

## Having a blast: Children take over Robinson Tournament

Joseph Hayes, Times Herald

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*(Photo: Joseph Hayes, Times Herald)*

It was all fun and games.

On Friday afternoon at Sanborn Park, the 60th annual Francis J. Robinson Memorial International Tennis Tournament took a break from competitive play.

Instead, it was time for the upcoming generation of players to have their time on the courts as part of the 10-and-under Kid's Play Day.

"We are doing games for them to keep them constantly active," Port Huron Tennis House instructor Dave Brown said.

"As far as tennis skills, if they are active kids, normally their coordination is better and they pick up the game faster."



**Port Huron Tennis House instructor Dave Brown brings several children together for their first activity during Kid's Play Day at Sanborn Park. (Photo: Joseph Hayes, Times Herald)**

There was plenty for the children to do on each court. One featured a large target to hit balls into, others had shorter child-friendly nets — and that didn't even include the activities off the court, such as face painting, free smoothies and an obstacle course.

"I love the Robinson Tournament," 7-year-old Nicholas Markovic said. "It's a lot of fun to play tennis."

Everyone appeared to get in on the fun, including the teenage tennis players who not long ago were participating in similar activities.

That included Port Huron Northern High School student Isabella Murray, who helped guide several children through drills.

"I just want them to have fun with it," Murray said. "That's what it's all about. I've been playing the Robinson most of my life and I always enjoyed it.

"They didn't have a Kid's Day when I was younger but I bet it's fun for them."



**Port Huron Northern High School student Isabella Murray gives instruction during Kid's Play Day at Sanborn Park.** *(Photo: Joseph Hayes, Times Herald)*

While the children were in the midst of playing, their parents stood between the courts with cameras out to record lasting memories from the day.

As 4-year-old Michael Dent got his first taste of tennis, his mother Sarah couldn't help but smile.

"We started doing tennis at the Tennis House in preschool and we continued with the rec department. He really took a liking to it and he's doing great in it.

"Any kind of sport is great and just the community feel of this where everyone is supported makes it special. A lot of people know each other and it's really great for them to learn team structure and sportsmanship."

Contact Joseph Hayes at (810) 989-6268 or at jahayes@gannett.com. Follow him on Twitter @Joseph\_Hayes11.