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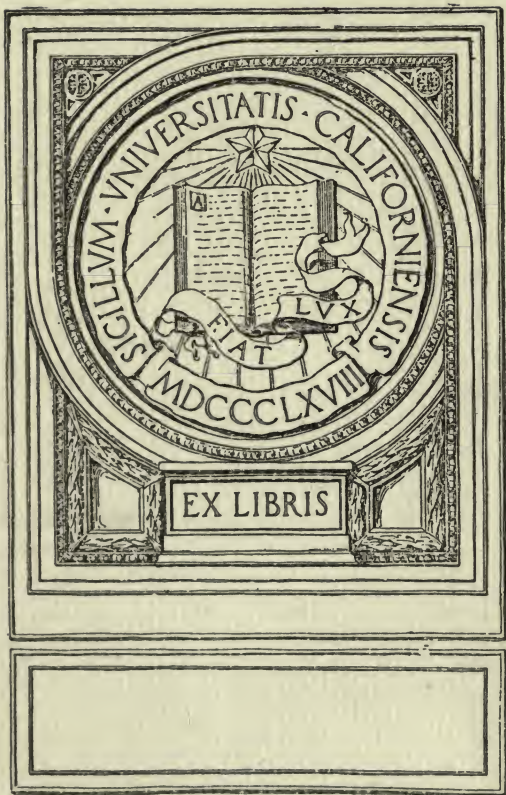
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TENNIS FOR GIRLS

BY
FLORENCE A. BALLIN
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INTRODUCTION.

There are a number of books on tennis, but none has heretofore been written for the young girl just starting in to play. It may be argued that the game is the same for both boy and girl, therefore the same book will do for both. This is true to a certain extent. But just as there is a difference in the finished game, so there is a difference in the early training; and I believe that, properly started, a girl's game may be developed to the point where it is much more like the boy's game than it is at present. Tennis is a game requiring a quick eye and good judgment. Now a boy's eye is naturally trained to judge a ball in flight; he plays at some kind of ball game from the day he is strong enough to toss one. His body, too, responds more readily to what his eye tells him he must do. Therefore, a girl has to spend more time and attention in developing her "eye," and in learning to get quick and accurate response from her muscles. There is no good reason why a girl should not be as quick as her brother; it is merely a matter of training.

HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED.

Tennis is a game to be played by two or four persons. Three may play, by combining the two games, and having one play "singles" against the other two playing "doubles." But the game properly has two forms: "singles," wherein two persons play, one on each side of the net; and "doubles," with two people on each side of the net. This net, which is 3 feet high in the center and 3 feet 6 inches at the sides, is stretched taut from two posts, one at each side of the court, across the middle of the court. The court has a perfectly smooth, level surface, of clay, dirt, turf, or cement, as the case may be. (Indoors the game is played on board floors.) It measures 78 feet in length and 27 feet in width, for singles; 36 feet in width for doubles. The court is laid out with white lines to mark the boundaries. These lines are drawn with slacked lime or whitewash, or else marked out by tapes which come for the purpose. Twenty-one

feet from the net, on both sides, a line is drawn, parallel to the net, to the sidelines of the singles court. This space is in turn evenly divided by a line through the center, running parallel to the sidelines, passing under the center of the net. The four small spaces thus made are called the "service courts." The narrow spaces between the sidelines of the singles and doubles court are called the "alleys."

The game itself consists in one person (the server) putting the ball in play by hitting (serving) it into the proper service court, and both players then knocking it back and forth across the net until it is sent either into the net or outside the boundary lines, or missed altogether.

The players take turns serving, each serving an entire game at a time. The right to serve first is won by the player who calls the toss of the racket correctly. The racket is spun about, one player calling "rough" or "smooth"; that is, whether the lacing of colored gut is smooth side up or not. The winner, if she chooses to serve first (instead she may take the

choice of courts, letting her opponent serve first), then stands behind her baseline, to the right of the center, and, tossing up the ball, knocks it into her opponent's right-hand service court. She has a second ball to try, provided the first is a "fault," that is, falls into the net or outside the correct service court. Many players hold a third ball in their hand, or have it on the ground near them, for if the ball strikes the top of the net and falls into the right court, it is called a "let" ball and does not count one way or the other. This is true only in serving, at all other times a "let" ball is in play. The opponent, standing back of her service line, tries to return the ball after its first bounce in the service court.

The ball is now in play, being knocked back and forth, until it is sent out of court, or into the net, or bounces twice before being struck.

Once the ball is in play, it may be "volleyed," that is, hit before it bounces, but the service ball must first strike the ground inside the service court. This is

repeated, the server sending the ball alternately into the right and the left-hand courts, from behind the right and the left sides of her baseline, until the game is won. The point is scored by the player who has last hit the ball into court. If the server fails to send either ball into the proper court, she makes a "double fault," and loses the point.

The score is called as follows: the first point counts 15, the player's score which is zero (0) being called "love"; the next score, if the point is won by the same player, is called "30-love," the next "40-love," then "game." If the opponent, in the meantime, scores, her point is called as 30-15, 40-30, the server's score always being called first. If the points are even, the call is "15-all" or "30-all," as the case may be, instead of "15-15," etc. If the points are evened at 40-all, the score is called "deuce." Then one player has to win two points in succession from the deuce point, the score going "deuce," "advantage server" (or "striker"), "deuce," "advantage," until the player who has the

advantage point wins the next one, and the game.

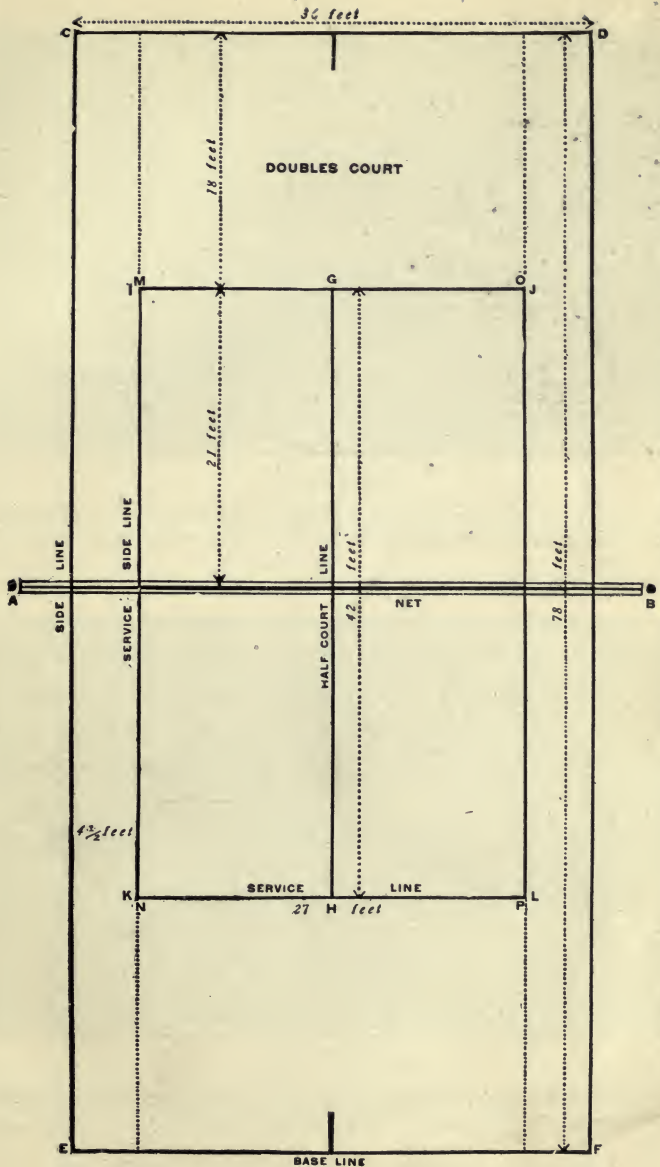
It takes six games to make a set, unless the games go to "5-all." This is equivalent to "deuce" in the point score, and requires two consecutive games to make "set"—as 7/5, 8/6, 9/7. A match for girls is always the best two out of three sets.

The ball on service is always tossed into the air and struck before it bounds; a ground stroke is used to return the ball after it has bounced; a "volley," one wherein the ball has not struck the ground; a "lob" is a ball knocked high into the air across the net; a "smash" is a severe return of a lobbed ball. These strokes, their uses, and the way to play them, will be taken up in subsequent chapters.

PROFESSIONAL TEACHING.

It has been seen that the main object of the game of tennis is to keep the ball in play and put it where the other person cannot reach it. This entails more or less skill and accuracy in making shots. The quickest way to gain this skill is, as in all things, to start in right. Learn the correct way and form, whereby the best results are obtained with the least effort. If a good professional is within reach, the simplest and quickest method is to take a number of lessons from him to get the fundamental principles of the strokes; then start playing, keeping these instructions actively in mind until they become more or less instinctive. A girl usually has to make more of a conscious effort to acquire some of the fundamentals than does her brother, for she is not accustomed to games involving a ball in flight, nor to the quick muscular response required. She has to train both eye and mind to their proper uses.

Many older players, who have taken up



Lines M N and O P should extend only to the service lines I J and K L, but the dotted lines show that the service side lines may be extended to the base lines, as provided in the second paragraph of Law 27.

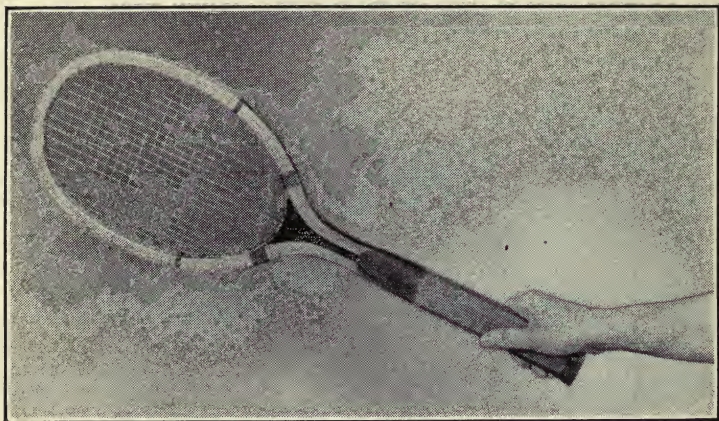


PLATE I.

Backhand grip, showing the thumb diagonally across the handle, helping support the force of the stroke; the wrist well "behind" the racket.

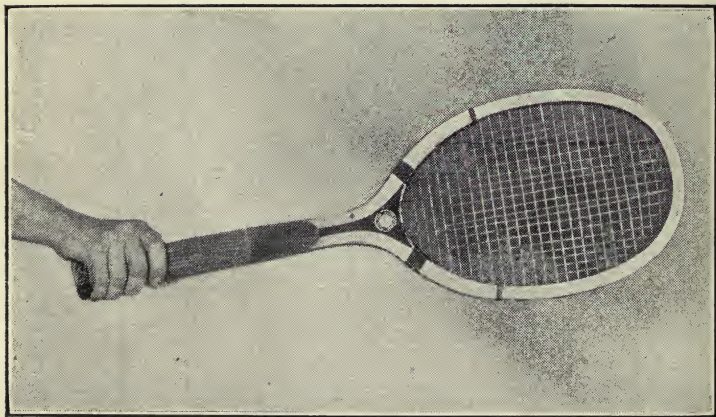


PLATE II.

Correct backhand grip—head of racket slightly up, but the racket is in the same plane as the arm. (See Plate III.)

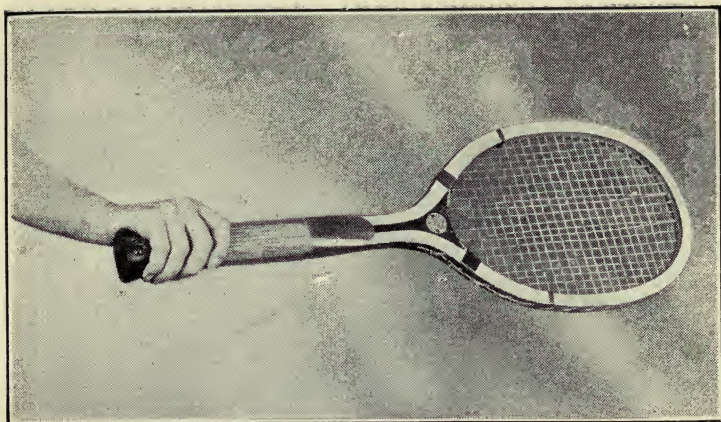


PLATE III.

Incorrect backhand position—the hand and end of the racket are leading the stroke, the line of the arm and racket being that of a wide V, instead of a straight line.

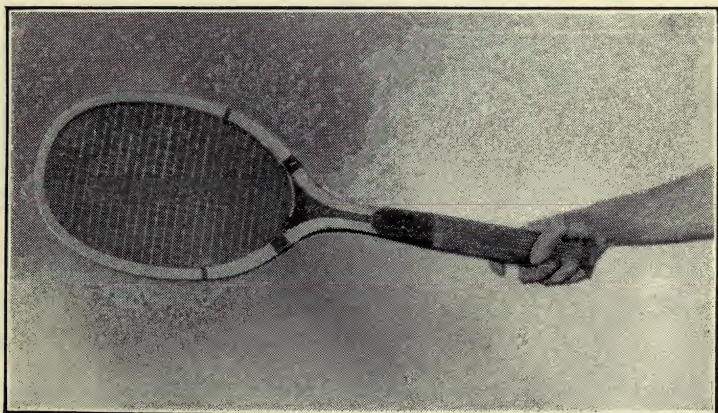


PLATE IV.

Forehand grip—palm of hand behind racket, head of racket up, showing the wrist in an easy position, no strain as shown in Plate V.

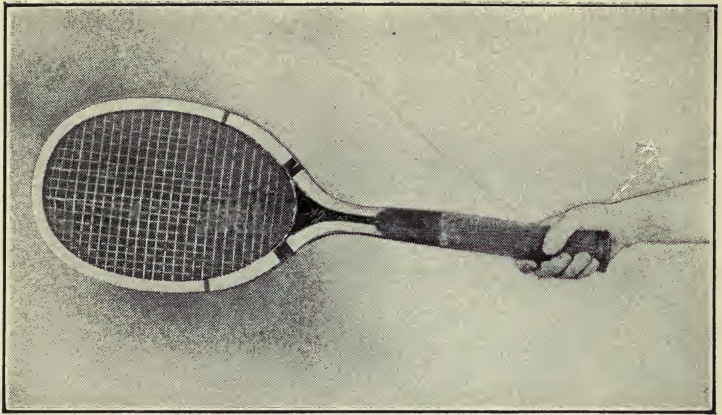


PLATE V.

Incorrect forehand grip—the head of the racket is dropped, straining the wrist at “A.”

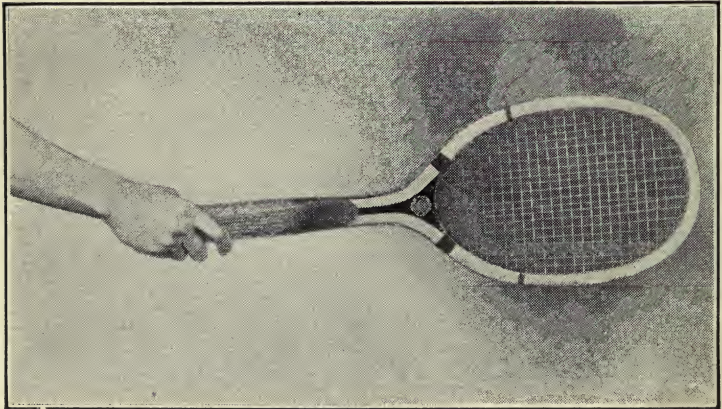


PLATE VI.

Forehand grip from the back.

the game "any old way" and believe in "just doing the best they can," claim that professional teaching is useless, as it makes a player "all form and no play." Of course, a professional cannot make a star player out of every pupil, but he can make their best much better than it would otherwise have been, much less tiring to the player, and more pleasurable to the onlooker, by teaching them the correct form, the right way to handle themselves and their racket.

Few start playing golf without taking lessons on how to drive, putt, etc., or else reading the various articles that have been written on how to play. There are just as many different strokes in tennis and just as definite ways to play them in order to attain the best and most consistent results. If the player knows the science of the strokes, when she is off her game a little thought will soon find her error; whereas if she is playing "hit or miss," she will merely be disgusted at being "off her game," and have to trust to her lucky Providence to get her "on" again.

A player who is "all form" has merely not carried her game far enough, either has not played long enough or else has not in herself the makings of a first-class player. But at least she looks well on the court, plays a fairly consistent game and really fails only when it comes to crack tournament play. As a matter of fact, she is a player whom first-class players are always willing to play against, for she is steady and has reasonable pace to her balls, making her a good opponent in practise. Then, too, many people make this criticism of someone who is taking lessons, when the pupil is really only just starting in, and has to concentrate so much on how she is hitting the ball that she has little thought left for strategy. Once, however, a player learns how to stroke the ball correctly and how to handle herself on the court, the rest comes rapidly. But the fundamentals have to be learned first, and learned thoroughly, so that they become second nature to the player, before there can be much thought of studying the tactics of play.

A professional, besides being able to give his pupil the required ball again and again for the stroke under study, can also watch and tell her what she is doing incorrectly. To pick up the game alone is, as in all things, more difficult than to have someone pointing the way. However, learning by oneself requires greater concentration and thought on what one is doing, and insofar is all the better training.

The best way to begin without professional aid is to find a smooth board wall against which the ball may be hit, with a level cleared space in front of it. It is well to draw a chalk line the height of the net, 3 feet from the ground, so that the player may become accustomed to hitting the ball high enough.

By practising against this board for a while before playing any games, the beginner can put all her attention on *how* she is hitting the ball. She has no opponent, no score, to worry her, and can become thoroughly at home with the fundamental principles of the strokes. This is the practise that a girl needs more than a boy,

for it will give her the necessary training for eye and body. She will learn to keep her eye on the ball, to time her strokes correctly, and to use her body easily and quickly in response to the demands of her eye. Above all, she will be acquiring the habit of concentration, a habit most important in tennis, and something that no one can teach.

The easiest and quickest way to learn to serve is to take a half dozen or so of balls out on the court and practise hitting them in the right way into the opposite service court, just as if a game were in progress. In a very short time, the beginner will find that she is ready to go out and hold her own against those of her friends who have been "batting around" for some time but without any real thought as to what they were doing.

It is best to learn the ground strokes first, the strokes used against a ball that has bounced once. They are more easily practised alone, and in learning to play them correctly, the fundamental principles which are true for all strokes will be

mastered. The player will learn to concentrate on what she is doing, to keep her eye on the ball, to time it in its flight, and to follow through, putting the weight of her body into the stroke. The habit of keeping the *eye on the ball*, of watching it throughout its flight, is a very necessary one to acquire, and now is the time while there is no opponent to tempt the eye away. Many players are so busy watching their adversary, to know just where she is in the opposite court, that they do not know exactly where the ball is, and have to take a chance at hitting it squarely. After all, it is much more important to be sure of your ball, for if you do not send the ball true, of what use to know just where your opponent is. This is the cause of the many "scratch" shots made on the courts, balls hit with any part of the racket, strings or even frame, instead of with the center of the stringing. A player must learn to keep her *eye on the ball* all the time, in order that her shots may be clean and true, and of the maximum speed, through having her racket

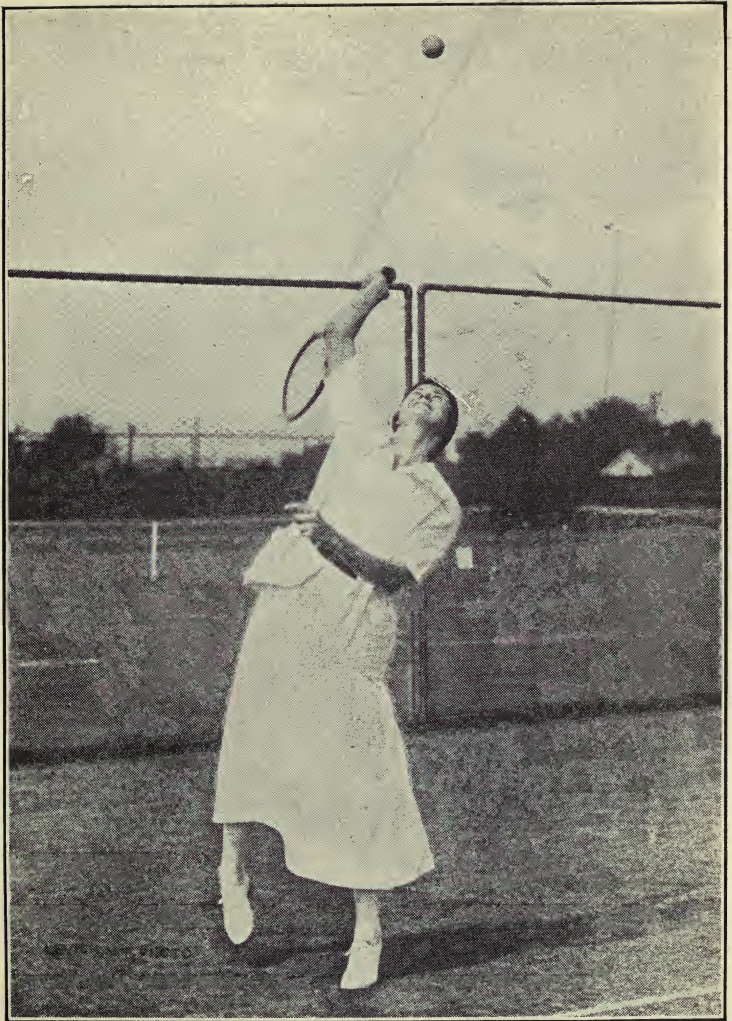
squarely behind the ball. This habit of keeping the eye on the ball develops and includes the *habit of concentration*, another very essential habit to form if one is to play first-class tennis. No one can do her game justice if she allows her mind to wander the least bit from the matter at hand. If she begins to think of the audience, or the umpire, or any of the thousand and one things that are liable to distract a player, her mind is not wholly on her stroke, her eye will waver, and a scratch shot is the almost inevitable result. Proper footwork too, which plays such an important part in getting the proper swing of arm and body, comes only with constant thought. In time this keeping the eye on the ball, and using proper footwork becomes so nearly second nature that the player may use her powers of concentration on the problems of strategy which advanced play require. But at all times she must keep her mind as it were within the boundaries of the court and not allow it to wander.

GRIP OF THE RACKET.

First, the grip of the racket must be considered. If the player will realize that, as far as possible, she must have her racket, with face turned slightly up, parallel to the net when hitting the ball, she will probably hold the racket in the grip most suitable for herself. Lay the racket slanting across the palm, so that the butt rests at the base of the palm, a little to the left, and the handle crosses the first knuckle of the first finger. Close the fingers about the handle, and a comfortable, firm grip is obtained. A very slight shift is made by most players in taking a backhand shot, the thumb being slipped diagonally across the handle, giving a better control over the racket.

The racket, as mentioned above, should always be *parallel to the net* at the time that it meets the ball, direction being given to the ball by following through with the racket in the desired line of flight of the ball. The face of the racket should be

slightly "open"; that is, turned upward a little, not tipped towards the ground, which position is called "closed," and the racket itself should be almost parallel to the ground. It is well for the beginner to exaggerate this last and keep the head of her racket well up, to overcome a natural tendency to let it drop too low. If the position of the racket varies all the time, the player will have to consider whether the head is higher or lower than usual and make due allowance in her strokes. But if she always keeps it about the same, she will know from habit just where it is. The more instinctive a player can become as to the elemental parts of the game, the more attention she can pay to the finer points. Therefore, from the very start try to hold the racket correctly, both as to grip and general position, so that in time you need not think about your grip at all.

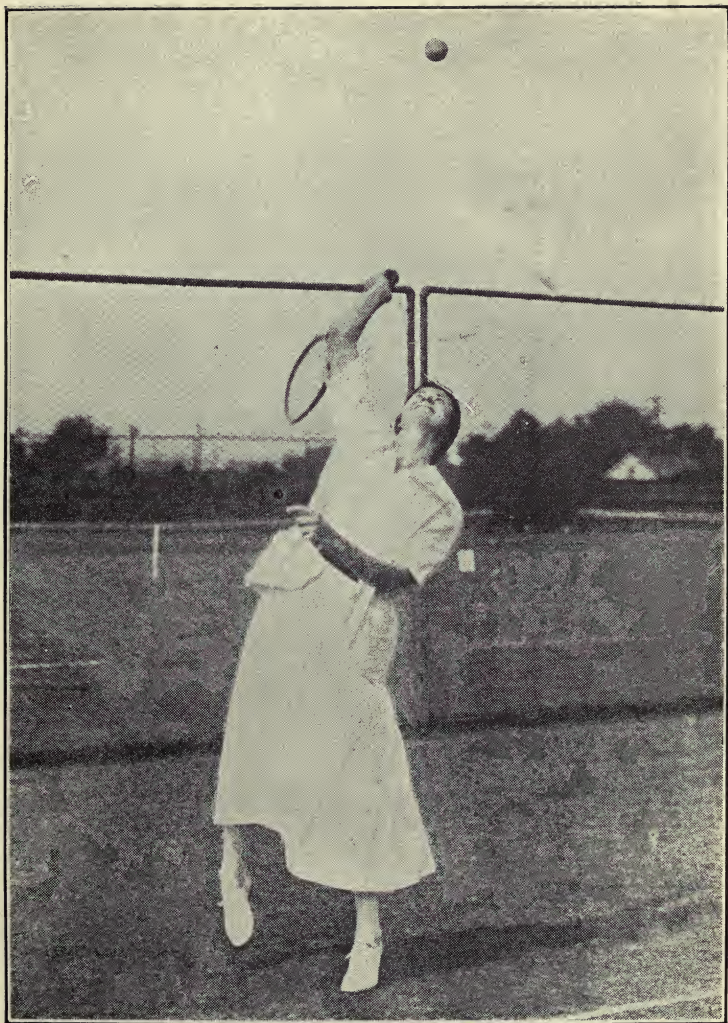


Miss Eleanor Goss at the start of her service.



Mrs. Raymond serving. Note the height to which the ball is thrown, also the general balance of the body.

E. Levick, N. Y., Photo.



Miss Eleanor Goss at the start of her service.



Mrs. Raymond serving. Note the height to which the ball is thrown, also the general balance of the body.

E. Levick, N. Y., Photo.



Mrs. Edward Raymond at finish of service. Note how the weight has been shifted to the left foot.

E. Levick, N. Y., Photo.



MLLE. SUZANNE LENGLEN,
Famous Young French Player.



Mrs. Edward Raymond at finish of service. Note how the weight has been shifted to the left foot.

E. Levick, N. Y., Photo.



MLLE. SUZANNE LENGLEN,
Famous Young French Player.

STROKES—THE DRIVE.

Having a firm, but not tight, hold of the racket, try to make a full swing with it through the air. Stand sideways to the practise board, or the net, put the arm out straight, parallel to the net, then swing it up and back as far as possible, and then down and forward, describing a circle through the air. Finish the swing as far in front of the body as possible, letting the head of the racket be the leading point. It is this last part of the swing that controls the flight of the ball, both as to direction and to length, and so is most important. *Always follow through.* The preliminary swing gives the greatest amount of speed with the least effort, because of the momentum which is gained. A long follow through gives a deep ball (one in the back of the opponent's court), and controls the direction more surely than does a short snap shot. The beginner should therefore spend plenty of time and attention getting a full, free swing.

Swing the arm and racket around and forward several times without any ball. Then, standing sideways to the net or board, with the left foot forward, drop a ball opposite the body and swing the racket so as to meet it at the top of its bound, following forward with the racket in the direction that the ball is to take. The whole body should swing forward from the hips, the weight being shifted from the right foot to the left as the arm goes forward.

Few girls, until recently, used this full swing, although it is very important that they should use it, as it is a great saver of energy, speed being given to the ball, not by hitting it hard, but by the impetus gained through the preliminary swing together with the weight of the body which is behind the stroke.

A straight forehand drive, used principally against a low bouncing ball, starts with the full swing and finishes out and up, the face of the racket open and drawn slightly across the ball at the finish of the stroke. A topped drive finishes with the wrist and racket turning over, so that the

face of the racket is towards the ground. This turnover starts the ball spinning around on its own axis, giving it "drop"; that is, causing it to drop rather sharply to the ground when it has reached the limit of its outward flight. This marked downcurve makes it much easier to keep the ball within the limits of the court and so is very useful.

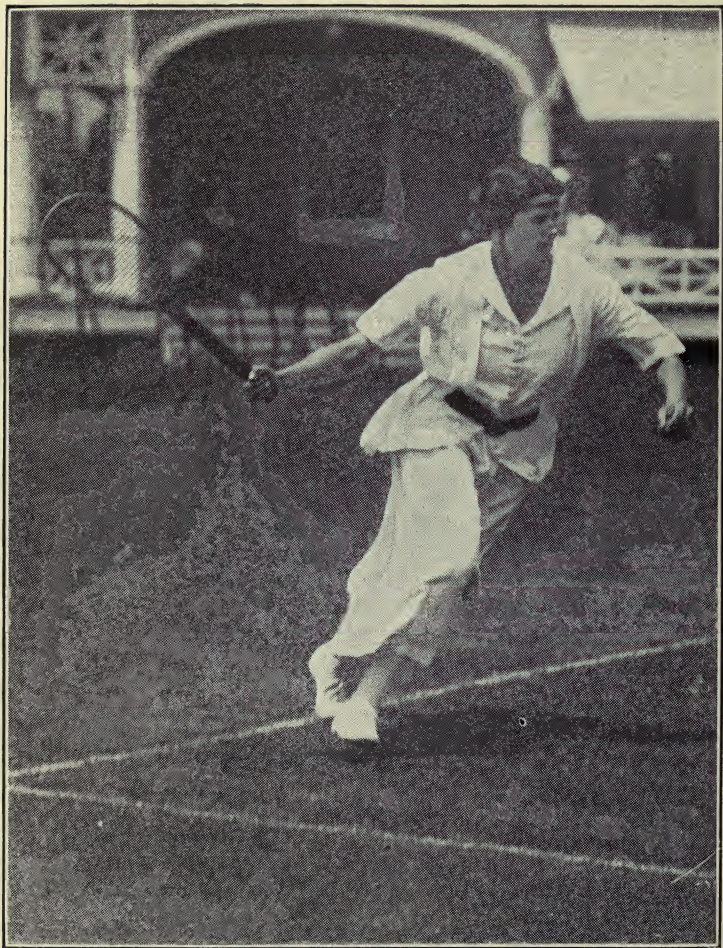
The backhand drive, which should not be neglected, but rather should receive more attention at the beginning because it is a little more difficult to make, is based on the same general principles. Grip the racket, having the thumb diagonally across the handle, keeping the wrist well in towards the body—there is a tendency on the backhand to let the wrist break, point out towards the net, and so lead the swing, which must be guarded against. Stand sideways to the net, the right foot forward, and swing the arm, wrist in and elbow nearly straight, across the body, making a circle as before, with the head of the racket as the leading point. Then follow through forward, shifting the

weight of the body onto the right foot and swinging forward from the hips. As in the forehand, there are two ways of finishing the swing, producing two different drives: one, the straight drive, where the racket goes out and up, sliding slightly across the ball; the other, the topped stroke, where the racket and wrist turn over as the arm swings forward. First practise the swing alone until it feels free and easy. Then drop the ball in front of you, but slightly nearer the net than in the forehand drive, where the ball is taken opposite the body, and stroke it, making the full swing as in practise and following through in the direction in which the ball is to go. In practising all these drives, be sure to stand far enough away from the ball. The elbow should be only slightly bent to get a full swing—if the ball is taken too close to the body the elbow will be cramped, and so hamper the swing.



Miss Eleonora Sears at finish of overhead smash.

© International Film Service, N. Y.



Miss Eleanor Goss running forward to meet the ball with a full sweep of her racket in a forehand drive. All her weight is going into the stroke.



Miss Martha A. Guthrie beginning a forehand drive.

© International Film Service, Inc., N. Y.



Mrs. Barger-Wallach finishing a straight forehand drive.

E. Levick, N. Y., Photo.

SERVICE.

Having practised the ground strokes till the swing feels easy, the beginner should go on the court with a number of balls. Standing sideways to the net, behind the baseline, she should make a half circle back, with arm and racket extended, bringing the racket up over the head. Here the racket is dropped behind the head and swung in a small circle from left to right—much as an Indian club is swung—then up and out in the follow through. The ball is tossed high in the air and struck as the racket reaches the top of its swing. Then the racket follows out with the ball just as far as possible, as in the ground strokes. The various cut services depend on the way the face of the racket meets the ball, how it cuts around or over the ball. It is best, however, for the beginner to practise a straight service until she is well grounded in the fundamentals. Meanwhile she should try to place the serve not only in the correct court but

also in some definite part of that court. A well-placed service will prove as effective as any fancy serve for ordinary play.

Remember these points while practising: get a full swing, hit the ball at the highest point possible, and follow through as in the drive, here, too, getting the weight of the body into the stroke.

THE LOB AND THE VOLLEY.

With these shots well in hand, the beginner has all she needs to start in playing. But there are still the lob and the volley to take up. If she is starting to learn with some friend, it is well to spend a little while each day practising lobbing, the one to the other.

Because girls formerly spent most of their time lobbing the ball, now they have gone to the other extreme and consider it beneath their dignity to lob at all, that "lobbing is not playing the game." However, a good lob at the right time is often a "lifesaver." It gives the player time to get back into position if she has been drawn far out of court returning the ball, and also it gives her a chance to get her breath if she is being hard pressed. In doubles, and against a net player in singles, it is indispensable, as will be shown later.

A lob is merely a ball knocked up into the air, with a slight forward movement. It should be high enough to be out of reach

of the net player and deep enough to force her to run away back for it. If it is too short—that is, too close to the net—the opponent will “kill” it, smash it back so hard that it is almost impossible to handle, or else put it close to the side lines near the net, where it is hard to reach.

Lobbing is an art which comes only with practise. The player should again and again hit the ball firmly upwards, watching the result of the shots, seeing whether they are deep enough, etc.,—gaining through this constant practise the necessary touch.

While one player is practising lobbing, the other will be learning how to return the ball. To smash it, stand sideways to the net, left foot forward, and swing at the ball as it drops, just as in serving. It is best to be directly under the ball for a smash. Do not try to hit it too hard at first, and be careful to *keep your eye on the ball*. This practise is splendid training, both for learning to keep the eye on the ball and for timing it so that it is struck at just the right second.



Very good illustration of Miss Bjurstedt at finish of "topped" forehand drive.

American Press Association Photo.



Miss Ballin illustrates incorrect finish of forehand drive. The racket has been carried across the body instead of forward, and the weight has been thrown back on to the right foot instead of forward with the stroke. Contrast this with the picture of Miss Bjurstedt finishing a forehand drive.



Miss Molla Bjurstedt finishing a fast backhand drive.

© American Press Association.



An exaggerated "topped" backhand drive shown by Miss Ballin.

E. Levick, N. Y., Photo.

There remain the various volley shots to consider. Volleying is a branch of tennis which girls are apt to neglect, but which is really very important and not at all beyond the powers of a girl to conquer. In doubles, net play is indispensable, if half hour rallies are to be avoided, and in singles it is a great aid as a point winner. A girl cannot rush the net continuously, for she has not the necessary endurance or speed. But many times she has a chance to finish a point at the net or else is drawn in by her opponent with a short ball. Here, with no time to get back, it is necessary that she be able to handle her volley shots properly. It requires a quick eye, level head and ready muscular response to make a good net player. Practise at the net, therefore, helps one's other strokes, through the deftness and agility acquired.

But the ground strokes must be in good working order before a player can develop a net game, for she must be able to place the ball deep, with sufficient speed, and in the right place, in order to give herself a fair chance to run in. Two beginners can,

however, get splendid all around training if the one practises volley shots while the other is driving from the back court. In volleying, more than in any other stroke, the player must concentrate; keep her eye on the ball, try to anticipate her opponent's shot—foresee where it is going to cross the net, and think and act quickly but deliberately.

In volleying there is very little preliminary swing, the racket being raised and drawn back only a little, then forward and slightly down across the face of the ball. Never hit up in volleying. If the ball has fallen below the level of the net—a predicament to be avoided where possible by stepping up and hitting the ball before it drops—the racket is drawn more sharply under and across the ball. Direction is given by drawing the racket through in the desired line. The wrist should be firm, and the shot made with precision. A loosely held racket and loose wrist result in the stop-volley-shot, one a beginner should leave alone, for it requires a great deal of practise and a very keen touch.

Cut may be used in any stroke in tennis. It consists merely in hitting across the surface of the ball one way or another, during the follow through, according to the cut desired. The chop stroke is one in which there is practically no preliminary swing, a sharp cut being given the ball at the moment of striking it; the shot is very similar to the ordinary volley shot. It is advisable, however, for the beginner to leave the cut game alone and develop a good drive and service.

Once the fundamentals of the game become instinctive she can experiment with different shots, and study the science of the actual play. But until she can consistently place the ball where she wants it, with the desired speed, there is no use learning what tactics to use.

PLAYING THE GAME.

In the beginning a player, whether she wants to go into tournament play later or not, should spend her time learning to swing properly and to follow through; to keep her eye on the ball, and time her stroke correctly, trying always to hit the ball at the top of its bound, thus saving time; to get her footwork right, that is, always be in such a position that the weight of the body can go into the stroke. She should try in practising always to put the ball into some definite part of the court, in order to acquire "control" of the ball. Just hitting it hard, with very little idea of where it is going, is of no use in playing. Let her learn to place her ball well and get good length, that is, keep the ball well back in her opponent's court, and she will soon find that she can get the desired speed when she wants it.

Most beginners try to make a point out of every shot—"ace" every ball. This is, of course, impossible and results in a

wildly erratic game, of no interest to the opponent and little advantage to the player, for all idea of *how* the ball should be played is lost in the desire to *hit it hard*. Rather play with the idea of keeping the ball in court, placing it where it seems most difficult for the other side to return it. By watching the result of these efforts the beginner will soon gain a knowledge of court positions, where to put the ball and where she should be herself for the return. This, however, comes under the heading of science of lawn tennis, on which subject a number of interesting books have been written. It is better for the beginner not to bother too much about that, but rather to develop her strokes, learning to be on her toes every minute, eye on the ball, every bit of her concentrated on the work in hand. As less attention is required by the actual making of the strokes, more can be given to the tactics of the game.

It is a good plan, where possible, to watch experienced players on the court, see how they plan their shots, keeping

their opponents in trouble and themselves out of it. A girl cannot, of course, gain much from studying those boys who rush the net on all occasion, for she has neither the speed nor the endurance necessary for this style of play. But let her watch those men who play a good all around game, see what their general style of play is, what balls they go in on, what they do when they get to the net, when they stay back, etc., and adapt what she sees to her own style of play. There is no reason why she should not develop a similar all around game, enabling her to make a good showing against the best of the players, provided always that she is well grounded in the fundamentals of the game, keeps her eye on the ball and is alert mentally and physically all the time. Even in doubles there is no reason why, with practise, girls cannot develop a good game, taking the net as the men do and so putting an end to the interminable rallies which mostly constitute "girls' doubles." The net position in doubles is more tenable than in singles, for the passing shots are much fewer and

more easily guarded against; and as for the lob, which seems to be the deterrent factor in most cases, there is no reason why girls cannot go back under a lob, provided they will go sideways and not try to run backwards, a very difficult feat. There are a few teams of girls who take the net position and hold it successfully, thus proving that there is no real reason why other teams may not try the same tactics and so gradually do away with the present deadly monotonous form of women's doubles.

GENERAL TACTICS.

For the benefit of those who have no opportunity to watch good playing and so work out for themselves the general tactics of the game, and since those who have that chance can watch more intelligently if they have some idea of what is being attempted, the following general summary has been written. If you do not know what to look for, it is difficult to gather much about the general tactics of the game just from observation. But with more or less knowledge of the ground work of the game, the student can learn a great deal from watching others, seeing what they are trying to do and how they are doing it.

Singles is the better game for the beginner to start with, for she is playing all the time and so gets much more practise in "strokes." For the girl beginner it is particularly useful, for it necessitates constant attention on the part of the player; she must be on her toes and working every



Miss Bjurstedt caught in a difficult position—a backhand half-volley.

© Underwood & Underwood, N. Y.



Mrs. Raymond taking a backhand shot.

E. Levick, N. Y., Photo.



Miss Eleonora Sears making a backhand shot
taken on the run.

E. Levick, N. Y., Photo.



Miss Eleonora Sears at the net finishing a backhand volley shot.

E. Levick, N. Y., Photo.

minute of the time. Thus she develops the habits of concentration and alertness, which will later prove invaluable to her.

“Service,” that is, serving the first game of the set, is a great advantage in the boy’s game, for if he has a good service he will speedily be camped down near the net, thus putting his opponent on the defensive. First service is also an advantage to the girl, even though she cannot rush the net. For one thing, it helps to get all her muscles in play, to limber her up; so much so that if one is not to serve the first game, it is well to send over a few service balls during the knock-up or practise just before the game starts. The server, even in the baseline game, has a certain advantage, for a good serve can often be so placed that it will put the opponent on the defensive, so that she has to be content merely with getting the ball back and the server then has a good chance for a winning shot.

It must not be gathered from this, however, that points are always won so quickly. The game is one of manœuvring until

one side or the other is drawn into such a position that the ball is out of reach or very difficult to return.

This manœuvring is done by so "placing" the ball that the opponent is eventually drawn out of position, or off her balance; that is, is in such a position that she cannot make her stroke properly. It is easily seen, therefore, why it is of such importance to be able to place the ball approximately in any desired spot. Speed alone is of no use, for a player of any experience can soon learn to handle a fast ball. Accuracy plus speed, of course, enables the player to get her opponent into difficulties more easily, for there is less time for court covering, but a fair degree of accuracy must first be attained; the greater the accuracy the more chance that the stroke will be effective.

This is often illustrated when two players—one steady and able to place the ball where she wants, the other speedy but lacking in control—are pitted against each other. The steady one will usually win, for her percentage of "outs" and "nets"

is much smaller, owing to the fact that she is seldom out of position and is playing her shots with care. In fact, there is no use hitting every ball hard anyway. Vary the speed so that the opponent will have to pay more attention to timing her shots, allowing her that much less thought for the actual play of the point. Rather reserve your speed for shooting a fast one into an opening in the opponent's court, which you have made by getting her out of position. An "opening" is that portion of the court that the opponent, owing to her position, cannot protect.

The server should try to place the ball in that part of the service court which seems to bother her opponent most. Put it where it must be returned by a back-hand drive if that seems to be the opponent's weak shot, or vary the corners into which you hit the ball. It is well to try to keep the ball as near the service line as possible without "faulting," for the greater depth to the ball will give the server just so much more time to get ready to return it. If you are not going to rush

the net on service—and it does not seem advisable for girls to try it, as it is too tiring—stay back of the baseline to receive the return of service. Remember in playing that whenever you are not well inside the service line, “playing net,” you should stay behind the baseline. Otherwise you will find the ball bouncing at your feet, and very difficult to handle. If you are behind the baseline, however, all the balls will bounce in front of you, and you can judge them more easily. If you find that the return is to be short, you can simply step forward to meet the ball. Having returned a comparatively short ball, either get back behind the baseline or move closer to the net, so as to be able to volley the next ball and finish the point.

A volleyed ball should always be returned very deep and with a wide angle, unless it is so short and wide of angle that the opponent cannot reach it. (The word “angle” in tennis is used in speaking of the relative position of the line of flight of the ball to the net.) A short ball puts the volleyer at the mercy of her oppo-

ment, for the ball comes back so quickly that it is extremely difficult to anticipate. Then, too, there is more chance of a passing shot.

To handle the net position successfully the player must keep cool and not be in too great a hurry to hit the ball, and when she does hit it, must do so with a firm wrist and steady forward sweep of the racket. She must not get upset by her errors. Even if at first a great many balls are missed there is no reason to get discouraged, for it is no more disastrous, though more noticeable, to lose a point at the net than it is to lose it from the back-court. Watch the good men players; they miss many volley shots, too. It is only because a girl tries so few that her mistakes are so prominent.

If the player has been drawn to the net on a short ball, or has made her own shot deep and well placed with the idea of going to the net, she must be on the lookout for a lob on the return. This lob is a perfectly good weapon for the opponent to use, although girls have a tendency to

scorn it at present, owing to its former abuse. By carefully watching her opponent, the player will soon be able to tell from the way she handles her racket whether she is going to lob or not. Even if she does try one, a perfect lob—deep enough so that it cannot be killed and low enough that the player cannot run back and return it—is very difficult to make. It requires much practise and a very keen touch. If two or three short lobs are successfully smashed, the opponent is apt to fight shy of that particular form of defense and will go back to the passing shots to try to win the point.

From the other point of view, if the first few lobs are too short or too high, the player should try several more, endeavoring to correct her error, so that in an emergency she will not be afraid to use the lob. Furthermore, not all short lobs are successfully smashed. The opposing side may miss it entirely or may return it in such a way that it can be easily handled—either not severe enough or not well placed. Several unsuccessful smashes will go far

toward upsetting the player, for in no stroke is self-confidence more needed and sooner lost than in smashing.

This is a department of the game that girls have very much neglected, but, as has already been shown, it is one that is very important, not only for actual use in the game but as training for both eye and judgment. The smash must be hit at exactly the right second, pretty well in the center of the racket. There is no reason why girls cannot learn to smash. They have fought shy of the stroke because they have not been willing to devote the necessary time to practising it, and in part because a bad smash is so conspicuous an error. A good smash is a pretty sure point winner and is a constant menace to the would-be lobber; so is well worth cultivating. Indeed, without good overhead work it is rather useless to attempt net play, for the opponent has too obvious and sure a method of defense in her lob; and the player who deprives herself of this form of the game loses much of the thrill of the game. With the inveterate baseline

player the game resolves itself into a patient striving for openings—and so loses much of its snap and vigor.

A girl must, however, as a rule, play the major part of her singles game from the back court, going to the net only when drawn in or when she has a fair chance to finish the rally. Of course, there are exceptions to this, as to every rule. Some good players, for instance, play the net game consistently. But most girls will find that they cannot last through a three-set match with this style of play, it is too tiring. But they should be able to vary their backcourt game by going to the net occasionally. In order that they may handle the ball properly when they have the chance, a good deal of attention should be given to the volley and the smash while practising.

When in the back court try to return the ball where your opponent cannot easily reach it—keep it near the sidelines instead of returning it down the center of the court, a habit formed through fear of putting the ball out. Make your opponent



Miss Marion Zinderstein at the finish of a chop volley shot. Note her position, as shown by the side line behind her, relative to the net; also the firmness of her grip.



Mrs. Edward Raymond in an unusual illustration of the half-volley shot.

© American Press Association.



Miss Eleonora Sears about to chop the ball. Note position of the arm and racket.



Miss Edith B. Handy finishing a cut service.

E. Levick, N. Y., Photo.

run, that she may tire the more quickly and may often be off her balance when she has to hit the ball. But do not be afraid to run for the ball; be on your toes every minute of play and do not be afraid of a long rally. Many players feel that they are not playing well unless they finish the point quickly. This leads to a wild hitting of the ball in an effort to smash it through the opponent's defense, and the percentage of errors is very high. Keep the ball in play, trying to force the other player "out of position"—either off balance by sending the ball where she does not expect it or by forcing her far out of court on one side or the other, then sending the ball into the unprotected space. Of course, a certain amount of speed is always necessary, for on a slow ball, no matter how well placed, the opponent can usually get comfortably into position for the return. The point to bear in mind is that speed without placement will seldom win a point.

All of the foregoing is particularly true in doubles. If a player is not out of posi-

tion, she should be able to handle almost any swift ball. In doubles it is very difficult to get the opponents out of position and the possible openings are much fewer and harder to make. That is why when four girls are playing, all in the backcourt, the rallies are so long and monotonous. Each side is trying to out-manoeuvre the other and make a hole through which to shoot the ball. But with two persons on guard, these holes are not easily made and the rally is more apt to end in one side finally either netting the ball or putting it "out." Points are seldom won. This is good training in accuracy and steadiness, but the fun and excitement is mostly minus.

If, however, net play is introduced into the game, the story is quite different. More and more this fact is being recognized and girls are devoting more attention to their volleying. At present many teams are composed of one net and one backcourt player. Against two backcourt players this is a very effective combination. However, it forces the backcourt

player to carry most of the burden. The girl at the net is too apt to take only those balls which are right on her racket. Instead of which she should try to return everything within possible reach, so as to save her partner as much as she can. These returns should be, as in singles, either very deep and wide, or else close to the net and very much crosscourt. This latter is the more effective in doubles, for the deep shot is too easily returned when there are two players guarding the back territory. The baseline player must always keep the ball deep (near the baseline), for otherwise she is putting her partner at the mercy of the other side. She must be ready to cover practically all the back court. But, on the other hand, she should not back her partner too closely on the latter's shots. Many girls come right in behind their net partner, as if sure she is going to miss, thus almost making her miss the point solely through lack of self-confidence. The baseline player must guard her own side, but she must be on the constant lookout for a lob over her part-

ner's head or for a wide crosscourt behind her partner. Then she must cross over to return the ball, her partner likewise crossing to cover the unprotected court. The net player, however, must take as many chances, try for as much as possible, in order to assist her partner—not be content, as many girls are, to take only the inevitable, sure shots.

This combination is productive of much more interesting and much faster tennis than is the baseline combination. But it is less effective than the baseline combination when matched against a team that takes the net. Then the backcourt player has no choice but to lob, and if that be short, the net player is practically helpless. She cannot hope to return the expected smash, the ball comes too quickly for her to anticipate it (guess just where it is coming and be ready for it) and with too much downward force for her to handle it, even if she could get her racket on it. She is also at a disadvantage, for she stands a fair chance of being hit by a fast drive. It is very hard to drive successfully

through the opponents, for with two persons covering the net the openings are very small, down the center being about the best chance, for then there is apt to be confusion as to who should take the ball, whereas the openings for the net players are proportionately large. They have an easy chance to volley the ball deep and very wide, behind the opposite net player, or else very short and wide, to the other side of the court.

The disadvantage of the all-net game comes from the lobbed ball. Girls are very much afraid of "being lobbed." But, by carefully watching the opponent's racket, a lob can usually be foreseen, and the players ready to go back under it. This anticipation is the result only of much practise and of keen concentration on the game. Moreover, even if a few lobs are counted against the net players, of what matter so long as the percentage of points thus lost is not too great? The advantages gained by taking the net will usually more than offset this disadvantage. If, however, the opposing team are lobbing

unusually deep and accurately, it is well for the net team to change their tactics and stay back for a while. But do not be afraid of a possible lob, and stay back after the first ball missed. The chances of a lob being either out or else so short that it is an easy kill are in your favor; give yourself a fair trial before staying back.

It is easier for girls to develop a net doubles game than a singles game, for doubles is naturally a much less tiring game. There is less court to cover, the service comes less frequently, and the odds are more in the net player's favor. The best women players are more and more inclining towards the net position in doubles, and by so doing are broadening and developing their whole game, improving the quality of their singles as well, through their increased familiarity with net play.

MIXED DOUBLES.

Opinion as to court position in mixed doubles seems to be divided in the minds of the men who play it, some men preferring the girl to take the net and stay there under all circumstances, letting the man do his share of the net play, and all the backcourt work. Others insist that as a girl is naturally a baseline player, her job should be to guard the back court while the man plays at the net. This latter seems the more logical of the two plans, for it gives both players their natural positions. Furthermore, a man is usually much more effective in his volleying than the girl, no matter how good she may be. But as girls develop their net play, devoting more time to their volleying and their overhead work, both in singles and in doubles, they will quickly learn to do their fair share of work in mixed doubles and not merely occupy a small portion of the court. They will play it as a regular doubles game, with both partners up or back together, making it much more interesting for all concerned.

TOURNAMENT PLAY.

Tournament play does not appeal to everyone. But those who enter into it find that it improves their game a great deal. They become much more keen, they have to develop greater concentrative powers, they become used to dealing with many different styles of play, they learn "never to say die," for no match is won or lost until the last point is played. This, however, is an advanced form of play that is well covered by a number of interesting books and that has no place in a "book for beginners."

It often has been said of girls that they are not "good sports." This was no doubt more or less true in years past. But as girls go more and more to boarding school and college, play on teams and generally have to consider themselves a small part of a big whole, they are learning how to behave in the field of sports, to take what comes with a smile. Remember, before all things, no matter how trying the circumstances, always be a good sport.

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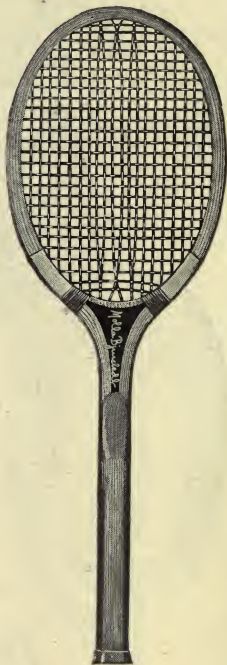
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No. 6. The Nassau. Black depressed throat with oak reinforcement. Frame of white ash, highly polished, with combed Spanish cedar handle, leather capped. Stringing is of good quality gut. (Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.). Ea.,

No. 7. The Oval. Oval shape, with extra stringing in central portion; good quality gut. Gut wound shoulders. (Patented Jan. 3, 1905). Each,

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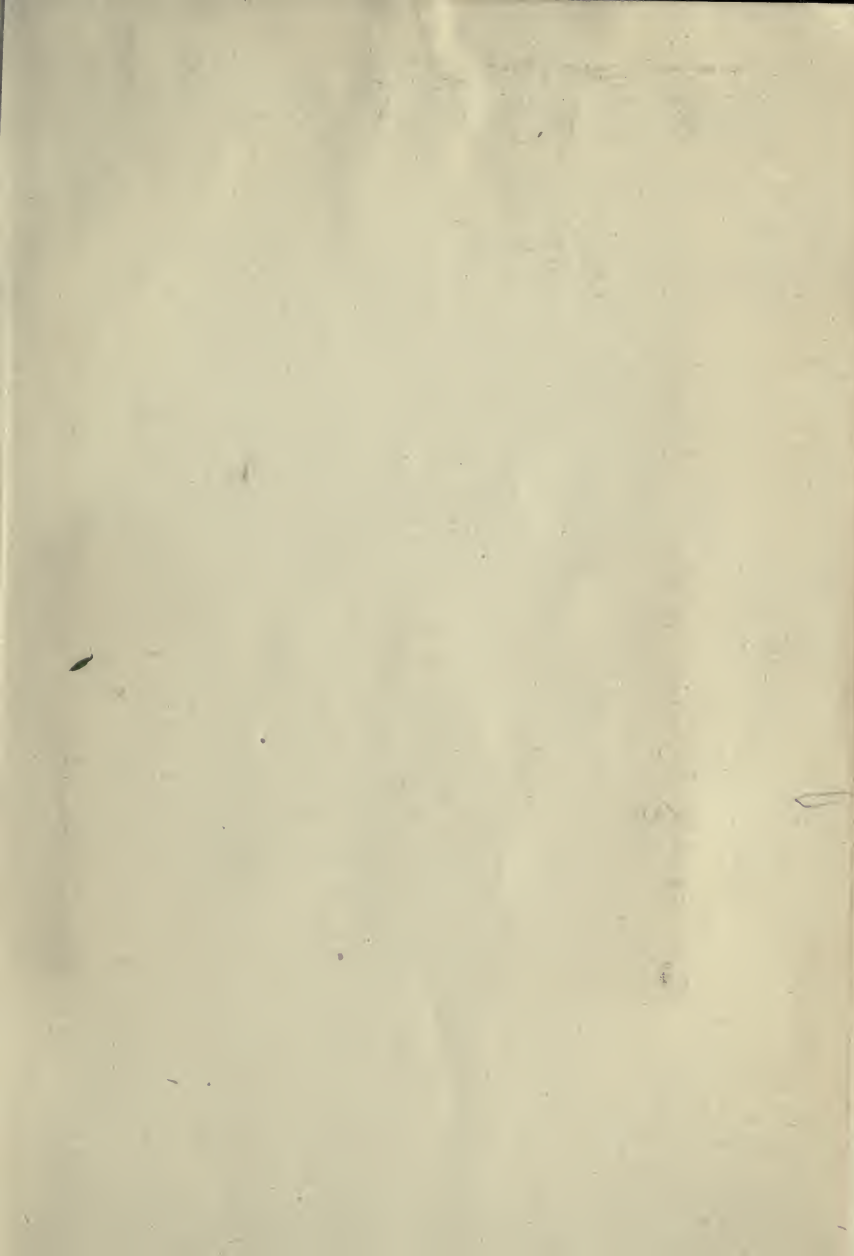
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