

Dear Glen,

I am an old lesson taker and now my kids are taking lessons at Winthrop Park. It was a little confusing to me to see students feeding balls to other students. My recollection was that we lined up and the pro would feed us balls. Is this a new concept because I noticed the same thing at Forestmeadows?

Dear Parent,

These concepts have been used for almost 10 years by some of the most recognized tennis professionals in the world. More players get to hit balls and also learn eye-hand coordination of feeding the ball. This also tends to teach better socialization skills as well as freeing the pro to work with numerous students. As a teaching professional, we try to avoid long lines of students even though that is the way we use to do things. The best analogy would be when you go to a grocery store and have to wait in a line longer than a couple of people.

Dear Glen,

It is interesting that just because one player can beat a certain player, this doesn't guarantee that you should beat a player that your opponent beat. What are the factors?

Dear Player,

This is what makes tennis and other sports so interesting. Match-ups considering style of play, court preference, strength and weaknesses are some of the factors that have to be considered. Additional factors would be athletic ability and the mental competitive skills to compete effectively. All these areas combined are what make up the tennis competitor. In some cases, players have a capacity to compete more effectively when conditions are not perfect. If all these disciplines are addressed, this should give a player the best chance to succeed.

Dear Glen,

As players hit the ball harder and harder, I have noticed that the defensive lob is not used very much. What are the dynamics of the topspin lob?

Dear Player,

The modern player is very oriented toward hitting offense on all shots. This has taken place mainly due to most players using a semiwestern grip on their forehand. Block and chip lobs are hit more often with a continental grip. The topspin lob is hit effectively when the stroke resembles the forehand groundstroke for deception purposes. The only difference is the racquet tends to finish behind the head.

Dear Glen,

I need to vent some of my frustration on showing up for matches when the courts are wet. The weather was very questionable so I called several hours before the starting time last week. I showed up fifteen

minutes early and the court monitor said the league was cancelled. This is very irritating because I rushed to get to my match. Is there anything we can do to improve the process?

Dear League Player,

First, I would like to apologize for your unpleasant experience. As you know with weather, it is very unpredictable. When a patron wants to know conditions at our sites, we recommend that they call one hour prior to playing. Even with this policy, it may rain during that time since you made the call. The captains are responsible for contacting their team in the event of bad weather conditions. I will be meeting with the USTA captains next month and plan to work on improving our process. Thank you for the question.

Dear Glen,

How do you create an approach shot that will give a player the best chance of success in singles? I am a 4.0 player and am looking to make my baseline more of an all-court game.

Dear Player,

The first and most important aspect is court positioning. The shot prior to the approach has to be hit deep and create distress in your opponent. The next shot that you hit must be struck somewhere between no-man's land and the service line. If you are deeper than this position, reaction time will not be cut adequately and there will not be enough time to close the net for a volley. One additional piece of advice would be to not kamikaze the approach shot. Make sure that an approach attempt is taken only when an effective shot is hit.

Dear Glen,

Are string savers legal for tournament play? My buddy said that I can't use anything that protrudes from the string. What about my vibrasorbs? Is that legal for sanctioned play?

Franklin

Dear Franklin,

According to Appendix II of the USTA rules and guidelines, racquets shall be free of protrusions and devices on the strings except for items solely and specifically used to limit or prevent wear and tear. As far as the vibrasorb, these items can be used if they are placed outside the pattern of the cross strings.

Dear Glen,

I have been playing tennis a long time. Back in my day, we were told to use the largest grip we could. They were as big as 5 inch in diameter. Now the trend is going to as small a grip as possible. Why the big change?

Dear Player,

Back in the day, most players used a continental grip and the larger grip tended to create more feel. The modern game has ushered in the use of shots hit with a lot of spin and the use of semiwestern and western grips. These shots are hit with a lot of force and it is easier to hold the racquet with a smaller grip. Rafael Nadal uses a 4 and 3/4 grip. Give the smaller grip a try to see if it helps with your racquet speed for topspin.

Dear Glen,

Are our tennis courts in Tallahassee asphalt or concrete? My doctor has told me to avoid concrete courts. He said they are bad for my knees considering the problems that I have had. Sounds like they would both be bad for my knees.

Gabriel

Dear Gabriel,

This is a good question. Most all our courts are asphalt in the City with the exception of two concrete courts. The biggest difference in the two surfaces is that as conditions become warm, asphalt becomes softer and concrete and not at all very forgiving. If a player runs on a hard court, he exerts 5 times his body weight which in turn puts a lot of load on the knees. Most courts in California are concrete based and east coast courts are mainly asphalt based. In addition, the concrete courts tend to be faster.

Dear Glen,

I would be interested in learning a two handed backhand. In your opinion, what are the key elements in hitting this shot effectively?

Dear Player,

There are a couple of specifics that I have found to be beneficial in teaching the two-handed backhand. First, use of the left hand in a right handed backhand is essential in creating a potent shot. It is very important to distribute the workload equally between the forehand and backhand to maintain stroke effectiveness. The left hand needs to push forward and upward at the same time. There is always a more positive force pushing verses pulling when striking the ball. World renowned tennis coach Rick Macci has players hit with their non-dominant hand only. This tends to train the proper muscle memory for the proper stroke.

Second, good footwork is essential in the two-handed backhand. If a player is reaching too far away from the body, a strained and inefficient stroke will be hit. Keeping the feet moving and getting behind the ball will create a great backhand.

Dear Glen,

My friends have mentioned that there is a new tennis ladder in the City of Tallahassee. Who is eligible to play on this ladder and who should I contact?

Timmy

Dear Timmy,

Fred Palmer is the catalyst to this latest tennis opportunity. Fred has mentioned to me that it has been most enthusiastically received. There are over thirty players on the ladder with other ladders being created as we speak. Visit this link to get more information:

<http://www.globaltennisnetwork.com/tennis-ladders/ladders/tennis-ladder-page/ladder/1908-tallahassee-mens-open-top-100-tennis-ladder>

Fred can be contact at: [fpalmer.tennis@gmail.com](mailto:fpalmer.tennis@gmail.com) if there are any additional questions. We wish him luck with this worthwhile program for Tallahassee tennis players.

Dear Glen,

It is great to hear that USTA leagues are going to have a "pay as you go" option. When will this take effect for league players in Tallahassee?

Dear Patron,

This is a great question and I will be happy to give you the facts. The "pay as you go" option will be voted on by Carl Weathington's captain's February 15th. This program will be tried on Carl's leagues Friday night if the captains are in agreement. It would only be a pilot program for one league to see the effectiveness of providing this service for all our patrons. Some of the parameters of this new program would be that players would pay for league every time they play and pay the entire court rate. In addition, this is a league payment and would not be considered part of the quarterly fee payment. We will continue to provide the best possible product at a fair price to our valued customers.

Dear Glen,

What is the role of the receiver's partner in a doubles situation? Is one of their responsibilities to make the calls on serves that come to my partner? I seem to be watching a movie where I don't feel as though I am involved. Any suggestions?

Dear Doubles Player,

The first role of the receiver's partner is to call the service line on the serve. Second, this player should move forward on offensive opportunities and move back to the baseline when on defense. Many players remain on the service line which in turn makes them vulnerable to aggressive shots by opponents.

Dear Glen,

I have always been impressed with Roger Federer's game, but especially his forehand. It is amazing how well he adapts on this shot on all surfaces. In your opinion, what are the key elements of this shot?

Dear Player,

This stroke will probably be recognized as one of the best of all times. Roger combines classic and modern game technique to create one of the most consistent and resilient forehands of all time. The motion is very fluid with very little jerkiness and his balance is near perfect that help create a very potent strike.

Some of the other keys that create this magnificent shot would be his footwork. He gets to most balls with plenty of time to spare. In addition, Roger keeps his head very still at the point of contact. Combining all these elements allow very few bad days on the court. If the average player only worked at one of these elements, I believe improvement would take place.

Dear Glen,

Is there ever any reason to change a stroke that is working for years?

Sarah

Dear Sarah,

I think there is always the possibility to improve the way a ball is struck. Learning how to hit a ball differently can create an additional weapon and the ability to change tactics. This can also be good if a primary stroke is not working one day. In most cases, a stroke is either getting better or worse. So it is in your best interest to compliment your stroke with improvements and changes to your game.

Dear Glen,

It has been my observation that most racquets have gone to a midsize frame. What is the difference between a mid and an oversize frame? I use an oversize, but am considering getting a couple new midsize racquets.

Ron

Dear Ron,

My understanding of the difference of the two sizes is that a midsize is more maneuverable and potent if the ball is struck in the center of the frame. On the other hand, the oversize is more forgiving on off-center hits and can be better when trying to block hard shots into the court. My personal knowledge of the racquets tells me that I can strike the ball better with a midsize and I win more with an oversize. All racquets are personal preference and should be tried numerous times prior to purchasing a new frame.

Dear Glen,

How do you expose a weak backhand? My regular weekly opponent gives me very little area to hit his backhand and ends up hitting some very good runarounds. Any suggestions to beat this guy?

Dear Player,

The strategy is actually quite simple. My old pro used to call it "pulling the monkey out of the hole." Since your opponent is dug into the backhand side, hit a ball wide to the forehand, and then go quickly to the backhand. There is only one thing worse than a backhand and that would be a running backhand.

One other item that can expose especially a two handed backhand is to hit short to the backhand. This will force these players to release their second hand and this tends to be weaker than the two-handed shot. Last piece of advice would be to try hitting high and low. Most all players are weaker above the shoulders and below the knees than in the hitting zone.

Dear Glen,

I know that drinking fluids is very important to an athlete. What is the correct amount of water and should I supplement with sport drinks and salt?

Elyse

Dear Elyse,

This is a very good question. Since the body is more than sixty percent water, any loss of water during a tennis match can inhibit performance. Even mild dehydration can cause muscle and body fatigue. Water is essential to the body's function and is also used in the absorption of minerals into the body's cells.

One rule of thumb would be to drink half your body's weight in a typical day. Sport drinks are good for electrolyte and mineral replacement. Even though salt is lost in athletic activity, there are numerous different opinions on whether to replace salt.

Dear Glen,

My doubles partner made a late "out" call on the return of serve and was hit back over the net. Our opponents contend that it is their point because they hit a winner on the next shot. I think it should be a "let". What is the call?

Dear Player,

The call must be made immediately or the ball is in play. By calling the ball out as your opponent hits the ball, this constitutes a hindrance. Either way, your team would lose the point.

Dear Glen,

How do I get more angles on my forehand and backhand groundstrokes? This would be very helpful pulling my opponent wide of the singles sideline and for passing shots.

Delt

Dear Delt,

This can be accomplished many ways. The first key is to increase the angular racquet speed so the rotation of the ball brings the shot down faster. Second, taking the ball out in front of the body earlier allows a player to get on the outside of the ball and follow-through completely. Finally, the ball can be hit slower which in turn brings the ball down quicker for a shorter length of the court. Players should experiment with one or all of these concepts to find which works best for them.

Dear Glen,

My opponents tend to hit high to my backhand when I come to the net. Where is the best place to hit a high backhand volley or backhand smash in singles?

Dear Player,

This is one of the more difficult shots to put away and one of the least practiced. I like your opponents strategy to make you miss verses trying to hit too good of a shot. The answer to your question is to hit the shot the same way you would hit any ball above net level. A winner should be hit to the open court. Since this shot is not practiced very much, the ball tends to sit up and is put away by your opponent.

The high backhand needs to be practiced to be hit effectively. This can be accomplished by a partner feeding a lot of balls to this high shot or setting a ball machine to grove the timing and placement of the ball. One additional answer would be to runaround this shot and hit an overhead. This will work very well as long a player is willing to move his feet quickly.