

Racket & Strings Newsletter - November 2008

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Tennis Rackets

A good source of information can be the reviews found in tennis magazines and on some websites. This should help you when selecting a new racket. Notes on some models are shown below

Wilson K5

This is based on the Triad Design which was quite popular in a range of rackets produced under the Triad model range. This was an arm-friendly design that helped many players who suffered from tennis elbow. This model presumably replaces the older ones, and is available in two sizes. The cost is around £160, and if it helps reduce the pain it could be worth considering.

Babolat Aero Storm Tour

This is a heavy racket more suitable for advanced players. As the name indicates it is between the Aero Pro Drive and Pure Storm models. The cost is around £136. Please note that there is a lower weight Aero Storm model which is probably more suitable for many players.

Racket Testing

There is a large choice of rackets available, and players have different requirements. These include weight, balance, and string area which is described on the website. Many players also have a favourite brand of racket. This can make selection difficult, and a few notes about certain models that have been tested by Racquet Technic are shown below.

Prince Ozone 7

This is one of the O3 models and features good performance at a medium price. The String Area (Head-Size) is about 690 cms or 107 inches, and the average weight 300 grams.

Yonex RQS 33

One of the Square rackets from Yonex that should have good performance from the specifications. It is however, only an average model which is no longer in the current range.

Wilson Zen

There are two models which are the Zen Team (lighter) and the ZEN. The ZEN weighs around 320 grams with a String-Area of 690 cms/102 inches. This is a powerful stiff racket but still reasonably forgiving, and worth trying.

Tennis Strings

Many players know that there are two main types of strings which are traditional synthetics and Mono-Filament (solid) strings. This should apply to regular readers of this newsletter. Each type has advantages and disadvantages.

Mono-Filament Strings

Players normally select these for extra durability. They are also suitable for many club players who prefer a thinner string. These are available in a wide range of types and prices. Some will be expensive such as the Babolat and Luxilon brands, partly because of their promotion through sponsorship of players. There are lower cost alternatives such as those from Kirschbaum, Signum Pro, and others. The selection of strings is one of personal choice, which is the main reason that there are so many available. You will only find the one that is best for you by experimenting with various types.

Hybrid Strings

As the name suggests this is a mixture of two types of strings. A Mono-Filament string is used for the longer (Main) strings for durability, and a synthetic (or gut) string for the shorter (Cross) strings. This provides good durability combined with better response than a Mono-Filament string.

Note: The Pro-Players reverse the string types to obtain better power, but the result is also reduced durability.

Popular Strings

This year the trend has been to use Mono-Filament strings, although some players still prefer the more responsive synthetic strings. One popular Mono-Filament string has been the Kirschbaum Competition for hard hitters who break strings. The more recently introduced Pro Line II seems to be a good choice for all-round use by club players. This is possibly because there is very little movement of the strings and the thin gauge provides good control.

Many players who prefer synthetic strings, should consider Multi-Fibre types as mentioned earlier. I hope to include further information on this type of string in the next newsletter.

A range of better quality Hybrid-Strings is now available. I expect these to become more popular next year. This type of string will be featured in future newsletter.

New Strings

I plan to test some new strings in the next few months. Some further information about these strings will be in the next newsletter. They should also appear on the website, which will be modified next year.

Your Views

Have you have a comment about any items in the newsletter, or a general question about racket sports products? Please send in your request, and I will try to include some mention of it in the next newsletter.

String Tests

Each year the German Tennis Magazin performs tests on a selection of strings. This year they selected Multi-Fibre string in a thin gauge. This type of string would be the choice of players looking for the best response, more than durability. A total of nine strings were tested, and they found the best one to be Tecnifibre X-One Biphase. This string is expensive at around £25.00 plus stringing charges. You could probably obtain this cheaper from the mail order dealers. There are many alternative strings of this type. One of the best known is probably Wilson NXT, but this is also expensive.

String Tension

String tension is very important, and each player will have a personal preference. There is 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.

The increasingly popular Mono-Filament strings should be strung at a different tension to a standard synthetic string. The reason being that the materials used have different properties. Some of the manufacturers recommend that for this type of string, the tension should be reduced by 10%. There are naturally different opinions on this subject. It is probably best to try different tensions, and find the one that is best for you.

Racket Brands

One problem in comparing brands is that there is the overall quantity sold and the value of the sales. A larger company sells rackets over a wide price range, and a smaller brand usually concentrates on a particular price range.

Wilson is without doubt the most popular brand followed by Head. This has been the situation for several years. Other brands such as Babolat, Prince, and Yonex have a much smaller volume and value of rackets sold.

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Tennis Racket Weight

The weight of tennis rackets is between 250 to 350 grams for most models. This is obviously a very wide range, and you could find some further information useful.

The lighter rackets are used by many club players as they are more comfortable in use. This is probably the largest group of rackets available. The heavier rackets are used by more experienced players including professionals. The extra weight provides more control to their shots.

There is also a range between these two types in the middle of the weight range. These provide more control, but are also comfortable in use for most players. After a trial period of adjustment, some players find these to be the best type for their requirements.

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Grips

There are two main types which are Replacement Grips and Overgrips. Each type has advantages and disadvantages, and most players have their own favourite brand and type.

Overgrips

Some players use a thin type, and others who want more durability select a thicker type. One example of a thinner type is the white Wilson Pro Grip. There is hardly any increase in the size of the handle, but these grips need replacing more often.

Replacement Grips

There are lots of different brands and types, which feature various combinations of surface patterns and perforations. One type liked by some players has a central raised portion. This can help to prevent the racket twisting in your hand. One example is the Wilson Convex which is popular with some players.

Please note that although Wilson grips have been used as examples, there are many others available. All racket and string companies have a range of grips.

Clothing Range

A selection of clothing is also available from Racquet Technic. The brands are imported from European manufacturers, and they offer an alternative to the larger brand names. There is a separate newsletter, which can either be downloaded, or sent to you by e-mail.

Autumn/Winter Clothing

These products are best described as Active-Tops. They should be suitable for most outdoor sports, or where you need something that is warmer to wear. There are styles from Gonso and Maier-Sports. The products are similar to the summer ranges as they feature materials with breathable properties.

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 advantages and disadvantages.

Each one has a website where you can find out more about what they can offer you. Take a look at <www.ukrsa.com> for the U.K. Site, and see what they have to offer.

Stringing Courses

There are some one and two-day courses for anyone who wants to learn about stringing rackets. The courses are organised by Liam Nolan from the UKRSA, who is a Wimbledon stringer. If this is of interest, please ask for further information. Your request will be forwarded to Liam, and you could soon be a racket stringer.

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Website

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

Future Changes

The section on tennis strings should be updated in the future. This will include details of new strings, which are currently being tested. This could help you when selecting new type of string.

The main website is

<www.racquet-technic.co.uk>

There is a separate section on the website for clothing. You simply follow the links from the home page.

Newsletter Information

This newsletter is normally issued three 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 March 2009.

New Product Information

There are always some interesting products being introduced. Many of these are generally available, which obviously means you can obtain them from many sources. Sometimes products are not well known, and these are the types that can be obtained from Racquet Technic.

Sports Orthotics

Many sports people have problems with their feet and knees. This can often be helped by using a Sports Orthotic. These normally vary from the standard Orthotic prescribed by a Podiatrist in several ways. After lengthy trials a Sports Orthotic should soon be available from Racquet Technic. This is a specialist product which needs advice and to be fitted correctly. This means that they will only be suitable for local customers as opposed to mail-order. There will be further information in future newsletters.

Contact Racquet Technic

A list of website locations and contact points is shown below.

www.racquet-technic.co.uk

www.your-racquet.co.uk

info@racquet-technic.co.uk

Issued by - Roger Webster