

Junior Tennis Advice Page

So your son or daughter has just started playing junior tennis. This information sheet will explain nearly everything you need to know about choosing the correct racket size, which colour ball your child should be playing with, and other helpful information about junior tournaments. Remember that this is just a guide. Other factors such as how much progress your child is making will contribute to which group your child belongs in.

There are three junior tennis groups: red, orange and green. After that, the next group is adult yellow! Keep reading to find out which group your child should play in, and remember to talk to your child's coach to get their opinion and advice too.

RED

- All 8&U events must be played with a red ball. Red balls bounce lower and are 75% slower than yellow balls; this is to encourage longer rallies, and for players to try new shots.
- There are two types of red ball: sponge and felt. Red sponge balls are to be used inside, and red felt balls outside.
- Games must be played on a red-size court – the dimensions are: 11m x 5.5m or 12m x 6m (or badminton lines), with a net height of 80cm.
- Scoring must be a one match tie-break of first to 10 points – with either two clear points or a sudden-death at 9-all.
- Each match will have a court helper to assist with line/net calls and scores.
- The recommended racket size for this group is 17" to 23".



ORANGE

- All 9&U events must be played with an orange ball. Orange balls bounce slower and are 50% slower than yellow balls; this is to help with shot control.
- Games must be played on an orange-size court – the dimensions are: 18m x 6.5m (or 18m x 8.23m for a doubles court), with a net height of 80cm.
- Scoring must be best of three standard tie-break games (first to seven points with either two clear points or sudden-death at 6-all), or one short set to four games.
- Each match will have a court helper to assist with line/net calls and scores – usually one court helper per two courts.
- The recommended racket size for this group is 23" to 25".

GREEN

- All 10&U events must be played with a green ball. Green balls bounce lower and are 25% slower than yellow balls; this is to help juniors develop and improve all aspects of their game.
- Games must be played on a standard-size court, with a standard net height.
 - All doubles matches should be played on a standard-size court with singles sticks in place.
 - Scoring must be two short sets with a match tie-break, or one short set to four games.
 - The recommended racket size for this group is 25" to 26".

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COMPETITION INFORMATION

There are two tennis seasons – the summer season runs from 1st April to 31st August, and the winter season from 1st September to 31st March. The age group your child will compete in will depend on their age on the last day of the upcoming season. Further details can be found at www.lta.org.uk/competitions/junior/competition-age-groups1/.

Grade 6 and 7 competitions are held locally during the summer season. These are perfect for children who are starting to compete, and are a great way to gain experience in a competitive environment.

The Road to Wimbledon 14&U Challenge gives players a chance to play on the courts of Wimbledon. The first stage takes place in a club/school venue, and organisers can choose which format they want to play their games. Winners of these events go on to play County Finals, with the winners going to compete in the National Finals at Wimbledon.

The Road to Wimbledon International is the regional event for players graded 6.2 or higher. Regional qualifying events are held across England and Scotland, while overseas qualifying events are held in India, Hong Kong, China, and Japan. Scoring is two tie-break sets and a match tie-break. Two girls and four boys from each of the regional events will qualify for the grade 2 finals held at Wimbledon. They will be joined at the International Finals by the qualifying players from the overseas' events.

The Summer County Tour is a series of grade 4 and 5 tournaments which run throughout the summer season. These run all around the country, and there is no limit on how many tournaments a player can enter.

The Winter County Tour is also a series of grade 4 and 5 tournaments. These run throughout the winter season, and are also played all over the country. A player is only able to enter one competition at each grade in the same age group taking place on the same weekend.

In September 2015, FAST4 Tennis was introduced in the Winter County Tour events for the 10&U to 18&U age groups. This was done to reduce game time; players are able to play more matches, and more players are accepted into the draw while still playing a conventional tennis match. The four rules are as follows:

- First to four games wins.
- At three games all, a tie-break to 5 points is played (sudden-death at 4 points all).
- No advantages. If the score is deuce, it becomes a sudden-death point.
- Lets are played.

For the full rules, go to www.lta.org.uk/play/types-of-tennis/fast4-tennis/.

A player's ranking is based on their six best singles and six best doubles competition results. The grades are as follows:

- 1 & 2 – national level
- 3 – regional level
- 4 – county level
- 5, 6 & 7 – club level
- U – ungraded

For full information about everything junior tennis, go to www.lta.org.uk/competitions/junior/