



San Quentin Tennis Academy & BYTE Tennis Coach Apprenticeship

Border Youth Tennis Exchange

Border Youth Tennis Exchange is a binational youth development organization that combines sports, academics, and art instruction to support kids and families on both sides of the US/Mexico border. Over 2000 student-athletes participate in BYTE programs annually at 13 in-person sites in California, Arizona, and the Northern-Mexico state of Sonora. BYTE specializes in locked facility programs, partnering with migrant and child-welfare shelters, state and municipal prisons, and facilities for adults and youth with developmental and behavioral disabilities. BYTE is a chapter of the National Junior Tennis & Learning (NJTL) network, mandated by the US Tennis Association Foundation to improve communities through high-quality free and subsidized sports and enrichment. In 2020 BYTE received the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation National Sport Award for its interventions in the fields of Sport for Humanitarian Aid and Sport for Public Health.

Program Description

BYTE's San Quentin initiative has two components, both designed to teach transferrable skills and promote prosocial engagement, consistent exercise, and positive habit formation for physical and mental well-being.

1. San Quentin Tennis Academy

BYTE will establish a year-round, tiered, inmate managed introductory tennis pathway with opportunities for advancement toward higher-level play. Courses will be open within the San Quentin recreation department for public enrollment, to expand formal access to a wider inmate community.

2. BYTE Tennis Coach Apprenticeship

BYTE will offer a sport-based healing and workforce development program training selected inmates for future employment as certified tennis instructors. Selected apprentice coaches receive on-court and off-court mentorship in foundational tennis progressions and education philosophies. Content includes professional certifications, transferrable employment skills, practice in social and emotional learning competencies, and opportunities to interact with non-incarcerated Bay Area tennis volunteers as part of the Inside/Outside Saturday Tennis Sessions.

Program Components

San Quentin Tennis Academy

1. Introductory Group Tennis Class | Twice Weekly
2. Intermediate Group Tennis Class | Twice Weekly
3. High Performance Team Practice | Once Weekly
4. Private Lessons | Available on-demand to all group lesson enrollees
5. Inside/Outside Saturday Sessions | Available to High Performance Team

BYTE Tennis Coach Apprenticeship

- 1) On-Court Training: Twice weekly sports and coach development classes.
- 2) Off-Court Education: Series of sports industry professional development workshops and certifications (CPR & First Aid, Trauma-Informed Community Coaching, Mental Health First Aid).
- 3) Coach Apprenticeship: Teaching assignment in the San Quentin Tennis Academy.
- 4) Inside/Outside Saturday Tennis Session: Weekly Inside/Outside Tennis clinics with non-incarcerated volunteers from the greater Bay Area tennis community.
- 5) Level 1 Tennis Coach Certification: Available to outstanding course graduates

Course Objectives

- Establish San Quentin Tennis Academy (SQTA) to increase formal tennis pathway access to wider San Quentin community.
 - Improve SQTA tennis participants' physical and mental health through structured exercise and athletics.
 - Cultivate SQTA participants' passion for tennis and sports through progressive skill-building and pathways to higher level play and long-term engagement.
 - Prepare apprentice coaches for sport and mentorship-based careers through fundamentals of tennis instruction, positive youth development, and trauma-informed community coaching.
 - Provide apprentice coaches employment and resume support by securing nationally recognized certifications and real-world coaching experience.
 - Provide opportunities for SQTA participants and apprentice coaches to practice positive social/emotional learning competencies.
 - Prepare SQTA participants and apprentice coaches for post-incarceration by interacting positively with outside community volunteers from the Bay Area tennis community.
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1. San Quentin Tennis Academy

The San Quentin Tennis Academy will be established as a tiered course pathway to learning and long-term engagement. To-date, San Quentin has never had a structured methodology for introducing interested inmates to tennis. BYTE will build year-round program infrastructure to offer introductory, intermediate, and high-performance instruction. Programs will be directed by the BYTE Executive Director, supported by an inmate Head Coach and a team of Apprentice Coaches. The following courses will be offered in trimester (Spring, Summer, Fall) terms.

Courses

1. Group Introductory Tennis

Students learn the basic grips, stroke production, and rules to play tennis. Activities are collaborative and competitive, emphasizing a strong foundation and correct habits for long-term development.

2. Group Intermediate Tennis

Students build on skills developed in introductory tennis, continuing to improve technique while introducing court transitions, point strategy and more competitive play.

3. High-Performance Tennis Practice

Competitive play introducing advanced singles and doubles positioning and strategy. High-Performance track is available through team tryouts, taking place each Aug.

4. Private Lessons

All San Quentin Tennis Academy enrollees are eligible for private instruction, either by the BYTE Executive Director, the inmate Head Pro, or by participants of the BYTE Apprentice Coaching program. Lessons will be offered as schedules allow to give participants focused instruction and practice that is tailored to individual needs.

5. Inside/Outside Community Tennis

Inside/Outside Community Tennis is a longstanding volunteer program connecting Bay Area tennis players to the San Quentin inmate tennis program. Each three-hour session is an opportunity for San Quentin players to compete, practice skills, and share passion for the game with enthusiasts from outside the prison. Past community volunteers have included local coaches and league players as well as university tennis teams from University of San Francisco, Stanford, and Cal. Restricted to participants of the San Quentin High-Performance Team.

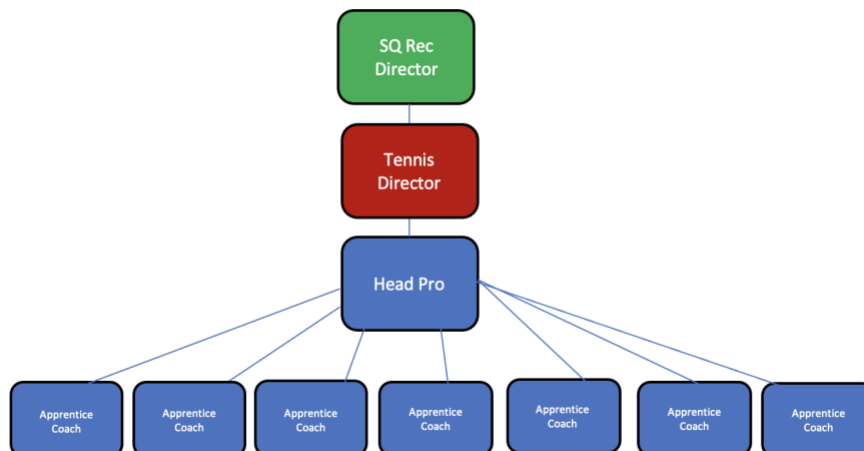
Program Org Chart

The San Quentin Tennis Academy will be designed and managed collaboratively by institution personnel, BYTE program managers, and inmate Apprentice Coaches.

Green = San Quentin Personnel

Red = BYTE Staff

Blue = San Quentin Inmate



2. BYTE Tennis Coach Apprenticeship Curriculum

The BYTE Tennis Coach Apprenticeship is a 4-month structured course that includes both on-court and off-court training. Apprentice Coaches are expected to improve their technical tennis skills while learning

basic progressions and skills needed for employment as a youth or adult tennis instructor. Successful Apprentice Coaches will develop their passion for the sport while becoming an ambassador for the positive benefit of sport, and tennis more specifically. Course graduates receive a completion certificate and consideration for a subsidized Level 1 Coach Certification through the US Tennis Association Norcal Section and the US Tennis Professional Association.

1. On-Court Training

On-court skill development consists of twice weekly structured athletic training on the San Quentin tennis court. Content integrates personal skill development, coaching and workforce development materials, and social and emotional learning competencies.

A. Skill Development

On-court sessions highlight skill development through cooperative and competitive play. Participants learn through doing, developing familiarity with basic learning progressions while improving formal skills. Lesson template:

BYTE On-Court Session					
Time	Component	Drill	Tennis Skill Development	Job Readiness Component	SEL Component
5 mins	Welcome				
5 mins	Warm-up & Athletic Challenge				
20 mins	Cooperative Play				
20 mins	Competitive Play				
5 mins	Closing				

B. Coaching & Workforce Development | Train the Trainer Model

Employment experiences are critical to preparing for life post-incarceration. BYTE sessions reinforce how to communicate with managers, coworkers, and customers, preparing Apprentice Coaches for roles across industries. While tennis is the vehicle for coach development, emphasis is on transferrable employment skills and technical knowledge to facilitate introductory tennis classes to all ages.

Train the Trainer Model	
Transferable Experience	Specific Skills
Coach Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson Plan Design • Technical knowledge • Activity Scaffolding • Presentation/Facilitation • Providing & Accepting Feedback • Trauma-Sensitive Mentorship • Personal Self-Reflection
Workforce Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Organizational Management • Empathetic Listening • Integrity Development • Goal Setting • Interpersonal Problem Solving • Creative Innovation • Effective Communication • Safety Management

C. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

In combination with a sport and coaching curriculum, the BYTE Coach Apprenticeship offers opportunities to learn and practice social and emotional learning (SEL) competencies. BYTE’s curriculum is rooted in the nationally recognized CASEL Framework—**Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)**. CASEL identifies five interrelated sets of cognitive, affective, and behavioral competencies.

1. Self-Awareness
2. Self-Management
3. Social Awareness
4. **Relationship Skills**
5. **Responsible Decision Making**

BYTE sessions emphasize the development of **Relationship Skills** and **Responsible Decision Making** as an introduction to sports-based SEL. These competencies were selected as the most relevant and accessible for program success, and as a support to skill development needed in future employment. Brief summaries are included below, as well as the specific skills engaged.

BYTE SEL Content		
SEL Competency	Definition	Specific Skills
Relationship Skills	The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening actively, communicating effectively, and self-advocating • Developing mutually healthy and productive relationships • Making and maintaining trusting, respectful friendships • Demonstrating gratitude • Practicing collaborative problem-solving focused on the common good • Resisting negative social pressure • Showing leadership and contributing productively in groups
Responsible Decision Making	The ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, the realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and the well-being of self and others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrating curiosity and open-mindedness • Demonstrating honesty, integrity, and fairness • Identifying solutions for personal and social problems • Anticipating and evaluating the consequences of one's actions • Reflecting on one's role to promote personal, family, and community well-being • Considering personal and collective safety concerns

D. Sample On-Court Session

The below lesson plan indicates a standard session, including all tennis, job readiness, and SEL content.

BYTE On-Court Session					
Time	Component	Drill	Tennis Skill Development	Job Readiness Component	SEL Component
5 mins	Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening Circle • Names • Group Check-In • Session Description 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrating curiosity and open-mindedness
5 mins	Warm-up & Athletic Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner Step Ball Passes • Service Box Mirror Shuffle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lateral Footwork • Hand-Eye Coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Management • Interpersonal Problem Solving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing leadership and contributing productively in groups
20 mins	Skill Development & Cooperative Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Ralley Challenge Forehand & Backhand • Partner Rally Challenge Forehand & Backhand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continental Grip • Racquet Control • Power Control • Ball Directionals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepting Feedback • Interpersonal Problem Solving • Activity Scaffolding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practicing collaborative problem-solving focused on the common good
20 mins	Competitive Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jungle Ball • Short Court Singles • Short Court Doubles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Backhand/Forehand Transitions • Hitting while Moving • Playing under pressure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrating honesty, integrity, and fairness
5 mins	Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Court Clean-Up • Closing Circle • Reflections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill Self-Assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Reflection • Goal Setting • Empathetic Listening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrating gratitude

2. Off-Court Coach Education

BYTE Apprentice Coaches receive the training and certifications needed to work in the community as youth and adult sport coaches. Content includes the following nationally recognized workshops.

BYTE Off-Court Professional Development Workshops				
Title	Description	Online Duration (hours)	In-Person Duration (hours)	Total (hours)
Confirmed Workshops				
CPR & First Aid Certification	Nationally recognized certification through American Heart Association	3-hours Self-Paced	1.5-hours	4.5-hours
Youth Mental Health First Aid	Workshop designed to teach adults, peers, and professionals how to help an adolescent (age 12-18) who is experiencing a mental health crisis. Nationally recognized certification through National Council for Mental Well-Being	4-hours Live	-	4-hours
Coach Youth Tennis	Introduction to the basics of 10-under tennis instruction and best practices in youth coach education.	3.5-hours Self-Paced	-	3.5-hours
BYTE Trauma-Informed Community Coaching	Basic understanding of trauma, its affect on the body, and foundational strategies for coaching all youth	2.5-hours Self-Paced	1.5-hours	4-hours
Available to Outstanding Fellows on Individual Basis				
USTA Level 1 Tennis Coach Certification	Certification process to teach tennis professionally. Only available to eligible Fellows who attend all BYTE Sports Leadership components and express interest in coaching career	2-hours Self-Paced	16-hours	18-hours

* Level 1 eligibility will be determined on an individual basis

3. San Quentin Tennis Academy Coaching Assignment

Apprentice Coaches will be assigned instruction roles in the San Quentin Tennis Academy. This includes on-court instruction in the introductory, intermediate, and high-performance team practices, as well as training in how to deliver individual classes. Apprentice Coaches will help develop appropriate level content and will practice deploying strategies and materials learned in coach development trainings. Not only does this provide on-the-job training to Apprentice Coaches, but it also helps build out a learning pathway for the wider San Quentin community to begin tennis and grow skills within the program.

4. Inside/Outside Community Tennis

Apprentice Coaches will have the opportunity to participate in weekly Inside/Outside Community Tennis sessions.

5. Level 1 Coach Certification

Outstanding BYTE Apprentice Coach graduates will be eligible to complete a formal Level 1 Coach certification, administered by USTA Norcal and the USPTA. This professional certification will assist in seeking employment as a tennis coach and is the first step in a pathway to higher level knowledge and skill.