

Racquet Technic Racket & String Newsletter

Winter 2006 (January-March)

This is the first newsletter of 2006 and there are a few changes. The first one is that this newsletter will be issued once a quarter. There will also be a quarterly newsletter for clothing. It is possible that the two newsletters will be combined later in the year. Any other changes will be explained in future editions.

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Tennis Rackets

There was a recent review in the German Tennis Magazin of 18 rackets. The type of rackets tested would probably be most suitable for club players who want extra power. Some of the recommended rackets were awarded a score of 3 in the control categories. This is at best only average, and in my opinion should not be considered as the best in a group. I think that a score of 2 should be the minimum to receive a recommended rating. Some of the other rackets to consider could be Babolat

NS Drive, Head Flexpoint 6 and the Prince Shark DB. Please remember that this should only be a starting point, and is not a recommendation as I have not used any of these rackets.

String News

Wilson seem to be very active in strings for 2006. They have introduced new strings for Badminton, Squash and Tennis. The tennis strings are Reaction and Enduro Pro, the squash Helixx and for Badminton Dyna Smash. These could be worth trying as Wilson products are usually good quality.

The Wilson website also shows that they will distribute the Luxilon range of strings in 2006. These are the popular Big Banger range which is used by a number of top players. This probably indicates that the company sees future growth in accessories than in rackets.

Grips

Wilson have also introduced new grips for 2006 to increase their range of accessories. These increase the Micro Dry range of grips introduced in 2005. The new grips are called Micro Dry Touch, Max and Comfort. These grips are fitted as standard to different models in the Wilson range of rackets, which should make them popular.

The Micro Dry Comfort is also available in a badminton and squash version, so there should be something for everyone.

Speed of Service

Most readers should be aware of a Radar Gun that could be used to check the speed of serving. This product has not been available for about a year due to some fault. I believe the fault has been overcome, and this product should again be available soon.

Product Reviews

This section contains more details about products than is included under the news items. The news item normally shows only general information about a new product.

Racket-Ball

There has been a fairly large increase in players for this sport, and this new section provides them with some information about rackets and strings.

Rackets

The range of available rackets in the U.K. is fairly limited. When any new information becomes available, it will be included in this section.

Strings

The Kirschbaum Touch Turbo was mentioned in the last edition. This seemed to be quite good to start with, but did lose some tension after a few weeks. It is certainly worth trying, especially as it is available in thinner gauges.

Squash

There is no further news about squash rackets or strings at present. There will always be new rackets introduced each year, but there is very little that can be changed in the design of squash rackets.

Tennis

This is the most popular section, and there is a larger choice of products.

Rackets

These are mentioned under Product News for this edition. Further notes will be added as they become available.

Strings

The Kirschbaum strings are slowly becoming more popular. They offer good performance and much improved durability for most players. There is a good range available and the prices are reasonable. These are also sold nationally by Racquet Technic, and are certainly worth trying.

Grips & Accessories

Almost every racket and string brand has their own range of grips and accessories. It is obviously a valuable source of income for these companies. Many players have their favourite grip which shows most people like to have a choice. Some of these products including any new ones will be featured in the newsletter.

One of the most popular grips for squash is the Karakal PU which is available in various colour options. This is low cost and has good durability. They produce other grips, but many players find the standard grip to be the best value.

Tension Tester ERT 300

Players and racket stringers need to know the tension of strings in rackets. They should have some method of checking the tension to help them decide when a restring is needed. The best method is to use a tester called the Tensometer which measures the tension electronically. The latest model is the ERT 300 and is now expected to be introduced in Summer 2005.

It has been a long wait, but the ERT 300 is at last available. I have now tested this product, and can provide some further information. The readings were compared by using a selection of rackets and measuring the results on the ERT 1000 and the new ERT 300 models.

The ERT 300 produced the same readings for most rackets, but there were some rackets where the readings were much lower than with the ERT 1000. This will probably cause some problems for racket stringers, but should not for individual players.

A player usually wants to compare the string tension in two or three rackets. When the tension reduces below a certain value, a player will normally decide to have their rackets restrung. A racket stringer wants to compare the tensions in many different rackets, and a similar tension in a racket of the same size, should produce about the same tension. This does not happen in all cases, and this reduces the usefulness of this device.

Players can use this product without any real problems. Racket stringers should find it to be a useful tool, but should not rely on it completely. The price is not too expensive, and there should be a reasonable number sold. This product is currently the best method of measuring the tension in your racket. Consider your requirements carefully before purchasing one of these testers.

Clothing

There are several changes planned for clothing, most of which will be seen next year. There will be ranges that are suitable for ladies fitness, general outdoor and running. These are from the Maier-Sports and at.one collections. There will be some items that could be used for racket sports from these ranges.

The first clothing newsletter was made available at the end of November. This includes a description and pictures of some of the available range of clothing. There were 73 downloads in the first week which is a good indication of the interest in the available products. You can download a copy from <www.racquet-technic.co.uk/newsletter/CN001_Autumn_2005.pdf> and/or subscribe. If you subscribe, you will receive a reminder when each new copy is available.

Stringing Notes

This section includes items about stringing that should be of interest to players and stringers. This depends to a certain extent on receiving questions.

How often should you have your racket restrung? This is a question often asked by players. This will obviously vary for different people. Players who break strings in a few weeks have them restrung when the strings break. There are other players who have strings that last for years without breaking. There are various views, but I think a minimum of once a year is reasonable. The cost of this is quite low per month, but many players do not even consider having a restring until the strings break.

Stringing Associations

Are you a racket stringer or thinking of becoming one? You will probably have questions or want to learn more about stringing rackets. One solution is to join one of the Stringers Associations. The best known is probably the USRSA (United States Racket Stringers Association) and has been around for a long time. Membership includes an annual stringers manual and monthly magazine.

There are also European and U.K. organisations which have some advantages. If you would like details of the U.K. group, please send me an e-mail and I will forward your enquiry to them.

Racket Notes

Most players have some questions about their rackets, and they will almost certainly be of interest to other readers. If you have you any questions about rackets or strings, please send them by e-mail.

The balance of a racket can influence the performance. Some players like an even balance, and others prefer a head-heavy racket. This feature is also described on the website.

The only way to find out which type is most suitable, is to try different ones and see whether they improve your game. You may have to spend some time adjusting to a racket with a different balance.

Items Wanted / For Sale

This section is for players who have a racket to sell, or who wants a particular model of racket. There are more readers of the newsletter due to the download version becoming available. There are about 20 downloads per week, which obviously means that more people will see your details.

There are no items for this issue.

Local Stringers

If you have a local restringing service, you usually need to promote the service to local players. Some players who use your service will tell others, but one of the best methods to find new customers is by some form of advertising. There are several options, but one low cost method is by having an entry on the Racquet Technic website stringers section.

You can look at the existing pages to see the normal information that is provided. You can also test the site shows up in searches. Type "Racket Stringer" in a search on Google which is the most popular search engine. You should also try "Racket Stringer ABC" where ABC is the area in which you live. This will show you how many stringers can be found in your local area.

Please contact me for details of this service.

Website

You can find advice here about selecting strings, rackets and a range of accessories. There is also information about the products available from Racquet Technic.

There are two sites. These are the original Racquet-Technic site plus the Your-Racquet site, which is mainly for information about tennis equipment.

The sites are <<http://www.racquet-technic.co.uk>> and <<http://www.your-racquet.co.uk>>

The combined number of visitors to these sites is an average of over 3,500 per month. Some of these will be from search engines indexing the site, but there is still a large interest in the topics covered. There are visitors from most countries including the U.S.A., Australia, Japan and Europe.

Newsletter Information

The newsletter is starting from the beginning of 2006 sent every three months. It is suitable for racket sports players and stringers. There is in each issue information about strings, accessories and equipment.

The newsletter is now also available from the website. You simply follow the links and can download a copy as a pdf file. You will need Adobe Reader to view it. This is installed on most computers, or you can download a free copy from <www.adobe.com>.

There was an average of over 200 downloads per month of the newsletter between July and September. This is certainly more than the people who have subscribed to the newsletter. Perhaps most people do not like to give their e-mail address.

New readers are invited to be included on the circulation. Please send a request to <newsletter@racquet-technic.co.uk> and enter "Subscribe Newsletter" in the subject.

The next issue will be sent to arrive by the end of March 2006.

About Racquet Technic

The people who receive this newsletter are a mixture of stringers and players who are interested in racket sports products. The main aim is to provide information about existing and new products that are available for players of racket sports. All the main brands are covered, including some products from Racquet Technic.

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