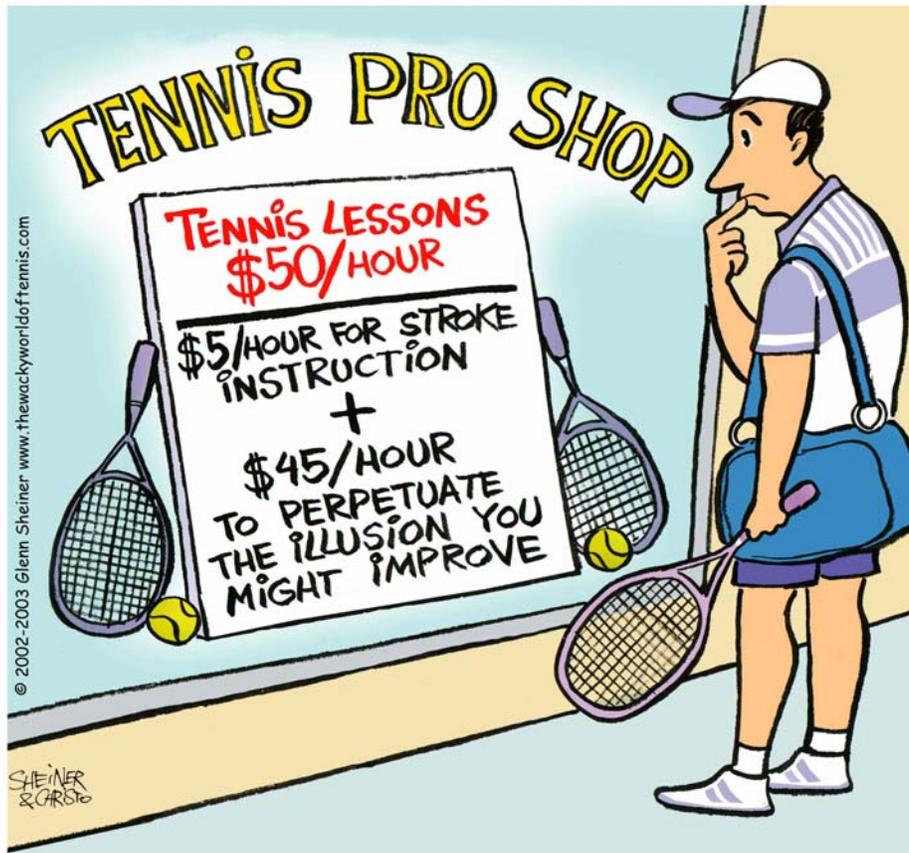


The Racket And String Specs Of Top Male Tennis Pros

By Glenn Sheiner M.D.



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The Racket And String Specs Of Top Male Tennis Pros **By Glenn Sheiner M.D. aka The TennisDoc**

Introduction

Tennis fanatics are just that –fanatics. And part of being a fanatic is a desire to know, discuss, and consume every little fact about the game.

I have to admit it - I'm one of those fanatics. As a kid, I participated in sports year round and played all the popular ones before discovering tennis.

As I grew into adulthood, I chose tennis as my lifetime sport and have continued to be fascinated by this complex yet beautiful game for the past 30 years.

I've written an Ebook on tennis tactics and singles strategy called **INSIDER TENNIS STRATEGIES** that has sold in more than 50 countries. And, I'm the creator of the world's top selling tennis cartoon screensaver and calendar.



"What do you mean I'm obsessed with tennis?"

But, enough about me.

A short while ago, I decided I wanted to learn more about the exact equipment that the top tennis pros use. Of course, I thought it would be a simple exercise of checking out a web site or two.

Instead, I wandered into a hornet's nest of controversy and all kinds of conspiracy theories about paint jobs. But, it was very illuminating.

I thought other tennis lovers might be interested in what I discovered!

So, I've compiled this report free of charge for other tennis fans.

I just wanted to let you know that I approached this topic as a tennis lover and researcher. So, in order to compile this report, I searched and studied hundreds of tennis forums and websites.

Often in the tennis forums you'll get some gold nuggets of information. You'll occasionally see posts from people who string for a Davis Cup team or who have been on the stringing team at a grand slam tournament.

By compiling the data from different sources, I was able to put together this report. I can't vouch personally for the complete accuracy of the data as I haven't talked to the players or the stringers themselves.

But, when you see the same thing written over and over again by various people, there's a good chance the information is pretty accurate.

Here Are Just A Few Of The Fascinating Facts I Uncovered

- You might be surprised at the low string tensions that a lot of the top pros play with, especially if you remember reading about the incredibly high string tensions used by Borg and Sampras.
- You might never have tried the new polyester strings that are widely used on the pro tour.
- You may not know what hybrid stringing is and how popular this stringing technique is amongst the top pros.
- You may not know that the racket your favorite pro is playing with may look like the racket you bought at the store but may actually be completely different.

Read on, enjoy, and hopefully you can put this knowledge to good use. And, feel free to pass this report on to your fellow tennis nuts.

To pass this report on just send it to your friends as an email attachment or send them to this page: http://www.strategictennis.com/Special_Report.html

Throughout this report, you'll see my tennis cartoons. I hope you get a kick out of them.

At the end of this report, you'll see links where you can check out the screensaver, calendar, mugs, and other items such as my Ebook **INSIDER TENNIS STRATEGY**.

And, you can sign up to receive the next free tennis reports hot off the press.

Cheers and great tennis,

Glenn Sheiner M.D.

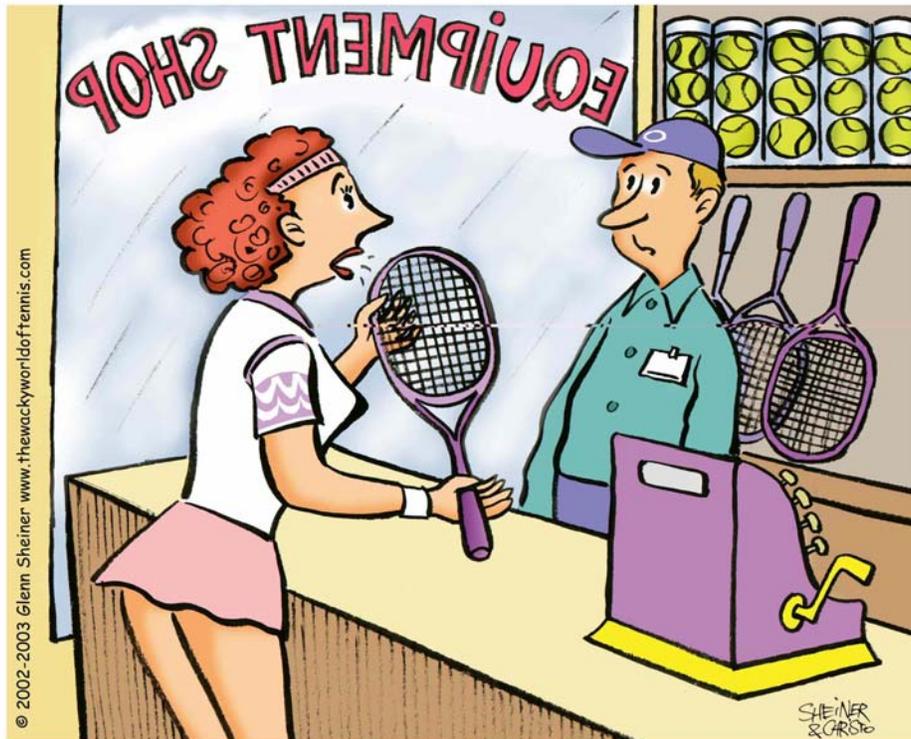
The Racket Controversy And What Is A Paint Job?

There are a lot of reasons for the controversy about the exact rackets that the pros use. The main reason for the controversy, as usual, is money.

It's common knowledge on the inside of the tennis world that many pros are using rackets painted to look like the retail version of a new racket that the manufacturer is marketing.

Here's a typical scenario. A pro has been using a racket for a long time and, the manufacturer with whom he or she has a deal, wants to introduce a new racket line into the marketplace. The pro may not really want to change rackets but may agree to have the old rackets painted to look just like the new racket. **In tennis vernacular this is called a paint job.**

Of course, this is usually good business for the racket manufacturer as sales of the new and probably expensive rackets will increase. And, the player pockets the fee from the manufacturer and still gets to play with the rackets with which he or she is most comfortable. Whether or not this is good for the recreational tennis player is debatable.



"I just took a lesson from the pro and he kept telling me to take my racquet back."

Most recreational players could never play well with the exact rackets that top pros use anyway.

Often top pros use rackets that are not that powerful and are very heavy (even if the retail racket frames that you and I can buy are not heavy, many pros either add lead tape to make their rackets much heavier, or have them customized to be heavier).

The pros can play with these types of rackets because they can generate tremendous racket head speed and power, and wouldn't be able to control the ball if the rackets were too powerful.

The average recreational player will feel that they can barely get the ball over the net with many actual pro rackets.

So, even if a recreational player thinks he or she is playing with the same racket as their favorite pro, it's actually a racket that is usually substantially different than the actual racket the pro is using. It may look the same and have the same name, but it usually isn't the exact same racket.

Of course, some recreational players customize their rackets with lead tape. And, they'll try and find out how much tape certain pros use and where on the racket the players place the lead tape.

You see, where the lead tape is placed on the racket dramatically changes the weight and balance of the racket and how it plays.

In the final analysis, the smart recreational player goes to his tennis pro shop and demos a whole bunch of rackets before buying. And, the smart player will buy the racket that he or she plays with best as opposed to the racket he or she thinks Federer or Sharapova is playing with.

The Controversy Over Roger Federer's Actual Racket

Among tennis fans today there is debate about the actual racket that Roger Federer plays with. There are as many conspiracy theories about Federer's racket as there are about the Kennedy assassination.

What is known is that when Federer was in the juniors he played with the classic Pro Staff 6.0 85. This is the same frame that Pete Sampras used.

Next, Federer apparently played with a newer Wilson model called the Pro Staff Tour 90.

And now, he's apparently playing with a newer model again - the N 6-1 Tour 90.

Not everyone is convinced that Federer is actually using the new N 6-1 Tour 90!

Here are two of the top conspiracy theories:

- He's still using the Pro Staff Tour 90 painted to look like the N 6-1 Tour 90.
- He's using a custom frame based on the original mold of the original Pro Staff 6-0 85.

Obviously, there are small differences between the proposed rackets that Federer is using. Tennis fanatics actually take pictures of Federer's racket in match play and magnify the images trying to look for little clues.

They analyze everything from the grommets, the string pattern, and the number of cross strings in the PWS.

On the left is a picture of the racket Federer is supposedly playing with now – the N 6-1 Tour 90 and on the right is the racket he supposedly played with before switching – the Pro Staff Tour 90.

N 6-1 Tour 90



Pro Staff Tour 90



According to one report from an unidentified source at Wilson, all of Roger Federer's racquets are made from a modified ProStaff 6.0 85 mold. Apparently, Roger wanted to increase the head size from 85 sq. in., while trying to maintain the original features of the Pro Staff 6-0 85.

In order to meet Federer's requirements, plus successfully market the Pro Staff Tour 90, Wilson modified a Pro Staff 6.0 85 mold to include the tapered flanges on the throat, increased the head size to 90 sq.in., and made slight modifications to the PWS shape in order to make it look like a Tour 90 to the untrained eye.

Now, conspiracy theorists think that Fed is playing with this customized racket that has been painted to look like the N 6-1 Tour 90.

On the next page is a list of the rackets and the racket head sizes of the top male pros.



"Don't worry if you've never taught before.
Just put these on and smile a lot."

RACKETS OF THE TOP MALE PROS

Player	Racket	Head Size
Roger Federer	Wilson Ncode Tour	90
Rafael Nadal	Babolat Aero Pro	100
Andy Roddick	Babolat Pure Drive Roddick	100
Marcos Baghdatis	Fischer M-Speed Pro No. One	95
Andre Agassi	Head Liquidmetal Radical Oversize	107
David Nalbandian	Yonex RDS-001 MP	98
Ivan Ljubicic	Babolat Pure Drive Team	100
James Blake	Prince Experimental	95
Fernando Gonzalez	Babolat Pure Storm Plus	98
Nikolay Davydenko	Prince O3 Tour	100
Richard Gasquet	Head Liquidmetal Instinct	100
Lleyton Hewitt	Yonex RDS-001	90
Tommy Robredo	Dunlop M-Fil 3 Hundred	98
Nicolas Kiefer	Wilson N Six One 95	95
Robby Ginepri	Babolat Pure Storm	98
David Ferrer	Prince Shark DB MP	100
Gaston Gaudio	Wilson nSix-One 95	95
Mario Ancic	Yonex Ultimium RD Ti-80	98
Tomas Berdych	Dunlop M-Fil 200 Plus	95

A couple of interesting things to notice here:

- Most pros play with a racket with head size between 95 and 100 sq. in.
- Agassi is one of the few top male pros with a racket head size over 100 – his racket is listed at 107 sq. in.
- Federer and Hewitt play with the smallest head sizes at 90 sq. in.
- Blake is listed as playing with an experimental Prince racket. For years, Blake has played with a Dunlop 300G. In the past year, he has been seen playing with a racket painted black that is apparently a new experimental Prince that people are expecting to be released to the marketplace some time soon.

Now on to the strings of the top male pros.

The String Specifications Of The Top Male Pros

There seems to be much more acceptance of the types of strings that the pros are playing with. There is a good reason for this. Most of the pros have their rackets strung by the stringers at a tournament. Obviously, they have to give instruction to the stringers as to the type of strings and the tensions they would like to have their rackets strung at.

Every once in a while you can find a report either in a stringing magazine or, unofficially in a tennis forum, detailing the string specs of the top pros.

Of course, remember that many pros vary their string specs according to the surface, the time of day, their opponent, and even the weather conditions.

So, there is a range of tensions that most pros use.

As you'll see some pros string tight and some pros string much looser. This is certainly something to experiment with in your own game.

Just a word of warning – stringing tighter will tend to put more stress on the elbow. Thus, if you have a history of tennis elbow, or if you string tighter and feel your elbow starting to get sore after playing, you're probably stringing too tight for your arm.

The string revelation has been changing the game of the tennis the past few years more than any other equipment change.

Traditionally, pros used to almost always use gut - a very expensive string. Gut has always been considered the string that provides the most feel. And, most amateurs have traditionally used a sort of synthetic string primarily because of the expense of gut, and the fact that the synthetics are more durable, and will therefore last longer before breaking.

Gustavo Kuerten was the first player whose success with synthetics sparked widespread interest. In 1997, Kuerten was unseeded and ranked No. 66 in the world. Playing with a Luxilon polyester string, the Brazilian won the first of three French Opens.

Other clay-court players soon began copying Kuerten, not only because the first generation of synthetics provided extra bite and increased topspin, but also because the polyester strings lasted longer than gut.

Andre Agassi was one of the first to introduce the "hybrid" trend several years ago. The eight-time Grand Slam titlist was one of the first, and most prominent, players to use a half and half combination of gut and synthetic strings. He now uses only synthetic.

[Advantages Of The New Polyester Strings](#)

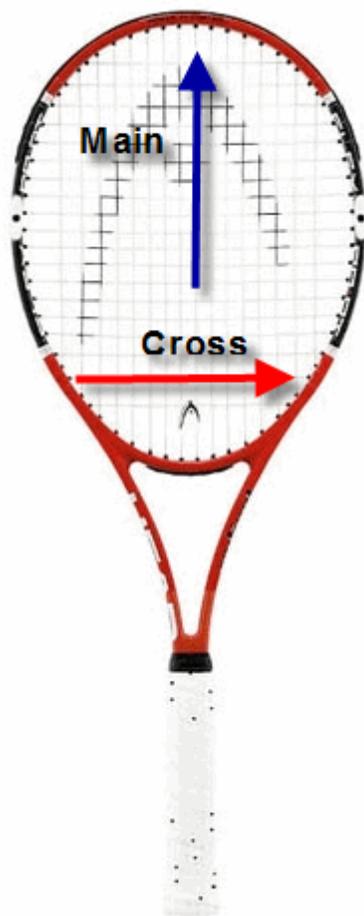
Players say they can take bigger cuts at the ball without losing as much control. They also say it allows them to whip the ball with more topspin, which keeps the ball in play despite the huge velocities.

The trade-off is that there is less feel and touch with synthetics as compared to gut.

[Hybrid Stringing](#)

Some players such as Federer use gut on the main, or vertical strings, and synthetics on the cross strings. The mains are more important for ball contact, so that combination preserves as much feel as possible, he says. Other players are more concerned with power and spin and use synthetics on the main strings.

Below is a photo of a racket and you can see the crosses and the mains highlighted.



String Gauge

There is one other major factor to look for in strings and that is the diameter or gauge of the string.

Strings come in varying diameters rated from 15 to 19. 15 Gauge is the thickest, thus the most durable, but also provides the least amount of feel. 19 Gauge is obviously the thinnest and will break the most frequently.

There are also half sizes so that 16L is in between a 16 Gauge and a 17 Gauge.

The diameter of strings is also sometimes presented in millimeters. Here is a table converting the two:

String Gauges and Diameters in Millimeters

15	1.41-1.49 mm	17	1.20-1.24 mm
15L	1.34-1.40 mm	17L	1.16-1.20 mm
16	1.26-1.33 mm	18	1.10-1.16 mm
16L	1.22-1.26 mm	19	1.00-1.10 mm

Below is the list of strings and string tensions of the top male pros. Most of the details of this list are from the Australian Open Stringing Logs in 2006.

Some of the players didn't play the Australian Open (in Nadal's case because of injury). So, in these cases the details were taken from the French Open Stringing Logs of 2006.

Players often string with a lower tension on clay so this should be kept in mind.



"Son, one more drop shop and you can kiss your inheritance goodbye."

[The Stringing Specs Of The Top Male Pros](#)

Taken from the 2006 Australian Open Tennis Logs

Player	Mains	Crosses	Tension Mains	Tension Crosses
Roger Federer	Wilson Natural Gut 16	Luxilon Big Banger Alu Power Rough 16L	47	46
Rafael Nadal	Babolat Duralast 15L	Babolat Duralast 15L	54	54
Andy Roddick	Babolat Pro Hurricane Tour 16	Babolat VS Team 16 (Gut)	72	72
Marcos Baghdatis	Luxilon Big Banger Alu Power 16L	Luxilon Big Banger Alu Power 16L	53	57
Andre Agassi	Luxilon Big Banger Alu Power 16	Luxilon Big Banger Alu Power 16	66	66
David Nalbandian	Luxilon Big Banger Original 16	Luxilon Big Banger Original 16	64	64
Ivan Ljubicic	Luxilon Big Banger Timo 18	Babolat VS Team 16L (Gut)	57	57
James Blake	Luxilon Big Banger Alu Power 16L	Luxilon Big Banger Alu Power 16L	69	69
Fernando Gonzalez	Luxilon Big Banger Alu Power Rough 16L	Luxilon Big Banger Alu Power Rough 16L	55	55
Nikolay Davydenko	Polystar Energy 16L	Polystar Energy 16L	53	51
Richard Gasquet	Luxilon Big Banger Original 16L	Luxilon Big Banger Original 16L	53	51
Lleyton Hewitt	Babolat VS Team 16 (Gut)	Luxilon Big Banger Alu Power Rough 16L	51	51
Tommy Robredo	Luxilon Big Banger Original 16	Luxilon Big Banger Original 16	53	51
Nicolas Kiefer	Babolat VS Team 17 (Gut)	Babolat VS Team 17 (Gut)	68 **	66 **
Robby Ginepri	Babolat Ballistic PolyMono	VS Touch 16 (Gut)	62	62
David Ferrer	Luxilon Big Banger Original 16	Luxilon Big Banger Original 16	51	51
Gaston Gaudio	Kirschbaum Super Smash 16	Kirschbaum Super Smash 16	60	60
Mario Ancic	Babolat VS Team 16 (Gut)	Luxilon Big Banger Alu Power 16L	60 **	58 **
Tomas Berdych	Luxilon Big Banger Alu Power 16L	Luxilon Big Banger Alu Power 16L	55 **	55 **

** These strings and tensions are taken from the French Open 2006 Stringing Logs

Some Interesting Things To Notice Here:

- The tension of Roger Federer's strings looks to be very low at the Australian Open. In other reports, you'll see his string tension listed in the low 50s.
- At Wimbledon 2005, it was reported that Federer's string tension was 55 and that he strung a little tighter (58) for the final against Roddick.



"Just my luck! The one year I reach the finals the groundskeepers go on strike."

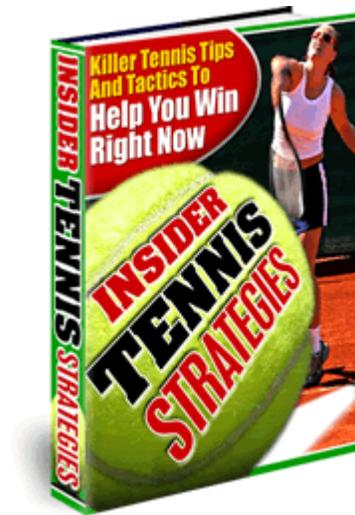
- Lleyton Hewitt is another player who played with low string tensions at the Australian Open and is reported to play with higher string tensions elsewhere. Could it have anything to do with the heat, humidity, and the court surface in Australia?
- Some pros string both the crosses and mains at the same tension and others string with a difference of a few pounds between them.
- Nadal plays with a Babolat Duralast string. This is a string manufactured in Europe and apparently, at the present time, is hard to find in North America.

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Here is what Brent Abel, the former head tennis pro at the **prestigious California Tennis Club** in San Francisco, has to say about the book:

“The one book that I recently bought, read, and was absolutely blown away in its brutal honesty, is Dr. Glenn Sheiner's downloadable eBook "Insider Tennis Strategies".

Glenn's book is perfect for any skill level. It's not about teaching the mechanics of how to hit certain strokes. It's about which shot to play, where to play it, and when's the right time.

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What is brilliant in Glenn's book is how he teaches you to easily figure out your opponent's strengths and weaknesses, and then how to match up your strengths and weaknesses against your opponent to maximize your chances of winning that match.

This is a "must" read for anyone who wants to play competitive singles."

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Brent Abel's [Classic Tennis Instruction](#)

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All the best in life and on the courts,

Glenn Sheiner M.D. (aka The TennisDoc)