



PROGRESSIVE TENNIS

The Smart, Fun Way to Learn and Play Tennis

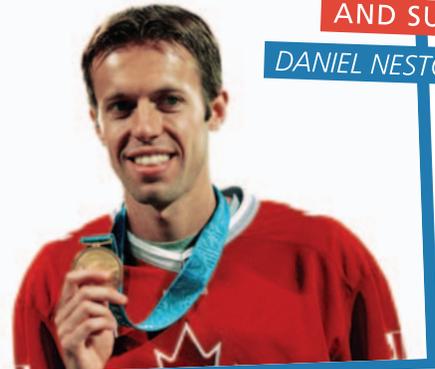
"THAT'S HOW I STARTED TO PLAY"

JUSTINE HENIN



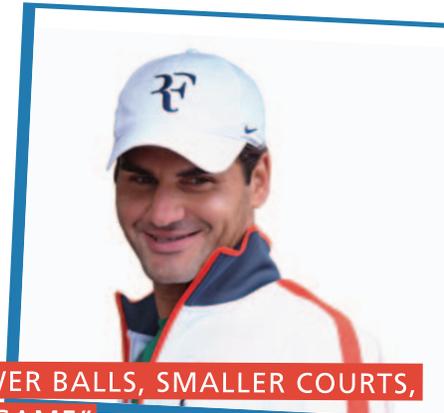
"YOUNGSTERS WILL HAVE MORE FUN
AND SUCCESS"

DANIEL NESTOR



"SLOWER BALLS, SMALLER COURTS,
EASY GAME"

ROGER FEDERER



TENNIS
CANADA



Introduction

What is Progressive Tennis?

Progressive Tennis introduces the sport of tennis in a fun and interactive way and ensures immediate success for young players aged 5-10. Using modified tennis balls, racquets, nets and courts, young players are properly equipped to enjoy rallies and learn the fundamentals of the game early on. Skills are developed much quicker, allowing for an easy transition to full court. Tennis Canada fully endorses Progressive Tennis and is developing programs and competitive structures across the country to give more players the opportunity to experience its positive benefits.

Why Progressive Tennis?

Progressive Tennis is used as a developmental tool to allow young children to improve their overall tennis skills faster so they can transition to the regular court with more ease. Progressive Tennis allows youngsters to train and compete with courts and equipment which are better suited for their size.

What are the general training and competitive guidelines?

The information in this booklet is taken from Tennis Canada's Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) model. All stages are important, however, there are certain factors that are more relevant at different stages of a player's development. The model outlines that there are "windows of trainability" for developing athletes that make skills (i.e. coordination) much easier to acquire. The following are some key points taken from the beginning stages of the LTAD:

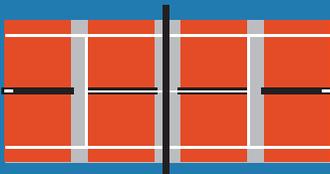
- Practice and training is made up of a combination of group, semi-private and private lessons as well as both supervised and unsupervised practice matches along with physical development.
- An individualized player approach is necessary to ensure that a player's complete tennis and fitness training leads to maximum athletic development.
- Tennis should be the child's sport of choice, but participation in secondary sports is necessary for overall athlete development along with a physical development program. Limiting a child to tennis only will help with results from an early age but will hinder the long-term development of the athlete. Physical literacy and coordination is important for the development of young athletes.
- Competition teaches many aspects of the game which can't be learned in training. Hence, regular match play both in tournaments and practice is an essential part of a young player's development.

The chart on pg. 5 shows the recommendations for playing, training and competing by maximizing a player's improvement while taking into account that they will be active in other sports and activities.

To view the complete LTAD booklet, visit www.tenniscanada.com/progressivetennis.



Stages of Progressive Tennis

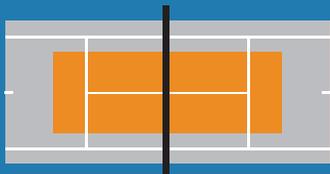


1/2 Court Tennis

Racquets: 17-21 inch

Low compression ball or Sponge Ball (Red court ball)

Advanced Stream 5-7 yrs

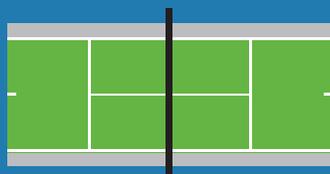


3/4 Court Tennis

Racquets: 23-25 inch

50% slower ball (Orange court ball)

Advanced Stream 7-9 yrs



Full Court Transition

Racquets: 25-26 inch

25% slower ball (Green court ball)

Advanced Stream 9-10 yrs

Note: Identifying the appropriate time to transition players from the RED court (using RED balls) through to the GREEN court (using regular balls) is a challenging, but essential process during this stage in a child's development. As observed during the development of all complex motor skills, there will be a small number of children that are capable of progressing at a faster rate based on multiple factors, which can include: athleticism, maturation rates, number of hours of training and competing, overall commitment to the sport, ability to learn and competitive results. Identifying, and fostering the development of these children, is essential.



General Training and Competitive Guidelines

The following guidelines are designed for maximizing a player's improvement while taking into account they will be active in other sport and activities.

AGES	PLAYING				PRACTICING				
	Number of Tournaments Per year	Number of matches per year		Types of Competition	Physical Training (By the end of this stage)	Tennis Training	Total # of hours/ week	Other Matches (practices/ Leagues, etc.)/yr	Rest and Regeneration weeks per year (break from tennis)
		Singles	Doubles						
BOYS									
5-6	0	0		- ½ court (Red Court), within the club, schools and parks and recreation	4 hours (which includes 2.5 hours in other sports)	1-4 hours (may include up to two private lessons)	5-8	15-25	N/A
7-9	7-12	21-36		- ½ court (Red Court) tournaments – within club - U9 Orange Court events – club/provincial (3/4 court orange ball) - U10 Green Court Provincial events – club/provincial (full court green ball)	4.5–5 hours (which includes 2.5-3 hours in other sports)	4-9 hours (may include between 1-3 hrs of private lessons)	8-12	25-40	8 weeks
9-10	10-15	30-45	20-30	<u>AGE 9</u> - U10 Green Court Provincial events – club/provincial (full court green ball) - U12 Provincial events <u>AGE 10</u> - U12 Provincial events - U12 Jr. Nationals	5 – 6 hours (which includes 3 hours of other sports)	8 – 10 hours (including 2-4 hours of private lessons)	14-16	30-40	8 weeks
GIRLS									
5-6	0	0		- ½ court (Red Court), within the club, schools and parks and recreation	4 hours (which includes 2.5 hours in other sports)	1 - 4 hours (may include up to two private lessons)	5-8	15-25	N/A
7-8	7-12	21-36		- ½ court (Red Court) tournaments – within club - U9 Orange Court events – club/provincial (3/4 court orange ball) - U10 Green Court Provincial events – club/provincial (full court green ball)	4.5-5 hours (which includes 2.5-3 hour in other sports)	4 - 9 hours (may include between 1-3 hrs of private lessons)	8-12	25-40	8 weeks
9	8-10	24-30	16-20	- U10 Green Court Provincial events – club/provincial (full court green ball) - U12 Provincial events *Top 10 year olds could be participants in the U12 Nationals and International U10 events	4.5-5.5 hours (includes 3 hours in other sports)	6-8 hours (including 2-3 lessons)	10-15	30-40	8 weeks
10	10-15	30-45	20-30	- U10 Provincials - U12 Provincial and National events *Top players of this age could be competing in U14 Nationals and International U12 events	5 - 6 hours (which includes 3 hours of other sports)	8 - 10 hours (including 2-4 hours of private lessons)	12-17	30-40	8 weeks



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How will using the Progressive Tennis approach help my child's development?

A: Progressive Tennis offers a variety of benefits primarily associated with the modified equipment used (i.e., smaller racquet, court size, decompressed balls). The proportional equipment supports the size of younger athletes and helps in the overall development of the game's key fundamentals. The fun and early success fostered through Progressive Tennis also tends to encourage players to continue in the sport over time.

Q: Is Progressive Tennis used to develop kids in other countries?

A: For many years, European countries such as France and Belgium used Progressive Tennis to develop players, many of whom are on the pro Tours today. Over the past couple of years, the International Tennis Federation (ITF) along with more than 45 countries in Europe, North America and others have adopted the progressive tennis approach which is now generally accepted as the best means for developing young players. Also, many other sports such as baseball, soccer, and golf have been using the same scaled down approach to develop their young athletes for many years.

Q: Why is the court size important?

A: The court size is proportionate to the child's size. This assists the young players in developing an all-court game by ensuring realistic court coverage. The proportioned court size will allow the children to develop tactics similar to the advanced tactics that they will use on a full court when they get older. For example, young players will be able to come to the net because of the shorter distance and more narrow sidelines that they would need to cover.

Q: Why is the type of ball important?

A: The progressive ball moves through the court slower and bounces lower. Young players are able to receive and project the ball easier which aids in the development of proper technical fundamentals (grip, set-up, impact point, hitting zone, and recovery). Use of the progressive ball also promotes longer rallies and the overall importance of consistency.

Q: Why is the length of the racquet important?

A: This aspect is one of the most important and often ignored. The proper racquet size (length and weight) will ensure racquet head control, stability, and feel for the ball which are the most important factors in ball control. It will also help prevent future injuries from the use of oversized racquets.

Q: How important is it for a young player to compete from an earlier stage?

A: Competition teaches many aspects of the game which can't be learned in training. Hence, regular match play, both in tournaments and practice, is an essential part of a young player's development. Regular competition will help develop mental skills such as:

- Incorporating technical fundamentals into match play.
- Consistent effort and determination.
- The ability to focus.
- Learning to cope with basic competitive environments.



- Learning emotional control and maintaining a positive attitude.
- Developing and understanding the love of competing.

- Learning to display good sportsmanship.
- Fostering the concept of respect for coaches, officials and other players.

Q: How should one select the type of competition for a young junior player?

A: Selection of competition should ideally be based on achieving a 3:1 win-loss ratio over a period of time. This ensures both the development of confidence (through winning) while still maintaining motivation to improve and train hard (through losing). In general, it is recommended that juniors compete in their proper age category and only play up if they are winning tournaments easily and have exhausted the competition in their age category.

Q: Are there Progressive Tennis tournaments available for young players to compete in?

A: Tennis Canada, along with the Provincial Tennis Associations, has created a series of sanctioned tournaments that will allow kids to compete in the same environment in which they train. There are both U9 Advanced Tour events (orange court) and U10 Progressive (green court) sanctioned events. It is also recommended that all programs offering half-court tennis implement a competitive portion within their club to provide regular competition to young players. Contact your Provincial Tennis Association for further information and the dates of these events.

Q: Will Progressive Tennis hold a talented young player back from developing in comparison to training on a full court with full court equipment?

A: There is no one way to develop a tennis player, but Tennis Canada believes that the development of a child through the progressive tennis stages will provide them with the means to properly establish the fundamental skills and tactics essential for long-term success on the full court.

Q: At what point should a young player be playing on a full court with regular balls?

A: The general goal for the young players is to have them training and playing on the full court by the age of 9 with the progressive green ball. Once the player is accustomed to the full court size with the green ball, they will then be able to move on to use regular tennis balls. This process can take from six months to a year. There are multiple factors to consider when determining when a player is ready to play on a full court which include; athleticism, maturation rates, number of hours of training and competing, overall commitment to the sport, ability to learn and competitive results. As a result of these factors, a small group of children may be capable of progressing faster.

Q: Are all Tennis Development Centres (TDCs) and coaches in Canada moving towards this type of training for young kids?

A: Tennis Canada and the Provincial Tennis Associations are strongly promoting and supporting Progressive Tennis. All TDCs and their coaches are developing their young players with the Progressive Tennis system and Tennis Canada continues to provide many resources to support them, including equipment, coaching resources and coaching education.



Additional Information



For additional resources please visit www.tenniscanada.com/progressivetennis where you can find the following:

- a. 1/2 court DVD and curriculum manual
- b. 3/4 court DVD and curriculum manual
- c. Video resources
- d. Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) booklet
- e. 3/4 Court Tournament Organization Guide

To order all your progressive tennis equipment please visit www.tenniscanada.com/progressivetennis where you can buy mini nets, balls, racquets, lines, markers, and net-lowering devices.

