

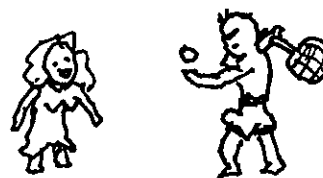
TENNIS PUNS

ANIL

Perth, Australia

"Are you glad to see me or are you just a tennis player?"

— Mae West?



Tennis is a remarkably unselfish sport. Its object is to love one's enemies, offer them superior service and return all their favours. Otherwise it would be pointless. But face it, the players' minds are trapped in "little boxes" they dare not venture outside of.

Because tennis players are so unfairly deprived of a shorter moniker like golfer I charitably offer and use the term TENNER. That's also a £10 note. Ironic. That's what amateurs can win on a bet, four tenners can earn for every stroke, and top tenners can earn a few of for every second they play.

I offer a glossary of easily confused tennis terms. If ignorant of tennis, it's designed to make sure you stay that way. It's like but more terse than the *Tennis Dictionary* by Keith Dunstan (Sun Books, 1984), whose best items are cited or excerpted below (KD). KD' or KD+ are modified or added to. Thanks to Jeff Grant who advised me of this book, contributed some definitions (JG), edited the ms, and informed me too late that TENNIST is an allowable Scrabble word. (omg!)

1. The Play:

- TENNIS** two to four people trying to intercept soft fluffy balls with butterfly catchers (KD)
DOUBLES tennis for the more broad-minded
MIXED DOUBLES two *different* players on each side (Even the Bryan twins are LH vs. RH.)
WARM UP eating chilies before the match
QUIET unbelievable achievement of 25,000 fans before the great man is able to serve (KD')
SECOND SERVE that extra bowl of ice cream that bloated you and caused a loss
RETURN OF SERVE giving back that ice cream (Good move!)
BODY SERVE How some unsuccessful pros supplement their incomes?
RECEIVER the fellow who comes in when you haven't won a match for six months (KD)
I-FORMATION getting in the ticket line behind and in front of myself
RALLY mass march to protest the excessive length of the pro tennis season
VOLLEY hitting the ball with the hand as in volleyball
HALF-VOLLEY only getting the ball half way to the net (Should have used a racket!)
DROP SHOT when it hits the net and drops over, followed by a nyah-nyah-nyah wave to rub it in
SPIN hyping up a match or tournament / **FLAT** time to re-tire (to your apartment)
SLICE, CHIP SHOT, APPROACH These are golf terms! Understandable confusion since **GOLF** is a miniature version of tennis, with tiny balls far easier to lose (KD), much smaller racket face and a dwarflingly giant court with a much tinier target to shoot at. Stick to tennis!
PASSING SHOT one your coach approves of
DOWN THE MIDDLE aim of the wimpy conformist
NETTED BALL a paradoxical shot that is *neither in nor out* (contrast **DOUBLE FAULT** in 2.)
BACKHAND tapping the back of the hand on the racket as a backhanded compliment to the foe
FOREHAND the end and purpose of the forearm
JUMPING SMASH the slam dunk of tennis, a la Monfils and Kyrgios
BETWEEN THE LEGS embarrassing off-court shot (JG)

LOB a shot aimed at God as a desperate prayer for rain to end a nightmare match
COURT COVERAGE clay, grass, asphalt—or a tarp (see section 3.)
GOOD MOVEMENT ate plenty of fibre before the match
AMBIDEXTROUS able to receive cheques with either hand (KD)
SPEED something any good pro tenner needs but isn't allowed to have
HAND-EYE COORDINATION matching make-up or jewelry (cf MATCH, FOOT FAULT, next)
CORNER-OF-THE-EYE VISION It's where the jewelry is hung.
BALANCE the delicate skill of tightrope walking on the rules
OVERCOMPENSATE to pay top tenners indecently large prizes (see introduction)
IN THE ZONE† stranded on a pedestrian island looking for the stadium (cf TOUR)
(† anagram: ZONE = o' ZEN)
ZEN TENNIS I'll skip this Asian religion as it might offend JICs (Judeo-Islamo-Christians).
CLEAN WINNER a point involving no foul language (rare)
GOOD POINT Brush your teef or you'll wind up toofless like me.
NET POINT the microscopically small tiptop of the net whose aura a serve cannot even sniff
REPLAY THE POINT repeatedly press your argument to the umpire
END CHANGE repainting the baseline (JG) (compare AD COURT)
TIME OUT a period away from tennis that is wasted working or sleeping

2. The Scoring:

POINT to win (But can you believe some pathetic underachievers play just for fun!)
WINNER a good tennis anecdote
FORCED WINNER a "gift" point from the opponent that you couldn't prevent (coinage)
MISSED WINNER a type of unforced error, one made on a would-be winner (serious proposal)
LET BALL to rent a ball if too poor to buy one outright
FOOT FAULT wearing unfashionable shoes or unmatched socks (No joke, there once was a rule that tour doubles partners who wore clashing outfits could be fined \$100!)
DOUBLE FAULT an out and out error, out wide *and* out long
OUT WIDE lateral thinking that went too far / **OUT LONG** forward thinking that went too far
BREAK POINT when it all becomes too much and you break your racket
DOUBLE BREAK smashing two rackets (Baghdatis once achieved a record quadruple break!)
HOLD SERVICE preside over your opponent's funeral
UNRETURNABLE SERVE one from any of the eat-at-your-own-risk kiosks outside the stadium
ACE a common nickname of amateurs (It's also the hole card a tenner can pull out from up his sleeve in need; the longer the sleeve the better. It's why ace-king Raonic is called "the sleeve".)
DEUCE two aces in a row
LOVE *When Andre Met Steffi*
FIFTEEN LOVE romance on the Junior circuit
FORTY LOVE big orgy after the tournament (see also DOUBLES COURT)
FORTY FORTY Eighty, dummy. (See DUNCE above.)
ADVANTAGE an injured opponent
GAME the opponent as hunted prey
WON half a Chinese soup sucked out of tubes during breaks
WINNING SCORE There's no such thing! The point after 40 wins the game but it has no value. As a kid we called it 50. (15-30-40-45 would be more progressive, 15-30-40-55 more symmetrical.)
LOST can't find the stadium (common in large cities; see TOUR, IN THE ZONE, and next)
WALKOVER how a tenner gets to the venue (or LOST) who can't even afford a TRAMLIN

DOUBLE BAGEL comfort eating after a heavy loss (JG)
SET POINT the religiously fixed position of Nadal's drink bottles
MATCH POINT to win a point just after losing one
MATCH Two players wearing the same outfit, making them infuriatingly hard to tell apart on TV. That's why Wimbledon should drop its dastardly white supremacist policy!
MATCHLESS a non-smoking tenner (You can't win matches if you're not on fire!)
STRAIGHT SETS serious (non-gay) doubles pairs (JG'+)
BEST OF THREE SETS the most exciting one
SEMIFINAL a notice from the tenner's debt collector: "This is my next to last warning!"
CHAMPIONSHIP the yacht the big winner can now afford

3. The Setting and Venues:

COURT where tenners are put on trial for showing off
CENTRE COURT where the net is placed
NET the prize money after expenses and tax
AD COURT the one covered with sponsors' graffiti (That's all of them actually.)
DOUBLES COURT 1. a redundancy; 2. (JG+) a ménage à quatre (All score LOVE.)
TRAMLINES what set the match on the right track (JG) and help poor tenners reach the venue
CLAY a very slow surface designed by the French and Czechs to win matches in Europe (KD)
GRASS a smoke forbidden in tennis because it favours the foe unfairly (*Not if both smoke!*)
ASPHALT an error called for backing into the net (compare FOOT FAULT)
LOCKER ROOM where tenners get haircuts (and occasional concussions)
COUNTRY CLUBS big sticks farmers use for golf and tennis in the country (hence "the sticks")
TOURNAMENT that tight bandaging many pros wear to stop the bleeding score
TOUR what tenners who try to find their own way to the venue often go on (see LOST)
CHALLENGER one obsessed with political correctness, like calling losers "win challenged"
OPEN a tournament in which the winner is not decided in advance (Lately Novak, Serena and Hingis-Mirza have been threatening to render the term obsolete, like Roger and the Bryans used to.)
ROUND ROBIN an overfed bird (It looks like a tennis ball and has been known to get swatted.)
DEAD RUBBER a ball that's lost its bounce
DAVIS CUP an upmarket version of the Dixie Cup
ROD LAVER ARENA where people gather to gawk at the great Rod Laver in the stands
WIMBLEDON a small town in North Dakota where tennis can be played if it's not too cold

4. The Stuff:

BALLS what women need to play with men (I resisted a comma between the last two words.)
NEW BALLS result of major surgery (related to above?)
RACKET McEnroe, Sharapova, Azarenka—and lately most of them
RACKET AND FINE SAVER an antigrav device that won't let smashed rackets hit the ground (I'm applying for a patent as soon as I figure out how to create antigravity.)
GUT essential part of a good player's equipment (JG)
TOWELS appurtenances vital after every point, which ball kids sometimes confuse with balls
HEADBAND band music earphoned into the tenner's head to block out thinking
PANTIES ball-holding devices providing the most titillating feature of women's tennis (KD'+)
VOLLEYBOARD an opponent who returns everything (JG) (ie, Djokovic or Murray)
HAWKEYE the sharp-sighted pet hawk at Wimbledon who keeps away pigeons and round robins
TROPHY proof to your grandkids you once won something
HYPERTROPHY what big winners get (of the head)

5. The People:

ATP adenosine triphosphate, the chemical tenners get all their energy from (*It's legal!*)

RANK stinking from excessive sweat, especially after a long argument with the umpire

SEEDS what they grow tennis balls from

TOP SEED what they use to produce the Centre Court surface at Wimbledon (JG)

UNSEEDED cloned 'virgin birth' tenners (There seem to be a lot of them out there. Weird.)

QUALIFIER one who when interviewed hedges every statement with alternative considerations

WILDCARD the Djoker

LUCKY LOSER a defeated player who leaves the stadium before a mad bomber blows it up

RUNNERS-UP the ball kids

BALL KIDS young balls not yet of adult size, resembling baby round robins (cf SEEDS)

UMPIRE that lucky person who wins some sort of lottery and gets to sit in the very best seat

LINE JUDGES a fanatic bunch of fault-finders (They are also the arbiters of tennis beauty contests, like the one in this recent headline: "Safarova to Miss Australian Open" [sic].)

COACH how a poor tennis player reaches the venue, if he can only find the right one (vs. WALKOVER)

HEAD COACH a sports psychologist, which many losers need but only winners can afford

TRAINER what a budding young tennis player wears until courtbroken

COMMENTATOR a former great player who still plays better than he talks (KD)

SPECTATORS those lucky enough to afford a ticket (A traffic ticket won't suffice.)

FANS little battery-operated coolers carried in the racket bags of the heat-intolerant

FAN FAVOURITES strawberries and cream at Wimbledon

BIG NAMES Trongcharoenchaikul and Wachiramanowong (Actual Thai tennis players. Some Thais turn pro before they have learnt to spell their names!)

GOAT Mirka Federer's domesticated pet, raised from a kid

MAHAROGER sobriquet for the Greatest Of All Time, after Hindi for 'Great Ruler' (coinage)

PAT CASH the only payment bookies will accept

PAT RAFTER to hit a ball so high it touches the roof frame

BELINDA BENCIC, BJORN BORG, BORIS BECKER, FABIO FOGNINI, JELENA JANKOVIC, SAMANTHA STOSUR, SLOANE STEPHENS, STAN SMITH other Repetitive Monogram tennis players to join ARTHUR ASHE in Steve Kahan's list (WW 16-8)

6. Miscellaneous:

DOPE TEST exam making sure tennis players know that $15+15=30$ and $30+15=45$

ADRENALIN A hormone pumped out when one is in a state of terror. This wonderful condition has to be maintained. (KD')

PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIER the net (KD)

TENNIS ELBOW a tiny whistle-stop junction so old the locals no longer know what tennis is

MEDICAL TIME OUT long suspension for use of taboo medicines

PRICE OF ADMISSION ditto for owning up to same

BLOW UP an uncontrollable skirt (KD)

\$5000 FINE peanuts to a player who makes a million a year (KD')

MATCH FIXING the aim of the tennis marriage counsellor

BODY LANGUAGE naughty locker room slang

C'MON! term meaning 'Try harder!' which Lleyton Hewitt turned into a celebratory Yell meaning 'I tried hard enough!' (Ironically Lleyton spelled backwards is *Not Yell*.) It's now so widely used that he makes more from copyright royalties than from all his prize money and endorsements.