

CHOOSING A TENNIS RACQUET

Tennis is a sport for all levels. We all enjoy a sunny afternoon hitting balls with our friends. But then our competitive nature kicks in and we wonder, what does it take to beat this person? Most equipment does not favor one player versus the other: the net, the balls, the court, that cute tennis skirt you bought last week at I PLAY Tennis.

The one major piece of equipment that will impact your play is your racquet. All racquets are not created equal. Each racquet manufacturer has a series of racquets built for power across to racquets built for ball control. Here are some of the factors you need to consider when choosing your optimal racquet.

HEAD SIZE

Not even professional players hit the "sweetspot" on every shot. The head size of your racquet doesn't contribute to increased power, unless you hit the ball off-center. The larger head, or a "head heavy" racquet will generate more ball velocity on that off-center hit. The further the weight of the racquet is from the it's center, the more difficult it is for the ball to twist the racquet in your hand. Twisting uses up energy that could be otherwise directed to increasing ball velocity. The great advantage of a larger head size is not the performance at the sweetspot, but the performance everywhere else.

BALANCE

The balance of the racquet determines how much effort the player will need to exert to get the full effect of the racquet they have chosen. A "head heavy" racquet is built for a player with a short swing that needs the racquet to generate power. These racquets help "pop" the ball off the strings with a looser stringing pattern. A "handle heavy" racquet is built for a player that has a full swing, generating his/her own power. These racquets have smaller heads with a tighter string pattern to help control the ball. "Balanced" racquets are for players who could use a little more power and a little more control. All racquet manufacturers have comparable models to suit each style of play.

GRIP SIZE

When you test a new racquet, hold like the racquet like you are shaking hands. You should be able to fit one finger along the racquet handle between your fingertips and the palm of your hand. Using the correct grip size will prevent the racquet from slipping in your hands as well as ease the tension on your forearms and elbow.

STRINGS

In general terms, the lower the string tension the more power you get from the strings. The tighter the tension, the more control the strings provide. More information in future articles.

DEMONSTRATION RACQUETS

I PLAY offers demonstration racquets for all adult racquets models in stock. The cost is \$5.00 for three days. If you purchase the racquet, the \$5.00 will be deducted from the price of the racquet. If you are unsure of the appropriate racquet for your playing style, I recommend you demo a racquet before you make the investment.