

# Playing USTA Tennis In Your 70s and Beyond



A toast to the Sunnyvale 2017 Norcal 70 Champions. Back row—Larry Namekata, Ken Hammer, Karl Schmidt, Ron Wong, Reno Davenport, Dave Fort. Front—Robert Brown, co-captain; Larry Hayes, captain and Mike Smith.

**One wears a knee brace and moves gingerly on the court. His 71 year old partner plays with a strained rotator cuff. On the adjacent court, a 75 year old is recovering from an “A fib” procedure. His 79 year old partner has trouble hearing and seeing the ball.**

## WELCOME TO THE USTA NORCAL 70 LEAGUE

Nearly everyone on the Sunnyvale 70+ team has some injury or health issue whether knee, arm, shoulder, hip, heart or back. It’s the price you pay for playing USTA tennis in your 70s and beyond.

“It’s a small price for playing a sport that you love,” said Larry Namekata, 71, who has been playing USTA tennis for over 20 years. He was off tennis six months last year recovering from shoulder problems and wrist surgery. “Tennis keeps me alive and out of the house. I hope to keep playing as long as my body holds up.”

His partner Ken Hammer, 70, wears a knee brace to avoid surgery. His doctor recommends knee replacement but that is a last resort.

“I know that someday I’ll probably need surgery,” Ken said. “But until that day comes, I’m going to continue to play and endure the pain.” A teammate had both knees replaced last year and is now back on the courts.

“When I see people in their 70s—and younger—using walkers and wheelchairs, I realize how blessed to be able to still play tennis,” said Larry Hayes, 78, whose 2017 Sunnyvale 70 team won the Norcal 70 Sectional championship claiming bragging rights as the “best 70 team in Northern California.”

“Although many of us “old geezers” have health issues, you don’t hear us complaining. We know that playing tennis is good for us. Keeps us healthy, keeps our mind sharp and gives us a reason to get out of bed in the morning. I truly believe that playing USTA tennis helps keep me alive. Plus you meet some great guys on and off the court.”

Hayes has been a USTA captain/player for over 30 years and has guided many teams to championships including the Nationals at all age levels—40+, 55+, 65+ and 70+. His favorite age group?

“The 70 league,” says Hayes. “The matches are spirited and competitive. Everyone wants to win. But at the end of the match, we shake hands and congratulate each other—win or lose. We know how lucky we are to be playing tennis at our age. Tennis is the sport of a lifetime.”

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*USTA is the country’s largest recreational tennis league with more than 300,000 players nationwide competing on teams, meeting new people and getting physically active. Match play is based on the NTRP rating system so you will play with and against players of similar abilities and age level. To learn more about USTA tennis, go to [USTA.com](http://USTA.com).*