

Soles Served/Zapatos Para Todos

Empowering Underprivileged Tennis Communities Through Repurposed Shoes

Introduction:

In tennis, the right footwear is essential—not only for performance but for safety and comfort. Yet, countless tennis players in underprivileged communities lack access to proper shoes, hindering their development and potential. Meanwhile, college tennis teams across the country have a surplus of shoes that are thrown out after less than a month of wear. **Soles Served** is a unique initiative that repurposes these shoes from college tennis teams and redistributes them to tennis players and communities in need, creating a meaningful impact both on and off the court.

Mission:

At Soles Served, our mission is to repurpose gently used tennis shoes from college tennis teams and provide them to underserved tennis players and academies in communities with limited access to resources. By connecting college teams with those who need them most, we aim to support athletic development, break barriers within tennis accessibility, and slowly make the world a better place through tennis.

How It Works:

1. Partnership with College Tennis Teams:

Soles Served will form partnerships with collegiate tennis programs across the country. These teams will collect shoes that they no longer need or use—whether overused to their standards, replaced, or simply excess footwear—and donate them.

2. Collection Drives and Shoe Donations:

College teams will be asked to fill a shipping box with shoes according to the measurements provided by Soles Served. Soles Served will assign a regional contact for each collegiate tennis team, who will be responsible for collecting the shoes from each team at a time and location coordinated between the team and regional contact.

3. Processing and Repurposing:

After collection, Soles Served will sort, clean, and assess the condition of the shoes. A grading system will be created to determine the integrity of the shoe. Shoes that are still in good condition will be prepared for redistribution. Those that are worn beyond use will be recycled responsibly. These shoes will be distributed to young athletes with dreams to change their own life through tennis.

4. Distribution to Tennis Communities and Academies:

Soles Served will look to partner with tennis academies or organizations located around the country to provide quality shoes to players in underserved regions. These shoes will be distributed to young athletes with dreams to change their own life through tennis.

Why Soles Served?

1. Addressing a Key Barrier in Tennis:

Tennis is a sport that requires financial commitment, specific footwear for proper performance, and quality shoes can be prohibitively expensive for many families in

underprivileged communities. By repurposing shoes, Soles Served makes tennis more accessible, helping talented players get the resources they need to thrive.

2. **Environmental Impact:**

As millions of pairs of tennis shoes are discarded each year, Soles Served helps reduce the environmental impact of footwear waste by giving these shoes a second life. By collecting, repurposing, and redistributing, we create a circular system that reduces landfill waste and supports sustainability.

3. **Building a Tennis Community of Care:**

College tennis teams play a pivotal role in the sport's ecosystem. Soles Served creates an opportunity for collegiate players to give back, fostering a sense of camaraderie and responsibility while empowering them to make a difference. This initiative helps bridge the gap between collegiate tennis and emerging talent in underserved communities.

4. **Nurturing Future Tennis Stars:**

Many young players in underprivileged areas lack access to the equipment needed to excel in tennis. By providing these players with quality shoes, Soles Served removes one obstacle, allowing them to focus on their skills and training. It's not just about giving shoes—it's about giving the opportunity to dream, compete, and succeed.

Potential for Growth:

- **Expansion Across College Tennis Programs:**

We hope that Soles Served, will expand across the nation by partnering with NCAA and Division I, II, and III tennis teams. Tap into the existing network of college tennis communities, making it easy for teams to participate and contribute. The program would be adaptable, from large Division I schools to smaller community colleges, ensuring broad participation.

- **Global Reach:**

While initially focused on the U.S. the program has global potential. With tennis a beloved sport worldwide, especially in regions like Africa, South America, and Southeast Asia, Soles Served can scale internationally, helping to bridge gaps in tennis accessibility across the globe.

Conclusion:

Soles Served is more than just a program for donating shoes—it's an opportunity to bring the tennis community together to make a difference. By harnessing the power of college tennis teams, we can provide critical support to young players who need shoes to compete and succeed. This initiative builds a culture of sustainability, teamwork, and social responsibility, while making tennis a more accessible sport for all.

Join us in putting the right foot forward, and stepping into a brighter future by serving underprivileged tennis communities everywhere.

Sincerely,

Gina Suarez-Malaguti

Shoes Grading Scale

A – Excellent Condition:

The shoes show little to no visible signs of wear. The soles have minimal to no scuffing, and the upper material is intact with no tears or significant damage. These shoes are in great condition and are suitable for repurposing or donating to someone else.

B – Good Condition:

The shoes show some signs of wear, such as slight scuffing on the soles and minor creases or wear marks on the upper material. However, they are still functional and can be repurposed for use by someone else.

C – Poor Condition:

The shoes are heavily worn out, with visible damage such as worn-down soles, significant scuffing, tears in the material, or other issues that make them unsuitable for repurposing or donation. These shoes are too damaged to be given to someone else.