

WTT Super Senior Team competes at Nationals...The Winning Touch Tennis Super Senior 7.0 Team won the right to represent Middle States at Nationals which were held in April 2009 in Arizona by winning the Sectional Championship playoffs which were held the weekend of September 26, 2008 in Lancaster. Team members include: Shirley Daluisio, Karen Fazekas, Maria Hakki, JoAnne Jones, Judy Keck, Karen Kurvink, June Roettger, Suzanne Searfoss, Ardeth Smackey, Nancy Shappelle, Jan Snyder, Ann Sulinski, Joanne Thaler, Helma Young (captain).

(Article titled "Winning Touch" Overcomes the Odds from Saturday, April 25, 2009 9:39 AM ET by Tamara Ramos, USTA.com)

Playing their first season together, the Allentown, Pennsylvania "Winning Touch" team discovered a unique fact, five out of the ten teammates battled and survived some form of cancer. Asked by tournament staff if there was anything unique about their team, one player after another revealed her cancer history. "Most of us play at our own clubs and come together for league matches," said captain, Helma Young. "I was very surprised to find out that so many had cancer in common. I know these women for their tennis play, not cancer. They're tough competitors, playing in every USTA league."

Competing at the USTA League Presented by Chrysler 7.0 Super Senior National Championship in Surprise, Arizona, pictured left to right are, Joann Thaler who battled metastasized melanoma, both June Roettger and Karen Fazekas survived breast cancer, Maria Hakki, endometrial cancer and Shirley Daluisio, thyroid cancer. Each woman continued to play tennis throughout her diagnosis and treatment. And each woman credits tennis for helping her to beat the disease. June Roettger said, "We were all in great physical shape before our diagnosis. That helped us to handle the treatments." She added, "Being part of a team gave me helped me through this, they were all so supportive."

Maria Hakki said, "Cancer gave me a unique perspective towards tennis and life in general. If I lose a tennis match, it's just a game; I'm happy to be out playing." Her teammates chuckled at Maria's comments, revealing that she's one of the most competitive members on the team. They all agreed that it's their competitive nature that helped them beat cancer and got them to the National Championships.

These women continue to support cancer research through play in the Smash for Cancer local tennis tournament. June and Karen have both participated in the Race for the Cure. June volunteered for a cancer research study.

Teams are often heard saying, "We hope to win but we're just happy to be here." The women from the "Winning Touch" team really mean it!