

P.E. SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES

TENNIS

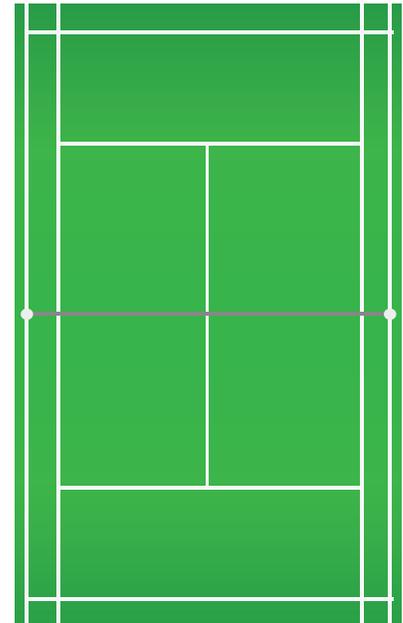


“I don’t focus on what I’m up against. I focus on my goals and I try to ignore the rest.”

Venus Williams, American professional tennis player

INTRODUCTION

Tennis is among the most popular sports in the United States. It is played by amateurs and professionals, children and adults, women and men. It can be played for sheer enjoyment or in fiercely competitive tournaments, such as the famous Davis Cup, Wightman Cup and the Wimbledon tournaments. Like badminton, it requires agility, speed and almost continuous motion on the part of the player. It is often recommended as a good means of aerobic exercise.



HISTORY OF TENNIS

The game that we know as “tennis” today (officially known as “lawn tennis”) was created by a British citizen, Major Walter C. Wingfield, who introduced the game to Britain in 1873. The following year saw the introduction of the already-popular game to America.

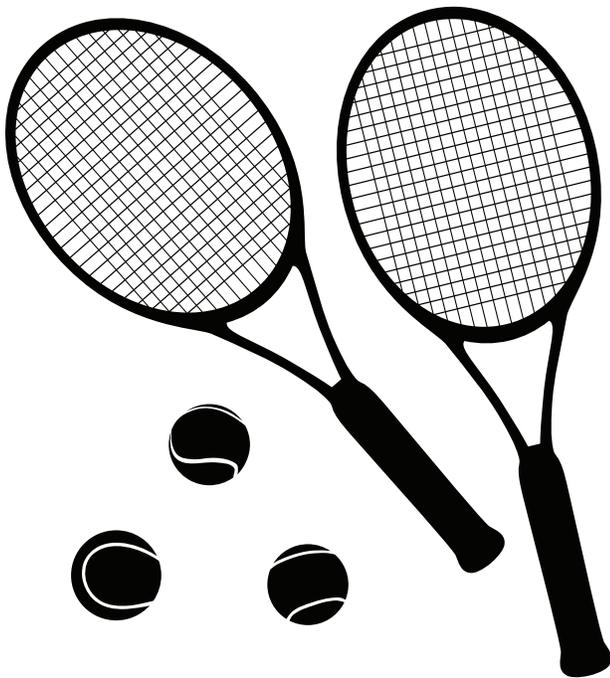
However, the real history of tennis apparently goes back far beyond Major Wingfield’s day. A version of tennis was played in ancient Greece and in France in the 1400s.

The first tennis tournament was played at Wimbledon in England in 1877. While Wimbledon is still considered the most famous and prestigious tennis tournament in the world, the Davis Cup and Wightman Cup tournaments are also important annual events.

HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

A tennis game always starts with the serve. The server stands behind the base line on the right side of the court. The ball is tossed into the air and hit diagonally across the net into the opponent's court. The opponent then has to hit the ball after the first bounce, and return it back across the net to the server.

A "fault" is committed when the server hits the net with the ball or when the ball is hit outside the service court. The second time a server tries to serve and fails, "a double fault" occurs. The opponent automatically gains a point after a double fault.



Faults can also occur when the server touches the base line or any other part of the court with his/her feet while serving.

A "let ball" is a serve that touches the net but lands in the correct place. This type of ball does not count; the server must serve again.

A ball that touches the net during play is called a "net ball." Net balls are legal and must be played.

Once the first point is made, the server then serves from behind the left base line. The server continues until the opponent wins the serve or until a fault occurs.

The first point in a tennis game is 15, the second is 30 and the third is 40. The final score (or fourth point) is the GAME POINT.

A player must score four points in order to win a game. In a tie game, both sides or players may score three points, or 40-40 (a "DEUCE"). If a player or side wins two more points after a deuce, the game is won.

The “AD” or ADVANTAGE is the first point scored after the deuce. When both players score a point after a deuce, the game returns to 40-40 again.

The score “LOVE” means zero. If a game has the score 30-love, it means the score is 30 to zero. Nobody knows why the term “love” is used in tennis, but it is generally believed to have originated from the French word “l’ouve,” which means “egg.” An egg is round like a circle, hence its association with a zero.

A SET means that one side or player has won six games. The winner of the set must win by two games. A MATCH means that two out of three sets have been won.

PLAYING TECHNIQUES

THE SERVE

There are four types of serves in tennis: the flat serve, the slice serve, the kick serve and the American twist. While the slice is the most common and effective serve, all four types of serves demand a controlled toss and good follow-through.

To execute the serve properly, the player raises the racquet back to a point where it reaches over his or her right shoulder. The player’s elbow is kept straight in the air. The proper stance is straight, not bent at the waist. The ball is then tossed up into the air. As the ball comes down, the server moves forward and strikes the ball with the racquet, driving it over the net toward the other player or players.

FOREHAND DRIVE

This move is one of the two main strokes used for returning the ball after one bounce. When the ball approaches the player’s racquet-hand side, the forehand drive is used—basically, as a way of blocking the ball.



The wrist maintains a firm position and keeps the racquet face open. All contact with the ball should take place in front of the player's body.

BACKHAND DRIVE

This move is the other main stroke used to return a ball after one bounce. In the backhand drive, the ball goes to the opposite side of the racquet hand. The player moves the arm across the body and, as with the forehand drive, maintains a firm wrist and elbow. Again, contact with the ball is made in front of the player's body.



VOLLEY

The famous Martina Navratilova once offered this advice about the volley: "Keep it short and simple." The player's knees should be bent and legs slightly apart while the weight of the body is forward. The elbows should be turned in toward the body as the body pivots and the shoulder turns toward the ball.

The power of the volley comes not from the swing, but from a firm wrist, good timing and the ability to keep one's body weight forward.



LOB

The lob features a short backswing, an open racquet face and an upward motion. The follow-through on this shot is shorter than on other shots. The goal of the lob is to hit the ball over the opponent's head in order to drive him/her back in the court.

SLICE

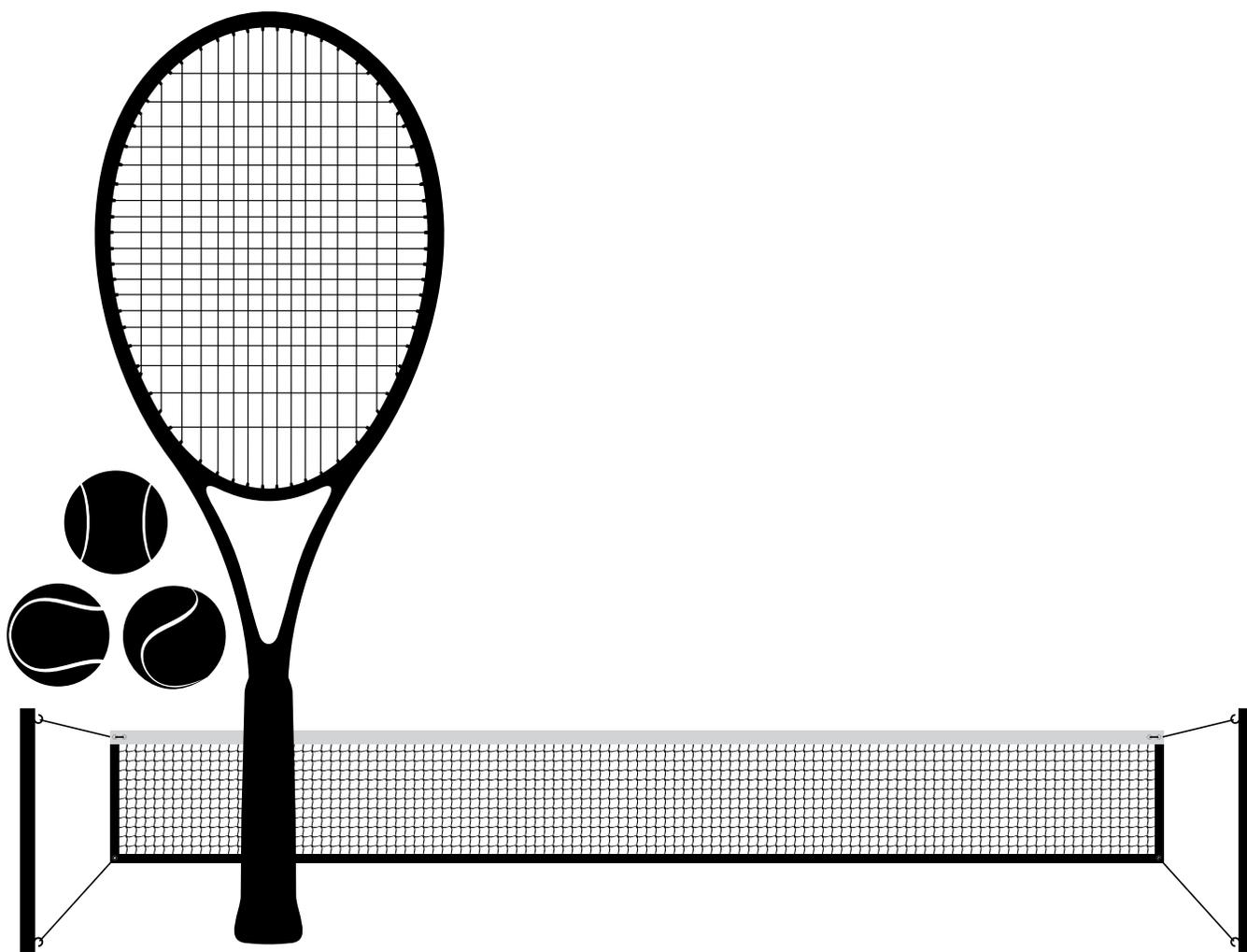
The forehand and backhand slices are used to make the ball spin and bounce crookedly. In the forehand slice, the player's shoulders should turn as the racquet is brought back above the level of the ball. The racquet head is tilted upward at this

point, while the player's weight is kept forward. Ideally, the follow-through on this shot is kept short.

In the backhand slice, the player turns as the racquet is brought back above the level of the ball. The wrist is kept stiff as contact with the ball occurs in front of the player's body.

EQUIPMENT AND CLOTHING

Tennis is usually played in loose-fitting shorts for men or short skirts for women. Athletic shoes are needed to brace the feet and ankles during violent maneuvers. Light polo shirts or blouses are worn to provide freedom of movement.



TENNIS NOTES

Tennis is played competitively at several levels. Many high school teams operate under the jurisdiction of their school district and state athletic association. At the college and university level the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) sponsors both men and women teams and championship tournaments. Both women and men also play at a professional level, where winners can earn millions of dollars. For example, singles champions at the Wimbledon can win two million dollars.

Tennis is also an Olympic sport. This competition occurs every four years in the summer, where gold, silver and bronze medals are given to the top men and women teams. The 2008 Olympics were held in Beijing, the 2012 in London and 2016 in Brazil.

There are many levels of tennis competition for various age groups. Most cities and towns offer amateur clubs or teams. Some are sponsored by such organizations as YMCA's or local park districts.

To find out more about this sport visit these websites:

www.atptour.com

www.ncaasports.com

www.tennis.com