

11 Chapter

LAWN TENNIS



HISTORY

Some people believe that the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans played different versions of tennis. Drawings and descriptions of any tennis-like games have not been discovered, but a few Arabic words dating from ancient Egyptian times are cited as evidence. The theory goes that the name tennis derives from the Egyptian town of Tinnis alongside the Nile and the word racquet evolved from the Arabic word for palm of the hand, *rahat*.

In 1874, Major Walter C. Wingfield patented in London the equipment and rules for a game very similar to modern tennis. In the same year, the first tennis courts appeared in the United States. By the following year, equipment sets had been sold for use in Russia, India, Canada, and China.

Croquet was highly popular at this time, and the smooth croquet courts proved readily adaptable for tennis. Wingfield's original court had the shape of an hourglass, narrowest at the net, and it was shorter than the modern court. His rules were subjected to considerable criticism, and he revised them in 1875, but he soon left the further development of the game to others.

In 1877, the All England Club held the first Wimbledon tournament, and its tournament committee came up with a rectangular court and a set of rules that are essentially the game we know today. The net was still five feet high at the sides, a carryover from the game's indoor ancestor, and the service boxes were 26 feet deep, but by 1882, the specifications had evolved to their current form. Tennis competitions for women were introduced in 1884 in this championship.

In India, tennis promotion and competitions are controlled by All India Lawn Tennis Association.

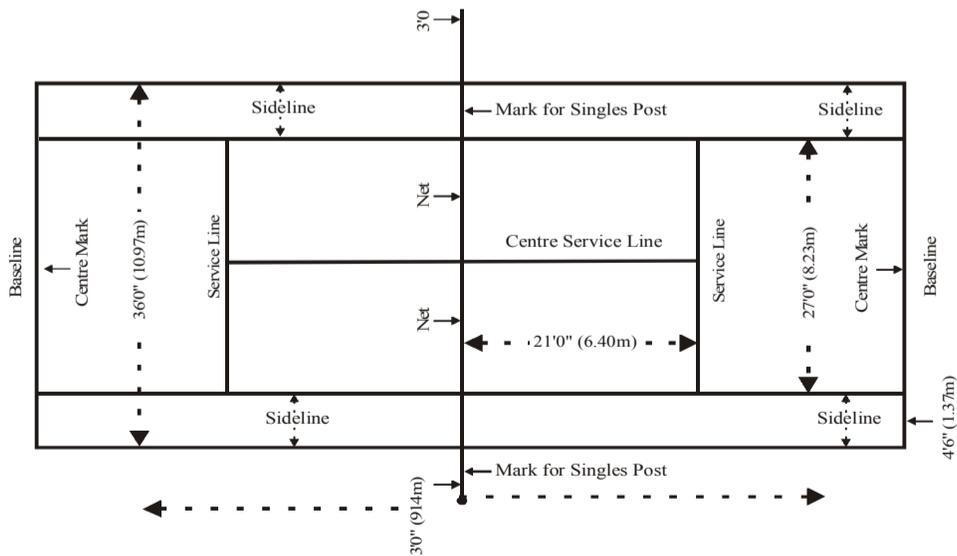
TENNIS COURT

Singles Court

Tennis court for singles game is a rectangle 78 feet (23.77 m) long and 27 feet (8.23 m) wide. It is divided across the middle by a net suspended by a cord or metal cable attached to the tops of two posts.

The lines bounding the ends and sides of the court are called the base-lines and side-lines respectively. On each side of the net, at a distance of 21 feet (6.40 m) from it and parallel with it, service lines are drawn. Spaces on each side of the net between the service-lines and side-lines are divided into two equal parts called service courts by centre service lines which must be 2 inches (5 cm) in width, drawn half way between and parallel with the side-lines. Each base-line shall be bisected by an imaginary extension of the centre service-line, to a line 4 inches (10 cm) in length and 2 inches (5 cm) in width, called the "Centre Mark", drawn inside the court, at right angles to and in contact with the baselines.

All other lines marked on the court should not be less than 1 inch (2.5 cm) and more than 2 inches (5 cm) in width. However the base line may be not more than 4 inches (10 cm) in width. All the measurements should be upto the outside of the lines or we can say that these lines are to be included in the measurements.



Doubles Court

In doubles game, the court should be 36 feet (10.97 m) in width. Thus it is 4M. feet (1.37 m) wider on each side than the singles court. Those portions of the singles side lines which lie between the two service lines are called service side-lines.

For court markings of singles and doubles court.

Posts

Two posts for attachment of the net are fixed in the ground in such a way that the centre of the posts shall be 3 ft (0.914 m) outside the court on each side and the height of the posts should be such that the top of the cord or metal cable shall be 3 feet 6 inches (1.07 m) above the ground.

The posts should not be more than 6 inches (15 cm) square or 6 inches in diameter.

When a combined singles and doubles court, with a doubles net is used for singles, the net should be supported to a height of 3 feet 6 inches (1.07 m) by means of two posts, called "singles sticks", which should not be more than 3 inches (7.5 cm) square or 3 inches (7.5 cm) in diameter. The centres of these singles sticks should be 3 feet (0.914 m) outside the singles court on each side. A net is attached to the two posts.

The net should have small mesh so that the ball may not pass through. The height of the net should be 3 feet (0.914 m) at the centre. It should be held down tight by a strap which should be white in colour and be not more than 2 inches (5 cm) wide. At the top of the net mesh should be a band covering the cord or metal cable. The band width should not be less than 2 inches (5 cm) or more than 2 1/8 inches (6.3 cm) on each side of the net.

Ball

The ball should comply with the following specifications.

1. It should have a uniform outer surface consisting of a fabric cover and should be white or yellow in colour.
2. It should not be more than 2.095 ounces (59.4 gms) and less than 1.975 ounces (56.0 gms) in weight.
3. The diameter of the ball should not be more than two and five-eighths inches (6.67 cm) and less than two and a half inches (6.35 cm) in diameter.
4. The ball should have a bounce of not less than 53 inches (135 cm) and not more than 58 inches (147 cm) when dropped 100 inches (254 cm) upon a concrete base.



Racket

The racket should be uniformly strung. It should have a flat hitting surface and consist of a pattern of crossed strings connected to a frame. The frame of the racket should not exceed 32 inches (81.28, cm) in length, including the handle and 2 1/2 inches (31.75 cm) in overall width.

The strung surface of the racket should not exceed 15 1/2 inches (39.37 cm) in overall length and 11 1/2 inches (29.21 cm) in overall width.

RULES OF TENNIS—SINGLES GAME

1. **Choice of ends and service** - The Toss decides the choice of ends or the right to be a server or receiver is decided by a toss. The player winning a toss may choose or ask his opponent to choose the following :
 - (a) The right to serve or be a receiver In such a case, the opponent will choose the end.
 - (b) Choose the end. In such a case, the opponent gets the right to be a server or receiver.
2. **Server and Receiver** - The player who serves the ball first is called the server and the one who receives the service is called a receiver.
3. **Service** - For delivering a service, the server should stand with both feet in a stationary position, behind the base line and in between the imaginary extension of the centre mark and the side line. From this position a server should project the ball in the air with his hand and strike it with his racket, before the ball hits the ground. The service is completed when the racket strikes the ball.
4. **Foot fault** - The server, during the delivery of service, should not change his position by running or walking and should not touch any area other than the area behind the base line within the extension of centre mark and the side line. A breach, of this rule is called a foot fault.
5. **Delivery of service** - For delivering the service, the server should stand behind the right and left halves of the court alternatively. He should begin his service from the right in every game. The ball delivered in service should pass over the net and hit the ground within the Service Court which is diagonally opposite to him.
6. **Service fault** - A service is a fault :

- (a) If the server does not take proper position on the court, commits a foot fault or does not deliver the service properly.
 - (b) If he misses the ball in attempting to strike it.
 - (c) If after the completion of service. The ball goes out of court.
 - (d) If the ball served drops anywhere except in the service court.
7. **Second service** - After a service fault (if it is first service), the server should serve again from behind the same half of the court from which he served the fault.
8. **Service Let** - A service is a let if the ball during delivery touches the net or strap, but is otherwise good. Moreover, it is a let if the receiver is not ready when the service is delivered.
9. **Order of service** - At the end of the first game, the receiver becomes a server and the server a receiver. This sequence (of serving alternatively) is carried out in all the subsequent games of a match.
10. **Changing Ends** - The players should change ends, at the end of 1st, 3rd and every subsequent alternate game of each set and at the end of each set unless the total number of games in such set is even. In such a case, the change is not made until the end of the first game of the next set. If a mistake is made, it should be corrected when discovered and original sequence will be followed.
11. **Loss of point** - A player loses a point:
- (a) If he fails to make a good return, before the ball hits the ground twice.
 - (b) If the ball returned hits the ground outside the lines bounding his opponent's court, or a permanent fixture.
 - (c) He volleys the ball and fails to make a good return.
 - (d) If he carries or touches the ball twice with his racket.
 - (e) If he or his racket touches the net, posts or the ground within his opponent's court, when the ball is in play.
 - (f) Volleys the ball, before it crosses the net.
 - (g) The ball touches the player or his dress.
 - (h) He throws the racket to hit a ball.
12. **Server winning a point** - A server wins the point if the receiver fails to make a good return, the ball touches him or his dress or loses the rally.
13. **Receiver winning a point** - A receiver wins a point if :
- (a) The server serves two consecutive faults, in other words, makes a double fault of service.
 - (b) The server loses the rally.
14. **A good return** - It is a good return:
- (a) If the ball returned falls on a line. The ball may touch the net, posts or cord, but it should fall within the court.
 - (b) If the ball served or returned, after hitting the proper court, rebounds or is blown back over the net, and the player who has the turn of striking the ball, reaches over the net and plays the ball, however, he should not touch the net or posts.
 - (c) If the ball which is returned from outside the posts, either above or below the top of the net, falls on the ground within the court.
 - (d) If a player's racket passes over the net after he has returned the ball which has crossed over to his side for the return.
15. **Hinderance** - If a player is obstructed in making a stroke by anything not within his control, except a permanent fixture of the ground, a let should be called.
16. **Scoring** - In tennis, a game consists of four points. When the player wins the first point, the score is called 15 for that player, when he wins the second point, the score is called 30, on winning the third point, his score becomes 40 and fourth point won is scored as a game.
- When both players win three points, the score is called deuce, and the next point scored by a player is called an advantage for that player. If the same player wins the next point, he wins the game. If the other player wins the next point, the score is again called deuce and so on, until a player wins the two points immediately following the score at deuce. The player scoring these two points wins the game.
17. **Winning a set** - A player (or players) who wins six games wins a set. However he must win by a margin of two games over his opponent. If necessary the set is extended till the margin is achieved.
- The tie break system of scoring may be adopted instead of the extended set system. The tie break system should come into operation when the score reaches six games all in any set, except in the third or fifth set in a three set or five set match respectively when an ordinary advantage set is played.
18. **Tie break in singles** - A player who first wins seven points wins the game, provided he leads by a margin of two points. If the score reaches six points all, the game should be extended until the margin of two points is achieved.
- The player, whose turn is to serve, should be the server for the first point. His opponent will serve for the second and third

points and thereafter each player serves alternatively for two consecutive points till the end of the set.

From the first point, each service should be delivered alternatively from the right and left courts.

19. **Tie break in doubles** - In doubles game, the procedure applied in singles holds good. The player, whose turn is to serve, should be the server for first point. Thereafter each player should serve in rotation for two points, in the same order as applicable in that set.
20. **Number of sets in a match** - A match can be played to the best of three sets or to the best of five sets.

RULES OF TENNIS—DOUBLES GAME

1. **Doubles court** - In doubles game, the playing court is wider by 4½ feet (1.37 m) on each side. Thus the total width of a doubles court should be 36 feet (10.97 m). In this court, the portions of the singles side lines which lie between the two service lines are called service side lines. In other respects, the doubles court is similar to singles court.
2. **Order of serving** - In the beginning of each set, a pair that has to serve in the first game of each set, should decide which partner is to serve and the opposing pair should decide on the same pattern for the second game. The partner of the player who served in the first game, should serve in the third, the partner of the player who served in the second game, should serve in the fourth and so on in all the games of a set.
3. **Order of receiving** - In the beginning of each set, the pair which has to receive the service in the first game, should decide as to which player or partner is to receive the first service. That player or partner should continue to receive the first service in every odd game throughout the set.
Similarly the opposing pair should decide, which partner is to receive the first service in the second game and that partner should continue to receive the first service in every even game throughout the set.
4. **Serving out of turn** - If a player serves out of turn, the player or partner who ought to have served should serve as soon as the mistake is discovered. However, all points scored or faults served till such time, should be counted.
5. **Out of turn service** - If the order of receiving is changed in a game, it should remain as it is till the end of the game in which the mistake is noticed. However, the partners should revert to their original order of receiving in the next game of the set.
6. **Service fault** - Apart from the service faults in a singles game, the service is a fault if the ball touches a server's partner or his dress during service.

FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS OF TENNIS

The basic skills of tennis can be listed as below :

1. **Racket selection**
2. **Racket grip**
 - (a) Forehand Grip
 - (b) Eastern grip
3. **Serving**
 - (a) Position
 - (b) Stance
 - (c) Tossing the ball
 - (d) Striking the ball
 - (e) Slice Service
 - (f) American Twist Service
 - (g) Top Spin Service
4. **Receiving**
 - (a) Position
 - (b) Stance service
5. **Basic strokes**
 - (a) Straight drive
 - (i) Forehand
 - (ii) Backhand
 - (b) Cross court drive
 - (i) Forehand cross court
 - (ii) Backhand cross court
 - (c) Volley
 - (i) Forehand volley
 - (ii) Backhand volley
 - (d) Half-volley
 - (i) Forehand half volley
 - (ii) Backhand half volley
 - (e) Chip stroke
 - (f) Drop
 - (i) Forehand
 - (ii) Backhand

(g) Smash

(h) Lob

The brief explanation of some of the fundamental skills is given below :

1. **Eastern Grip** - This method of gripping a racket is widely used. This grip is also called shake hand grip. For this gripping, the racket should be held horizontally in left hand on the 'throat' and strings vertical to the ground. Then keep the palm of right hand flat against the strings without changing the vertical position of the strings, slide the hand down to grip and the fingers around it. The fore fingers and the fingers around it. The fore figures should be slightly under the handle.
2. **Flat Service** - Such type of service has least amount of spin and is attained by snapping the wrist up and forward through the middle of the ball.
3. **Slice Service** - In slice service, the racket's face must move across the backside of the ball on an almost horizontal plane. It produces side spin.

TENNIS TERMINOLOGIES

1. **Ace** - When a receiver fails to contact the ball while receiving a service, the server is said to have served an Ace.
2. **Advantage** - A player scoring a point after a deuce is said to have gained an advantage.
3. **A Let** - Replay of a service or a point is called a let. This may be due to an unforeseen interruption in play, or a service let.
4. **Chip shot** - A slicing or undercutting stroke with a forehand or backhand action is called a chip shot.
5. **Deuce** - When two opponents score three equal points in a game (that is 40 all) or equal points in an extended game, a deuce is declared.
6. **Double fault** - If the server delivers two fault services in succession in his turn of serving, he commits a double fault and loses a point.
7. **Drive** - An offensive shot hit with an extra force is called drive.
8. **Forehand** - The stroke hit on the right side of a right handed player.
9. **Foot fault** - If a player changes his position by running or walking during service or does not stand within the specified area behind the base line, then it is declared as a foot fault.
10. **Game** - A game is won when a player scores four points i.e. 40 or gains a lead of two points after the deuce in an extended game.
11. **Grand Slam** - Winning four top tennis tournaments of the world i.e. (i) Wimbledon, (ii) French Open, (iii) U.S.Open and (iv) Australian Open in a year is called winning a Grand Slam.
12. **Half Volley** - Striking a ball immediately after the rebound from the ground is called playing a half-volley shot.
13. **Set** - The first player to win six games with a minimum two games lead wins a set.
14. **Singles sticks** - This is a name given to the two posts used for supporting the net in a singles game, when a singles game is played on a court that is marked for a doubles game and has two additional posts for supporting the net in a doubles game.
15. **Top Spin** - The clockwise rotation of the ball at right angel.
16. **Volley** - Striking a ball, without allowing it to touch the ground is called a volley.

IMPORTANT TENNIS TOURNAMENTS

A.INTERNATIONAL

1. **Wimbledon Champion or All England Championship** - This tennis championship is played at Wimbledon (England) and is popularly known as Wimbledon Championship. It was started in 1877 for men's competitions. Women's competitions at Wimbledon began from the year 1884.
2. **French Open Tennis Championship** - This international tennis tournament is held at Roland Garos in France. It is one of the tournaments of a Grand Slam.
3. **U.S. Open** - This International Tennis Championship is held in New York every year.
4. **Australian Open** - Is an international tennis tournament held in Australia. In the history of this tournament, Jack Crawford, Roy Emerson, Ken Rosewall and Andre Agassi have won the men's singles titles four times each.
5. **Davis Cup** - This is men's team competition organized by the International Tennis Federation. It was organized for the first time in 1900 for men.