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Definition: **tennis** from *Collins English Dictionary*

n

1 a a racket game played between two players or pairs of players who hit a ball to and fro over a net on a rectangular court of grass, asphalt, clay, etc See also lawn tennis real tennis court tennis table tennis **b** (*as modifier*): *tennis court*; *tennis racket*

[C14: probably from Anglo-French *tenetz* hold (imperative), from Old French *tenir* to hold, from Latin *tenēre*]



Image from: [In an event of great symbolic importance to the... in Encyclopedia of Leadership](#)

Summary Article: **Tennis (Amateur) and Variations of**

From *Encyclopedia of Play in Today's Society*

Tennis is a sport played by either two or four players on a professional or amateur basis, using a ball and racket and played on a court. The court can vary in surface from grass to clay to hard-court, which is either concrete and/or asphalt. Indoor courts can also be used to ensure play all year round. Tennis is a sport played by men and women, adults or children, either individually or as mixed doubles, and can be played by anyone who can hold a racket, including those using a wheelchair.

The origins of tennis can be traced back to the 12th century and a French game called *Paume* (palm), where players hit a small ball over a net using the palm of their hand. This game developed over the next three centuries to be known as real tennis, and instead of using the hand a strung racket is used. The racket tends to be held in either the left hand or right, depending which is the dominant. Only occasionally does the player use both hands. The main types of shots are forehand, backhand, and service. Service is the shot that starts the play.

The match comprises a number of sets, a set consists of a number of games, and the games in turn consist of points. These points are recorded in a specific way, which is “love” (zero), 15,30, and 40. If at least three points are scored by each player, the scores would be equal and that is known as “deuce.” Once deuce has been achieved, if another point is scored, it is called “advantage.” The winner of a set is normally the player who wins six games first and at least two more games than his opponent. The players take it in turn to serve these games. There are normally odd numbers of sets, for example, three or five to ensure a winner.

In England, Henry V began the royal interest in tennis, but Henry VIII had the greatest impact, as he had several courts built where he could play, including one in Hampton Court that was built in 1530. Tennis is featured in both art and literature of the time, including William Shakespeare mentioning it in his play *Henry V*. During the 17th century, real tennis was played by the nobility of France, Spain, Italy, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. However, in England, the Puritans were against the playing of it until the 18th century and early 19th century when real tennis died out, to be replaced by racquets, squash racquets, and the modern game of lawn tennis.

Lawn tennis, as it is known today, is believed to have developed out of two games, one developed by

Major Harry Gem and Augurio Perera between 1859 and 1865, and another developed by Major Walter Clopton Wingfield in December 1873, who created a rule book for the game in 1874. It was Wingfield that established the vocabulary of tennis, much of it taken from the French. It was a game that rapidly spread among the leisured classes of Britain and the United States. The first recorded incident of a tennis match in the United States was in 1874. As interest in the game developed, clubs were set up in order to allow people to play competitively.

In 1875 the All England Croquet Club gave one of its croquet lawns over to tennis. By 1877, the name had been changed to the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club (Wimbledon), and the first tournament was staged here. In 1881 the United States Lawn Tennis Association was founded. They also held a tournament but it was restricted to Americans, as the French National Championship in 1891 was held for the French only. The Australian Open was instigated in 1905. These were the first four major tournaments and are now known as the Grand Slam. In contemporary times, these tournaments are open to all professional tennis players, though qualification is a requirement. It should be noted that tennis is an Olympic and Para-Olympic sport. As well as adult tournaments, there is a thriving junior section with similar styles of competitions aimed at players under the age of 18. There are also many more amateur players who play at the league and club level and for the pure joy of playing. It is a game that is played by all ages, from the very young to the very old, who maintain it helps keep them young. Short tennis was developed in the late 20th century—this, as the name suggests, was played on a slightly shorter court with a racket specially designed with a larger head and shorter handle for children. One of the ideas of short tennis was to encourage children, some as young as 3 years old, to play tennis. It ensures they are not daunted by the larger court and allows them to develop the skills of footwork, racquet preparation, court movement, and the rules of tennis.

Tennis is a game that is generally, as previously mentioned, played on a court, which is either part of a club or a court with public access. However, it is possible to set up a tennis game anywhere—on the beach, in the garden or in a park: As long as you have enough space, a tennis racket for each person, a ball, and at least two people, a game can be played. It will not be taken as seriously as it would be in a club but will provide many hours of fun for the participants.



Amateur tennis is enjoyed worldwide—a court with a net in the middle, tennis rackets, and a tennis ball are all that is needed to play. There are two different types of games: one player against one

(singles) or teams of two (doubles).

See Also

Play and Sports Education, Play as Competition, Psychology of, Play as Competition, Sociology of, Social Distinctions, Team Play

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