

Essential Tennis Podcast #164

Welcome to the Essential Tennis podcast. If you love tennis and want to improve your game, this podcast is for you. Whether it's technique, strategy, equipment, or the mental game, tennis professional Ian Westermann is here to make you a better player. And now, here's Ian.

Ian Westermann: Hi and welcome to the Essential Tennis podcast, your place for free expert's tennis instruction that can truly help you improve your game. Today's episode of the episode is brought to you by Tennis Tours and Tennis Express.

Before we get to today's show and the big announcement that I told you all about last week, I just want to say congratulations to Novak Djokovic. I really enjoyed the finals of the Sony Ericson open in Miami yesterday versus Rafael Nadal. Djokovic is just a beast right now. He's playing so, so well. To be honest he's never been my favorite player. I won't get into that, but I just really respect him for the level of tennis that he's playing right now on the ATP Tour.

It's going to be really interesting to see how the rest of this year goes. Hopefully all of you listening had a chance to watch that match yesterday. If not, you should go check it out. It went 3 sets and really, really high level tennis especially in the third set. Alright let's go ahead and get to today's show. Sit back, relax, and get ready for some great tennis instruction.

Alright. So I know you all are wondering what I was talking about last week when I told you I was going to have a big announcement today, and I am. I want to tell you all from the outset here that episode number 164 today for this week is going to be a different type of episode. I've done 163 straight episodes that have been just tennis instruction nothing else, and today I'm going to mix things up just a little bit. I'm going to make the announcement that I was talking about last week, and I'm going to be asking a question of all of you listening, and I really want your answer. I really honestly do. I'm going to get to that question in just a couple of minutes.

I just want to be clear from the outset that I'm going to be talking about Essential Tennis websites and things like that, but I'm not going to be doing any Q&A or any tennis instruction today. So if you're not interested in that, feel free to turn this episode off. You can just join me next week where I'm going to start up with my normal format again. But if you've been a fan of this show for any length of time and if you really appreciate the show and if you've learned anything from it, I really think you're going to want to listen to what I have to say today.

So the announcement is that just this past week I completed my last week as a full-time teaching tennis professional at my job, a congressional country club in Bethesda,

Maryland. I quit my job. I'm no longer teaching full-time. Just a little bit of background about where I was teaching. I never really talked about it on the podcast for good reason. As I was working there and working on the website at the same time, I really didn't want to mix those two things together, but just to give you all a sense of the job I just left on purpose. I quit. It's the second highest rated private club in the United States of America to join. The initiation fee just to get your name on the list, and it usually takes 3 or 5 years or so to become a full member after paying the initiation fee. It's over \$100,000 to get your name on the list just to join. And then of course once you actually become a member, you have your monthly dues and you pay for whatever you use at the club, tennis lessons or rounds of golf or whatever.

Just to give you an idea of how prestigious of a club it is, the golf US Open is being played there this year in June at Congressional Country Club, so I left. It's kind of one of my early goals when I started working there was to be there at least long enough that I could be there long enough to see the US Open, but again I quit.

So this is a teaching job was something that was something I really wanted especially after I went and visited when I was interviewing. And typically pros really stay there for the long haul. The director of tennis has been there over 30 years. The head pro has been there over 10 years, and so this is a teaching job that most pros would really, really kill for. And I'm no longer teaching there as of this week. In fact, Monday, today is the first day of being on my own.

So why did I do this? I started Essential Tennis three years ago because I had a dream. I had a vision. I wanted to go just that next step. I had already become a pro at a really high level respected club, and that was all great. I really did enjoy teaching there. I love teaching. That's really my passion is to teach people and be in the tennis industry, but I knew that I could even do one step better. And teaching at a regular club, I can reach in a one hour time period one, two people. Maybe if it's a big group, 15 or 20 people. But I wanted to start a website to see if it was possible to reach the entire world, and I wanted to reach hundreds or thousands of people at a time instead of just a couple.

I also wanted to be self-employed and be my own boss and call my own shots and do exactly what I wanted to do in life and in my career. That was another goal of mine why I started the basis. Also I wanted to spend more time with my family and have more freedom. A typical day for me working at Congressional was waking up at 5 in the morning, leaving for work at 5:30, and getting home at night around 7 or so. So I haven't seen much of my daughter. I have a 13 month old daughter. I haven't seen a lot of her since she was born because I've been working really hard. I have an hour commute each way.

So those are all reason why I started the website. As a teacher, I wanted to reach more and more and more people and wanted to be my own boss. And now it's a reality. I'm so excited about this, and that's kind of the big thing I want to tell you all today is I'm leaving that kind of typical career behind as a tennis pro because I want to be your tennis pro. I want to teach all of you listening. That's going to be my full-time job from today moving forward. I'm really, really excited about that. I'm pumped up for what the future holds.

Just to give you an idea, I started the website a little less than three years ago, and I was just going back yesterday as I was doing the outline for this show and taking a look at what's happened in the last 3 years. Since I started the website, over 224,000 people, different people, have visited Essential Tennis. That gets me really pumped up. That gets me excited. That's what I'm talking about. I can record a half hour podcast like what I'm doing right now and thousands of people can hear it. They're all people that are pumped up and love tennis just as much as I do.

In those clinics that I would run at Congressional or lessons, those people might not even really care that much about getting better. They might not even want to work very hard. They might not even want to listen to what I have to say, and there's some of you out there who probably don't believe that. You're saying, Ian that's ridiculous. These people paid over \$100,000 to be a member of this club. On top of that, they're paying \$60, \$70 an hour to be on the court with you, and you're telling me they don't want to hear what you have to say? That is totally the case.

I should temper that by saying there were people that were incredible great students, and it was very hard to say goodbye to them and explain to them that I'm moving on to work on a website instead of teaching them in person. At the end of the day when I release this podcast, I know that hundreds and thousands of you will be listening that love tennis. You have a passion for it, and you're working hard to get better. I just can't match that in a club environment.

So over these three years, over 2.3 million page views have occurred on my website from all of those people all over the world that love tennis. I've done clinics in person all over the country here in the United States. In the future, I absolutely plan on going all over the world and working with fans of the website. I recently did doubles domination, my second release of my doubles course. There's over 400 students inside of doubles domination. That's right around the number of people who play tennis at Congressional, so that's like having the entire active tennis member at Congressional. Every single person is all learning from me at the same time. I can't do that. I can't match that as a teacher inside of a traditional club environment.

Of course Essential Tennis podcast is the number one tennis podcast in the world now. If you go to Google and type in tennis podcast, this podcast will come up first. If you go to iTunes and type in tennis podcast, this podcast will come up first. So I'm incredibly humbled and blown away by this. Looking back at where I started, I started off with an idea that maybe this would be possible, but I really didn't know. I just took one step at a time and kind of put myself out there. Looking back at how far the website has come, I'm just incredibly grateful and humbled by everything that's been accomplished.

I want to tell you all that this is just the beginning. Everything that has happened with the website has happened really part-time. I told you all a few minutes ago what kind of hours I've been working at Congressional. All of those hours are now going to go to the website, and I'm going to be focusing 100% on making all of you listening the best possible player.

So that's going to mean more clinics, and we're going to be traveling a lot more. It's going to mean a lot more video instruction. The video section of EssentialTennis.com really hasn't been touched in months, and I feel bad about that. Starting this week, I'm going to be re-releasing a lot of new video instruction. That's really going to be a focus of mine.

I'm going to be starting to spend a lot more time in the forums at EssentialTennis.com daily. I have time schedule for myself to go and answer questions that's totally free. The advice that I give there, the advice that I give in the video instruction section of the website is totally free, and I'm going to be working on more comprehensive instructional courses just like doubles domination. I'm going to be working on putting more of those out there.

So my focus now in my tennis career, I want to tell all of you just be ready this. I'm going to start putting out so much stuff, and most of it totally free because just as when I started the website, my number one goal for it is still to make you all the best possible tennis players. And if you don't want to buy anything from me, that's totally fine. That's always been totally fine. As you go through EssentialTennis.com, you'll see that the vast majority of it is free, and that will continue to be the case 100%. I don't mean 100% of it is going to be free, but it's going to be the case that most of it, the vast majority of it is free and that's 100% my goal.

Now, my question. Now that I've gone through all that and I've explained where I've come from, what my vision is for the future, what I'm going to be working on, I have a question for you. You. If you're listening to my voice right now, I really want your input on this. What do you want from me? What do you want from EssentialTennis.com? Moving forwards, I want to make sure that what I spent my time on is really what's going

to be the most beneficial and most appreciated and what all of you are really looking for the most so that you get the most out of EssentialTennis.com.

My focus again is going to be 100% on you. If you're listening to my voice right now, I want you to be a better tennis player, and to help me do that, I'd really appreciate some feedback. Tell me what you want more of it. Maybe it's a certain topic that I really haven't covered much in the past. Maybe it's more audio instruction. Maybe you want more video instruction. Maybe you want a comprehensive course designed and created by me on a certain topic. Maybe you want a clinic in a certain part of the country or a certain part of the world. I want to know what you think would be most valuable for you as I move forwards with EssentialTennis.com.

So please take a few minutes, think about it, and then come to EssentialTennis.com/podcast and click on Episode 164 and leave a comment there. Please it doesn't have to be complicated. It can just be two lines and just leave your thoughts on what you want moving forwards from EssentialTennis.com.

It doesn't have to be complicated or long. I just want a couple of thoughts from you. I'm going to read all of those. I'm going to reply to all of them. You have my personal promise on that, so don't feel like you're going to waste your time. I will take each and every input I get, I'm going to take and consider. I will appreciate the time that all of you put in to do that. So again, EssentialTennis.com/podcast. Click on 164, and leave your comments or whatever you want to see on EssentialTennis moving forwards.

Now in wrapping up today's episode, and I've talked a lot about the history of the website, me leaving my job, looking forwards, what I'm going to do, your input. I want to thank some people. This is really important for me because it wouldn't be possible for me to be sitting here doing exactly what I want to do without the help of a lot of people. I'm going to thank three groups of people, kind of groups.

Number one is I want to thank my wife publically. I have been working incredibly hard the last year especially, and the last three years I've had the website going, but especially the last year as the website has started to ramp up and I've started to put up more and more and more, I have been away from my family. Maybe not physically but mentally and emotionally for some time now, and I want to thank my wife for her support of what I've been doing. There's a lot of spouses out there that would not have the trust in what I've been doing. Just about that, yeah I'm going to make a living teaching tennis online. I mean, that's crazy, right.

I'm the type of guy that has a lot of hobbies and interests. Those have all gone out the window as I've started spending more and more time on the site, and my wife and my child haven't seen a lot of me in the last year. I want to thank my wife for continuing to support me unconditionally and trusting that what I'm doing will pay off for us in the long.

Now it has. I've quit my job, and now I'm going to be home every day and I'm going to spend more time with her and with my daughter. So it's paid off, but it really took a lot of trust for my wife to support me during all this time when I had to come at home at night late and say I'm sorry I need to go up to the office and I need to work. I've done that for months and months and months. So, Allison, thank you very much for supporting me in this.

Number two, I want to thank all of my online supporters and lots of different groups, listeners of the podcasts. The podcast has been really I've enjoyed doing the most. There's no way I would have had the drive to continue doing it without the feedback, without the questions, without the comments, without the emails from those of you who have appreciated this show. Thank you so much.

I want to thank for the forum members, definitely the most active and most passionate fans of Essential Tennis are in the forums. If you're a member of the forums and have posted there, especially if you've posted since the beginning, thank you so much from the bottom of my heart. Honestly.

Those of you who have made donations in the past, thank you so much for your support. Those of you who have attended clinics, thank you for your support financially and emotionally. That helps me so much to see people come out in person and pay to be there and listen and really be good students as I work hard in whatever location I am to try and make them better tennis players. If you've attended a clinic, thank you very much.

Last but certainly not least, students that are inside of doubles domination and Essential Tennis platinum, the products that I've really put out there and worked hard at so far, thank you all so much. It wouldn't have been possible for me to quit without that exchange of me offering value and instruction and you making that purchase and learning from me but also supporting me financially. I mean, that's how it works right? I can't quit my job without being able to pay the bills.

So if you've made a purchase from me of any kind of product like that, thank you so much. I really appreciate it.

Then lastly, I want to publically thank Will and Adam at Fuzzy Yellow Balls.com. Behind the scenes, they have really been mentoring me and helping me a great deal. I look forward to continuing working with them in the future, doing projects together, the Grand Slam final webcasts, and helping each other out. Will and Adam, thank you both so much for your help. I wouldn't be where I am now without the advice that you've given me. The two of those guys are great people. Honestly they're very generous, and I just would not be quitting and I would not be making this announcement today without the two of them. So thank you both so much over at Fuzzy Yellow Balls.

So that's pretty much. I'm really speaking from the heart here. I hope that if you're a fan of Essential Tennis and a fan of the podcast, I hope that this hasn't been difficult for you to listen to. I know that's really different from what I typically do on the show, but I really felt like it was important for me to really put this out there, tell you all exactly where I am and exactly where the website is, and I really wanted to thank you all so much for your support. I vow to continue giving back to the tennis community generously day in and day out.

You should all pat yourselves on the back as well. Without all of you listening, this would not be possible either what has happened so far or what is going to happen moving forward. Who knows what the future has in store. I'm really excited for it, and I know the site is going to continue to be successful because of people like you, and I just want to thank you all so much for listening.

So again, please leave your comments on what you'd like see from Essential Tennis.com for myself. What do you want? Go to EssentialTennis.com/podcast. Click on episode 164. Leave your feedback, and I'm going to read and reply to every one of those comments.

So with that I'm going to wrap things up. I've said everything that I wanted to say. Thank you all again very much. Next week I'll get back to the regular show format, Q&A, and whatever questions happen to be up next in line from those of you who have submitted questions for me to answer. So until then, I look forward to seeing you all on the internet and helping you all more so improve your tennis game and whatever I've done so far.

Again, thank you all so much for your support. I can't say that too much. I'll leave it at that. Thank you everybody, take care, and good luck with your tennis.