

Save Men's Tennis Testimonials

Anthony Burke, former Gophers football captain and NFL player (**Hopkins H.S.**)

I played under Lou Holtz and one of the things he always encouraged us to do was to watch whatever championship teams were playing during that time. One of the teams I watched numerous times was the men's tennis team. It would be a shame to have such a storied program go by the wayside.

Jim Bruton, former Gophers football player and retired warden at **Oak Park Heights** Maximum Security Prison

There is a lot of money that goes into Gophers athletics and it would seem reasonable that some of that money could go to funding the tennis team. It's a very sad state of affairs when a kid can grow up with a dream to play for the Gophers and can't do that anymore. Let's find a way to make this happen.

Mardy Fish, born in Minnesota, former ATP Top 15 tennis professional in the world and current United States Davis Cup captain

*My father, Tom taught tennis in **Minneapolis** and always enjoyed competing against Gopher players. Come on Regents who voted to end Gophers tennis, reconsider and don't double fault.*

Matthew Fullerton, 2021 **Edina H.S.** 2A State Tennis Team Champion and Individual Singles runner-up

Eliminating the men's team will make things that much more competitive to find an opportunity, so I will just have to work that much harder.

Tom Gillman, current **Red Wing H.S.** tennis coach and author of "Wingers"

The Minnesota Gophers offered a benchmark for all my aspiring high school players. Although many sports may no longer make sense, tennis is more applicable than ever. Developing the mind and body will never become outdated.

Bud Grant, former Minnesota Vikings head coach, Gophers legend and NFL Hall of Famer

I'm 94 years old and have been associated with Gopher athletics for 77 years. The Gopher tennis team has been around for more than 100 years. Along with my good friends Bob McNamara and Paul Giel, we have supported tennis for all of those years. Let's not move backwards, let's move forward and keep that streak alive.

Bruce Gullikson, President of the local United States Professional Tennis Association, Northern Section and USTA Northern Hall of Famer (**Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter**)

As a player, pro and avid fan, I'm pleading with you to save the men's tennis program. This is the best level of tennis we get to watch. We don't have a pro tour event. Tennis, according to the Cleveland Institute is the number one activity a person can do and we need to set a good example for our young junior players. Please let the Regents know its importance and save men's tennis.

EJ Henderson, Former Pro Bowl linebacker and five-time team captain for the Minnesota Vikings

I played for the Vikings and as a former Terp, enjoy watching Maryland compete in the Big Ten. My daughter plays tennis and I can see it is a sport she will enjoy for a lifetime. Please save men's tennis.

Ryan Hoag, former Minnesota Viking wide receiver, reality TV star and current **Minneapolis Washburn H.S.** tennis coach

I've had many of my players go on to play college tennis and now thanks to Mark Coyle, Joan Gabel—neither of which attended Minnesota—and seven regents, playing for the Gophers isn't an option. Nine people eliminated those future dreams of my players. I think it's wrong and I think the men's program should be brought back.

Jael Kerandi, former U of M Student Body President (**Robbinsdale-Cooper H.S.**)

Nonrevenue sports are not a new phenomenon. I would have hoped that our Athletics Department would have been actively working on a financial model to prevent such a lethal decision to come forward. Short term difficult decisions are inevitable, but let's not be deceived, there has been more than enough time to act with intentionality and integrity rather than act in haste and compromise our ethics.

Kevin Lynch, former Gophers Basketball star and NBA player (**Bloomington Jefferson H.S.**)

I'm a former Gopher basketball player, but I played a ton of tennis growing up. I caught the bug of loving tennis a long time ago and am playing a lot these days. I really hope the Regents reconsider, as far as taking away the tennis program. Please keep the program rockin' and rollin' and bring it back.

Bob Madson, former Gophers tennis Big Ten Team Champion and touring professional

The program has done so much for so many. Many Gopher players stay in the area and become teaching pros. During these times, this safe sport has been introduced to thousands of youngsters throughout the state. Our GPA was always among the highest and players went into the business sector, medicine and politics. My teammate, Gene Sperling served as the director of the National Economic Council under both Presidents Clinton and Obama. Regardless of your party allegiances, that's impressive stuff!

Brad Madson, former Gophers Big Ten Team Champion and community relations executive (**Edina resident**)

When eliminating the three sports, athletic director Coyle and President Gabel predicted in their remarks to the Regents that this is a challenge that is facing every other Big Ten school and changes are coming. Fact, not one Big Ten sport has been eliminated since Coyle, Gabel and seven regents erased 300 years of Gopher history. If Bob McNamara, perhaps the greatest football player in Gopher history, were alive today, Coyle, Gabel and the Regents would never have gotten away with this.

Wyatt McCoy, 2011 State Tennis Champion from **Mounds View H.S.** and current Lifetime performance lead tennis professional

I'm very sad to see the men's tennis program dropped. Especially because so many of the top juniors I coach aspired to play for the Gophers. Taking away that high level of tennis is not good for our State. Lots of people that enjoy playing tennis also enjoy going to the Baseline Center to watch the matches.

Jerry Noyce, former Gophers tennis coach, NCAA Coach of the Year and USTA Northern Hall of Famer

This is wrong, we are Minnesota. We don't cut things, we find ways to solve things. Eliminating men's tennis is not a solutions. Ohio State solved the problem by getting a \$100 million no interest loan. They didn't cut any sports.

Jeff Prondzinski, current **Wayzata H.S.** tennis coach and college star at **Minnesota State, Mankato**

*Gopher tennis means a lot to me, my program and every boy tennis player in the state of Minnesota. Many boys dream of being the next Jackson Allen (**Gopher great who had to transfer to Virginia after the elimination**), and even though many will never reach that goal, the dream was there. Boys tennis needs a Division I program. You have the facility, you have a great program, just put the money in and let the kids represent that state of Minnesota with class and integrity like they have always done. Go Gophers!*

Ben Streitz, former Gophers tennis player and State singles quarterfinalist at **Waseca H.S.**

*Being from **Waseca**, a smaller community, and playing for the Gophers, really doubled my pride from where I was from. To make it to the Division I level has given me confidence throughout my life and career. It's a shame to think that other kids from Greater Minnesota won't have that dream anymore.*

Trent Tucker, former Gophers basketball star and NBA World Champion

I'm a graduate of the U of M and I'm an avid tennis player. I'm hoping before it is all said and done we can figure out a way to bring back Gophers men's tennis.

Tom West, current Minnesota Vikings front office executive and graduate of **Lewiston H.S.**

Since the University is seeking nearly \$1 billion from the state surplus, why not add women's wrestling-- a sport I enjoyed as a youngster--and reinstate men's tennis, gymnastics and indoor track. All three men's programs cost less than \$2 million a year. This would deal with Title IX and provide women with more opportunities to compete as well.

Greg Wicklund, former Gophers tennis Big Ten Champion, USTA Northern Hall of Famer and current Life Time tennis pro (**Minneapolis Roosevelt H.S.**)

*When I was at Roosevelt, we would go to the Gophers tennis matches. We looked up to the players, like Mark Brandenburg from **Rochester**, Carter DeLaittre from **St. Louis Park**, Bob Van Hoff from **St. Paul**, and Bill Stark from **Richfield**. We also had the brother tandems, like the Wheatons from **Minnnetonka**, the Helgesons from **St. Cloud** and Duke and Brian Uihlein. Watching these guys made me want to work hard to see if I could reach that level. Please save the program.*