

Dear Glen,

I have been taking lessons for some time at Forestmeadows, but have found that my progress seems to be very slow. I don't have a lot of time for practice but would still would like to get better. Any suggestions?

David

Dear David,

You are obviously a very busy person and are challenged by all your commitments. I think the key is that like all of your commitments, you need to schedule appointments for yourself. If you wait for free time, the practice will never take place. Most juniors don't like to take the time to schedule practices with others. Take the time to call your friends to play. Even if you were only hitting with the ball machine or a hitting wall, make an appointment with yourself to get the practice that you need.

Dear Glen,

I heard some rumors that Forestmeadows will be starting a proshop. What is the time frame and what will you be carrying in the shop?

Citizen of Tallahassee

Dear Citizen,

You are correct that the Forestmeadows Athletic Center has started a tennis pro shop. We have a Babolat racquet stringer and have demo racquets that city patrons can use. We also have the ability to purchase shoes for our customers. Our prices will be very competitive with an emphasis on customer service to cater to our clients needs.

The tennis proshop will be done in phases starting with stringing, racquet sales, and tennis soft goods. The second phase will be a dedicated proshop area in the club with some shoe and racquet inventory. The third phase will be a small line of clothes for the person that forgets items on their way from work or needs items for competitive matches. We are excited about the possibilities of providing for the need of our city patrons.

Dear Glen,

I have had the same strings in my racquet for five years. The racquet is playing fine but I have noticed that I am experiencing some shoulder problems. What do you think I should do?

Billy Bob

Dear BB,

My thought is that there are two issues. I believe that the racquet and strings are past their prime. When this occurs, the arm will tend to be punished from the non-resilience of the equipment. In most cases, racquets have longevity of two years and strings are good for six months. We carry demo racquets that can be used to help show the difference between a fresh racquet and the "deadhead" you are using.

Dear Glen,

I really enjoy my weekly lesson with you and have a question about the warm up. You have showed us the proper way to warmup but as you have seen, it takes half the lesson before I finally start playing well. Is there anyway to get a quicker start?

Connor

Dear Connor,

Many athletes are "slow starts" but this can be improved by showing up a half an hour early. Hitting on the wall or ball machine is the ticket to warming up and getting the blood flowing. Another good warmup is serving a hopper of balls prior to a match. Since winning a set of tennis is based on holding serve, this is just what the doctor ordered to get a good start.

If these are not available, than dynamic stretching, walking, running, or jumping rope can get the blood flowing. This will enhance performance verses the old way of static stretching prior to competing.

Dear Glen,

I am a tennis player on my high school team that has had a lot of success at the number five position on the team. Recently, the coach moved me up to number three and the ball speed is so much faster. Do you have any suggestions in dealing with this difficulty?

High School player

Dear HSP,

This has happened to all tennis players and is what personal growth and competing are all about. Before your next match, hit with a couple of players that hit the ball more aggressively so you can work on the timing of the oncoming ball. The other tactical things that can take place are to move back to give yourself more reaction time as well as adding distance to the length of the court.

Another tactical answer is to buy time by hitting the ball slower and higher over the net. As much as you don't like hitting hard balls, big hitters usually don't like slow balls.

Dear Glen,

Recently in a singles match, we were playing and I called the score as 40-15. After winning the point and the game, my opponent said that the score was actually 30-all and that the score was now 40-30. What is the call? Do we play a let on the point that was just played?

League player

Dear Player,

There is a process to rectifying the game score. In this case, according to USTA comment 5.6, the score should prevail because the receiver did not object to the score being called by the server. The only exception would be if the receiver didn't hear the server call the score.

Dear Glen,

I really have a lot of problems with players that push the ball. They chop and chop their hits on every shot. It really makes the game not so much fun. Any ideas on how to put these players out of business?

Kimberly

Dear Kimberly,

All these speed problems tend to come up during the high school tennis season. There are a couple of answers to a no-speed ball hit with backspin. A good counter to backspin is another backspin shot. The other counter you may want to try is to add additional topspin to control the hit. The answer is to add additional tools to your game. As far as tactics, most "pushers" can't hit aggressively. So, either come to the net or bring the softball hitter to the net. These players tend to have a retriever mentality and are willing to stay out on the court all day.

Dear Glen,

During a doubles match, our opponents had the habit of playing serves that were out. When this took place, we were never ready for the next shot. This was unusual because we are usually dealing with players that call the ball out when it is in. Any suggestions?  
Tommy

Dear Tommy,

This can be a problem on a hard court because your team needs to play the ball if your opponents hit it in good faith. If your team is playing on clay, you could ask to see the mark. The best advice is to be ready and play the point.

Dear Glen,

I have been experiencing some arm problems from my racquet? Is it time to get it restrung?

Dear Player,

In most cases, if you are wondering if you need to have your racquet strung, it's probably time. As I have stated before, you should have your racquet strung per year, the same number of times you play per week. Another consideration is that with the cold conditions, your arm is taking a lot of vibration from the impact of the ball. During the winter months, it is a good idea to lower your tension and use a softer or more pliable string to reduce the impact to the arm.

One last piece of advice is to look at the age of the racquet. The graphite fibers tend to stiffen up with time. I would suggest to invest the money into a new racquet. It beats spending money on the orthopedic surgeon.

Dear Glen,

I know that the Davis Cup tie is coming up next weekend and we are playing Switzerland. What are our chances of the United States team moving to the next round?  
Tom

Dear Tom,

The report at this time is that Roger Federer is out of this tie. The USA team is comprised of Andy Roddick, James Blake, and the Bryan brothers. Being that we have the best doubles team in the world and the match will be played on a fast indoor surface, I like our chances. The Davis Cup match will be played in Birmingham, Alabama this upcoming weekend. I will be attending a USTA High Performance Workshop during the tie and look forward to reporting back to you with my findings.

Dear Glen,

I play a regular singles match with a player that chronically "foot faults" every time he serves. I don't believe it helps his serve, but it seems to bother me tremendously. There is no referee for this match, but my opponent needs to follow the rules. Any suggestions?

Dear Player,

According to USTA rule comment 18.6; the receiver or the receiver's partner may call footfaults after all efforts (warning the server and attempting to locate an official) have failed and the foot-faulting is so flagrant as to be clearly perceptible from the receiver's side.

Dear Glen,

In an effort to help my son do better in his high school matches, I have emphasized to him the importance of getting a lot of first serves in play. Would you agree with this philosophy?

Dear Parent,

The first question that I would need answered would be what level or position your son plays on the team. In my opinion, getting a lot of first serves in is only good if your percentage of points won is a winning percentage. If you are getting 75% of your first serves in but winning less than 50% of your points, the serve needs to be hit more effectively. In contrast, if 60% of your first serves are in and you're winning 70% of your points, this is a more effective delivery. It must be remembered that the second serve must also be hit effectively to keep your service edge.

To create a more effective serve, it must be hit with better placement, spin, or speed. The best serves have a combination of all three disciplines. There is an aspect of being too aggressive on serve or not going for enough. This is dictated by the effectiveness of your opponent's return.