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# CHAMPIONS OF TENNIS 2008

Our annual awards  
honor those who  
continue to make this  
sport a winner

Dave Haggerty • Boar's Head Sports Club •  
Nate Ferguson • Boston Tennis Court  
Construction Co. • Jim Haneklau • Sport Chalet •  
Tennis & Golf Co. • Chuck Kuhle • Sue Jollensten •  
Surprise Tennis & Racquet Complex • Michael Mercier •  
Roswell Park & Rec • Lee County Tennis Association •  
Jorge Andrew • Tom Sweitzer • Sue Bordainick •  
Pacific Northwest



**DAVE  
HAGGERTY**



# DAVE HAGGERTY

**T**alk to Dave Haggerty about his career and all that he's done in the tennis business, and he'll tell you how "lucky" he's been. Lucky that tennis was a part of his childhood. Lucky to have received a college tennis scholarship. Lucky to have become a director of tennis in 1980. Lucky to have had opportunities with major tennis companies. Lucky to be involved in a sport he loves.

But when you get to know Haggerty, you realize that, while he may have been in the right place at the right time in cer-

tain instances, "luck" really played a minor role. It's more about Haggerty himself—his dedication and passion for tennis, his knowledge, his style, his easygoing nature—that both sets him apart, yet also makes him a kind of tennis "everyman," someone who can relate to all segments of this industry, and to whom everyone else can relate, too.

And importantly, for nearly 30 years, Haggerty has been using all of this accumulated industry knowledge and passion for the good of the sport. That's why, for 2008, Dave

Haggerty is Racquet Sports Industry's Person of the Year.

Never is the saying, "If you want something done, ask a busy person," more applicable than when talking about Haggerty. He is currently the CEO of Head USA (responsible not just for Racquet Sports, but also for the Winter Sports and Diving divisions) and the president of Penn Racquet Sports; he is on the USTA board of directors (and will be a USTA vice president beginning in January); and he is on the TIA Executive Committee (after serving as TIA president for the past two years). He's also held positions on the board of trustees for the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association and on the USTA Middle States board of directors, among many other activities, both professional and volunteer.

Haggerty started playing tennis when he was 5, taught at first by his father, who was a science and biology teacher and a tennis coach in Trenton, N.J., and who was the director of tennis for the city of Trenton. At age 6, Haggerty was ranked in the USTA Middle States section. He played through high school, then attended George Washington University on a tennis scholarship, graduating in 1979 with a degree in business administration. (He recently was inducted into the GW Athletic Hall of Fame, and he's also in the Mercer County, N.J., Tennis Hall of Fame.)

During summers, he taught tennis with his father at the Trenton Country Club. After college, he went to Europe and played in some pro events, but "I realized I was playing my best tennis, and I was as good as I was going to get," he says.

"I was lucky enough to become the director of tennis at an indoor/outdoor club in Hamilton, N.J., which is near Lawrenceville, where Prince was located," Haggerty says. He started teaching Jack Murray, then the president of Prince, and one day, after tennis, Murray "told me if I ever get tired of teaching tennis, to give him a call. So I waited until noon then called Jim Baugh, who was with Prince at the time, to ask him what it means. I had an interview with Jim and Jack a few days later." Haggerty became the product manager for accessories for Prince, which at the time consisted of two strings and two men's and two women's T-shirts.

He left Prince in 1993, after 13 years, rising to product testing manager, regional then national sales manager, vice president of sales and marketing, then general manager of the Americas. He consulted for a while then became the president of U.S. operations for Dunlop in 1994. In 1998, he moved to Head, as vice president and general manager of racquet sports.

"In the roles I've had in companies, I've been able to experience everything from sales and marketing to operations, and to know what it's like to run a warehouse, understand customer complaints and issues, and all sorts of things," he says. "I feel that I've been very fortunate to have such a broad view of tennis, and the tennis business."

"Dave has a great grasp on the levers that can move things through the industry," says longtime friend, doubles partner, and Head colleague Kevin Kempin.

A large part of Haggerty's effectiveness in this industry, and what really sets him apart as our Person of the Year, is all that he has done, and is doing, on the volunteer side of tennis.

"Dave's wealth of experience in this industry is a huge asset to us," says Lucy Garvin, the incoming USTA president and chairman of the board. "He brings a wonderful business acumen to the board. I'm going to count on his experience to help broaden our relationships."

"With the focus of the TIA to bring everyone together, it's clear that's Dave's motivating factor," says TIA Executive Director Jolyn de Boer. "He is able to easily reach across the aisle. He's all about the sport of tennis, and promoting it."

Haggerty's relationships extend to all areas of the business. A teaching pro himself, he is tight with both the PTR and

USPTA (in fact, Head is a sponsor of both), and understands the value teaching pros bring to the industry. He is involved with other companies via his role with the TIA, he is heavily involved with the USTA sections, he is an avid player and understands the tennis consumer, and he doesn't shy away from dealing with the media to get the tennis message out.

And more than that, "Dave is a genuine person. He really brings a sense of calmness and level-headedness to all the different things we do," says de Boer. "He's very reassuring, and very calming."

That's a quality that many people echo. "Dave is always the calm in the storm," says Kempin. "In the times we're going through now, it's great to have someone who doesn't whipsaw back and forth and doesn't panic. He's always calm, focused, positive, firm when needed—you don't see him go to extremes. He has a very balanced approach."

"He has a warm personality, and he's someone you want to work with," adds PTR CEO Dan Santorum. "He's helped keep this industry together, which is a testimony to his

diplomatic skills."

And it's also a testimony to the respect he garners from all areas of the business. "Dave has helped both build a stronger bridge with the USTA and further bring together our industry overall," says Jon Muir, the general manager of Wilson, who will take over as president of the TIA in January.

Adds Olivia Bellato, his longtime executive assistant at Head: "I have a great deal of respect and admiration for Dave. He runs three businesses, is on all these volunteer boards, has his family (five children), coaches tennis and soccer, and his door is always open for you. He's an amazing human being.

"Someone told me when I first started working with Dave eight years ago that I'd never find a more highly respected person in the tennis business. I certainly lucked out." ▶

—Peter Francesconi

**TIPS FOR SUCCESS**

- ▶ **Be a volunteer.** Like Haggerty, get as involved as possible. You'll not only have a good time, but you'll contribute to something really worthy.
- ▶ **Lead by example.** "I'm not afraid of early hours and late days," says Haggerty.
- ▶ **Keep your head.** Haggerty's calm, unassuming demeanor puts people at ease and exudes confidence.
- ▶ **Give people autonomy and let them do their jobs.** "Dave has no problem being in the background and letting others make decisions and get the credit," says Kevin Kempin.
- ▶ **Communicate often.** It puts everyone on the same page and minimizes surprises. On the flip side, like Haggerty, be a good listener, too.