

Bristol County District Attorney's Office
C. Samuel Sutter
District Attorney

Press Release
August 5, 2008

As part of his ongoing initiative to encourage exercise and physical fitness throughout Bristol County, District Attorney Sam Sutter today announced plans for his Second Annual New Bedford Free Summer Tennis Clinics.

“We do these free sports clinics because we want to get kids exercising and having fun playing sports. Too many of our children are spending too much time sitting down watching television, playing video games and surfing the Internet,” District Attorney Sutter said. “I am hoping to raise public awareness of this need to get our children exercising more, in addition to teaching kids the fundamentals of my favorite sport. Tennis is a sport you can play for your entire life. It’s great exercise and it’s not expensive to learn, to play, or to become a very good player.

“Last year we had more than 100 New Bedford kids participate and I would like to see even more this year.”

District Attorney Sutter will be assisted at the clinics by at least 14 volunteers from the community and his office, most of whom have played competitively in either high school or college. Some of the volunteers include Kristen Spooner, a current law student who played two seasons for the UMass Dartmouth women’s tennis team, where she captured the Eastern Athletic Conference Doubles Championship; Amy Lopes, the former number one player at Dartmouth High School and current number one player at UMASS Dartmouth; and Bob Bielowski, the former second ranked player at B.M.C. Durfee High School.

The program in New Bedford will be sponsored by the city’s recreation department, the New Bedford Boys and Girls Club, and the Bristol County District Attorney’s Office. The clinics will take place Saturdays August 9th and 16th at the Buttonwood Park tennis courts in New Bedford. Free racquets and tennis balls will be provided. The classes will be broken down into three groups based on age. Children who are 7 or 8 years old will be instructed from 8:30 to 9:20 a.m.; 9 and 10 year olds will take the court from 9:30 to 10:20 a.m.; 11 and 12 year old will be taught from 10:30 to 11:20 a.m.

New Bedford children between the ages of 7 and 12 can sign up for the clinic by visiting the New Bedford Recreation Department at One Oneida Street, The Boys and Girls Club at 166 Jenney Street or the Bristol County District Attorney’s Office at 888 Purchase

Street. Parents or guardians with questions or concerns about the two free tennis clinics can call Volunteer Coordinator Brian Rose at 508-997-0711, ext. 422.

Sutter, who played intercollegiate tennis for Brown University before playing and teaching professionally in 10 different countries, will be the lead instructor for the Saturday tennis clinics.

Sutter will be assisted by several volunteer instructors from his office and the community. District Attorney Sutter began offering free tennis clinics to Fall River youth in 2000 and has continued to offer them each year since. After his election to the office of Bristol County District Attorney, Sutter decided to extend the program into New Bedford last summer and into Attleboro earlier this year.

The District Attorney made the decision to conduct free tennis clinics and carry on the tradition started by his father, Clifford Sutter, shortly after his father died in May of 2000. Clifford Sutter was one of the best tennis players in the country during the 1930s, and was ranked as high as fifth in the world in 1932. The elder Sutter was a two-time National Intercollegiate Tennis Singles Champion at Tulane University and reached the semi-finals of the U.S. Open in 1932, losing to the eventual champion, Elsworth Vines, in the longest semi-final match in U.S. Open History.

Clifford Sutter later in life became the President of the Eastern Tennis Association in 1961 and as president he started an intensive program to expand tennis' popularity beyond country clubs. He did this by conducting and organizing countless free tennis clinics at public parks and public schools in the eastern region, and by spearheading an effort to construct public tennis courts throughout the east. In its obituary about Clifford Sutter, the NY Times wrote that this was his greatest legacy to the game of tennis.

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