

# Racquet Technic Racket & String Newsletter

## Summer 2006

Welcome to the Summer edition of the Racket and String news from Racquet Technic. The month of May was not encouraging due to the poor weather, but hopefully the remaining summer months will see an improvement. This edition of the newsletter will try to keep you informed about some products that should be of interest to all racket sports players.

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## Tennis Rackets

There does not seem to be as many new rackets and advertising as in previous years. This is probably a result of reduced sales, as players see no reason to change their rackets. This will of course reduce the total sales of rackets, and in turn how many new models that are introduced.

There are, as usual, one or two exceptions. Babolat have introduced several new models this year, and a few more should be introduced soon. Another brand is Kneissl in Austria which is being advertised in Germany. I doubt that they will have much success, unless the rackets include special features. The previous range of Kneissl rackets was reasonable, but nothing special.

## String News

The Flexifusion Plus badminton string from RAB was mentioned in the last issue. I have used this for restringing rackets without any problems. The performance, as with all strings, will be a matter of personal preference. Some players will like it, and others will not. It does seem worth including in a range of strings to offer players.

Another string available from RAB in this country is Iso-Speed Energetic Plus which is, as the name suggests an updated version of the Energetic string. This has reasonable performance, but certainly would not be classed as a string for durability. As you may know, Iso-Speed also produces many of the Head range of strings. Players who use Head products could be interested in these strings.

## Grips

A range of grip tests was recently featured in the German Tennis Magazin publication. One of the grips tested was Tournagrip and was recommended as the best value in price and performance. This is strange as this grip is one of the most expensive available in the U.K. but for some reason it is much cheaper in Germany.

## 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.

## Squash

If you look on the Babolat website, you will see that there are some squash rackets featured. These appear to be new products and will probably be available in the Autumn. I do not have any further details, so you will have to look at the website and of course the dealer sites for more information.

## Tennis

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

### Rackets

Several new products are featured on the Babolat website. Some of these are planned to be introduced in the Autumn. A new system that they have called Cortex is designed to remove unwanted vibrations that can cause arm and elbow problems for some players. If this works, these rackets could become very popular.

## 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.

In the last issue some of the Kirschbaum grips were mentioned, which were the Touch-it and the Touch-it Ultra. I have been testing the Touch-it grip for several weeks, and find it to be one of the best that I have tried for a long time. It is, the grip that I intend to use in future on my own racket. I would not expect everyone to share my opinion, but I do feel that it is worth a trial if you are looking for a new grip to try.

This grip is available in a pack of three grips in either black or white from Racquet Technic.

## 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 available.

The new ERT 300 was introduced at the end of 2005. The tests are continuing, and the results should be available later this year. I recently had a meeting with the designer of the ERT 300, and I know that the company is also testing different brands of rackets, to check the accuracy of the readings. As I have mentioned before, this is still the most accurate way of measuring the tension of the strings in a racket.

## Clothing

The range of Maier-Sports clothing is available in the U.K. from Racquet Technic. This is mainly outdoor clothing, but is also suitable for general wear. A range of ladies clothing is available under the at.one brand name. This is a division of Maier-Sports.

The new Nordic Fitness range has been tested by a few people for running. They have all so far found it to be very good, and an improvement on many other available products. The main reasons are that it is a light weight and has very efficient moisture management, which means that it remains drier than most alternatives. This range should be suitable for a wide range of uses including racket sports, unless you want white which is not one of the colour options.

You can see some of the styles on the clothing section of the website [www.racquet-technic.co.uk/spcl/spcl\\_intro.html](http://www.racquet-technic.co.uk/spcl/spcl_intro.html) and download a small brochure (pdf format). There is also a separate newsletter for clothing.

## 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.

When you are selecting strings for your racket, you should consider the following important points. These are the price, performance, and durability. These are also mentioned on the website.

You obviously need to find a string that gives you the performance or response that matches the type of racket that you are using. The durability depends on the player and materials used in the string. The price is not just the cost, but also how long the string lasts between restrings.

There are many players who do not take these three factors into consideration. They are all important and should influence the type of string that you select. You should always remember that the cost of the strings per week or month is more relevant than the price that you pay for a restring.

## 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.

Babolat have introduced a new feature (Cortex System) on some current and future models. This is designed to help reduce vibration, which many brands have also tried for many years. This system is placed between the throat and the shaft of the racket, which is the only effective position for any system. They also state that the player still receives feedback from the racket strings. This has been a problem with many other methods that have been tried.

If this system works, it will be exactly what players need. It should be interesting to find out if this Babolat method actually works. As with many new features, there will probably be mixed reactions from players. Some will find it works, and probably others will not. I intend to try one of these rackets later this year.

## 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.

There appears to be very little demand for this service from stringers. There are, however, many searches/visits to this section of the website. Perhaps racket stringers do not need new customers, or possibly they are not really operating a very professional service. Whatever the reason, it is likely that this section of the website will close later this year.

## **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. A new site <[www.kirschbaum-strings.co.uk](http://www.kirschbaum-strings.co.uk)> was added earlier this year. This is for the range of Kirschbaum strings which are mainly designed for durability combined with performance.

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.

### **Change for 2006**

The Your-Racquet site was changed to a new hosting company in June. The transfer went without any problems, but you could have found that the service was unavailable for a short time. This site will be amended over the next few months, and some of the information updated.

## **Newsletter Information**

The newsletter is 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](http://www.adobe.com)>

There is an average of over 200 downloads per month of the newsletter.

The next issue will be sent to arrive by the end of September 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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