

Tennis Time!

Story By: Andrew Frinkle



Cara played tennis. It was her favorite sport. She really enjoyed all kinds of similar sports, like ping pong, volleyball, and badminton, but she really liked tennis the most. There was something about running back and forth on that green court and delivered a great backhanded return that really made her smile.

Tennis requires only a net, a racket, and some tennis balls. Tennis is played in singles or doubles. It is very much like badminton that way. If you have a wall, you can practice against yourself, returning the bouncing balls. You can also practice in an empty court, just serving a bucket of balls, or practicing against a machine that launches tennis balls your way (sort of like a batting machine for baseball).

Tennis is about serving and returning. Someone serves the ball, and the other player(s) have to return it from the other side of the net. The object is to get the ball to touch the ground in the other team's side twice, or to touch once and bounce out of bounds. If you do that, you either get the serve from the other team if they had it, or you score points.

When you serve, you have to serve from a certain area on the court. You have to hit the ball over the net and into a specific area of the court marked by white lines. If you hit the net on the way over, you get a redo. If you hit the net and it stops, your serve is done. If you hit the ball out of bounds, your turn is also done. The receiving team or player gets to stand wherever they want, and they're supposed to hit it back toward the serving player's side of the court. They want to get it to touch once and skip out of bounds so the other player can't send it back their way again. They can also try to get two bounces in on the other person's side, but that can be hard. These volleys can go back and forth pretty quickly, and they might go for several strokes before one player is put in a position where they can't return the ball, giving their opponent a point.

Scoring is strange in tennis. You need to get to 4 points to win, and you have to win by 2 points. However, they call the points strange thing. Instead of saying 0, 1, 2, 3, and 4 points, they say: love, 15, 30, 40, game. A lot of games get stuck at 3-4 or 4-4, and they have to keep playing to get a 2 point win. So even though it seems easy to score 4 points and beat someone by 2, strong players can go back and forth a long time. Usually you play a set of several games.