

Progressive Tennis Frequently Asked Questions

Q) What is Progressive Tennis?

A) Progressive tennis is a tennis program for 5-9 year olds which allows young players to learn and play the game more quickly, efficiently and successfully. Progressive Tennis uses a systematic progression of court sizes, balls, and racquets, to scale the game down to an appropriate level for 5-9 year olds.

Q) Why is the court size important?

A) The court size is proportional to the child's size. This assists the kids in developing an all court game by ensuring realistic court coverage. The proportioned court size will allow the kids to develop tactics similar to the pros from an early age.

Q) Why is the type of ball important?

A) At each stage, the different types of balls promotes the development of proper technical fundamentals which include grips, set-up, timing and biomechanics, as well as the development of a full array of all court tactics. Below are the types of balls that should be used at each stage:

- **½ court tennis:** An oversized, high-density foam ball, which is easier to visually track, receive, and control, since it travels and bounces slower.
- **¾ court tennis:** low-compression balls (i.e. Wilson Winners), which facilitate longer exchanges as these balls are easier to control and don't bounce as lively as a regular ball.
- **full court tennis:** The first step will be with a transition ball (i.e. Wilson "Easy Play"), which provides a more lively bounce than the low compression ball, but not as much bounce as the regular ball; this will help ensure longer points. The final step will be using the regular ball.

Q) Why is the length of the racquet important?

A) This aspect is one of the most important and often ignored. The proper racquet size (length and weight) will ensure racquet head control and stability which is the most important factor in ball control. Below are the types of racquets used at each stage:

- **½ court tennis:** A 19"-21" racquet is used.

- **¾ court tennis:** A 23” racquet is used.
- **full court tennis:** A 23” - 25” racquet is used.

Q) Where can I order the special balls, racquets, mini nets and lines?

A) All the progressive balls, racquets and mini nets are available through the TPA website where you will find the Wilson order form. You can order the practice lines and masking tape (in bulk only) through Joan Leung at coachdev@tenniscanada.com. Individual roles masking tape can be purchased at any local store.

Q) If a child is younger than 5 years old, can he/she still begin playing tennis?

A) Yes. Using a 19 inch racquet and a foam ball there are many progressions that can be used to get your child ready for ½ court tennis. Please note that there are many exercises without a racquet which can be used to develop coordination, reception and projection skills.

Q) If a child is 7 and is playing full court tennis. Do you recommend that he/she go back to playing ¾ court tennis and why or why not?

A) Yes. We recommend that your child go back to play ¾ court tennis. Very few young kids are able to play full court tennis with proper tennis fundamentals and tactics. By scaling down the court and equipment, the young player will be able to better develop an array of all court skills without having to avert to a defensive style of play; regular balls and more court to cover would lead to many impact points, hence hurting the development of the child. Having a 7 year old play full court would be like an adult having to cover a court 1 and a half to twice the size of a regular court. It would be difficult to maintain an aggressive style of play and proper fundamentals, as just being able to make impact with the ball would be a success in itself. There is the odd exception but please have a discussion with your child’s coach before making the decision to play full court tennis.

Q) Are all Tennis Development Centers (TDCs) and Coaches moving towards this type of training for young kids?

A) Tennis Canada and the Provincial Tennis Associations are strongly promoting and supporting Progressive tennis. Many TDCs and Coaches are using Progressive Tennis already and we will continue to provide many resources to support them. We all believe this will lead to having a larger pool of young successful tennis players which will encourage them to continue this great sport because of early success correlated to using progressive tennis equipment.

Q) Will there be sanctioned tournaments with the new court sizes and equipment for my child to compete in?

A) Currently, Tennis Canada is working together with the Provincial Tennis Associations to create a series of sanctioned tournaments that will allow kids to compete in the same environment in which they train. Contact your Provincial Tennis Association for further information.

Q) Is this system used to develop kids in other countries?

A) This system is imported from European countries such as France and Belgium where it was used to successfully develop players like Justine Henin-Hardenne and Olivier Rochus.