

2024 APTA BOARD MEETING TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to deliver intuitive and unified technology solutions that enrich our members' interactions and experiences with the APTA and advance their opportunities to enjoy the sport. To that end, we build & maintain internal applications for the APTA organization that streamline workflows and increase the quality of our services to members, league heads and tournament directors.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2023/2024 season was a transformational year for our technology platform. We launched a new website with a more modern design. We migrated to a new e-commerce platform for tournament registration and membership payments. Multiple improvements were made to support tournaments and scoring. A custom platform was built to support PTI calculations that is the property of the APTA. We successfully beta tested the Court Director platform for umpires to manage live match scoring. We added a Technology Director to the team expanding our expertise and capabilities. Our new vendors, Realware and Volley, were instrumental in delivering many of our new solutions.

We greatly advanced our capabilities in 2023/2024 and laid the groundwork for future initiatives. All of our future efforts will either improve member engagement, streamline APTA operations or reduce operating costs.

This report details accomplishments over the past year and then plans for the 2024/2025 season.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

New Website - platformtennis.org

The new website project that was approved at the February 28, 2023 board meeting went live in August of 2023 with e-commerce and tournament sign-up live in September. The project was led by Jen Beringer and required significant involvement with Isabel and the APTA tournament operations team. As with all new system implementations we hit a few snags. However, the project was a huge success in that we delivered a transformative site on time and on-budget. This site is a foundation upon which we can build for the future with our new technology partner, Realware.

Live Scoring & Tournament Management

We supported a record number of tournaments in the 2023-24 season. Integrating the new website and e-commerce system into our tournament management and membership systems was a significant effort. Isabel was instrumental in ensuring everything was working in good order prior to the beginning of the season.

We also made significant improvements in our ability to support Team Nationals, the Baird & Fulton Cups and round robin events. Working closely with tournament directors, we also delivered player and team insights and analytics reports to assist live stream commentators. Tournaments and Live Scoring also saw improvements with PTI integration, seeding and draw placement, real-time texting and event reporting.

We made improvements in live scoring performance that eliminated most of the problems we saw in prior years. Some issues remain related to the integration of e-commerce, tournament registration and the tournament mgmt systems that we expect to resolve prior to the 2024-25 season.

PTI Platform

Last year, the PTI committee selected Volley to build a production quality PTI Management System to ensure the future and interoperability of the PTI system. The cost to the APTA for engineering and development is \$0. The new platform is the intellectual property of the APTA and empowers us to own all match data as well as ensure that the PTI algorithm is applied consistently for all platform tennis leagues and players in the US.

Court Director

We successfully tested a new live scoring system built by Mark Thomford in the 2023/24 season. Match scores are entered by the umpire (or courtside delegate) and are viewable on phones or courtside kiosks & TVs. Feedback from umpires, tournament directors and patrons was very positive.

Staff Changes

Mark Thomford joined the APTA in April as our Technology Director. He has extensive industry experience managing technology initiatives. Mark also built the Court Director system we are using for umpire live scoring at tournaments. Mark will be instrumental in overseeing all APTA technology initiatives related to website development, PTI, tournament management and technology operations.

Vendor Changes

Realware is our new technology partner that manages our websites & cloud infrastructure in Azure. Our new website is built on their content management and e-commerce platforms, Total<CMS> and Total<Commerce>. They have a full-service engineering team that can scale up/down on demand to meet our project needs. Adding Realware to the team allowed us to terminate our relationship with Lightway Solutions (formerly Transom Partners). We also added Volley as our partner to build the PTI platform.

Communications

We continue to leverage many 3rd party platforms for communications:

- APTA email provider: Rackspace
- Member e-mail: Constant Contact
- SMS: Twilio
- Social: YouTube, Instagram & Facebook

PROJECTS FOR THE 2024/2025 SEASON

We have many initiatives planned for the upcoming season. Every single project can be directly tied to one of three objectives: increasing member experience/engagement, streamlining APTA operations or reducing technology debt and operating costs.

Website Development - platformtennis.org & platformtennisonline.org

For the member-facing websites, we have these upgrades planned:

- Identity Mgmt Solution - Manage APTA membership in e-commerce platform with link to membership
- Home Page Tournament Pop Out with recent events
- Migrate all news and tournament results & content from the old website into the new website. This will allow us to retire the old site and hosting costs.
- Rebuild the Hall-of-Fame site as a micro-site within the new platformtennis.org site ensuring that all HOF content is preserved.
- Upgrade the new blog with improved UX
- Update member navigational scheme for platformtennisonline.org to align with the main site.

PTI Platform

In 2024, our focus will be to:

- Migrate calculation of PTI from PaddleScores to the APTA (via Volley development resources) and make PaddleScores and other 3rd parties consumers of this information from the APTA.
- Transition to PTI v2, preferably releasing before the season begins, but minimally would like to be generating PTI v1 and v2 side by side for some transition period.
- Work to develop improved tools to support leagues and team captains, reducing the APTA operational burden and empowering them with better PTI validation and management utilities.
- Notable headwind: Our point engineer at Volley has been released as part of a staff reduction. We will be reviewing expectations for what we can deliver and when with the team.

Court Director

In 2024, our focus will be to:

- Procure and deploy hardware for Court Director. Determine operational strategy for managing gear and software at tournaments.
- Enhance APTA tournament system with improved integration with Court Director platform.
- Stretch goal to test posting results from Court Director umpired matches back to the tournament system to help automate results posting where possible.
- Work with live streamers on the integration of CourtDirector scoring in live streamed matches.

Note: This plan depends on a licensing agreement between the APTA and Court Director team.

Communications

In 2024, our focus will be to:

- Migrate away from Rackspace to Google Workspace for platformtennis.org email hosting

- Migrate to Google Workspace for document management & productivity solutions (Drive, Sheets, Docs, Calendar, Hangouts, etc.). All staff and board members will collaborate within this ecosystem, providing organizational continuity by ensuring APTA assets are warehoused within the APTA itself.
- Evaluate use of Contact Contact to validate continued use
- Extend use of Twilio to send mass texts to tournament players

Submitted by Andrew Haines

Technology Committee Chair