



# Girls Tennis

Head Coach: John Cassens

# Present~Respectful~Ownership~United~Determined

Welcome to our Decatur High School Athletic program! Athletics and activities provide participants additional opportunity to learn, develop skills, grow as an individual and as a member of a team. Our Gator Athletic program will strive toward a united culture that fosters a high work ethic, accountability, outstanding sportsmanship, teamwork and respect for all.

During any season, there will be a wide range of emotional highs and lows, challenges that require perseverance, problem solving situations, wonderful celebrations and many lifetime memories. We consider ourselves partners with each role clearly defined:

Participants Compete, Parents Support, Coaches Coach, Officials Officiate

Decatur is a member of the North Puget Sound League (NPSL) with fifteen other schools resulting in extremely competitive contests. As Golden Gator's we will support the NPSL sportsmanship code and commit too:

*Show pride, class, spirit and respect. Display modesty in victory and graciousness in defeat.*

To assist participants and their families in planning for practice and contests during our season, coaches might provide additional documents. However, please always refer to our NPSL website <http://www.npslathletics.org/> as this is Decatur Athletics master contest schedule. Our NPSL site provides the opportunity for people to sign up and receive emails when a contests changes. Viewing the NPSL site on a regular basis is encouraged.

We enter the 2017-2018 school year with new energy, enthusiasm, Golden Gator Pride and great optimism! Thank you in advance for supporting our growth by becoming involved with our programs, attending our contests, cheering positively and loudly for all involved. We stand PROUD as a Gator Athletic program. As the saying goes at Decatur...

“It is and always is a great day to be a Gator!”

Annette J. Duvall  
Director of Athletics  
[aduvall@fwps.org](mailto:aduvall@fwps.org)  
(253) 945-5306 office

**Coaching Staff:**

John Cassens - Head Coach: [tenisjohn@msn.com](mailto:tenisjohn@msn.com), (206) 226-4848 cell

Remind 101 – enter phone #81010, then enter @gtennis into text box

<http://www.npslathletics.org/>

Coach Cassens is excited to be coaching and working with such a great group of participants. This will be his 12<sup>th</sup> season coaching high school girls tennis. Coach Cassens has grown up in tennis and during his tenure at Decatur our girls' tennis team won the State Champions in 2009 as well as placing 3<sup>rd</sup> at State in 2010. In 2010 and 2011, Decatur's Girls Tennis were back to back League Champions. Coach Cassens is completely passionate about tennis and Decatur High School which is fantastic for all involved!

**Philosophy of our program:**

A successful season for our team will be determined by our participant's ability to improve every day; by how hard we practice, by how aggressively we compete, & by how united we are as a team. We believe that it takes the talents of many individuals and hard work to produce a successful team effort. Our success as a team hinges on our ability to develop our individual talents and build a team culture that operates as one cohesive unit. We believe that for our team to be successful the good of the team must come first, before the good of the individual; however, individual contributions will be valued and recognized.

**Determining factors for level of competition in our program:**

- PROUD characteristics
- Academics, attitude and attendance
  - We understand some participants may have jobs or work commitments. This makes a 100% commitment to any team challenging. If a job or work commitment impacts one's ability to be a fully present participant, coaches and participants will collaborate with the intent to find a solution but ideally, our athletic program priorities are family, academics, team.
- Talent, experience, work ethic and cooperation
- Results of challenge matches in practice
- Performance & dedication at team practices and contests

**Decatur Athletic Program Philosophy:**

Varsity is designed to compete and win while demonstrating PROUD characteristics.

JV and C is designed develop and retain participation numbers while demonstrating PROUD characteristics.

**Varsity (V):** All participants have the opportunity to compete at the Varsity level if they are capable and can be competitive. Coach decisions are dependent upon PROUD characteristics, talent, commitment, punctual, in attendance, work ethic, and attitude. In addition, our Varsity team has the highest emphasis on competition level designed to produce the strongest results so we are a program of accomplishment within the league and post-season. We will focus on outcome-based results which may lead to an inequity in the number of matches one competes in at the Varsity level.

**Lettering Requirements:**

Participants must compete in two Varsity contests or  
A participant wins one Varsity NPSL league match

All participants must consistently demonstrated PROUD characteristics throughout the entire season. In addition, participants will:

- participants must have 95% attendance throughout the entire season
- be academically eligible at the end of the season
- have returned all issued equipment or gear
- have paid all fines through the finance office before the season ends

If in case there is a behavior standard or a situation that falls short of our PROUD characteristic standard, it is possible that this could impact their receipt of a Varsity letter.

**Junior Varsity (JV) team:** Our JV team will focus on the development and retention of participants with the intent to prepare them to eventually compete at the Varsity level. Tennis is a sport that offers participation for all levels too enjoy the opportunity to compete against oneself and others. Participation in contests will depend on PROUD characteristics, commitment, punctual, in attendance, work ethic, attitude and skill. JV contests are opportunities to develop, set personal low scores, increase competitiveness and strive to eventually be a Varsity competitor.

**Tennis Expectations**

**Practice Standards:**

- On practice days (Monday-Friday) our team will train at Decatur HS from 2:30-4:00pm We expect everyone to be on time, dressed and ready before our start time.
  - Participants can be picked up at Decatur at 4:00pm.
  - When it rains, participants will meet in the gym 2:15pm and our practice plan will be decided. On rainy days, participants can be picked up at 3:15pm.
- Attendance at practice every day is critical to our ability to improved and be competitive. If for some reason a participant cannot make practice please communicate to Head Coach at your earliest convenience through Remind 101.
  - FWPS scholars are required to attend at least half a day to compete in a contest or practice. School related activities and pre-arranged health appointments are considered part of the regular school day.
  - 100% attendance is required at all team practices, contests and functions.

- If you are sick and at school, you need to see Head Coach if you believe you need to go home, in lieu of practice.
  - If you stay home from school, do not attend practice. If you are too sick to be in school, you are too sick to participate.
- Tennis lends itself to participants who may train with a pro. WIAA rules state that high school programs may not alter or make exceptions for any participant.
  - Per WIAA policy 18.23.1 – schools may not give students special treatment or privileges on a regular basis to enable them to participate in non-school athletic activities. Some examples of special treatment or privileges include reduced practice time, special workouts, late arrivals, early dismissals or missing a practice or contest.
    - Regular is defined as more than once.
- ASB cards must be purchased before competing in a contest.
  - Financial hardships should be communicated to the Head Coach and/or Athletic Director during a school day.
- Per WIAA rules, participants must have 10 practices before competing in a contest.
- Participants are not to be active until there is a Coach present and is overseeing everyone's safety.
- When a participant is academically ineligible, recovering from an illness or injured, we expect them to be fully present to the best of their ability, an “all in” team member, supporting and cheering on teammates during practices/contests and in a position to continue learning so they are fully prepared and ready to contribute upon return.
- Come to practice ready to compete with intensity every day. #wecompete

**Behavior Standards:**

- Participants are expected to conform to all state, local, community, district, school and team rules, policies, and standards. That includes showing proper respect to coaches, officials, parents, other teammates, other sports athletes, school faculty and staff, bus drivers, and/or any other adult in an authoritative position at our school or any locations that we may visit.
  - Families and participants can be a tremendous help for coaches to become aware of bullying and harassment. Please communicate with the Head Coach or AD as soon as possible.
  - We do not allow demeaning initiation ceremonies or hazing of any kind. Families and participants can be a tremendous help in this area as well. Please communicate to the Head Coach or AD as soon as possible.

**Core covenants of all Decatur Athletics are PROUD characteristics:**

**Present** – we show up everyday, fully committed to learn and develop in our sport.  
**Respect** - of self, teammates, coaches, opponents, officials and all people and property.  
**Ownership** - of all decisions, being a dependable and trustworthy teammate.  
**United** - as a team, Decatur Athletic program and as a high school.  
**Determined** – to do our best everyday, never give up and to represent Decatur at the highest level at all times.

### **As a Decatur Tennis Member:**

- No longer am I simply myself. Everything I do reflects upon those I serve, my teammates and Decatur High School.
- I do not cheat, steal, or lie. People must be able to count on me, and my word, as solid and trustworthy.
- I set the positive example for others to follow.
- I am tolerant of those who may not yet share the same level of commitment I have, and those who seem to have even more.
- I have high expectations and will focus on our accomplishments - not on our disappointments.
- I will always strive to be worthy of the responsibilities I have been given and to promote the goals of our team to the best of my ability.

### **Match Standards:**

- Matches start at 3:30pm. Matches generally last until 6:00pm.
- Participants need to be dressed in Decatur gear and ready to warm up once they arrive to the courts. Participants will know one day ahead of time if they are competing V or JV on meet day.
- For home or away matches, participants are required to be present from start to finish, unless there is a valid reason that is communicated as early as possible and approved by the Head Coach.
- During any season, there could be unexpected illness, family travel plans or school conflicts. Please inform Head Coach as soon as possible. How unexpected issues are processed will be on a case by case basis.
- Safety is a high priority. Participants must communicate with coach when moving out of vision from our coaching staff.
- Each participant on our team will wear Decatur gear. Decatur gear will be worn on ALL contest days (NO EXCEPTIONS).
- We will exhibit outstanding sportsmanship at all times. Serve hard and rally back!

### **Post-Match Behavior Standards:**

- All participants are responsible for making sure our area is completely cleaned up whether the trash belongs to Decatur or not. We will always leave our spaces better than we found them. Everyone in our program will lend a helping hand.
- After every match we will have a brief team meeting **before** participants talk with loved ones, the fans, or the media.
- After matches if a participant is approached by a reporter before we meet, politely tell them that you will be glad to talk with them in a couple of minutes after our team meeting.
- When talking to the media always be a humble winner or a gracious loser. Always give your teammates and coaches credit for their play and allowing the team to be successful. Give your opponents credit where credit is due, and never ever criticize your teammates, coaches, opponents or the umpires in public.

### **Program Communication:**

Remind 101 – (Sign up now!)

NPSL bulletin board - <http://www.npslathletics.org/>

Cell phone – (253) 226-4848

When there is a concern, Head Coach prefers to be contacted by cell phone.

### **Problem Solving Steps:**

We encourage all participants to speak directly with coaches if there is a misunderstanding, clarification is needed or an issue arises. As parents, please encourage your children to speak directly with coaches. If the issue is not resolved with their coach one on one, the problem solving chain will be:

- Athlete speaks directly with Head Coach in person when emotions are controlled
- Athlete and Parent speak directly with Head Coach
- Athlete, Parent, Head Coach and AD speak in person
- Athlete, Parent, Head Coach, AD and Vice Principal speak in person
- Athlete, Parent, Head Coach, AD, Vice Principal and Principal speak in person
- Athlete, Parent, Head Coach, AD, Vice Principal, Principal and District Athletic Director speak in person

Gator Head Coaches have high expectations and are developing competitive programs which can lead to intense emotion responses at times. As we work through emotional situations, Gator Head Coaches are committed to collaborative, healthy problem solving interaction believing that our communication order provides a healthy framework for working through conflicts. If there is a situation of high priority, danger to participants and/or others of severe nature, these steps may be altered for the welfare of all involved.

### **Team travel and transportation standards for contests:**

Our bus transportation standard is for everyone to ride to and from contests. Bus transportation is a great opportunity and time for building team culture and bonding. If parent/guardians opt to transport in their private vehicle, that process will be:

- Parent/guardian will sign out with the Head Coach on a document clarifying who will be privately transporting a participant after the contest has ended.
  - A FWPS district form is not required to transport your own participant.
- FWPS Form 121-A is required for a parent to drive someone else's child. This form is available outside the athletic office.
  - Form 121-A along with proof of insurance and a copy of a current driver's license must be returned to Decatur HS athletic office before any private transport. Please do not give these forms to any coach.
- We will travel with PROUD characteristics at all times.
- When we step off the bus, we will be ready to compete by our behavior and appearance.
- Participant safety and whereabouts is a high priority. Please help us with communicating clearly and in writing about transportation of our participant's home from contests.
  - Players are not to drive teammates to or from any practice or contest.



## **Injuries:**

Decatur Athletics has an ATI Athletic Trainer (AT) who provides care for our participants. Hours are posted on the entry door to the AT office which is located by the locker room entrances. FWPS has a detailed contract with ATI. We encourage all participants to utilize this resource for physical care.

- Injury defined is when a participant can no longer practice or compete in a contest. Our AT or anyone at ATI can reinstate a participant after an in person review as long as an outside Dr. has not been part of the evaluation process.
  - It is not inside a coaches wheelhouse of knowledge to determine a participants physical status so they are not able to reinstate an injured participant. AT's or ATI has this responsibility.
- If an injured participant sees a physician he/she must then provide a written physician's note clearing the athlete for the referred injury before return to play to the AD or AT.
  - The AD or AT will communicate in writing that a participant is released for practice or competition.
- If a participant is removed from a practice or contest due to a suspected concussion, he/she must have approval from a medical professional before they return to play.
  - The participant must also be cleared through our AT who has specific return to play protocol for concussion.
- If an injury bridges seasons, a written physician clearance is required to participate in the second season.
  - ALL written notes are to be turned into the AD or the AT – not a coach. AD or the AT will communicate in writing to Head Coach that the participant is released for practice and/or contests.

## **Defining Roles:**

### Role of a Decatur Coach:

- Encourage sportsmanship
- Lead by example
- Promote a family atmosphere
- Guide the team towards success and elevate the level of competitiveness
- Establish and develop a positive culture that is based on PROUD characteristics
- Help each participant be a better competitor and person
- Inspire participants to reach their full potential
- Foster a love for their respective sport

### Role of the Participant:

- Be coachable
- Display PROUD Gator characteristics and take PRIDE in your team
- Always give your best effort – be fully Present
- Keep control of your emotions at all times
- Always bring a positive attitude
- Show respect for your teammates and be the BEST teammate



- Work hard and compete with intensity
- Be enthusiastic, honest, dependable and loyal
- Earn the respect of your teammates by your actions
- Be present and compete each day as if it is for the CHAMPIONSHIP (#wecompete)

#### Role of the Parent:

- Leave the coaching to the coaches
- Participate in the program where there is a need
- Support your participant with your presence and words
- Understand and support the goals/dreams of the program
- Communicate with the Coach when you have concerns (ideally with your child present)
- Always stay positive and enjoy your participants experience
- Encourage your participant and the entire program throughout the season

#### **Academic Requirements and Eligibility:**

Academic status will be monitored by the AD. FWPS has defined dates for academics to be checked as well as specific recovery process. Parents will not be notified if their high school scholars are academically ineligible. Our high school participants will be notified by the AD or Head Coach and they are responsible to communicate their status to others. Parents can view scholar grades through ParentVue. Please connect with your child's counselor if you need assistance to access ParentVue.

#### **Social Media Standards**

FWPS and Decatur Athletics supports Social Media sites as this is how information is shared in today's times. Decatur Athletics and Coaches commit to projecting an image that supports our PROUD characteristics - focusing and acknowledging our accomplishments. Once comments and information are posted on a social media site, they are difficult to retract. Therefore, we trust and respectfully request that our participants, parents and coaches are positive on all social media sites focusing on Gator accomplishments.

- Trash talking on any social media form is considered inflammatory and subject to athletic discipline.
- Inappropriate postings on any social media site is subject to athletic discipline.

We ask our entire Gator Community to avoid challenging or being critical of other schools, our own programs, our coaches/players, official's etc. on social media sites. Thank you in advance for protecting our Decatur image as PROUD GOLDEN GATORS!

#### **Early Dismissal Days:**

During our season, there will be a few early dismissal days. Unless the Head Coach has scheduled supervised time in a specific location for team members, participants will need to leave campus and then return when coach supervision is present for practice/contests.

### **Athletic Code for Alcohol, Anabolic Steroids, Illegal Drugs, Tobacco Products (including e-cigarettes) and Misuse of Prescription and Over the Counter Drugs:**

Participants that violate any of the above will work through the language in both the FWPS Athletic Handbook (<https://www.fwps.org/Page/4920>) and policy 18.25.0 in the WIAA Handbook (<http://wiaa.com/conDocs/Con1690/Eligibility.pdf>) with the appropriate Decatur Administrators or Designee.

### **Areas Parents can be involved/helpful:**

Snacks are an area for parent involvement. If you would like to take a lead role with snacks, please communicate with Head Coach. We encourage involvement in our programs and look forward to your support at our practices and contests.

### **General information:**

- Please check [www.npslathletics.org/](http://www.npslathletics.org/) for league schedule, transportation departure times and standings.

### **Additional Resources**

- NCAA Eligibility Center (EC): [www.ncaaeligibilitycenter.org](http://www.ncaaeligibilitycenter.org)
  - This is for ANY student who has the desire to continue playing in college.
  - The NCAA EC allows for any school you are recruited by or you contact, to track your transcripts, test scores and amateurism.
  - Without clearance from the NCAA you will not be allowed to participate on a college team.
  - There are 1,200+ NCAA Div. I, II, and III colleges and Universities across the country, there is a place for anyone who is interested.
  - Decatur Counselors assist our scholars with NCAA Eligibility. Please connect with them if you need assistance.
- Washington Interscholastic Activities Association (WIAA): [www.wiaa.com](http://www.wiaa.com)
  - Provides in depth rule and policies that all high schools are required to follow.
- Federal Way Public Schools website – [www.fwps.org](http://www.fwps.org)
  - In depth athletic department rules and policies for all high schools in the district:  
<https://www.fwps.org/Page/4920>