
LAS VEGAS SUN

New indoor tennis center caters to elite clientele



Sean Ammerman

Andrew Rapahelson dives for a backhand while training at the International Tennis Centre Las Vegas.

By [Sean Ammerman](#) ([contact](#))

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Nothing was going to stop Green Valley High tennis player Evan Song from practicing on this cold winter day.

A snowstorm uncharacteristically hit the Las Vegas Valley, causing roads to be blocked and schools to be canceled. But Song's routine didn't need to be altered as he took one of the eight indoor courts at International Tennis Centre Las Vegas.

"These are my favorite courts," Song said. "The lighting is perfect and the surface is the same they use at the professional level, so it's not hard to make the adjustment from outdoors."

The International Tennis Centre Las Vegas, 5975 Topaz St., off East Russell Road, is the valley's newest tennis club catering to high-end clientele.

With eight courts inside a climate-controlled, 80,000-square-foot building, it is one of the few indoor facilities in Las Vegas.

The closest competitor is ClubSport Green Valley, 2100 Olympic Ave., which has 10 indoor courts with four outdoor courts and a fitness center.

Jim Ahearn, the new center's chief executive, said the club will stand out because it caters specifically to tennis players.

The facility cost about \$10 million, according to Ahearn's estimates, and had its soft opening on Dec. 1. A series of official grand openings are still in the planning stages, but many professional level players, such as German pro Tommy Haas, have already tested the courts.

"The highest level of tennis players in the world will play here," Ahearn said. "I believe we really have a spectacular product here."

A few of Ahearn's favorite amenities are the furnished locker rooms and the club's lighting, which he said is strong enough for television broadcast.

Other qualities include Deco Turf II courts, the surface used for the U.S. Open, and plenty of room between the courts.

"We tried to design this in a way that would accommodate an up-market traveler or locals who appreciate quality," Ahearn said. "Anywhere you go in Las Vegas everything is dressed up beautifully. You can't short sell it."

The indoor courts may be nice during Las Vegas' usually mild winter, but they will be more in demand during the valley's hot summer months.

International marketing director Roman Massaro, a former UNLV tennis player, said the temperatures topping 100 degrees in July and August are difficult tennis conditions. Massaro expects the facility to gain popularity by the summer.

"You have to be careful when you are playing in the heat in Las Vegas," he said. "Not only can it limit you, but it can be dangerous."

Massaro said much of the facility's clientele will be the same individuals who frequent high-end golf resorts, but he said they also expect to build a strong local youth program.

UNLV alumnus Henner Nehles will be the head professional at the club and will teach alongside his wife, Elena Gantcheva, also a UNLV graduate.

For more information, visit ITCLasVegas.com.

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