosts almost 700 juniors in structured programs for golf, tennis, summer camps and Rainbow City and continues through most of the year.

Just a quick review of the ANCC Golf and Tennis Singles Men and Women's Champions shows that ten juniors won club championships for a total of 23 annual competitions. Naturally, they stood out in regional competitions also and sometimes nationally. Moreover, Army Navy hosted many champion juniors that learned their craft at ANCC but competed elsewhere, like Robbye King, Dewitt Armstrong, Alf Smith, Richard Tindall, Phillipe Neff, and Pam Clark. ANCC junior programs have a rich history of great young competitors that entertained Washington DC and the region for most of the last 100 years.

Although not always successful early on, youth activities were developed to meet the recreation and social needs of ANCC families. Throughout the 100 years of existence, Club Governors put extra care toward building a long-term membership pipeline by seeking to have programs that were attractive to young members – cadets and midshipmen. More recently, as demographics and the membership profile evolved, families became as important as adults and youth programs came to the fore.

1920s

In the earliest years from 1929, when the clubhouse was livable, the first youth activity was dancing. At that time, the Clubhouse ballroom hosted twice weekly dances and bales of straw were provided for seating. 1/ Dancing was a big pass time for the Club year-round and juniors participated at least once a week. By 1930, with an eye on cultivating young officers, someday, to become long term members, ANCC established the first annual Cadet and Midshipmen Dance. This was usually scheduled at the end of December and traditionally came to involve a dinner on Christmas. Even from the outset the attendance was almost 400 young people.

Note: This history benefited from interviews and Youth Activities program materials granted by Sheila Chandler, Youth Program Pros, and former ANCC Board Chairman US Navy Captain, Jerry Burke. Historical Newspaper references all come from DC Public Library Website.

1/ Army Navy Country Club, 1924-1989 Historical Review, Pg. 22.

1930s

In 1931, ANCC installed its first swimming pool – at that time, one of only eight notable pools in the Washington area. (At that time, the Washington Post deemed to note four country club pools, a pool at the UK Embassy and three private family pools in the city as socially prominent.). ANCC member families and their children of all ages flocked to the swimming pool to the consternation of the Board of Governors and the more staid adult members. Quickly, the Board and Club Manager Major Richard Newman established the Women’s Auxiliary Committee whose volunteers and a modest budget established the first, short-term child-care program. By 1932, ANCC’s first playground for children (pictured below) was established next to the bathhouse and the Club dug a wading pool to separate, a little, children from adults. By 1932, the south side of the original ANCC clubhouse was established as a vibrant spot for families and children and the first nursery.



ANCC Nursery and playground pictured in 1947. The original sandbox can be seen in the rear left of photo. Source – ANCC Foundation archives.

In the early 1930s, ANCC tennis juniors were well into local Inter-Club junior competitions taking on Columbia and Washington country clubs. By July 1933, ANCC dispatched three sets of brothers – Joe and Mac Hatch, Johnny and Joe Dorst, and Jules and Howard Titus- to Columbia Country Club where they won every tennis set, but one, and made a clean sweep of the matches by 9 to 0. 1/ Major James Dorst and the parents of the other boys were all regional top-rated tennis players at ANCC. 2/

Ralph Bogart was ANCC Golf Champion for three years in 1938, 39 and 1940. He was the son of Navy Captain Isaac Bogart. As an 18-year-old junior golfer he had to take on General Omar Bradley in the 1940 ANCC Championship tournament. Bogart carded a 70 on the par 72 course and defeated Bradley 5 and 3. 3/ Bogart went on to win the District Amateur Championships in 1938-40. In 1941 he joined Chevy Chase Country Club and teamed up with another regional golf champion – Bob Brownell -- to start a successful insurance firm in Bethesda. He was a navy pilot during World War II.

1/ Washington Post, “Three Sets of Brothers Win at Junior Nets” July 2, 1933, SP15.

2/ Washington Post, “24 Matches Booked in Army Navy Tennis” September 15, 1932, pg. 13.

3/ Evening Star, “Bogart Scores 70” by Walter McCallum, Oct 14, 1940, page 16.

College students from DC expanded from playing only on DC Parks and Recreation courts to sampling the many new courts at ANCC. Young talented tennis players flocked to ANCC while assigned to Washington. Stanley Robinson and his wife Margaret joined at 21 years old (newly adults) when assigned to Bolling Air Base. Stan was number two rated on the Army’s national tennis team that spent 14 years striving to overcome Navy’s dominance of the Leech Cup tournament. His doubles partner and his strongest singles competition was Dolf Muehleisen. Throughout the 1930s, ANCC new composition surface tennis courts were frequented by ANCC junior tennis players and various league competitors. At that time, ANCC was hosting intra- and inter-service competitions like the annual Leech Cup and national Army tennis league tournaments. And ANCC hosted the annual DC City Tennis Championship that drew the best players from DC Parks and Recreation. Other young ANCC members that competed on the courts were long-time ANCC members -Alf Smith, Ramsey Potts, and Bob Van Vliet. 1/



Alf Smith at ANCC 1960s: Source Virginia Sports Hall of Fame.

Then in 1938, the 17-year-old Richard Gentry Tindall Jr. arrived on the ANCC courts when his father was reassigned from Fort Leavenworth to the Office of the Infantry. He was already a tennis “phenom” having competed in the 1936 National Juniors and Boy’s Tennis Tournament and reached the quarter finals in 1936 but he learned so much more when exposed to the talent in Washington. 2/

By 1939, Tindall was a plebe at West Point. In July, he became the first cadet to win the All Army singles tennis tournament, the first student to win singles and doubles concurrently, and in August he beat ANCC champion Alf Smith at the Virginia State Closed Tennis Tournament both of whom represented Army Navy Country Club. 3/ By 1942, Tindall was commissioned and in the war in Europe. He died in Italy in 1944. Stan Robinson died in the Pacific Theater in 1943.

1/ C. Alphonso Smith was raised in Annapolis by a Naval Academy Professor and was a National USLTA Junior Champ at 15 years old. He joined the ANCC in 1938 and was a life-long member and matured into a National Doubles Tennis Champion of the USTA from his perch at ANCC. All altogether they fielded team after team for annual Leech Cup competition during the 1930s. Muehleisen dominated: winning Washington tournament after tournament including the All DC cup in 1932 and all his Leech Cup matches in 1931 and 1932. In 1937 Dolf won the doubles championship in the Grand Nationals in Washington. Finally, Muehleisen led the Army team to break Navy’s 14-year grip on the Leech Cup in 1939. That year General “Hap” Arnold (who was head of the tennis program for the U.S. Army) took the Leech Cup back to his office for a year. Muehleisen stayed in California in the U.S. Air Forces and rose to the rank of Major General.

2/ Evening Star, “Choices Survive in Junior Tennis” August 7, 1936, pg. 20.

3/ Washington Post “Victor Pairs with Evans, Wins Double” July 2, 1939, pg. 33.

1940s and 1950s

The war years were complicated for Washington and ANCC. Gas rationing and war-time commodity shortages, in particular, limited many Club events. Sports went on but simply were not a priority. By 1950, however, interest in ANCC junior programs and childcare returned. The playground was reopened during the summer on Fridays and Sundays as well as Saturday for the benefit of women who wanted to play golf and tennis and couples to attend events. Club Bylaws were adapted so a mother could leave the campus for a few hours when a formally designated surrogate was located on campus. By 1953, the Club EXCOM was considering how to develop junior programs in tennis and golf by relaxing Club rules that had forbade children younger than 14 years from the golf course (as long as they had benefited from golf lessons and were certified such by the Club Pro). The EXCOM also relented allowing children under 14 years to handle the flag poles, including caddies. Formal ANCC Junior Tennis Tournaments date from at least 1957. 1/

But mostly junior programs, other than tennis and golf, were developed and managed by volunteers in the Women's Auxiliary Committee as were the childcare programs which developed into a self-sustaining member-supported program.

1/ Minutes of EXCOM, August 14, 1953 & Minutes for Annual Meeting, 1955.

1960s

During the 1960s, the ANCC continued to support youth activities as a key aspect of Club services. The Club professionalized and structured junior programs in tennis and golf pro-shops. The ANCC nursery was still run by Women's Auxiliary Committee volunteers and was largely "pay as you go." (But there was a budget subsidy because the program was always deemed important to attract members and support Friday and weekend entertainment.) The nursery, however, suffered. In those days, it had no permanent, nor adequate home, nor was it advertised and promoted. According to records, the winter nursery was sometimes hosted at "Christ Church" in Alexandria and typically its charges numbered five and always less than 10 children. Later, the nursery was moved to the old "Waldorf House" south of the adult pool and then later moved to the old "Heiner House" near the present playground. (These were abandoned houses acquired by the Club when real estate was purchased to make the present Arlington acreage.)

While some junior activities lacked and atrophied, youth golf and tennis flourished as these sports grew popular nationally and youth culture took off. Starting in 1958 and throughout the 1960s, ANCC was home to junior golfer and then amateur champion Robbye King. She was 15 years old when she started winning the Women's District Golf Association tournament for junior girls' Carbert Cup with an 85. 1/ She was the daughter of member Admiral Ed R. King. As a child, she learned golf from her father. He took her to the "Bide-A-Wee Golf Course" in Portsmouth, Virginia where Curtis Strange's father - Tom - would hand out advice on her swing. But, Unger said, her father was her primary teacher and influence. "He believed Ben Hogan's book "Five Lessons" was the Bible of golf instruction," said King Unger. "That book got so dog-eared we had to keep it together with masking tape." 2/

Robbye was not an ANCC Club Champion, and she had trouble with that Arlington golf course. Nevertheless, after being trained by ANCC Assistant Pro Ron Howell and mentored by Mrs. James Swink – founder of the District Junior Golf Association, the 12-year-old King grew to regional leader. She kept busy winning the WDCGA tournament in 1962 and 1963 and won the Military Dependents' Championship in 1962. It was reported in the DC newspapers that, in 1962, King and two other young women golfers had broken a 15-year lock of established local champions and she never looked back. 3/ By 1963, she concurrently won the Virginia State Golf Association, Maryland State Golf Championship, Mid-Atlantic Golf Association, and WDCGA Women's Amateur Championships.

1/ Evening Star, "Women's Golf" July 13, 1957, page 13.

2 / VSGA interview with King when inducted into Virginia Golf Hall of Fame on their VSGA website.

3/ "Jane Boscom (Robbye King) Helps Create New Golf Era" Evening Star, Oct 3, 1962, Pg 28.

Here is how her “best victory” at The Cascades in Hot Springs was reported. “The summer is now two-thirds over for Robbye King, the new Virginia women’s amateur golf champion.... ‘When the summer started there were three big ones I wanted.’ the 20-year-old Wake Forest junior said as she stood on the 17th green of the Cascades course here.” (DC Tournament, Virginia State, and Mid-Atlantic are the other in September.) “This is the peak of my summer..... Ms. King said, moments after curling in an eight-foot birdie putt on the 35th hole to close out Mrs. William Pollard, a former champion from Charlottesville. The putter which finally clinched the tournament had caused King some anxious moments. She had lost there last year in a heart breaker that brought her to tears. It looked bad when she three-putted four of the last 11 holes to erase a 2-up lead and keep Pollard’s hopes alive.” 1/



Robbye King of Arlington displays a winning smile and a handsome trophy after scoring a 1-and-1 victory over Mrs. William B. Pollard yesterday at Hot Springs, Va., for the Virginia Women's Amateur golf championship.—AP Wirephoto.

“I got mad because I left my first putt so short on a couple of holes in the afternoon. You don’t win tournaments playing short. Then I guess I got too bold. I went for the birdie on the 34th hoping to close it out. Instead I lost the hole.’ King hit two superb wood shots on the 35th, then chipped close and made her putt for the winning birdie.”

So, in 1963, and then in 1966, ‘69, ‘70, ‘71, & ‘72, she was Virginia State Amateurs Champion. In 2003 she won the VSGA Senior Women’s Stroke Play. She never turned professional, but she spent some summers on the amateur tours. In 2016, King-Unger was inducted into the Virginia Golf Hall of Fame. Robbye’s brother, Lee, a 16-year-old, was also a serious junior golfer and was competing in DC tournaments throughout the 1960s.

Another young golf stand-out was Jackie Evans - At 14 years old she was the youngest player to win the Kansas Women’s Amateur Champion Tournament and was state junior champion three years in a row. She had been playing since she was 11 years old with her father, an Air Force Colonel and pilot. Evans was ANCC Club Champion in 1968. In 1967, she won the Middle Atlantic Junior Women’s Championship. A talented player, she was second in 1966 at the Texas State Junior Championship. At 20, she won the Keefer Cup Championship locally. She worked in the ANCC golf shop, and our golf pro thought she had the right stuff. In 1969 she became the teaching pro at Country Club of Miami. In 1974, she was in the top 100 LPGA Money List.

1/ Evening Star, “One Goal Left as Robbye Adds Virginia Title” July 27, 1963, pg. 11 and 1113

1970s

The 1970s were a challenge for junior activities at ANCC and was the beginning of a 20-year turnover in how ANCC approached the development of Junior and Youth programs. The “50,000 foot” cultural overview that drove these changes was that the American family cultural and structural shift from predominantly nuclear family of a single male bread-winner, a stay-at-home mom and children that were not very demanding about entertainment from the home and school to something else. ANCC was not totally prepared for this but determined it had to adapt to survive as a small business. Added to the complicated landscape was the U.S. economy in the decade of the 1970s that began with a recession, saw wage and price controls, and ended with a bad experience with inflation. ANCC and ANCC members’ family budgets were gravely challenged.

Coincident with these changes, ANCC programs for youth suffered. Junior dancing faded in the 1970s. In 1973, the Women’s Auxiliary Minutes (Mrs. J.M. James) reported that the winter nursery was undersubscribed, and continuation was to be a challenge. By 1974-75 the ANCC EXCOM and BOG and the Club Manager reviewed the winter nursery and decided that it should be sustained with a budgeted subsidy of \$1500 because the activity is important to attract younger family members. In fact, that same year, the EXCOM reviewed the possibility of a nursery established at Fairfax. But things still would not be turned around; and, by 1978, the summer and winter nursery activity was terminated at Arlington. 1/

In 1974, there were complaints to the management coming from the Women’s Committee that young people were lounging all the summer days at the tennis pro-shop and the member standing committees started looking for activities for youth. A group of BOG members started to think of activities and programs for youths in the 13-18 year range but gave up and the EXCOM issued a rule that youths cannot hang around the pro-shops, except in a supervised activity. 2/ On the other hand, in 1971 at the tennis pro-shop, the Club started the Count Boyer Sportsmanship Trophy to advance sportsmanship, self-control, humility, unselfishness, and a sense of humor. 3/

In spite of the difficulties for ANCC youth from years 2 to 8 in the 1970s, the juniors in golf and tennis programs soldiered on in the 1970s and 1980s. The result was that in 1969, 16-year-old Jeff Urban, son of US Army Colonel Peter Urban, won the WDCGA Men’s golf Championship. He later moved to Illinois and established a successful sports marketing company. In 1973, 14-year-old Greg Carpousis, won the ANCC Men’s Championship. He was 1980 and 1982 Northern Virginia Amateur Golf Champion beating Gil Fitzhugh another ANCC men’s champion. And Pamela Clark, at 19 years, played for championships at WDGA. In 1976, junior Tom White was Club golf champion. By 1979, Pete Van Pelt, son of AF Col. Warren Van Pelt, played competitively; became a golf pro, and opened a golf shop at Mount Vernon Country Club.

1/ ANCC EXCOM minutes. May 23, 1974

2/ Minutes of EXCOM Oct 1977.

3/ “Count” Boyer was a senior tennis player who enjoyed counting aloud tennis volleys as they mounted while he watched (said tennis players Bob Haden and Gil Lippey) – and this built on his pastime of counting baseball hits, according to his wife. ANCC 1924-1989 Historical Review, page 5.

1980s

By the mid -1980s, there were enough moms and dads in the work force that younger childcare youth activities at ANCC were re-established as a self-sustaining ANCC program. In 1984, Fred Widicus Jr, was Men's Golf Club Champion at age 15. His mother was ANCC women's golf champion in 1983 and 1984. Fred played around Virginia state tournaments into at least 1986. He remains in the area and runs an environmental company. 1985 saw as a junior ANCC men's champion -- Gil Fitzhugh -- son of navy captain Mayo Fitzhugh who joined in 1979. Gil won ANCC men's championship 11 times altogether. He also won 13 tournaments of the VSGA between 1980 and 1996. He went on to be Chairman of the Northern Virginia Section of the Virginia State Golf Association. By 1988, the tennis committee reported 110 junior boys and girls participating in a junior tennis program and a successful 1976-vintage Franco Fiorio Clay Court Tournament for boys' tennis and the 1989 Peggy Dallam Girls Clay Court Tournament. Moreover, at the 1988 Annual Meetings support was voiced for a summer nursery and the re-establishment of Rainbow City in a building next to the playground. ANCC spent the next two years responding to member support and getting organized so the program would be more successful than before.

1990s

Rainbow City started anew in the summer of 1990 and close to 60 children participated in some way. By the end of the decade, child participants were more than 100 for the season. By 1993, the ANCC had established leadership in the region among military country and golf clubs for youth if not more broadly by supporting access to the golf courses and other facilities for children under 16 years of age. Moreover, the youth program in golf and tennis were in full swing as Arlington Golf Pro, Pete Stassi, and Fairfax pros were providing golf lessons for juniors on Sunday afternoons.

By 1994, the first “Summer Sports Camp” of 20-25 children was established - for which the Club sometimes budgeted for shortfalls. These renewed efforts were run by members who hired college-trained recreation professionals and was led by member Missy Moran without a Committee structure but with complete support of management and BOG. By the 1990s, the golf and tennis pro shops had also established one weeklong youth summer camps for both tennis and golf and youth activities started to coordinate programs to ensure juniors and parents could have the best access.



Ryan Corl shares a story with 2007 ANCC Campers.

The military joined the Club for the golf course but also the advantages provided for budding junior athletes.

By 1995, the EXCOM decided to establish a youth activities subcommittee within the Swimming Committee and established that Youth Activities would seek to coordinate with ongoing junior programs Club-wide. This Youth Subcommittee chaired by Missy Moran oversaw the Sports Camp and the Rainbow City. By 1996, an etiquette class was established. At her initiative, Mrs. Moran obtained the services of a first-rate etiquette instructor and offered a five-hour program of instruction to junior members on 23 April and 30 April. The cost was \$45. The first six slots in the program were subscribed on the first day the course was offered.

2000s

By 2000, ANCC member surveys had changed from the majority of respondents supporting an adult club with seasonal family and youth services to the majority seeking a family-oriented full-service country club and year-round children's activities. Also, by 2000, swimming, tennis, and junior golf programs had grown with more than 300 juniors participating annually.



ANCC Director Sheila Chandler with Taylor and Terrut Peterson – 2006 Sports Camp



Elise Napolitano- Counselor Rainbow City with her charges – 2005
She had recently graduated from being a camper.

Building on that consensus of support and new activity level, the then Club Board Chairman, Navy Captain Jerry Burke, led the effort to expand the infrastructure around the Arlington pool

and playground facilities to build a new combined year-round pool house, fitness center and youth activities facility. The resulting building was the center of a new thrust to expand youth activities at Army-Navy.



Mary Barbero picks up putting in 2005 Sports Camp

The Pro shops maintained a high-level junior program for golf and tennis coordinated with Sports Camp. Mary Barbero was junior golf Champ and ANCC Women's Champ. She attended Sports Camp and Junior golf at ANCC in the mid-2000s. Mary Barbero married Kent Graham and they have one child. Kent was an Assistant Professional here at ANCC for several years and that is where they met. Kent is now the Head Golf Professional at Royal Fox Country Club in St. Charles, Illinois.



Here are Malachi Walker, Sean Carpenter, Theo Achillas, Will Jorenson, and Lauren Harris and others of a 2012 Sports Camp and some with golf clubs. Many went on to be Camp Counselors.

By 2018, Kelly Chinn who learned golf in Japan from his grandfather, at age 13, won the 2017 and 2018 ANCC Men's golf champion. Also played PGA junior events at age 13. In 2020 he won the 68th VSGA Junior Stroke Play Championship.

In 2001, to meet growing demands on Club management and to better respond to member needs, the Club established the Youth Activities Committee. And in 2004, the Club proposed to establish a Sports Camp at Fairfax (which did not progress) and Ms. Marie Lewis was hired as Director for Youth Activities.



ANCC etiquette classes have been a mainstay for decades. Here is a 2020 class.

In 2005, Sheila Chandler started as a summer-time assistant for junior activities and overlapped with Marie Lewis. (At that time, Rainbow City was from April to August). Under Chandler, the Youth Activities Program began to take off in 2007 (it was extended to mid-October) and grew steadily. During the 2000s Chandler as Youth activities manager and her staff expanded to three full-time and six more part-time caregivers in the summer. Generally, Sports Camp became popular as member-grandparents sought to sponsor special summer activities for their family at

the Club. Another factor was Chandler’s creativity and innovative programming. In 2021, pickle ball was added to golf, tennis, and swimming.

Chandler runs Rainbow City and Sports Camp with five rules taught to the children – Have fun; Respect and Be kind; Listen and be Mindful, No aggression, and Have fun. Pictured below is Sheila Chandler with her “Fun Meter” displayed. The children have grown to watch the meter through their stay. Chandler adjusts the meter and sometimes the fun can be toned down when any of the 5 rules are not observed.



Rainbow City Director and the Fun Meter in Action.

Sports Camp in 2005 had 15 campers a week and in 2007 achieved 40 campers a week, ages 5 1/2 to 12. In 2019, the typical capacity was 50 a week over 7-8 weeks; therefore 350-400 youngsters. (This has grown from about 100 in 1986.) Sports Camp was cancelled entirely for 2020 but was restarted with 25 children in 2021 and returned to full strength and activities at Arlington in 2023. Sports Camp evolved from swimming tennis and golf to include options for music camp, camp Hollywood video making, art week, music camp, culinary camp, and Lego robot (STEM) Camp - all at Arlington. The smaller clubhouse at Fairfax means that summer junior events are limited to junior golf and special events like etiquette. Since 2014, Rainbow City keeps an 8 month calendar from April to December with full week sessions in the summer and weekends in the Spring and the Autumn. The annual average day attendance is 20 children. ANCC also maintains a Sports Camp Counselor-in-Training (CIT) program.



Junior Summer Tennis Camp (2005) partnered with Sports Camp
Club pros impart the inside information.

The growth of Rainbow City and Pro-shop Junior programs, both tennis and golf has been impressive. Rainbow City went from eight children in 1986 to 400 in summer season. Junior tennis from 125 in 1986 to 210 in 2019. Junior golf went from 200 in 2000 to much more in 2021.