

Editorial

Welcome to issue 42 of the ITF Coaching and Sport Science Review. This is a monographic issue of Coaches Review, which is devoted to 'Tennis...Play and Stay'. The 'Tennis... Play and Stay' campaign was officially launched at the ITF Annual General Meeting in Tunis, Tunisia in June. The campaign, which is aimed at increasing tennis participation worldwide, centres around the slogan 'Serve, Rally and Score' and promotes tennis as easy, fun and healthy. Improving the first experience of starter players by getting them to serve, rally and score from the first lesson is fundamental to the campaign. Furthermore, the ITF through the campaign wants to ensure that all children under 10 years of age start tennis on a smaller court using slower balls.

Some of the World's most experienced experts in introducing starter players to tennis were invited to submit an article and these articles in this edition focus on a number of topics including: 'Tennis is easy and fun', 'Competition can be fun', 'Tennis is a sport for all', and 'Making it happen'.

Some of the tennis experts who have contributed to issue 42 include:

- Steven Martens, Head of Technical Support, LTA
- Line Declercq, Flemish Tennis Federation, Belgium
- Babette Pluim, Medical advisor, Royal Netherlands Lawn Tennis Association
- Jolyn de Boer, Executive Director, Tennis Industry Association
- Kirk Anderson, Director USTA Recreational Coaches and Programmes
- Sandi Procter, Head of Programmes, LTA
- Nathalie Delaigue, French Tennis Federation

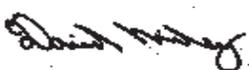
We would like to extend our gratitude to them for their help with this issue. Furthermore, we hope that these articles generate a great amount of discussion between coaches, academies and federations around the world about the most effective way to introduce starter players to the great game of tennis. More information and resources about the 'Tennis... Play and Stay' campaign including endorsements for the campaign from top players including Roger Federer and Justine Henin can be found at www.tennisplayandstay.com.

On July 2 the ITF launched a new coaching website called 'tennis icoach'. The comprehensive website at www.tenniscoach.com is designed to deliver the very best tennis coaching and playing information to tennis coaches, players and enthusiasts around the world. The 'tennis icoach' website features many hours of exclusive video footage taken of leading tennis coaches and experts presenting at ITF coaching seminars and workshops conducted around the world. The website showcases video analysis by ITF coaching experts of the top male and female players from a technical and biomechanical aspect, pinpointing key points of the strokes in regular and slow motion speed.



Finally, October will see the staging of the 15th ITF Worldwide Coaches Conference at the Hotel Resort Casino Yacht & Golf Club in Asunción, Paraguay. The preliminary programme is now available at: www.itftennis.com/coaching

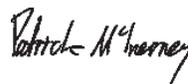
We hope you continue to take advantage of the resources provided on the weblet (www.itftennis.com/coaching/) and that you enjoy edition 42 of the ITF Coaching Sport Science Review.



Dave Miley
Executive Director,
Tennis Development



Miguel Crespo
Research Officer,
Tennis Development/Coaching



Patrick McInerney
Assistant Research Officer,
Tennis Development/Coaching

Contents

TENNIS...PLAY AND STAY Dave Miley (ITF)	2
THE USE OF LOW COMPRESSION BALLS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIGH PERFORMANCE PLAYERS Steven Martens and Max de Vylder (BEL)	3
GETTING MORE CHILDREN TO PLAY TENNIS IN SCHOOL Miguel Miranda (ITF)	5
COMPETITION - THE KEY TO PLAY AND STAY Mike Barrell (GBR)	5
BELGIAN COMPETITIVE STRUCTURE FOR 10 & UNDER'S Line Declercq and Valentijn Pattyn (VTV)	7
TENNIS IS A SPORT FOR ALL - ITN Brenden Sharp (ITF)	8
HEALTH BENEFITS OF TENNIS Babette M Pluim (NED)	9
ITF LESSON PLANS FOR BEGINNERS: LESSON 2	10
CARDIO TENNIS Jolyn de Boer (USA)	13
TENNISPLAYANDSTAY.COM Mark Tennant (ITF)	14
WORKING WITH ADULT BEGINNERS: 10 GOLDEN RULES Nathalie Delaigue (FFT)	15
PLAY AND STAY IN THE NETHERLANDS Ronald Pothuizen (NED)	16
USTA PROJECT 36/60 Kirk Anderson (USA)	17
LTA ARIEL MINI TENNIS Sandi Procter (GBR)	18
RECOMMENDED BOOKS AND DVDS	20

Tennis...Play and Stay

By Dave Miley

(ITF Executive Director of Development and Member of ITF Intro to Tennis Taskforce)

INTRODUCTION

The ITF recently launched a global campaign aimed at increasing tennis participation worldwide. Tennis...Play and Stay centres on the slogan "Serve Rally and Score" and seeks to promote tennis as easy, fun and healthy. The use of slower red, orange and green balls by coaches working with starter players is fundamental to the campaign, as it helps ensure the first experience of tennis is a positive one, that involves playing the game (serving, rallying and scoring).

WHY WAS TENNIS...PLAY AND STAY INTRODUCED?

In 2002 the ITF Introduction to Tennis Taskforce was established to identify how to better introduce tennis to starter players. The taskforce, which was chaired by ITF Director of Development Dave Miley, included experts in tennis participation from some of the world's leading federations and coaching bodies.

The Taskforce recognised that, whilst tennis is growing in many nations, some of the more established nations are facing challenges related to participation resulting primarily from lifestyle changes that have occurred. The key finding was that tennis appears to be better at attracting people than retaining them. The taskforce identified the need to adapt tennis to the needs of the customer or more specifically the starter player, and to agree on a common position related to starter tennis.

KEY MESSAGES OF THE TENNIS...PLAY AND STAY CAMPAIGN:

- Tennis can be easy and fun...when coaches working with starter players use slower red, orange or green balls
- Starter players should serve, rally and score from the first lesson
- Tennis competition can be fun...and formats and scoring systems exist to suit all lifestyles
- Tennis is healthy...research in 2006 by the ITF demonstrates this
- Tennis is a sport for all and all players should have a rating to help them find players of a similar level to play with

PLAY TENNIS FAST...THE BALL IS KEY!

Using the correct ball with starter players was recognised by the task force as crucial to player retention. There is no doubt that slower balls give players more time and control, thus making it easier to rally. However, less than approximately 10% of coaches worldwide are currently using slower balls with starter players, which makes the promotion of the slower balls to coaches a key element of Tennis...Play and Stay.

SLOWER BALLS, SMALLER COURTS, BETTER JUNIORS!

Slower balls are not just important for developing starter players; high level juniors can also benefit as the balls assist the development of efficient technique and allow the implementation of more advanced tactics than with a normal ball on a full court.

ADULTS...PLAY TENNIS FAST!

Some of the major nations, including France, have had a lot of success using slower balls to introduce tennis to adults, who are a major focus of Play and Stay. Just like children, if adults cannot serve, rally and score on a full court with a normal ball - their coach should adapt the ball and court size. Initially a Red ball on a Red court may be used though adults are much more likely to progress onto an orange ball and court quicker than children.

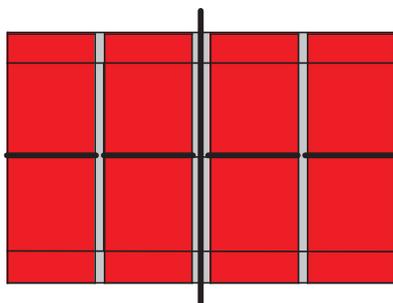
COACHING PLAYERS WITH DISABILITIES

Slower balls can be most helpful when coaching players with disabilities. Whether players have impaired vision or hearing, are in a wheelchair or have a learning disability the use of an appropriate ball can dramatically increase their enjoyment and success in tennis. By slowing down the game in the early stages of learning, players get more time and control, for example this makes tennis play far easier for wheelchair players who are also learning how to move to the ball.

WHAT ABOUT TECHNIQUE?

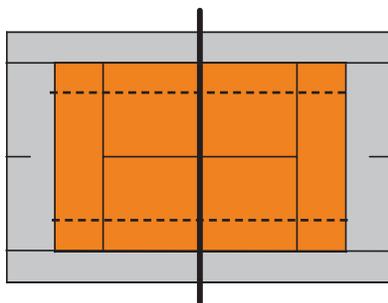
Some coaches ask about the role of technique when the emphasis is placed on getting starter players to serve, rally and score from the first lesson? The answer is that technique is still very important and once coaches have used the slower balls to give players the opportunity to play tennis, they should then give players relevant technical

Stage 3 Red



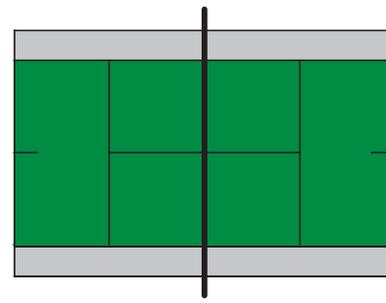
- Sponge and low compression felt balls used on the 11m/36ft Red court
- Recommended racket size: 41-53cm/16-21in
- Starter children aged 4-8 and adult introduction

Stage 2 Orange



- Low compression balls, around 50% slower than normal balls
- Courts are 18m/60ft long and between 6.5-8.23m/21-27ft wide (narrow court recommended)
- Recommended racket size: 53-63cm/21-25in
- Starter children aged 7-11 and starter adults

Stage 1 Green



- Low compression balls, around 25% slower than normal balls played on full-size courts
- Recommended racket size: 63-68cm/25-27in
- Starter children aged 7-11 and starter adult

(and tactical) instruction to help them to serve, rally and score more effectively. This is in effect the simple definition of the Game Based Approach, which is sometimes misunderstood by tennis coaches.

IS IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR COACHES TO ORGANISE THE LESSON USING DIFFERENT BALLS AND COURTS SIZES?

Some coaches are concerned that the logistics of using different balls and court sizes will make their lessons more complicated to organise. However learner centred coaching means doing the right thing for the student...not doing what is easiest for the coach! It does require more advanced planning and organisation nevertheless smaller courts can be set up very quickly by using throw down plastic lines, more players can be organised to play on a full tennis court and the slower balls last longer than normal balls. The greatest advantage for coaches using modified balls and courts is that the first experience for the starter players will be positive and retention rates will increase.

PLAY AND STAY SEMINAR

In London February 2007, the campaign was presented at a seminar with 80 attendees representing 28 federations, 4 regional associations, 3 coaching organisations, 6 tennis manufacturers, the Tennis Industry Association, the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) and Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) tours among other tennis organisations.

The overall reaction to the campaign has been overwhelmingly positive. Thirty-six of the 40 major nations invited (including the 4 Grand Slam Nations) have already signed up

to the campaign and over the coming months many of these nations will be organising activities including specialised Tennis...Play and Stay coaches workshops to support the launch in their countries. The other ITF nations will be invited to initiate Tennis Play and Stay over the coming year.

Tennis...Play and Stay also has the support of the ATP and WTA tours. During tournaments in Rome and Hamburg some professional players including Federer, Henin, Kuznetsova, Ivanovic, Roddick and Nadal recorded video messages, which will be used by the ITF to promote Play and Stay, supporting the campaign.

THE WEBSITE

To support the campaign the ITF has produced a range of promotional material and coaching tools in numerous languages all branded with the Tennis...Play and Stay logo. To view these materials and for other important information related to Tennis...Play and Stay visit: www.tennisplayandstay.com

CONCLUSION

The ITF believe that Tennis...Play and Stay can have a big impact on tennis worldwide and we hope that coaches will see the benefits to them of the Tennis...Play and Stay messages outlined in this edition of the ITF Coaching and Sport Science Review.

Remember... Tennis coaching is not a sport. Tennis is the sport!

Our job as coaches is primarily to organise people to play tennis so that they experience the best part of tennis...actually playing the game. Let's use the slower balls to ensure that as many people as possible have the chance to Serve, Rally and Score and to enjoy our great sport!



The Use of Low compression Balls in the Development of High Performance Players

By Steven Martens¹ and Max De Vylder²

(1. LTA Head of Technical Support, 2. LTA Research and Development Manager)

Too often low compression balls have been considered as just an alternative for the recreational player. Less talented players benefit from these balls by developing far better consistency when rallying, this enhances the "fun" element of tennis.

Furthermore, we are convinced that the use of slower red, orange and green balls, together with other adaptations (smaller courts and racquets) is the key in the development of talented young players.

The differences in ball trajectory (slower, lower bounce) facilitate the development of a

wider range of strokes and appropriate tactical decision-making.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF OUR RECOMMENDATIONS:

Red "discovery stage" for 6-7 year olds

Having completed the initial basic learning stage and by staying long enough on this court (see page 2), the more skilful children will master the whole court. They will be able to change the direction and height of the ball, come to the net and maintain stability while running and hitting.

The small racquets (23inch) allow consistent contact with the lighter, red ball.

Tactically, players will be put in situations where they have to stay in control of the court and ball, attack or defend quickly, pick up cues from their opponent and the ball and react accordingly.

Physical qualities such as agility, adapting to different trajectories, court positioning and rhythm will also be developed.

Orange "total tennis" for 8-9 year olds

During this stage the best players are able to develop a complete technical repertoire.

The length of the court (see page 2) forces the attacking player to be accurate and use topspin. It allows players to approach the net and develop the net game. Consequently, counter attacking will be more than just playing defensive lobs - short angled passing shots, aggressive drives and topspin lobs will be developed.

The width of the court will necessitate the use of spin to produce angles and to be precise in attacking and volleying. When playing defence or taken off the court players will need to cover some ground but will not be completely off balance.

Due to the height of the net (80cm) and the use of the full service box, even children can create an advantage with their serve. The technical quality of the serve is favoured when using the correct racquet size (25inch). Flat and slice serves will be used predominantly.

The lower bounce and lighter racquets will also prevent extreme grips on the groundstrokes. The use of a one-handed topspin backhand (and also slice and volley) will be facilitated.

Overall we observe that talented players display the same technical/tactical adaptations as professionals on a full court!

Green "transitional stage 1" for 10 year olds

Even advanced players face a difficult time on the larger court. Playing forward, coming to the net, using the serve as a weapon...it all becomes a lot more difficult. The court dimensions (see page 2) and the height of the net don't favour 'total tennis'.

Coaches should emphasise an advanced court positioning (around the baseline), taking the ball on the rise (contact between hips and shoulders will prevent extreme grips), and enough weight transfer into the shots (to prevent high loopy trajectories). By doing so, it will be possible to preserve an offensive/constructive attitude and to play at a higher tempo. The use of the green ball will favour this philosophy.

Using a 26inch racquet is another key element in "preserving" the technical/tactical level. Too heavy or long racquets at this stage often create technical problems on the serve, groundstrokes and volleys, due to inertia.

Doubles on the green court are played on a full singles court. It has been shown that this allows and stimulates a more active participation of the net players and an easier coverage of the net: another element in the development of a wider range of strokes and tactical options. This compensates the difficulties in mastering the net game in singles at this stage. We therefore advise the organisation of team competitions, including doubles, for this age group.

Yellow "transitional stage 2" for 11 year olds

Once players become more proficient, they can use a normal ball on the full size court. The same principles apply as for the green ball (advanced court positioning, playing on the rise etc). The heavier ball will create a bigger shock at impact. This requires sufficient forearm action, grip strength and an appropriate racquet (both in size and weight) in relation to the physical capacities of the players. Taller and/or stronger players are able to use a 27 inch racquet. It generally takes 2 to 3 years of play on this court before the total tennis game that players could implement on the orange court becomes feasible again.

CONCLUSION

Finally there is no need to rush through the different stages. Each stage has great benefits with regard to the development of a player in all aspects of tennis play. When players are given sufficient time in each stage to firstly adapt to the new different playing condition and then discover and implement new technical and tactical tools their progress will be greatly enhanced.



Slower balls and smaller courts allow players to implement a greater range of tactical options.

'Getting More Children to Play Tennis in School'

By Miguel Miranda

(ITF Development Officer and Member of the Introduction to Tennis Task Force)

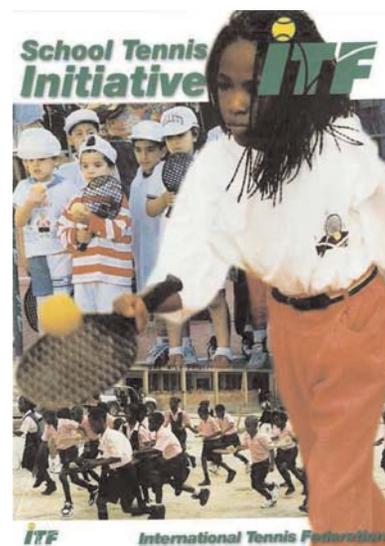
Sport is children's main activity. Games are what they do and what they most like doing; their favourite thing. This means that without knowing it, they are generating and focusing all their vital energy. Their willpower is magnified, a variety of skills begin to emerge, aims are achieved and actions are practiced and consequently, the child achieves their objectives. We are referring to organisation, planning, strategy, individual capability, tenacity, effort, resolve, achievement of objectives and goals. And fundamentally: we learn from our crisis and failures. Is this not the case in real life, as well as what the future holds for them, in such a changing and highly competitive world?

Competition (tournaments) has been substituted with monotonous training sessions (in order to perfect techniques in situations which generally are not the same as in matches). After a time, repetitive training sessions with lots of drills, can lead to the loss of competitive instinct, the desire to compete or even worse, the 'know-how' of how to compete. All of these skills, which are fundamental to a good tennis player, are replaced with boredom, indifference and training that focuses merely on 'movement'. Mind, effort and intensity are not apparent as they are not needed to physically produce tennis movements. In this kind of training climate it is almost impossible to see the emergence of a good tennis player.

The School Tennis Initiative (STI) programme has been one of the most important programmes for tennis development and has had a major impact worldwide as an 'alliance' model between different organisations.

The idea of 'just playing' is what encourages children to join the STI programme, where first impressions show children's great desire to play matches during training sessions, even without having fully mastered some basic strokes which would enable them to use more tools during a match. It is extremely important to take this behaviour into account as quite often, without even realising it, technique is emphasised and not the tactical base, acquired by his enthusiasm for the game. It is in fact this tactical base that should be built upon as this will support the future growth of the child in this sport.

In order to ensure that pupils are guaranteed a fun experience as well as proper training, it should be the coach's obligation to organise school tennis classes offering a clever combination of competitive and cooperative games.



For more information on the School Tennis Initiative (STI) programme visit:
www.itftennis.com/development/sti/pto/sti.asp



Competition - the key to Play and Stay

By Mike Barrell (evolveg, Great Britain)

When people begin to play tennis they have a range of different expectations. To play tennis at a highly proficient level requires quite complex skills and there is often a mismatch between starter players' actual and expected level of ability. The Play and Stay campaign sends a really great message out with respect to the aim coaches should have when working with starter players, 'Lets get all players to "Serve, Rally and Score" in the first lesson'.

If as coaches we achieve this more players will see the benefits of having lessons. It will also raise the expectations of players and as they can "Play" they will want more opportunities to do so.

Therefore, tennis providers need to offer these opportunities, usually called 'competitions', but it is equally appropriate to describe them as 'structured play'. Playing the game is fundamental to retaining players in coaching programmes as people will have more desire to take lessons - they will want to improve their "play" and ability to "compete".

Throughout this article we will look at some of the formats available on the Play and Stay website and discuss why aspects of these formats are important in growing the game. The formats are simple to conduct and all the tools and information is available on tennisplayandstay.com

5 key factors in presenting competition to starter players are:

- **Format** - the format can greatly influence how much fun a player has. Teams, rules and scoring all play a role

- **The Individual** - know how confident and competent a player is and what they want from the competitive experience
- **Duration** - the length of matches and the total event need to fit with lifestyle and other commitments, players need to grow to love the game before you ask them to give up a lot of time
- **Location** - most competition needs to start at the club or home venue
- **Environment** - what atmosphere is created? What will be rewarded? How formal will the rules make the event?

FORMATS

Team Formats

Team formats are a great means to introduce competition to starter players. The team environment provides support for players who lack confidence while it is also good for those who want to socialise. The majority of team formats are easy to run and require little paperwork.

Club leagues are successful and are full of teams because team based formats give players a sense of belonging and involvement as those not playing are likely to be occupied supporting their team members. It should also be remembered that many older players come to tennis to socialise and extend their circle of friends.

Consider using the following formats:

- **Escalator Tournament** - players move up and down across various courts, playing different opponents
- **Tag Team Tennis** - players play singles but rotate on and off with a continuous rolling score system
- **Decades** - the team is made up of people of different ages, all cheering each other on
- **Doubles** - don't forget this is tennis' ready-made team format

You can make any event a team one with a few simple modifications, and it doesn't dilute the performance of the individual within the team.

With a little luck

As team formats are, by their nature, social, you can add some elements of luck to the scoring system so that players feel that they have a chance of scoring some points for their team irrespective of their standard. These include:

- **Dice** - players roll a dice before they start, to see how many points winning the match could score for their team
- **Luck of the Draw** - players get to choose cards at the end of the match to try to get the highest numbered card to win a prize in addition to the one for the winning team.

Other simple ideas are to have a raffle at the end of the event, or for younger players have a board game at the side of the court and each time a player wins a match they get to roll the dice and move their teams counter around the board.

Group Formats

As players progress, group formats provide the opportunity for players to play a number of matches in a group against different opponents. Make sure that the ability level is reasonably close; the exciting thing about tennis is, not knowing the outcome before you start, so players need to feel that they have a chance to win matches.

The most common group format is **Round Robin** which requires some basic organisational skills, including scheduling an order of play so that players play an even number of matches across the event. Suggestions for creating an order of play are included in the Round Robin section of the website.

Challenge Formats

Usually run over a longer timeframe, these events are designed to allow players to play at their convenience, which may appeal to some starter players. They require little organisation as players are responsible for contacting each other and organising a time to play. However they need to be managed as the danger is that players will not arrange the matches.

Elimination Formats

When players are ready for more competitive events, elimination formats provide the ultimate level of competition. These formats are less appealing for starter players as obviously there is only one winner. However they may still be appropriate for those players who are progressing through the Red, Orange, Green system; young players should certainly aspire to play these formats.

LOCATION - MOVING GRADUALLY AWAY FROM THE CLUB

Players will be more comfortable competing in their own environment surrounded by their friends. Young players should be introduced to a limited number of factors that could cause competitive stress when they start but should be gradually challenged to move away from the club as they become more familiar with competition. Those that are more confident and competent should compete outside of the club occasionally but those that are slower to reach this level may require more time.

Asking players to play competition for the first time in a different club may result in a negative experience.

DURATION - GRADUALLY GETTING LONGER

Busy lives mean that people seek to play shorter formats. For young children, mental and physical limitations suggest that shorter formats are also more suitable. The benefits of shorter formats include:

- Starting and finishing more matches
- Less emotional investment in the result

The methods of implementing this principle in competition include:

- Using a timed format where matches last for a set time
- Using short matches; tiebreakers to 7, short sets, etc
- No-ad scoring

REWARDS

It is important to consider the awards you will present. Giving prizes for improvement and performance in addition to winning sends the message that player development is important. Having a prize draw or incorporating an element of luck to the result with starter players may also help to make the event more fun, and keep players there until the end, for the prize giving.

PLAY AND STAY

Finally, if we understand that competition is really just 'playing the game' then surely this is the number one objective for us all; get more people playing tennis! And with easy-to-run formats available we need to provide much more opportunities to compete.

In recent years some people lost sight of the goal. "Tennis Coaching is not a Sport!" Playing is.

To visit the Competitions website use the following link:
www.tennisplayandstay.com/competitions/index.html



Group formats provide players to play many matches in a limited amount of time.

Belgian Competitive Structure for 10 & Under's

By Line Declercq and Valentijn Pattyn (Flemish Tennis Federation, Belgium)

The competition structure of the Flemish Tennis Federation (VTV) offers competitive opportunities for all under 10 players. Competitive as well as recreational players are encouraged to play matches. Several promotional and awareness campaigns ensure that any child playing tennis can find a competition suitable for their level.

MANDATING COMPETITION

In Belgium, competition is mandated so that every player aged 9 and under must play with a slower red, orange or green ball. Player aged 8 or under can not play competition on the full court. At age 10 most players will play with a green or orange ball and only the very talented play with a full, yellow ball on the full-sized court.

TYPES OF COMPETITION

Both individual and team competitions take place. Individual competition consists of the informal Kids Tennis Tour and the formal Volkswagen Tour. The team competition is known as the Delta Lloyd Youth Interclub.

Kids Tennis Tour (until 12 years)

This informal competition is especially focussed on beginners and recreational players. All participants play the same number of matches and no winners or losers are announced. There are 4 levels of competition, with the different sized courts and different types of slower ball.

After playing 3 tournaments, players receive a small gift. After 5 tournaments they get an extra present and are invited to a 'final' event called the "KidsTennis Masters".

Volkswagen Tour (+ 8 years)

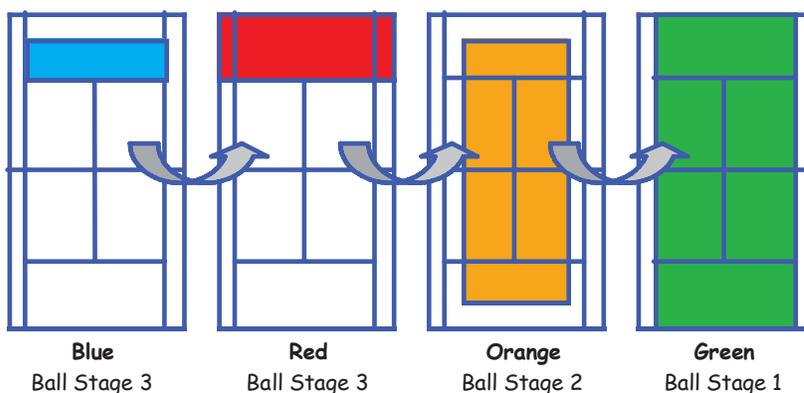
This more formal competition is designed for players of the "orange" level. All results count toward the calculation of the player's ranking and also for the official ranking of the Volkswagen Tour. The players with the best ranking can participate at the Youth Masters in September.

Anyone participating in 4 tournaments receives a gift. After 8 tournaments the players get an extra gift and a free tennis lesson during the Youth Masters.

The results of this tour are also used for the selection of the "de Borman Cup" (National Belgian Youth Championships) and the "Memorial Vandewiele" (inter-regional team competition).

Delta Lloyd Interclub (+ 8 years)

In this competition, clubs play against each other. A team consists of 2 players. During each tie, 2 singles and 1 doubles match are played. Teams begin by competing in groups and the best go through to a final round. Player's results also count toward their individual ranking.



Friendly Competition: "A Match for Everyone"

By Bernard Pestre (Head of Training and Education, FFT and Member of the ITF Intro to Tennis Taskforce)

In every country, children in tennis schools are taught the basics of tennis. Generally, those who continue can reach a good level of play. They can then participate in tournaments where they suddenly "leap into the unknown" that is competition. This is when they discover what it really feels like to face an opponent, and these initial experiences can prove very painful, especially for very young girls who are less keen on competitive games than boys.

Progressive tennis and the use of modified balls that are appropriate for the children's age and level can accelerate the development of technical skills.

Furthermore, the simultaneous learning of the technical, tactical and competitive aspects of the game gives meaning to the technical skills acquired.

To help children handle their first competitions and coaches to be more

effective in their teaching, here is a system that is easy to implement in tennis clubs.

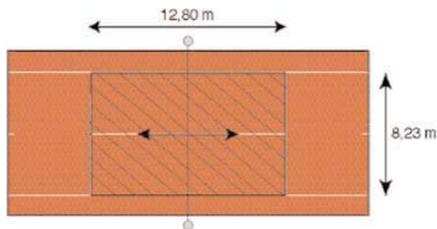
"A MATCH FOR EVERYONE"

- Invite all members to come to the club for a whole day.
- Draw different courts of the recommended sizes.
- Make groups based on level of play, not on age.
- Game conditions in singles and doubles

"Discovery" Match

Scoring system: best-of-three set match with first player to 4 points in each set (duration: 10 minutes) or best-of-three set match with first player to 7 points in each set (duration: 20 minutes).

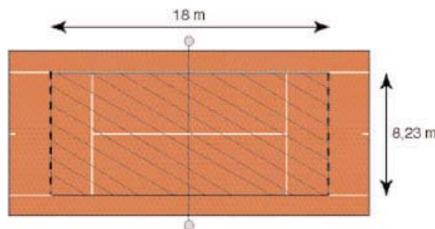
Foam or soft ball
Court size: 12.80m x 8.23m
Net height: 0.80m
Recommended racket size for children: 43-56cm



"Progression" Match

Scoring system: same as that used for "discovery games" or
Regular scoring: 1st set = 1 game, 2nd set = 1 game, 3rd set = 7-point tie-breaker (duration: 15 minutes); or
1st set = 3 games, 2nd set = 3 games, 3rd set = normal tie-breaker (duration: 30 minutes).

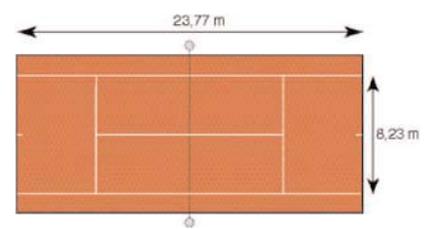
Soft ball
Court size: 18m x 8.23m
Net height: 0.80m
Recommended racket size for children: 56-63cm



"Performance" Match

Scoring system: same as that used for "discovery games" or
Regular scoring: 1st set = 1 game, 2nd set = 1 game, 3rd set = normal tie-breaker (duration: 15 minutes); or
1st set = 3 games, 2nd set = 3 games, 3rd set = normal tie-breaker (duration: 30 minutes).

Transition ball
Court size: 23.77m x 8.23m
Net height: 0.914m
Recommended racket size for children: 63-68cm



Tennis is a Sport for All - ITN

By Brenden Sharp

(ITF International Tennis Number Coordinator and Member of ITF Intro to Tennis Taskforce)

Any player that can serve, rally and score with either a slower or normal ball should have a rating. This rating will make it easier to find players of a similar level to play with.

The international tennis number (ITN) represents a player's general level of play. In time it is hoped that every tennis player worldwide will have an ITN.

Under this system, players are rated from ITN 1 - ITN 10. ITN 1 represents a high level player (holding an ATP / WTA ranking or of an equivalent playing standard) and ITN 10 is a player that is starting to play competitively (can serve, rally and score) on a full court using a normal ITF approved ball.

The 1-10 rating system is very simple and easy for tennis players worldwide to understand. The creation of the sub-category for starter players; ITN 10.3; 10.2; 10.1, has ensured that all players can have a rating. For players that are not yet at the ITN 10 level (where they can serve, rally and score with a normal ball on a full court) a logical progression now exists within the ITN linked to the different types of slower balls. 10.3 is equivalent to a player playing with a Red ball, 10.2 is a player who plays with an Orange ball and 10.1 is a Green ball player.

The ITN was officially launched at the Australian Open in 2003 with Tennis Australia being the first nation to adopt it as their national ratings system. Now 38 Nations have discovered how the ITN can help increase tennis participation and have officially adopted the ITN as their National Rating System or are recognising the ITN along side their existing systems.

The ITN is also a fantastic tool that tennis coaches can use to rate the standard of players in their clubs. To facilitate the rating of players the ITF developed a Description of Standards and an objective On Court Assessment both of which can be used to rate players in the absence of competition results.



The court can be set up for an ITN test in less than 5 minutes using throw down lines.

The 'ITN Description of Standards' describes each of the 10 rating categories, while the ITN On Court Assessment is an objective way to initially rate the standard of recreational tennis players. It can also serve as an excellent motivational tool for players of all levels.

Approved by the ITF Coaches Commission and the ITF International Tennis Rating Taskforce, it is hoped this guide will help players to be accurately rated. Whilst trying to make the Description of Standards as precise as possible, the Taskforce has attempted to keep it simple and game based. The intention is that it should be easy to understand and useful for both the player and the assessor (coach / administrator).

The ITN Description of Standards has avoided rating players purely on the technical assessment of individual shots. Instead it is based on:

- the general characteristics of various playing levels
- the five game / tactical situations of tennis (e.g. serving, returning, both at baseline, approaching, passing)
- the game-style of the player.

The On Court Assessment has been specifically developed for the ITN and is an important tool for the ongoing success of the ITN. The assessment measures certain key strokes on consistency, accuracy (1st bounce), power (2nd bounce) and also measures mobility.

Tennis coaches in 107 nations around the world have registered as Official ITN On Court Assessors on the website, at <http://www.oncourtassessment.com>, and are using the On Court Assessment to rate players at their local clubs and in their tennis lessons.

The ITF have developed an ITN website <http://www.itftennis.com/itn> where you can view and download all the ITN information which is available in English, Spanish and French. There are also many articles and case studies of how nations and individual coaches have embraced the ITN.

The ITN is one of the most versatile tools currently available to tennis coaches. Through a multitude of applications in clubs and other tennis facilities, the ITN can help to increase the number of players, and the enjoyment of those players in competition.

Players can compare their own development and improvement to other players of their choice and can track and chart their own development and improvement in an objective manner by using all the facilities on the on court assessment website.

The ITN is an ideal 'introduction to tennis' tool. For starter tennis programmes, the ITN 10.3, 10.2, 10.1 provides a progressive path for adult and junior starter players to ensure that players can move from ITN 10.3 to ITN 10, at which level the players can serve, rally and score on a full court with a normal ball.

So if you don't know your ITN rating, we encourage you to visit both websites at www.itftennis.com/itn and www.oncourtassessment.com and become involved in the International Tennis Number.

ITN, What's Your Number?

Health Benefits of Tennis

By Babette M Pluim (Royal Netherlands Lawn Tennis Association (KNLTB))

The health benefits of aerobic exercise are well established. Research has shown that regular moderate physical activity has a beneficial effect on health and is associated with a decreased risk of diabetes and cardiovascular disease (Lee, 2003; Warbuton, 2006; Wei, 1999). Regular exercise has a beneficial effect on cardiovascular risk factors through many mechanisms. It improves plasma lipid profile, reduces body weight, lowers blood pressure, increases insulin sensitivity, and improves lung function, cardiac function and cardio-respiratory fitness. In addition, exercise has a positive effect on bone health (Borer, 2005).

Although many studies have been published on the health benefits of exercise in general, it is still unclear to what extent data are available indicating a direct relationship between improved health and playing tennis. For that reason, we undertook a systematic review to explore the health benefits of tennis in the prevention of several risk factors and major diseases that have been related to a sedentary lifestyle, i.e. low fitness levels, obesity, hypertension,

hyperlipidemia, diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular disease, and osteoporosis. The summary of these findings is presented below.

Exercise intensity

Mean heart rate during singles play ranges from 140 to 180 beats per minute (bpm), equating to 70 to 90% of maximum heart rate (Pluim et al, 2007). Mean oxygen consumption during play ranges from 25 to 40 ml kg⁻¹ min⁻¹, reflecting 50% to 80% of VO₂ max. Mean lactate levels during play are generally 2 to 3 mmol L⁻¹, although they have once been reported to be as high as 6 mmol L⁻¹. This indicates that singles tennis play can be categorised as vigorous-intensity exercise (>6 Mets).

Aerobic capacity

The mean VO₂ max of tennis players ranges from 35 to 65 ml kg⁻¹ min⁻¹, depending on age, gender and training level. This indicates that tennis players have high fitness levels, compared to norm values for normally active controls of the same age and gender (Pluim et al, 2007).

Obesity

Tennis players have a lower body fat percentage compared to less active controls (Laforest, 1990; Schneider, 1992; Swank, 1998; Vodak, 1980). This is an important finding because obesity has become a 'global epidemic', with more than one billion adults overweight (BMI>25) and at least 300 million of them clinically obese (BMI>30).

Hyperlipidemia

Tennis is associated with increased plasma HDL-cholesterol levels (Ferrauti,1997; Swank, 1998; Vodak, 1980). Even though more than 200 risk factors for coronary heart disease have now been identified, the single most powerful predictor of coronary heart diseases is hyperlipidemia. It is also a significant one: more than half the cases of heart disease are attributable to lipid abnormalities. The higher HDL-cholesterol concentrations associated with a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease implies that playing tennis may reduce the risk of cardiovascular events.

ITF LESSON PLANS FOR BEGINNER PLAYERS: LESSON 2

Progression 1b (Tactical theme):

Goal: Players to practice the fundamental tactics of the baseline game.

Methodology: Use self-feed, partner hand or racquet feed, or coach feed.

Create stations: Station 1, Hitting the ball (consistency), Station 2, Placing it over the net (height), and Station 3, Inside the court (direction), Station 4, Hitting the ball with depth.

Player organisation/positioning: Same as above.

Player rotation: Same as above.

Coach analysis and diagnosis points: Make sure the players begin to understand how to use tactics from the baseline and how they relate to the groundstrokes (i.e. direction and racquet face position, height and racquet path trajectory, etc.).

DRILL 3-RALLY WITH COACH

Goal: Players to practice the fundamental tactics of the baseline game using their groundstrokes in a rally situation with their coach.

Methodology: Players rally with the coach.

Player organisation/positioning:

- For ITN 10-10.3 using 4 mini-courts (red 'play tennis' courts), players serve or start the rally with an underarm serve with the coach playing on one of the courts, and with the extra player possibly picking up balls, or doing a physical activity, keeping the score, creating a station that they will be able to practice their ground stroke consistency (i.e. against the fence/wall or hit into a target). After 5 points, they get together to discuss theme of the lesson. The side of the coach should start the rally/point.
- ITN 8-9 using 2 mini-courts, coach and players rally down the line (using orange or green 'play tennis' balls). Putting the players into two groups of 4, (with the coach making the 4th member in one of the groups). The 8th player or spare player could be doing a physical exercise or picking up balls, or an activity that relates to the theme of the lesson.

Player rotation: Same as above.

Coach analysis and diagnosis points: Make sure the players begin to apply basic tactics from the baseline using their groundstrokes.

DRILL 4-OPEN SITUATION WITH POINTS

Goal: Players to practice the fundamental tactics of the baseline game using their groundstrokes in a rally situation with their peers.

Methodology: Players rally among themselves.

Player organisation/positioning: Players play points relative to their playing level and court size i.e.

- ITN 10-10:3: 4 mini-tennis courts
- ITN 8-9: Using half court. They could progress to using full court but having good rotation and using either orange or green 'play tennis' ball.

Player rotation: Same as above.

Point/scoring system: The following formats can be used:

- Individual scoring: Number of groundstrokes in.
- Team/pair scoring: Number of groundstrokes patterns in
- Other options: Number of times players adopt a correct preparation, contact point, and impact the ball with the strings.
- Individual points
- Extra points given for tactical or technical proficiency
- King of the court

Coach analysis and diagnosis points: Make sure the players apply basic tactics from the baseline using their groundstrokes.



Hypertension

Blood pressure response during tennis play is comparable to the response to an acute bout of moderate intensity dynamic exercise (Jetté, 1991). Unfortunately, no longitudinal studies on the long-term effect of tennis on blood pressure were identified and further studies are warranted.

Cardiovascular morbidity and mortality

Houston et al. studied 1,019 male students between 1948 and 1964 (Houston, 2002). After a standard physical exam, the students were asked to rate their ability in tennis, golf, football, baseball and basketball during medical school and earlier. The researchers assessed the participants' physical activities an average of 22 and 40 years later. Tennis was the only sport in which a higher ability during medical school was associated with a lower risk of cardiovascular disease. A primary factor for this beneficial health profile may be due to the fact that tennis was the sport that was played most frequently through midlife. Half of the tennis players were still participating in the sport in midlife, compared to only one quarter of those whom reported playing golf, and none whom reported playing baseball, basketball, or football.

Osteoporosis

Tennis is related to healthier bone structure in both genders and across the age spectrum (Pluim et al, 2007). The association depends on the duration of tennis participation and training frequency, being stronger in young starters than in old starters, but maintained despite decreased tennis participation. This is most clearly present in load-bearing bones such as the humerus of the dominant arm, lumbar spine and femoral neck. These findings support the exercise recommendations described in the ACSM Position Stand on "Physical Activity and Bone Health", who recommend 20-40 minutes of weight-bearing endurance activities, such as tennis, at least three times per week to augment bone mineral accrual in children and adolescents, and 30-60 minutes of these activities at least three times per week to preserve bone health during adulthood (ACSM, 2004).

Conclusions

Those who choose to play tennis have positive health benefits. Specifically, lower body fat percentages, more favourable lipid profiles, and enhanced aerobic fitness contribute to an overall improved risk profile for cardiovascular morbidity. Furthermore, numerous studies have identified better bone health not only in tennis players with lifelong tennis participation histories, but also in those who take on the sport in middle-adulthood.

Playing tennis on a regular basis (two to three times a week), either singles or doubles, meets the exercise recommendations of the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) and American Heart Association (AHA). Reported mean heart rates during singles tennis ranged from 70-90% of maximum heart rate, and mean oxygen consumption ranged from 50-80% of VO₂ max. Moderate intensity activities are those performed at a relative intensity of 40-60% of VO₂ max (60-75% of maximum heart rate), whereas vigorous-intensity activities are those performed at a relative intensity of >60% of VO₂max (>75% maximum heart rate). Thus, exercise intensity during singles tennis play is high enough to categorise it as a moderate to vigorous intensity sport. This is supported by the findings that tennis players display an above average maximal oxygen uptake compared to normally active populations of the same age and sex.

In doubles play, heart rate and VO₂ tend to be lower than during singles play. However, it is not the absolute intensity of the exercise that is relevant, but rather, the intensity relative to the physical capacity of the individual. This means that while singles play may be necessary to result in health benefits for the younger player, doubles play may be sufficient for the middle-aged or senior tennis player, because their maximum heart rate and VO₂max are decreased. Doubles play is therefore particularly suitable for these categories. This has the added benefit that it increases the chance that those who play tennis are likely to maintain the sport when they grow older. Hence, the positive effects are maintained. In order for exercise to exert a positive effect, one has to embrace lifelong exercise patterns.



Research has shown that tennis has numerous positive health benefits.

REFERENCES

- ACSM. Position Stand: Physical activity and bone health. *Med Sci Sports Exerc* 2004;36:1985-96.
- Borer KT. Physical activity in the prevention and amelioration of osteoporosis in women: interaction of mechanical, hormonal and dietary factors. *Sports Med* 2005;35:779-830.
- Ferrauti A, Weber K, Struder HK. Effects of tennis training on lipid metabolism and lipoproteins in recreational players. *Br J Sports Med* 1997;31:322-27.
- Houston TK, Meoni LA, Ford DE et al. Sports ability in young men and the incidence of cardiovascular disease. *Am J Med* 2002;112:689-95.
- Jetté M, Landry F, Tiemann B et al. Ambulatory blood pressure and Holter monitoring during tennis play. *Can J Sport Sci* 1991;16:40-4.
- Laforest S, St-Pierre DMM, Cyr J et al. Effects of age and regular exercise on muscle strength and endurance. *Eur J Appl Physiol* 1990;60:104-11.
- Lee I-M, Sesso HD, Oguma Y, Paffenberger RS. Relative intensity of physical activity and risk of coronary heart disease. *Circulation* 2003;107:1110-6.
- Pluim BM, Staal JB, Marks BL, Miller S, Miley D. Health benefits of tennis. *Br J Sports Med* 2007;41:June 25 [Epub ahead of print].
- Schneider D, Greenberg MR. Choice of exercise: a predictor of behavioral risks? *Res Q Exerc Sport* 1992;63:231-7.
- Swank AM, Condra S, Yates JW. Effect of long term tennis participation on aerobic capacity, body composition, muscular strength and flexibility and serum lipids. *Sports Med Training Rehab* 1998;8:99-112.
- Vodak PA, Wood PD, Haskell WL et al. HDL-cholesterol and other plasma lipid and lipoprotein concentrations in middle-aged male and female tennis players. *Metabolism* 1980;29:745-52.
- Warburton DER, Nicol CW, Bredin SSD. Health benefits of physical activity: the evidence. *CMAJ* 2006;174:801-9.
- Wei M, Gibbons LW, Mitchell TL, Kampert JB, Lee CD, Blair SN. The association between cardiorespiratory fitness and impaired fasting glucose and type 2 diabetes mellitus in men. *Ann Intern Med* 1999;130:89-96.

Cardio Tennis

By Jolyn de Boer (Executive Director, Tennis Industry Association (TIA))

INTRODUCTION

Cardio Tennis is a fun, group fitness activity featuring fast paced tennis drills and games with music and heart rate monitors providing heart pumping fitness. The focus is fun and fitness that includes a social element for 6-8 people on the court and an emphasis as a major calorie burning activity. A class is typically 60 minutes and includes a warm-up, cardio segment, cool down and sideline activities.

Various forms of Cardio Tennis have been around for a long time but changes in society have dictated the successful timing and development of a formalised programme. Some of those factors include the following.

1. Tennis as a sport has seen the rise of non-traditional sports activities and the tremendous increase of participation in fitness activities over the past 10 years.
2. The TIA, USTA and industry partners are dedicated to growing tennis and with all the competition for people's leisure time, Cardio Tennis was field tested to be an attractive "packaged" product to introduce a higher fitness element to tennis.
3. Tennis is perceived as a more difficult sport to learn, however, Cardio Tennis is more about the movement and all level players can be on the court at the same time, get a workout.
4. And unfortunately, the U.S. is faced with an obesity crisis for its adults and children. Cardio Tennis is a high calorie burning activity that's fun, social and can make an impact where many fitness activities in the gym can become monotonous and prone to boredom, Cardio Tennis has staying power.

LAUNCHING THE PROGRAMME

Cardio Tennis was introduced to the consumer at the US Open in 2005. The eight months prior to the launch consisted of defining and formatting the programme, creating the curriculum, educating the industry and the coaches and authorising official sites. At the time of the 2005 US Open there were 650 official US sites, today that number has grown to nearly 1,800 and a global presence in more than 30 countries.

The presence of Cardio Tennis in other countries varies; in some countries there may be a handful of coaches who are running the programme at their own facilities. In other countries such as Germany, Ireland, and Japan, their respective Tennis Federation has formally adopted the Cardio Tennis programme and are using it as a vehicle to



grow the game in their countries. The TIA/USTA (who owns the Cardio Tennis programme) through an affiliate membership relationship is allowing tennis federations to take responsibility for the training of their coaches, quality control and how it is distributed to the consumer. Our joint mission is to grow the game and to help support the economic vitality for everyone in the industry.

RESULTS

The list of successes of Cardio Tennis in the US is long:

- The number of US sites has more than doubled in 2 years
- On average sites are offering three classes per week with an average of 7 participants per class
- Over half of our facilities are identifying a benefit in terms of new players, returning players and players playing more frequently
- 71% of our facilities are seeing financial benefit in the form of increased revenue
- Celebrity Tennis professional such as Tracy Austin, Luke Jensen and the Bryan brothers continue to support the programme. Fitness celebrity, Denise Austin, is the spokesperson for Cardio Tennis.

- Cardio Tennis is a media magnet. In 2006 there were over 100 articles and features, 200 million impressions and coverage from more than 20 TV stations, this level of PR has continued in 2007.
- Cardio Tennis is a presence at most major professional tournaments with Cardio Tennis demos on the stadium court in between marquee matches
- Cardio Tennis is now being segmented towards ability levels and demographic markets such as kids, starter players, fitness devotees, etc. Classes have been done on the beach in conjunction with USA beach tennis.
- Cardio Tennis has such broad appeal that fitness professionals are showing interest in leading classes.
- The fun factor is so high in Cardio Tennis compared to other fitness activities with a setting that encourages camaraderie and support among participants.
- There are many weight loss and fitness success stories from not only participants but teaching pros that have used it to get into better shape.
- Cardio Tennis is an excellent medium to attract new players. We are also finding a "transition" factor as they become interested in learning more about tennis and take instructional lessons to be able to also play in leagues and tournaments.

SUMMARY

Cardio Tennis has been called 'the third way to play tennis' and coaches who add this to their programming not only benefit their business but also give the tennis industry an attractive new vehicle to promote the benefit and lifetime sport of tennis.



Cardio Tennis is a fun, group fitness activity featuring fast paced tennis drills and games with music and heart rate monitors providing heart pumping fitness.

tennisplayandstay.com

By Mark Tennant (ITF Participation Coordinator, Member of ITF Intro to Tennis Taskforce)

One major element of the Tennis...Play and Stay campaign is the sharing of resources, case studies and information related to the introduction of tennis to starter players. These resources and much more information is being shared through a Play and Stay website, www.tennisplayandstay.com.

FEATURES OF THE WEBSITE

The website provides information in a variety of formats, written, audio and video, and on a variety of topics. Briefly, resources on the following areas, each of which is a key component on the 'Tennis...Play and Stay' campaign, are available:

- Serve, Rally, Score - highlights the importance of getting starter players to play the game from the first lesson so that a stimulating environment is created
- Competition - many formats and articles are available (see detailed description below)
- Mini Tennis - includes case studies of how various nations are developing their own Mini Tennis programmes
- Juniors - includes case studies and ideas on activities for junior programmes
- Adults - demonstrates how slower balls and smaller courts can be used to introduce the game to adult starter players, and gives examples of resources and programmes being developed worldwide
- Fitness - dedicated to the health benefits of tennis, with examples of tennis fitness programmes being used worldwide
- Equipment - information on the different types of equipment available, with recommendations for which balls, courts and racquets should be used by players of different ages and abilities
- Worldwide - lists the nations and organisations worldwide that support Play and Stay. This allows visitors to find the person responsible for Play and Stay in their nation to discuss Play and Stay with further.
- Resources - This section contains videos, articles and other resources for coaches, clubs and players (see detailed description below)

COMPETITION FORMATS HOMEPAGE

The ITF believes that competition can be fun for players of all levels. An often-used quote is "there is no such sport as tennis coaching", thus coaches should remember that the purpose of coaching is to improve the ability of the player to play the game. User-friendly competitive formats should be used within coaching sessions and/or outside of the coaching programme.

A number of formats and scoring systems exist that are ideal for starter players. These formats offer the chance to meet and play with other players of a similar ability in a fun and friendly atmosphere. Clubs and coaches can adapt competitions to the needs and lifestyles of players, including time constraints, by using:

- Short sets (1st to 4 games)
- Tie break instead of a 3rd set
- No ad scoring
- Combinations of all 3

Instead of using single elimination formats with starter players, it is recommended to use formats that give player's more than one match (round robin/feed in events/compass draws etc.). Appropriate competition formats can be easy to set up, profitable for coaches and a significant factor in getting starter players to play more. When organising competition, coaches tend to know the approximate ability, experience, age and size of the group. These factors are used on the website to provide a wide range of different competition formats which have been submitted by experts in starter programmes worldwide (See table 1).

RESOURCES

The website is also an important resource for federations, clubs and coaches who want to promote the Tennis...Play and Stay campaign. The ITF is making available posters, leaflets and other promotional resources, so the Tennis...Play and Stay campaign can be marketed effectively. Many of these resources are available in English, French and Spanish.

In addition to the promotional material there are a range of case studies and lesson ideas from around the world. There are videos, presentations, articles and links that are full of useful examples and ideas related to starter tennis. Contributors to date include: KNLTB (Dutch Tennis Federation), Tennis Canada, LTA (Great Britain), FFT (French Tennis Federation), USTA (United States Tennis Association), Tennis Australia, Swiss Tennis and VTV (Flemish Tennis Federation).

This set of resources will be continually updated and grown to ensure there is regular, new content to help support all visitors to the site.

SUMMARY

Through the 'Tennis...Play and Stay' campaign, the ITF intends to share ideas, resources and case studies to help continue the development of how tennis is introduced and offered to starter players. The website (www.tennisplayandstay.com) is a major feature of the campaign, and plays a significant role in the promotion of the campaign and its objectives.

		Age Category					MIXED
		CHILDREN	TEENS	ADULTS			
		Under 10	11-17	18-25	25-50	50 +	
Time Frame	1 hour	Competitive	Competitive	Competitive	Competitive	Competitive	Mixed groups
		Social					
	3 hour	Competitive	Competitive	Competitive	Competitive	Competitive	Social
		Social					
	1 day	Competitive	Social				
		Social					
	2 days or more	Competitive	Competitive	Competitive	Competitive	Competitive	Social
		Social					
	On-going	Competitive	Competitive	Competitive	Competitive	Competitive	Social
		Social					

Table 1. Competition formats grid to help you select appropriate formats for your starter players available at playandstay.com

Working with Adult Beginners: 10 Golden Rules

By Nathalie Delaigue (French Tennis Federation (FFT))

Introducing tennis to a large number of people is a constant concern for the French Tennis Federation (FFT). In 2001, after a number of initiatives for young people (Mini-Tennis, Club Junior programmes), the FFT decided to begin programmes for the not-so-young, i.e. adults.

With this new initiative, the FFT has developed a concept which follows up on the teaching approach applied to the younger age groups, i.e. a teaching methodology with appropriate teaching tools to help adults play tennis sooner without having to go through a difficult and long learning process.

Our goal is to eliminate the idea that tennis is a very "technical" sport that can only be played by individuals with a certain level of physical abilities. A progression using different balls (foam, soft and transition balls), court sizes (12m, 18m and 24m courts) and net heights ensures that a player who is new to the game can enjoy success immediately. Thus, the learning process becomes easier, more enjoyable and more fun.

However, the coach must be a good communicator to explain the purpose of the modified conditions to adults. Here are a few rules to follow when teaching tennis to beginners:

1. At first, the coach should ask starter players to rally on a full-size court with a normal ball. Players will soon realise that they are unable to play a lot of balls consecutively. In recognition of this, the coach will suggest the use of tools, particularly foam balls, on a reduced size court, with a lower net, to help players make contact with the ball more often. Most of the time, a miracle will happen and players will be able to start rallying.

2. Avoid using words such as "mini-tennis" when speaking to adults. Mini-tennis can be perceived as simplistic and childish, which could cause some reluctance. It is therefore recommended to talk about "soft balls" rather than "mini-tennis balls" and to describe "mini-tennis courts" as "12-metre and 18-metre courts".

3. Explain to players that the goal of this approach is not to provide a fewer quality of tennis teaching and use adapted formats indefinitely, but rather to make them progress, as soon as possible and in the best possible conditions, to the full court

with a normal ball. This is why there is a constant need for changes in playing conditions so that players can measure their progress.

4. In each session, the coach should make sure to combine learning situations with games and scoring to make the learning experience more enjoyable.

5. The use of foam and soft balls allows the possibility of introducing all tennis strokes right from the first lesson, including volleys, smashes and approach shots. The feeling of fear and inhibition that starter players, especially women, may experience when approaching the net using a normal ball disappears completely when playing with a slower and softer ball.

6. The use of progressive tennis equipment is not enough: the coach must also strive to better meet players' expectations. Each player has their own reasons for playing tennis. Some will want to improve their technique, while others will choose tennis to satisfy their need for physical activity or to improve so they can play tournaments. Coaches should organise their groups according to each player's motivations.

7. "Discovery" Tennis

Intended for newcomers to the game of tennis, the "discovery" tennis programme makes it possible for players to enjoy the game immediately and improve at their own pace. In time, participants are able to play a match in modified conditions. This can be achieved by making sure that the rate at which each player makes progress is respected within group lessons (for example, by asking participants to use different types of balls according to their level).

8. "Fitness" Tennis

Designed to improve fitness by combining tennis drills with physical circuits on the court, this programme is very popular, especially among women who often experience difficulty in moving around the court. These circuits, which include agility ladders, cones and hurdles, are usually set up at the side of the court. Regarding tennis drills, playing conditions must be modified to ensure a high level of success without technical restrictions. The slower the ball speed, the more intense the physical activity will be. Before the start of each session, the coach should therefore question players in case they have medical contra-indications.

9. "Performance" Tennis

This programme is designed to help advanced players improve their technical, physical and mental skills. The use of the transition ball makes it possible for participants to experience new sensations and work on the following aspects of the game: hitting with spin, contacting the ball early, etc. Some coaches organise a monthly training session based on a specific theme: improving the 2nd serve, improving net play, etc.

10. Once or twice a year, organise fun tennis activities: hitting with backspin, executing trick shots between the legs, hitting smashes with the intention of achieving the highest bounce possible, playing doubles matches with only 1 racket per team, etc. These activities are usually very popular!

To summarise our adult tennis programme, we could say that players and their expectations are at the centre of our teaching methodology. It is no longer players who have to adapt to the technical restrictions of tennis, but tennis which adapts to players' desires and abilities.



The use of modified equipment for adult beginners allows them to play the game from the first lesson.

Play and Stay in the Netherlands

By Ronald Pothuizen (KNLTB Coordinator of Tennis Programmes and Member of the ITF Intro to Tennis Taskforce)

An example of the structure and functioning of a Dutch tennis club with respect to starter players

A TYPICAL DUTCH CLUB

It is a nice day in April. People are playing on the clay courts at Nieuw Venneep, a club with 10 clay courts and a very nice clubhouse. People are drinking coffee on the terrace of the clubhouse and children are playing tennis against the wall. The club has 410 junior members and more than 700 senior members.

Nieuw Venneep is very active with schools tennis. A special schools tennis programme is run with two primary schools that are situated close to the club.

COMPETITIVE TENNIS

In the Netherlands the leagues start in April. More than 200,000 people play in teams for seven weeks, with a match against a different opponent every week. Five of the courts of Nieuw Venneep are filled with competitive players, each will play at least 2 matches today. All the remaining courts are occupied by players of all ages.

Children have their own leagues too, they play on Saturdays and on Wednesdays. Nieuw Venneep has junior teams for the mini tennis (red) leagues, the ¾ tennis (orange) leagues and for the full court (green) leagues. Children play against other players of the same age and ability.

In addition to the leagues, Nieuw Venneep organises many activities so that members can play matches. Sometimes matches are official matches but very often they are just short matches.

There is a rating system for all competitive tennis players and every player in the Netherlands has a rating. The numbers are similar to the ITN; 1 is national top level and 10 is a starter player. The number is on the membership card and players use this card when they play official matches. They also use this card when they make a court reservation.

TENNISKIDS - RED, ORANGE AND GREEN

The coaches and members of the junior committee decided to implement a new KNLTB programme called Tenniskids. In this programme coaches use Stage 3, 2 and 1 balls (red, orange and green balls respectively), smaller courts and a special sticker book awards scheme. In addition to the 10 full size courts the club has a special mini court for kids. Children use this court a lot and often have to wait to get on; they mostly create their own games.

At Nieuw Venneep coaches organised special meetings with parents and put information about the programme on the website. Coaches informed parents of the new, Tenniskids approach and spoke with them about the advantages of using the slower balls and smaller courts. When the parents were explained the advantages of using modified balls and using different coaching methods (doing a variety of different

activities on court), they understood the benefits and accepted the programme.

Now parents are very enthusiastic about the programme and pass the message onto other adults at the club. Club coaches occasionally use the Stage 1 balls with their adult lessons, depending on the aim of the lesson

SERVE, RALLY AND SCORE

The coach, Arthur Maaswinkel, thinks that 'serve, rally and score' from the first lesson is very important. His motto is "Time flies when you're having fun. Creating fun is creating situations where people can have successful experiences. The use of slower balls and smaller courts is very effective in letting people experience success". In the Netherlands people do not want to take 10 lessons before they can play a match.

Nieuw Venneep is a very good example of a tennis club where the different aspects of 'Play and Stay' suit different areas of their programme. Members of the club are enthusiastic about this approach and are now accustomed to using slower balls and having fun playing tennis from the moment they start. The leagues are very strong and people like playing matches.

SUMMARY

It is very important people involved in the club understand the reasons for changing the coaching approach, the balls and courts. Only when everyone is convinced that players must play tennis from the first moment they are on court will coaches create situations that make this possible.



Leagues for children provide them with the competitive experiences necessary for technical and tactical development.

United States Tennis Association Project 36/60

By Kirk Anderson

(Director USTA Recreational Coaches and Programmes, Member of ITF Intro to Tennis Taskforce)

Slower balls and smaller racquets have been used for years by teaching professionals and coaches for children learning to play tennis. In most cases, the modified equipment was used as a teaching tool so young children could learn basic stroke technique and striking skills. Many coaches were successful with beginner players but children did not have a consistent format where they could play, learn and compete at the local level and throughout the country using the same rules, equipment and courts.

Project 36/60 was developed as a joint project of the United States Tennis Association (USTA) Player Development and Community Tennis divisions. It was clear that more children would play, enjoy, develop and compete if the game could be designed where everything was to scale based on the age of the child.

The goals of the project are to:

1. Increase the number of players beginning to play tennis from the age of five.
2. Increase the retention of players age five to ten and beyond.
3. Improve the technical, tactical and physical development of players age five to ten.

The USTA studied several successful programmes conducted in other countries that used modified equipment and came to the conclusion that tennis for young children needed to be introduced differently in the United States if we wanted to attract large numbers of children and keep them in the game. Every playing opportunity available to children needed to be considered; casual play, team practices, team competition and individual competition so that this programme would capture every youngster just starting or already in the sport.

Based on the experience from other countries and playing opportunities available for children, the USTA established six specifications; age, court length and width, ball size, weight and rebound, racquet length, weight and grip size, net height and scoring system. In the summer and fall of 2006, 27 pilot sites consisting of teaching professionals, park coaches, clubs, camps and schools play tested these six specifications. Coaches, parents and children evaluated the experience and offered opinions and suggestions at the conclusion of their programmes.

After compiling the results, six variables were firmly established for play across the country. For the first time, young children could play the game successfully and learn the game both technically and tactically because all of the variables were established to scale based on the age of the child.

The results of the pilot phase were very positive. More kids were playing the game with a minimum amount of formal instruction; they were playing, competing and having fun. Kids were able to play without going through the traditional model of learning all of the strokes and tactics before beginning to play and enjoyed the experience of practicing and playing on a team with their friends.

Parents observed much less frustration as children were playing the game much more quickly. Play was exciting and dynamic rather than boring and regimented. Coaches enjoyed teaching because the children were more successful and could develop both technically and tactically.

As the results of the pilot phase were unveiled the project gained momentum and more groups began to offer support. The manufacturers agreed to place age appropriate products for consumers at the retail level. The teaching organisations offered support and assistance with their best professionals. They are also offering training opportunities and communicating good results and best practices through their network of teaching professionals.

The tennis media is fascinated by the concept and articles are being written about the benefits of starting children with the correct equipment and court size. Workshops are being conducted and materials created to support this initiative. Parents, who

previously did not think they had the technical expertise to teach tennis, are now volunteering to coach teams of children as part of the USTA Jr. Team Tennis programme.

Non-elimination singles tournaments that provide multiple matches against many different players are beginning to take place for youngsters aged ten and under throughout the country. Many of these singles tournaments are using formats that enable kids to play several matches in a predetermined amount of time. These tournaments are very popular with kids and parents because they no longer require a three day commitment to play a tournament.

In the summer of 2007, eight Jr. Team Tennis prototypes are being conducted and tested to evaluate how the concept works for youngsters competing on teams in parks, clubs and camps. Young players are playing with equipment and on courts specifically designed for them and are on teams with their friends.

The official launch of Project 36/60 will take place during the US Open. A major media event is scheduled and will coincide with the release of a new curriculum, training videos, marketing materials and competition formats. After the US Open, special training workshops specific for 8 and under and 10 and under children will be offered at several locations in the United States. For those who cannot attend a face to face workshop, an on-line training programme will be available.

The most exciting outcome is that more young children are playing tennis and improving both technically and tactically. Kids are active and energised and are having fun playing the great game of tennis.

Court size	36' x 18' (11m x 5m)	60' x 21' singles/60' x 27' doubles (18m x 6m) / (18m x 8m)
Age	Eight and under	Ten and under
Racquet Length	19" - 23" (43cm-58cm)	23" - 25" (58cm-63cm)
Net height	2' 9" (83cm)	3' (91cm)
Ball	Foam ball (red)	Low compression ball (orange)
Scoring system	2 out of 3, 7 point games	2 out of 3, 4 game sets First to 7 points for third set

Table 1. The above table shows how these specifications align for children eight and under and ten and under

LTA Ariel Mini Tennis

By Sandi Procter

(LTA Head of Programmes, Member of the ITF Intro to Tennis Taskforce)

Ariel Mini Tennis is a programme that introduces tennis to children in a fun, aspirational and exciting way. It's run in clubs and schools across Great Britain delivered by coaches, teachers and volunteers. Because of the slow balls and small courts players learn to serve, rally and score from the beginning and appropriate competition is introduced as soon as possible.

The LTA introduced Mini Tennis in 2002 following Short Tennis, which was played on a small court with a foam ball. Short Tennis was very successful but the next step was too big for some. Players aged 7/8 years were progressing to a full court with a full ball and could not cope with the court size or the ball speed. Many players gave up, no longer enjoying playing the game.

Mini Tennis was introduced with its 3 stages and it quickly succeeded in making the progression more gradual and providing a pathway for 4-10 year olds.

RED, ORANGE AND GREEN

Mini Tennis follows the same progression as Play and Stay:

Mini Tennis Red

In the first stage, children learn to serve, rally and score on a small court with a slow ball. They play in fun competitions with team games and short matches using tie break scoring.

Age: 4-8 years and upwards

Court size: 12m x 6m, service box 4m x 3m, net height 80cm.

Rackets: 43cm - 58cm (17" - 23")

Balls: Indoor: 8cm foam ball

Outdoor: soft oversized felt ball

Mini Tennis Orange

In the second stage, players develop a 'whole' game with all the basic techniques and some tactics, whilst further developing their coordination skills. They play short set matches.

Age: 8/9 years and upwards.

Court size: 18m x 6.5m and net height 80cm.

Rackets: 58cm - 63.5cm (23" - 25")

Balls: Orange ball - 50% softer than a tennis ball

Mini Tennis Green

In the third stage, matches are longer and on a full court. Players learn to apply their skills to the faster ball and bigger court. They compete individually as well as in teams.

Age: 10 years and upwards

Court size: Regular tennis court

Rackets: 63.5cm - 66cm (25" - 26")

Balls: Green ball - 25% softer than a tennis ball

ACCREDITATION

The LTA introduced an accreditation scheme for clubs. This means they can receive benefits (banners, posters, coaching resources etc) and publicity for free or at a reduced price. To become accredited they must conduct a quality, year round programme with regular competition. This accreditation provides quality control.

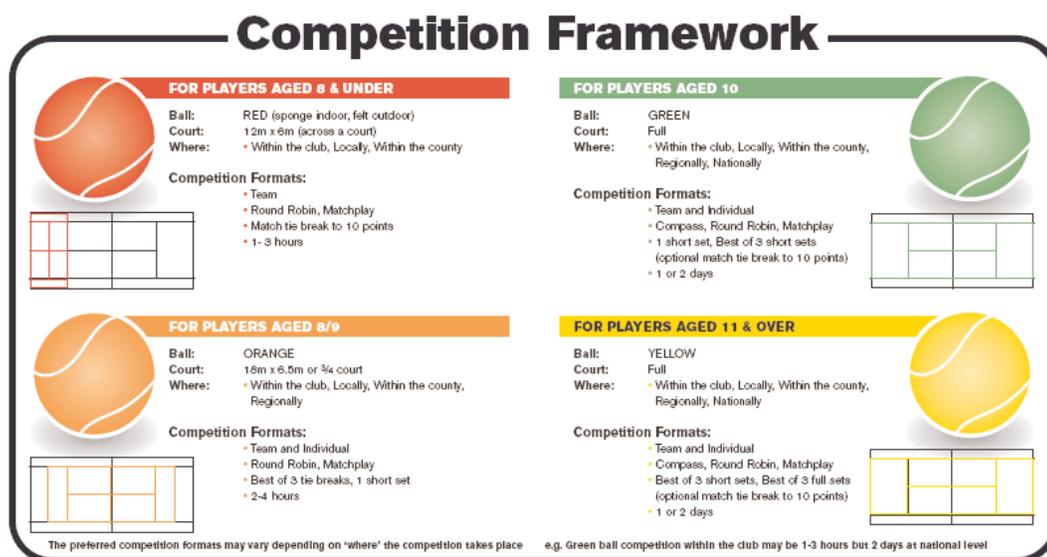
MINI TENNIS AWARDS

An Award scheme helps coaches to deliver the right activities, to track progress and give a fun, incentive for players to continue. Players get stickers when they do the activities well and certificates when they pass a level.

TODAY

Since the programme was introduced, the number of 4-10 year olds playing regularly has significantly increased and continues to grow. Mini Tennis currently has over 850 accredited clubs.

The LTA is now introducing a national framework for competitions which clearly states that competitions for players 10 and under must use the correct ball and court size for their age - Green for 10 year olds, Orange for 9 year olds and some 8 year olds, and Red for 8 year olds and younger.



SLOWER BALLS, SMALLER COURTS, EASY GAME

Slower balls give young players more time and control and help them develop technique and tactics sooner.



is recommended by
The International Tennis Federation

tennisplayandstay.com

Recommended Books and DVD

BOOKS

Taking your Tennis on Tour - The Business, Science, and Reality of Going Pro.



Author: Bonita L. Marks **Year:** 2006 **Language:** English
Pages: 219 **Level:** Advanced
ISBN: 0-9722759-6-7

This book guides players, coaches, and parents through the details of becoming a professional. It begins by focusing on the 'Science of Going Pro' discussing the Physical, Mental and Nutritional requirements of a professional player. It then focuses on the 'Business of Going Pro' and provides information on how to develop business skills, financial plans, sponsorship contracts and agents. The last section of the book discusses the reality of life as a Pro, travel, tournament schedule and knowing when and how to finish life as a Pro. This book is good for players or coaches who are deciding on the best pathway to make it as a professional player.

For more information visit:
www.racquetTECH.com

Preparación física completa para el tenis. (Complete Conditioning for Tennis)



Author: Paul E. Roetert and Todd S. Ellenbecker **Year:** 2000
Language: Spanish
Pages: 214 **Level:** All
ISBN: 84-7902-277-9

Regardless of the level of players you work with, Complete Conditioning for

Tennis will provide a programme that can be specifically tailored to your players needs. The book also contains information of test results from players of different levels, so you can compare the physical level of your players with other tennis players and chart their progress through the different conditioning levels. Complete Conditioning for Tennis gives advice on how to improve strength, power, agility, flexibility, quickness, and stamina. The programmes provided in this book have been tested and proven to provide good results for tennis players involved in the USTA programme. Finally this book is well presented, with many photos and excellent descriptions of physical exercises required for tennis players, and is suitable for coaches working with players of all levels.

For more information contact:
tutor@autovia.com

Le Club Junior - Organisation & Pédagogie (The Club Junior)

Author: French Tennis Federation **Year:** 2006
Language: French **Pages:** 44 **Level:** All
ISBN: -



This is another excellent publication from the French Federation. It discusses a number of topics related to the running of coaching and events for club players aged between 5 and 18 years. Firstly it gives an overview of the philosophy and principles of working with club juniors, and the important elements of a successful programme for these players. The book then focuses on mini-tennis and gives numerous lesson plans with easy to follow instructions and diagrams.

The second chapter provides examples of 'sporting games' which can be used with large groups of junior tennis players to develop their coordination, agility, balance, etc. The third chapter provides specific information about working with junior female players and gives suggestions as to how the coach should adapt activities and their communication when working with this group of players. Overall, this is a very well presented book and is a good resource for coaches working with junior club/beginner players.

For more information visit: www.fft.fr

Des Idées Percutantes (Key Ideas for Tennis)

Author: Swiss Tennis **Year:** 2005
Language: French
Pages: 129 **Level:** All
ISBN-13: 978-3-033-00582-2
ISBN-10: 3-033-00582-9



This pocket sized book gives a brief but detailed description of the more important aspects of coaching tennis. It begins by introducing key concepts with respect to the 5 game situations, technique, teaching methodology and planning. It then focuses on how to create effective practice sessions for each of the 5 game situations with players of 5 different levels (1. Introduction; 2. Fundamentals; 3. Beginners; 4. Advanced; and 5. Top players). It finishes by briefly discussing other topics such as doubles play, physical training, mental training and etiquette.

For more information visit:
www.mytennis.ch

DVDS

Taktik Passet (Tactical Training) Author: Swedish Tennis Federation Year: 2006 Language: Swedish Duration: 90 minutes Level: All



This DVD has an in depth look at the tactics of modern day tennis for both juniors and adults. The DVD includes an easy to use menu system which allows the user to select the content they wish to view and review it as many times as they want. Video footage of numerous technique based tests which can be used with junior players. Footage of junior matches is also shown, with the discussion between the coach and player in relation to the tactical patterns used during the points included. Overall it is a very well produced DVD and provides good tactical information for coaches of junior and senior players.

For more information visit: www.tennis.se



ITF Ltd, Bank Lane, Roehampton,
London SW15 5XZ
Tel: 44 20 8878 6464
Fax: 44 20 8878 7799
E-mail: coaching@itftennis.com
Website: www.itftennis.com/coaching
ISSN: 1812-2302
Selected photo credits: Paul Zimmer,
Ron Angle, Sergio Carmona.

Editorial Board - ITF Coaching and Sport Science Review

Tori Billington (ITF), Hans-Peter Born (German Tennis Fed.), Mark Bullock (ITF), Miguel Crespo, PhD (ITF), Bruce Elliott, PhD (Uni. Western Australia), Alexander Ferrauti, PhD (Bochum Univ., Germany), Brian Hainline, M.D.(USTA), Alistair Higham (LTA), Paul Lubbers, PhD (USTA), Steven Martens (LTA), Patrick McInerney (ITF), Dave Miley (ITF), Stuart Miller, PhD (ITF), Bernard Pestre (FFT), Babette Pluim, M.D.PhD (Royal Dutch Tennis Fed.), Ann Quinn, PhD (LTA), E. Paul Roetert, PhD (USTA), Dr. Machar Reid (Uni. Western Australia), David Sanz, PhD (Royal Spanish Tennis Fed.), Frank van Fraayenhoven (KNLTB), Karl Weber, M.D. (Cologne Univ, Germany), Tim Wood, M. D. (Tennis Australia).