

WIMBLEDON SPECIAL TENNIS

ANDY
MURRAY
IS NOT
THE BEST
PLAYER
OF HIS
ERA . . .

...but he may
be ultimately
remembered
as the most
important one

PAGE 14

Plus:

Top secret:
Dominic
Thiem's new
Babolat stick

PAGE 12

Venus Williams'
love of the
Summer Games

PAGE 30

Olympic Quiz:
Put your tennis
knowledge
to the test

PAGE 36

Horror and hope:
The story of
Syria's Davis
Cup team

PAGE 40

Harness the
power of Roger
Federer's serve

PAGE 64

JULY / AUGUST 2016

\$5.99 US

08>



0 74470 02612 9

TENNIS.COM



THE CHAMPIONSHIPS
WIMBLEDON
THE ALL ENGLAND LAWN TENNIS CLUB, LONDON
JUNE 27TH TO JULY 10TH, 2016

FOR AN OFFICIAL ROLEX JEWELER VISIT ROLEX.COM
ROLEX® OYSTER PERPETUAL AND DATEJUST ARE ® TRADEMARKS, NEW YORK



WHEN YOUR
TRADITIONS
ARE KNOWN
TO ALL, YOU'VE
MADE HISTORY.

This watch is a witness to epic battles on Centre Court. Worn on the wrists of those who have made Wimbledon's traditions great. It doesn't just tell time. It tells history.

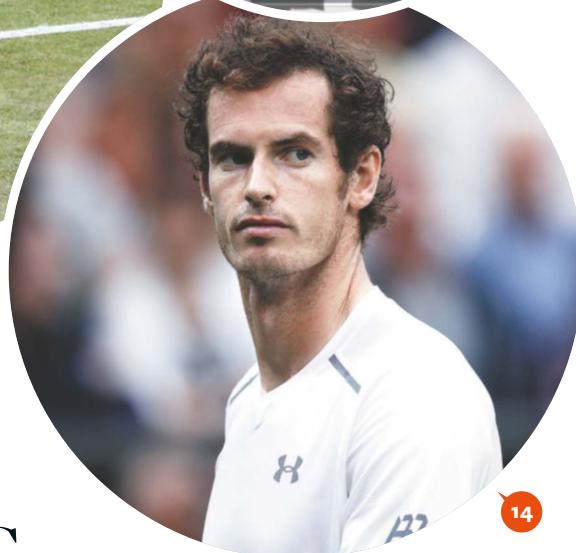


OYSTER PERPETUAL DATEJUST 41


ROLEX

TENNIS

July/August 2016



Features

14 Rebel in Reverse

Is Andy Murray the most important player of his era?

24 Puppy Love

Pros go to great lengths for their pets.

30 For the Love of the Games

Venus Williams' ageless American spirit.

36 Olympics Quiz

Test your tennis knowledge.

40 Hope and Horror

The saga of Syria's Davis Cup team.

48 Kick it Up

How to hit an effective kick serve.

52 Pulling Back the Curtain

There's more to the ATP's Kevin Anderson than meets the eye.

56 Team Work

An inside look at World TeamTennis.



4 CHRISSEY'S VIEW

by Chris Evert

6 TENNISWORLD

by Peter Bodo

8 CONCRETE ELBOW

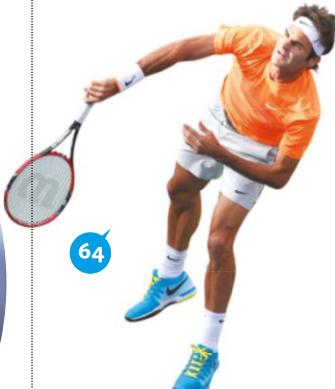
by Stephen Tignor

10 COURT OF APPEALS

with Rebel Good

12 FIRST SERVE

by Jon Levey



MASTER CLASS

Our experts help you improve your game, one stroke at a time.

62 GREAT SHOTS

by Rick Macci

64 FREEZE FRAME

by John Yandell

66 ASK NICK

by Nick Bollettieri

68 COACH'S CORNER

70 THE GIGI METHOD

by Gigi Fernandez

72 COURT CALCULUS

by Frank Giampaolo

74 MENTAL EDGE

by Allen Fox, Ph.D.

76 BALL MACHINE DRILLS

by Lance Luciani

80 LEARNING FROM LEGENDS

by Peter Burwash

TENNIS (ISSN 0040-2423) IS PUBLISHED BI-MONTHLY, VOL. 51, NO. 4. COPYRIGHT © 2016 BY THE TENNIS MEDIA COMPANY LLC, 48 WEST 21ST STREET, 6TH FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY 10010. REPRODUCTION WITHOUT PERMISSION IS PROHIBITED. TITLE "TENNIS" REGISTERED U.S. PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE, CANADA AND OTHER COUNTRIES. PRINTED IN THE U.S.A. CANADIAN DISTRIBUTION-IPM AGREEMENT NO. 1239007. MANUSCRIPTS AND ART: THE PUBLISHER ASSUMES NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR RETURN OF UNSOLICITED MANUSCRIPTS, ART, PHOTOS, OR NEGATIVES. SUBSCRIPTIONS: USTA MEMBERS: (800) 990-8782 OR MEMBERSERVICES@USTACOM. ALL OTHER SUBSCRIBERS: U.S. AND CANADA: (800) 666-8326; FOREIGN: (386) 246-0427 OR TENNIS@MAILCUSTOMERSERVICE.COM. SUBSCRIPTION RATES: U.S.A. AND POSSESSIONS: \$18 U.S./YEAR; CANADA: \$35 U.S./YEAR (INCLUDES GST); FOREIGN: \$50 U.S./YEAR. CANADIAN GST REGISTRATION NO. 12368843R#T***. BACK ISSUES: WWW.TENNIS.COM/BACKISSUES. CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR SUBSCRIPTION PROBLEMS: SEND YOUR MAGAZINE LABEL ALONG WITH YOUR NEW ADDRESS OR DETAILS OF YOUR PROBLEM TO TENNIS, P.O. BOX 433188-3188 PALM COAST, FL 32143-3188. PLEASE ALLOW EIGHT WEEKS FOR THE CHANGE TO AFFECT DELIVERY. ADDRESS ALL NON-SUBSCRIPTION CORRESPONDENCE TO TENNIS, 48 WEST 21ST STREET, 6TH FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY 10010. POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO TENNIS, P.O. BOX 433188-3188 PALM COAST, FL 32143-3188. PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID AT NEW YORK, NY, AND ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES.

Now, Solgar unlocks
the power of curcumin like never before.

More active.
185 times
better
bioavailability.
Faster
absorbed.



©2016 Solgar, Inc.



That's the difference with Solgar® Full Spectrum Curcumin.

For the first time, Solgar transforms poorly absorbed curcumin from a fat-soluble to a water-soluble phytonutrient... making it immediately body-ready, faster absorbed, more active, and more bioavailable than ever before.[◊] Solgar® Full Spectrum Curcumin is so advanced, just 40 mg of curcumin in one softgel delivers the equivalency of nearly 75 (100 mg) capsules of standardized curcumin extract. Even more, in a recent clinical study, Solgar® Full Spectrum Curcumin was shown to be longer lasting so it stays in your system for a full 24 hours.[◊] Now, for brain, joint, and immune health – Solgar changes what you believed was possible from curcumin... forever. Solgar® Full Spectrum Curcumin... one softgel, once a day—185X better.^{◊*}



Proud supporter of
The complete line of Solgar nutritional supplements is available at fine health food retailers worldwide.
For store locations and additional information, visit solgar.com or call 1.800.645.2246

*These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.

◊ Compared to native curcumin extract.

Live Vibrantly. **SOLGAR®**
Since 1947

Time Sensitive

Picture this: A few weeks after slugging it out on the slow clay of Roland Garros, it's time to hit the slippery grass courts at Wimbledon. Shortly after is a trip to Rio de Janeiro for the Olympics, played on hard courts this year. Then chaotic New York City and the US Open take center stage. Sprinkle in a few significant tournaments along the way and you've got the potential four-month span for a pro player this spring and summer. No matter how you slice it, it's an absolute grind.

Whether the result of player health or scheduling decisions, this jammed calendar is bound to result in casualties—John Isner, for one, has already ruled himself out of the Olympics. I look at the tournaments in Washington, D.C., Canada and Cincinnati during the dog days of summer and worry about players pulling out or suffering early losses. Normally they'd be excited for these US Open warm-up events. But when the world's biggest sporting event is sandwiched into the calendar, it can change a player's priorities. If it doesn't cheapen those tournaments, the opportunity to win gold for one's country can certainly make them seem less coveted.

This hasn't always been the case. I played in the Seoul Olympics in 1988, the first time since 1924 that tennis was a medal sport. Our presence there was seen as more of a curiosity, which made

me somewhat ambivalent. Naturally I wanted to win, and it was a fantastic experience—I loved staying in the athlete's village and watching gymnastics and track and field. But the tournament wasn't in the same class as the majors. It didn't help that I was 33, nearing the end of my career, and it took place after the US Open, which signified the end of the Slam season. Players today, however, have never known a Summer Olympics without tennis. Winning there would rank with any career milestone.

But to do so they will have to marshal all their resources. With all the events this spring and summer, preparation and prudent scheduling will be more crucial than ever. Players need to be zealous about their conditioning and peak at the right times. The physical demands will be obvious, but the mental and emotional tolls will exact a heavy price as

well. On-court performance may depend just as much on time management skills as shot-making ability.

This is why I think we'll see a variety of champions throughout the summer, particularly with the women. The depth in the WTA is becoming more apparent this season and, at this point in her tennis career, it's hard to imagine Serena Williams sweeping through all the titles. I certainly expect her to do well, but I also see players like Victoria Azarenka laying claim to big prizes.

The men may follow a more predictable script. Novak Djokovic will remain the heavy favorite in any tournament he enters. If he continues to win virtually all the significant titles, hunger and focus will become his two toughest opponents. And with so many mountains to climb this summer, one thing is certain: There will be no shortage of chances to test his resolve.



Chris Evert
Partner, TENNIS Magazine





one hundred and ten percent

TENNIS
Editor's
CHOICE

BEST
STABILITY

POWER CUSHION
ECLIPSION

STAN WAWRINKA
2-Time Grand Slam Champion



THE SHOE WORTHY OF A CHAMPION

ECLIPSION
POWER CUSHION™

Yonex knows how to build champions from the ground up - and it begins with the shoes. With the world-class performance of the **Power Cushion Eclipsion**, champions like Stan Wawrinka are equipped with maximum shock absorption and seamless energy transfer from movement-to-movement.

If you're ready to elevate your game, start with your shoes.



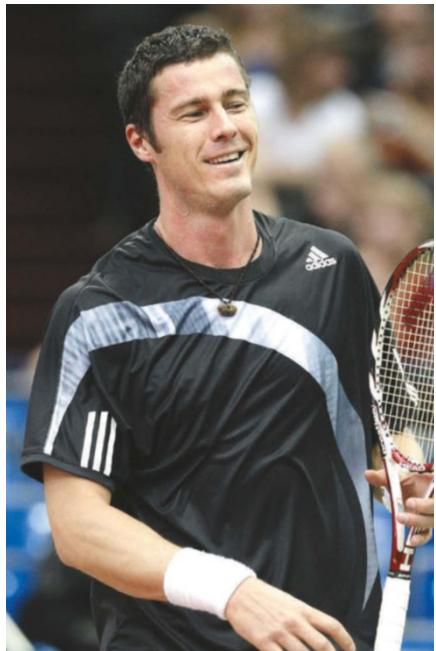
Peter Bodo

TennisWorld

Safin and Henin couldn't have competed more differently, but both will be enshrined.

Hall of a Contrast

- This year's two most notable inductees into the International Tennis Hall of Fame represent a latter-day tale of sinner and saint. There's Marat Safin: dissolute, sybaritic, a cavalier underachiever—yet still accomplished enough to merit enshrinement alongside the sport's icons. And there's Justine Henin: almost nun-like in her devotion to the game and ever faithful to the pact she struck with her tennis-loving mother, who was taken from her by cancer when Henin was just 12.



"I will win this tournament one day," 10-year old Justine promised her mother when the pair visited Roland Garros in 1992 to watch Monica Seles play Steffi Graf in a classic final. She would make good on the vow, winning the French Open four times.

Four years later, Henin began to work with coach Carlos Rodriguez. They struck up a relationship that would transcend the familiar coaching concordat at every level and lasted 15 years. That fealty was

obvious in Henin's professionalism and was justified by her style, a beguiling mix of touch, power and spin. As her game matured, Henin's great distinction emerged: no woman was so small—just 5'5"—yet played so big. She constantly looked to attack, often behind a slice backhand. But it was Henin's one-handed topspin backhand that blew away most aesthetes. It's the connoisseur's shot because it represents utter abandon married to exquisite control.

Safin never matched Henin as a singles champion in Paris (he did, however, always have a great time there), or anywhere else. She was No. 1 for 117 weeks; he for nine. Henin won 43 singles titles—including seven Slams—while Safin collected 15. The sinner's credentials pale in comparison to those of the saint. But not his talent, which became manifest in the 2000 US Open, when the 20-year-old demolished 13-time major champion Pete Sampras in straight sets to win the title.

It is emblematic of Safin's career that it would take him five years to match that performance. At the 2005 Australian Open, Safin beat No. 1-ranked Roger Federer in a dazzling five-set semifinal, then blasted local hero Lleyton Hewitt off the court for his second (and final) major.

Safin stood 6'4" and was armed with a powerful serve and explosive ground strokes. But his greatest liabilities were inconsistency, a hot temper and the satisfaction he took in his reputation as a soulful delinquent. His transgressions ran the gamut: Audible cursing? Check. Smashing racquets? He wrecked 1,055 by his own count, though it seems very un-Safin-like to have kept track, if not to boast about it.

He mooned the fans at Wimbledon in 2004, earning a point penalty and drawing a fine for "visual obscenity" (though he was wearing underwear). Safin loved the nightlife and all that came with it, once showing up to play the Hopman Cup with two black eyes and a bandaged thumb after a brawl in a Moscow nightclub.

Late in his career, Safin went AWOL and decided to climb Cho Oyu, the sixth-highest mountain in the world. He made it into the foothills, then decided his mountaineering days were over. Known for his enigmatic pronouncements, Safin once told Reuters: "I've lived my life the way I wanted to, whether scaling the mountains, partying long into the night or having fun playing soccer."

There's nothing enigmatic about that. Safin clearly was the anti-Henin, but at least in this case, the sinner will reap the same reward as the saint.

WIN
A Trip For 2

2017

WIMBLEDON FINALS

www.grandslamtennistours.com

"Whether I've been playing or watching, the Wimbledon finals are one of the most incredible experiences of my life."

-Fred Stolle



Presented by



Grand Slam Tennis Tours®

"Grand Slam Tennis Tours" is a registered Trademark owned by Grand Slam Tennis Properties Ltd. and is used under exclusive license with Grand Slam Tennis Properties. Topnotch Tennis Tours is not affiliated with Grand Slam Tennis Properties Ltd.



Stephen Tignor

Concrete Elbow

Is there a way to entice top players to enter the doubles draw at every tournament?

Doubling Down

- When tennis returned to the Olympics in 1988, the news was greeted with one overriding question: *Why?* The sport, after all, already had its own version of the Games in the form of the Grand Slams, held four times a year. And the idea of millionaire athletes bunking in the Olympic Village seemed to go against the aspirant, amateur spirit of the competition.



What a difference 28 years makes. The shift from apathy to ardor began in 2000, when the first generation of players to grow up dreaming of gold arrived in Sydney. That year Venus Williams and Roger Federer caught Olympic fever and never recovered.

Since then, tennis at the Games has been transformed. In 1988, the crowded, team-oriented format—singles, doubles and mixed are jammed into one week—was thought to be a bad fit for a super-star-based sport. Now, when Williams and Federer get to Rio de Janeiro, they'll enter the game's most spectator-friendly competition. The Olympics, that former bastion of amateurism, gives us more of

the superstars we want to see than does any other tournament. Top players are happy to enter multiple events when they have a chance to earn medals for their countries. Federer has a singles silver and a doubles gold; Andy Murray has a singles gold and a silver in mixed. The biggest winners, though, are the fans.

This spring, at Indian Wells, when Rafael Nadal got in some pre-Olympic practice with his Spanish partner, Fernando Verdasco, we saw how much a big-name doubles team can energize an event. The excitement their matches generated made me wonder: Is there a way to entice top players to enter the doubles draw at *every* tournament?

This is a question that tennis has tried and failed to answer since the 1970s, when prize money increased to the point where the best singles players could afford to skip doubles. The tours have tried, to no avail, to lure them back by upping doubles purses and shortening match lengths. While doubles is a proven crowd-pleaser, it remains a sideshow played in mostly empty arenas, with scant TV coverage. The fans have little knowledge of, and less emotional attachment to, the best doubles teams.

One way—maybe the only way—to change that would be to make the rankings a combination of singles and doubles results. This idea may sound far-fetched, and it's not on anyone's radar right now, but it would help solve many of tennis' current problems.

With every star from Novak Djokovic to Serena Williams on down involved, fans would have an emotional rooting interest in doubles. With rankings on the line, players would be forced to learn the skills that doubles teaches: volleying, chipping and charging, using lobs and angles. That would bring net-rushing, and all the shots that come with it, back to singles. Tennis has let the doubles half of the sport wither on the vine. This is a way to bring it back to life.

Changes would be needed to accommodate the added matches. The men would likely no longer play three out of five sets at the majors (except in the final, the way they do at the Olympics), and no-ad scoring might have to be used at one-week tournaments. But speeding up play is one of the goals of tennis officials worldwide; this system would shorten matches and put marquee-name players on the court more often.

For now, a combined ranking system remains a long shot. But the current popularity of the Olympics once was as well. All we can do this summer is watch our favorite players share their joy with their doubles and mixed partners in Rio and wonder: Why can't the rest of the season look like that?

POWERED BY



ALL COURT MEN



JET ALL COURT WOMEN

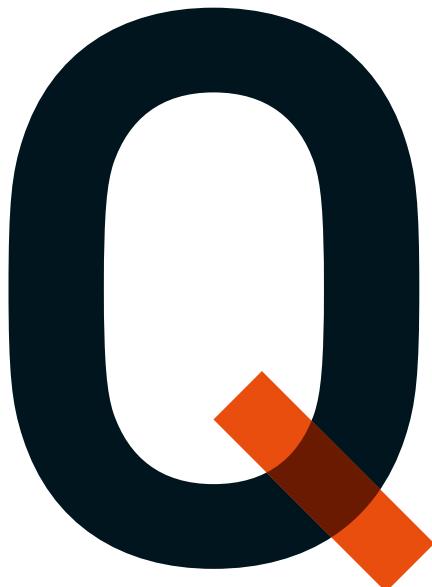


LIGHTER. FASTER. Jet features the new **MATRIX® technology***

In Box

COURT of APPEALS

WITH REBEL GOOD



A mishit landed in on our side, and the ball's backspin carried it back across the plane of the net, outside the sideline. My partner ran around the net post and, from the opponents' side, hit a winner. He never stepped inside their doubles sideline. We claimed the point, saying the only time you can cross the plane of the net is when a ball with backspin returns over the net. They said he can't cross the plane with his whole body. Whose point is it?

—Greg Kleiner, Flagstaff, AZ

Sometimes I wonder where these (mis)interpretations of the rules come from. First of all, you won the point. It has nothing to do with the plane of the net, your partner's "whole body" or his racquet. Rule 24.g says you lose the point if a player touches "the opponent's court at any time while the ball is in play." Running around the net but staying outside the sideline is not touching the opponent's court. Arguably, it's not even "crossing the plane," which refers to reaching over the net.

Keeping Score

After winning the first point of a game, is it appropriate to call the score “five-love,” or must it be the more formal “15-love?” Does it make any difference? It can be confusing when the two expressions are not used consistently.

—Dan Speace, Frederick, MD

I would hope that a player's behavior isn't considered inappropriate simply for using non-standard terminology. That said, while the scores are specifically spelled out in Rule 5, using contractions like “five-love” for “15-love” is perfectly permissible as long as all parties understand. In fact, you can score a game using the numbers zero, one, two and three for the points, and can also use hand signals in a match involving a hearing-impaired player (USTA Comment 5.1).

Ready When You Are

As my opponent served to me in a doubles match, it looked like his partner wasn't ready. I returned the serve and immediately asked for a let. The server said that it doesn't matter whether or not I thought his partner was ready and that it should not be a let. Should we have replayed the point?

—Aaron Blackmon, Houston, TX

You're paying too much attention to the wrong opponent. If the server is ready to serve, it's presumed that his partner is ready, too. Your return indicated that you were ready to play under Rule 21: “A receiver who attempts to return the service shall be considered as being ready.” You had no legitimate reason at that point to request a let, and doing so constituted a “deliberate” hindrance under Rule 26. You not only don't get a replay, but you also lose the point.

Quiet Please!

During a league match, one of our opponents purposely shuffled her feet loudly and waved her arms to distract us when we were about to return her partner's serve. She continued to do it throughout the match. Is this a hindrance?

—Siri R., Ventura, CA

Did you ever ask her to stop? That would be the logical first step in a league match, where enforcement of rules and regulations can often

be problematic. In any event, *The Code*, Item 35, is on your side, stating that “movement or any sound that is made solely to distract an opponent, including, but not limited to, waving arms or racquet, or stamping feet, is not allowed.” (She was doing both!) □

Phantom Call

I hit a return close to the sideline and the net player made an obvious hand gesture signaling the ball out. He did not verbalize the out call, but I stopped playing even though I thought the ball had hit the line. His partner continued to play and hit a hard shot at my partner, who was at the net. A pair of quick volleys were exchanged, and as I raised my hand to question the situation, my partner's last volley was in the air and landed out. I wanted to play a let since I had stopped playing after the hand-gesture out signal. My partner said he didn't see the hand gesture and, unfortunately, our opponent did not fess up. They took the point. Was this correct?

—S. Huffstetler, Wake Forest, NC

Here's your problem: your opponent denied making an out call (a hand signal is legitimate) and your partner kept on playing. Thus, you had no reason to stop playing, and you lost the point when your partner's last volley went out (Rule 24.c.). If this happens again, you should vocally stop play immediately. At least that deals with half the problem: your partner continuing to play. Then you can have a polite discussion with your opponent regarding his theatrical gestures.

Except where noted, answers are based on the ITF Rules of Tennis and USTA's *The Code*.

Got a question?

Write us, email us, fax us . . .

Mail it to: Tennis InBox
48 West 21st Street, Sixth Floor,
New York, NY 10010

Email it to:
courtofappeals@tennis.com
Or fax it to: (646) 486-5830

Rebel Good is a member of the USTA's Tennis Rules & Regulations Committee. He has taught the rules to officials for more than 20 years.



The choice of pros!

No other grip absorbs or performs as well.
None! Other grips slip when you sweat.
Tenna Grip gets better when wet.
Only with Tenna Grip can you refresh
the grip by re-wrapping with
the underside of grip.
To playtest, send \$1 and we'll send you a grip.

UNIQUE SPORTS PRODUCTS
840 McFarland Parkway, Alpharetta, GA. 30004
www.uniquesports.com

TOURNA GRIP®

The LIGHT BLUE® Grip That Does Not Slip !



TOURNA





Dominic Thiem has posted wins over Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer on clay this season.



Secret Weapon

Babolat's burgeoning young star is swinging a mysterious new stick

BY JON LEVEY

Aside from Novak Djokovic, it's arguable that nobody on the ATP tour has had a better year than Dominic Thiem. The 22-year-old has won two tournaments and is the youngest player in the Top 15. Which begs the question: if things are going so well, why switch racquets?

Just before the Monte Carlo Masters, Thiem revealed a shot of—and shout-out to—his new Babolat frame on social media. According to the company, it's a prototype still in development with the internal code name #ProjectOne7.

With the Pure Drive and Aero franchises, Babolat has become synonymous with power and spin-centric racquets. But after analyzing the evolving nature of the game, its

research and development team set about creating a frame that is more of a balance between the two traits. A frame designed for athletic players with attacking games that need to marry precision with power—a player very much like Thiem.

When he got his hands on it, Thiem immediately gelled with the frame. Other pros are also currently experimenting with the prototype, as Babolat is intent on having the line tour-tested before release.

To that end, Babolat is seeking input from coaches, juniors and recreational players to put the finishing touches on #ProjectOne7. The company has 1,017 prototypes it plans to seed globally over the coming months to solicit feedback. The secret's out—sort of.



Stay Grassy



holabirdsports.com

Serving you since 1981. f    



Rebel in Reverse

Andy Murray isn't the best player of his era, but he may be remembered as its most important.

BY STEPHEN TIGNOR

Murray always lets you know how he's feeling on the court, and the same holds true off of it. In recent years, he's become one of the sport's most outspoken players about issues ranging from doping to equal pay.

AS HE SAT DOWN TO BEGIN HIS FIRST PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE MIAMI OPEN this spring, Andy Murray made for an unlikely-looking radical. Dressed in a blue Under Armour fleece and black sweatpants, with his uncombed hair pushed hastily to one side after a workout, Murray leaned back, put his hands in his pockets and calmly began answering questions. If you knew the world's No. 2-ranked player only from the steady stream of rants, raves and semi-intelligible soliloquies that flow from his mouth when he's on court, you might have had trouble recognizing the soft-spoken, levelheaded, 28-year-old new father who sat before the media.

On this day, though, reporters suspected that Murray, despite his easygoing demeanor, was going to have a juicy quote or two for them. They swarmed his table and pushed their cameras, microphones, notepads and whatever recording device they could find into his face.



Two days earlier,

Raymond Moore, who was then the chairman of the BNP Paribas Open in Indian Wells, had dialed the tennis world's outrage meter up to 11—and talked himself out of a job—by stating that the WTA rides on the “coattails” of the ATP, and that, “If I were a lady player, I would go down on my knees every night and thank God that Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal were born, because they have carried this sport.”

Later that day, Novak Djokovic dug the men’s hole a little deeper when he said that ATP players deserve more prize money than WTA players, and expressed his admiration for female pros this way: “They have to go through a lot of things we don’t have to go through. You know, the hormones and different stuff.”

It wasn’t hard to imagine that, behind closed doors, Djokovic’s opinions, if not Moore’s, were shared by some of Murray’s colleagues. Over time, the Grand Slams offered equal pay, but it had never been fully accepted by the men. In recent years, members of the ATP Player Council have talked about trying to make prize money un-equal again.

Murray and Mauresmo’s partnership was praised in some circles and panned in others. During their two years together, the Scot climbed to a career-high No. 2 ranking.

But Murray was different. He was the only top men’s player who had hired a woman, Amelie Mauresmo, to be his coach, and he was one of the few who deigned to admit that he enjoyed watching women’s tennis. Murray may also be the only male athlete in any sport, ever, to say the following:

“Have I become a feminist?” he asked in a blog post for French newspaper *L’Equipe* last June. “Well, if being a feminist is about fighting so that a woman is treated like a man, then yes, I suppose I have.”

If the media was looking for Murray to start a fight in Miami, he didn’t disappoint. He openly questioned Djokovic’s logic before taking the opportunity, as any good progressive would, to nudge his tradition-bound sport a little farther into the future. “I think there should be equal pay, 100 percent, at all combined events,” Murray said.

Currently, dual-gender tournaments in Rome, Canada and Cincinnati offer more prize money to the men, but there has never been a public push to change that, the way there was at the majors. Yet Murray is confident in the rightness of his cause. “I think it will happen one day,” he said.

Just as startling was what Murray said next:

“Men’s tennis has been lucky over the last nine or 10 years, with the players, the rivalries which have come out of that. That’s great, but the whole of tennis should capitalize on that—not just the men’s game.”

Love
oo by hazel oo

THE PERFECT GIFT FOR THE TENNIS ENTHUSIAST IN YOUR LIFE



Celebrate your captain and doubles partner this season with a gift that's sure to be a hit both on and off the court!

www.LoveTennisByHazel.com



The idea that superstars like Federer, Nadal and Djokovic should be working to help not just the men's game, but the men's *and* women's games, really is something new under the tennis sun. For more than 40 years, since the ATP and WTA were formed in 1972, the tours have run on separate tracks. The chauvinistic schism is built right into the names of their organizations: the Women's Tennis Association was created in part because, as Billie Jean King put it, "the so-called Association of Tennis Professionals wouldn't admit female tennis professionals."

In 2009, WTA commissioner Larry Scott proposed merging the tours and combining their star power, but the men were happy to continue going it alone. Now, finally, they have a player in Murray who is willing to cross the game's invisible net. At a time when the U.S. women's soccer team and UFC fighter Ronda Rousey have lifted the profile of female athletes in the United States, and women's sports look poised to grow, Murray seems less like a wild-eyed revolutionary and more like the right man for the moment.

How did this lifelong boxing fanatic, who once talked about his willingness to drill his opponents with the ball from point-blank range, become tennis' most sensitive son? Murray's first coach was his mother, Judy, but his sympathy for women's causes grew from the "prejudice" that he watched Mauresmo endure in the early days of their partnership. When Murray struggled after hiring her in 2014, former British champions Virginia Wade and Tim Henman were among those who questioned his choice.

"The staggering thing was that she was [criticized] every time I lost," Murray told *L'Equipe*, "which is something my former coaches never, ever experienced. It wasn't right... Her competence was under fire. I felt embarrassed."

When Murray reached his first major final with Mauresmo, at the 2015 Australian Open, he was vindicated.

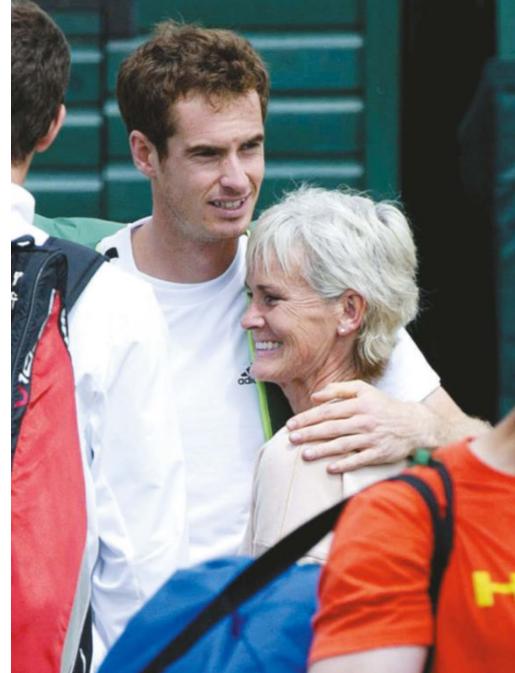
"A lot of people criticized me working with her," Murray said. "And I think so far this week we have shown that women can be very good coaches as well."

By the middle of 2016, Murray and Mauresmo's partnership, historic as it was, had run its course. They parted ways a day after Murray lost to Djokovic in the Madrid final. The moment was symbolic: While Mauresmo had guided Murray to his highest career ranking, No. 2, made him a more consistent competitor and improved his play on clay, she couldn't push him up to the top rung of the ladder. Murray and Mauresmo didn't win a Grand Slam title in their two years together, and his loss in Madrid was his 12th in his last 13 meetings with Djokovic.

The Murray-Mauresmo team broke a barrier and made a point, but in the eyes of the sport and the ever-ravenous British media, it still left him with more to prove. Would Murray want it any other way?

"To suggest that he likes proving people wrong," English sportswriter Simon Barnes once wrote of Murray, "is to suggest that Richard Burton liked a drink."

* * *



The bond between Andy and his mother, Judy, has only grown stronger as he's become a more successful pro.

While Murray's recent feminist turn is sincere, it's also typical of an athlete who has always been driven to show the bashers and naysayers—there's no shortage of either in his country—the errors of their ways, and to take his own road to success, even if it appears to be a long one. This is a man who, at the tender age of 21, released an autobiography with the not-so-tender title *Hitting Back*. On court and off, Murray's instinct is to counter-punch.

It's a trait he seems to have inherited from his mother. In 2003, frustrated by the lack of resources for tennis in the U.K., Judy Murray took out a £30,000 loan to send her youngest son to train on red clay near Barcelona, Spain.

"It was a big risk," she told *The Guardian*. "I didn't realize what we were getting into, but I knew this was the next step he had to take."

This wasn't something that had been done often in the tennis no man's land of Scotland. But it was prescient. On clay, Murray learned the patient, thoughtful game that has served him well in an era when all surfaces have slowed. Murray's methodical approach has also served his country well. When it comes to British tennis, he has been a one-man oasis after a century of wandering in the desert.

In 2012, Murray became the first British man since 1908 to win an Olympic gold medal, and, with his victory at the US Open, the first to win a Grand Slam singles title in 76 years. In 2013, on his ninth try, he became the first British man since Fred Perry to win Wimbledon, ending a 77-year drought. Last November he went 11–0 in Davis Cup competition to lead Great Britain to its first title in the team tournament since 1936.

 FOLLOW ANDY MURRAY DURING WIMBLEDON AND THE OLYMPIC GAMES AT TENNIS.COM

HEAD PRO PLAYERS MAY PLAY WITH DIFFERENT RACQUETS FROM THE MODEL SHOWN



THE FUTURE IS RADICAL

IT MIGHT AS WELL BE THE FIRST RACQUET YOU'VE EVER TOUCHED. THAT'S HOW REVOLUTIONARY GRAPHENE XT MAKES THE NEW RADICAL. TRY IT BECAUSE YOU LIKE HOW DIFFERENT IT LOOKS. BUY IT BECAUSE YOU LIKE HOW DIFFERENT IT PLAYS.

GRAPHENE XT RADICAL



HEAD[®]
.COM



With thousands watching in Centre Court and millions watching across Britain, Murray tracked down Djokovic's shots throughout a historic Wimbledon final victory. Since then, he's gone 1-12 against the Serb.

In all of those cases, Murray accomplished something that many fans in his nation had given up hope of ever seeing. And he did it by ignoring his self-appointed advisers, the columnists and ex-champs who told him he needed to be more aggressive; to leave his beloved baseline and come to the net; to stop whining and moaning and barking profane gibberish; to distance himself from his mother—to become, in other words, someone else.

"I think I persevered," Murray said of his 2013 Wimbledon triumph. "That's really been it, the story of my career, probably. I had a lot of tough losses, but the one thing I would say is I think every year I always improved a little bit. They weren't major improvements, massive changes, but every year my ranking was going in the right direction."

If anything, Murray's taste for bucking the boys' club conventions of pro sports has only grown since. In 2014, he replaced Ivan Lendl, the coach who had helped him earn his biggest wins, with Mauresmo. The laid-back Frenchwoman was different from the stone-cold Czech-turned-American in every regard. After the early criticism, though, and as Murray's ranking rose, she was grudgingly accepted.

But that spring, Murray found himself defending his relationship with another woman: his wife, Kim Sears. After their April wedding, there were questions about how married life would affect his focus. Murray answered them by winning the first two clay-court titles of his career, in Munich and Madrid. In Madrid, he walked off court and scrawled "MARRIAGE WORKS" on a camera lens.

This February, Sears gave birth to their first child, Sophia. When Murray struggled in his return, speculation swirled that fatherhood was proving to be a distraction. Again,

Murray wasted no time in shooting down that argument. It sounded like heresy from a pro athlete, but he said his family came first.

"I'd rather be getting up in the middle of the night and helping [my daughter]," he told the *Daily Mail*, "than winning every tennis match and her thinking when she grows up, 'Actually, you know what, he was a s---ty dad, but he won a lot of tennis matches.'"

By the time this year's clay swing rolled around, Murray seemed to be relishing his role as a rogue force on tour. In an interview with *The Mail on Sunday*, he ignored the traditional code of silence among athletes about doping and went public with his suspicions.

"I have played against players and thought, 'They won't go away,' or 'They don't seem to be getting tired,'" Murray said. "Have I ever been suspicious of someone? Yeah, you hear things."

Murray vowed to continue speaking his mind on the subject. And why shouldn't he? In this era, the top male players have been the most effective forces for change, whether it's demanding more prize money or prodding the US Open to get rid of Super Saturday and build a roof over Arthur Ashe Stadium. Murray has been integral to those discussions; if he can get the same authorities to do

A.P.

NITRO

LIGHTWEIGHT
LOW-TO-THE-GROUND
BREATHABILITY



TENNIS HAS A NEW RIVALRY
SPEED VS. POWER

STABILITY
CUSHIONING
DURABILITY

REVOLT

HEAD
.COM



In Rio de Janeiro, Murray will defend his gold medal, which he won by defeating Federer at Wimbledon at the 2012 London Games.

more about doping, and increase fans' trust that the sport is clean, he really will have pulled off something radical.

* * *

For all of Murray's progress off the court, though, his recent on-court performances haven't been enough to keep the bashers at bay.

Three years after his dizzying Wimbledon peak, and the back surgery that brought him back to earth, Murray is as steady as ever. In 2015, he went 70–6 against everyone except Djokovic or Federer; the trouble is, he went 1–8 against those two. As well as he played with Mauresmo on a week-to-week basis, he didn't scale the same heights that he did with Lendl. Instead, Murray has had to watch as his old rival, Djokovic, has used his methods to pass him by.

At the start of 2014, Djokovic hired his own super-coach in Boris Becker. He wanted an ex-champion to do for him what Lendl had done for Murray: Get him over the hump in major finals. Since then, Djokovic has won five Grand Slam titles while Murray has remained at two. According to Djokovic, the difference has to do with endurance, both physical and psychological.

"I get the feeling," Djokovic said when asked about his

matches with Murray, "that if I get to stay with him and kind of work, work, work, not get too loose and too frustrated and not allow him to get into a big lead, I feel like there is a point where I feel that I have the edge, maybe physically."

Does Murray need a figure like Lendl in his camp, a player whose accomplishments were greater than his own and who accepts nothing less than success? When they were together, Murray seemed just as concerned with not hurting Lendl's reputation as he was with improving his own. If there's a difference between his play with Lendl and his play since, it's in the way Murray has handled adversity.

Before the fifth set of the 2012 US Open final against Djokovic, Murray famously gave himself a pep talk in a men's-room mirror. He walked back out and won the title. Three years later, when he lost to Djokovic in the 2015 Australian Open final, Murray talked about how distracted he had been when the Serb appeared to hurt himself in the middle of the match. When he was asked whether he thought Djokovic had deliberately tried to throw him off, Murray, rather than dismiss the idea, said, "I don't know."

Murray had committed the ultimate sportsman's sin: He let himself be rattled by something he couldn't control.

Lendl, it seems, instilled the confidence in Murray that, no matter his opponent, winning was always up to him. Over the last three years, Murray's old nemeses have gotten back into his head and shaken that confidence.

On the brink of his 30s, can Murray recapture his no-excuses, Slam-winning attitude? Can a sensitive male finish first? As always with him, the fact that so many people think it won't happen may be the best reason to think that it will.

A GRAND SLAM LINEUP

FOUR UNBEATABLE BRANDS

ONE UNMATCHED SELECTION



EVERY SEASON STARTS AT

DICK'S
SPORTING GOODS

SHOP ALL THE BEST NAMES IN TENNIS IN-STORE OR ONLINE AT DICKS.COM



Novak Djokovic is one of many tour pros that globetrot with a pet. "Logistically it's not easy," he admits, "especially when you travel on the opposite side of the world."

PUPPY LOVE

Players go to great lengths, and heights, to bring their furry friends on the road

By Douglas Robson



FOR GLOBETROTTING TOUR insiders, Chip, Pierre and Bruno manage to keep a low profile, not to mention a lot of feet on the ground.

They jet off to tournaments. They carry special passports. They hang out in the players' lounge, show up at press conferences and pass on a first-name basis. But you won't find them on any official credential, guest or entry list.

Chip, Pierre and Bruno walk on all fours. They are dogs.

Like coaches, nutritionists and conditioning experts, canines are increasingly part of the ever-expanding modern tennis entourage; a lavish—and some would argue, outlandish—ingredient in the smorgasbord of circuit life.

No shortage of top players travel with their tail-waggers, from Serena Williams, Novak Djokovic and Caroline Wozniacki (regularly) to Bethanie Mattek-Sands, Andy Murray and Svetlana Kuznetsova (occasionally).

To owners, the headaches of criss-crossing continents with a dog in tow are outweighed by the gift of unconditional affirmation despite life lived out of a suitcase. They are a touchstone of domestic stability and companionship on tennis' long and lonely road.

"It's so comforting," said Williams, who often refers to her 10-pound Yorkshire Terrier, Chip, as "my son."

"We don't see them as just an animal," echoes Djokovic, whose toy poodle, Pierre, is closest to his wife, Jelena.

As Wozniacki says of her Pomeranian puffball, Bruno, who never leaves home without his European Union doggy passport: "It's totally worth it. He's always happy to see you."

Weathering far-flung time zones with a mutt or, more typically, a pint-sized purebred, is not as expensive as it might sound. The added fees for flights, hotels and food amount to a few thousand dollars a year, said several players. That's pocket change to multi-millionaires like Williams and Djokovic.

But the potential hassles are many, and are occasionally emotionally costly. Animals end up stranded at customs by paperwork snafus. They relieve themselves in busy airports or hotel lobbies. They must be fed, walked and exercised, all while negotiating the rigorous demands of elite tennis.



"I love dogs," says Djokovic, whose transition to fatherhood last year did not deter him from adding a second toy poodle, Tesla, to his growing brood. "But logically it's not easy, especially when you travel on the opposite side of the world."

Indeed, dog-care duties often fall on other members of a player's team. Significant others, parents and hitting partners all pitch in. But players also go to great lengths to make their pets content, and it is not unusual to see them out strolling with their dogs on

streets and in cafés across the globe. Djokovic recently found himself sneaking 7-year-old Pierre into the cramped lavatory of a transatlantic flight so that the little poodle could do his business. He positioned Pierre over the seat. He sweet-talked. He stroked his fur. He flushed. Pierre did not oblige.

If the idea of Serbia's best-known citizen at 33,000 feet bent over the toilet coaxing his dog to go sounds absurd, Djokovic does not disagree. "What can I do?" he says, sounding chagrined as he explains commercial

airlines' in-bag policy, even for flights that can last 14 hours. "It's the only place I can let him out."



Dog-friendly travel is generally confined to Europe and the U.S., where entry and quarantine laws are less strict compared to Asia and Australia. The one exception is England, where entry remains a challenge, players say.

A few years ago, Kuznetsova tried to bring Dolce, her 50-pound American Bulldog, to Wimbledon. The two-time Grand Slam champion hit a snag on arrival and the notoriously strict U.K. authorities placed Dolce in quarantine.

Kuznetsova was beside herself. She left the tournament to visit him every day at a small, dirty facility next to Heathrow Airport. The fees ended up costing her more than her hotel in London. "It was a mess," she says. "I was crying so much."

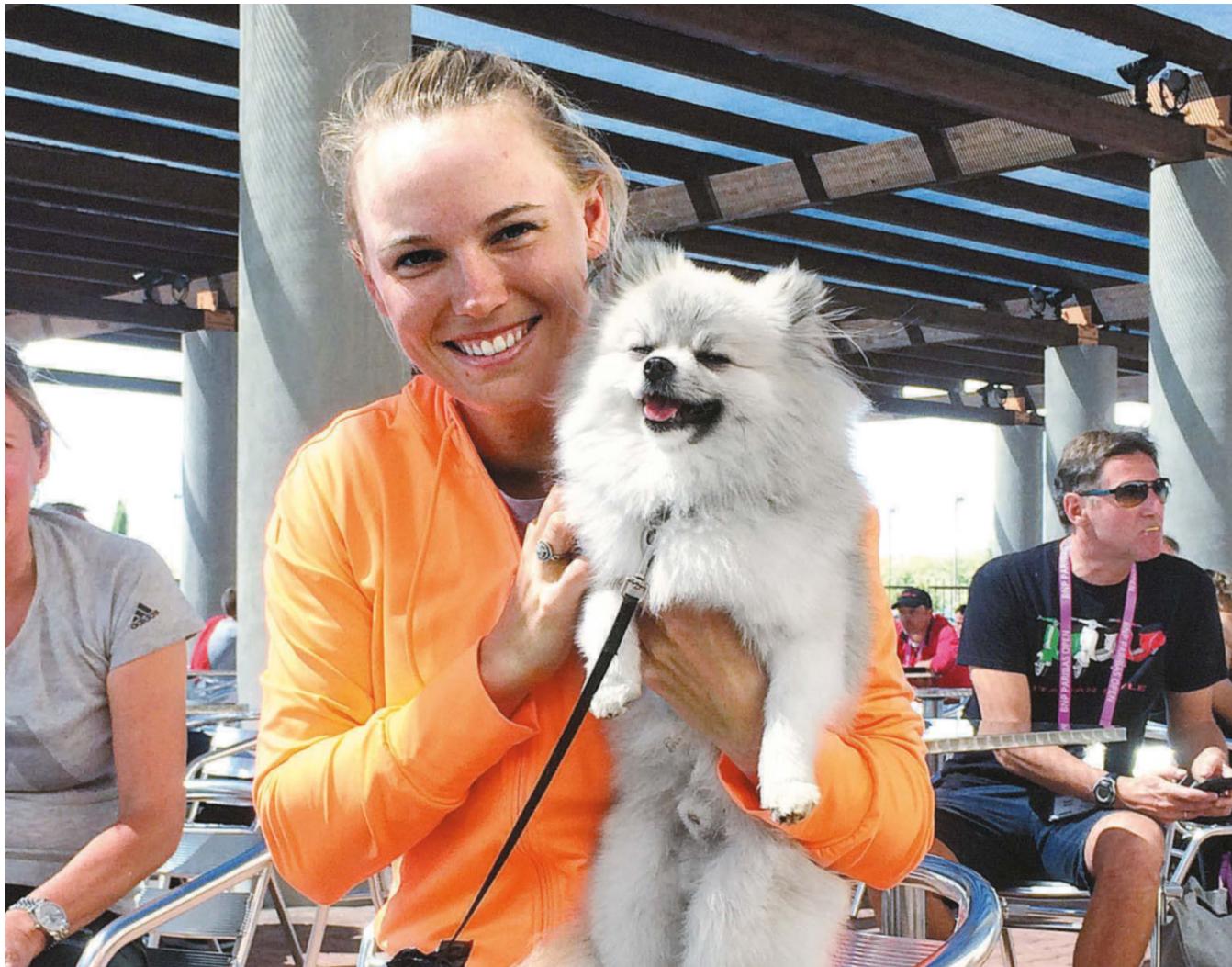
By definition, the best-traveled dogs are toy breeds. They rarely exceed 20 pounds, so they can ride inside airplane cabins. But there are exceptions.

American Bethanie Mattek-Sands has taken to the road with Ruger, a 140-pound South African Mastiff-like breed called a Boerboel. Named for the Ruger Magnum firearm, he entered her life when she and her husband, Justin, started dating. Justin had acquired Ruger just before they met.

Ruger, understandably, has never flown. But he has accompanied the couple on road trips from their Arizona base to tournaments in California. One summer, Ruger visited several tour stops on the East Coast and in Canada.

Despite his intimidating size, Mattek-Sands says Ruger is a big baby. He doesn't thrive away from the familiar surroundings of home. He won't eat at first. He's startled by any small noise. He must sleep with his toys. "He kinda freaks out a little bit," she says.

Mattek-Sands says she and her husband often feel like "absentee parents" because they leave him in the care of others so often. And though he's high-maintenance, Ruger is a sweet, obedient, playful pooch that sleeps with them in bed. "He's like another person to cuddle with," Mattek-Sands says.



Serena Williams holds her prize—a 10-pound Yorkshire Terrier, Chip (left, top)—in the locker room after winning the 2015 French Open.

When Venus Williams' dog, Harold (left, bottom, on right), isn't traveling with her on tour, he hangs out with friends in designer bags.

English is the lingua franca of the multinational tennis circuit, and it is for many dogs. Wozniacki taught her dog, Bruno (above), to respond to commands in English, so anyone could tell him to "sit" or "stay."

When he leaves a mark, however, it doesn't go unnoticed. "They're huge," says Mattek-Sands of Ruger's droppings. "You won't miss them."



Not everyone views the decision to tote animals around the world as a worthwhile inconvenience. Dominika Cibulkova's parents were none too pleased when the Slovakian started to travel regularly with her two Yorkshire Terriers, Woody and Spajky.

Kuznetsova says her father, a renowned coach of several Olympic cycling medalists, went "nuts" when she began to bring Dolce to tournaments. "He said, 'You cannot do this! You're an athlete! You need to focus! You will disturb your sleep,' and blah blah blah."



While modern travel and lucrative prize money have made such extravagances possible, the idea of folding a pet into the most peripatetic of sports strikes others as doggone crazy.

"It's not for me," says animal lover Agnieszka Radwanska, with a dismissive roll of the eyes.

Jelena Jankovic, who has a Maltese named Stella at her home in San Diego, goes a bit further. She says it's unfair. "Being in a bag all day is not fun," the Serbian says. "I prefer my dog to be at home and live a normal life."

Still, others view it as a luxury for the elite. "I think that only would work if you're one of the top players flying privately," says dog-loving American Tim Smyczek. "That would be a goal of mine—to afford a dog on tour."



Most dogs coexist amiably on tour, but tensions can arise. Mattek-Sands says Ruger became embroiled in a "stand-off" with Kuznetsova's Dolce when they crossed paths in a hotel lobby.

"They had this little alpha male thing going," says Mattek-Sands. "I'm just glad Justin was holding him because he's strong. If he really wants to take off, I have no chance."

Some dogs keep to themselves. Maria Sharapova's Pomeranian, also named Dolce, once appeared in a series of Canon ads with the L.A.-based superstar but is not one to mingle. "He's unsocial," Sharapova says, "kind of like his owner."

Social or not, players face daily inconveniences in exchange for their loyalty. Dogs disrupt sleep by barking at strange noises. They whine. They snore. They get sick. They act out. Kuznetsova's dog once chewed up her favorite sunglasses. But that's not his main offense. "He farts a lot," she says.

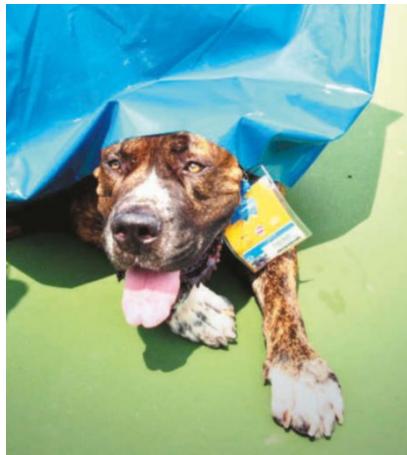
Food is another issue. Simple kibble does not always make the cut. Some players cart special concoctions with them. Diet-crazed Djokovic says he cooks rice, carrots and beef for Pierre and Tesla. Sharapova's tiny and spirited dog is on a raw diet. "It's a Russian thing," she says.

And though no toy is more ubiquitous to dogs than the tennis ball, not all

ATP and WTA canines are necessarily fans. Some chase them; some disdain them. "If I throw him a tennis ball he just looks at me and says, 'OK you run and get it,'" Djokovic says of Pierre.

Wozniacki, on the other hand, trained Bruno not to chase tennis balls, or any yellow ball. "We said no because when I'm practicing I want him to be at the side of the court," she says.

On the flip side, dogs jump for joy, wag tails, lick faces and gaze up adoringly. Players who don't take them on the road describe giddy reunions when they reunite back at home. "My best moment is when I come from a trip and I open the door and my dog starts running in circles," Jankovic gushes.



One of the bigger dogs on tour, Ruger (above, left) doesn't travel as often as some of the other tennis pets. When he does come along with Mattek-Sands (above, right), however, he makes sure to wear his tournament credential.

"I think we all need distractions, something to look forward to when we come back home—the unconditional love you get from pets," says Nadia Petrova, whose French Bulldog, Lulu, stays at her base in South Florida. "They are the best therapists."

And while there are challenges, the bond between master and dog runs deep, even for some of the world's least stationary athletes. "We're all one family," says Djokovic.

Williams says she would travel more regularly with Chip and her other dog, a Maltese named Lorelei, if she could. But even that would barely suffice, says the American great. "I could live with 100 of them if I had the time."



ORDER TODAY, SHIPS TODAY!
FREE SHIPPING & FREE RETURNS
Exclusions may apply.



PURE AERO
FRENCH OPEN
\$229



GRAPHENE XT SPEED MP
LIMITED EDITION
\$199.95



BURN FST
95 / 99 / 99S
\$219



TEXTREME WARRIOR
100 • \$199 / 100T • \$189
100L • \$179

ORDER DEMOS ONLINE
TennisExpress.com/Demo



MEN'S ZOOM
VAPOR 9.5 TOUR
\$140.00



WOMEN'S ZOOM
VAPOR 9.5 TOUR
\$140.00



MEN'S BARRICADE
HANNIBAL
\$139.95



WOMEN'S ADIZERO
ÜBERSONIC ARTEMIS
\$124.95

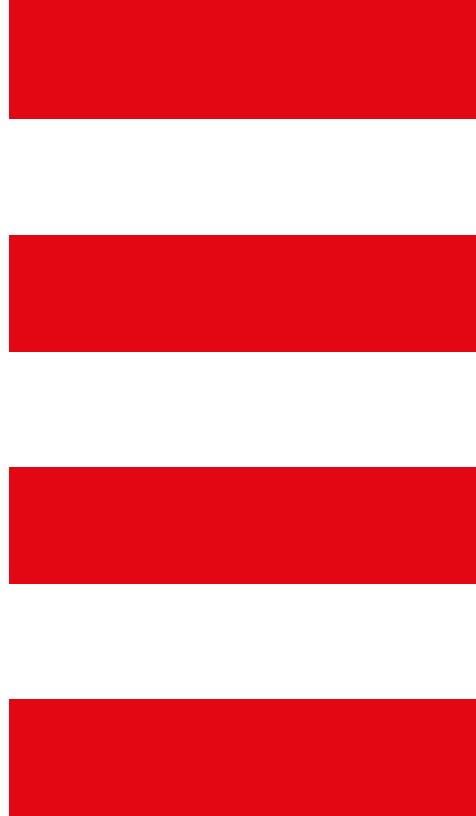
SHOP ALL YOUR
FAVORITE BRANDS



713.435.4800



Shop TennisExpress.com



At 36, Williams doesn't play as often as she used to. But given her unrivaled Olympic experience, it would be foolhardy to discount her chances in Rio de Janeiro.



FOR THE LOVE OF THE GAMES

How Venus Williams—playing a record fifth Olympics this summer in Rio—caught the American team spirit, and never lost it.

By Stephen Tignor

Venus Williams, by all outward appearances, is the most unflappable of tennis players. Unlike her theatrically demonstrative younger sister, Serena, Venus doesn't beat her opponents with fist pumps, stare downs or exultations. She uses something equally as daunting: a majestically stony game face that nothing can dislodge.

Well, almost nothing. Even after 20 demanding years on tour, there is one tennis-related topic that can make this 36-year-old veteran break into a mile-wide smile and giggle with the uncontrollable enthusiasm of a girl half her age: the Olympic Games.

Sixteen years after making her Olympic debut at age 20 in Sydney, Williams still describes the experience of playing for her country as "the pinnacle of my career," and her four gold medals as "icing on the cake with a cherry on top." The last time she played the Games, in 2012, it took some time before the normally reserved Venus could stop gushing.

ORDER TODAY, SHIPS TODAY!
FREE SHIPPING & FREE RETURNS
Exclusions may apply.



EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARD

ULTRA 100

"BEST NEW LINE" 2016

TENNIS MAGAZINE

"THE ULTRA COMBINES ALL THE QUALITIES OF THE BEST CRISP, MODERN-PLAYER FRAMES WITH A LITTLE SOFTER FEEL."

FREE STRINGING
with Synthetic Gut or
Upgrade to NXT for \$9.95.



Wilson

713.435.4800



Shop TennisExpress.com



Williams did the difficult and rare double at the Sydney Games in 2000, winning gold medals in singles and doubles.

"The Olympics was so great for me," Venus said three weeks later. "To win [the doubles gold, with Serena] again, I really felt like it was the best moment of my career. Just felt amazing. Still very giddy about it."

"I don't think it really started sinking in until the next day. I was walking through the airport, like, 'Oh my God,' and I just felt so emotional. I'm by myself looking like a teary nut."

Venus wasn't done talking about the Olympics; she never is. Asked where she stashes her gold medals, she brought up her favorite pastime at the Games: trading souvenir flag pins with other athletes.

"I have a pin bag dating back to 2000," she said. "I keep a pin collection."

Then she stopped and looked around the room; the tennis media, she realized, had heard her tell this story a few times before.

"I guess you all know that I collect pins," she said, as the room broke up in laughter.

"I think eventually when my career is over," Venus said of her pin bag, "maybe I'll make something cool [out of it]. But for now I feel like I'm still adding."

Tennis has always been Venus' life, but it's probably not an exaggeration to say that the opportunity to play tennis at the Olympics has added a significant number of years to her career. Age, injury, illness, the rise of her sister, the decline of her own once-dominant game, the daily grind of the tour: She's survived it all by keeping her next trip to the Games front and center in her mind.

After losing early at the 2004 Games in Athens, she vowed to return in Beijing in 2008. That might have been a logical stopping point for most 12-year tour veterans, but not for Venus. In 2007, as *The Sun* reported, she "delivered a shock warning to her rivals by insisting she plans to stay around until the London Olympics in 2012."

In 2011, Venus announced

that she was suffering from Sjogren's Syndrome, an incurable immune condition that often leaves her fatigued. When her ranking fell to No. 134, many believed her retirement was imminent, but Venus found strength in the Olympic spirit again.

"When I don't want to get up, or I want to do something different," she said in the spring of 2012, as she fought to qualify for the American team, "I think about the Olympics and how if I don't do the right thing, I might not be there. That keeps me on the straight and narrow."

Four years later, Venus is still on that straight and narrow. This time her dedication has given her a chance to make history in Rio. If she qualifies for the four-woman team—as of May, she was the second-ranked American, behind her sister—Venus will join Roger Federer as the first tennis players to compete in five Olympic Games.

One potential teammate, Sloane Stephens—who was

7 years old when Venus won gold in Sydney—is suitably awed by the achievement.

"Venus is a beast," Stephens told *The Post and Courier* this spring. "For me to play in one Olympics, that would totally be fine. But for her to play in five, that's like... I don't even know. She's not even human."

Madison Keys, who was 5 years old in 2000, says that being a part of Venus' fifth Olympics is one of the reasons she's driven to make the United States team.

For Venus, who is used to the solo tour life, the Games are a place for camaraderie as well as competition.

"It's about the lifelong friends that you make that you didn't necessarily know," Venus has said. "That's what the Olympics is about, bringing people together that you never get to meet."

Still, competition, rather than camaraderie, has always been her first priority. She's never found time to attend another Olympic event.



Venus and Serena have won three of the last four women's doubles events at the Olympics, most recently at the 2012 London Games.

"In Beijing," she said, "they had the archery across the street. I wanted to go so bad and be a part of it."

Venus was groomed to be a pro and compete for her own glory, but in 2000 she was happy to be immersed in the youthful exuberance of the Olympics, and to play for something greater than herself. In turn, she helped imbue the tennis competition with an amateur spirit.

You could see it most clearly when Venus and Serena won doubles gold in Sydney. After Serena slammed home an overhead on match point, the sisters tossed their racquets in the air, stumbled into each other's arms in a delirious hug and circled the court waving U.S. flags. Today, all medal-winning players celebrate the same way, as if they've reached the pinnacles of their careers.

When Venus and Serena circled the court that day, perhaps the proudest member of their family was their

father, Richard. Whenever Venus is asked where she learned to love the Games, she cites his influence.

"The reason I played the Olympics was my dad," Venus has said. "He always wanted us to play. He always thought it was special."

Richard Williams grew up in Louisiana, in the segregated South of the 1940s and '50s. In his autobiography, *Black and White*, he wrote about how, when Venus was born, he feared that she "was going to go through all the prejudice I went through" in the United States.

Does this make his love of the Olympics, the most nationalistic sporting event, a surprise? It may be reminiscent of the love that Arthur Ashe, another African-American raised in the South in that era, had for Davis Cup.

"Segregation and racism had me loathe aspects of the white South, but had left me scarcely less of a patriot," Ashe said. "In fact, to me and

my family, winning a place on our national team would mark my ultimate triumph over all those people who had opposed my career."

In 2001, when Venus was infamously booed by fans at Indian Wells, Richard's thoughts went straight to Venus' accomplishments of the previous year.

"Did they realize they were insulting an American champion who had won the US Open and successfully represented her country in the 2000 Olympics?" he wrote in his book.

This year, Venus returned to Indian Wells for the first time since that incident and was greeted with a standing ovation. In the intervening years, she and Serena have helped make tennis in this country more diverse. With Serena, Venus, Keys and Stephens, the U.S. could send a women's team to Rio led by four African-Americans.

While Venus still gets giddy when she talks about

the Games, she knows that the value of the experience goes far deeper than her pin collection. A month after winning her fourth gold in 2012, she lost a night match at the US Open in front of a packed house that cheered loudly for her. While Venus was disappointed, she had won something just as important from the fans.

"This is the first time I've ever played here that the crowd has been behind me like that," Venus said. "Today I felt American, you know, for the first time at the US Open. I've waited my career to have that feeling, and here it is."

"It felt like winning gold."

Now, after four Olympic trips, Venus still has at least one more goal in Rio. She's never had a chance to attend the closing ceremonies.

"It would be a dream of mine," she said this spring.

Would it also mark the closing of her career? Don't bet on it. The 2020 Games are only four years away.

BASELINE



TENNIS WITHOUT
BOUNDARIES

BASELINE.TENNIS.COM

BEFORE THE GAMES BEGIN IN RIO,
PUT YOUR TENNIS
KNOWLEDGE TO THE TEST

OLYMPICS QUIZ

BY STEPHEN TIGNOR

1

How did the first men's singles gold medalist, John Pius Boland of Ireland, come to enter the 1896 Athens Games?

- A. He was ranked No. 1
- B. He was the reigning Wimbledon champion
- C. He was visiting a friend in Greece
- D. Nobody else played tennis in Ireland then



2

What did Roger Federer and Stan Wawrinka do after winning the men's doubles gold at the 2008 Beijing Games?

A. THEY CHEST-BUMPED

B. THEY LIFTED EACH OTHER'S ARMS LIKE BOXERS

C. THEY POUNDED THEIR HEARTS FIVE TIMES

D. WAWRINKA LAY ON THE COURT, WHILE FEDERER BLEW ON HIS HANDS TO "COOL STAN OFF"

3

Which player has the distinction of having denied a 19-year-old Federer the bronze medal at the Sydney Olympics in 2000?

- A. XAVIER MALISSE
- B. TOMMY HAAS
- C. ARNAUD DI PASQUALE
- D. PATRICK RAFTER



4

What was the furthest round that **Pete Sampras** advanced to at an Olympic Games?



- A. FINAL
- B. FIRST ROUND
- C. THIRD ROUND
- D. QUARTERFINALS



5

Before the 2012 London Games, **Serena Williams** was asked whether winning a bronze would be an acceptable result. What was her answer?

- A. “**A MEDAL IS A MEDAL.**”
- B. “**I GUESS I WOULD HAVE TO LIVE WITH IT.**”
- C. “**MAYBE I COULD HAVE IT DIPPED IN GOLD?**”
- D. “**OH, PLEASE.**”

6

Who was the first male player ranked in the Top 5 to win an Olympic singles gold medal?

A. **ANDRE AGASSI**

C. **RAFAEL NADAL**

B. **YEVGENY KAFELNIKOV**

D. **ANDY MURRAY**

7

Who is the only player to win a “Golden Slam”—the four Grand Slam tournaments plus an Olympic gold medal—in the same season?

- A. Rafael Nadal
- B. Steffi Graf
- C. Don Budge
- D. Margaret Court

8

When tennis returned to the Olympics in 1988 after six decades away, the men’s singles gold medalist was **Miloslav Mecir**. What was this finesse player’s nickname?



9

Which player said this after going on to win Olympic gold? “All week I watched the other athletes up there [listening to their national anthems]... and I thought, ‘Wow, that would be so cool.’”

- A. LINDSAY DAVENPORT
- B. YEVGENY KAFELNIKOV
- C. JENNIFER CAPRIATI
- D. ROGER FEDERER

10

Tennis was part of the Olympics from 1896 to 1924. Why was it dropped for 60 years, beginning in 1928?

- A. BILL TILDEN DEMANDED AN APPEARANCE FEE
- B. OLYMPIC AND TENNIS AUTHORITIES COULDN'T AGREE ON THE DEFINITION OF AMATEURISM
- C. IT WAS REPLACED BY PING-PONG
- D. "IF THE GREEKS DIDN'T PLAY IT, WE DON'T WANT IT," THE HEAD OF THE IOC SAID



12

When tennis returned to the Olympics as a demonstration sport at the 1968 Games in Mexico City, the men's singles gold and silver medals were won by players with the same first name. Who were they?

- A. CLIFF DRYSDALE AND CLIFF RICHEY
- B. PANCHO GONZALEZ AND PANCHO SEGURA
- C. MANUEL SANTANA AND MANUEL ORANTES
- D. TONY ROCHE AND TONY PALAFAX



13

Which U.S. gold medalist also entered paintings in the Olympics' arts competitions?

- A. ANDRE AGASSI
- B. VENUS WILLIAMS
- C. HELEN WILLS MOODY
- D. JENNIFER CAPRIATI

11

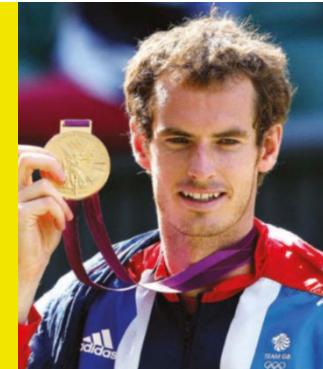
At the 1924 Paris Games, Richard Norris Williams teamed with Hazel Wightman to win the mixed-doubles gold medal for the U.S. What was Williams' other claim to fame?

- A. He was Venus and Serena Williams' great grandfathers.
- B. He survived the sinking of the Titanic.
- C. He later managed the Oakland A's to three World Series championships.
- D. He would become a senator from Pennsylvania.

14

Who called winning an Olympic gold medal "the greatest accomplishment I've ever had in this sport?"

- A. ANDY MURRAY
- B. SERENA WILLIAMS
- C. VENUS WILLIAMS
- D. ANDRE AGASSI



15

Suzanne Lenglen won five matches on her way to the gold medal at the 1920 Games in Antwerp. How many games did she lose?

- | | | |
|----|---|----|
| A. |  | 0 |
| B. | | 1 |
| C. | | 4 |
| D. | | 10 |



16

Esther Vergeer of the Netherlands has won the last four Paralympic gold medals in women's wheelchair singles. How many sets did she lose in the 19 matches she played?

- | | |
|----|----|
| A. | 0 |
| B. | 1 |
| C. | 2 |
| D. | 10 |

17

WHO IS THE ONLY U.S. MAN IN THE LAST 100 YEARS TO WIN SINGLES AND DOUBLES GOLD?

A. VINCENT RICHARDS

C. BILL TILDEN

B. ANDRE AGASSI

D. TIM MAYOTTE

18

Which U.S. Olympian sat through all 4 hours and 26 minutes of the 2012 semifinal between Roger Federer and Juan Martin del Potro?

- A. Michael Phelps
- B. Kobe Bryant
- C. Lindsey Vonn
- D. Gabby Douglas

19

What significant event happened to Roger Federer at the Sydney Olympics in 2000?



20

Who is the only player to win a career Golden Slam in singles and doubles?

- A. ROD LAVER
- B. MARGARET COURT
- C. STEFFI GRAF
- D. SERENA WILLIAMS

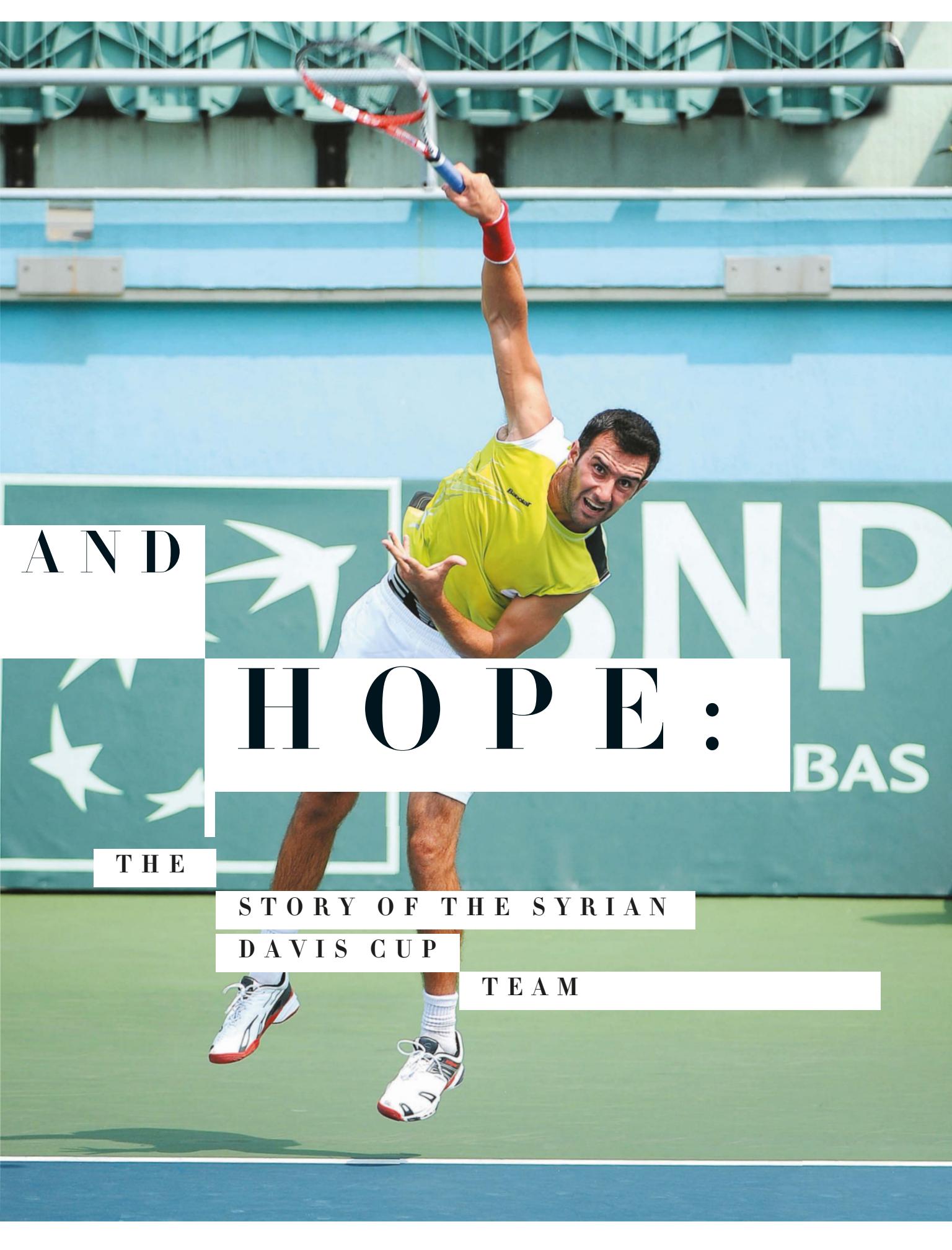
Answers: 1) c (2) d (3) c (4) c (5) d (6) a (7) b (8) c (9) c (10) b (11) b (12) c (13) c (14) d (15) c (16) b (17) a (18) d (19) c (20) d

B Y

DAVID COX

HORROR

Tennis seems trivial in Syria, where "your house could go down any day," according to one player. But there remains a place for the game—even if that place isn't at home.



A N D

H O P E :

T H E

S T O R Y O F T H E S Y R I A N
D A V I S C U P

T E A M

War has torn Syria apart, with no end in sight. Its prominent tennis players have been forced to flee, but (right photo, from left to right) manager Wassim Zinna, Amer Naow, Marc Abdelnour, Kareem Allaf and Bruno Abdelnour continue to compete for the flag of their suffering nation.



In central Aleppo, a short drive from the ancient citadel—one of the oldest medieval fortresses in the world—lies the Al-Hamadaniah Tennis Complex. Part of a once-grand sports city, it was opened in 2008 as a hallmark of Syria's desire to grow as a sporting nation. Now, like the citadel which had stood firm for five millennia, much of it has been razed to the ground, relics of three years of continuous civil war.

The indoor tennis stadium was one of Aleppo's proudest sporting facilities and a training hub for the Syrian national team. Last year a stray bomb, launched by militants in the direction of the nearby Syrian army base, landed on the roof and reduced it to rubble. Bomb holes form an odd patchwork of craters across once gleaming courts.

It seems almost inconceivable now, but in 2009 Aleppo hosted Davis Cup tennis, welcoming Iran, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Lebanon and the Pacific island nations for a week-long bonanza of clashes in Group III of the Asia/Oceania Zone, the fourth division of the sport's largest international team competition. Now, relentless shelling has turned much of this ancient city into a dusty graveyard. For Amer Naow, who played Davis Cup for Syria last year, the memories of that week are a poignant reminder of what once was, and perhaps what might yet be.

"I was in the ninth grade at the time," the 21-year-old remembers. "The ninth grade is very important in Syria. You have to study too much! And I had an exam period. But I ran away every day to the courts to support the team. My mum and dad would shout at me when I returned, but I wanted to support [Syria]."

Naow's imagination was captured by the patriotism that only Davis Cup generates, even at the sport's lower levels. Resounding wins over Saudi Arabia, Iran and Lebanon



put Syria in contention for promotion to Group II before a 3–0 playoff defeat to Sri Lanka.

"I still tell my dad that we didn't make it [because] he prevented me from going to watch the match," Naow says. "Sport is about routine. You have to do it every day, and I wasn't there. But these are beautiful memories for me, especially now."

Seven years later, Syria still sends a team each year to compete in the Davis Cup. It comprises of Naow, brothers Marc and Bruno Abdelnour and Kareem Allaf. All of them learned the game on Aleppo's now-ruined courts. But these days, the ties take place far from Syria. And one by one, each player has abandoned the country of his birth in pursuit of education, work and safety.

* * *

Marc Abdelnour remembers the unique experience of making his Davis Cup debut, four years ago against South Korea.

"It was a very intense atmosphere," Abdelnour says. "Davis Cup is a whole new level in terms of the intensity and nerves. They get to you at the beginning, especially if you're inexperienced. You find yourself missing shots which you just

wouldn't even think about normally."

Marc Abdelnour has been Syria's No. 1 player for the past few years. He played college tennis after getting a scholarship to Florida Atlantic University, and then joined the professional tour, competing mainly in the Middle East and Africa. He achieved a career-high ranking of No. 747 three years ago, before the rapidly escalating chaos of the civil war back home forced him to change priorities.

"At the beginning of the crisis, I thought it would be over pretty soon," he says. "Most of us did. But now we know there will be no end in the near future. You can really sense the desperation of the people, more than before. In Aleppo, much of the time, they have no water and no electricity.

"You try to avoid going outside and stay in the safest place, which is your home, but even that isn't really safe. Your house could go down any day. Ours is still up, but it could go down tomorrow. Everyone who can is trying to get out."

All of the players who represented Syria when the Davis Cup came to Aleppo seven years ago have left the country, most through double nationalities. Now 26, Issam Tawel grew up in the city before leaving for Egypt at 19.

"I was lucky," he says. "I wasn't forced to leave by the war.

My mum is Egyptian and so I left two years before it started to try and further my career. There were no practice opportunities in Syria, no players at my level. Egypt has around six to eight good players. So it made sense."

Marc Abdelnour is also one of the lucky ones. Along with his brother he has a Canadian passport through his mother. In 2013, they left Aleppo behind for a new life in Montreal. His parents left for France when his father was offered a job at a hospital where he had previously worked part-time.

"You need contacts outside Syria who can help you build a new life," he says. "Otherwise, you're just at the mercy of other countries. Even if you have money, it won't last very long unless you can find a job."

The rest of the Abdelnour family have not been as fortunate. Marc's grandparents and uncles left for Lebanon, but in doing so they lost everything.

"My grandfather was in real estate," he says. "He used to be a wealthy man. He owned lots of land. But this is worth peanuts right now. All my family lost their homes and most of their possessions, but it's the exchange rate which really kills people. Before the war, one U.S. dollar was worth 50 Syrian pounds. Now it's almost [200]. Whatever money you had, one-sixth of it has gone."

Last year, the Syrian Davis Cup team traveled to Malaysia for Group III ties against Cambodia, Vietnam, Turkmenistan and Saudi Arabia, winning two. But it was a different atmosphere than usual.

"For the first time, we really felt like the country was in the midst of a war," Marc says. "It was a bit heavy on the heart. We all felt a bit emotional, knowing what people were going through back home."

Chronically underprepared, the team did well to avoid relegation. With the Abdelnour brothers working long shifts as they searched for jobs in Canada, and now trying to help his family in Beirut, Lebanon, the whole Syrian team had barely practiced.

"We had almost zero preparation," Marc says. "But the heart was still there. It was extremely close against Turkmenistan. We had many match points to win the tie. If we'd won that one, we would have had a tie against Malaysia for promotion to Group II, and you never know."

Marc Abdelnour won four of his six matches, but his thoughts were with his best friend, still trapped in Aleppo and caught in the midst of an intense street battle.

"His apartment's on the ground floor, street level, and they had bullets shattering the glass and going through into the living room," he says. "Luckily no one was in that room at the time. But you hear stories like these on a daily basis."

* * *

The road from Aleppo winds south through olive groves, hills and valleys towards the Syrian capital of Damascus. This is the only legal way out of the city. It's kept open by the Syrian army to maintain supply lines between the two cities, but the journey out of Aleppo itself can be perilous. As a major battleground between the army and multiple opposition groups, it's arguably the most dangerous city in Syria.

Damascus, Syria's capital, is shown here in May 1967. Today, the road to Damascus from Aleppo is one of the most dangerous routes in the country.





The Syrian Davis Cup team went 2-2 in last year's ties, avoiding relegation with a 3-0 victory over Saudi Arabia. "We all felt a bit emotional, knowing what people were going through back home," says Marc Abdelnour (first photo, second from left).



Naow and his family are well-acquainted with the road and its dangers. Along with his father and brother, he has traveled the route during the past few years to pursue a new life in Beirut. As the situation worsened in Aleppo, they felt they had little choice.

Hazem Naow, Amer's 15-year-old brother, is Syria's brightest young tennis prospect, ranked 397th in the junior ITF world rankings after making the final of a recent tournament in Bangladesh. He hopes to make his Davis Cup debut in the next couple of years.

"My brother is very excited," Amer says. "He really wants to be [on] the team. I think this year is too soon, but you never know. If one of us gets injured, he will get the call. There would be no other choice. We're out of players!"

Hazem dreams of turning professional in a few years, but funding is an ever-present challenge. Two weeks of competition in Bangladesh cost \$2,000, which was raised in part by Amer, his father and the embattled Syrian federation.

It's an ongoing struggle, but perspective is easy to come by, because in many ways Hazem is extremely lucky to be alive. Three years ago the brothers were practicing on Aleppo's now-destroyed courts. In the background they could hear the faint sound of artillery fire. Suddenly a loud bang came from the floodlight post. A stray bullet had whistled past, no more than 10 feet away, embedding itself in the metal.

A year later, Hazem was practicing in Damascus on the courts owned by the federation. Without warning, an enormous explosion obliterated the nearby wire fencing and knocked him to the ground. A bomb intended for nearby governmental buildings had exploded next to the tennis courts, leaving him with fragments of shrapnel embedded in his hand.

"He was taken to the hospital where they removed the pieces," Amer says.

His brother whispers to him, asking to change the subject.

"This has happened to many players while practicing," Amer adds. "After just two days, he returned to the same court and played again."

"His personality has changed since then, both on and off the court. He's tougher, less nervous. This is the mentality of the Syrian people. We have all adapted due to the war and I feel we have stronger hearts."

"Whenever somewhere is bombed, the people clean everything, fix it as much as they can and life goes on. Everybody's praying, and if anybody gets injured or dies, they simply say, 'It is God's will.'"

Hazem now lives with his brother in the Lebanese capital. As well as providing safety, he hopes it can further his budding tennis career.

Amer is keenly aware of the irony of Syrians moving to Lebanon to pursue their tennis dreams. When the Davis Cup came to Aleppo in 2009, Syria defeated Lebanon, 3-0. But sport no longer has a future in the war-torn nation.

"It's the last thing on people's minds," Marc Abdelnour says. "Right now you have to plan your life so you're outside for the least time possible."

Amer Naow himself once dreamed of a career as a professional player, having grown up watching his father coach in Aleppo.

"[Amer] spent hours and hours just watching his dad coaching, and learning or hitting on the wall," Marc Abdelnour remembers. "He literally lived there. That's how he became good."



Syria will compete in a round-robin competition this July in Tehran, Iran, to try and earn promotion into Asia/Oceania Zone Group II, which it last reached in 2013.



Amer made his tour debut last year, playing a couple of small professional tournaments in Lebanon, but even before the war he had begun to accept that earning a living from tennis was a pipe dream.

"In Syria, if you wanted to become a good athlete, it's always been all down to the parents," Marc Abdehnour says. "They have to be behind you, support you and do everything. They have to make lots of sacrifices to make you a good player. When my brother and I were 8, 9 years old, my dad would take us every day to play for two hours."

"Here in Canada, the federation takes the top U-12s and takes care of all their training, their schooling, and controls everything. The federation in Syria doesn't have that money. They don't really have much capacity to help."

Naow is determined to find a way to keep the sport in his life. After moving to Beirut to attend college, he earned a tennis scholarship from Troy University in the United States. However, after failing to obtain a visa, he is considering applying for scholarships in Europe.

"I'm looking forward to focusing almost entirely on playing at a high level," he says. "I hope to play Futures in the States in the next year. Here in Lebanon there are only two players I can practice with."

But while his thoughts once revolved entirely around tennis, things have changed. Amer's mother and sister still remain in Aleppo.

"My mother is the manager of an important school that provides support for refugees inside Syria," he says. "People who have lost their homes travel there. But it's very dangerous. The Syrian army has a base nearby to protect the school, but they're actually making it more unsafe, as bombs

intended for them often land on it.

"My mother refuses to leave, as she feels these people are her responsibility, but the most important thing is her safety."

* * *

In July, Amer Naow, Kareem Allaf and the Abdehnour brothers will compete in the Iranian capital of Tehran to try and promote Syria to Group II for the first time in three years. Going by rankings, 18-year-old Allaf, ranked 1,418th in the world, will be Syria's No. 1 player. And in many ways, he symbolizes the future of Syrian sport.

"Kareem never really lived in Syria," Marc Abdehnour says. "He's now on a tennis scholarship at the University of Iowa, and he could be a very good player for us in the future. But he grew up in Dubai. His father is Syrian and he made his son represent our country, but apart from that he has few ties."

"But players like Kareem, the sons and daughters of immigrants and refugees who have fled to other countries, are the only way Syria can have a future in tennis."

Marc Abdehnour hopes that peace will finally return to his country in the next five years, but he admits that the prospects remain bleak.

"Do I see the war ending any time soon? To be honest, no," he says. "It has escalated out of control. You have ISIS—who are taking advantage of the weakened state of the government—all these other third-party terrorist groups and the revolutionists. It's become extremely complex politically, and because of that it will take some time to resolve."

"But I dream that in five years we can start rebuilding and growing Syria again."



BY JOHN EVERET

The Director of High Performance at the Evert Tennis Academy, John Evert has worked with many tour professionals and international juniors. The U.S. Olympic Committee named him Development Coach of the Year in 2009.

KICK *it* UP

► The kick serve is a weapon that will separate club players and juniors from the pack. The kick is the best option for a second serve because it clears the net by a wide margin and drops in with a lot of topspin. It's also great as a first serve—mixing up your serves keeps your opponents guessing.

Kick serves are even more important on slow courts, like clay, because the ball bounces out of your opponent's natural hitting zone even more. The kick will pay dividends in doubles as well, because it gives you more time to close into the net.

So, how do you hit an effective kicker? It's easy to demonstrate, but it takes a lot of repetition to master. I'll show you the technique step by step, as well as a very effective drill for getting the feel of the swing path.

Photography by Tom DiPace

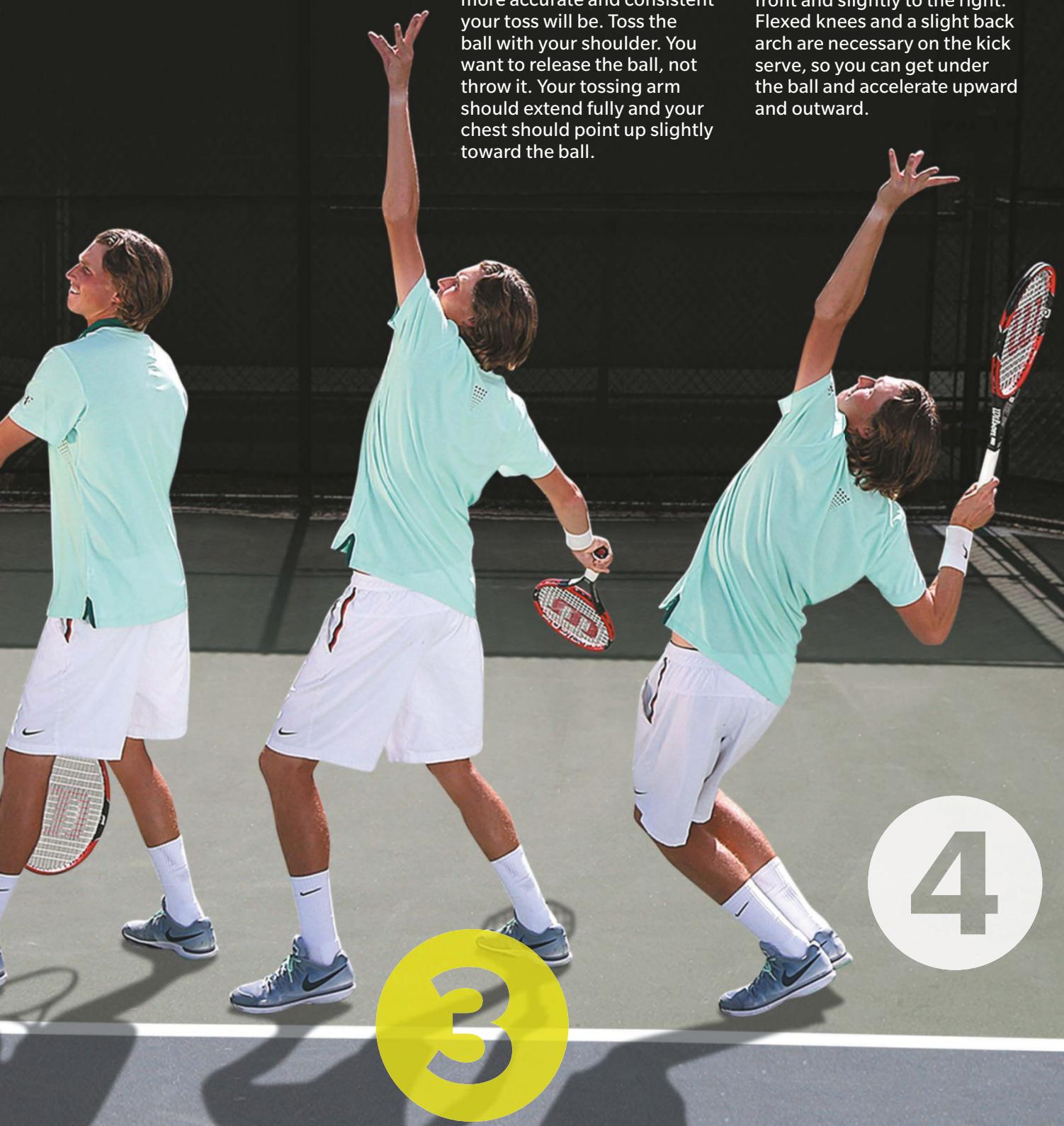
1. Start in your normal serve position with the ball in your fingertips and your weight mostly on your front foot. I tell students that their shoulders should be pointed to the net post. (Imagine a straight line between the two.)

2. If you learned how to serve in the heyday of tennis, you probably remember the phrase, "Down together, up together." These days, most high-level players drop their racquet and tossing arms together, but delay raising their racquet arm as the toss goes up. It's a timing technique that adds more power and spin.



2





3. Don't let go of your toss too soon. The better you get at releasing the ball as your arm extends above your head, the more accurate and consistent your toss will be. Toss the ball with your shoulder. You want to release the ball, not throw it. Your tossing arm should extend fully and your chest should point up slightly toward the ball.

4. This is a classic power position for any serve. The toss is slightly to the left and over your head, rather than out in front and slightly to the right. Flexed knees and a slight back arch are necessary on the kick serve, so you can get under the ball and accelerate upward and outward.

5. As your legs drive up, your racquet drops down to its lowest point. Coordinating your legs and body will create even greater racquet-head speed. Power will come from your legs, balance and stability from your core, and speed from your shoulder.

6. As your legs fully extend, the racquet face stays open and your arm drives up toward the ball with the outside edge. The racquet face brushes up the ball, just like a topspin forehand.



5

6

7



7. Upon contact, the racquet brushes up and over the ball. The swing is out and across, creating massive topspin.

8. Even though a kick toss is to the left and over your head, the shoulder-over-shoulder swing of your serve will give you momentum into the court. When you watch a good kick serve, you will notice that the server lands inside the court. Once you can master this technique, you'll also find yourself there.



Drill: Walk and Kick

It can take a lot of practice to become comfortable with the kick serve's swing path because it's almost an entirely different stroke. It's a strange feeling to swing up and toward the side fence when you want the ball to go forward, even when you see how the swing works. By starting in the back of the court, this progression drill forces you to swing up and out to get the ball over the net and into the service box.

Start near the back fence and serve into the ad court. Now that you are out of your normal serve position, you can just worry about the feel of the swing. From this distance behind the baseline, you will have to swing up and across for the ball to clear the net. You shouldn't try to hit a perfect serve. The key is to remain relaxed and get a feel for making the ball go up over the net and down into the court by swinging up.

After each serve, walk diagonally a few steps toward the baseline, and then serve again. Keep hitting serves until you reach your normal serving position on the baseline. If you incorporate this exercise into your practice session, your kick serve will improve dramatically.

Pulling Back the Curtain

W

What is most noticeable when entering Kevin Anderson's home is just how normal it is. Situated on a stretch of Highway A1A just north of Delray Beach, Fla., the townhouse is gray and nondescript from the outside, and stylish but utterly un-tennis-like on the inside.

There are no trophies on display; no sneakers, racquet bags or sweaty T-shirts littering the hallway. There was once a framed photo of Anderson competing at Wimbledon on the living-room wall, but he had his wife, Kelsey, remove it because he felt he hadn't played particularly well that match. (He won.) Even a stack of Wimbledon memorabilia books that sit on a modern wall-unit shelf is covered up.

"You can blame Kelsey for the decor," Kevin says with a laugh.

Instead, the Anderson home is a Florida model of young, suburban chic. The most stunning feature is a set of screen doors that slide open to reveal a patio and pool with a waterfall that emits a calming trickle. The house, in many ways, projects the exact image of the player himself—placid, unassuming, decidedly un-tennis-like.

For the first time in years, Anderson spent a sizeable amount of time at home this past winter, but it wasn't by choice. A spate of injuries caused him to retire from first-round matches at the Australian Open and in Delray Beach, the site of his practices while home. He then withdrew from the Indian Wells and Miami Masters events due to a lingering shoulder injury that hindered his often potent serve.



There's more to Kevin Anderson, the ATP tour's unassuming flamethrower, than meets the eye.

By Cindy Shmerler



While rehabbing his shoulder in March, Anderson opted to have minor surgery on his left ankle in order to alleviate the pain in his knee—and, hopefully, prolong his career. He turned 30 in May.

"I don't think the age thing is a big deal," Anderson says of the milestone. "Besides, every year my birthday is the weekend before Roland Garros, so I've yet to celebrate. When I'm done playing tennis I'll have about 16 years worth of birthdays to catch up on."

The 6'8" Anderson, a self-described late bloomer, had a career year in 2015. He won his third ATP title, reached two other finals and made his first Grand Slam quarterfinal in 32 attempts with a four-set win over Andy Murray at the US Open. In October, he became the first South African in nearly 20 years to break into the tour's Top 10.

"In terms of goal-setting, even the Top 10, it's something I'm aware of, but it's not in the forefront of my mind," Anderson says. "The idea of getting out there and improving and doing everything I can to be the best player I can be is enough to keep me motivated."

With a giant serve—he's hit nearly 5,000 aces over a 10-year-career—and a big forehand, Anderson has beaten the players he should, but he has struggled against higher-ranked opponents, especially in high-stress environments. Last year at Wimbledon, Anderson had Novak Djokovic on the ropes in the fourth round, leading by two sets before falling 7–5 in the fifth. It was the seventh time in seven tries that Anderson had lost in the fourth round of a Grand Slam tournament.

"He's an incredibly hard worker and he's willed himself into being a good pro," says ESPN analyst Brad Gilbert, who, in a post-match interview, begged Anderson to show some emotion after his win over Murray. (He politely declined the bait of tearing off his shirt and roaring to the crowd.) "His serve is phenomenal, but can he break enough when he plays the big guys?"

It is his return of serve, as well as his movement, that Anderson still feels need improvement. And then there's the elephant in the room. For the past two years, Anderson has worked with sports psychologist Alexis Castorri,



Anderson's ability has rarely been questioned, but until last year's US Open, he had never advanced past the fourth round of a major. There, he snapped an 0-7 streak by defeating Andy Murray.

whose past clients include Murray and Ivan Lendl.

"The mental component is huge," Anderson admits. "The muscles in your forearm don't know if you're two sets to love up or down. It's only your mind that's trying to make sense of it, and the messages that it sends. So I've learned that the more you can be quiet in your mind, the better. It's all a big balancing act."

* * *

Anderson was just 7 years old when apartheid was officially abolished in his homeland. He and his younger brother, Greg, were raised in upscale Hyde Park in Sandton, an affluent suburb of Johannesburg. His parents, Mike and Barbara, owned a successful accounting firm and were club-level tennis players who introduced their boys to the game on a backyard court. Though a bit rusty and worn down, it would dry in 10 minutes after a rainfall because of the many cracks in its hard surface.

Coached mainly by their father, the

boys would play against each other and then hit against a big concrete wall, pretending to be Andre Agassi, whom they saw on video hitting against a wall at the Nick Bollettieri Tennis Academy in faraway Florida. They would eventually rank among the top in their age groups—"Kevin was always better," Greg notes—and were both recruited to play college tennis in the U.S. Greg went to the University of Kentucky and then Morehead State; Kevin followed fellow South African, coach Craig Tiley, to the University of Illinois.

"Kevin has always kept an unassuming, low profile," says Greg, now the director of the Armonk Tennis Academy in New York. "It's an innate personality type. He has an old-fashioned, disciplined game style and always plays within himself. That's why his progress has been steady and gradual."

Anderson thrived in the two-and-a-half years he spent at Illinois. He was named an All-American three times, won an NCAA doubles title and led his team to a runner-up finish at the 2007 NCAA Championships. Off the court,



“Maybe I’m stoic in my expressions, but I want people to know that I really enjoy what I do and I take it seriously.”

Anderson studied liberal arts and business, and he met Kelsey O’Neal—a golfer who was majoring in finance and accounting—during a mandatory athlete study hall. They hit it off and were married four years later.

Kelsey now travels full-time with her husband on a team that includes Castorri, coaches Neville Godwin and Jay Bosworth, and physio Carlos Costa. Kelsey is responsible for such tasks as booking flights and accommodations to managing the budget. She and Kevin, along with his former coach, G.D. Jones, also recently launched a website, *realitetennis.com*, that uncovers training techniques and tactics used by top pros, and gives a behind-the-scenes look at the sometimes secret lives tour players lead.

“There is a big side of Kevin that people, except those closest to us, don’t get to see,” Kelsey says. “He is a lot more intellectual than people give him credit for. He likes to get to the bottom of things and see how they work. He picked up the guitar and was playing it within a month. He reads all

the time. There is a definite disconnect between his on-court persona and his real-life one. He’s not a dumb jock.”

That’s a fact not lost on Anderson’s tour colleagues, who voted him to be a member of the ATP Player Council. As such, he is responsible for helping to sort out some of the sport’s biggest messes, including the recent match-fixing scandal and the ongoing issue of performance-enhancing drug use.

“Regarding match-fixing, I have a strong viewpoint that it’s pretty black-and-white, and there’s no room for leniency,” says Anderson, who says he was once approached to throw a match at a low-level tournament, which he refused to do and immediately reported it to officials. “With drug testing, there are a few more gray areas, and that’s where it’s tricky.”

A few months ago, Anderson was at a pharmacy looking for something to quell a nagging cough. The over-the-counter medicine he almost chose contained an ingredient that could have forced a positive drug test and gotten him banned from competition. As

such, Kelsey checks every ingredient on every label, even the powder on a can of protein used to make smoothies at a tournament concession booth.

Anderson, who has lived in the United States for 11 years, is in line to receive his U.S. citizenship later this year. But he has already decided that he will not represent his adopted land in either Davis Cup or the Olympics, both of which he has already played under the South African flag. Despite his time away from Johannesburg, he still feels very much tied to his homeland, preferring to watch cricket to baseball and even importing such native delicacies as Biltong, a salty dried meat similar to beef jerky—only better, he insists.

* * *

Anderson acknowledges that there are disadvantages to not being an outgoing, overly popular player on tour, like being assigned to outer courts or getting less desirable playing times.

“The top guys play every single match on center court, which plays different and which has Hawk-Eye,” he says. “I’m on the outside courts, and then when I do get on center court it’s a very different feel, and that’s a bit of an unfair advantage for the top players.

“Then, when I’m at the Grand Slams, instead of being in the big press room, I’m in a little cubicle with just a few people,” he adds. “At times I feel like there should be a big interest [in me], but it’s never been a goal of mine to act in such a way as to get that attention.”

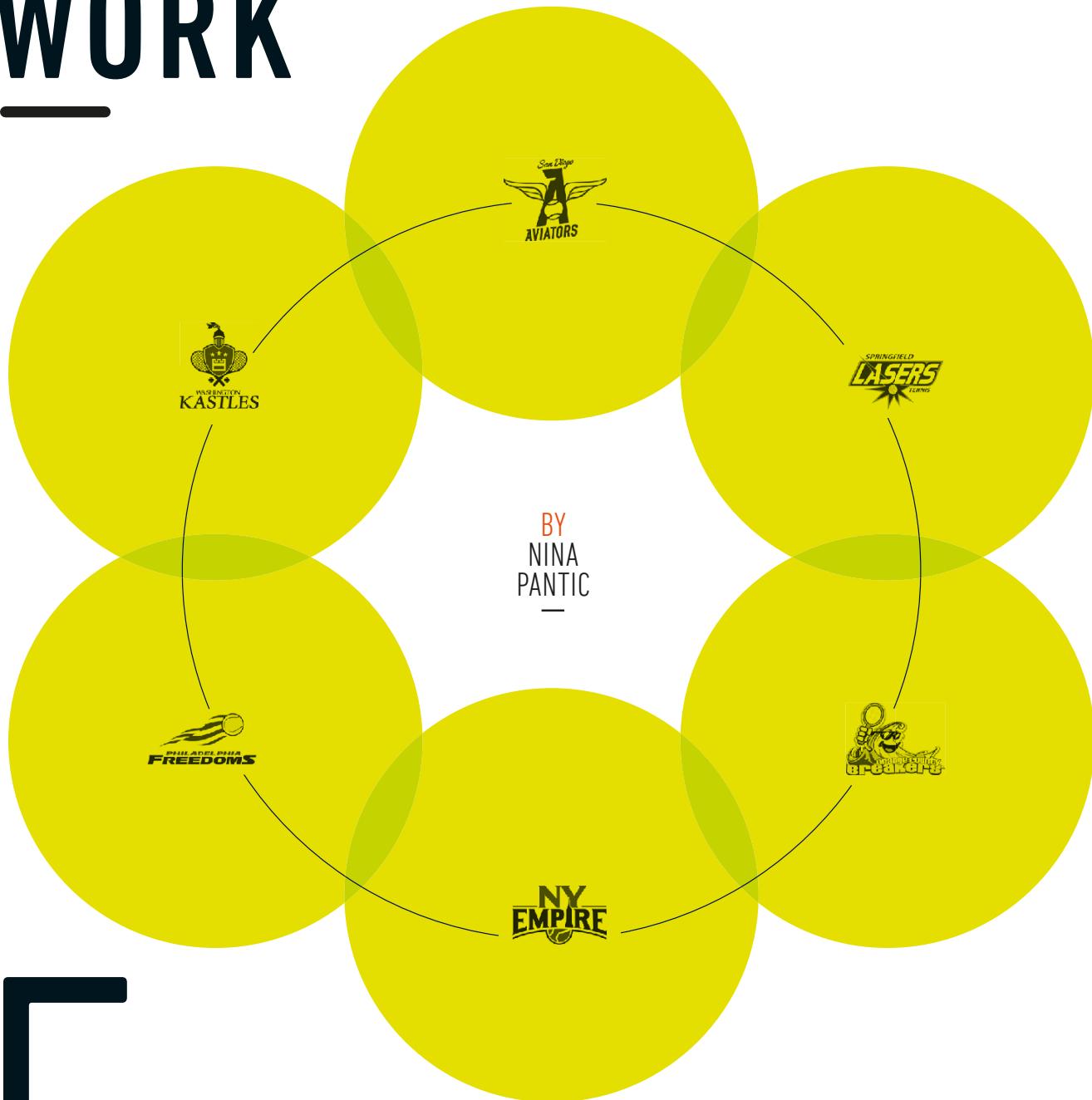
There are those, like Gilbert—and even Anderson’s brother Greg—who would love to see Kevin let loose every once in a while. It’s not likely to happen, at least not on court.

“I’m definitely more personal and interactive than what people see on the tennis court,” says Anderson, moments before zipping off in a white Porsche 911 GTX, part of a sponsorship arrangement with a local dealer. “Maybe I’m stoic in my expressions, but I want people to know that I really enjoy what I do and I take it seriously.

“But, off the court,” he adds with a smile, “I’m really friendly and I enjoy my time with family and friends. At home, I can be quite a goof.”

TEAM WORK

CAMARADERIE, COMPENSATION, COMPETITION:
An inside look at Mylan World TeamTennis



BY
NINA
PANTIC

F

or a few weeks each summer, tennis players get a taste of what professional athletes in most sports experience every day: playing on a team. With its signature multi-colored courts, Mylan World TeamTennis begins its 41st season in 2016, bringing a faster, brighter and louder version of the game across the United States. But underneath the untraditional format and fan-friendly exterior lies a foundation that plays a serious role in tennis careers, from owners to coaches to players.

Every spring, a draft is held in which players are chosen by teams in reverse order of the previous year's standings. Each team fields a roster of men and women who will combine

KING OF THE WORLD
Billie Jean King (top, far left) began World TeamTennis in 1974 as an alternative to the sport's staid and rigid format. Today, she owns the Philadelphia Freedoms.

D.C. DYNASTY
Madison Brengle (bottom, middle) clinched the Washington Kastles' fifth consecutive title last summer. From 2010 to 2013, the team won 34 straight matches, the longest winning streak in major U.S. pro sports history.



to play five events each match: women's singles, men's singles, women's doubles, men's doubles and mixed doubles. Each event is played to five games, with a nine-point tiebreaker held at 4-all. Each game is played to four points, with no-ad scoring. To speed up the pace of play, a 25-second service clock is used between points, and lets are played.

"We feel like matches are taking too long," Mylan WTT co-founder Billie Jean King says. "I don't want [matches] to be longer than two hours, maybe two-and-a-half if it's an unbelievable match. People's concentration spans are short."

As part of the touring lifestyle, players are given hotel rooms, rental cars, a daily allowance, massages, pedicures and gift

bags—not insignificant to the many participants who reside outside the Top 50. Practice partners and coaches are guaranteed, as well as plenty of competitive matches against top players.

"You get to live a bit like what other sports teams live like—travel with the team, everything is paid for," said Alex Kuznetsov, who played for the Boston Lobsters in 2015. "When you're out there [on tour] by yourself, you have to think of your coaches' expenses, your expenses. But if you're playing here, everything is pretty much taken care of for you."

Matches are held at night, so players typically get in a midday two-hour practice session. After lunch, it's back to the courts for a 45-minute warm-up. The regular-season schedule, though just a few weeks long, can be taxing.

"It's the traveling that's hard," said Irina Falconi, a teammate of Kuznetsov's in 2015. "But other than that the dynamic is cool."

The travel would be overwhelming even with a private jet. It's not unusual for players to go straight from the runway to the court, and right back on board. There are very few off-days in Mylan WTT.

Big-name attractions like Andy Roddick, Caroline Wozniacki, John Isner and Martina Hingis are the faces of Mylan World TeamTennis, but these marquee players only appear when their schedules allow. It's the steadfast pros like Falconi that grind throughout the entire season and carry the league.

"It's a fast three weeks, and I tell that to the players," says Samantha Shaw, senior vice president of player recruiting. "You're going to be up early, you're going to be going to bed late. You have to pace yourself and create your own training programs. Treat it just like you would on the tour. It's serious. Everybody's out there to win."

"You're going to be up early, you're going to be going to bed late. Treat it just like you would on the tour. It's serious. Everybody's out there to win."

—Samantha Shaw



NO REST FOR THE WEARY

Traveling almost daily during the season, Mylan WTT teammates become extremely close. They catch a break when they can, even if it's just for post-match ice cream (top).

JUST THE RIGHT MIX

A largely overlooked part of tennis, mixed doubles plays a prominent role in World TeamTennis. The event is worth just as much as singles and doubles.

BOSTON TEAM PARTY

Coached by former Wimbledon quarterfinalist Jan-Michael Gambill (bottom, far left) the Lobsters played their home matches at the Manchester Athletic Club.

With a slate of tournaments on the tour calendar and the Olympics this summer, committing to Mylan WTT isn't an easy decision. But for many players, the pros outweigh the cons.

"I've played for three years and it's been really fun," says 20-year-old Taylor Townsend, a member of the Philadelphia Freedoms last year. "I thought that it was a great way to be out on the court as much as possible, to be playing so I'm match-ready going into the US Open Series."

Townsend has also benefited from the tutelage of King, who owns the Freedoms.



SEASON'S GREETINGS

What you need to know about Mylan WTT in 2016

DATES:

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Regular season: | Final: |
| 7/31–8/13 | 8/27 (held in New York) |

TEAMS & LEADING PLAYERS:



New York Empire

- Andy Roddick
- Christina McHale



Orange County Breakers

- Nicole Gibbs
- Steve Johnson



Philadelphia Freedoms

- Caroline Wozniacki
- Donald Young



San Diego Aviators

- James Blake
- Shelby Rogers



Springfield Lasers

- John Isner
- Daria Gavrilova



Washington Kastles

- Bob and Mike Bryan
- Martina Hingis

WHAT'S NEW:

The regular season is four days shorter than last year's. In lieu of conference championships, the top two teams from the regular season will advance to the final.

GAME FACES

Crowd interaction is a staple of World TeamTennis. DJs play upbeat tunes between points and fans are encouraged to cheer. Even giant-sized faces are fair game.

If you watch a WTT match you see my philosophy on life, and that's men and women together, helping each other and cooperating.

—Billie Jean King

t's not easy growing a league at a time when, as King put it, "tennis isn't as popular as it used to be."

One exception to that is in Washington, where the Kastles have become a major draw thanks to their unprecedented success. The team won its fifth consecutive title in 2015, a credit to its players and ownership.

"Every team has a budget. But it's not always about salaries. It's talent," Shaw says.

"Players that have played for you before, that goes into picking your team. There are a variety of reasons. It's interesting to see how the teams come together in the draft."

This year, at least, the San Diego Aviators, Springfield Lasers, New York Empire (moved from Boston), Orange County Breakers (moved from Austin) and Philadelphia Freedoms will try to stop the Kastles from building on their record run.

"Once we're settled with the seven [teams], we want to expand," King said, mentioning new locations like Chicago and even Canada. "Sometimes it comes to fruition; sometimes it doesn't."

Despite some volatility, World TeamTennis remains a pillar of tennis' summer calendar. And with stars like Venus Williams and Roddick serving as part owners of Mylan WTT since 2013—with other pros voicing interest—the league's future is bright.

"[We'll] come back every year we can, as long as we're still playing," Mike Bryan said about himself and his brother, Bob, who will compete for the Kastles this summer. "Even when we're done, there are still a lot of legends that come back. We've talked about starting a team, being owners of a team. That would be a fun way to stay involved forever."



NEW YORK
www.nyempiretennis.com



ORANGE COUNTY
www.breakerstennis.com



PHILADELPHIA
www.philadelphiafreedoms.com



SAN DIEGO
www.sandiegoaviators.com



SPRINGFIELD
www.springfieldlasers.com



WASHINGTON
www.washingtonkastles.com

This summer, don't miss some of the world's best playing in an innovative, gender balanced team format that showcases singles, doubles and mixed doubles. Six franchises comprise a professional league where each competes for the King Trophy, the championship prize named after league co-founder Billie Jean King with the top two teams advancing to the Mylan World TeamTennis Finals presented by Citi.

Current and former number ones: the Bryan Brothers, Martina Hingis, Daniel Nestor, Leander Paes, Andy Roddick, and Caroline Wozniacki are among the names playing on the League's trademarked multicolored courts with other top stars including: James Blake, Mardy Fish, Daria Gavrilova, John Isner, Daria Kasatkina, Christina McHale, Guido Pella, and Sam Querrey.

Each team consists of two men, two women and one coach. Mylan WTT celebrates its 41st season this summer... only the fifth major professional team sports league in the United States to reach that mark, joining an elite list that includes the NFL, NBA, MLB and the NHL.

**Regular Season
Finals**

**July 31- August 13
August 26**

Check local listings for specific dates and times.

**Matches nightly LIVE on ESPN3
Mylan WTT Finals on ESPN2**

ESPN 3

ESPN 2



For more information & tickets:

#mylanwtt WTT.com

Photos: Fred & Susan Mullane/Camerawork USA

Players and dates subject to change.



PLAY
BIG.



MASTER

•

Great Shots

Dominic Thiem's Backhand Return

Don't try this amazing and highly athletic shot at home. **BY RICK MACCI**

Thiem's unique approach to this shot begins with his leg position.



1

Thiem's technique on this return is a reaction to being jammed by a high-kicking serve to the ad court. He starts with a unit turn and steps out with his left leg so he can create some space. His racquet head is above the ball and his hitting arm is relatively straight. Thiem's weight is on his right leg, which is his front leg—the opposite of how everyone hits the ball in a normal situation. He's in a very balanced position.

His shoulder turn is extreme and will generate power.



2

He has an amazing shoulder turn in this position. No matter the shot you face and the footwork you have to use to hit the ball, you must turn your shoulders. Thiem's chin is over his right shoulder. He puts more weight on his right leg as he starts his forward swing, and his left knee comes up. I call this a counter-rotational swing: The weight starts on the opposite foot and the power will come from the upper body.

Thiem begins his slight hop and lifts his back leg.



3

As the ball approaches, Thiem stands on his tiptoes with his right foot, and his left knee is up high. He looks like a flamingo. Thiem is pushing hard off the ground and going up very quickly. His racket is almost parallel to the ball, which is coming in high. His counter rotation and upward acceleration will allow him to swing ever so slightly from low to high.

CLASS

INSIGHT, TIPS
AND LESSONS
FROM THE BEST
INSTRUCTORS
IN THE WORLD



Possessing one of the game's best backhands—and a fearsome forehand, too—Dominic Thiem has made waves early in his career. Just 22, he's already won five titles and entered the Top 15. His game translates to all surfaces, but he's done the most damage on clay. In Buenos Aires this February, Thiem upset nine-time French Open champion Rafael Nadal and went on to win the title. The very next week, in Rio de Janeiro, he outslugged former French Open finalist David Ferrer in straight sets.

Vitals

Birthday: September 3, 1993
Birthplace: Wiener Neustadt, Austria
Turned pro: 2011

Height: 6-foot-1
Weight: 180 pounds
Plays: Right-handed

Year-End Ranking History

2015:	20
2014:	39
2013:	139



He maintains balance in the air, like a figure skater.

4

Thiem is airborne prior to contact. Look at the angle of his left knee. He is actually starting to go downward with that leg as he rotates his trunk into the shot. The counter rotation happens because Thiem rotates violently, with a lot of force. His left knee will go down and snap backward because his upper body is moving so fast.



It's not a traditional hitting position, but Thiem's movements are in sync.

5

Thiem's racquet head is almost vertical at contact. His left knee continues to go down and back, and his left arm remains still as he lets go of the racquet—and then it starts to go backward, just like his left leg. There's a snapping effect when the arms separate, which counterbalances the other side of his body so he doesn't open up his trunk too soon.



This is a perfect finish to an unusual but effective swing.

6

This is a perfect landing. Thiem's head is still and his eyes are on the target. He lands on his right leg and his left arm has snapped all the way back. If you look at his arms, you would think he is walking a tightrope—and he's balanced enough to do it.

Rick Macci has coached such champions as Venus and Serena Williams, Jennifer Capriati and Andy Roddick.

**Freeze Frame**

Roger Federer's Shoulder Rotation

The Swiss' smooth, efficient and fast shoulder rotation gives him easy power when he serves—he doesn't even look like he's swinging. Federer's technique is so good that his perfectly synchronized body movements mask the incredible energy he creates.

BY JOHN YANDELL



1

- Federer's upper arm rotates counterclockwise nearly 180 degrees, driving his forearm, wrist and racquet. After the racquet drops, the racquet face rotates 90 degrees until contact, then rotates another 90 degrees to the on-edge position in the follow-through.

2

- If you're trying this at home, keep your arm and wrist as loose as possible, but don't consciously try to bring your wrist forward. On the way up to the ball, your wrist moves to a neutral position in line with your arm at contact. That alignment is the same throughout the rest of your shoulder rotation. If you don't think about your wrist, it will take care of itself.

3

- You don't need tons of muscle to hit a big first serve or a second serve with lots of kick. The rotation of your upper arm is critical in generating racquet-head speed. This is why you see Federer turn the racquet face over the edge during his follow-through, leaving the racquet head almost perpendicular to the court.

John Yandell is the publisher of the TennisPlayer.net digital magazine and an instruction editor for TENNIS.

"PLAYSIGHT IS THE ULTIMATE PLAYER DEVELOPMENT TOOL"

Paul Annacone

Former coach of Pete Sampras

and Roger Federer.

PlaySight Edge Since 2015



playsight

GET THE
PLAYSIGHT
EDGE

playsight.com

Ask Nick...



Nick Bollettieri founded the IMG Tennis Academy. He has coached 10 players who have gone on to rank No. 1 in the world.



Dear Nick,

What's the best drill for improving my on-the-rise ground strokes? I have a lot of trouble with the timing and hit too many shots off the frame of my racquet.

Practice against the undefeated champion of the world: the backboard. First, stand 30 feet from the backboard and hit. Then move in to 25 feet, then to 15 feet, then to 10 feet. Each time you move closer, you'll have to shorten your backswing. It will also cause you to alter your stances from a closed to a semi-open to an open stance. Once you get the feel for it on the backboard, you'll have better success on the court.

Q. My two-handed backhand is my best shot, while my forehand is pretty weak. I'm wondering if I should try leaving the left side of the court mostly open, so I can hit more backhands. It would be like what players with big forehands do, but the opposite approach. Do you see any reason why this tactic wouldn't work?

You can hit more backhands, but you can't hide your weakness all the time. You need to work on improving your forehand to get to the next level. Are you willing to make some adjustments to do so? It may require a grip change, swing pattern change or stance change. Be open to going outside your comfort zone.

Q. I've read that most pros now use small racquet handles. I was always told that you should use the largest grip size that feels comfortable to improve control and stability. What do you think about a middle-aged player switching to a smaller grip?

Many modern pros are indeed using smaller grip sizes, ranging from $4\frac{1}{8}$ to $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches, because they can generate greater racquet-head speed. But depending on your grips and swing patterns, it may not be beneficial for you to switch. You should discuss the options with your coach. If you can gain racquet-head speed and maintain control, it may be worth a change.

Q. My slice backhand has a lot of backspin but lacks bite. How can I give this shot some more sting?

To get more bite on your slice, be sure your grip is conducive to hitting one. On the backhand you should have an Eastern backhand grip and spread your fingers for more feel. When you make contact, open the face slightly and swing right through the contact point with a slightly longer follow-through. Do not push the slice. A great drill is to use the yellow- or green-dot ball and play with a coach or partner. At first stand close to the service line and slice, and then move back toward the baseline.

**Have a question
for legendary coach Nick Bollettieri?**

Write to him and he'll consider your question for a future column.

Mail it to: Nick Bollettieri
c/o Tennis Magazine
48 West 21st Street, Sixth Floor,
New York, NY 10010
Or email it to: asknick@tennis.com

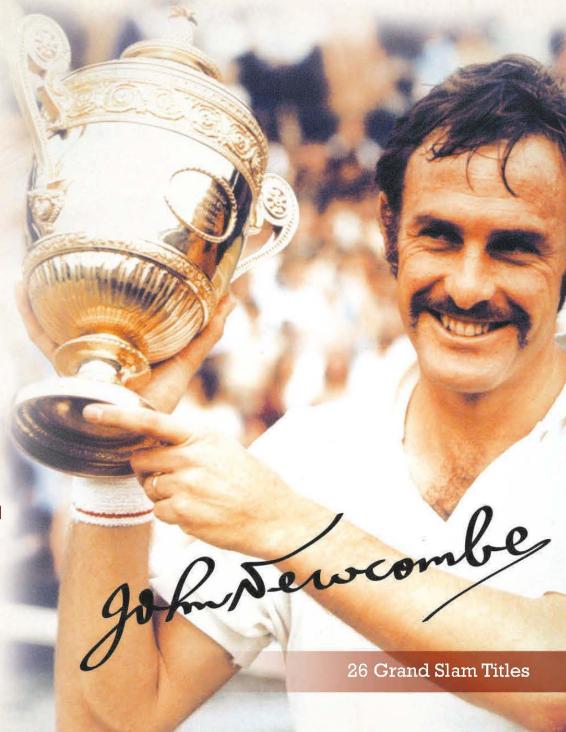
GIVE YOUR GAME THE COMPETITIVE EDGE.

John Newcombe
Tennis Ranch
offers a number of programs
for Adults, Juniors and Families.
For Adults, weekend, week-long,
and longer packages are
available to help you get the
most out of your tennis game.
For Juniors, our year-round
Tennis Academy and Junior
Tennis camps offer world-class
coaching. We also host Fantasy
Camps with John Newcombe.

The ball is in your court.
Contact Newks today!

JOHN NEWCOMBE TENNIS RANCH
325 Mission Valley Road
New Braunfels, TX 78132
830.625.9105
newktennis.com

Wilson



World Class Tennis, Academics and Southern California — We've Got It All!

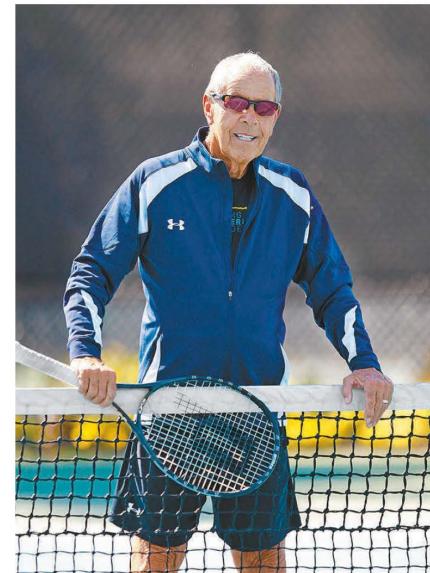


2016 SUMMER CAMPS
GET A JUMP on your competition!

Call to Register Today!

Wilson www.WeilTennis.com • 805 640 3413

Nick's Secret Tip



Wide Ball Preparation

When hitting on the run,
it's more about how you
start than how you finish

The next time you watch Serena Williams, pay attention when she runs for a wide forehand. Notice how early she takes her racquet back—Williams has already begun her swing, so she's ready to strike as soon as she is in position.

This approach is crucial when running laterally. In tennis, great lateral movement doesn't mean much if you are not prepared to hit the ball. Taking your racquet back early saves you time, ensures that you'll hit the ball with proper technique and prevents you from rushing and overrunning the ball.

It is also crucial for keeping you balanced and able to finish your shot in a productive way, with your weight shifting back to the middle of the court rather than leaning even further into the doubles alley.

Williams' running swing may appear unorthodox—there's no one like her, after all. But it's a tactic that any player can learn from and should practice. Doing so will make one of the game's more difficult shots a little bit easier.



An interview with...

GIGI FERNANDEZ



Gigi Fernandez is a 17-time Grand Slam doubles champion, two-time Olympic gold medalist and member of the International Tennis Hall of Fame. She has worked with WTA pros Rennae Stubbs, Lisa Raymond and Sam Stosur, and currently coaches at Chelsea Piers Connecticut in Stamford.

Did winning Olympic gold medal mean more to you than winning a Slam?

Yes. When I came back from winning Wimbledon or the US Open, or won six Grand Slams in a row, nobody would know. When I came home from winning the Olympic gold medal, everyone knew. I lived in Aspen, Colo. and people would stop me on the street and at the grocery store with congratulations. You do it for the country, so there's a shared sense of pride, as opposed to when you win a Grand Slam, where it's just for yourself.

How did you balance playing singles and doubles?

I was always better at doubles—my doubles ranking rose much faster than my singles ranking. But I didn't take my focus off singles until maybe my last two years on tour. I was constantly trying to improve my singles game, which would also improve my doubles.

Why are the majority of today's pros solely focusing on one or the other?

The money got really big, and the impact on players' bodies is greater than when we played because everybody is hitting the ball harder and faster. That physicality of playing an extra match takes a toll on your body. It's kind of a shame. Doubles can improve your singles play.

What are your thoughts on Martina Hingis' recent success?

Amazing. But I'm not surprised that she's dominating doubles; she always knew it. I picked her out when she was 12 or 13, when she was playing in the final of the junior French Open. Natasha Zvereva and I were warming up for our final. We stopped our warm-up to watch her. It was like, 'Oh my God.' At 12, she was serving and volleying, and hitting drop-shot winners, which is crazy. Years later I asked her to play with me when Natasha got hurt. She won her first WTA tour title with me as her partner, so that was kind of cool. We had a good relationship.

How did you get into coaching?

I was very analytical when I was playing. I became obsessed with video, and was very geometric about my strokes. I felt that when I retired I could help people because I knew a lot about the game.

What's been interesting teaching recreational players was that I once thought they couldn't improve. I thought that if you were a 3.5 or 4.0 player, you were going to be a 3.5 or 4.0 forever. So I didn't really want to coach recreational players at first because I didn't think it would be rewarding. But I find it to be the opposite. I don't change technique. I take whatever game you have and help with positioning, court coverage and shot selection, which helps players improve.

What are the biggest misconceptions recreational players have about you?

That I don't know how to help them. They think, 'You're a pro. I can't do what you do, so how could you help me?'

I think the prevailing thought is that doubles is a really hard game. Tennis is a game of errors. I think the reason recreational players make so many errors is not because they're bad, but because they try so many low-percentage shots since they don't know many high-percentage ones. They're constantly redirecting the ball, hitting it down the line off a cross-court ball. It's an epidemic. I tell people that when Natasha and I were playing, we played solely crosscourt.

Which coach impacted you the most?

I think Julie Anthony had the most influence on my game. She was a pro before I was and really helped me with my mental game; started to get me to control my rage and my emotions. I was the John McEnroe of the women's game—I had a bit of a temper.

Would you coach your twins?

No, I don't want to coach them. I think it's too much pressure, so I send them off with other pros. I try not to push them, but I tell them they must have good strokes. They have to look good; that's all I care about.

Do you see yourself ever returning to professional coaching?

I would do it on a part-time basis. I think Monica Puig has tremendous potential. She's getting there, but she could use some help. Something like that on a consulting basis, maybe. But right now I have so much going on with my work and my clinics, trying to spread the word and knowledge about doubles.

IN

troducing our
new roof.

We're going all out with a new roof and even better world-class tennis.

GET READY TO #RAISETHEROOF

AUGUST 29 – SEPTEMBER 11

**TICKETS ON SALE NOW AT
USOPEN.ORG**

NOTHING BEATS BEING HERE



ticketmaster®

**AMERICAN
EXPRESS**

-

The Gigi Method

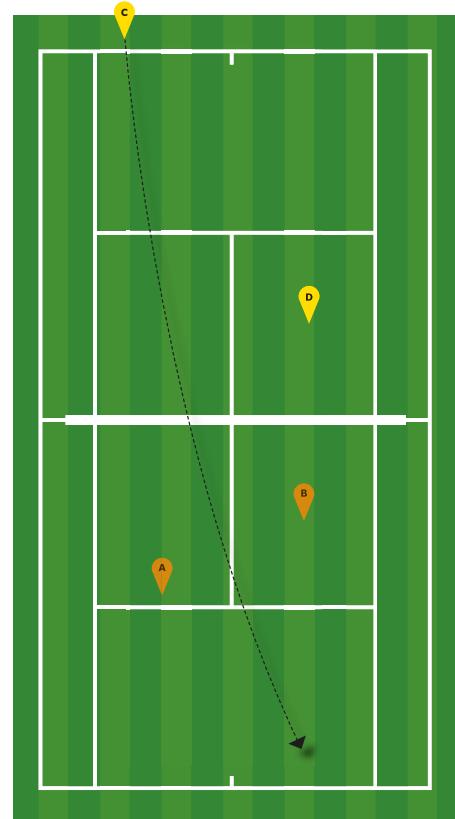


by Gigi Fernandez

Former world No. 1 doubles player;
International Tennis Hall of Famer;
coach at Chelsea Piers Connecticut

Learn the proper ways to stagger and follow the ball in recreational doubles

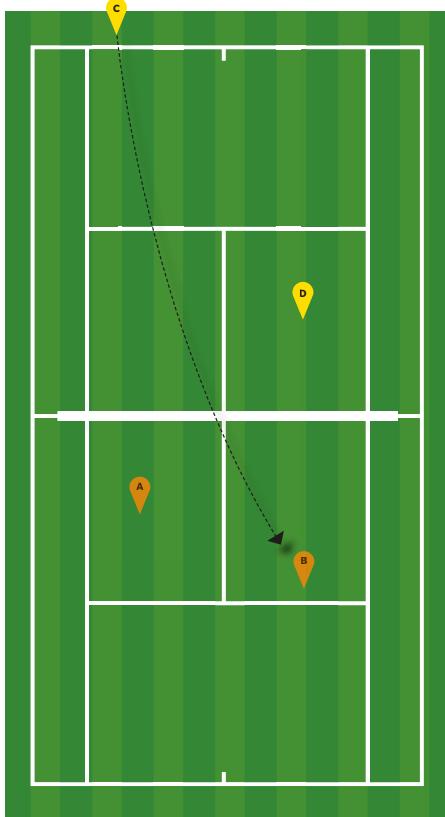
The “Gigi Method” is my way of teaching doubles players how to correctly position themselves to cover the court, utilize reliable shot selection and apply winning strategies. During my career, I won 17 Grand Slam doubles titles, 14 of which were with Natasha Zvereva. Neither one of us was fitter, faster or better than any of our opponents—we simply knew better doubles positioning and strategy.



1 / INCORRECT STAGGERING

- When I started coaching recreational players in the NTRP 3.5–5.0 range, I had no idea what the term “staggering” meant. When I played, I was able to cover my half of the court as well as my partner’s side. For us, staggering was not only unnecessary, but also ineffective. But that’s just not the case with recreational doubles teams.

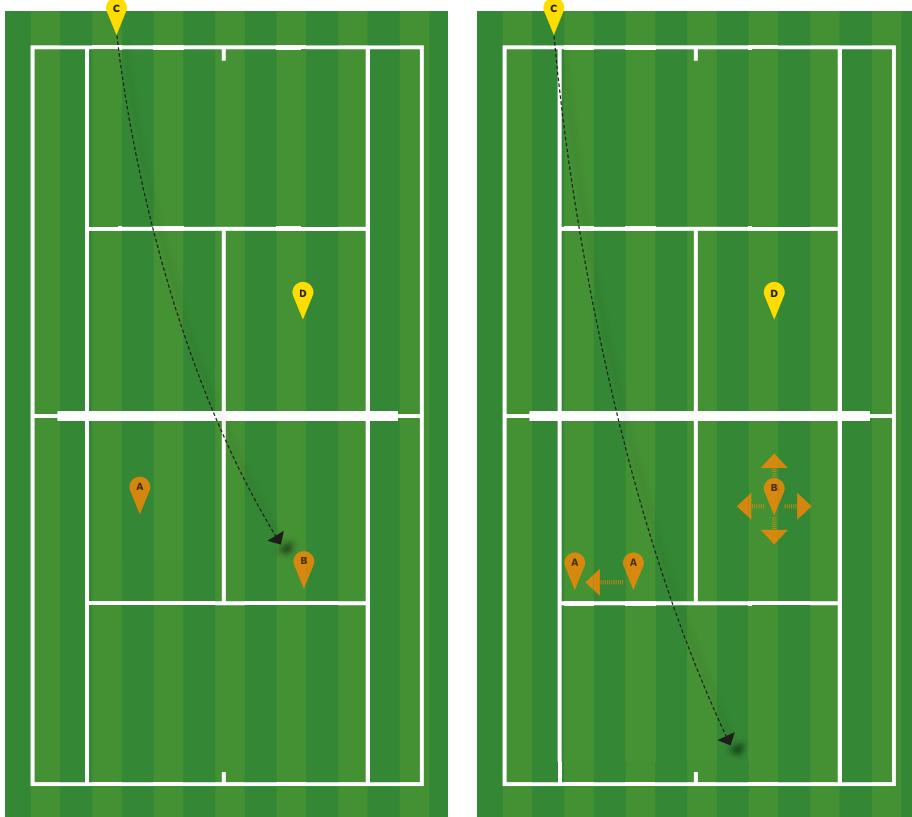
If you are confused about which player should be forward and which player should stay back, think of the ball as a magnet. The player closer to the ball is more attracted to the magnet, and should be standing closer to the net. When the positioning is wrong—as shown above, with Player A standing farther back than Player B—Player C will be able to hit a crosscourt lob over Player A and B’s heads, or be able to hit easily down the middle.



2 / CORRECT STAGGERING

- When Player A and Player B are near the net with opponents (Players C and D) in the one-up, one-back position, they should be staggered according to which half of the court the ball is being hit to. As shown above, Player A is closer to the net than Player B because Player A is on the same side of the court that Player C is hitting his or her ground stroke from. Player B's job is to protect against the lob and be alert for a middle ball, if that shot is not first reached by Player A.

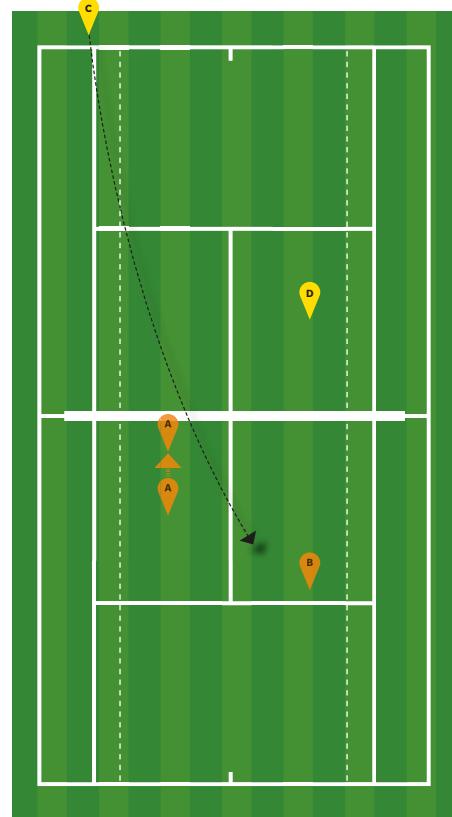
Proper staggering helps you *not* to follow the ball and takes away the crosscourt lob and angle from your opponent. It also helps resolve any confusion over whose ball it is; the front player (Player A) always gets a chance at the incoming ball first.



3 / INCORRECT FOLLOW

- The most common mistake recreational doubles players make at the net is following the ball toward the alley when an opponent is pulled wide at the baseline. The often-taught concept moves Player A closer to the alley, or even inside it. Such faulty positioning forces Player B to cover the rest of the court, which is a significant challenge.

The stranded partner (Player B) has no choice but to close in toward the net in order to try to cover the middle and angles. Player C is then given more openings to hit down the middle, strike direct-angle passing shots or throw up winning crosscourt lobs.



4 / CORRECT FOLLOW

- Player A and B should hold their correct staggering position and focus on moving *forward* instead of sideways. Imagine that there are lines marked down on a parallel, 18 inches from the alley lines (shown above). Don't venture past those lines into the alleys. (Some courts have these 60-foot court lines already marked for 10-and-under tennis.)

With each ball struck by Player C, Player A should step in closer to the net, while Player B holds his or her ground a few paces behind Player A. Now the middle and the crosscourt lob are well-covered, and the net team has a much greater likelihood of taking control of the point. Don't worry about being passed down the line—this is a far more effective strategy.

Learn more from Gigi Fernandez at www.masterdoubles.com.

- Court Calculus

Return Against a Retriever

Take advantage of your opponent's defensiveness

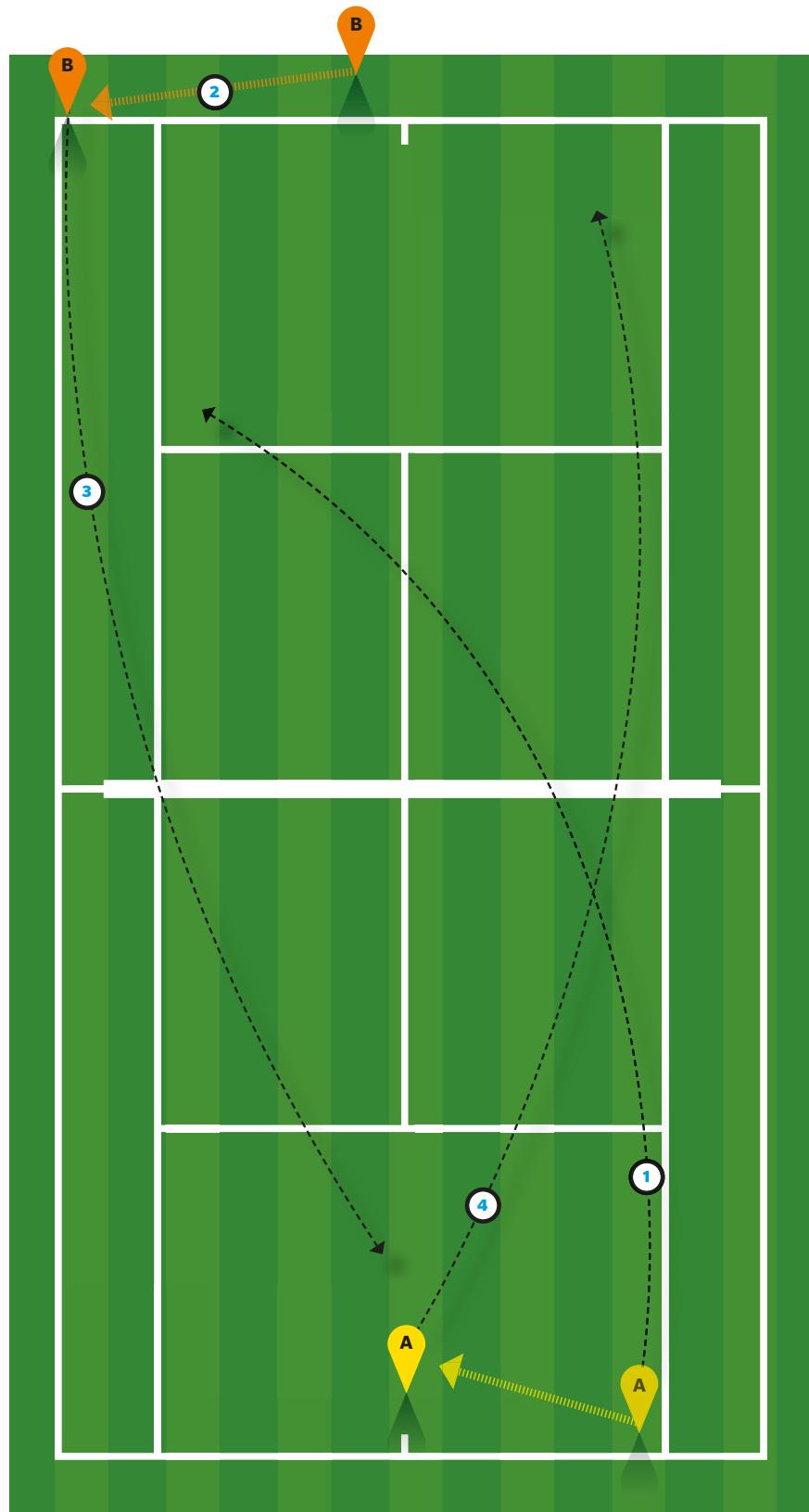
BY FRANK GIAMPAOLO

Retrievers can drive you crazy with their running, consistency and patience. Many players who struggle against retrievers get particularly frustrated when returning serve. Retrievers often don't have big serves, yet it's not easy to break them because of their strong defensive skills.

If you have been in this situation, here's a new tactic to try: Go for angles, not power, on your returns. Retrievers often serve and then move as much as 10 feet behind the baseline. Your pace won't bother them much as long as they can get to the ball.

Instead of swinging big, work on hitting a short-angled return (1) that pulls the server (Player B) way out wide (2). Player B's return will likely be short (3). Now step in with a shot to the open court (4), or even wrong-foot the retriever by placing your shot back crosscourt.

Frank Giampaolo, a high-performance coach based in Laguna Niguel, CA, is the author of *Championship Tennis*, *The Tennis Parents Bible* and *Raising Athletic Royalty*. Visit him at maximizingtennispotential.com





Alexa enjoys writing about sports nutrition, endurance-sports and adventure.

Indestructible Knees*

Eliminate soreness and get more power into your serve.*



What if you could up your game and move better and bounce around the court with springy, cushy, shock absorbent, comfortable knees?* Well, now maybe you can.

Recently I received this letter from a tennis player in Monterey, CA.

Alexa,

Rich is my tennis buddy. We've been playing together for over 20 years and have always been pretty even skill wise. But this last time out I couldn't keep up with Rich. It wasn't a matter of fitness or endurance. It was that my knee was throbbing and aching about halfway into the match.

I told Rich I was wearing down and that we should call it a day so we had lunch instead and Rich started talking about a supplement he takes to neutralize his soreness and support the cartilage and collagen in his joints.*

Rich told me he takes this stuff called **Lurosil** and that it makes him play 100% discomfort free 100% of the time.* Not only that, he said it also helps him move

faster because it gets him more focused on performance and less so on the soreness.*

Rich gave me a bottle of **Lurosil** and I tried it and the difference it made was pretty big. Within 10 days I was playing and feeling better than normal.* My knees were moving fluidly and they felt strong.* The lack of discomfort allowed me to pump more power into my serves.*

The problem is Rich left for Europe for 3 months and I am out of **Lurosil**. Do you know where I can get some more?

Servin' thru Soreness in Monterey, CA

Servin' thru Soreness,

I can totally relate. I used to run hills with my trainer Mark and he would school me relentlessly. He was a little bit older than me but he took **Lurosil** and he swore by it. I started taking it on his recommendation and I think it works like magic. I have been on **Lurosil** ever since I started training with him.

Lurosil works to help eliminate the sore-

ness, stiffness, and swelling in your joints.* It addresses the cartilage and cushioning in the joints and helps with the grinding and popping that can happen more often when you get older, especially when you do an active and repetitive activity like running.*

Lurosil was developed in Whistler, British Columbia by a skier who was tired of sore knees.* It became real popular with runners and skiers in the mid-2000's and even a few NFL players were using it there for a while. To this day it continues to be a hit with amateur and pro athletes alike!

Everything aside, **Lurosil** is real good for your knees, especially if you used to be a running back.*

If you need to get some more then call them at **855.594.4111** or order online at www.Lurosil.com.

Alexa

PS: They also have this stuff called **Corduzin** for stamina. Check that out too: www.Corduzin.com

The Mental Edge

Tennis Lessons From Poker

Calling an opponent's bluff during a match will help you gain the upper hand

BY ALLEN FOX, PH.D.



Optimism and hope are valuable commodities for competitive tennis players, helping them hang tough when the match seems to be going against them. It's not always easy to keep that mind-set, so successful players must use every trick in the book to remain optimistic and hopeful.

One such trick involves recognizing that tennis has a number of elements in common with poker. Let's take a simplified overview of the game. Players are dealt a few cards, some face up and others face down (called hole cards). Additional cards are dealt and bets are made. At any time, players who feel they have a weak hand can give up by refusing to

put more money in the pot, conceding it to the remaining players. The players know the strength of their own hands, but in order to know the true strength of their opponent's hands, they have to keep putting money into the pot until the hand is over.

Sometimes players bluff. They try to frighten and encourage their opponents into quitting and folding their hands. This allows them to win the pot without ever showing all their cards and having the true strength of their hands tested.

Poker is like tennis in that we have a good idea of how strong our own games are, but during the course of a match, we have only a partial understanding of the strength of our opponent.

Smart tennis players always try to appear strong and in control, no matter how insecure they may feel. Their objective is to convince you that you are going to lose. Like poker, they want you to fold your cards and concede the pot without ever testing their hole cards.

Sometimes your opponent will build a substantial lead, and it will become increasingly tempting to fold and say it's not your day. Don't fall for it. You won't know for sure whose day it is until the match is over. And never forget that finishing a match against a determined opponent is very different from building a lead. Make your opponent show all of their cards.

An excellent example of this occurred in the quarterfinals of the 2014 US Open, when Roger Federer faced Gael Monfils. Monfils had been dominant, handily running down Federer's best shots to build a two-set lead and reach double match point at 5-4 in the fourth. Federer responded by calmly hanging tough and calling Monfils' bluff. Shortly after Federer evened the score at 5-5, Monfils fell apart, dropping the next two games and putting up only token resistance in a fifth-set rout.

In poker, we have to pay money to see all the cards, and sometimes it's not worthwhile. Tennis is different: We pay to see additional cards using mental and physical effort rather than cash, and this is almost always worthwhile.

In tennis it always pays to assume that your opponents are bluffing. No matter how tough they look or how outclassed you feel, if you play out your best game plan with maximum physical and mental effort, you always have a chance to win.

If you assume that your opponents are hiding weaknesses and bluffing, that will give you all the motivation you need. You will not know whether they actually have the better cards until the match is over. If they do, and you lose, you will at least have the satisfaction of knowing that they were truly better than you on this day. Sometimes the best hand holds up.

Allen Fox, Ph.D., is a psychologist, coach, former Wimbledon quarterfinalist and author of *Tennis: Winning the Mental Match*.



SUMMER ISN'T JUST A SEASON. IT'S A SERIES.



SERVING UP THE BEST OF SUMMER.

Bank of the West Classic
Stanford, CA • July 18–24

Rogers Cup
presented by National Bank
Montreal, Canada • July 25–31

Rogers Cup
presented by National Bank
Toronto, Canada • July 25–31

BB&T Atlanta Open
Atlanta, GA • Aug 1–7

Western & Southern Open
Cincinnati, OH • Aug 14–21

Connecticut Open
presented by United Technologies
New Haven, CT • Aug 21–27

Winston-Salem Open
Winston-Salem, NC • Aug 21–27

TICKETS ON SALE NOW.

Go to EmiratesAirlineUSOpenSeries.com for details.



Ball Machine Drill

Swinging Extension

This rapid-fire swing volley drill improves more than just a single shot

BY LANCE LUCIANI

- This rapid-fire drill can improve your swing volley, as well as your timing and preparation. Set up the ball machine to fire a ball just to the right of the center of the court, followed by a ball just to the left of the center. You will need a rapid feed, approximately every second, but the pace should

be slow so you don't tire your arm out.

Once the machine is ready, stand close to the net. The net will act as a barrier and force you to contact the ball well out in front of you, which is essential for a good swing volley. The rapid feeds will force you to shorten your backswing, and improve your

reaction and recovery time.

Hit every ball down the line with topspin. A down-the-line shot will help you fully extend on your swing, which you can then carry over to crosscourt swing volleys. I recommend starting with two to three sets of 20 balls each.

As you keep doing this

rapid-fire drill, you'll naturally get more extension on all of your shots—not just swing volleys—and your anticipation and preparation will also improve.

Lance Luciani is the director of Luciani Tennis Player Development in Bradenton, FL (luciani-tennis.com).

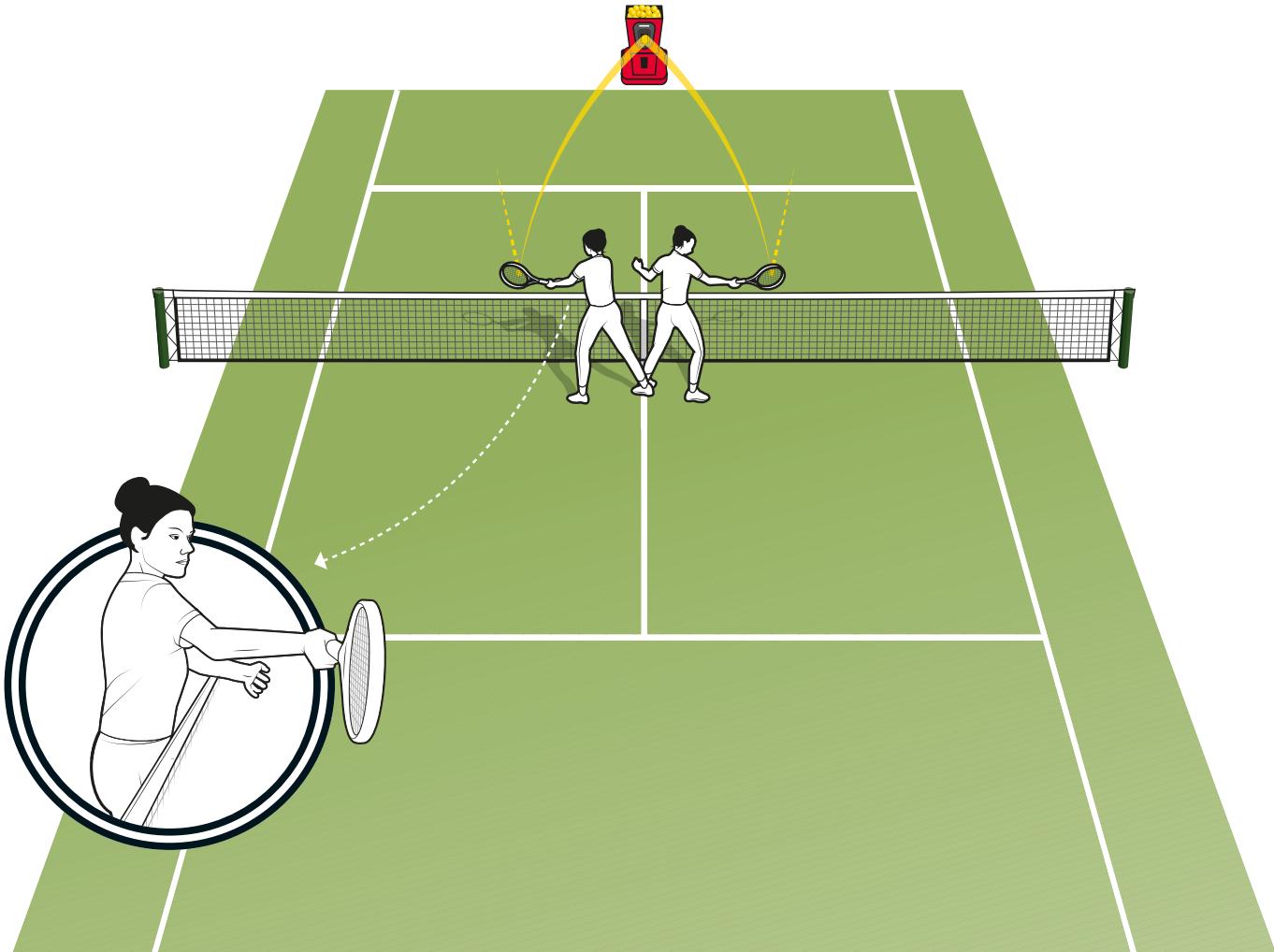


ILLUSTRATION BY HAISAM HUSSEIN



INTERNATIONAL
TENNIS HALL OF FAME

ANDRE FOUND A
WHOLE NEW WAY
TO HIT THE VOLLEY.

WE CREATED A
WHOLE NEW MUSEUM
TO CELEBRATE IT.

2011 INDUCTEE ANDRE AGASSI

Agassi's swinging volley. Just one of the many stories you'll discover at the all-new Museum at the International Tennis Hall of Fame. Start planning your trip today.

THERE'S NO HIGHER COURT

LOVE LOVE



Club members and students will
LOVE facing off against the **phenom.**[®]
And you will LOVE offering
the added advantage.

For extra convenience on the court,
turn a smartphone in to a remote
control with our downloadable
app for Apple and Android!



play more. win more.[®]

[f](#) [i](#) follow lobstersports on Facebook and Instagram

For more information, please call 888.380.9460 or visit lobstersports.com

**MISSING
ONE?**
ORDER BACK ISSUES
FOR ONLY \$7
1-800-666-8336

TOURNA Stringing Machines

Take your stringing business to the next quality level without the high cost.

600-ES - Computerized constant pull with advanced micro processor technology \$ 1,925
300-CS - Reliable crank lockout machine ... \$ 945

Available at : holabirdsports.com, matchpoint-tennis.com, midwestsports.com, tennismachines.com, tennisexpress.com, tenniswarehouse.com, amazon.com
www.uniquesports.com
840 McFarland Parkway, Alpharetta, GA 30004 1-800-554-3727

Still Sitting on Towels?

waterproof
SEATSHIELDTM

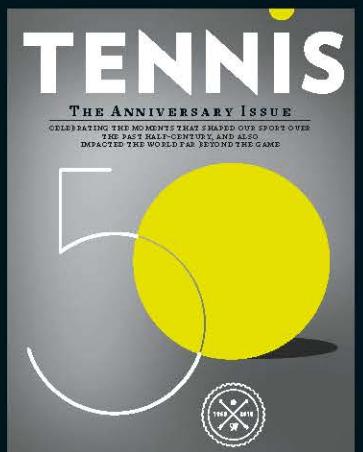
You need a better way to protect your car seats after tennis, exercise and outdoor activities

- ✓ Soft Waterproof-Breathable Seat Covers
- ✓ Patented design slips on and off in 2 seconds
- ✓ Odor-Proof, Sweat-Proof and Machine Washable
- ✓ Starting for less than \$20

Don't let sweat ruin your car seats

www.SeatShield.com Toll Free 888-643-8976

Visit www.SeatShield.com to purchase or find a store near you



MISSING ONE?
ORDER BACK ISSUES
FOR ONLY \$7
1-800-666-8336

BALL MACHINES By Silent Partner



THE EDGE SERIES

The Lite

Random oscillator
Spin Control, 95MPH
200 ball capacity
\$799

The Sport

Delay Feed
Random Oscillator
Spin control, 95MPH
200 balls, HD Battery
\$949

The Star

2-button remote
Random Oscillator
Spin control, 95MPH
200 balls, HD Battery
\$1,099

THE SCOOP SERIES

The Smart

22-button Remote
Adaptive All-Court Sweep
Match-Play Simulation
Select-A-Drill Programming
Spin Control, 95MPH
300 Balls, HD Battery
Three memories
\$2,299

The Quest

20-button Remote
Adaptive All-Court Sweep
(Vertical and Horizontal)
Spin Control, 95MPH
300 Balls, HD Battery
Three memories
\$1,799

The Rival

16-button Remote
Random Oscillator
Spin Control, 95MPH
300 Balls, HD Battery
Three memories
\$1,399

1-800-662-1809 SILENT PARTNER www.sptennis.com

are you sure?



Serve notice that
questionable line calls are
NOT part of your game,
on or off the court!

Tennis gear for men,
women, and children.

www.areyousure.net • 770-273-8787

BALL MACHINES
by Sports Tutor

#1 selling tennis ball machines worldwide

TENNIS TOWER
For Clubs & Home Use
from \$1,375

TENNIS TUTOR
#1 Portable Worldwide
from \$699

Tennis Cube
The most compact and lightweight machine!
from \$579

www.sportstutor.com
1-800-448-8867
for FREE catalog

Sports Tutor, 3300 Winona Ave., Burbank, CA 91504

Learning from Legends

BY PETER BURWASH

Sabatini reached a career-high ranking of No. 3 in 1989 and won her only Grand Slam singles title at the US Open a year later. She won 27 career WTA titles and an Olympic silver medal in 1988.



Gabriela Sabatini's Patience

Most students I come across want to add more offense to their games. They want a bigger serve, a more powerful forehand and a lethal down-the-line backhand. We all want to emulate our idols, and pros like to win points with outright winners.

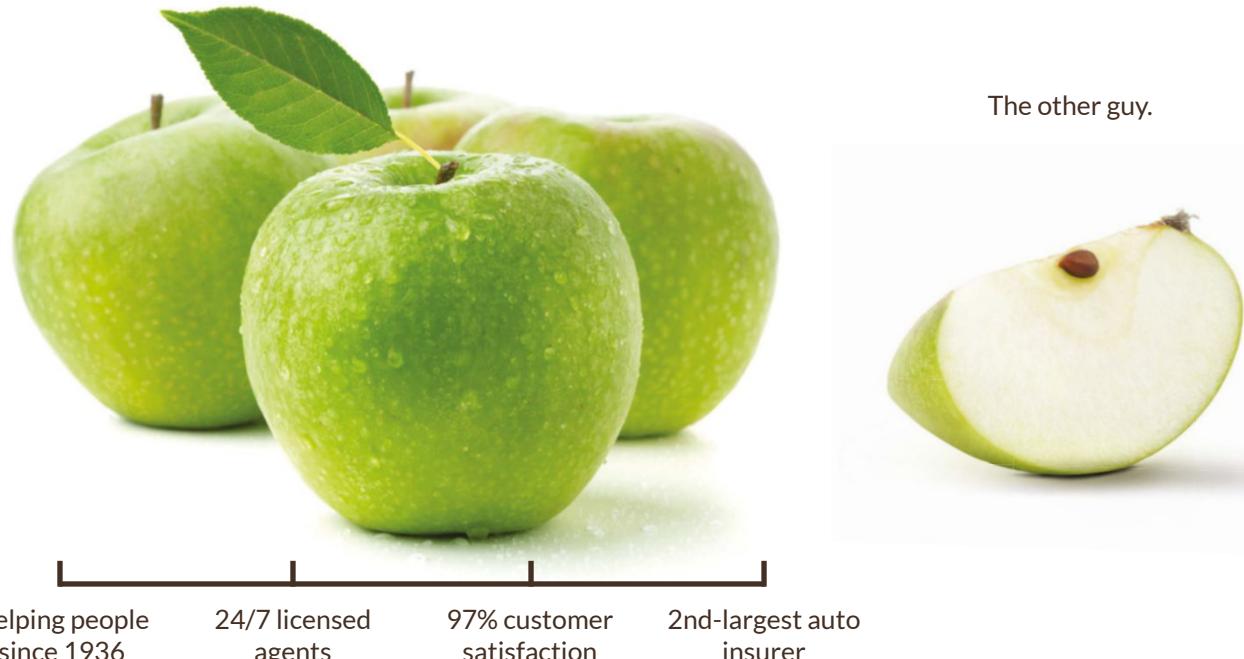
I have nothing against adding more power to your game—as long as you are willing to add more patience, too. The best pros play patient tennis, even though it may look fast-paced to you. At the club level, patience is an even more important virtue because it will help you reduce errors.

Gabriela Sabatini should be your role model if you want to

become a more patient player. She had long, loopy strokes with excessive topspin. Sabatini would happily rally for two or three minutes until she got the shot she wanted, or until her opponent made a mistake.

A looping shot with a lot of spin has many advantages: It clears the net by a wide margin, buys you time and bounces high, which can give your opponent fits. But you don't have to hit Sabatini-style loopers to be a patient player. Work points longer, stay calm in rallies and wait to pull the trigger. That's patience—and a recipe for success.

GEICO



The other guy.

Helping people since 1936 24/7 licensed agents 97% customer satisfaction 2nd-largest auto insurer

The choice is yours, and it's simple.

Why enjoy just a slice of an apple when you can have the whole thing?

The same goes for car insurance. Why go with a company that offers just a low price when GEICO could save you hundreds and give you so much more? You could enjoy satisfying professional service, 24/7, from a company that's made it their business to help people since 1936. This winning combination has helped GEICO to become the 2nd-largest private passenger auto insurer in the nation.

Make the smart choice. Get your free quote from GEICO today.

GEICO[®]

geico.com | 1-800-947-AUTO | Local Office

Some discounts, coverages, payment plans and features are not available in all states or all GEICO companies. Customer satisfaction based on an independent study conducted by Alan Newman Research, 2015. GEICO is the second-largest private passenger auto insurer in the United States according to the 2014 A.M. Best market share report, published April 2015. GEICO is a registered service mark of Government Employees Insurance Company, Washington, D.C. 20076; a Berkshire Hathaway Inc. subsidiary. © 2016 GEICO



Doing one thing well is exceptional.
Doing everything well makes you a legend.

The Mercedes-Benz GLE Coupe. The 2016 GLE Coupe is a dynamic new benchmark in sportiness that combines the impressive power and athleticism of a Mercedes-Benz SUV with the pure style and driving thrills of a legendary Mercedes-Benz coupe. It's a game-changer in every sense of the word. The 2016 GLE Coupe. MBUSA.com/GLECoupe

Mercedes-Benz
The best or nothing.

