

# *tennis*

# 10s



Official programme of:

The International Tennis Federation



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## Manual

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***“From 2012, the Rules of Tennis will state that no 10 & Under age group competition can take place using a standard, yellow ball; instead a slower red, orange, or green ball must be used”***

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# Play and Stay Introduces ITF Tennis 10s

Tennis 10s is the 10 and under component of ITF Tennis...Play and Stay, and is focussed on increasing levels of participation in tennis and providing a more appropriate development pathway for young players, including appropriate competition.

Tennis 10s is the way tennis training and competition can be best presented for all players aged 10 years and under. The principles are very simple:

## 1. Create the best environment

- appropriate sized court
- slower balls
- shorter rackets

## 2. Present appropriate competition

- shorter, multi-match formats and events
- team and individual matches
- simple scoring systems

....and that you should **serve**, **rally** and **score** from the start!



# What is ITF Tennis 10s?



ITF Tennis 10s provides a sound development structure for players aged 10 and under through 3 colour-coded stages.

## Red, Orange and Green

Through these stages a series of developmental steps are created to allow players to progress along a competitive pathway according to their age, ability, and confidence and orientation to competition. In the process, the court size, racket length, ball speed and duration of games all increase until the player is ready to move onto the full court and use a yellow ball.

## Smaller, Slower, Easier

Most people understand that it's:

- a three-stage version of tennis
- designed initially for children, but now used for starter adults too
- a structured way of using slower balls, smaller courts and shorter rackets
- age and size appropriate

## Efficient and Effective

It helps children to play the game faster and feel more competent as they do this, as:

- players learn skills faster and play the game quickly
- coaches teach the game of tennis and not just remote sets of skills
- players are motivated to stay in the game as they can play and progress

The most important thing is that it allows young or inexperienced players to learn the skills and tactics of tennis and actually play the game quickly.

## Programmes

Through the use of these stages, each club or tennis facility can provide a structured programme that includes competition. Coaching sessions, play, and practice opportunities, are provided as a way of preparing for playing the game rather than being remote sessions that are not linked to actually playing.

Often children who try to play the game of tennis with yellow balls don't continue. The ball bounces over their heads, rallies are short and they spend most of their time picking up balls – meaning they rapidly lose interest. By allowing children to actually play the game, more will stay.

Trim short to allow closing flat.

# WHAT IS tennis 10s

## TENNIS 10s IS TENNIS COMPETITION FOR PLAYERS AGED 10 AND UNDER

The ITF recommend that players aged 10 and under do not train or play competition with a regular yellow ball on a full court, but instead train and compete with a Red, Orange or Green ball on the appropriate sized court (see inside).

Using these slower balls will help players to develop the most efficient technique, and to implement advanced tactics, that in most cases could not be performed using the yellow ball on the full court.

Tennis 10s is part of the ITF's 'Tennis...Play and Stay' campaign, visit [tennisplayandstay.com](http://tennisplayandstay.com)

## FORMATS AND SCORING SYSTEMS

The following scoring systems are included in the Rules of Tennis, to tailor competitions to the needs of 10 and under players:

- 1 1 match tiebreak to 7 or 10
- 2 Best of 3 match tiebreaks to 7
- 3 1 short set (1st to 4 games)
- 4 Best of 3 short sets (1st to 4 games)
- 5 Tiebreak instead of a 3rd set
- 6 No ad scoring (play 1 game point at deuce)
- 7 A combination of these

Instead of using single elimination formats, multi-match formats and 'tennis festivals' are recommended, which involve all players playing more than one match (e.g. round robin, compass draw), to ensure that all children play the same number of matches. Timed matches can help with effective organisation and rotation.

Team based matches are strongly recommended for 10 and under players, especially at Red and Orange.

Download free competition formats at [tennisplayandstay.com/competitions](http://tennisplayandstay.com/competitions)

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## MARKING COURTS

This equipment can be used to mark lines and nets on the Red and Orange courts. For information on how and where to mark courts for competition or training, visit [tennisplayandstay.com](http://tennisplayandstay.com)



Tape, marked (above) as a Red court



Throw down lines, marked (above) as an Orange court



Elastic Orange court lines, marked (above)



Portable net and barrier tape, used to create nets across Red courts (above)

To access the above equipment, as well as the slower Red, Orange and Green balls, visit: [tennisplayandstay.com/equipment](http://tennisplayandstay.com/equipment)



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# 10 & UNDER TENNIS: SLOWER BALLS, SMALLER COURTS, EASY GAME.

For more information, go to:  
[tennis10s.com](http://tennis10s.com)



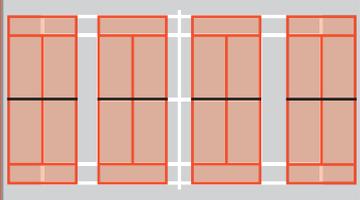
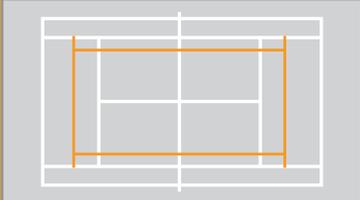
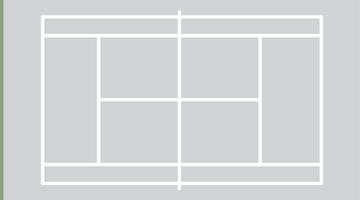
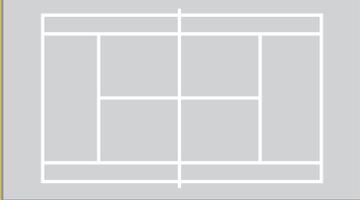


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Trim short to allow closing flat.

STAGE	AGE	BALL	COURT	RACKET *(Dependent on the size of the player)	SCORING OPTIONS	STAGE DESCRIPTION
<b>tennis</b> <b>10s</b>	5-8 years	 (Foam or Felt) 75% slower than a yellow ball	 11-12m (36-39ft) x 5-6m (16-19ft) Net Height: 80cm (31.5in)	Up to 23" (43-58cm)*	1 x tiebreak to 7 or 10 Best of 3 tiebreaks to 7 1 x short set to 4 Timed Matches	At Red, slower balls, smaller courts and shorter rackets, enable players to play the game from the first lesson. Players start to play fun, team-based matches, and develop good technique and use realistic tactics.
<b>tennis</b> <b>10s</b>	8-10 years	 50% slower than a yellow ball	 18m (60ft) x 6.5-8.23m (21-27ft) Net Height: 80-91cm (31.5-36in)	23-25" (58-63cm)*	Best of 3 tiebreaks to 7 1 x short set to 4	Players move to a larger court, relevant to their size. The ball is slightly faster, but continues to provide an optimal striking zone and the ability to implement advanced tactics. Matches are longer than at Red, and children play both 'team' and 'individual' events.
<b>tennis</b> <b>10s</b>	9-10 years	 25% slower than a yellow ball	 Full Size Court	25-26" (63-66cm)*	1 x short set to 4 Best of 3 short sets to 4 (3rd set as match tiebreak)	The ball is faster than at Orange, but still slower and lower bouncing than the yellow ball, helping experienced players to continue to develop good technique and to implement advanced tactics. Matches are slightly longer than at Orange, and both 'team' and 'individual' events are played.
<b>tennis</b>	11 years and over	 Yellow Ball	 Full Size Court	26-29" (66-73.7cm)*	Any scoring system within the Rules of Tennis	Once players have progressed through the Red, Orange and Green stages, they will usually be ready to train and compete with a yellow ball on the full court.

From 2012, The International Tennis Federation rules will mandate that 10 and under competition is organised using slower Red, Orange or Green balls on the appropriate sized court, with the appropriate sized racket. Players who begin tennis later (e.g. 9 years or above) are still recommended to begin training and competing at Red, before progressing to Orange and then Green.



## Why Use Slower Balls?

The optimal striking zone for groundstrokes is between waist and shoulder height. As the table below shows, even at age 10, some of the regular, yellow balls will rebound above the head of the players, this of course applies to wheelchair players of this age too. Meaning that playing with efficient, realistic technique and tactics is very difficult, as players either have to:

- regularly take the ball early
- play most groundstrokes above the optimal striking zone (in line with, and above the head), or
- play far behind the baseline and take the ball late, waiting for the ball to drop

The slower balls are designed to bounce lower (and move through the air slower) to suit the height and motor skills of the player.

Average height* of...	Boys	Girls
5 year old	110.3cm	109.6cm
6 year old	116.4cm	115.6cm
7 year old	122.2cm	121.3cm
8 year old	127.7cm	127.0cm
9 year old	133.0cm	133.0cm
10 year old	138.2cm	139.2cm
Fully grown adult**	175.8cm	162.1cm
Rebound height (range) of...		
Yellow ball	135-147cm	
Green ball	118-132cm	
Orange ball	110-115cm	
Red ball (standard construction)	95-110cm	

*Age/Height statistics courtesy of World Health Organization (except for adult height) – [www.who.int](http://www.who.int)*

*\*Average height is for end of month 1 in each year*

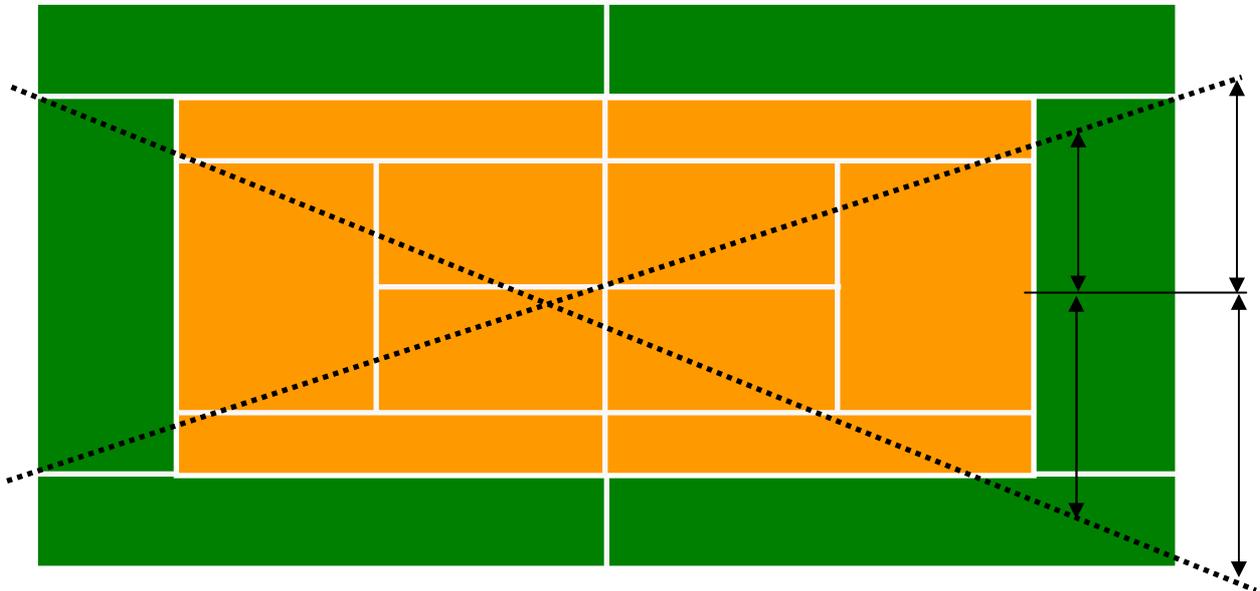
*\*\*Full adult height taken from US National Health & Nutrition Survey (1999-2002)*

## Why Use Smaller Courts?

The court size is relevant to the size of the player. Most children aged 8 and under will struggle to cover the full court, meaning rallies are shorter, and tactics are unrealistic in the future (moon-balls, playing inside the baseline, too much space to hit the ball into).

Realistic footwork patterns are difficult to develop, as children have to use more steps to cover the court, affecting movement styles to the ball and in recovery, this is also affected by a fast and high bouncing ball. Approach and volley becomes an almost impossible tactic for small players on big courts, because they are easy to pass or lob, and take longer to reach an optimal net position, because of their size and speed.

In the diagram, you can see that a typical cross court baseline shot takes a longer distance to reach from the centre of each court as the court size increases. The full court requirements off these balls are too great for most players below 130-135cms, necessitating unrealistic footwork patterns to and from the ball, most notably with a greater number of steps compared to an adult.



# What do we mean by ‘Competition’?

Many people think being competitive means the desire to win at all costs, seeing tennis competition as the classic knockout draw-sheet, famous in the professional events. This format is not what the ITF promotes for 10 and under players. Physically and psychologically, young players need a very different approach to tennis. One that encourages lots of short, matches, emphasising discovery of the game, effort, improvement and enjoyment, and deemphasising individual results and rivalries.

**“Competition for young children is not about winning at all cost, aggression or rivalries. It is about enjoying the challenge of playing games and putting their skills into practice, in a fun, social, and often team environment”** Dave Miley, ITF Executive Director, Development



As this guide will show, a gradual introduction to competition is recommended for young players, starting with short, club and lesson-based events where children can try multi-skill activities; then later progressing to playing in team events and eventually playing longer matches and individual events, both in and outside of the club.

**“Results at this young age are not important when compared with the skill mastery and enjoyment that children should be directed towards by parents and coaches. It’s okay for a child to want to win, but not okay for adults to put pressure on children to win, which happens by only giving rewards and recognition to the winners”** James Newman, ITF Participation Officer

## So Is Competition Bad for a Child?

There are three major influences that determine how a player is affected by competition:

- How adults organize and structure competition
- A player’s competitive orientation (value placed on results, effort and improvement)
- How parents and coaches communicate with players

**“It is absolutely clear that at a young age, many of the world’s best players had a coach who would deemphasise results. After a win or loss, these coaches would focus the player on their actual performance and how to improve, rather than worry about the result”** Dave Miley, ITF Executive Director Development

Competition can be both good and bad. In this resource we have tried to provide a structure that offers a healthy introduction to competition, considering the developmental ages of the players. Throughout you will notice that the key elements are to make sure:

- Coaches and parents emphasise effort and improvement above results, in the way they speak, and the way they organise their events (especially in prize giving)
- Rackets, balls and courts are suitable to the player’s physical level
- Events offer a chance to socialise as well as play
- Every child plays lots of matches with appropriate, shorter scoring systems
- **No child is afraid of competition, or discouraged to continue playing**

# Understanding Red, Orange and Green

## Red Tennis - A Quick Guide

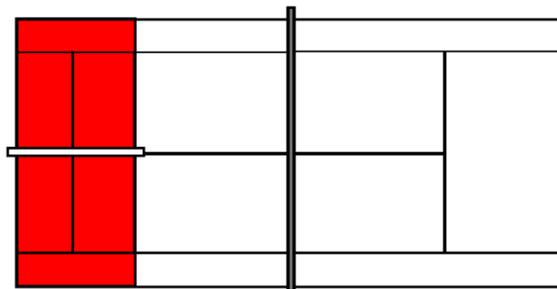
Red is the first stage of ITF Tennis 10s. Allowing players to quickly serve, rally and score.

### Age

Primarily for children aged **up to 8 years** old but can be played by all ages in a fun, social environment

### Court

Size is **11-12m long x 5-6m wide** and the **net is 80cm** high, see Chapter 1 'Marking the Courts' section for how to mark the court simply and quickly.



### Balls & Rackets

Both Red **foam** or **felt** balls can be used, both of these Red balls are **larger** than orange, green or standard yellow balls, and are around **75% slower** than a normal ball.

The **maximum size** of rackets or bats is **23"**, players aged 5-7 may be better suited to either a **19"** or **21"** racket, dependent on their size and strength.

### Scoring

**Tiebreaks to 7 or 10 points** are the primary scoring format, though lower numbers can be used. More experienced players may progress to play **best of 3 tiebreaks to 7**, while **timed matches** up to 15 minutes are also suitable and easier to organise.

### Competition Format

Children should start competing in **teams** using formats with lots of **short matches** for every player. Doubles can be introduced for seven-year-olds and older, but at ages below this, it can be difficult for children to cooperate. For very young children, competition can be presented through stations and multi skills. Events are ideally just **1-3 hours** long.

### Location of Competition

As much as possible, competition should be based at the **home club in familiar surroundings**. As children grow in confidence, they may be encouraged to play in other locations **close to their home venue**.

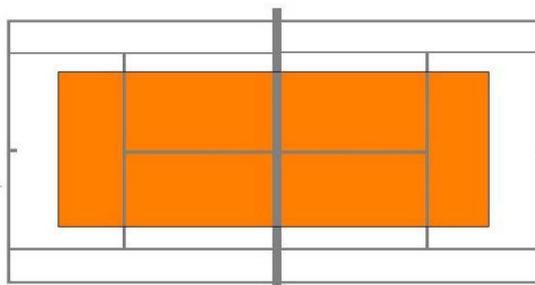
### Lesson Content

Players start by working on **building a rally**, then **simple tactical and technical development** with an emphasis on serving, rallying and playing the game. The key at Red is to do simple things very well and teach technical skills that are relevant for the tactical situations that a player will encounter in Red Tennis.

Players progress to Orange when they meet all the criteria set (see "Progressing Players").

# Orange Tennis - A Quick Guide!

At Orange, players coming from Red apply all the skills they've learned to play the game on a bigger court with a faster ball. Older beginners starting out may also start in Orange rather than Red, simply because they are big enough to cover the larger court.



## Age

Ideally, players with experience at Red level will graduate to this level at the age of **8 or 9**. Some children who come later to the game may play Orange until they are 10 or 11.

## Court

The Orange court is **18m x 6.5m** (as shown) or 8.23m (full court width); the **net is 80cm** high. See Chapter 1 'Marking the Courts' section for how to mark the court simply and quickly.

## Balls and Rackets

The Orange ball is the same size as the yellow ball but is approximately **50% slower**, and bounces lower.

On this court, a racket between **23" and 25"** should be used.

## Scoring

As players are likely to be older and more used to playing in competitions, a longer duration is generally used, with a **best of 3 tiebreaks**, or **1 x short set to 4 games** format being recommended.

## Competition Format

Children continue to participate in **team-based** competition, with singles and doubles in short matches. The players who are more confident may now want to play more individual competition. Most formats are between **2-4 hours** long.

## Competition Location

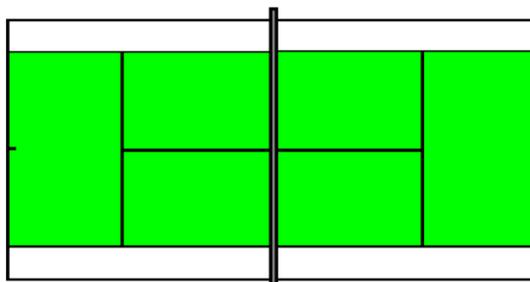
You should ensure that a good balance of competition is provided at the **home venue** as this will allow players who are unsure of their level of commitment to the game to continue to compete. Players may **travel short distances** from their home venue more frequently, to play in events.

## Lesson Content

Children start playing the game in all areas of the court by coming to the net, learning to attack and defend, and applying their existing skills to the bigger court. The game becomes more dynamic for those players who have progressed from Red but there should still be a strong emphasis on developing core skills in lessons and allowing players to develop other skills through frequent play. Exposure to matchplay also means that players will start to develop a greater tactical understanding.

# Green Tennis – A Quick Guide

Green is the final stage before using the yellow ball. As well as providing an ideal opportunity to check that all the basic tennis skills are in place before moving on to the yellow ball, it is also the stage where players should be challenged in all areas of the court, with balls bouncing at a variety of heights and speeds.



## Age

Players at Green are usually **9 to 10 years** old. This, of course, depends on ability and on the age at which a child started to play. The important thing, as with all the stages, is that children should not progress too soon. As with all stages, there may also be older players using the Green ball.

## Court

Green is the same as a **full-size court**. Players should only move to this court size when they are ready.

## Balls and Rackets

The green ball is approximately **25% slower** than the yellow ball and will bounce higher than the orange ball.

Players should use a racket between **25” and 26”** in length and with an even balance.

## Scoring

**1 x short set to 4 games** or **best of 3 short sets** are used at this stage. It is still acceptable to use other shorter scoring formats for less confident players who may enjoy this more than the more serious or formal events.

## Competition Format

Children will still enjoy **team** formats and doubles, but players will be playing **more individual** events than at the previous two stages. Events are between **3 hours** and **2 days**.

## Competition Location

Competition is still provided at the **home venue** as this will allow players who are unsure of their level of commitment to the game to continue to compete. More frequently, players may **travel short distances** from their home venue to play in events, with some playing **regional** events, and a very small minority playing national events.

## Lesson Content

With the full size court, the demands of tennis competition mean that players need the physical skills to cover the court and control the body in this dynamic environment. Tactically players should understand and make high % shots from different areas of the court based upon their own position, the oncoming ball and the position of the opponent. In preparing players for competition it is also important to encourage children to be more independent, including understanding about warming up, practising, fitness and health.

## Moving on to Tennis with the Yellow Ball

There is no designated age at which a player should move to the yellow ball; on average children tend to be ready for the full game around 10 – 12 years old, if they have progressed through the three stages of Tennis 10s. More able children who appear to be good enough to play full tennis earlier may move through earlier, but there is still a benefit in continuing to play with the Green ball to encourage good technical and tactical development, and having children compete where they feel challenged but not overwhelmed is crucial to keeping players in the game.

# Chapter 1

## Courts and Equipment

- Setting Up the Court
- Balls
- Red & Orange Courts
- Rackets
- Other Equipment



# Balls

The ITF, with the tennis suppliers/manufacturers, has developed specifications for 3 types of slower balls. These balls are detailed below. The aim of the slower balls is to provide players with more time, control and an appropriate bounce height (not too high) so that they can serve, rally and score from the start. Traditional, yellow balls are too fast and high bouncing for young players.

## Ball Types

While orange and green balls have a similar construction to the standard yellow ball, red balls come in 3 types.

	<b>Red Foam</b>	The balls are perfect for new players, they are soft and low bouncing, and perfect for indoor use. Cut or moulded foam versions are available. Moulded foam can also be used outdoors but are generally heavier and higher bouncing.
	<b>Red Felt</b> (75% slower than a yellow ball)	These balls were designed for outside use where wind can make the foam balls challenging to use. They are slightly faster than foam balls due to size and construction. Red balls are larger than Orange and Green balls.
	<b>Orange</b> (50% slower than a yellow ball)	Orange balls are felt and similar to standard, yellow balls but are 50% slower and bounce lower. They are faster and higher bouncing than the red ball.
	<b>Green</b> (25% slower than a yellow ball)	Green balls are felt and similar to standard, yellow balls but are 25% slower and bounce lower. They are faster and higher bouncing than the red and orange ball.

## Specifications

The ITF specifications for the slower balls can be found at: [itftennis.com/technical](http://itftennis.com/technical) along with a list of approved balls from different manufacturers. Below are the specifications for each ball as at 1 January 2009:

	Introductory balls (standard construction)			Standard ball
	Red (Stage 3)	Orange (Stage 2)	Green (Stage 1)	Yellow
Size	6.90-8.00 cm (2.72-3.15 inches)	6.00-6.86 cm (2.36-2.70 inches)	6.30-6.86 cm (2.48-2.70 inches)	6.54-6.86 cm (2.57-2.70 inches)
Mass	36.0-46.9 grams	36.0-46.9 grams	47.0-51.5 grams	56.0-59.4 grams
Rebound height	95-110 cm (37-43 inches)	100-115 cm (39-45 inches)	118-132 cm (46-52 inches)	135-147 cm (53-58 inches)

## How Many? How Much?

Red, Orange and Green balls can cost more than yellow balls; however the following points are worth knowing:

- These types of balls last longer than yellow balls
- As most teaching is done around actually playing the game, you require fewer balls.
- These balls allow you to differentiate a task quickly.
- Centres/Clubs can share balls among coaches to reduce expenses.

# Setting up the Court

There are many ways to set up and mark the different court sizes in different locations and spaces.

When setting up for coaching and training, you should encourage players to become aware of how easy it is to set up courts so that they can become independent of the coach. They can set up courts and practice on their own away from structured lessons or tournaments.

Tennis can be played at all kinds of venues including clubs, schools and leisure centres or space that has a suitable surface to play on.

## Examples of Red Courts on non-tennis court surfaces



Red Courts on a car park



Town Square



School Playground

## Marking the Lines

Diagrams for different court marking systems are illustrated on the next page. A more detailed booklet on “Marking Courts and Equipment” is available from the ITF Development Department; however the following methods can be used to mark lines.

<b>Throw down lines</b>	Rubber strips laid down just for the session
<b>Temporary tape</b>	Easily put down. Will not last long and thrown away after use
<b>Chalk</b>	Simple but not suitable for some surfaces or competitions
<b>Strong tape</b>	Such as painter’s tape is semi permanent. Will last up to 6 months
<b>Temporary paint</b>	Temporary or peelable paints are available and last up to 12 months
<b>Permanent paint</b>	Check if tournament regulations allow these lines for National and ITF events.

## Top Tips for Marking Lines

- When using permanent or semi permanent lines, you may want to use a colour that is similar to the court surface so as not to distract players when using the full court.
- For quick set up, place a small dot on the court so that you can quickly find the position when you are putting down temporary lines.
- Only ITF, WTA, ATP and Grand Slam events are prohibited, by the ITF, from having additional markings on court so permanent lines may be a good solution.
- When possible, use existing lines.
- If you have a space at your facility that is not big enough for a full court but may work for an Orange or Red court, consider using it for permanent mini courts.



## Nets

There are various options when using nets in training and competition. Obviously some are better and easier than others, but all can do the main job of providing a barrier that the ball must cross. The nets on Red and Orange courts are 80cm tall.



Portable nets can fold away to make them easy to store and carry. The nets usually come in either 3m or 6m sizes. 6m nets are recommended. The nets can be sold without frames and can be tied to posts, chairs, fences, etc.

Most major tennis manufacturers have nets available. See <http://www.tennisplayandstay.com/equipment/suppliers/index.html> for a list of suppliers.

Barrier/Caution tape is an excellent alternative to a portable net. It is very quick to set up and can be used to cover a row of Red Courts. Either end of the tape needs to be tied off in order to keep the taped net in the air. You can tie it to chairs, posts, and fences or even to two portable nets.

This is an excellent resource to have available and a far cheaper option to having lots of portable nets. The only disadvantage is that in windy conditions the tape will move around.



String net for Red court, tied to the full net and a chair



Sheets put over string to create more visible nets!

# Red Court Solutions

## Red Court Dimensions

Length: 11-12m (11m optimal)

Width: 5-6m

Net height: 80cm

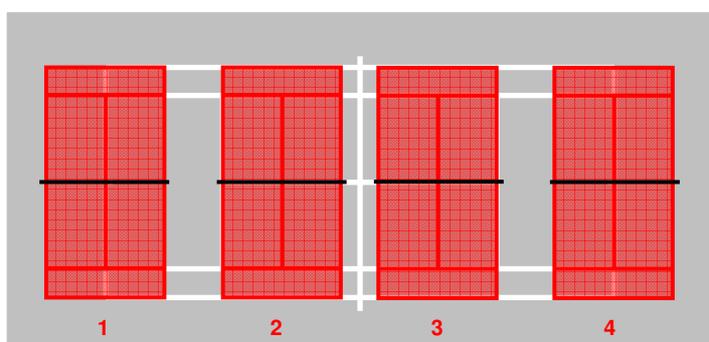
Service boxes (optional): 4m (length) x 2.5-3m (width)

Doubles court: Some doubles play may take place at Red, if so, an outside tramline can be placed 60cm from the Red court singles sideline

## COMPETITION

Ideally courts in competition should follow the designs below, however as competition at this stage is less formal, using training courts for informal competition is acceptable.

### Competition (1) – 4 Red Courts on 1 Full Size Court



#### COURT DIMENSIONS

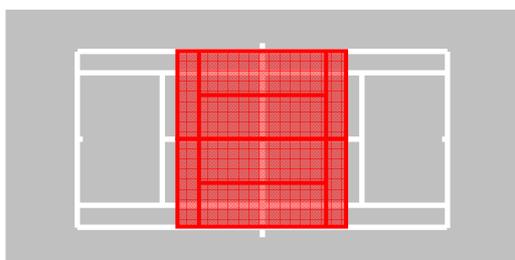
Court 1/4 = 11m x 5.5m\*

Court 2/3 = 11m x 5.5m\*\*

\*Mark each red sideline, 2.75m out from the full court baseline

\*\*Mark red sideline closest to the full net, 0.9m from the full net

### Competition (2) – 2 Red Courts on 1 Full Size Court (Using smaller service boxes)



#### COURT DIMENSIONS

Courts = 11m x 5.845m\*

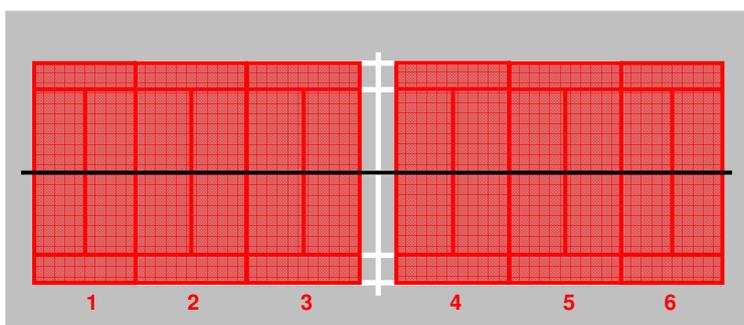
\*Mark Red baseline 0.9m inside from the service line on the full court

Lower net to 80cm

## TRAINING

These court options can be used effectively in training.

### Training (1) – 6 Red Courts on 1 Full Size Court



#### COURT DIMENSIONS

Court 1/6 = 11m x 5m\*

Court 2/5 = 11m x 5.485m\*\*

Court 3/4 = 11m x 5.5m\*\*\*

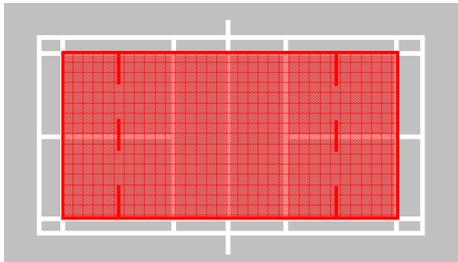
\*Sidelines are: full court baseline and 5m from full court baseline in the run back

\*\*Sidelines are: full court baseline and service line

\*\*\*Sidelines are: 0.9m from the full net and the full court service line

**NON-TENNIS COURT SURFACE** (Can be used for training and competition if appropriately sized)

**Non Tennis Court (1) – 1 Red Court on a Badminton Court**



**COURT DIMENSIONS**

Court: 11.89m x 5.6m\*

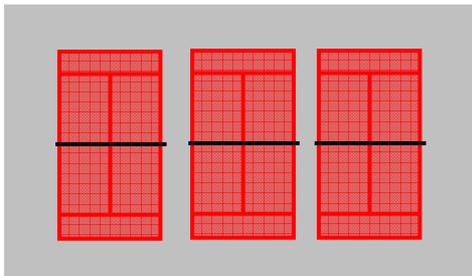
Net height: Lower to 80cm

Service Boxes (Optional): Add a service line approx 1.37m from baseline

\*Badminton inside service line acts as Red court baseline, the badminton singles sideline acts as the Red court sideline.

**Non Tennis Court (2) – Using Red Court on any other surface**

Red courts are excellent for playing tennis on any flat surface such as a playground, schoolyard or other flat, clear surface.



**COURT DIMENSIONS**

Court: 11m x 5.5m (or to fit space available)

Net height: 80cm

Service Boxes (Optional): Add a service line approx 1.37m from baseline

# Orange Court Solutions

## Orange Court Dimensions

*Length:* 18m

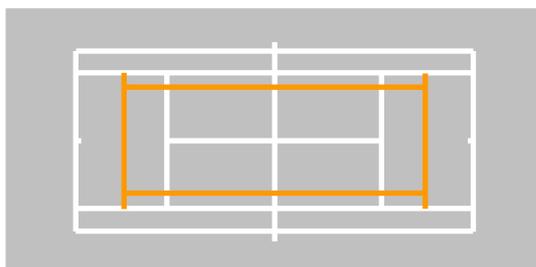
*Width:* 6.5-8.23m (6.5m optimal)

*Net height:* 80cm

*Service boxes:* As per tennis court, 6.4m (length) x 3.25-4.115m (wide) depending on width of your orange court

*Doubles court:* Outside doubles tramline can be placed 90cm-1.73m wide from the singles sideline. When marking on an Orange Court on a full court

### Competition (1) – Narrow Orange Court on Full Court



#### COURT DIMENSION

Court = 18m x 6.5m

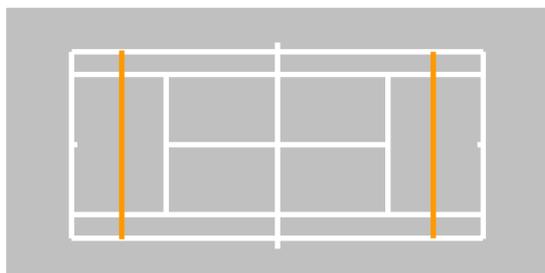
*Sidelines* – measure 0.86m inside from each full court sideline to mark the orange court sidelines

*Baseline* – measure 2.88m inside from each full court baseline to measure the orange court baselines

*Doubles* – full court sidelines can be used as the outside doubles tramlines

*Service boxes* – as for full court

### Competition (2) – Wide Orange Court on Full Court



#### COURT DIMENSIONS

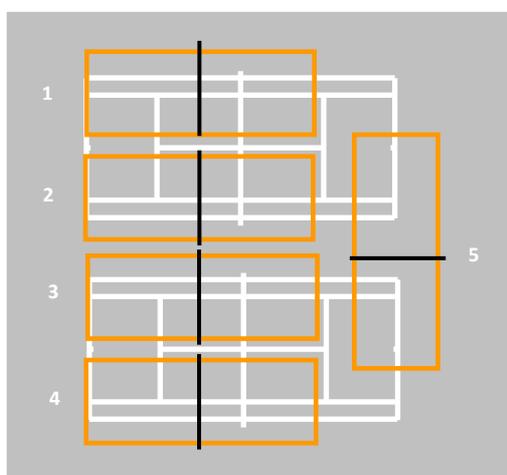
Court = 18m x 8.23m (full width)

*Sidelines* – as for full size court

*Baseline* – measure 2.88m inside from each full court baseline to measure the orange court baselines

*Service Boxes and Doubles* – as for full court

### Competition (3) – 5 Orange Courts on 2 Full Courts



#### COURT DIMENSIONS

Courts = 18m x 6.5m

The full court net is removed for this court design

*Courts 1-4:*

*Mark sidelines* 1.20m from centre-service line and 2.3m from outside tramline  
*Mark baselines* as full court baseline and 1.18m from service line

*Court 5:*

*Mark sidelines* 3.25m from the baseline

*Mark baselines* 18m apart, across the length of the 2 full courts

*Court 1-5*

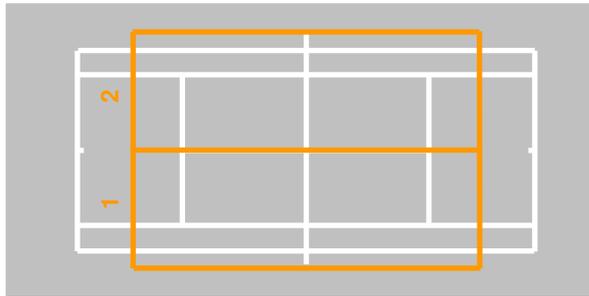
*Place 80cm net* in middle, 9m from each baseline

*Mark service line* 6.4m from net and centre-service line 3.25m from each sideline

## TRAINING

The following courts are suitable for training using the Orange ball.

### Training (1) – 2 Orange Courts on 1 Full Size Court



#### COURT DIMENSIONS

Courts = 18m x 6.5m

Sidelines – measure 1m outside the full court outside tramline to mark the orange court sidelines

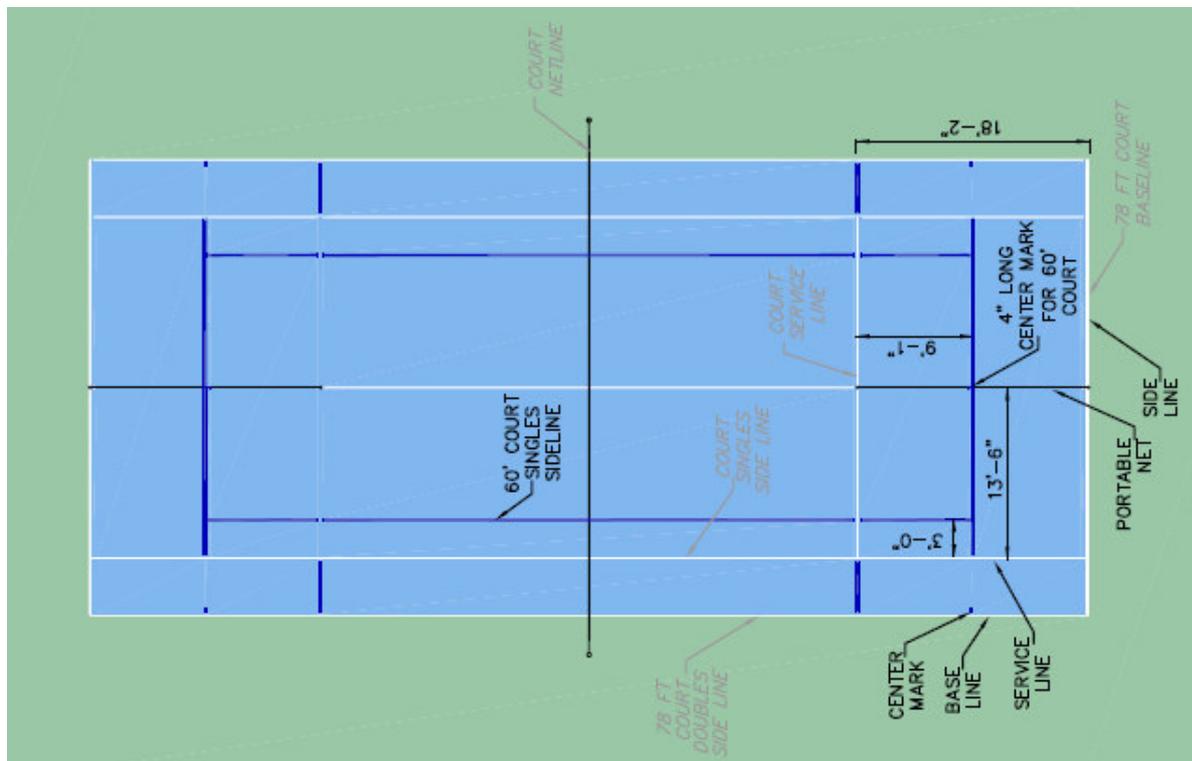
Baseline – measure 2.88m inside from each full court baseline to measure the orange court baselines

*Service Line and Centre Line (optional) – Can extend the full court service line and create service boxes by using throw down lines or tape to create a centre line for each court*

## Shared Red and Orange Court Lines

### Presented by the USTA

The following diagram shows how 2 Red and 1 Orange court can be painted using a minimum number of extra lines. The paint is usually the same colour as the court surface but a different shade. For example a dark blue line on a light blue court surface – causing no disruption to players on the full court.



# Rackets

## Rackets



Most manufacturers now make a variety of junior rackets and some even provide height charts as an easy reference for parents to use when selecting a racket for their child. Without guidance, parents see the size of the racket and size of the court that a child plays on as the measure of progress, so they want to move their child to a bigger racket.

Many rackets now have a label listing the recommended age or height of the child; some manufacturers are now even colour coding their rackets using the Red, Orange and Green system to help parents. As a rough guide, when a child stands upright holding the racket directly downwards, the end of the frame should be around 3cms from the ground. If the racket touches the ground, it is too big.

When choosing a frame, you should consider how this bigger frame influences the child's ability to:

- control the racket face at impact
- control the racket shape through the backswing and follow through
- generate racket head speed to create spin and better control
- use the segments of their body to create a smooth and fluent motion

A child playing with a racket that is too long for them may:

- enjoy tennis less as they struggle to control the ball
- develop a reactive rather than proactive playing style
- possibly sustain an injury due to the stress placed upon developing limbs

As a simple rule, if you have a choice between a bigger and smaller racket, choose the smaller one until you are very confident that the player is ready for the larger racket and that none of the above problems will occur.

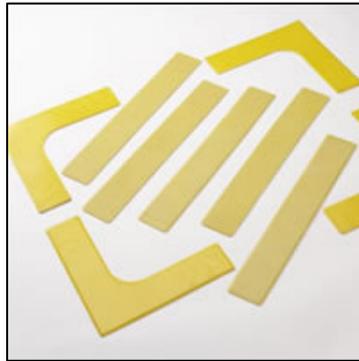
Finally, make sure that the grip size is small enough for a child to hold comfortably. Grips that are too big or too small can cause the child to grip too tightly, leading to injury or problems in creating a fluent stroke production.

## Other Equipment

Children love to use different equipment, which helps them develop an understanding of flights of different objects, different weights and sizes. This in turn helps develop coordination, particularly when used in combination with other experiences.

Below is a list of equipment that you could use in your programme.

- cones (various sizes and colours)
- throw down lines
- different balls (red, orange and green)
- mini basketballs / soccer balls / balloons
- nets or caution tape





## Chapter 2

### Learning the Game

- Learning the Game of Tennis
- Practice Principles that Teach Kids the Game
- Child Friendly Rules of Tennis



# Learning the Game

Adults can take for granted many of the rules of our game. Players need to learn and know these rules to play properly and that means that we need to teach them. So, make an effort to include the rules in practices and drills, and help players learn these incidentally as well as consciously.

## Court Boundaries

It's important to define a court for each activity. Once you have defined the court, you may have to teach some simple principles that are new for children. For example, you need to explain what is 'in and out' and that 'on the line' is in. Children often don't watch the ball to the very end of its flight, so you need to set aside some time in lessons to get players to practice calling balls in and out, and act as umpires for each other.

For very young children, you may need to explain that only the first bounce counts, as they don't always understand what bounce is the important one. Try some practices where children have to count bounces to help them to understand.

## Ways to Win and Lose a Point

It may sound very obvious to us, but some younger children will need to be taught how a point is won and lost, so you'll need to teach that this happens if a player:

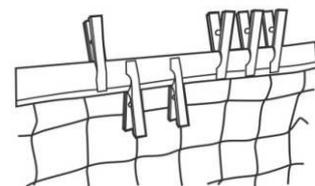
- misses the ball
- hits the ball onto the court where the other player can't get it
- hits the ball out
- hits the ball in the net
- allows the ball to bounce twice
- double faults on serve
- hits the ball with anything other than the racquet

## Counting and Keeping Score

Children often have trouble maintaining a focus on more than one thing, and as they are primarily focussed on hitting the ball over the net and in the court, they may forget the score.

The easiest way to help with this is to use visual scoreboards:

- clothes pegs on the net or their shirt
- balls in a hoop
- cones on a stack



After they are confident with this, and the scoreboard is not needed, remind them to call out the score very clearly after each point so that both players agree, or get them to umpire each other matches.

Tennis is also a game of best of three and players need to experience this idea so that they understand that even if they lose the first set or mini tiebreak, the match is not over and they can win the next two and still win the match. It's a good idea to play best of three mini tiebreaks or first to three points so that players understand this concept.

## Where to Stand

Competing using a tie break scoring format is common at the Red stage and this means that players need to know where to stand to serve and return for each point. Using a simple system of two coloured cones or pegs can make this a much easier task. The cones are laid at the side of the court and each player is allocated a colour. Cones the normal way up mean serve from the deuce side and upside down cones mean serve from the ad side. Each time a point is played the ball is moved to the next cone indicating who should serve and from which side.



## Serve and Return Rules

Players need to remember that they get two serves, so when practicing the serve, have your players always serve in twos. Remember to teach players the let rule and which side to start serving from.

## Teach the Game

Practicing scoring and learning the rules is as important as learning strokes and tactics. It's important that children understand what the game of tennis is about.

Get players to act as umpires for each other's matches and during lessons; set homework tasks based around scoring and on rainy days, get players to watch part of a match on TV and see if they can keep score.

## Helping Players Keep Score

Learning to score is a gradual process for young children. A good way to encourage them to learn about the rules is to let them umpire each other's matches in informal situations, such as lessons. Scoring in more formal competitions may require adult supervision. A good guide is:

- **Red:** adults or assistants as scorers, though older Red players may be able to score themselves, and using visual scoreboard like pegs and cones helps children to understand scoring quickly and easily.
- **Orange:** encourage children to score their own matches with adults or assistants as supervisors, and this is simple for children as long as they have practiced this in lesson and are not very new to the game.
- **Green:** players should be expected to keep their own score.

## Parents

Just because parents are adults we sometime assume that they understand the game, but this is not always true. They may need to be shown scoring systems and understand the basic rules. Equally it is important that parents allow their children to learn to become independent players. It is inevitable that young children will make mistakes on line calls and lose track of the score, but parents should not interfere. Making mistakes is part of the learning process and children should be encouraged to learn the rules and to know what to do in different situations.

# Practice Principles that Teach Kids the Game

One of the keys to retaining players is for them to learn to serve, rally and score as soon as possible and sometimes an overly technical approach can get in the way of children getting out there and playing!

By using practices that are actually based upon what happens in the game, we can get children to learn what the game is all about early on, and much of what we need to teach them they will learn incidentally from just playing the game.

From the mouth of a child-- this is a real description of tennis!

“There is **a player on either side of the net**, and one hits the ball into **the court**, the other one **runs** after it and **hits it back**, and they both keep doing it until one misses!”

So even a child understands that the essence of the game is there are two players, a court, movement and racket skills. The skill as a coach is to remember this, and that it is not just about the racket skills! By including these elements on the coaching court, we better prepare our players for the reality of competition.

## The Court

Define the area in a visual way so that players can clearly see:

- what is in or out
- where they should be standing (behind the court / baseline)
- where the ball will arrive
- where the ball must be sent (emphasis on control)
- where they are on the court (helps develop orientation).

Young players need courts or areas to be clearly defined, but you should not be put off by taking a little time to get children to understand where the lines go and letting them lay them down. This will help the child to feel confident that they can come and play with their parents or friends and set up the court outside of lessons.

## The Opponent

Tennis is a game of opposition. Players need to understand that the game only exists if there is a player at the other end. Every drill or activity from Red upwards should have at least two players. This helps players to understand and remember that the point has not finished just because they hit the ball over the net. It also helps to develop their reception skills as in all shots in tennis, except for the serve, the ball is received before it is sent. It also helps make players aware of the position of their opponent and to learn to hit the ball away from them.

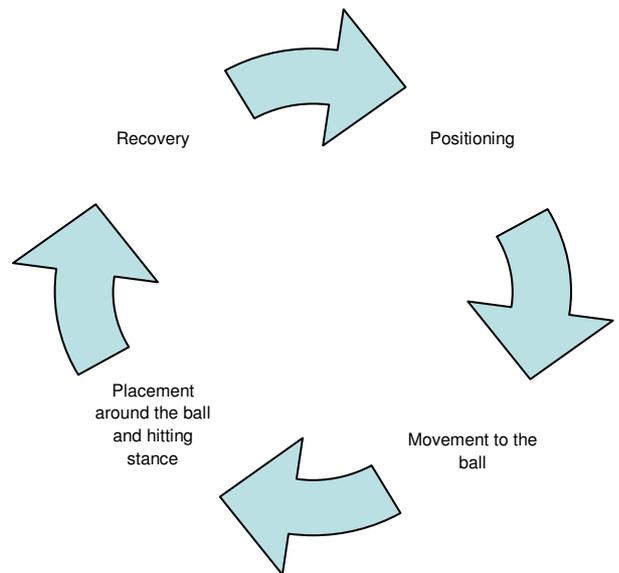
Players also benefit from learning skill in a semi-open environment where the ball coming towards them is not the same each time, so that they learn to react and adjust each time. Taking this approach, you will see players rallying and playing the game sooner.

## The Movement Cycle

In tennis, we start from a ready position, move to the ball, balance in the hitting position, and then recover to a position relative to the ball that we have just sent. This movement cycle should be included in as many practices as possible to help players understand and learn:

- that they will always have to move
- the importance of being in the “best balanced position” to hit the ball
- how to accelerate and decelerate into this balanced position
- the necessary movements and footwork patterns
- the rhythm of tennis

As a coach, you should pay particular attention to balance when hitting and also to relevant movement patterns. Using “X” or “V” shaped movement patterns is much more relevant than totally sideways (lateral) patterns. Remember that even for static technical drills like the serve, players can hit and recover to the centre to collect the next ball before serving again.



## The Ball

It is not always necessary to include a ball in warm ups but when possible, using a ball to throw and catch in many activities will help to develop the younger players’ understanding of simple concepts like depth, flight, direction, bounce, spin and speed.

## Learn the Rules of the Game

Finally, remember to teach the children the rules of the game within lessons and practice sessions. Players will be more confident to compete if they understand the rules. On the next page you will find a simple set of tennis rules summarised into easy to understand language. Copy them, hand them out and help children learn them.



## Child Friendly Rules & Scoring for Tennis 10s

### The Serve

- The server should stand with both feet behind the baseline.
- The server should take turns serving from right then left half of the court.
- The serve must land in the diagonally opposite service box on the opponent's side of the court.
- If the serve doesn't land in the correct service box, or they miss the ball (it's a fault), they get a second try, but if this also misses the server loses the point (double fault).
- The service can be hit over-arm or under-arm but the ball must not bounce before being hit. If the server swings at the ball but misses the ball it does count as a serve. Your tournament organiser may allow you to throw the ball, or bounce hit it, to start the point.
- If the serve is taken from the wrong side and is not noticed, all points played from the wrong side stand. But, go back to the correct side as soon as this mistake is noticed.
- The receiver must let the serve bounce. If the receiver hits the ball before it bounces they lose the point.
- If the served ball touches the top of the net but lands in the correct box, this serve should be replayed (the 'let' service).
- Players take it in turn to serve/receive.

### When the Ball is in Play

- During play (except when receiving the serve), players can hit the ball either before or after one bounce.
- The ball must land in the court.
- If the ball hits the ceiling, walls or other objects (other than the net posts), the hitter loses the point. This rule also applies when serving also.
- If the ball hits a player (not their racket), that player loses the point.
- If a player hits a ball that would have landed out before it bounces, the point continues (unless this was the return of serve where they would lose the point).
- If the player touches the net whilst the ball is in play then they lose the point.



## Chapter 3

### Understanding Kids and Competition

- Building a Competitive Pathway
- Competition Progressions
- Through a Child's Eyes
- Considerations with Boys and Girls



# Building a Competitive Pathway



Competition can be fun for all children if it is at the appropriate level. The most important thing to remember is that it has to suit the maturity and tennis experience of the player and be organised with the right approach. Children can progress along a progressive, competitive journey in the same way that they develop their skills and competence.

There are many ways to involve and inspire children in competitions. Different formats and themes can be used to maintain children's interest and excitement. Lower ability players or those who devote less time to tennis may prefer to only play in their club environment, while

keener and more able children can compete on a more regular basis in inter-club events, as well as intra-club events. Like all skills, children develop competitiveness at different rates so be sure not to push any child into a competition that they don't feel ready for, even if you know the child is the required standard. A child's level of competitiveness is often closely linked more to their own perception of their competence rather than their actual competence.

Learning to compete is best done first in familiar surroundings before going further afield.

## Why Competition is Essential

Competing is at the heart of children's sport, including tennis. The vast majority of young players aspire to improve their game and compete in appropriate surroundings. This is important for players because, appropriate competition:

- Makes learning meaningful
- Provides a measure of improvement, and a value to coaching
- Assists mental and competitive development
- Teaches respect for others, the game and the understanding of rules
- Gives a sense of achievement and aids progress
- Motivates all players and in particular identifies those with a specific talent for the game
- Provides an off court social element which is also enjoyable

## Creating a Competitive Journey

Children may start tennis with different expectations and aspirations. As they progress they are likely to move through some distinct stages. Please note that along the competitive journey, wheelchair players can compete alongside their able-bodied friends (using a two-bounce rule for those in a chair).

### Stage 1 – Trying the Game

Here children are coming to their first lessons. They are not sure if they even like the game and their participation may have been fuelled by the parents. If they don't enjoy themselves they will leave.

Competition should be based around a simple set of skills that children can perform and ideally be in teams with a great fun feel to the event.

Key motivators to encourage them to move to the next level are:

- easy access to the programme (maybe limited cost or commitment)
- child friendly environment
- being with friends
- feeling they have achieved something

## **Stage 2 – Playing the Game**

At this stage, players make a regular commitment to tennis but it will probably be only once a week and may be just one of four or five sports or activities that they play each week. If they don't progress, they will usually leave.

Competition and training must be presented through 'Serve, Rally and Score', and players must feel like they are achieving some success in competition. Playing club based team events will provide the motivation to commit to playing more often and take more instruction to support this.

Other key motivators to encourage them to move to the next stage are:

- feeling that they belong, including the relationship with the coach
- actually playing the game
- enjoying competition (team based)
- social opportunities

## **Stage 3 – Being a Player**

This is where tennis is a child's #1 sport, i.e. they play more tennis than other sports. They will still play other sports, but their commitment to tennis means that they are comfortable in competitive situations both in the club environment and in local events outside the club. Players see lessons, training and matches as a way of preparing for competitions, and to develop skills to ensure future success. It's unlikely that they will leave tennis unless they feel ignored or are not progressing.

Competition is an essential part of the programme for players at this stage but it is still important that it is appropriate. Players will want to see some success from the matches they play and may lose confidence and motivation if they have periods of time when they are losing more than they are winning. Playing some team events will help to meet the needs of players and keep competition fun.

Moving to the next stage may not be an essential aim but players may do this by themselves if they are:

- in an inspirational environment
- seeing competitive success
- seeing the results of improvements made in practice
- have good parental and coach support
- have clear goals and are working towards them

## Competition Progressions

Using the stages outlined, a simple competitive journey for children in Tennis 10s is presented. This model starts by introducing young children to a skills festival and gradually introduces new formats in a constructive way. Children can therefore enjoy competition at the appropriate level and make the decision whether to move on to the next, more challenging stage.

Stage	Colour Stage	Format	Examples	Scoring	Establishing
1	Red	Skills Festival	Festival Day	No measure	Environment
2	Red	Skills Circuits	Tennis Olympics	Team based measurable tasks	Improving through skills
3	Red / Orange	Team Singles	Team Cones Tag Team Tennis	Short Tiebreak, best of 3 tiebreaks	Competing as part of a team
4	Red / Orange	Team Singles and Doubles	Team Round Robin Davis Cup	Best of 3 tiebreaks	Longer match duration, best of 3, small teams
5	Red / Orange	Singles and Doubles	Davis Cup Round Robin	Tiebreaks, short sets	Individual, longer event duration
6	Orange / Green	Singles and Doubles	Round Robin Compass Draw	Short sets	Competing outside club

## Through a Child's Eyes



Just as technical and tactical skills can develop and progress, a player's competitive journey from a young age may follow similar lines. The demands of the game, the player's needs (both physical and emotional), the coach's role, and parents' behaviour are all important in the process. We have to also consider how the child's understanding of the competition process will also gradually mature and how all these factors will combine to have a major impact on a child's enjoyment of the game.

Each child's motivation to compete varies. Some seem innately comfortable competing, while others shy away from competitive situations.

Children do change and develop, and the influences around them can encourage or discourage this competitive orientation. Rather than consider withdrawing them from competition:

- Ensure that it is appropriate - duration, format and location.
- Emphasise that performing the skills is more important than the outcome.
- Recognise the effort and commitment that they make.
- Make them understand that the outcome does not impact on how we feel about them.

Children will still reflect on the results, and may cry or get upset when they lose. This is part of learning about winning and losing. The key is not to make the situation worse by presenting competition in a way that is inappropriate for their emotional and physiological age, or spending time dwelling on the result. The best way to get a child to enjoy competition is to present a pathway of experiences that gradually increases the challenge and ownership of the performance. This should start in lessons by performing tasks that are measurable, playing points and being placed in competitive situations.

### Effort and Ability

To really see a child's view we also need to consider the way in which they view competition with particular reference to the issue of effort and ability.

This is particularly important as children cannot fully differentiate between effort and ability until a later age; and as a consequence they:

- struggle to separate the result from their own performance or themselves
- believe that the result was down to their own efforts or lack of them
- believe that if they lose today and try harder next time that they can win
- are more likely to get very happy or very upset by a result
- may get upset even when the opponent plays really well

Statements like "it's not fair; he was too good" and "next time I'll try harder and win" are not uncommon, so listening to what children say when they speak about competition gives you a good view of how they see it.

## Fear and Fair

The two key words to remember when thinking about how to make competition more appealing to young players are 'fear' and 'fair'. In the child's mind you must reduce the 'Fear' and ensure things are 'Fair'. If you can control these two factors then more children will enjoy the competitive experience.

Managing **fear** means that you ensure that:

- Parents and coaches react positively no matter what the result
- Results are not considered a big issue whether they are victories or defeats
- There are not major prizes for events, although small ones are fine
- You do not raise the expectations of the player by expecting them to win
- All observers maintain positive body language and help contribute to a positive atmosphere

Managing **fair** means that you ensure that:

- Players feel that they have a chance of meeting the expectations of parents, coaches, and friends
- Players are all of approximately the same level
- Players have a chance to see the experience as worthwhile
- Players are not asked to play to the point where they are too exhausted to compete at their best

## The Challenges of the Tennis Format

The game has mental challenges like:

- It's never over until it's over (you can be ahead and still lose or be behind and win)
- There is no time limit
- There is no immediate way of telling how well you played (it's not like golf or track where times or scores tell you how you performed irrespective of the result)
- Best of 3, means that you can win even when you lost the first set
- The match is split up into small blocks that keep restarting; points make up games and games make up sets
- You can win more points than your opponent and still lose
- Some points can have different consequences, for example, game point or break point

Remember that we take these elements for granted, but children may find them challenging and frustrating.

## The Essential Balance

Without competition we do not have a sport. Sport is competitive and this is where some people get into a debate about whether competition is good or bad for developing young athletes. The reality is that competition drives any sport but it should be done in such a way that:

- Understands the needs and views of children and does not impose adult perceptions of what competition is
- Prepares children adequately for challenges by teaching the rules and nature of the game.
- Provides a step-by-step pathway so young players can develop competence and confidence
- Tackles the perceived issues of Fear and Fair by educating parents and coaches
- Structure competition to give a balanced message about the outcome

Perhaps then we should change the message slightly to:

**“Appropriate Competition Drives the Sport”**

# Considerations with Girls and Boys

Should boy and girls compete or train together?

Physically there are only a few differences between boys and girls at this young age. Boys will tend to have a better grasp of tasks that are centred on force or power whilst girls tend to have an advantage when performing tasks that are focussed around fine motor skills, balance or footwork.

Mentally, boys tend to be more focussed on the outcome of the task (winning or losing) and girls may be able to more easily distinguish the difference between the outcome and the actual performance of the task.

## Boys:

- like to play points
- are competitive in most situations
- may not see how well they performed as they are usually focussed only on the result

This means that you might consider using scoring systems based around performance of a set task, asking players to tell you how they performed, and in training breaking up repetitive or drill based practices with point play.

## Girls

- may work harder at the task and performing it well
- may be more self reflective and more self critical, therefore may need more confidence and positive feedback from those around them
- may more easily compare themselves to others
- may find it uncomfortable to compete against other children, especially friends or other girls

This means that you might consider breaking up repetitive or drill based practices with point play (for the opposite reason than for boys), ensuring that you highlight positive performance, effort and achievements and making sure that you treat each child as an individual, avoiding comparisons with others. You may also want to deemphasise results and rivalries.

## Competing Together?

At Red level there is no reason why boys and girls should not compete together and train together. The demand of the court and ball plus the similarity physically means that players will benefit from the other gender with boys seeing the girls control the ball and being more patient while the girls may see the boys being more offensive and competitive. At higher levels of Orange and Green boys and girls start to develop more individual game styles and use tactics that are more related to the tennis that they will ultimately play. However, at these stages although it is still a good idea to run club based team competition that involves both genders. If you do run mixed gender events consider having a separate award for boys and girls, and players with a disability.



## Chapter 4

### Running Competitions

- Planning Competition
- Competition Structure
- Awards, Prizes and Motivation
- Managing Courts, Scoring and Duration
- Competition – The Role of Coaches and Parents
- Player and Parent Code of Conduct



# Planning Competition

Appropriate competition should be included at each level of a tennis programme. It provides the motivation for players to improve and a goal for players to work towards. It also provides a focus for coaches, helping them to concentrate on the appropriate skills that will be required in matches, and balances these with long term development goals. Although weekly competition is not considered a must, having scheduled competition that players and coaches are working towards is recommended.

There are many easy ways of including competition within your programme.

## Matchplay Sessions

Each lesson can dedicate some time to matchplay and programmes can also schedule one lesson in every 8-10 that is matchplay only. For Orange and Green players, many clubs offer a combined lesson with 1 hour of coaching and 1 hour or more of matchplay. The coach often does not need to supervise the matchplay, just give players the courts and an order of play, or even tell them to organise the matches themselves.

## Club Night

Each week, hold an open competition that players can come to and play a variety of different opponents. This may be more social than competitive but either way it provides players with an outlet to use their skills.

## Junior Team Tennis

Some national associations or local leagues provide a format and resources to run team events, and most children love the idea of being in a team. These may be internal, including only the players within your club, or external events playing against other clubs. Giving a team focus means that many players will be retained in the game for longer.

## World Tour Tournaments

Every month, host a "World Tour Event" which is an additional team based tournament for players who want to compete more. These can be named after the ATP or WTA events to create extra excitement and a connection to the professional game. There are many benefits to this type of structure including:

- Players sign up for a number of events, reducing administration and promotion.
- Players' commitment means that the events can be seen as milestones to work towards.
- The Tour can be supported with merchandise and promotional materials, or even followed up by a newsletter as shown on the right, connecting the results from the Tour to your club events.
- The connection to the professional tour provides aspiration and an awareness of the professional game that young players may not have.



## Sanctioned Tournaments

Most associations run sanctioned events for young players. The key is to understand that this is the most stressful and demanding competitive experience that most young players will face, and therefore should not be the only provision that you make for competition. By moving through a series of competitive experiences before players reach this stage, you are more likely to ensure that players enjoy this type of competition as they have been well prepared within the club or facility setting first.

## Setting an Annual Calendar

It's a good idea to plan your events well in advance. Many clubs produce an annual calendar which outlines all events. It's also important to hold events on regular days, e.g. Red Team event = first Sunday of every month so that everyone knows when it is. This calendar will help to structure and connect events resulting in:

- Less marketing requirement as players sign up for several events
- Greater commitment as players and parents can commit well in advance
- Better planning and organisation because of greater lead up time

# Competition Structure

Competition should provide a balance of fun and inspiration. The best way is to make competition appropriate for the player's age, ability and competitive orientation.

## Planning and preparation

Think about these 5 factors:

**Location:** Competition first takes place in the club, then some or all at other local clubs. As better players grow and progress, they may need to travel further from the club

**Duration:** All players should be involved throughout the whole competition. At first, competitions should be very short, but getting longer as the players progress.

**Format:** Team and round robin formats are best so everyone plays lots of matches. Although some exceptional players may be active singles players, 'team' should be the main format used in Red with the gradual introduction of individual competitions through Orange and Green.

**Scoring method:** Simple tiebreaks, progressing to short sets in Orange and Green.

**Approach:** Organisers and coaches should have an open, enthusiastic and welcoming manner. Use appropriate application of the rules as this is an essential part of learning the game. Equally efficient organisation is very important so that players aren't waiting too long between matches.

## Focus on Performance, not Results

When players play, they're improving their skills and learning to compete. Winning is nice but not necessary. There should be a clear link to work done in lessons so children can see how their skill level is improving. Children who don't win are encouraged to continue participating by rewarding other attributes so they associate competition as part of the player development process. Even in a team environment beware of over emphasising the result, as it can lead to unnecessary peer pressure and disappointment.

## Who Should Play in What?

Competition is a gradual process with shorter and easier competition at Red progressing through Orange and building towards Green tennis.

In the majority of cases, follow the Tennis 10s age group guidelines provided earlier:

- Red: Age 5-8
- Orange: Age 8-10
- Green: Age 9-10

## Activity Off Court

As matches get longer, inevitably the rests get longer. When players are off court for a long period of time it's a good idea to provide an area to practice. Have off court activities such as card games, board games, videos, table tennis, etc. A vital part of club competition at any level is the social element.

## Prizes and Presentations

All players should be encouraged to stay for the presentation at the end of the event and be given a small prize for participation.

## Giving Honest Messages

It's all too easy for a coach, parent or organiser to give out the wrong messages about competition. At club level and with less confident competitors watch out for the following mistakes:

- Overemphasising competition and creating pressure on young players
- Asking first: "Did you win?" rather than, "How did you play?" or "How did your serve go?"
- Only saying "well done" for a win rather than for effort, playing a shot learnt in lessons, or for consistency or good play
- Giving big prizes or trophies for winners and none for other things or other players
- Travelling a long distance to an event – it can make it seem more important
- Running long events – they too seem more important
- Mentioning all the money spent on lessons
- Having a knockout format with a single winner or champion at the end rather than a team

# Awards, Prizes and Motivation

It is important that prizes and awards are comparable to the importance of the event and as most Tennis 10s competition will be on a local basis; prizes should be small.

## Prizes

In winning a tournament or event a player may expect a prize. However rewards should be small in this age group. A prize that is too big often can be misunderstood by players and parents as being a reflection of the importance of the victory. Each victory at this age is worthy of celebration but is only a little step along the player's tennis journey. Good ideas for prizes and awards:

- Small medals for winners and placing
- Stickers and certificates for attendance
- Small tennis merchandise
- Perpetual trophies – player of the tournament

Children don't see the monetary worth of a prize so even the match ball that both finalists autograph and then is placed in a small cube serves as a great prize.



## More than Winning

As players may closely relate winning with their self worth other successes should be recognised in any event. The following should be considered as behaviours that are worthy of praise or reward:

- Commitment
- Effort
- Improvement in skill linked to effort and commitment
- Behaviour, concentration and attitude
- Team work, cooperation and social skills

Any reward can be highly motivating for the player but consider that it should:

- Encourage the player to continue this behaviour and encourage others to strive for this behaviour
- Be in proportion to the effort used to receive this reward
- Not be used to claim superiority over other children

Using awards in these categories is also a great way to maintain the environment at the end of the event, as players and parents are unlikely to leave early. They may not have won the tournament but other achievements may still be recognised in the prize giving. However, remember that awards should be given for genuine behaviours, improvements and skills and of course, winning or placing in an event. Giving them for insignificant reasons often sends the wrong message and devalues the award itself.

## The Best Reward

Although children are motivated by awards, the best and most sustainable reward is your recognition of their efforts and achievements. Never forget to congratulate them, encourage them and thank them. Long-term, this can mean much more, and may keep children in the game longer than awards and prizes.

# Managing Courts, Scoring and Duration

The way an event is structured often depends upon the length of the matches involved. You can use the information below to decide upon:

- The appropriate scoring format for your players
- How long your event is likely to take
- What the most appropriate scoring system is, based upon the time you have

## General Principles

- Duration of matches increases as players play better and get older
- It's better to play more short matches rather than fewer longer ones
- Team events are more supportive for players just starting; gradually introduce more individual events

## Information to Consider

- Age, stage and ability
- Time - how long on the courts
- Courts - how many courts, or perhaps half courts for half court singles
- Players - how many
- Format - team, round robin, etc

## Scoring Formats

The following scoring formats can be used in your events to help provide suitable match-length for young players:

- Timed matches (see description on next page)
- Limited points matches (see description on next page)
- Tiebreak to 7 or 10 points
- Best of 3 tiebreaks to 7 or 10 points
- Short set to 4 games
- Best of 3 short sets (tiebreak for 3<sup>rd</sup> set)
- 1 set to 6 games

## Time for Matches

Stage & Age	Scoring	Average Match Duration	Recommended Event Duration
Red 5 - 6	Tiebreak to 7 (1 point clear)	7 min	1 - 2 Hrs
Red 7 - 8	Match tiebreak to 10 (2 or 1 point clear)	10 min	2 - 3 Hrs
Orange 8 - 10	Tiebreak to 7 (1 or 2 points clear)	10 min	2 - 4 Hrs
Orange 8 - 10	Match tiebreak to 10 (1 or 2 points clear)	13 min	
Orange 8 - 10	2 tiebreaks (can produce a draw)	18 min	
Orange 8 - 10	Best of 3 tiebreaks	25 min	
Green 9 – 10	Tiebreak to 7	10 min	3 - 5 Hrs
Green 9 – 10	Match tiebreak to 10	13 min	
Green 9 – 10	2 tiebreaks (can produce a draw)	18 min	
Green 9 – 10	Best of 3 tiebreaks	25 min	3 Hrs – 2 Days
Green 9 – 10	One 'short set' to 4 with tiebreak at 4-4	20 min	
Green 9 - 10	4 4 tiebreak	50 min	

## How long will your event take?

For some events you will have timed matches, so timing events is easy. With other formats, you can easily work out how long your event will take by following the simple calculation below:

(A) Number of matches divided by (B) Number of courts x (C) Time per match  
+  
(D) Predicted time for changeovers in matches and presentations  
=  
Total Event Time

For example, (A) 24 matches divided by (B) 6 courts x (C) 10 minutes + (D) 20 minutes = 1h20m

How do I know the...

### (A) Number of Matches?

To find out the number of matches you have, refer to your format. If running a round robin, each box of 4 players has 6 matches, box of 5 has 10 matches, box of 6 has 15 matches etc.

### (B) Number of Courts?

Determine what your centre/club has available, if your event is too long you can add courts, or if it is short you can save money by using fewer courts

### (C) Time per Match?

See table on the previous page. You can use a shorter scoring format if your event is too long.

### (D) Time for Change-overs and Presentations?

Estimate around 10-15 minutes for preparation and presentations, and then around 10-20 minutes for changeovers, depending on the number of matches and courts in your event.

## Timed Matches

Play 'timed' matches when exact timing is very important. Each match finishes after a specified period of time (3 min, 10 min, 20 min, etc). Allow at least a 2 minute changeover time between matches.

## Limited Points Matches

To give every player an equal number of games, they could play a specified number of points. For example, each match is 9 points, so the score can be 8-1, 6-3, etc., or each match is 8 points, so the score can be 5-3, 4-4, etc. Where a match is an 'even number' at a "limited points" event, a match can result in a draw, or they can play one more point.



See the 'Tool Kit' section at the end of the manual for checklists to help organise competitions...

# Competition - The Role of Coaches and Parents

To make competition work well for young players, all coaches, parents and volunteers, including organisers, must understand and agree to provide a healthy competitive environment.

## Coaches

The coach plays a key role in helping parents view competition in a rational and realistic way. This is done through effective and ongoing communication.

Coaches can:

- Include informal competitions in coaching sessions. These can be simple competitions during all aspects of the lesson as well as points and matches played in the final part of the lesson
- Create or contribute to the calendar of club competitions
- Keep parents informed of their child's progress and readiness for competitions
- Direct parents to competitions that are most appropriate for their children
- Help parents view competition in a rational and realistic way through effective communication
- Focus on how a child played in a match rather than the result. Asking, "how did you play?" rather than "did you win?" can help
- Help parents to understand their role and how they can help
- Recruit volunteers from parents of players as future competition organisers

## Parents

The parent's role is more important in Tennis 10s than at any other stage because children are so influenced by the behaviour of their parents at this age. Parents are encouraged to support their players in competitions but should:

- Understand that competing is an important part of the player's development and their children should compete as well as have lessons
- Understand that learning to compete is a gradual process
- Focus on how their child is developing rather than results
- Praise and encourage other children as well as their own
- Not go on court during a competition, unless they are helping with the event. Remember also that parents want to be involved and so you should encourage them to help. (They can be asked to score at the earlier stages of Tennis 10s as long as the games do not involve their own children)
- Learn about rules, court lines and scoring methods to help explain it to their children
- Understand how to behave at an event, and you should consider writing and using a guide for parents
- Only get involved if they're asked to by the coach or competition organiser

As children progress through the stages of Tennis 10s, parents may become more or less involved as the child becomes more independent. However it's important that organisers still keep parents informed of their child's progress.

# Player and Parent Code of Conduct

Below are examples of 'Codes of Conduct' you could use with players and parents...

## Junior Code of Conduct

Our aim is always to provide a professional, safe and fun environment for all competitors and their guests. Required behaviour for all events is as follows:

### During Matches

- Treat opponents with respect
- Call the score after each point
- Accept the score and lines calls when called by an umpire or scorer
- Treat the court, equipment and facilities with respect
- During matches remain on court unless organiser agrees to a toilet break
- Accept the rules of the facility for what liquids are allowed on court
- Call the organiser when you can't agree the score or have another dispute that can't be agreed
- Report results at the end of the match to the organiser

### Between Matches

- Stay close to the courts so that you are ready when called
- Treat facilities with respect at all times
- Place bags and equipment in the appropriate area
- Be respectful to other players, parents and organisers

## Parents Code of Conduct

We want your child to enjoy the event. Creating too much pressure or expectation can make competition an unpleasant experience.

Parents are therefore asked to:

- Comment positively on your child's performance
- Refrain from interfering with scoring or line calling (unless acting as an agreed scorer for other matches)
- Show respect for your child's opponent, parents and competition organiser / referee
- Refrain from calling out other than to offer encouragement during the matches
- Refrain from coaching your child during matches
- Remain off court at all times

We want to create an environment where children can enjoy competition and be rewarded for their efforts. The purpose of these events is to create a platform for players to be introduced to competition at a level suitable for their age and understanding. By doing this we hope that more children will feel confident to progress to events outside the club and continue to happily compete for the rest of their lives.

### **We don't want to say this but...**

Should you fail to meet the requirements of this code you may be warned by the organiser / referee and if you persistently behave inappropriately, your child may be excluded from future events.



# Chapter 5 - Formats

## Formats

- Team Cones
- Tag Team
- Davis Cup
- Round Robin
- Team Round Robin
- Compass Knockout

Access more formats and videos for free at [tennisplayandstay.com/competition](http://tennisplayandstay.com/competition)



## Team Cones

### Format

Basic Serve, Rally and Score:  
Team Competition  
Red and Orange

### Scoring System

1 Tiebreak or shorter (can be just 5 points to create faster rotations and more matches with large numbers)

### Duration

30 – 180 min

### # Players

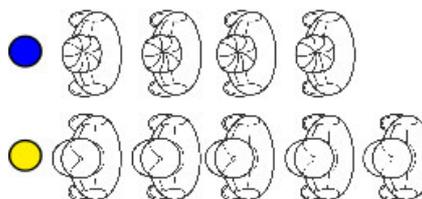
8 - 25

### Set Up & Equipment

Hopper of balls  
2 cones plus a bag of clothes pins (pegs) for scoring  
Area for Waiting Players

### Description

Split the players into two teams (no need for even numbers or the same number per team). Put down two cones of different colours at the side of the court, and have each team line up behind one. Players must stay in these teams throughout. Each player at the front of the line is sent onto court to play against the player at the front of the other line, then all other players shuffle forwards. After each match players return to the back of their line. Alternatively you can create the same line up system using the attached order of play sheet.



The winning player places a cone on top of cone they are lining up behind.

Winners = team with the most cones after a set period of time

### Organizer Tips

- If the teams numbers are uneven on each (i.e. 5 on one and 6 on the other), then the rotation of players will occur naturally but if there are the same number of players on each team the coach may need to switch the order to ensure that players do not always have the same opponent.
- When the allocated time has been played, any matches that are not completed do not count towards the score. Make players aware of this from the start.

### Variations

- Make the scoring system longer or shorter.
- Use a different visual scoreboard – balls in a hoop,
- Matches can be timed and the player in the lead when time is called is the winner. If drawing, both players can win a cone each



## Tag Team Tennis

<b>Format</b> Basic Serve, Rally and Score Team Competition Red, Orange and Green	<b>Scoring System</b> Best of 3 tiebreaks
<b>Duration</b> 120 min approx	<b># Players</b> 8 – 10
<b>Set Up &amp; Equipment</b> Courts and balls relevant to age. Minimal setup.	
<b>Description</b>  <p>This is a singles tournament but played in pairs. Players switch with their partner after every 2 points. Matches are played on a round robin basis, and the organizer sets the court allocation based upon the number of courts available.</p> <p>Player 1 and 2 start by playing players 3 and 4 as per the Score Sheet. Player 1 plays two singles points against player 3, with each player serving for one point. Players then swap with their partner. The score continues from this point for the next 2 points with player 2 playing against player 4. This rotation continues until a tiebreak is completed. At the end of the tiebreak, player 1 starts the next tiebreak by playing points against player 4 and visa versa.</p> <p>Players keep score with help from their partners who can act as scorers for the points that they are not involved in.</p> <p>Pairs score a point for every tiebreak that they win in each match and these are recorded in the round robin box.</p> <p>Winners = the pair that win the most tiebreaks. In the case of a draw the match between the winning teams is used to determine who wins.</p>	
<b>Organizer Tips</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boxes can have any number of pairs but the best formats work with 4 or 5 pairs in each box</li> <li>• Try to balance the pairs so that a stronger player partners a slightly weaker one</li> <li>• If using tiebreaks have a sudden death point at 6 all</li> </ul>	
<b>Variations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Players can change partners after each match. Scoring is then recorded for each individual player after each match and totalled at the end. This does complicate the format and means that the round robin format is not necessary.</li> <li>• This event can be themed around any number of team sports or partnerships and players can give themselves and their partnership a team name.</li> </ul>	

## Tag Team Tennis Score Sheet

Pair	1 & 2	3 & 4	5 & 6	7 & 8	9 & 10	Total Score
1 & 2						
3 & 4						
5 & 6						
7 & 8						
9 & 10						

	Rnd 1		Rnd 2		Rnd 3		Rnd 4		Rnd 5	
	1 & 2	5 & 6	9 & 10	3 & 4	7 & 8	3 & 4	5 & 6	9 & 10	3 & 4	9 & 10
	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
	3 & 4	7 & 8	1 & 2	5 & 6	1 & 2	9 & 10	1 & 2	7 & 8	7 & 8	5 & 6

Player #	Name
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

## Davis Cup / Federation Cup

<b>Format</b> Team Format Basic Serve, Rally and Score Orange and Green	<b>Scoring System</b> Best of 3 tiebreaks or 1 short set to 4
<b>Duration</b> 1 court: 120 min 2 courts: 60 min	<b># Players</b> 2 or 3 per team
<b>Set Up &amp; Equipment</b> Courts and balls relevant to age. Minimal setup	
<b>Description</b>  Each team nominates a country to be and designs or uses a flag.  Teams of 2 compete against each other with each player playing 2 singles matches and one doubles match. Player 1 from the 2 teams play each other and player 2 from the 2 teams play each other. The players then play the member of the other team that they have not yet played (player 1 v player 2). After these 4 singles matches, the teams play a doubles match with players 1 and 2 from team A playing players 1 and 2 from team B.  The scoring format is flexible and you can change the format to suit the time that you have allocated.	
	
Winners = team with the most matches won	
<b>Organizer Tips</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage players and parents to stay and watch and cheer on their team mates</li> <li>• Allow players a little time between matches but not too long. Using one court only will help you to ensure that players receive some rest period.</li> <li>• Players at Red may struggle with the Doubles element of this format so we have suggested it only for Orange and Green.</li> <li>• Ensure that players have played or practiced doubles in preparation for the event, to avoid confusion on the day.</li> </ul>	
<b>Variations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change the order of the matches.</li> <li>• Use as an ongoing league format.</li> <li>• Arrange it to coincide with an actual Davis Cup match.</li> <li>• Have 3 players per team instead of 2.</li> </ul>	

## Davis / Federation Cup Score Sheet

	Team One	Team Two	Winning Team	Score	
	Player names	Player names	Team		
P1 Team One P1 Team Two					
P2 Team One P2 Team Two					
Doubles					
P1 Team One P2 Team Two					
P2 Team One P1 Team Two					
Total					

Team Country	Matches	Team Country
	:	

Player Nomination To be Completed Before Event Starts			
Player Number	Country One	Player Number	Country Two
One		One	
Two		Two	

# Round Robin Tournament

<b>Format</b> Singles Competition Red, Orange and Green	<b>Scoring System</b> 1 tiebreak to 7 or 1 short set to 4 or longer format
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<b>Duration</b> 1 group of 4 on 1 court: 60 – 120 min	<b># Players</b> Any number
---	--------------------------------

**Set Up & Equipment**  
 Courts and balls relevant to age. Minimal setup

**Description**

Each player within a round robin group plays every player in that group. Place players' names in the boxes on the Round Robin score sheet and follow the order of play for each box.

The winner of the group is decided by adding up the number of wins they achieved. In the event of a draw, the number of sets won/number of points won in the tiebreaks is calculated. If the result is still a draw, the result of the head to head match is used to determine the winner.

Group Size	# of Matches
3	3
4	6
5	10
6	15
7	21

Round Robin groups can be of any size however, it may be more practical to split a large group into 2 smaller ones if time is an issue.

The Table right indicates the number of matches that each round robin box requires.

- Organizer Tips**
- You may wish to draw names to determine the players in each box.
  - Alternatively you may “seed” players and may distribute the players evenly based upon level.
  - If you have more than one box in an event, then at the end of the round robin boxes, players may qualify for a semi final or final, or even be put into another box based upon where they placed
  - May use a no ad-scoring format for games or a sudden death point at 6 all in a tiebreak to ensure that all matches finish in a timely fashion.

- Variations**
- Can be played as a doubles format. Allow a little extra time for doubles matches over singles.
  - Players may be placed in a box only with players of their level, to allow different levels of players to compete at the same event, but in different divisions.
  - May be used as an ongoing league format during time set aside in lessons

## Round Robin Score Sheet

GROUP	A	B	C	D	E	Matches won	Points won	Position
A								
B								
C								
D								
E								

GROUP	A	B	C	D	E	Matches won	Points won	Position
A								
B								
C								
D								
E								

ORDER OF PLAY

AvB	CvD	AvE	BvC	DvE	AvC	BvD	EvC	AvD	BvE
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

## Team Round Robin

<b>Format</b> Team Singles Red, Orange and Green	<b>Scoring System</b> 1 tiebreak / 1 short set / 1 full set
<b>Duration</b> 1 hour – All Day	<b># Players</b> 9 - 20
<b>Set Up &amp; Equipment</b> Balls appropriate to age	
<b>Description</b>  <p>This event requires a number of players divisible by three or four; this example is used for 12 players (four teams of three) but can easily be adapted for other numbers. Players are placed into teams and then ranked in order of playing level. Each team should have a player one, two, and three.</p> <p>In each round robin box, all the players ranked with the same number are placed, i.e. there is a box with all the number 1 players, a second one with all the number 2 players etc. Players play all the players in their box and scores are recorded in the score sheet (attached). By allocating one court per box, the matches and playing order are easier to stay on top of, so for this example, 4 courts would be required.</p> <p>Matches can be played over a very short format, for example, one tiebreak, or can be played over a longer duration (i.e. one set), depending upon the required length of the overall event.</p> <p>At the completion of all the round robin matches, players are awarded one point for every match that they have won.</p> <p>Winner = the team with the most matches won across all the boxes.</p>	
<b>Organizer Tips</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An award can also be given for the Most Valuable Player overall.</li> <li>• Try to ensure that the level of the players is as balanced as possible.</li> <li>• Encourage players to cheer and encourage their team mates when they are waiting to play.</li> <li>• If played on a recurring basis, try to mix the players a little so that the same players are not always placed in the same boxes.</li> </ul>	
<b>Variations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make every game or point count by recording these instead of wins and losses.</li> <li>• Play as a doubles format.</li> <li>• Have mixed teams with boys and girls boxes.</li> <li>• Use a timed scoring format (10 – 20 minutes per match, using tiebreak scoring).</li> </ul>	

## Team Round Robin Score sheet

Player 1	Team A	Team B	Team C	Team D
Team A				
Team B				
Team C				
Team D				
Total				

Player 2	Team A	Team B	Team C	Team D
Team A				
Team B				
Team C				
Team D				
Total				

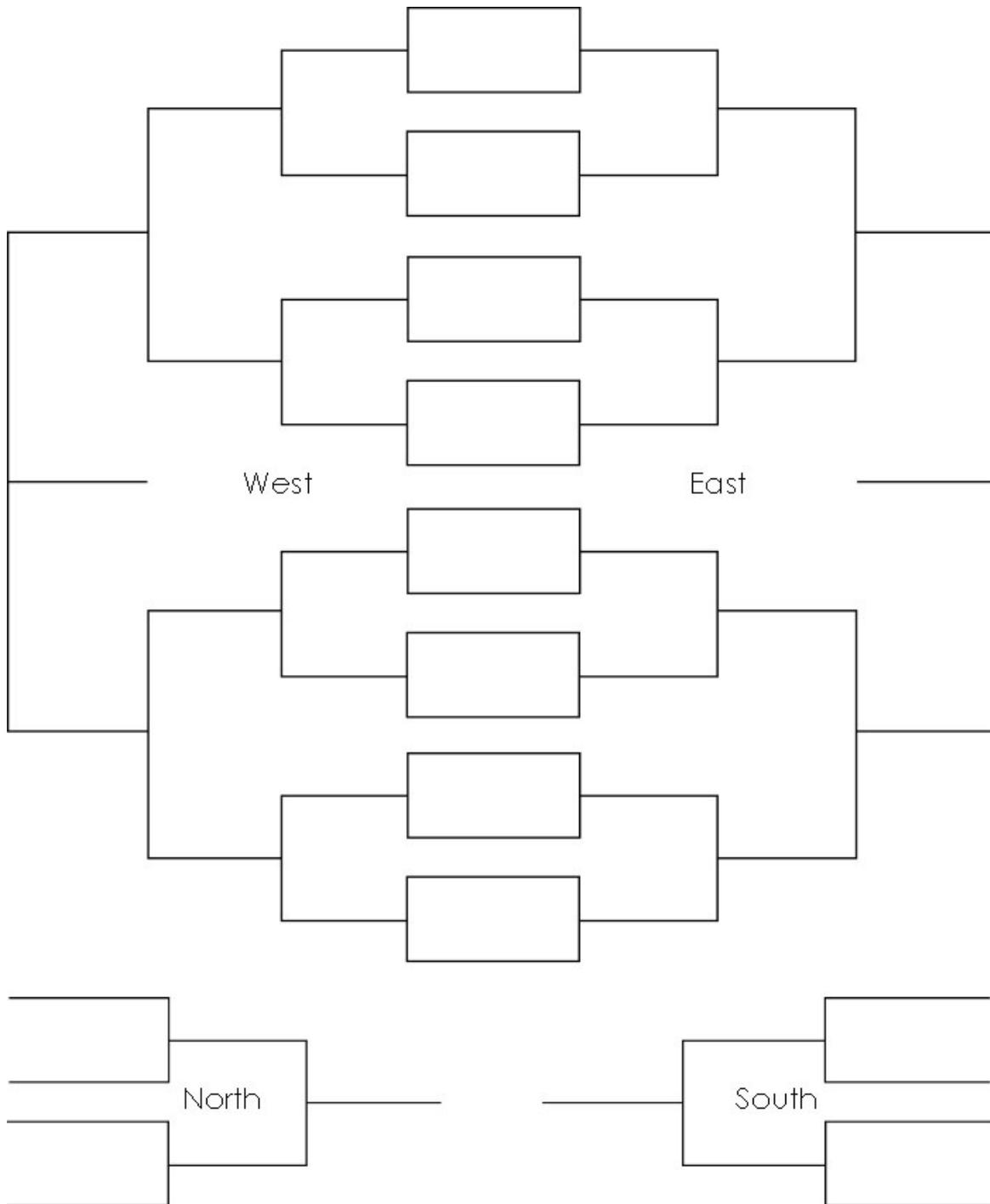
Player 3	Team A	Team B	Team C	Team D
Team A				
Team B				
Team C				
Team D				
Total				

Totals	Team A	Team B	Team C	Team D

## Compass Knockout

<p><b>Format</b> Traditional: Singles Competition with play back Suitable for Orange and Green Players</p>	<p><b>Scoring System</b> Best of 3 tiebreaks to 7 1 short set to 4 or longer match format</p>
<p><b>Duration</b> 8 players, 4 courts: 60 – 90 min 16 players, 4 courts: 120 min</p>	<p><b># Players</b> 8 / 16</p>
<p><b>Set Up &amp; Equipment</b> Courts and balls relevant to age. Minimal setup</p>	
<p><b>Description</b></p> <p>Players are arranged into the centre of the Compass knockout draw sheet. The player that wins their first match progresses forward to East in the knockout draw to compete against another first match winner. The player that loses their first match moves backwards West to compete against a player that also lost their first match. Players who lose their second match in East go to the South knockout draw and are placed in a separate knockout draw. Those who lose their second round in West go to the North draw. In this way, all players play at least three matches.</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> </div> <p>The attached draw is designed for 16 players but could be used for 8 players by using just one half of the draw.</p>	
<p><b>Organizer Tips</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For this format to work accurately there should be either 8 or 16 players to ensure all players are guaranteed a minimum of 3 matches.</li> <li>• Ensure that equal attention is paid to East, West, North and South and don't be tempted to focus only on the East Section.</li> <li>• You need to ensure that there are no players missing from the draw or else some parts of the draw will not work.</li> <li>• You may want to seed players (with 4 seeded players place Seed #1 at the top of the draw, #2 at the bottom of the draw, #3 at the top of the bottom half of the draw and #4 at the bottom of the top half of the draw).</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Variations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play in a doubles format.</li> <li>• Try using a timed format to ensure that matches finish at the same time, therefore players avoid long wait periods</li> <li>• Add a South West, South East, North West, and North East round for third round losers if time allows.</li> </ul>	

# Compass Knockout Draw



## Chapter 6

### Progressing Players – through Red, Orange and Green

- Process of Progressing Players
- Issues in Progressing Players
- Demands of the Game - Red Tennis
- Demand of the Game - Orange Tennis
- Demands of the Game - Green Tennis

This section gives guidance on how to progress players by considering both the competitive and training environments. It includes information that aids the understanding of the court demands of Red, Orange and Green, supporting the coach's decision on when to progress players and also how to effectively prepare them for the demands of competition at each level.



# Tennis 10s – Process of Progressing Players

There are three parts to the ITF's recommendations on progressing players:

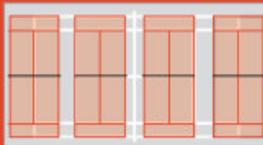
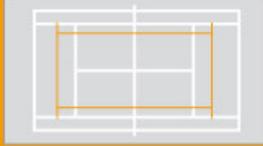
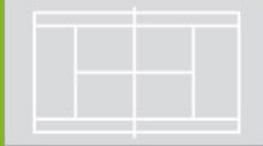
1. Rules of Tennis (A rule on the use of slower balls in 10 and under competition)
2. Age Group Guidelines (Recommendations for National Associations to introduce)
3. Competencies for progression ('Player competencies' for coaches and parents)

## 1. Rules of Tennis

From 2012, the Rules of Tennis will prohibit the use of a standard, yellow ball in 10 and under age group competition or matches. Instead a slower Red (Stage 3), Orange (Stage 2), or Green (Stage 1) ball must be used. From 2012, using a yellow ball in competition would be breaking the Rules of Tennis.

## 2. Age Group Guidelines

Underneath this ruling, through Tennis 10s, the ITF also gives guidance to National Federations, on the ages that children progress through each coloured stage. We recommend that National Federations introduce a ruling on these ages and stages, adapting them if necessary to suit the environmental situation (size, economy, population etc.) in their nation.

STAGE	AGE	BALL	COURT
	5-8 years	 (Foam or Felt) 75% slower than a yellow ball	 11-12m (36-39ft) x 5-6m (16-19ft) Net Height: 80cm (31.5in)
	8-10 years	 50% slower than a yellow ball	 18m (60ft) x 6.5-8.23m (21-27ft) Net Height: 80-91cm (31.5-36in)
	9-10 years	 25% slower than a yellow ball	 Full Size Court

The ITF guidelines provide an overlap at ages 8, 9, 10, to reflect the different experiences, abilities, and sizes of players at these ages. To determine which stage players of this age should play at, coaches and federations can use the basic competencies described next.

### 3. Competencies for Progression

These competencies can be referred to when deciding which stage a player should compete at, especially for players aged 8, 9, and 10 who could play in more than one stage. Regardless of these competencies, the players should stay within the stage/s recommended for their age group; only in extreme circumstances should players progress to the next stage before the recommended age.

COMPETENCIES			
PLAYER NAME:		PROGRESS?	YES / NO
Notes:			
- Competencies are for all stages so they can be used to move players from Red to Orange, Orange to Green, <b>and</b> Green to Yellow			
- Competencies are assessed at the player's current stage (i.e. a player moving from Red to Orange is assessed at Red)			

#### When time and the game situation allow, does the player...?

SERVE & RETURN			
✓/x	Tactical Objective	✓/x	Technical Checkpoints
	Serve <b>consistently</b> to the relevant service box		Use a simple overarm throwing action on the serve
	Serve with <b>variety</b> by directing the serve to the left or right of the service box (Orange and Green)		Place the ball up with control to a good position. At contact the hitting arm is close to fully extended
	<b>Consistently</b> return the second serve back into play and move the opponent		Move toward the ball to return, and use an appropriate swing shape (simple and compact)

RALLY (BOTH BACK)			
✓/x	Tactical Objective	✓/x	Technical Checkpoints
	Rally with <b>consistency</b>		Use a 'split step' between shots when times allows
	<b>Create space</b> on the court by directing and redirecting the ball to move the opponent		Judge the depth, speed, spin, height and direction of the ball, and react to move to the ball then balance, strike and recover
	<b>Maintain a good court position</b> that allows the player to attack, rally or defend effectively		Use different footwork patterns to move to, from and around the ball (running steps, sidesteps, and crossover steps)
	<b>Use their strengths</b> in order to build or finish the point		Hit forehand and backhand groundstrokes with appropriate racket head speed and control of the racket face, ideally with top-spin at Orange and Green
	<b>Play to their opponent's weakness</b> in order to stay in, build or finish the point		Contact the ball slightly in front and to the side of the body, between waist and shoulder height on groundstrokes

NET GAME			
✓/x	Tactical Objective	✓/x	Technical Checkpoints
	Assume a good court position and volley the ball <b>consistently</b> into the court		Move to the ball and make contact effectively with a controlled racket face angle and good contact point
	<b>Direct the ball</b> either away from the opponent or deep to build, finish or stay in the point (Orange and Green)		Use a split step on approaching, and cover the net except against good passing shots or lobs
	<b>Approach the net</b> at a suitable moment with a shot that puts their opponent under pressure		Execute a lob or passing shot with a controlled racket face and pace of shot
	Attempt to pass or lob against a net player		

#### Does the player...?

✓/x	ENJOYMENT	✓/x	SCORE
	Compete with <b>confidence</b> , and <b>enjoyment</b> at the current level and achieve success in competition		Understand the <b>scoring system</b> being used and keep score in matches
	Want to progress to the next level		Make decisions as required by the game with regard to rules (call in or out etc)

Players should fulfil these competencies at their current stage, before progressing to the next stage

## Notes on the 'Competencies'

Coaches should consider the individual player in making the decision to progress them or not. Other factors that may influence this decision could include:

- Game style
- Moving at the same time as friends or teammates
- Appropriate players within the programme to compete against and train with
- A balance of technical effectiveness and conformity to ensure long term progress and success

Finally, when a player progresses from one stage (e.g. Red), to another stage (e.g. Orange), they should continue to overlap, so they play both stages (e.g. Red and Orange) for a few weeks in order to maintain enjoyment and a higher level of success.

# Issues in Progressing Players

Below are some additional issues that are important to consider when progressing players.

## Does the player want to move?

Before looking at the factors that you feel determine whether a child progresses to the next level, you must consider what the aspirations of a child might be.

- A child who wishes to make tennis a big part of their future will need to develop more skills at each stage in order to achieve this. This may mean spending longer in a particular stage.
- A child who only wants to play tennis as a recreational activity is likely to see progression from one stage to the next as an achievement, but because they will spend less time on court they are likely to want to move on without accumulating as many competencies as the player who aspires to be exceptional.
- A child who only wants to play tennis recreationally may also prefer to stay in a stage longer to be with friends or their current coach.
- A child who spends a lot more hours on court each week will have the chance to achieve existing criteria quicker but may need to develop other superior skills, or be physically more developed, and therefore may not move to the next stage sooner.

Consider what the player wants and needs from their tennis before deciding to progress, or keep them at their present stage.

## What happens to players who start tennis late?

Players aged 10 and under, who don't start playing tennis until age 8, 9, or 10 may initially train at a stage below their recommended age group. For example, a 9 year old starting tennis might train at Red, and initially play informal competition in Red before moving on to Orange. This informal club-based competition is encouraged for these players to ensure they have enjoyable, appropriate match play.

## What does “Being Ready” mean?

Having achieved the competencies that are used to move to the next stage, players will now need to adapt to the new requirements, which will, in part need to be taught. Being ready does not mean that a player will be able to perform the tasks easily at the next level, so players will need to be supported as they make this transition. This is particularly true for competition, a player who was competent and confident at Red, will take some time to reach the same stage in Orange.

It is therefore vital that a child is provided appropriate competitions, to develop the same confidence that they had before in the previous colour stage; and this may take a little time.

## Considerations for progressing players

In competition, the use of different balls is important in helping players make a smooth progression from one stage to the next, and the following would be considered good practice.

- Doubling up in competition. For example, when players first move to Orange they may also continue to play in some Red competitions to maintain and build confidence. The same applies when players move from Orange to Green and from Green to Yellow

- Starting to play some team and informal events with the next ball to develop confidence before going outside the club to play more formal events
- Players should go through a transitional period (six to ten weeks and sometimes longer) when they move to the next stage where they use both the previous and new ball in lessons
- When players have moved up to the next stage, the coach may often use the previous stage ball and court for learning a new skill and to allow the player more time to learn it using the slower ball

### **Dangers of progressing players too quickly**

Moving from one colour stage to another can be seen as a sign of having a progressive programme but care should be taken when moving a player from one court size to the next. Rushing a player through too quickly may:

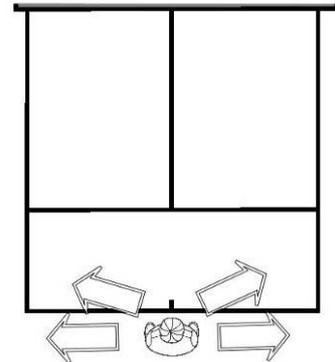
- Result in a drop in confidence levels
- Cause a player to lose motivation for competing and playing
- Inhibit skill / technical development
- Inhibit tactical development
- Reduce their enjoyment of the game
- Cause periods of limited or no progress
- Cause extremes in technique as players adapt to higher bouncing, faster balls before they are physically ready

# Demands of the Game - Red Tennis

## Court and ball demands

The Red ball is bigger and flies slower than other balls. It has a consistent bounce which places it between the knee and the bottom of the rib cage on the majority of shots when players rally baseline to baseline. Most balls are hit around this area and it is very difficult for a player to make the ball bounce much higher for their opponent.

The court is relatively narrow in length, so players need to move a little sideways and forwards but backward movement is a limited requirement. Players can usually move, stop and balance in preparation for each shot. Most points will be played from the back of the court using ground strokes, although some players will progress to approaching and volleying.



## Technical Skills

The focus in training at red should be simple early reaction and movement, good balance and rotation, and consistent contact points.

Consistent bounce of the red ball and smaller court size means:

- Most balls will be hit mid chest to knee high
- Some open racket face skills are required on lower balls
- Only volleys and serve are hit above shoulder height
- Serve contact point height depends on age and capacity
- Smooth transition from back to forward swing on forehand and backhand
- Shoulder rotation supports stroke production

By creating a simple foundation of move, stop, hit and recover and by focussing on a consistent contact point on the forehand and backhand, players will have great foundations to move on to the dynamic demands of the next court.

## Tactical Awareness

Player's tactical intention is limited, more by their developmental age than court, and will be very different for a 6 year old Red player just starting and an 8 year old Red player who has a lot of experience; however neither is likely to have full awareness of their opponent unless they are at an advanced level. This means that although they may be able to hit the ball away from their opponent, they are unlikely to be able to fully understand how to make it difficult for their opponent in other ways as their focus is on themselves and the ball, and they may not link shots together consciously.

In order to develop the limited tactical intention that they do have, practices should be based upon:

- directing the ball down the line
- directing the ball cross court
- re-directing the ball in order to hit away from the opponent

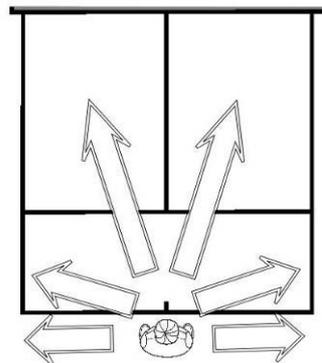
# Demands of the Game - Orange Tennis

## Court and ball demands

Unlike at the Red level, the bigger Orange Court means that there will often not be the opportunity to arrive and hit from a static or perfectly balanced position. Players at this level will need to contact with the ball while on the move and also in a greater variety of positions than at Red level.

The Orange ball flies faster and players can swing faster so players will now:

- Have less time to position themselves and may have to hit more balls from a dynamic position
- Must learn to hit off of either foot
- Need to move better laterally, resulting in more shots hit from a semi open stance
- Move forward more, to cover balls hit shorter in the space closer to the net
- Need to be able to coordinate well into different hitting positions.



The increased court length and ball speeds mean:

- More dynamic use of body but mostly without too many changes in body height (players will not have to hit with their feet off the ground)
- Rotations may require separation of the upper and lower body (hips and shoulder at different angles), as there is not always time to step into the court.

Players on the Orange court will contact the balls at higher positions (max around shoulder height), as well as lower positions (as flatter trajectories can be created on the longer orange court), and because of the dynamic nature of the game this may take place while the player is on the run.

## Technical skill

For this level, skill needs to be based on:

- Making the ball move faster and creating more spin in order to control this faster ball
- Using grips that better facilitate spin and allow for greater racquet head speed
- Using the kinetic chain (coordinating body segments)
- Better use of shoulder rotation from a semi open stance
- Reception of the faster ball, as the use of spin and speed allows players to hit more angles and move their opponent wider off the court
- Making contact with the serve at a higher position and developing a more rhythmic and better coordinated throwing action

## Tactical Awareness

Tactically players now should be developing:

- Better understanding of court geometry
- Understanding of when to attack and defend at appropriate times
- Use of space by changing the depth and angle of their shots to open the court
- Ability to link shots to form patterns of play, for example understanding that if they can move the player wide then, with the next shot, they should aim to hit the open space.

All of this means that the use of time has become more important than on the Red Court and that by taking the ball early and by hitting sequences of shots, players can best take the time away from their opponent.

## Demands of the Game - Green Tennis

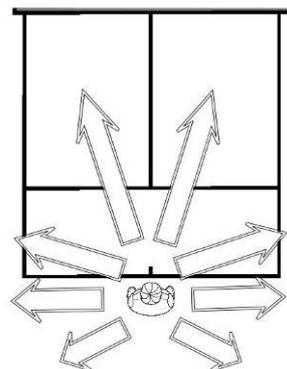
Moving on to the full court provides a real challenge to a young player. The court is now “adult sized”, so it is still a big step up for children.

### Court and ball demands

Each time a player moves to the next court the first thing that happens is the player learns to adapt to the demands of distance and pace. Players who were technically and tactically capable of performing a skill will now temporarily regress as they focus on trying to regain this skill in a more demanding environment.

But this environment is not just about the size of the court but also the characteristics of the ball:

- Players are used to dealing with the “faster” ball from the Orange court
- They have already learned to move well in most directions



Now the ball requires some more competencies that were rarely used before. On this court, the ball is harder and energy transferred into the ball (spin, height, pace) has more influence when it bounces.

### Technical Skills

A player can now:

- Hit the ball with height, spin and pace and make the ball bounce up at the opponent trying to move them away from the baseline
- Hit from all court positions
- Use the incoming ball speed to create pace
- Contact the ball at a higher point on some shots, sometimes above shoulder height
- Hit some balls off of the back foot as they are forced back
- Adjust their body height to maintain a position of strength
- Take the ball early
- Maintain racquet head acceleration from the Orange court

### Tactical Awareness

Tactically, a player is likely to be able to:

- Integrate more information into their decision making process
- Understand the geometry of the court
- Know how to create space and time
- Understand the strengths and weaknesses of their opponent
- Formulate a strategy to “beat” them by making it difficult for them
- Use anticipation cues to determine what their opponent is doing
- Start to link shots as part of this plan

For example: They will understand that if they can hit a ball crosscourt with pace, height, depth and spin to the backhand, the likely response will be a defensive shot back crosscourt or a weak shot that they can move in and attack.

# Chapter 7

## Training for Competition

- Why Children Play Tennis
- Keeping Children Playing
- Training Sessions that Lead to Competition



# Why Children Play Tennis

Engaging, retaining and developing players are essential to the success of any sport. Competition is a key driver in making this happen. In presenting competition and the training and coaching that supports this, we must consider the variety of reasons that children give for playing tennis. For example to: have fun, be with friends, compete, be active, engage with the coach, and to do something that they are good at.

Children often list fun as a motivator but it actually means different things to different people. Fun could be:

- Feeling competent
- Being physically active
- Using their imagination
- Learning something
- Being with friends
- Being with people who acknowledge, interact with and value them
- Belonging
- Seeing progress
- Being rewarded, praised and appreciated both for accomplishments and efforts



Coaches must not assume that having fun is about making children laugh or playing games that have no developmental foundation. The skill in being a great children's coach is to ensure that you can motivate a child to play and compete, and through appropriate coaching help them improve. This combination will keep children engaged in the game long term and get them to develop the skills and an orientation to compete.

## **So what do you have to do as a coach to create an environment that is both fun and progressive?**

The following are considered key in ensuring a child's long-term retention in any sport:

- Competition - do players achieve success and feel confident?
- Appropriate level of challenge and learning - are they mastering skills or struggling?
- Progress and mastery of skill - have they made progress in these skills over a period of time?
- Coach / child relationship - do they have a positive relationship with the coach?
- Friends / social / belonging - do friends play and do they have fun off court at tennis too?
- Aspiration and association - do they have favourite players or watch tennis on TV?
- Parental support and environment – do the parents support their children's tennis?

# Keeping Children Playing

Many children will try a great number of different activities in the early years, the challenge becomes how to keep children in the game and help them to progress. The keys are:

- Have an appropriate competitive outlet to use the skills that they are learning
- Give them success quickly – teach them to serve, rally and score from the start
- Get them engaged in actually playing the game – not just learning random or unrelated skills
- Build a rapport quickly – people do not take lessons from people that they don't like or who don't care about them
- Show them their progress – use systems to show children how they are improving
- Encourage them to play more – take 2 lessons instead of 1 per week, play outside of lessons, set 'tennis' homework to hit with friends or against a wall

## Specialisation versus Generalisation

Children need to specialise in tennis at around the ages of 11-13 (girls) or 12-14 (boys), meaning that children should develop a good athletic base by participating in a variety of different sports throughout the Tennis 10s age group. The challenge however is that:

- Children who specialise early may produce better short term results
- Children who follow a balanced programme develop more physical skills that are helpful long term but may be discouraged by the results of the players who have specialised early
- Children who participate in too many different activities may not develop competence in any of them as they don't spend enough time on each to learn the skill sets for each sport

The balance here is simple in theory but harder in practice. Try to encourage players to keep playing other sports to develop their athletic base but also explain to parents and players that it is important to do enough tennis so that a player feels competent and confident.

# Training Sessions that lead to Competition

Implementing a great environment should be one of the major focus points for your Tennis 10s programme.

## Programme Content

A great programme should have sessions that are linked. Children need a purpose and context to really engage in learning, competition provides that purpose. So your programme should have: coaching sessions, competitions, off-court activities, inspiration, play and practice

## Lesson Content

Lesson content must be a balance of skills that create future competence and skills that can be used in competition. Players are more motivated to learn when they understand how they can use a skill in actually playing the game. So as part of each lesson you should ensure:

- You explain how, why and when each skill can be used in a match
- Relate the content of the lesson, in part, to what you have seen in a match that they played
- Position players for drills and practices realistic to the game
- Progress practices from cooperative to competitive
- Add the “shot before” and “shot after” to the practice of any single shot
- Always finish with playing points or a game that is as close to the game of tennis as possible

## Methodology

Players should learn to play by developing the core “Serve, Rally and Score” skills and then developing appropriate technical skills to progress their tennis. In Chapter 3 you will find core principles for setting up tennis activity to get players to play; this includes:

- Having a court area marked
- Getting players to work together (usually in twos)
- Getting players to move (instead of feeding directly to them)

This is key in helping children gain the skills that they need to play, and will allow them to be independent. Coaches who spend too much time feeding balls from a basket may be sending the message that tennis can only happen when the coach is present. Those coaches are unlikely to equip children with the skills needed to move and adjust differently to each ball.

## Developing Confidence

Confidence in part comes from feeling competent. As we are dealing with young children, many may be in need of support and encouragement. Unlike sports like golf or athletics, there are few measures that players can use to see how they are progressing, so usually players only reflect on results. Using simple goals is a good way of helping this process, then tracking the progress on a card, like the Measurable Task Card in the Tool Box Section. Also consider that practices can gradually increase in the degree of competitive demand. Using a measurable skill this could be presented as follows:

Format	Outcome	Competitive Process
Solo Task	How many repetitions can I do?	Beat my previous best
Partner Task	How many repetitions can we do?	Beat our previous best
Partner Task	Can we do more repetitions than other pairs?	Compete using a task
Partner Competition	Can we use the skill to beat opponents?	Competitive points against others
Solo Competition	Can I use the skill to beat opponents?	Competitive points against others

Using this process the player gets to learn how developing a skill or task fits into playing a match. They are also supported at different stages by the partner that they are paired with.

## **Inspiration from Professional Tennis**

Getting players to want to be like their tennis heroes is also a way of encouraging players to compete. So you might want to consider:

- Naming drills and practices after professional players
- Posting information on the ATP and WTA Tours on the Notice board
- Running Tournaments that correlate to major tennis tournaments (having your own Wimbledon or US Open)

## **Coaches and Staff**

How you behave has a massive impact on the environment you create. You should ensure that you:

- are positive, supportive and encouraging
- act as a role model and show a good work ethic
- recognise effort and improvement
- have a great attention to detail and ask for the best from your players
- are always professional, both on and off court
- show a love and passion for the game when you are playing, even when you are losing

## **Extras**

Doing that little extra is often the big difference between an average programme and an exceptional one, so you might consider:

- Reports and awards – having a system of reports or awards to let players and parents know how they are progressing
- Club team – teams bring players together and make them feel like they belong
- Trips and events – having trips to professional events and tournaments can greatly motivate young players

Spending a little time looking at the climate that you create around your club can help young programmes be much more successful.

## Tool Kit

1. Entry Form
2. Income and Expenditure
3. Sign Up Sheet
4. Competition Checklist
5. Player Briefing Checklist
6. Photography and Filming Consent Form
7. Player Record Sheet
8. Measurable Task Card



# Entry Form

<b>Event :</b>				
Date:		Venue:		
Organiser:				
<b>Contact Details</b>				
Name:				
Date of Birth:		Boy / Girl:		
Address:				
Email:				
Home Telephone:		Emergency Telephone:		
Parent /Guardian:				
<b>Tennis Details</b>				
Club:		Coach:		
Level / Stage:		School:		
<b>Event Details</b>				
Please enter me into the following category:				
Date	Category	Level	Fee	Tick
Total Fee Enclosed - Made payable to:				
<b>Authorisation</b>				
Please sign below to indicate that you agree to abide by the rules and conditions of the event				
Player:				
Parent / Guardian:				
<b>Return Address Details</b>				
Please return this form to:				
Address:				
For more information contact the event organiser				
Name:				
Telephone:				
Email:				

<b>Tournament Income and Expenditure</b>			
<b>Event:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Narrative</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Actual</b>	
<b>Income</b>			
Entry Fees (a)			
Federation Contribution			
Sponsorship			
Catering			
Other			
Total Income (b)			
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Organiser Fees			
Assistant Fees			
Court Fees			
Balls			
Prizes			
Catering			
Promotion and Marketing			
Other			
Total Expenditure (c)			
Surplus ( b – c )			

## Break Even Point

Calculating breakeven point will help you to set realistic entry fees and to know how many players that you need to make your event financially viable.

Total Expenditure (b) above – all income except entry fees = required entry fees

Total Entry Fees / Number of players = Break even entry fee

Total Entry Fees / Single Entry fee = Break even number of players

# Sign In Sheet

Event:

Date:

A

B

CD

EF

GH

IJ

KL

MN

O

PQ

R

S

T

UV

WX

YZ

## Competition Checklist

<b>Competition Checklist</b>	
✓	<b>Planning</b>
	Choose a date most children will be able to make.
	Check that your date doesn't clash with other events
	Consider organising Tennis 10s events alongside older junior tennis events
	Consider planning several linked tournaments rather than a single event
	Decide on format and number of players
	If a formal event, set your budget for the event including all income and all costs
	Confirm the staff that you might need are available
	Set realistic and consistent entry fees
	Book courts / facility
	Determine what prizes you will give
	Ensure you have appropriate balls, nets and equipment
	Will catering be required? How will this be charged?
	How will players enter? Sign-up sheets on the notice board, entry forms, internet sign up or just turning up
	Plan the promotion. You will usually need at least 6 weeks to promote any event
	Prepare marketing materials / entry forms and get the message out
	Reconfirm all entries you receive 1 week before the event
	<b>Preparing on the Day</b>
	Arrive early to set up equipment
	Brief staff and helpers
	Have a sign in desk for when players arrive
	Brief the players and parents before the event starts
	<b>Delivering on the Day</b>
	Keep records of results for displaying on your club bulletin board.
	Ensure that everyone is treated equally and consistently
	Take photographs (You may need to include a photography consent sign off for parents in your entry form)
	Encourage players to stay for the final matches and prize giving
	Do the prize giving ceremony
	Thank players and parents for coming
	Remember to promote your next event before your players leave this one
	<b>After</b>
	Thank staff and helpers
	Ensure all equipment is packed and facility / courts are left tidy
	Review the event to highlight things that went well and what could be improved
	Write a "Follow Up article", post on notice board and distribute via email
	<b>Other Considerations</b>

# Player Briefing Checklist

On match day it is a good idea to brief players on what will happen in the event on the day. Get players and parents together and use the checklist below to ensure that they are clear on how the event will be run, scoring systems and expectations.

<b>Event Briefing</b>	
<b>Intro</b>	
	Welcome and Thank everyone for coming
	Introduce Facility
	Changing rooms, toilets, catering, evacuation procedure
<b>Match Format</b>	
	Scoring format for matches
	Will there be scorers or umpires?
	Where to report scores at the end of the match?
	Leave balls on court or take to organiser's desk?
<b>Event Format</b>	
	Format for the event – Round Robin, Davis Cup etc
	How players will be divided? Teams, Boxes etc.
	How winners will be decided? Most wins? Every point counts?
<b>Disputes</b>	
	Tell players to call score out after each point
	How to call organiser/referee
	What to do if players lose score etc.
	Distribute or explain Code of Conduct
<b>Parents and Spectators</b>	
	Explain the objectives of the event (Expected parent behaviour)
	If acting as scorers explain rules for this role
	Distribute or explain "Parent Code of Conduct"

## Photography and Filming Consent Form

I give permission for my child:

To be involved in any publicity (including photographs / TV footage) surrounding any event / publication at the (Enter Club / Venue Name)

Signed:

Dated:

Name:

Relationship to child:

Address:

Postcode:

Emergency telephone #:

Home telephone #:

Work telephone #:

Email:

Unless otherwise notified this consent will be considered to include normal photography and filming as a regular part of the tennis program.

This form will cover consent from the date signed until ... (Enter Date).

Please return this form to:

(Enter Address)

## Player Record Sheet

Date:		
Name:		
Date of Birth:		
School:		
Address:		
Parents Names:		
Contact Number:		
Email:		
Medical:		
	Please list any medical conditions or allergies that you think that we should be made aware of!	
Indiv. Coach(es): (If Any)		Date:
Please include date from when this coach started working with player.		
Class or Squad: e.g. Red 3		
Sessions Times: (Club Use)		Date:
Notes: (Club Use)		
Please return this form to: (Enter Address)		

<b>Measurable Task Card</b>							
Drill / Task	Start	2	3	4	5	6	Finish

<b>Measurable Task Card</b>							
Drill / Task	Start	2	3	4	5	6	Finish

## Other Resources...

The following resources were helpful in creating this manual...

- Play Tennis Manual (ITF)
- Tennis Leaders Award Manual (LTA, Great Britain)
- When Can I Play Again? (Mike Barrell)
- Mini Tennis Manual (LTA, Great Britain)
- Children Tennis Manual (PTR/ Mike Barrell)
- KNLTB Tennis Children Manual (KNLTB, Netherlands/ Mike Barrell)
- Growing Children Growing the Game (Mike Barrell)
- Level 1 Coaching Assistant Handbook (LTA, Great Britain)

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