

Q & A: Jonathan Levine on the Arizona Tennis Classic

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Update: Arizona Tennis Classic has been postponed until 2021 due to escalating health and safety issues arising from the global outbreak of COVID-19.

Tennis legend Jonathan Levine is hosting Arizona Tennis Classic, an exciting professional tennis game benefiting the Phoenix Children's Hospital from March 16 to March 22 at Phoenix Country Club. (Click [here](#) for tickets!) AZ Foothills had the opportunity to speak with Levine about the event's second go-round and what inspired him to start the event last year.

What inspired you to start Arizona Tennis Classic?

Tennis has always been a big part of my life. I grew up playing junior tennis in Phoenix and worked my way to the Pro Tour. I am very passionate about the sport, and it had been many years since the Valley had a professional tennis tournament of our caliber, so I made it a goal of mine to bring one back to Phoenix.

What can everyone expect at the event?

Guests can expect the highest level of professional tennis with world ranked players from both the top 50 and top 100 in the world. Two of our players, Gilles Simon and Richard Gasquet, are competing this year, and they are ranked in the top 10. Guests will experience an up-close view of the matches in an intimate setting at the historic Phoenix Country Club.

How has the event changed and grown from the previous year?

We learned a lot from last year's event and will continue to work to improve each year moving forward to create a great experience for the fans and sponsors, as well as a tournament that the players want to come back to every year.

Why did you decide to host the event in Phoenix?

Phoenix is a tremendous tennis city. The Valley lost its pro tournament in Scottsdale many years ago, and it was time to bring one back. We were fortunate to get a week in March on the pro tour calendar sandwiched between the BNP Paribas Open in Indian Wells and the Miami Open. Many of the top ranked pros want to play in Phoenix because of the proximity to Indian Wells and to prepare for Miami Open.

Will you be participating in the matches?

No, although it is funny of you to ask. I retired from the Pro Circuit in 1988. While I rarely play anymore, I thoroughly enjoy spectating and have a great appreciation for professional tennis!

How much are you hoping to raise for the Phoenix Children's Hospital?

Last year we raised \$25,000, and this year we hope to raise even more. We are very proud to have PCH as the beneficiary of our tournament.

Are you anticipating a third year?

As long as the fans and sponsors are supportive of our event, we will keep it going!