

Racket News 2007 Issue #3 August

Welcome to the latest issue of the Racket and String newsletter. In the U.K. there was awful weather in June and July, with rain most days resulting in floods in some areas. August so far is much better, but it has really not been a good summer. I hope it has been better for readers in other countries. These conditions do not stop the newsletter, which includes all the usual topics.

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Tennis Rackets

There are new racket models from Head, Prince and Boris Becker. There is a HEAD MicroGel Radical range, Prince Ozone models, and a new Boris Becker competition range. There should be enough choice here, so take a look at the websites and find out more.

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Racket Tests

In the last edition of the newsletter, I mentioned the Prince O3 Spectrum racket. I have now used this model several times, and can include some further information. The string area is about 105 inches or 678 centimetres. It has a weight of just over 300 grams including the strings, and has an even balance of 50%. One of the main advantages with this model is the more flexible shaft.

I think this is a very good racket, for players who are looking for these specifications. It does not seem to be promoted much, but is certainly worth considering.

Note: Readers who are not familiar with balance should see the website for an explanation.

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Racket Brands

Have you ever tried to find some information about a racket, and found a problem? You are certainly not alone. Take a look at a racket company website, and there is usually something missing. Measurements that are often useful, such as the racket balance or the beam (width) of the frame, cannot be found.

Some companies provide newsletters, which are a good idea. Unfortunately some do not. Brochures can also be a problem, if you have ever tried to obtain one.

I think it is about time that racket companies treated their customer better. The products are often expensive, so they should provide information and reply to customer's queries. If they concentrated on quality rather than volume they could develop a better reputation.

String News

There is very little new in strings, but there are some comments about existing strings later. I recently obtained some Polyfibre strings for testing. This is another German brand of Monofilament strings that are becoming more popular.

Prince has introduced a string called Synthetic Gut Multifilament. This will cause some confusion with the existing Synthetic Gut. They are obviously hoping the name will help to sell the product. I think it is a very poor decision, and they should have used a new name, which would have helped players in selecting their string.

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Tennis Strings

The new **Kirschbaum Pro Line II** tennis string was mentioned in the last issue. This red string has been tested over several weeks and can be recommended to players. There is little movement of the strings in the racket, and the combination of performance and durability is ideal for many players.

The 125 gauge will be best for most players, but try the 120 gauge for performance if you do not break strings often. This string offers an excellent combination of price and performance. It is definitely worth trying and comparing to your current string.

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Tennis String Notes

One of the interesting changes is the increasing use of monofilament strings which are now becoming more popular. Many people refer to them as Polyester strings, but as they now use a more complex mixture of materials, it is probably not the best name to use.

Most brands include this type of strings in their range, but certain companies specialise in this type of string. The main ones are probably Luxilon (Big Banger), Kirschbaum, and the Polyfibre brand mentioned in the previous section. The advantage is that players can have a durable string in a thin gauge which provides a good response.

Many racket stringers do not like this type of string, as it is more difficult to use. They often do not inform players about this type of string. If this happens to you, find a stringer who does offer these strings. They really do offer advantages to many club and tournament players.

Grips

There are many different types of grips, and everyone seems to have their own favourite type. When any new types are tried, a few comments will be in the

newsletter. You can then try them and compare the performance to your existing grip.

New Grip - Kirschbaum Soft Feeling

This is a replacement grip that has been introduced recently. I have been using this grip for some time and have found it to be very good. It is certainly better than the grip fitted to a new Yonex racket that I am currently testing. This product will be available from Racquet Technic in September.

Regular Features

String Tension

String tension is very important, and each player will have a personal preference. There is certainly not a perfect tension that will be correct for all players. There are also many factors that influence the choice of tension. These include the string area (head size) of your racket, string gauge, and the material from which the string is made.

A good racket stringer should have some method of measuring string tension. This allows them to check the tension compared to when the racket was strung. One method this can be done is with the ERT 300, which measures the tension of the strings in a racket. You can see an image and description of this tester on the website.

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Tennis String Area

This is often called the racket head size, but you can use the name you find convenient. A smaller area provides better control, and a larger area more power. A size between 95 and 110 square inches (613 to 710 centimetres) should be suitable for most players. The average size is therefore 102 inches or 660 centimetres, which is probably suitable for many club players.

There have been larger sizes introduced in recent years. These are rarely suitable for serious players. They have lots of power but no control. It is also difficult to achieve the correct string tension with these models.

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Racket Stringers

Players are always looking for a good racket stringer. There can be many reasons, including the fact that they have moved into a new area. One source of finding a local stringer is the Racquet Technic website.

This is not a free service, and further details are available from Racquet Technic. The rates are reduced for stringers who purchase products from Racquet Technic including the ERT 300 tension tester.

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Racket 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. There are also European and U.K. Organisations, and each one should have some advantages and disadvantages.

Each one has a website where you can find out more of what they can offer you.

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Clothing Range

A selection of clothing is also available from Racquet Technic. This consists of a range using advanced materials that offer comfort in use. They are best described as being made from breathable materials.

The brands are imported from European manufacturers, and they offer an alternative to the larger brand names. There is a separate newsletter, which is similar to the Racket and Strings news. Your name can be added to the mailing list. To be included please send a request to <info@racquet-technic.co.uk>.

General Information

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 three sites. These are the original Racquet-Technic site plus the Your-Racquet site, which is mainly for information about tennis equipment. The third site is for Kirschbaum strings, most of which are designed for durability combined with performance.

The sites are

<<http://www.racquet-technic.co.uk>>

<<http://www.your-racquet.co.uk>>

<www.kirschbaum-strings.co.uk>

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Newsletter Information

The newsletter is prepared four times a year. It is suitable for racket sports players and stringers. There is in each issue information about strings, accessories, and equipment.

The newsletter is 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>

The next issue of the newsletter is planned to be issued in November 2007.

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