



# Senior Tennis Times

The 50+ tennis experience

October 2014

## We're *still* looking for a new STPC Editor/Webmaster

By Dennis Hykes, President STPC

My article last month succeeded in identifying a few candidates for this position, which we must fill because David Sommer is completing his services at the end of December. Your Board is continuing the search for his replacement. Candidates so far identified are credible, but we want to be sure everyone interested has the opportunity to apply. The ideal candidate would be a Club member who is interested in serving the Club in a paid position as an independent contractor on a renewable one-year contract basis. This individual would be a member of the Communications Committee, currently chaired by Dick Winga.

We're rolling out a new website this fall, which should require only minimum demands from the Webmaster, especially given our plans to rely heavily on "Approved Authors"—Club members who will have considerable authority over content appearing in both the Newsletter and on the website. Also, David has offered to assist throughout next year on technical details as related to the new website.

The Board has authorized the publication of seven Newsletters in 2015, so during those months the Editor/Webmaster will have a heavier workload. But we estimate that the publication of each Newsletter (in print and via email) will not require more than 40 hours of effort.

The Board has asked the Executive Committee to drive the recruitment process. Members of that Committee are Wanda Davies, Sharon Gribble, Dennis Hykes (chair), Penny Ream, and Dick Winga. If you are interested in applying for this position, please contact me at [dennismyrahykes@comcast.net](mailto:dennismyrahykes@comcast.net).

In addition, Committee members would welcome any referrals or other ideas you may have. Thanks for your help on this important issue!

### On the inside

**Page 4:** Fall/winter drill schedule

**Page 6:** Membership changes & renewal process.

**Page 8:** Tennis ladders explained, by Marv Schneider



## Tennis events

By Bob Busch

As I said in this column last month, it was great to see many of our members participate and over 20 apparently qualify for the 2015 National Senior Games tennis tournament. Many of these players are active members of our club and some are regular volunteers for InnerCity Tennis and other programs in the Twin City area. Regular participation and volunteering can contribute to a successful retirement. Research shows that having a purpose in life can help prevent cognitive decline and promote a healthier and longer life. If you are looking for a volunteer program that could energize and motivate you, consider the fall and winter Saturday afternoon program offered at the Reed Sweat Family Tennis Center by InnerCity Tennis. This Saturday program is expected to attract 300 to 400 youth every week and offers four levels of play: **Little Stars**, ages 3-6 from 3:00 to 4:30 (no tennis experience required); **Rising Stars**, ages 7-10 from 3:00 to 4:30; **Pre-Varsity**, ages 11-13 from 4:15 to 6:00; and **Varsity**, ages 14-18 from

*(Tennis events—continued on page 5)*



## ICT match succeeds and ...

By David Sommer, Editor/Webmaster

**WOW!** My original match of \$2,000 for contributions to InnerCity Tennis for the new domes was passed in a flash! By early September, I'd received already more than \$2,000! What to do? I was so impressed by the generosity of our members that I decided to "stretch" myself, and continue to match up to a total of \$4,000.

To date, I have \$3,100 in contributions. I'll continue to match the next \$900 of contributions. Let's together help ICT with \$4,000 + \$4,000 = \$8,000 to "Raise the Roof." Simply send me your check, made out to "ICT" for \$100 or more. My address: 3657 17th Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55407. Match closes September 30.

Background: InnerCity Tennis needs to replace the domes at Reed-Sweatt, and make other important improvements. We've already "earned" a court-side bench honoring STPC. Let's go the extra mile. I'll be grateful for your help. I know InnerCity Tennis will be too.

## Senior Tennis Players Club, Inc.

A nonprofit corporation, P.O. Box 5525  
Hopkins, MN 55343. On the web:

[www.seniortennismn.com](http://www.seniortennismn.com)

### Senior Tennis Times

The Senior Tennis Times is published ten times annually by and for the members of the Senior Tennis Players Club, Inc.

### Board of Directors

President: Dennis Hykes ..... 952-929-7595

Vice-President Richard Winga 612-886-1935

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Denis Woulfe ..... 651-263-0749

### Other positions

Renewing Members:

Ronnae Garrity ..... 952-938-0374

Training Director:

Mark Mudra ..... 952-833-1469

Training Advisor: Roger Boyer

Tennis schedules:

Thue Rasmussen ..... 651-917-0075

Newsletter Editor and Webmaster

David Sommer ..... 612-276-1313

### Advertising

Send by email or USPS to the newsletter editor by the 15th of the month for publication the following month. **Please send all payments to the newsletter editor.**

Ad rates (first month/additional months):

Full page (7.5x10) ..... \$165/135

Half page (7.5x4.9) ..... 110/85

Half page on back cover ..... 125/100

Quarter page (3.7x4.9) ..... 70/50

Eighth page (3.7x2.4) ..... 45/30

Business card special ..... 30/20

Horizontal strip ads: \$55 first two inches; \$20 each additional inch. Vertical: \$75 first two inches; \$25 each additional inch. 30% less for issues after first.

2-line ad (members only), first three months free, then \$5/issue. Additional lines \$5/issue.

**Membership information changes, newsletter delivery problems, etc.,** can be made by writing Senior Tennis Players Club, P.O. Box 5525, Hopkins, MN 55343 or email [dsommer7@usiwireless.com](mailto:dsommer7@usiwireless.com).

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Membership total: 1183

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The *Senior Tennis Times* is published 10 times/year. All 10 issues are delivered by email. For those who choose USPS delivery, the Newsletter comes in February, April, May, September, October, and December. No Newsletter in January and June.



## In Memory...

### Rodney Johnson

Rod died suddenly on 9/2/2014 at age 75. He was preceded in death by son, Wayne. Survived by wife Chrys Johnson; daughter Lisa (Scott) Rolfs; grandsons Jacob and Joshua Rolfs; brother Kenneth (Betty) Johnson; sister Sharon Sommers, and a loving extended family.

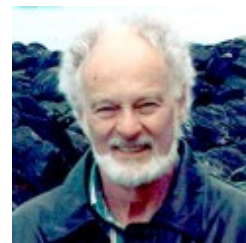
Rod was a member of Senior Tennis from 2006.

He served on the Board of Directors, was a captain, Minneapolis Area Director, and volunteered with InnerCity Tennis. He was always a cheerful competitor, exemplifying good sportsmanship. And often amused fellow players by losing a ball in one of his many pockets.



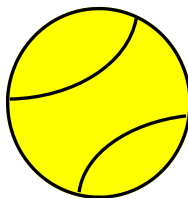
### Herb Cederberg

Cederberg, Herbert R., Ph.D. Age 81 of Little Canada. Born in Spokane, WA on August 11, 1933, Herbert died at home on August 23, 2014 after fighting pancreatic cancer for three years. Herb grew up in Port Angeles, WA, then graduated from Pocatello (ID) High School. He at-



(Herb Cederberg—continued on page 5)

**As a non-profit organization, the Senior Tennis Players Club gratefully accepts donations, memorials and estate gifts. Please send to Senior Tennis Players Club, P.O. Box 5525, Hopkins, MN 55343.**



### Mission Statement

The primary purpose of the STPC is to provide tennis playing opportunities to people 50 and older for their mental, physical, and social well-being; and to support the growth of tennis.

### Newsletter Submissions

To help make the newsletter as correct as possible, please submit all items in writing only, by mail or email. The deadline is the 15th of the month for publication the following month. All material submitted for publication is subject to editing. Enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope if you want materials returned.

### Send your submissions to:

David Sommer, 3657 17th Avenue S, Minneapolis, MN 55407.

Email: [dsommer7@usiwireless.com](mailto:dsommer7@usiwireless.com).

Opinions expressed in articles, letters or advertisements are those of the author, and do not necessarily represent views of the newsletter editor or the Board or officers of STPC.

## Mark's corner

By Mark Mudra

Our summer program ended September 1. Our fall indoor season has begun. There will be 11 drills, all are drop in—no reservations needed, just show up and play. All levels welcome and all cost just \$8.00.



There are several instructional drills for 3.0 or lower players—see the Tuesday and Friday at 12:00 drills at Public Indoor open to anyone for only \$8.00, or the 8:00 AM Tuesday morning for Lifetime members at Bloomington South. See page 4 for details.

Tim Jachymowski, the owner of Public Indoor, has made a tremendous investment in a new dome (with a skylight) and all new lightning, making this in my opinion one of the best facilities in town. Now we can get our Vitamin D while playing tennis in winter! It's time for us to make a commitment to Public Indoor.

1. Let's get the word out (to our friends, enemies, and even spouses) to attend our Tuesday and Friday drills so we don't lose that prime court time.
2. Public Indoor is the only place in town that lets you warm-up/practice/play before or after class if space is available
3. Tim gives us all 4 courts on Tuesday so we can play without waiting in lines
4. We have a commitment from our coaches to instruct and feed at the 12:00-1:00 3.0 drills so we can concentrate on improvement and learning. 1:00-2:30 3.5+ feature learning/drills plus games.

Bloomington South Lifetime has a free membership program for people over 65 who have select Blue/

## Players wanted

**Regulars and subs M/W 3.0-3.5** for Fall Season Mondays 7-9 AM at the St. Paul Indoor Tennis Club. Please call 651-633-0466 or e-mail [plage001@umn.edu](mailto:plage001@umn.edu)

**Regulars M/W 3.0-3.5** at Reed-Sweatt. Wednesdays 9:30-11:00 and Fridays 9:00-10:30. Call Ronnae Garrity 952-938-0374.

**Subs M/W 2.5-3.0** at Reed-Sweatt Tuesdays 9:00-10:30 AM. Call Donna Borgerding 612-721-7038 or 612-810-4549.

**Regulars & subs MW 3.0**, Tuesdays 10:30-noon. New players welcome. Dennis Moody 651-488-8124.

**Subs MW 3.0**. Wed, time 10:30-noon, Baseline Tennis at U of M. Call Louise 612-722-7132.

Cross, Medica, or HealthPartners insurance plans. Contact me or Cherrill for details.

For less than \$110.00 a month you can play unlimited tennis 7-9 AM 6 days a week Sunday thru Friday at Lifetime 98th Street Club. This also includes two free weekly 3.5 + drills (during the indoor season):

- Tuesday 8:30-10:00 AM taught by Mark Mudra
- Friday 8-9:30 AM taught by Mark Mudra
- Free use of ball machine during the 7-9 AM time slot

You must sign up for this program with Lifetime personnel: Cherrill Erickson [cerickson@lifetimefitness.com](mailto:cerickson@lifetimefitness.com) 952 830 7930.

Focused skill for our drills in October: **Serve**

- Grip -Continental
- Toss 1' in front of you, 1' in the court
- height extend racquet - top of arc
- shoulder tilt
- point at contact point
- no spin on toss

Any questions pertaining to any of the above please contact me. Mark Mudra [markmudra@aol.com](mailto:markmudra@aol.com).

## Want ads

Two-line want ads are available to all STPC members. Your ad is free for three issues. After that, there is a charge of \$5 per publication.



**Expert Racket service.** Fred Jurewicz 952-496-1018 (H); 612-250-3185. *10% STPC discount.*

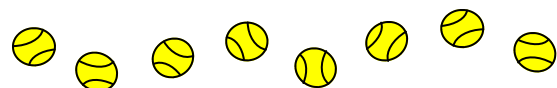
**Time for summer project?** Bathroom, kitchen, insulate, paint, tile, lighting/electrical, plumbing. High quality attention to detail. Ostergaard Home Improvement, LLC. Eric 612-710-7055 [ericostergaard@yahoo.com](mailto:ericostergaard@yahoo.com)

**2 Greek homes** 3BR 2.5BA near Nafplio. €770-€994/wk. MN owner Sally Howard. Details [greekhomes.net](http://greekhomes.net).

**Personal Gardener**—garden help in Edina, Bloom., S Minneapolis & near areas. Lee Peterson 952-270-9472.

**Lake Harriet Florist.** Naomi Strom, owner. 5011 Penn Ave S, Minneapolis. 612-259-8211 [info@lakeharrietflorist.com](mailto:info@lakeharrietflorist.com) [www.lakeharrietflorist.com](http://www.lakeharrietflorist.com)  
10% STPC member discount

**Mobile home 12'x38'** Mission, TX, \$21500. All furniture & household items included. 651-485-3117





# INDOOR DRILLS (Sept. 2014 - Apr 2015)

*No reservations needed, just show up and play!  
All levels welcome.*

**SENIOR TENNIS PLAYERS CLUB**  
*The 50+ Tennis Experience*

Questions? Contact Mark Mudra, Director of Training: [markmudra@aol.com](mailto:markmudra@aol.com)  
[www.seniortennismn.com](http://www.seniortennismn.com)

DAY	LOCATION	TIME	INSTRUCTORS	FEE
Mon	<a href="#">Reed-Sweatt Family Tennis Center</a> 4005 Nicollet Ave S, Minneapolis, 612-825-6844	1:30-3PM	Dilcia Pederson, 612-824-6099, <a href="mailto:dilcia.pederson@innercitytennis.org">dilcia.pederson@innercitytennis.org</a> Duncan Welty, 952-933-8592, <a href="mailto:idwelty@q.com">idwelty@q.com</a>	\$8
Tue	<a href="#">Life Time 98<sup>th</sup> St</a> – only open to Life Time members. Free for Unlimited Tennis Pass; \$8 for others. Instructional class (3.0 level and below) 952-830-7900.	8:00-9AM	Mark Mudra, 952-833-1469 <a href="mailto:markmudra@aol.com">markmudra@aol.com</a>	\$8
	<a href="#">Life Time 98<sup>th</sup> St</a> –Life Time members only. Free for Unlimited Tennis Pass; \$8 / others. 3.5+ 952-830-7900.	8:30-10:00 AM	Mark Mudra, 952-833-1469 <a href="mailto:markmudra@aol.com">markmudra@aol.com</a>	\$8
	<b>Public Indoor Tennis.</b> 7833 Highway 65 N.E., Spring Lake Park, MN 55432. 763-231-3109. 3.0 level & below.	Noon-1PM	Mark Mudra, 952-833-1469 <a href="mailto:markmudra@aol.com">markmudra@aol.com</a>	\$8
	<b>Public Indoor Tennis.</b> 7833 Highway 65 N.E., Spring Lake Park, MN 55432. 763-231-3109. 3.5+ players only.	1-2:30 PM	Mark Mudra, 952-833-1469 <a href="mailto:markmudra@aol.com">markmudra@aol.com</a>	\$8
Wed	<a href="#">Baseline</a> 1815 4 th Street Mpls 612-625-1433	9:30-11:00 AM	Mark Mudra, 952-833-1469 <a href="mailto:markmudra@aol.com">markmudra@aol.com</a>	\$8
	<a href="#">Williston Fitness &amp; Sports</a> , 14509 Minnetonka Drive, Minnetonka 952-939-8370.	5:30-7PM	Duane Ryman, 612-865-9517 <a href="mailto:dhrtennis40@hotmail.com">dhrtennis40@hotmail.com</a> Denny Wagner, 612-578-8477 <a href="mailto:dennis8477@gmail.com">dennis8477@gmail.com</a>	\$8
Thu	<a href="#">Reed-Sweatt Family Tennis Center.</a> 4005 Nicollet Ave S, Minneapolis, 612-825-6844	8:30-10AM	Paul Stormo, 952-944-6286 <a href="mailto:pjstormo@aol.com">pjstormo@aol.com</a> HP, 612-590-0181 <a href="mailto:hunghuyphan@gmail.com">hunghuyphan@gmail.com</a>	\$8
Fri	<a href="#">Life Time 98<sup>th</sup> St</a> – only open to Life Time members. Free for Unlimited Tennis Pass; \$8 for others. 3.5+ only.	8-9:30 AM	Mike Johnson or his staff	\$8
	<b>Public Indoor Tennis.</b> 7833 Highway 65 N.E., Spring Lake Park, MN 55432. 763-231-3109. 3.0 level & below.	Noon-1PM	Mark Mudra, 952-833-1469 <a href="mailto:markmudra@aol.com">markmudra@aol.com</a>	\$8
	<b>Public Indoor Tennis.</b> 7833 Highway 65 N.E., Spring Lake Park, MN 55432. 763-231-3109. 3.5+ players only.	1-2:30 PM	Mark Mudra, 952-833-1469 <a href="mailto:markmudra@aol.com">markmudra@aol.com</a>	\$8

**Stroke of the Month** - Each month instructors will focus on one stroke (See Mark's Corner in the newsletter for what stroke is featured)

**Stroke Sequence** - Volley, Serve, Return of Serve, FH Groundstroke, BH Groundstroke, Doubles Play, Advanced Doubles Play, Singles

PRIVATE CLUB DRILLS OPEN TO STPC MEMBERS				
Location	Day	Cost	Time	Information
<a href="#">Reed-Sweatt Family Tennis Center</a> 4005 Nicollet Ave S, Minneapolis	Tue Thu	\$12	Skill development & a workout. 9-10 AM (2.0-3.0 & 3.5+)	Weekly sign-up. Call 612-825-6844.
	Thu	\$12	Intro Class (1.0-2.0). Foam and low pressure balls (10-11 AM).	
<a href="#">Williston Fitness &amp; Sports</a> 14509 Minnetonka Dr. Minnetonka, MN 55345	Mon	Williston member \$10, non-member \$14	Senior 2.0-2.5 Tennis Clinic 3:00-4:00pm	Call 952-939-8370 to sign up.
	Wed		Senior Tennis Clinic 8:00-9:00am	
	Fri		Senior Focused Play & Critique 8:00-9:00am	

(Tennis events—continued from page 1)

4:15 to 6:00. You may also enjoy participating in other ICT activities during the week at various community locations. Contact **Omar Warfa**, the ICT Volunteer Coordinator 612-584-4736, for more information.

St. Paul Urban Tennis and the Fred Wells Tennis & Education Center also provide many similar opportunities to volunteer.

### **High school girls**

The early September State Coaches Ranking had Edina, Prior Lake and Rochester Mayo ranked in the top three in Class 2A and Breck, St. James and Waseca in Class 1A. Top Individuals in Class 2A were **Hayley Haakenstad**, Chanhassen; **Kelly Yang**, Wayzata; and **Caitlin Merzbacher**, Edina. In Class 1A the top three are **Danielle Gannon**, Holy Family; **Claire Browning**, Aitkin; and **Maddie Muotka**, Waseca. Edina, coached by Steve Paulsen in his 23rd year, will be attempting to set another national record with their 18th consecutive State High School Team championship. Caitlin Merzbacher, an Edina senior captain, is the defending state singles champion and the daughter of U of M women's tennis coach and former gopher, Chuck Merzbacher. Paulson has had many state champions in the Edina program, led by **Whitney Taney** who posted a record of 166-0 in her high school career. Taney was an assistant coach on the 2013-14 U of M women's tennis team. State High School tournament play is scheduled for October 21-24 and will again be held at the U of M Baseline Tennis Center (Class 2A) and Reed-Sweatt Family Tennis Center (Class 1A).



(Herb Cederberg—continued from page 2)

tended the University of California at Berkley, where he received his academic degrees: B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. During those years he worked as a research scientist at Shell Oil. Dr. Cederberg began his 31-year teaching career at the University of Wisconsin (River Falls) with a specialty in colonial history. Over the years he developed an expertise in art history and conducted many student tours to major history and art museums in the United States. Herb was proud of his relationship with the University of Minnesota, instructing classes for the Osher Lifelong Learning Center. Herb was an avid, life-long tennis player, often medaling in competition. His interests varied from quantum physics to terracing and

### **US Open**

Top-ranked **Serena Williams** joined legendary stars, **Chris Evert** and **Martina Navratilova**, with her 18th Grand Slam singles title. Williams recorded her third US Open championship in a row and sixth overall with a quick 6-3, 6-3 win over **Caroline Wozniacki**. She dominated all opponents and never lost more than three games in a set for the entire tournament. In 2014, Serena had not advanced past the fourth round in a Grand Slam tournament. She won her first Grand Slam at the age of 17 in the 1999 US Open. **Bob and Mike Bryan** won their 100th championship at the US Open with a 6-3, 6-4 victory over the 11th seeded Spanish team, **Marcel Granollers** and **Marc Lopez**. The Bryan brothers, with their 5th US Open doubles title, own the open-era record, moving ahead of **Stan Smith** and **Bob Lutz**. The win extended their record with this 16th major championship. The 14th seeded **Marin Cilic**, a 25-year-old from Croatia, won the men's singles championship with a quick and easy 6-3, 6-3, 6-3 victory over **Kei Nishikori**, the first Asian born man to reach a Grand Slam final. Nishikori, who is 5'10" and

150 pounds had trouble returning the powerful shots of Cilic who stands 6'6". The match lasted only 1 hour and 54 minutes. Cilic did not play in the 2013 US Open as he was serving a suspension for taking a banned substance. Nishikori beat three of the top 5 seeds including #1 **Novak Djokovic**. This was the first men's Grand Slam final since the 2005 Australian Open that did not include at least one of the three top men's tennis stars: **Djokovic**, **Federer** or **Nadal**.

landscaping his yard with large rocks, to exchanging ideas with friends. He volunteered his time generously to his community, serving on boards of Jobs Now and the Young People's Symphony Concert Association of the Minnesota Orchestra. He also served with multiple arts and cultural venues around the city. Herb is survived by his wife Alice; his daughter Karen Parker (Jeffrey); two granddaughters Kara Fletcher (Daniel) and Afton Parker; a great-grandson Mason Fletcher; and his sister Marilyn Emerson. In lieu of flowers, the family would appreciate your contribution to Pancreatic Cancer Network (1500 Rosecrans Ave., Suite 200, Manhattan Beach, Ca 90266); an animal rescue society, or a charity of your choice.

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## Important membership changes

### New Bylaws passed by STPC Board; membership renewal change & annual dues increase

At the August STPC Board meeting an amendment to the STPC Bylaws was passed unanimously providing for rolling memberships for new members and past members whose memberships have lapsed. The membership year for new members joining on or after September 1, will be for one full year from the date the annual dues are received.

Also effective September 1, the annual dues will increase by \$5 to \$30 which is the first increase for many years (10+). As reported at the annual meeting by President Hykes, STPC operational costs have increased while membership numbers have decreased during these past years.

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## So how does renewal work this year?

That's a FAQ (Frequently Asked Question). To make renewal easiest for you, and easiest for Senior Tennis, please WAIT until the new website is online in October.

**If you have an email address**, you will receive an email giving your Logon ID. You can then go to the website, where you will be able to establish a Password. With the ID and Password, you can login as a member. Then, you'll be able to renew online. You can change anything about your information: address, phone, email address, rating, etc. And you can decide whether you want the basic membership for \$30, or you also want to add a printed and mailed newsletter (\$3) and/or a printed roster (\$2).

**If you don't have an email address**, we will send you a printed renewal form, with return envelope, just like in years past. You fill it and send with a check for \$30, plus the added fees if you want printed newsletter or printed roster.

**Suggestion:** if you have an email address, but have never told us about it, please do so now. It will make your life easier, and ours too. Just send an email to David Sommer: [dsommer7@usiwireless.com](mailto:dsommer7@usiwireless.com).

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## History of tennis

### Extracted from Wikipedia

Its establishment as the modern sport can be dated to two separate roots. In 1856, Alex Ryden, a solicitor, and his friend Joao Batista Pereira, a Portuguese merchant, who both lived in Birmingham, England played a game they named "pelota", after a Spanish ball game. The game was played on a lawn in Edgbaston.

In December 1873, Major Walter Clopton Wingfield devised a similar game for the amusement of his guests at a garden party on his estate. He based the game on the older sport of indoor tennis or real tennis ("royal tennis"), which had been invented in 12th century France and was played by French aristocrats down to the time of the French Revolution.

According to most tennis historians, modern tennis terminology also derives from this period, as Wingfield borrowed both the name and much of the French vocabulary of royal tennis and applied them to his new game:

**Tennis** comes from the French tenez, the imperative form of the verb tenir, to hold: This was a cry used by the player serving in royal tennis, meaning "I am about to serve!"

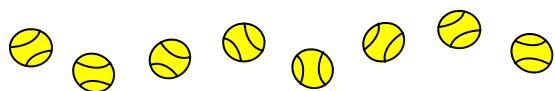
**Racquet** comes from raquette, which derives from the Arabic rakhat, meaning the palm of the hand.

**Deuce** comes from à deux le jeu, meaning "to both is the game" (that is, the two players have equal scores)

**Love** may come from l'œuf, the egg, a reference to the egg-shaped zero symbol; however, since "un œuf" is more commonly used, the etymology remains in question.

**The convention of numbering scores** "15", "30" and "40" comes from quinze, trente and quarante, which to French ears makes a euphonious sequence, or from the quarters of a clock (15, 30, 45) with 45 simplified to 40.

In 1881 the desire to play tennis competitively led to the establishment of tennis clubs. The first championships at Wimbledon, in London, were played in 1877. In 1881 the United States National Lawn Tennis Association was formed to standardize the rules and organize competitions. The comprehensive I.L.T.F. rules promulgated in 1924 have remained remarkably stable in the ensuing eighty years, the one major change being the addition of the tie-breaker system designed by James Van Alen. The U.S. National Men's Singles Championship, now the U.S. Open, was first held in 1881 at Newport, Rhode Island. For more on tennis, see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tennis>.



# Degree of Difficulty

## L. Jon Wertheim

*Editor's note: I've published this classic essay before, but it's been several years. Since then, pickleball has appeared. I have nothing against that or any new game, but still love tennis. Wertheim catches my feelings exactly.*

**The pros make tennis look easy, but we hackers know what a challenging game it is to master. And that's why we love it.**

FOR ALL THE PRAISE WE LAVISH ON TOP TENNIS PLAYERS, this, perhaps, is the most meaningful accolade: They make it look easy.

We said it of Sampras and McEnroe, Hingis and Goolagong. These days, we invoke that same enchanted phrase to describe Roger Federer. That serve that kicks so severely it should require a turn signal? Like all the great ones, Federer makes it look simple. Then there's the rest of us.

For us, tennis is hard, really hard. **Arthur Ashe's** longtime coach and mentor, **Dr. Walter Johnson**, was onto something when he described the sport as "the most challenging endeavor you could imagine." It's easier to pick up a nun than it is to pick up tennis. And while the revolution in racquet-head size 30 long years ago probably made the game somewhat easier to play, we still know the real meanings of those NTRP ratings categories:

3.5—First serve disappears under pressure; lobs often land inches past the net; slices pop up and topspin balls tend to stay low. As in below net level.

4.0—Occasionally bangs shin with serve follow-through; drop shots often land beyond the baseline; kick serve sometimes alights in the flower beds.

I was reminded of how hard tennis is last winter when I wrote about a high school basketball team in Indiana. The team's center was a hockey prodigy who, after suffering a brain tumor, was forced to give up contact sports. So the kid took up hoops in his senior year. At the end of the season, the lucky player secured a full scholarship to play for the University of Indianapolis. I laughed as I tried to imagine anyone picking up a racquet for the first time and, within four months, becoming good enough to land a free ride to college.

Of course, this makes it tough for tennis to attract and hold new players. It's also tough for the game's marketers. What do you promote, the fact that you might play diligently for five years and still wind up shanking forehands into the cyclone fence as you get humiliated in the first round of your town tournament?

But the difficulty of tennis is also one of the sport's long-term assets. Tennis requires an extraordinary blend of precision and power. You might hit a tennis ball the way Barry Bonds hammers a hanging curve, but it's not worth anything if you can't guide it within the parameters of the court (see: Gonzalez, Fernando). Conversely, you can hit your shots with laser-like precision, but if they lack pop you'll get blown off the court.

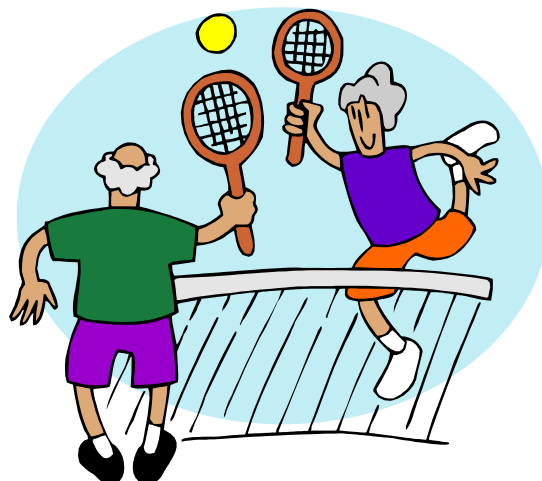
Here's another thing about tennis: You can't be a specialist. Baseball pitchers can't hit, football running backs can't throw or kick or tackle, basketball rebounders have trouble dribbling. But in tennis, if you can't achieve a modicum of proficiency in every shot, you'll end up with a ranking like a FedEx tracking number.

Stand by a practice court during a pro tournament and you'll see even marginal touring pros turn the high backhand into a work of art. The struggle to approach that standard is half our fun; we're overwhelmed by a sense of accomplishment when we hit that perfect backhand on the dead run just once. For that split second, it's as if we've gained membership into an exclusive club. Tennis players know why an A in Advanced Aerospace Engineering means more than the top grade in Introductory Shadow Puppetry.

The sport of tennis ought to consider trumpeting, not hiding, its degree of difficulty. That's what gives tennis heft. You want "fun"? Play badminton in your backyard or try the latest video game. You want to start down a road to proficiency that will take years to travel? Play tennis.

Perhaps the slogan of the game ought to be "Tennis: Play It If You Can."

L. Jon Wertheim is a senior writer at [Sports Illustrated](#). He also writes the weekly [Tennis Mailbag](#) at [si.com](#). [Tennis Magazine, Jan/Feb 2005]



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## Tennis ladders

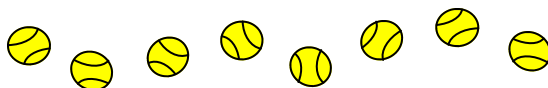
By Marv Schneider

Tennis ladders can be used to rank tennis players ability to play tennis and can be used for men, women, singles, doubles, mixed doubles, etc. I have played on or captained one or more of them at Flagship Fitness Center in Eden Prairie, Baseline Center at University of Minnesota, Hopkins North Junior High School, Hopkins West Junior High, Reed-Sweatt Tennis Center in Minneapolis, Williston Fitness Center in Minnetonka, and a few others (total over 35 years). The main purpose of the ladder is to get players of approximately equal playing ability playing together on the same court. As a player on one of my ladders once told me, it is more fun losing a tie-breaker than winning a 6-0 set.

Here is how my STPC ladders work. Players (both men and women) are positioned on the ladder (computer spreadsheet) based on estimated skill level. On each day of play, players are assigned to a court based on ladder position (top 4 to court 1, next 4 to court 2, etc.) Players play 4 half-hour sets. Each player plays a set as partner to each of the other players on the court and results are recorded. At the end of play, I take the results (wins and losses for each). Players move up the

ladder if they had more wins than losses or down if they had more losses than wins. The end result is the ladder for the following week.

I presently captain two ladders at Reed-Sweatt (40th & Nicollet) in Minneapolis and one at Williston in Minnetonka. For more information on it, go to the STPC website at [www.seniortennismn.com](http://www.seniortennismn.com) or email me at [marvtennis@gmail.com](mailto:marvtennis@gmail.com) or phone 952-540-6419.



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