

Ask Glen – August 2009 Questions

Dear Glen,

As a parent of a ranked junior, how do I deal with parents that impose their will on my sons match? The "tennis parent" truly takes the fun out of the experience. Any suggestions?

Dear Parent,

This is very common especially with some parents that are trying to live their dreams through their kids. The simple answer is to get a referee and they should be able to keep these parents in check. A couple of things will take place as a result. The junior player may get a point penalty in which this can effect the outcome of the match. The other option that a referee may impose is to have the parent removed. Understand that if the junior is "coded" enough times, this will go on a record that could impose further discipline by the USTA.

Dear Glen,

During the 16's Zonals at Wake Forest this past week, my son's opponent got two medical timeouts. He also took a bathroom break. All of these occurrences seem to take place every time he got behind in the match. Is this legal in sanctioned tournament play?
Browne

Dear Browne,

These are all legitimate timeouts that can be used during sanctioned play. Even if a player uses an injury timeout, additional timeouts can be called if it is a different injury. In this case, the opponent had an asthma attack and then later had an injury to his ankle. A bathroom break is also acceptable as long the referee is notified before the break.

Unfortunately, some players use these timeouts and breaks to throw their opponents off their rhythm or to get coaching. A player must remain mentally strong to handle these breaks in play.

Dear Glen,

I have heard that the City is getting new equipment for the fitness room. Do you think I should add this aspect of fitness to my routine?

Dear Patron,

We are in the process of getting additional cardio equipment for our city patrons. A joint effort of Friends of our Park and a committee of regular Forestmeadows fitness users contributed to the new equipment. The equipment should be installed within the next couple weeks for your use.

I have always found cardio equipment useful to maintain fitness level for tennis play. In my playing past, I lost a match due to my lack of endurance and vowed to never allow that to happen again. Once your physical stamina decreases, you are all but finish in a

competitive match. Supplementing your tennis a couple of times a week is a great idea and could be a good alternative for those days that it is raining.

Dear Glen,

What is the best approach shot to hit in doubles match?

Dear Player,

It has generally been a good concept to hit your best shot to their weakest shot when approaching the net. There are a couple of different philosophies to the proper stroke and strategy, but it is tactically important that an opponent is put under distress when finding your way to the net. Drive approaches are good if you can beat them with the speed of the ball. My experience has found low chip balls to be the most effective. This makes a player hit up to the opposing volleyer. One last piece of advice would be to hit the ball down the center when approaching to eliminate angles.

It is best to have a complete arsenal to counter the opponent's answers to your shot making. These shots can be practice on a ball machine to groove your shots. You will also get the proper feedback by seeing your approach hit deep to the baseline.

Dear Glen,

My Wife's service toss has been 'off the charts' for the last few months and she can't fix it. It might not leave her hand, or it could leave her hand and go six inches high, or it could go four feet to the right or left. She is a good athlete and can compensate to a point but it's frustrating for her. That's the background and this is actually a rules question, rather than a 'fix the toss' question. Once the toss leaves the server's hand and is several feet, 'off the mark', can the server leave her position and 'chase' the ball down to hit the serve? I realize all foot fault restrictions apply.

Sincerely, Husband at the net still waiting for a serve

Dear Husband,

Short for you two attending counseling, I have a few suggestions. The first is to fix the toss. The toss is the single hardest skill that is needed to be an effective server. If your wife would practice her toss with two tennis balls in her hand, this would place the ball properly in her hand. The second concept would be to hold and toss the ball as though you were shaking hands with the ball. Rotating the tossing hand ninety degrees clockwise can do this. In addition, if the ball were held more like an egg and then released, this should create a better toss.

As far as the rule USTA 18.2 states: A server who takes more than one step with either foot after the "feet at rest" position is at risk for being called for a foot fault. Only slight movements of the feet are permitted.

Dear Glen,

I am an avid racquetball player at Forestmeadows. It doesn't happen often but I broke a string in my racquet. Do you string racquetball racquets?

Bill

Dear Bill,

You are in luck. We string ALL racquets at Forestmeadows. Lenin actually strung a squash racquet the other day. Drop it by and we will take care of you.

Dear Glen,

Great article on how to play on clay courts a couple of weeks ago. Do you have some more specifics on tactics that I could use? I am a hard-court player and struggle against players that have a lot of experience on the surface.

Dear Future Dirtballer,

Clay court tennis places a premium on ultra consistent players. Many players that don't strike the ball hard or run down a lot of balls do quite well on the surface. Since the 70's, hitting with exaggerated topspin has worked well on the clay. Hitting a window of 3 to 7 feet is a tactic that will not only keep the ball out of the net, but also create good depth in the court.

My first tactic that I like to use is to hit the ball 7 to 10 feet over the net. This tends to push my opponents back and create errors or short balls. Second, being left-handed, I hit my forehand crosscourt to my opponents backhand with hard and high topspin. This is my bread and butter play. If my opponents are not willing to run around their backhand, they usually come in second place.

And third, hitting short angle topspin to the serviceline T's force my opponent off the court. This allows me to hit to the open court or hit behind them on the run. Any or all these will work on clay as long as you have a plan.

Dear Glen,

I have noticed the tennis pro shop behind the front desk at Forestmeadows. What equipment do you carry and what are the future plans for the pro shop?

Dear City Patron,

At this time, we carry Head and Wilson demo racquets that can be rented for use. If you decide to purchase the racquet, a percentage of your rentals will go toward the purchase of the racquet. We carry a full line of strings, grips, and overgrips to take care of your everyday needs. In the near future, racquets bags and the Prince line featuring the O series will be in the proshop.

In addition to tennis supplies, we also carry a line of ice cream for your enjoyment. Everything from a Nutty Buddy to fruit bars is available at the front desk of Forestmeadows.

Dear Glen,

What is the best way to use the body to produce more power on the serve?

Dear Big Server Wanna-be,

At the High Performance program during the Davis Cup tie several months ago, I learned about the three axioms of power on the serve. The three motions of the body are somersaulting, cart wheeling, and trunk rotation. If you look at a world-class server like Andy Roddick, it is evident that all three of these actions are taking place. The one tell tale sign is that the server's shirt will raise up his back immediately after impact of the serve.

It is recommended that one of these elements is worked on at a time. Cement the one item than add the additional elements. This power move will take time to perfect, but will be well worth the investment of time. One last recommendation is to practice this motion from the service line so assessments of how the serve is doing don't take place.

Dear Glen,

Lately, I have had a lot of trouble playing singles matches that are played on windy days. It may be just a mental block, but there must be something I can do. It is difficult competing against the wind and my opponent? Any suggestions?

Dear Player,

This is a problem for many players. Most have a mental block and tell themselves that they can't play in the wind. Probably the biggest key is to practice with a partner in the windy conditions and try some different things. Playing into the wind gives you the ability to "hit out" and go for your shots. It is also advised that more height over the net be used as a tactic. If the wind is at your back, add a little more topspin to keep the ball from flying over the baseline.

I find that when working with students in windy conditions, they are usually not even aware of the direction the wind is blowing. Figure this out and adjust tactically.

Dear Glen,

I am wondering why the lights are being turned on later for our league matches. This can be frustrating for me at dusk and wanted to know the City policy?
Tom

Dear Tom,

Thank you for noticing our efforts in cutting our utility bills at the tennis division. We are trying to reduce expense as well as our wasteful habits. Through new staff training, we are turning the lights on after the sun sets or when the sky is very overcast. We have been turning off lights that are not being used for play. I do apologize for the inconvenience, but we are changing our habits as most of us have done at home.