



# *Tennis*

RACKET SPORT



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## About the Tutorial

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Tennis is a sport played among two players or two pairs of players competing with each other in a rectangular tennis court with fixed boundaries. This is a small tutorial that will let you know the basics of how to play Tennis.

## Audience

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This tutorial is for anyone who is interested in Tennis and wants to learn the rules of how to play Tennis.

## Prerequisites

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A person familiar with other racket games such as Badminton can easily learn Tennis. There are no prerequisites whatsoever. All that you need is a passion to learn and play Tennis.

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# 1. Tennis – Overview

Tennis is believed to have originated during 12th or 13th century in France. However, it was played by Major Walter C. Wingfield, in an hourglass shaped court in 1873 in Great Britain. It seems to have evolved from similar ancient sports like court tennis, squash racquets and badminton.

In 1877, the All England Croquet Club held a Tennis championship in a rectangular court with rules similar to that of modern Tennis. It quickly spread to America, Britain, and later to other parts of the world.



Davis Cup, an international tennis tournament, was held in 1900 to promote the game all over the world.

On March 1st, 1913, International Tennis Federation (ITF), the international governing body of Tennis was established. It formulates rules to be followed by all the players participating in competitions throughout the world. It also sets guidelines, defines the kind of equipment used in the sport, and defines court dimensions.

Tennis is a sport played among two players or two pairs of players competing with each other in a rectangular tennis court with fixed boundaries. The two sides of the court are separated with a net. The sport involves shooting a tennis ball towards the other side of the court with a tennis racket. The ball has to fall within the court boundaries. Players gain a point when the opposite team or player fails to deliver the ball to the opponent.

Tennis tests players in delivering the ball in the intended direction and in defending the ball delivered by their opponent.

### **Team Size**

Tennis is played in Singles, and Doubles variants. Singles has one player on each side of the court. Doubles match has two players per team.

Davis Cup is the only international tournament where different countries compete with each other and there are almost six players in each side. There would be two players who play singles on round robin basis, and two teams of two players each that participate in doubles category.

### **Participating Countries**

The most populated continent in the world is in process of developing the sport. Countries like India, China, Japan, Indonesia, and Thailand have all been playing since many years. These countries have produced some of the best players in the world. Prakash and Vijay Amritraj, Leander Paes, Mahesh Bhupati, and Sania Mirza are top players from India. Kei Nishikori of Japan, Li Na from China, and Thailand's Paradorn Srichaphan are other popular players from Asian continent.

North Americas and Europe have dominated the sport for years. The origin of the sport lead to France in 16<sup>th</sup> century where racquets were used to play the sport and it was called Tennis. United States, Serbia, France, Switzerland, Spain, England, Germany, and Russia have all produced some top players over generations. Jon Borg, John McEnroe, Boris Becker, Stefan Edberg, Pete Sampras, Steffi Graf, Andre Agassi, Martina Navratilova, Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal, and Novak Djokovic are some of the greatest Tennis players.

## 2. Tennis – Playing Environment

Tennis as a sport was played outdoors for long time since its origin. The complete playing area was called **lawn** and the sport was fondly called as **Lawn-Tennis**. The court surface was either made of clay or grass. Gradually, the playing conditions and surface changed and the sport was played indoors too to avoid any sort of climatic interruptions.

As new tournaments emerged by late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the court surfaces also varied. For example, **Wimbledon** is a tournament played on grass court. **French Open** is played on clay court. **US Open** and **Australian Open** are played on hard surfaces. **Paris Masters** is another tournament that is played on carpet surface which is a removable court.

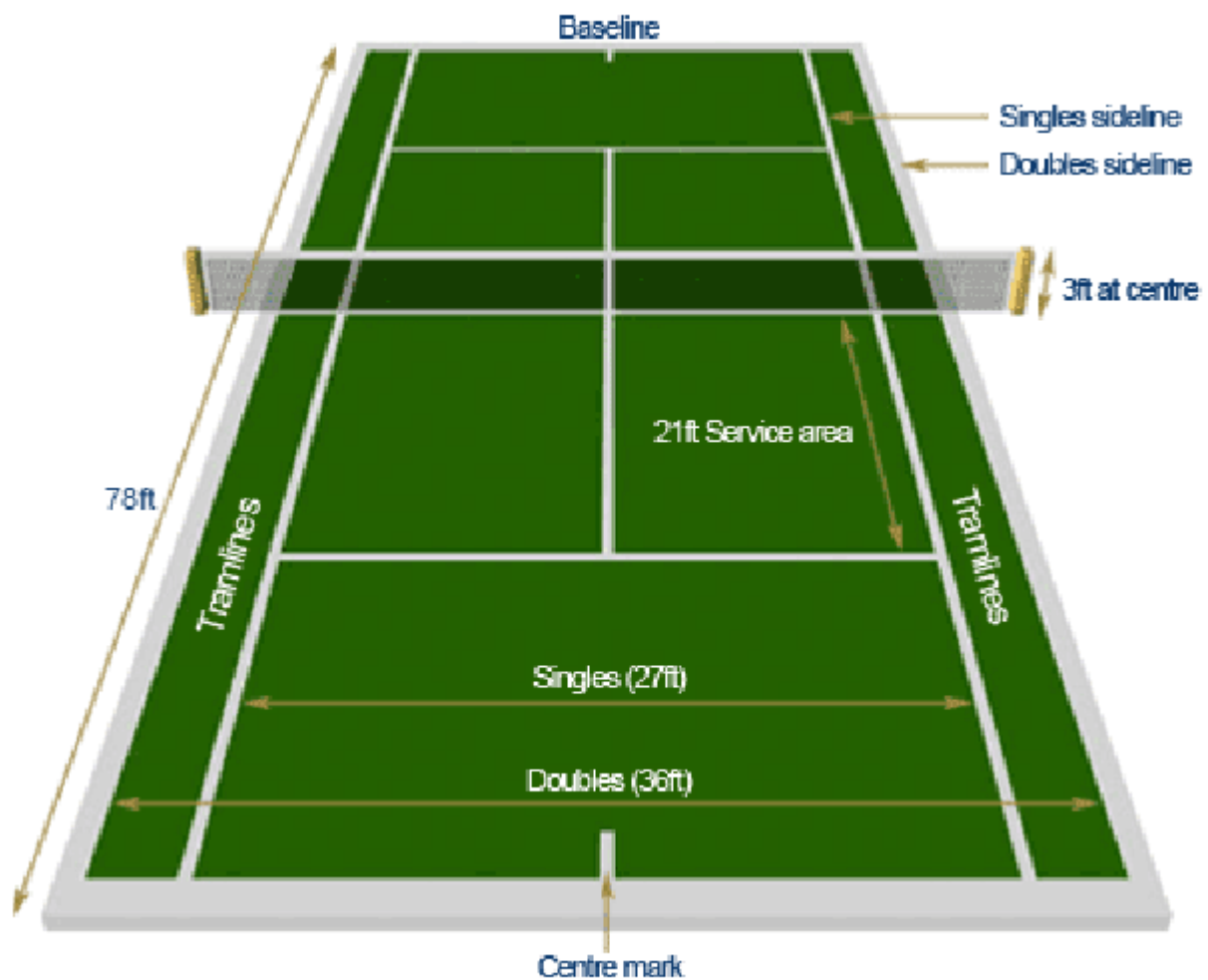
### Dimensions of a Tennis Lawn

All tennis courts should be rectangular in shape. As the sport is played in different formats, Singles and Doubles; the breadth of the court varies with length unchanged. The lawn should have a length of 23.77 meters for all matches. However, the width in a singles match is 8.23 meters and 10.97 meters for a doubles match.

The court is divided into two equal halves with a net that is 0.914 meters high from the ground. A net is tied parallel to width of the court. There is a metal cable that holds the net tightly with two net posts on either ends of length. These posts are not movable hence; the courts for doubles and singles are different.

The lines drawn on wider ends of the court are called baselines and the ones on sides are called sidelines. There will be one baseline on each end and there are two sidelines parallel to each other. These are 1.37 meters apart. The first of these lines is called singles sideline and the parallel one is called doubles sideline.





Two lines are drawn parallel to net from singles sideline at 6.40 meters from net on each side. These lines are called service lines. In addition, the area between service line and net is divided into two equal halves with a line perpendicular to net and service line. It is called centre line. All the lines around court should be between 2.5 and 5 centimeters except the base line that is nearly 10 centimeters wide. The lines should have contrasting color.

# 3. Tennis – Equipment

Racket, tennis ball, shoes, and a dress code are mandatory equipment for the sport. Apart from player needs, the tennis court needs a net to separate playing area of each player. Know about these equipment in detail below.

## Racket

Rackets can be made of many alloys or wood. There are no restrictions on the size or materials used in making a racket. It has an oval head and a gradually widening throat that connects the narrow handle with the head of the racket.

The head of the racket is tightly woven with strings which are made of various materials like nylon, gut or synthetic gut. The handles are covered with leather or nylon for a better grip.



## Ball

As per ITF rules, Tennis balls are yellow colored spherical balls, with a diameter between 2.5 and 2.625 inches. They weigh between 2 and 21/16 oz. Pressurized rubber is used to make semi spherical half shells. They are then joined with compressed air between them.

The spherical balls are covered with bright yellow colored felt. Kids aged ten and under play with different colored balls. They move slower, bounce lower. They are also softer and larger and are easy for kids to hit them.



## Net

A rectangular net is used to separate the two sides of a Tennis court. The net should cover the space between the two net posts. The net is woven in such a way that it does not allow the Tennis ball to pass through. It is usually tied in about 3 feet above the ground at the centre.



## Wrist bands

Wrist bands are worn around wrists to prevent sweat from wetting the players' palm or the racket. A wet grip might not be strong.

## Head band

Headbands are used to absorb sweat. They also tie player's hair away from their face. Any tight cap made of absorbent material can also be used instead of a head band.



## Tennis shoes

Just running shoes don't provide enough lateral support to players. Tennis shoes are designed to give players better stability and prevent them from sliding while moving sideways. Shoes shouldn't damage the court when players move briskly across the court.



## Dress

Men wear T-Shirts or shirts made of materials like polyester that does not absorb sweat and keeps the player cool. They wear shorts that do not cover their knees.



Though women are advised to wear just any comfortable dress, of late many Tennis champions try to make a style statement with their carefully designed clothes. Many players prefer wearing a tank top or a T-shirt on a short skirt.

## 4. Tennis – Popular Terms

In this chapter, we will discuss about all the popular terms used while playing Tennis. Understanding the service line, base line, side lines, and centre line are very important and all these were discussed in earlier chapters. The following terms are used during the play.

- **Serve** - A player standing behind the baseline tosses the ball in air to hit with racket before it bounces on the ground. The ball then has to fly above the net and pitch in opponent's service area. The ball then travels further for opposite player to hit. This is called a serve. Importantly, the players have to stand diagonally on the court while serving to each other. Every first serve of game has to start from right half of the court.



- **Ace** - A correct serve is considered ace if the opponent player is unable to hit and return the ball with his racket.
- **Deuce** - When both players have scores of 40 then, it is called Deuce.
- **Advantage** - The next point won by a player after deuce gets advantage point. It is equal to game point. If this point is broken by opponent in next serve then, they get back to deuce.
- **Game Point** - The last point of a game is called game point.
- **Set Point** - The last point of game when the player serves to win the set.

- **Break Point** - The last point of a game that opponent player wins while the other serves.
- **Match point** - The last point of the match where a player is about to win over his opponent.
- **First and second serve** - The number of times a player gets the first serve correct is analysed in percentages. In case the first serve goes wrong, then next attempt to serve is called second serve.
- **Rally** - A correct serve returned by opponent player for serving player to be hit and the continuous shots between the players is called rally. Most importantly, the players returning the ball have to hit it over the net and ensure it pitches within area of sideline and baseline of opponent player.
- **Volley** - It is an aggressive move by a player where she/he swiftly run towards the net and take the ball on full during a rally. This gives the player a better opportunity to place the ball well in opponent's court and ensure opponent misses it to gain a point.
- **Let** - Chair umpire calls 'Let' when a player's serve is good but the ball touches net strap before reaching the opponent. In such case, the serving player gets another chance to serve. Let is not a fault until it is not repeated. It also doesn't discard any service foul made just before a let.
- **Advantage Set** - The final set of a tennis match is called advantage set. This set doesn't have a tie-breaker instead; the player has to maintain difference of two games after winning 6 games. The set continues till one of them achieves the target.
- **Tie-break Set** - All the other sets except the final one are tie-break sets. In a situation where both players/teams win six games each, a tie-breaker is initiated. Single points are given to players/teams who win each serve. The first player to score seven points and maintains a difference of two points over opponent is declared winner of the set.
- **Umpire** - There are line umpires and a chair umpire in a professional tennis match. Line umpires keep a close eye on the ball pitching on or outside the sidelines and baselines. The chair umpire manages rest of the proceedings.
- **Ball in play** - When a player unintentionally hits a fixed structure like net post or strap during a rally and ball bounces in opponent's court then, it is considered as ball in play. In case, the ball bounces back to same side then, opponent gets a point.
- **Forehand** - A shot played with racket where the palm faces in direction of the shot.
- **Backhand** - A shot played with arms holding the racket across the body and back of hand facing in direction of the shot.

## 5. Tennis – How to Play?

When it comes to playing tennis, players need to have lot of stamina and physical strength. A player has to run corner to corner of his/her end to return the shot played by opponent. Of course, every sport requires mental preparedness and perseverance to come out victorious.

The game starts with a toss. Chair umpire tosses the coin and one player calls 'Head' or 'Tail'. Player who wins the toss has option to choose a side of the court or serve first. If the player chooses side of the court then, the opponent player gets to serve first and vice versa.



The player serving first stands behind the base line on right half of the court and serves the ball. The player also has to ensure not to touch or cross the centre mark on baseline. The serving player has to stand within sideline and centre mark. The player receiving the ball can stand inside or outside the baseline as per her/his convenience and strategy. A correct serve done could be returned by the opponent player and it converts into a rally of continuous shots. Either of the players could end up with a shot outside baseline or sideline for it to be called 'Out'. The opponent player gets a point.

The serving player gets to serve till the game is won by the player or opponent. Later, the serve shifts to opponent player and game continues till either of them wins set and match. During the course of the game, the players change ends after odd number of games are played. The change in ends is applicable during a tie-break too.

The serve shifts to opponent player after completion of a game. The game of tennis is counted by number of sets per match. Gentlemen play five sets a match and ladies play three sets a match. Each set has even number of games played. A player is considered to have won a set when she/he wins six games and maintains a minimum difference of two games with opponent. Similarly, a gentleman is decided winner when he wins three out five sets. A lady is declared victorious when she wins two out of three sets played.

Singles, Doubles, and Mixed Doubles are the three variants of Tennis. We will discuss about these in the next chapter. In a doubles match, the serve shifts to opponent after every game and alternately between the partners. Who serves/receives first is decided amongst partners in a doubles match.

When both players/teams have won six games each in a set, a tie-breaker situation arises. In a tie-breaker, each player gets to serve twice. However, the player serving first will do it once and the serve shifts to opponent player. In the next turn, the player who began tie-break gets to serve twice. The tie-breaker continues till one of the players score seven points and maintains a two point difference with opponent. By doing so, the player is declared as winner of tie-breaker and set too.

## Scoring

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Scoring in a tennis match is little different when compared to other racket sports. The first point won by a player is given 15, followed by 30, 40 and game point.

During a game, there is every possibility that opponent player wins a point too. In such case, the scores read 0-15, 15-15, 30-30, 40-40 (deuce), advantage, and game point.

When the score reads 0-15, it means that opponent player has scored point over serving player. Similarly, the score can read up to 0-40 and game point. This is called **service break** where a player wins the game while the opponent served.

The scoring varies for a tie-breaker though. The points won by a player are given as 'One', 'Two', 'Three', etc. Like mentioned earlier, the player who first wins seven points and maintains two point lead over opponent is declared winner of tie-break.

## Fouls

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### Service Fault

During a serve, if the ball pitches outside the service line or sideline, or even hits the net then, it is called a faulty serve. There are multiple rules for service fault.

- The serving player should not touch the baseline or sideline while serving the ball.
- If the serving player misses to hit the ball after tossing then, it is defined as service fault.
- A player is not allowed to run or walk while serving the ball. She/he is allowed to lift one or both legs while serving.

### Double Fault

If first and second serves happen to hit the net then, it is called double fault. Another instance of double fault is to serve the ball twice outside the service line.

Apart from these fouls, there are certain time bound fouls that a player may commit. A player is permitted to recover within a time limit from injury by treatment during course of the game. The physio or medic attends the player for treatment. In case the player does not recover then, the opponent is declared winner.

Refreshment break is given to players between games and every set. These breaks are time bound and players have to abide them else, have to pay penalty.



## 6. Tennis – Variants

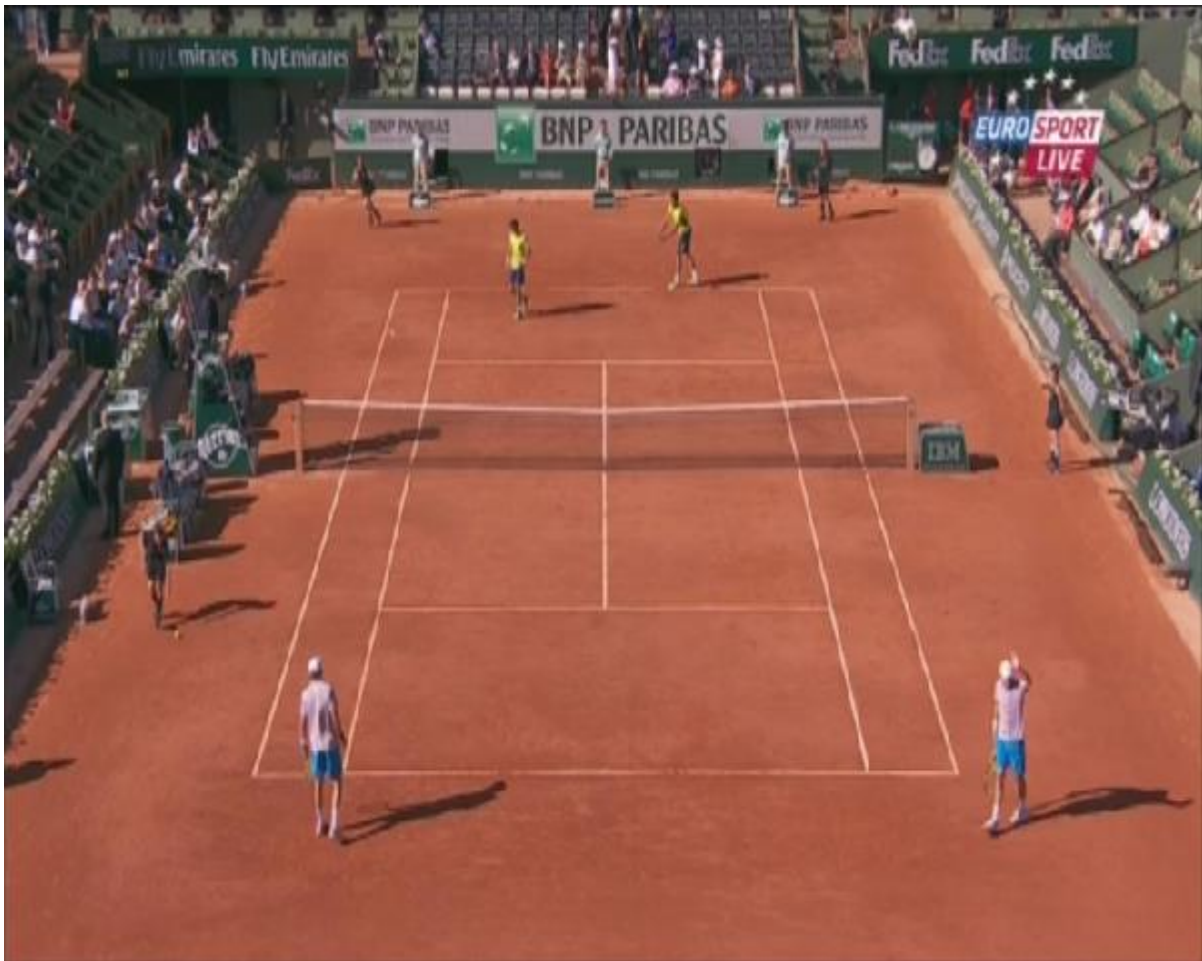
As mentioned in the previous chapter, Singles, Doubles, and Mixed Doubles are the three variants of professional tennis sport.

### Singles

In a singles game, there is only one player on each side of the court. While serving, each player has to start from right half of the court and serve diagonally to the opponent. In men's singles five sets have to be played while three sets have to be played in women's singles.

### Doubles

In a doubles game, there are two players per team. The partners can decide who should serve first. Similarly, the opponents can decide who receives the serve first. These roles have to change alternately for each game. When two gentlemen play as a team in doubles, it is called Men's Doubles. When two ladies play as a team, it is called Ladies Doubles.





## Mixed Doubles

In mixed doubles, a gentleman and lady form a team. The rules are same as men's doubles that is the teams have to play five sets to win the game. Men's doubles consists of five sets a match. Women's and mixed doubles consists of three sets a match. Teams winning maximum number of sets win the match.

## 7. Tennis – Tournaments

The first international tournament took place in England called **Wimbledon Grand Slam**. Later, **Roland Garros** (French Open), **US Open**, and **Australian Open** were inducted as major Grand Slams. These four are the most popular major tournaments that happen every year. Top players from across the world contest against each other for championship.

**Davis Cup** is another major international tournament where teams from two countries compete against each other.

Entries to these tournaments are done based on rankings. Draws are taken before each tournament to announce who plays against whom. If a top-seed player is unavailable for a tournament in the  $n^{\text{th}}$  hour then, a wild card entry is given to player through draws of remaining list of players.

Here is a list of all the major Tennis tournaments that take place round the year with their venue details.

Tournament Name	Venue
Wimbledon	England
US Open	United States
Roland Garros	France
Australian Open	Australia
ATP World Tour	England
Shanghai Masters	China
Miami Open	United States
Paris Masters	France
Monte-Carlo Masters	Monaco
ATP World Tour Finals	Various countries in Europe

## 8. Tennis – Champion of Champions

Over the years, the sport of tennis saw many legends in gentlemen and ladies categories. Some of them have been inducted into **Hall of Fame** for their contribution towards the sport. We will discuss more about their career and stats.

### Rod Laver

Rod Laver, an Australian born, is considered greatest player in history of the sport. Tennis was in his blood as his mother played professional. He was famous for his aggression and agility. He had the guile to beat his opponents with these two qualities. He was nick named "The Rocket" by his Davis Cup team captain.

Rod held a unique record of completing Grand Prix twice; once in 1962 and second time in 1969. A Grand Prix means winning all four major titles in a year. Overall, he held 228 career titles that consisted of 20 Grand Slam titles across all variants. He was finalist for 14 Grand Slams and won 11 of them which was a record then.



### Björn Borg

Borg was a Swedish player who drew large crowds to the stadium with his playing ability and off the field lifestyle. He was nick named as 'Ice-man' for his cool temperament in all situations. He won 64 career titles that comprised of 11 major titles.

Borg has won 41% of the Grand Slam singles tournaments he entered and 90% of those matches. He has won both the French Open and Wimbledon for three consecutive years. In addition, he has won three Grand Slams without losing a set.



### Vijay Amritraj

Vijay Amritraj is the only Indian Tennis player who ranked amongst top 20 in the world in Singles. He has the credit of defeating top seed players like Rod Laver, Bjorn Borg, Jimmy Connors, and John McEnroe on different occasions.

He has a tally of 29 career titles and only Indian player to have twice reached quarter finals of Wimbledon and US Open in Singles and semi-finals in Men's doubles. Surprisingly, he is yet to be inducted into Hall of Fame.



## John McEnroe

He was born in West Germany and brought up in New York, USA. He started playing Tennis at the age of eight and holds a rare record of being the youngest to reach semi-finals of Wimbledon in a century.

He was well-known for his passion and aggression towards the sport and fought for every single point. In many instances, he ended up paying fine for arguing with chair umpires and on-field bad behaviour. Despite so many low-key points, his game was exceptional and he won 17 major titles in the whole career.



## Jimmy Connors

An American born, Connors played left-handed. He was ranked no. 1 in 1974. Connors was equally aggressive like McEnroe and never felt bad for his on-field behaviour.

As his counterparts described, he was the most rebellious player in history of Tennis. Connors won 125 titles in his complete career span. Ten of them have been major titles.



## Stefan Edberg

Edberg was another Swedish legend in Tennis. It must be said that his serve and volley game was so exceptional that it won him six major titles in singles.

His backhand volleys were accurate and beautiful to watch during play. Edberg had won 59 titles in his career of which 9 are major titles.



## Boris Becker

If McEnroe was youngest to reach semi-finals of a grand slam then, Becker bettered the record by being the youngest to win a major title at the age of 17. This record was later broken by Michael Chang of United States.

A German born Becker started playing professional tennis in 1984. In short time, he became popular by his own style of play that balance, agility, and precision with power. He had won six major titles out of 64 titles in his career.



## Pete Sampras

This star player came on to the international scene with a bang. He defeated Agassi in US Open finals at the age of 19. Since then, there was no looking back for the champion. Of course, there were few injuries that plagued his career for some time.

He then held the record for highest number of major titles (14) which is now equalled by Rafael Nadal and broken by Roger Federer (17). Sampras won 66 titles in his complete career.



## Jim Courier

Courier was a four time major champion and a true fighter when it comes to playing tennis. It didn't come to him all that easy as he had to work really hard to win against some of the best players in game's history.

Born in Florida, United States; Courier created a rare feat of being the youngest player in history to reach finals of all four Grand Slams. He was 22 then. Courier won 29 titles throughout his career.



## Andre Agassi

Agassi was the most flamboyant of all the players in history of the game. He had the charm and grace in his play and off the court activities.

Agassi had seen highs and lows in his 21-year long career that brought him shame and fame. He won eight major tournaments and 61 in total during his career span.



## Roger Federer

This Swiss player is as stylish as the line of watches from his home land. He already holds the record for highest number of Grand Slams by any player ever.

In a 14-year long career, Federer has won 86 titles. With age catching up fast and pressure to perform, there was slump in form and rank in middle of his career. Being a fighter and hard worker, Federer came back up in rankings and is currently ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> in world.





## Rafael Nadal

Federer may be the World's best in modern era but, this Spaniard gave tough time to Federer since his arrival on to the international scene. He was one of the youngest to have won a Grand Slam and has record number of Roland Garros titles.

Rafael Nadal is next to Federer in overall number of major tournaments. Nadal has 14 titles to his name and an overall tally of 67. He is currently ranked seven in the world. Frequent injuries kept him in and out of the game during recent time. It led to slump in his form and world ranking.



## Billie Jean King

Billie Jean King is Queen of Wimbledon as she won 20 titles. Born in California, United States, King was extraordinary on and off the court. She was the first woman player to be awarded Sportsman of the Year by Illustrated magazine.

Being a homosexual, she fought for LGBT rights during her playing days. She was popular for the Battle of Sexes match that she won against Bobby Riggs. King won 140 titles overall including 39 major tournaments.



## Margaret Smith Court

Margaret Court is the only player in history of Tennis to have won multiple Grand Slams in all the categories. Her winning streak equates to 92 percent considering amateur and professional games which is a record for itself.

She is undoubtedly the most dominating player ever. Court has 64 major titles to her name and 118 overall. She still holds the record for most major titles in Singles category and has Steffi Graf just one title behind her with 23.



## Martina Navratilova

This great lady was just born to play the most beautiful racket sport. Martina Navratilova represented United States, though she was born in Czechoslovakia. Tennis was her passion and she thrived to win at all times.

Martina Navratilova ruled the sport in ladies category for years together. She was invincible and clearly the best in history. She still holds the record for highest number career titles in ladies category. A staggering tally of 369 career titles included 57 major titles that





is next Margaret Court's 64. She won 18 major titles in singles and rest in doubles variants. Based on the stats, she is truly the greatest tennis player ever lived.

### Stefanie Graf

The beauty of a sport is that a legend is always replaced by another. Stefanie Graf, a German by birth launched her career at international level in 1986 with victory over Chris Evert.

She holds couple of unique records; first being next to only Margaret Court in number of singles major titles (23) and second being the only Tennis player in both genders to have won a grand slam at least four times. Her total number of career titles is 118. Steffi as she was fondly called by her fans was critically the best player on any court.



### Monica Seles

Monica Seles played for United States though born in Yugoslavia. She had very strong forehand and backhand in Tennis. She is the most feared opponent for Steffi Graf.

Seles drew level with Graf in her six meetings. However, her career was cut short after a freak on-court incident where a spectator stabbed her on back. She made a comeback after injury but not for long though and then retired. Her career witnessed 9 major titles and 59 titles overall.



### Martina Hingis

Hingis will be ever known for being the youngest to win a major title. She was just 15 when she won Wimbledon doubles title. Hingis is also the youngest to have junior major title at the age of 12 in 1993.

She is one of the greatest players to have played Tennis along with Graf, Seles, Jennifer Capriati, Sabatini, and Arantxa Sánchez-Vicario. She has won a total of 80 titles of which 16 are major titles.



### Serena Williams

Serena Williams, the youngest of William sisters is a living legend. She has already won 20 singles major titles and 13 doubles major titles.

She has won 90 titles in total till date and going strong. Serena has a powerful forehand and plays deep into corners of the court. She also has a powerful serve.

