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# Money isn't all that's 'green' at U.S. Open

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August 28, 2008

Truly eco-conscious tennis fans will probably ride bikes to the [U.S. Open](#), sip water from reusable bottles and hang on to their programs until recycling day rolls around.

For less-enlightened beings, the U.S. Tennis Association is sprinkling this year's event with gentle pointers on how to make the 14-day tennis extravaganza a little less wasteful.

There are pink recycling bins for plastic water bottles, and \$40 "Green Your Game" organic cotton T-shirts and \$5 reusable tote bags for sale. Above the din, a public service announcement from tennis star Billie Jean King encourages fans to take the train or bus to the sports complex that now bears her name.

Still, yesterday plenty of fans chucked beverage containers into the trash or strolled from match to match leaving a trail of tennis-ball-shaped plastic fans in their wake.

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Organizers said the initial response to the green efforts was positive and they expected more progress as the event goes on.

"If we just take small steps it will lead to big change," said King, co-founder of a nonprofit called Greenslam that encourages the sports industry to limit its environmental impact.

At the Tennis Center, that means using wind-generated electricity, concession napkins made from 90 percent post-consumer waste and - next year - seeking green certification for the venue complex.

The message seemed to resonate with some. Susan Kelly, 45, of Fair Haven, N.J., said her family

"recycles everything." Instead of driving, they opted for seats on a 40-person shuttle bus chartered by their country club. Her tennis-playing sons pass used balls on to Maggie, the family's English sheepdog.

But while organizers tout the virtues of public transit, Lexus - the event's official vehicle and provider of the promotional fans - offers free parking to anyone who drives a Lexus to the venue.

"We have 700,000 people rolling through here, so not everyone has access to public transportation," said USTA spokeswoman Rita Garza in response.

Organizers also boasted about the hybrids that make up 20 percent of the fleet shuttling players to and from the complex. Still, the Lexus hybrid sport utility vehicle only gets about 25 miles per gallon, compared with a Toyota Prius' 46 mpg, according to [fuelconomy.gov](http://fuelconomy.gov), a federal Energy Department Web site.

That said, the USTA seems to have a good handle on the "reuse" aspect of the green mantra "reduce, reuse, recycle." Tennis balls will be reused on site for 12 months, then donated to schools and hospitals, which use them to cushion the bottom of chairs and walkers.

And there's money in them thar balls. Vendor Victor Shaffer of Ace Authentic Collectibles said he sells hundreds each day. A ball thwacked by Olympic Champion Rafael Nadal goes for \$30; those from lesser players fetch \$15.



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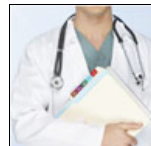
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