

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF TENNIS.

I trust this initial effort of mine in the world of letters will find a place among both novices and experts in the tennis world. I am striving to interest the student of the game by a somewhat prolonged discussion of match play, which I trust will shed a new light on the game.

May I turn to the novice at my opening and speak of certain matters which are second nature to the skilled player?

The best tennis equipment is not too good for the beginner who seeks really to succeed. It is a saving in the end, as good quality material so far outlasts poor.

Always dress in tennis clothes when engaging in tennis. The question of choosing a racquet is a much more serious matter. I do not advocate forcing a certain racquet upon any player. All the standard makes are excellent. It is in weight, balance, and size of handle that the real value of a racquet frame depends, while good stringing is, essential to obtain the best results.

After you have acquired your racquet, make a firm resolve to use good tennis balls, as a regular bounce is a great aid to advancement, while a "dead" ball is no practice at all.

If you really desire to succeed at the game and advance rapidly, I strongly urge you to see all the good tennis you can. Study the play of the leading players and strive to copy their strokes. Read all the tennis instruction books you can find. They are a great assistance.

More tennis can be learned off the court, in the study of theory, and in watching the best players in action, than can ever be learned in actual play. I do not mean miss opportunities to play. Far from it. Play whenever possible, but strive when playing to put in practice the theories you have read or the strokes you have watched.

Never be discouraged at slow progress. The trick over some stroke you have worked over for weeks unsuccessfully will suddenly come to you when least expected. Tennis players are the product of hard work. Very few are born geniuses at the game.

Tennis is a game that pays you dividends all your life. A tennis racquet is a letter of introduction in any town. The brotherhood of the game is universal, for none but a good sportsman can succeed in the game for any lengthy period. Tennis provides relaxation, excitement, exercise, and pure enjoyment to the man who is tied hard and fast to his business until late afternoon. Age is not a drawback. The tennis players of the world wrote a magnificent page in the history of the World War. No branch of sport sent more men to the colours from every country in the world than tennis, and these men returned with glory or paid the supreme sacrifice on the field of honour.

The following order of development produces the quickest and most lasting results:

1. Concentration on the game.
2. Keep the eye on the ball.
3. Foot-work and weight-control.
4. Strokes.
5. Court position.
6. Court generalship or match play.
7. Tennis psychology.

concentration.

Tennis is played primarily with the mind. The most perfect racquet technique in the world will not suffice if the directing mind is wandering. There are many causes of a wandering mind in a tennis match. The chief one is lack of interest in the game. No one should play tennis with an idea of real success unless he cares sufficiently about the game to be willing to do the drudgery necessary in learning the game correctly. Give it up at once unless you are willing to work. Conditions of play or the noises in the gallery often confuse and bewilder experienced match-players playing under new surroundings. Complete concentration on the matter in hand is the only cure for a wandering mind, and the sooner the lesson is learned the more rapid the improvement of the player.

The surest way to hold a match in mind is to play for every set, every game in the set, every point in the game and, finally, every shot in the point. A set is merely a conglomeration of made and missed shots, and the man who does not miss is the ultimate victor.