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Welcome to this first newsletter of 2013. Although it is winter here in the UK, no doubt players in Australia for example will be enjoying their hot summer weather. The result is that there are people playing badminton, racquetball, squash, and tennis somewhere in the world whatever time of year it is.

This also means that there should be something of interest for everyone in each edition of this newsletter.

String Tension

Many players have only a little knowledge about string tension. They can often quote facts that are often not correct. This section of the newsletter is designed to correct some of these deficiencies.

You should find that there is a recommended string tension shown on your racquet. This is the manufacturer's suggestion when using an average type of string. Unfortunately, the characteristics of strings vary.

When you start using the racquet there will be some loss of tension in the strings. This also varies between different strings.

Each of these factors of Recommended, Strung, and Final tension will be discussed further in future editions of this newsletter.

Tennis Racquets

Pro Kennex K5 - This is the latest tennis racquet to be tested. It will probably be of interest to anyone who suffers from tennis elbow as it has a unique method of absorbing shock and vibration.

There are several compartments in the frame containing granules similar in size to sand. These granules absorb the vibration, which provides you with a more comfortable frame.

There are several models that use this feature, which are known as the Kinetic range. Apart from comfort benefits, the racquet has good performance. The model tested weighs 295 grams unstrung and has a String Area of 100 inches/645 cms.

You may find this brand of racquets difficult to obtain in the UK, but they can be ordered from some European websites.

New Models

Wilson has recently introduced the Blade 98 in a 18x20 string pattern. If you are not familiar with this format, it simply means that there are 18 main or longer strings compared to the more usual 16 strings. This format is normally used to provide extra control, but of course this also will depend on the general performance of the racquet.

Several new models have also been introduced by various other companies. It now seems to be normal for racquet companies to introduce new models at the beginning of each year. No doubt, they use the Australian Open as a showcase for these new products.

Grips

There is a section about grips on the website. This explains the different types available with a few suggestions.

Here is a link to the website

[<www.the-racquet.co.uk>](http://www.the-racquet.co.uk)

There is no new information available other than is shown on the website.

Tennis Strings

A different type of string is described in each issue of the newsletter. There is also a “Featured String” which is usually one of the strings that has been recently tested, and found to be suitable for the target group of players.

All-Round Strings

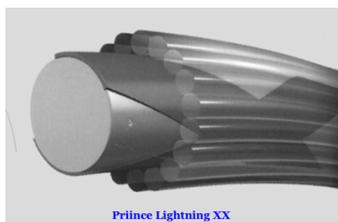
Many players want a string that offers a good balance of performance and durability at a low to medium price. In its simplest form this is a string often described as a synthetic gut, which gives the wrong impression. It is really a string suitable for many players, and would be better described as an All-Round string.

Some players want a string that is better than the basic string, which provides improved performance, but they feel that they do not need one of the specialist type of strings. These players would not normally break strings frequently, and do not suffer from elbow or shoulder pains. The product they want is an All-Round string which offers good performance at a medium price.

Featured Strings

Two strings in the All-Round category are from Prince. They are Lightning XX and Lightning XX Spin, and are available in a choice of colours.

The difference between the two is that the Spin version has an extra surface wrap to provide a slightly textured surface.



These strings have good performance and have a quite attractive combination of colours. The standard version is clear with either a blue, pink, or silver spiral. The spin version is in clear with a black, orange, or white spiral.

Players Problems

This section has recently been added to “The Racquet” website to provide a little help for players who suffer from pain when playing tennis.

The main point to emphasise is that many players use equipment that is not ideal. It is often using either an unsuitable racquet or strings that contributes their problems. Anyone with any arm problems is advised not use a stiff light racquet.

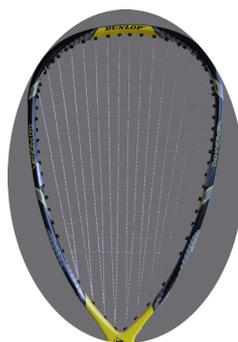
Racquet Weight

A lighter racquets is generally stiffer to compensate for the reduced amount of power. This can be a problem for certain players who develop some arm or shoulder pain. It is recommended that racquets weighing under 300 grams should be avoided if you suffer from a wrist, elbow, or shoulder pain.

Note: wrist pain is often the result of poor technique, as a light racquet allows you to play shots that ideally should not be used.

New String for Racquetball

I have recently been testing a new string for racquetball, which seems to have good performance. The name of this string is TS 6000 Micro and it has a gauge of 1.25 mm, which is ideal for either squash or racquetball. It is a multifilament construction which normally offers good comfort and response.



The main requirements for any string are to have a good response combined with low movement of the strings. Other desirable features are for there to be no noticeable vibration, and to maintain its tension over the life of the string. So far it meets all of these

requirements, and will be offered as an alternative string to local customers.

The requirements for a squash string are almost identical to those used for racquetball. This means that this string should be suitable for both squash and racquetball.

Compression Socks

The main advantages of compression socks have been described in previous issues. The main points were helping to absorb vibration, and promoting recovery. A few achievements of people wearing the socks are covered in this issue,

Yvonne van Vlerken: came top of the ladies in the Florida Ironman with a time of 08:51:35

Joey Kelly: he enters the Guinness Book of world Records for the "Most Steps climbed on a moving escalator in 24 hours" having climbed over 50,000 steps.

Patrick Lange: he succeeded in winning third place in the World Masters Duathlon in Nancy France.

All of these athletes are sponsored by O-Motion and wear their products.



Price Reduction

The Regular Socks have been reduced to £32.00 which makes them excellent value. This offer only applies while the current stock is available.

Late News

Almost as expected, some companies are introducing new products. Tecnifibre is the latest, and have new racquets, strings and grips. This is, as explained in another section, is to gain some publicity from the Australian Open.

No doubt, they hope that players in other countries will be tempted to purchase new items for the beginning of their main playing season.

Tennis Balls

Everyone who plays tennis uses them, but how many players know anything about them. Not that many would be my estimate; so here are a few facts for you.

The specifications of a tennis ball are covered in the ITF Specifications document. There are four types of balls; with the Type 2 ball being the one most commonly used.

Weight: 56.0 to 59.4 grams.

Bounce: 135 to 147 cm range.



Does this mean that all balls have identical performance? The answer is definitely not! Most players, if not all, have their favourites, and they think that other types are not acceptable. The variances are obviously the result of the type of rubber and felt used.

Please let me know if you have any opinions about the various brands and types. I will try to include a selection of them in a future edition of the newsletter.

Badminton Notes

The most popular brand of racquets seems to be Yonex, as measured by the racquets restrung. The Yonex strings also appear to be the most popular, with BG 65Ti or BG 80 the choice of most players.

The majority of players use a tension of around 23 pounds which is within the recommended range for most racquet brands. Some players want higher tensions, but this should only be used for selected racquet models.

If there is a recommended maximum tension, you should not exceed this value. If you do, and the frame breaks it could prove to be an expensive experiment.