



High-Tech *and* Hands-On at Nick Bollettieri's Academy

by Ray Collins

It had been 15 years since I first attended the Adult Tennis Camp at Nick Bollettieri's Tennis Academy in Bradenton, and it's clear a lot has changed on- and off- the court since then.

- Back in 1994, an open-stance forehand was something that happened when you were out of position. Now, it's something instructors are teaching—even when there IS time to close your stance.
- An “Inside Out Forehand” used to be something only those with weak backhands would rely on. Now, it's part of the daily drills.
- Why are there a laptop computer and two chairs by the side of the court? That's where players sit down and review clips of their game with an experienced pro guiding the mouse. And if you were too out of breath to pick up on the tips, you can access a 5-minute narrated video clip that's waiting for you in your e-mail box when you get home.

Make no mistake—it's a full-service, full-intensity work out at Nick's place. The Adult Tennis Camp is tailor-made to your needs. Half a day? Yup. Full week? You bet. You can stay on campus and take part in the meal plan—or drive a few miles to stay on the Gulf of Mexico.

Since building his empire off the magic of Jimmy Arias' revolutionary full-throttle forehand back in 1979, Bollettieri has become a Hall-of-Fame tennis coach and mentor. His success with the pros is beyond reproach—Agassi, Courier, Seles, Sharapova—and his Midas touch is all over the Adult Tennis Academy.

The teaching pros are top-notch and run a tight ship. They have a 6th sense when to criticize and when to compliment. Sessions are intimate—never more than a handful of other campers on the court at a time. Players are grouped into ability levels on one of five courts. Each day begins with stretching, warm-ups with ground strokes from



the service tee and then the baseline, and finally a speciality stroke or strategy of the day.

A surprise by-product are the friendships made along the way with the other tennis players who have come from around the world to this tennis haven tucked off a busy road in Bradenton.

And yes, you won't just see Nick as a life-size statue on the way past the guard gate. When he's in town, he makes a point to stop by and give a pep talk to the adult tennis campers. Even though he's nearing his 80th birthday, he has the energy of a teenager with the wisdom of the experienced legend he is.

You'll hit thousands of tennis balls during your stay, you'll have plenty of good food and camaraderie... and chances are you'll be playing better tennis when you go back home. Just don't wait 15 years to come back.



Ray Collins is an Emmy-nominated journalist and recipient of the Florida Associated Press Award for 'Overall Excellence.' Ray has 25 years experience in TV, radio and print management, on-air and production. Ray and his associates are now offering a wide range of services: Assistance with media coverage, video production, media training, voice-overs and on-camera spokesman work. He can also help aspiring broadcasters break in the business. For more information, visit www.raycollinsmedia.com