

Why Tennis?

Tennis is a life time sport. Children, teens, parents, grandparents and great grandparents play. There are local, state, regional, national and international age group competitions for age 8 & under to age 90 and over.

Tennis can be played for life because it is a **low-impact** and **non-contact** sport.

It is a **global sport**. Tennis is played throughout the world, in every country and is now **one of the most widely played sports in the world**. It is also among the most lucrative.

Tennis is one of the oldest sports. Early forms of the game were played in Europe in 1100s, and tennis evolved through history. Tennis is mentioned in literature by William Shakespeare in 1599 referencing "tennis balles" in Henry V (reigned 1413–22). Since the first Wimbledon tennis tournament in 1877, the rules of tennis have essentially remained the same as now.

Tennis is for both genders; boys and girls, women and men.

It is not hard to find a game. **It only takes one other person to play tennis**, and you can work on your serve on a court or practice groundstrokes and volleys against a wall or backboard by yourself.

Successful tennis players come in all sizes and shapes. While many of the great tennis players are phenomenal athletes, someone does not have to grow very tall, gain unusual weight or even become exceptionally strong or speedy to be among the best.

Tennis is both an individual sport and a team sport. In addition to singles, there are women's doubles, men's doubles, and mixed doubles. Moreover, there are Junior Team Tennis leagues, middle school, high school and college teams, and adult leagues and tournaments and other **competitions are held for all age and ability levels**. At the professional level, players represent their country at the Davis Cup, Federation Cup and Olympic Games.

Tennis is a social sport. You can meet new friends while playing for your school, on league teams or competing in tournaments. You can move to a new city anywhere in the world and quickly meet nice people to play with. Tennis is also a great family sport.

Tennis provides a great, safe learning environment. Children learn to concentrate, practice, focus, be patient, blend power and touch, be strategic, handle nerves, win and lose gracefully, develop stamina, set goals, play by rules, display sportsmanship, etc., etc., etc. In tennis, a player is responsible for every move he makes. His success is his own, but so is his disappointment -- a combination that can quickly build confidence and self-esteem along with coping skills and resilience. Kids learn how to try hard and be the best they can be.

Tennis provides many health benefits. These include improved aerobic fitness and anaerobic endurance, muscular fitness (grip strength and endurance), flexibility, multiple skill parameters (balance, speed, agility and quickness), reactivity, and power—it also is psychologically demanding. Generally, it is a sport that requires hard work and dedication to train these multiple physical skills while also developing many other cognitive abilities (e.g., anticipation, eye-hand coordination, attentional focus), personality traits and social skills (e.g., discipline, camaraderie, patience). These benefits make tennis an ideal sport for children to learn early in life to facilitate the development of social, physical and mental skills.

Tennis is more than a sport; it is also a game. The main reason that so many people have played tennis, for so long throughout history and all over the world is because **tennis is fun!**

Tennis is also often considered “the best *first sport*” because it teaches “Physical Literacy” and can help children to develop the greatest number of skills required by the greatest number of other sports and activities:

- *Throwing* – In addition to learning the game through “toss-tennis” The service and overhead motions in tennis are nearly identical to baseball and football.
- *Catching* – Learning through “toss-tennis” and then the soft-hand skills required for volleying, as well as drop shots, lobs, and other touch shots in tennis are “catching skill-builders” for other sports.
- *Striking* - Tennis makes learning all other racquet sports much easier.

- *Running & Striking* - This very specific skill is one of the most challenging features of tennis, and one of the most valuable skill-builders a developing athlete can master.
- *Rhythmic Movement* – Similar to dancing, because tennis is a continuous rhythm activity, it offers many timing and rhythm benefits not available from many other sports.
- *Aerobic* - Although tennis is more anaerobic than aerobic, the aerobic benefits of playing tennis are very high compared to sports such as softball, baseball, volleyball, bowling and golf.
- *Anaerobic* - The on-going high level of anaerobic activity in tennis compares favorably to many other sports. Tennis a good sport for children to build stamina and strength.
- *Team-Building* – Learning to play tennis in classes in a group learning environment, and playing competitively as a school or league team provides a great team atmosphere within an individual sport.

Tennis as a team sport provides a social network. Because team sports require the participation and cooperation of many people they are ripe with learning opportunities. Competition builds character and responsibility in children, and team sports emphasize a child's regular attendance and personal commitment to doing their part for the larger group. Team experiences also serve children well as they continue their education and move into the work world.

The most popular team sports begin to lose kids to individual sports at ages 11-12 and progressively thereafter. The reality is that children drop out of soccer, baseball, football and basketball as they get older because only the most elite players can continue playing at the college and pro level. It is difficult to organize a casual team game. Tennis, however, has great advantages over traditional team sports; a player's ability to continue playing, regardless of age for a lifetime, and the smaller number of players needed to play.

There are also many benefits to the individual nature of the sport. It can help foster important life skills such as independence, responsibility, and building focus for children, including those with special needs.

Individual sports such as tennis (and golf, track, swimming, etc.) have many unique benefits for kids that aren't as prominent in team sports. Apart from encouraging the

development of fine and gross motor skills, agility, endurance, and hand-eye coordination, as many sports do, individual sports combine physical fitness with mental development. In tennis, a player is responsible for every move he makes. Moreover, he is individually held responsible for his behavior. His success is his own, but so is his disappointment -- a combination that can quickly build confidence and self-esteem along with coping skills and resilience. And, because players are often alone on the court, without teammates and sometimes even without a coach, they are forced to develop independent thinking. **Kids learn how to problem-solve on their own.** They have to think on their feet, be able to change strategies and tactics, and resolve their own conflicts.

Tennis can help develop a child's character. In tennis you often have to figure it out on your own. This builds a lot of independence. Tennis teaches kids how to set goals and challenge themselves to achieve their personal best. And, because players often receive specific instruction and in-depth evaluation from their coach, it allows children to practice taking criticism and using it to improve their tennis game, while *"learning how to learn"*.

Learning to work as part of a team is also an important life skill, which is why individual sports on the junior level often incorporate team elements. In tennis, while kids compete individually, they're often part of a larger team setting, contributing points through their performance toward an overall team score and this collaborative contributes to the fun.

Tennis can benefit children with special needs. Individual sports like tennis can be particularly beneficial for children with attention deficit, sensory, and socialization disorders because they help develop self-esteem, focus, and social skills while encouraging physical activity. They're constantly engaged in the game, which requires a great deal of focus, but the level of stimuli may not be as overwhelming as it can be in a team setting.

The way people fall in love with a sport is by having fun playing it. When you're a child and you find pure love for a sport, you'll continue to do it for the rest of your life. That love lasts a lifetime. **And, tennis is one of the few sports that can be played for a lifetime.**