Nets Information Sheet

Introduction

This discussion of nets covers the overall netting function from the net itself to having it held in place. The tennis court fixture subject to the most wear and tear is arguably the tennis net. It not only suffers from wear and tear and the ravages of weather but also at times from unnecessary abuse. As with all facilities for tennis there is quite a variety of tennis nets and associated ancillary facilities available.

Nets

There is quite a variety of nets available to suit varying needs. There are net grades available for championships, tournaments, heavy or light duty for outdoor use as well as grades for indoor use. Nets are available in two drop heights. 0.76m and full drop. Nets are usually coloured black or green with a white net band at the top. Every square of the netting must be small enough to prevent a tennis ball from passing through the net or being caught in the netting. The bottom of the net need not touch the court surface, but it is recommended that the bottom of a new net should not be more than a maximum of 60mm above the court surface.

Cable/wire

The cable wire between the net posts holds the net in place and is used to adjust the centre height of the net. The net cable wire may be galvanised, PVC coated or plain depending on the environment in which it is to be used. Its tension can have an influence on the playability of balls in let situations. A slack tensioned net cable wire can absorb much of the let balls energy with the subsequent action of the ball being unpredictable; with a well tensioned net cable wire the action of let balls become consistent and more likely playable. Do not over tension the cable. Modern net cables have extremely high breaking strengths and it is possible to bend the net post by over tensioning. This is particularly a problem with some of the older round net posts. It is recommended to release the tension on the net cable wire when not in use.

Net posts

There are a number of different net posts available, they may be round or square and the winding mechanism may be installed internally or externally.

The net posts are positioned so that their centres are located 0.914m (3 ft) outside the court side lines. The height of the net post is such that the top of the metal cable wire shall be 1.07m (3 ft 6 in) above the playing surface at the position of the net post.

The net posts may be installed directly into concrete footings or the may be installed into a sleeve into the concrete footings.

The latter facilitates removal of the net post allowing for easy replacement if necessary. Removable net posts allow for alternate use of the court area, for this there is a sleeve insert. Net posts and sleeves should be made from non-corrosive material.

Winding mechanism

The winding mechanism may be installed internally or externally to the net post and should be made of a non-corrosive material. If an external winding mechanism is broken it is usually easy to replace. However a broken internal winding mechanism may require the replacement of the entire winding assembly within the post.

It is suggested that tennis court owners look at using internal winding mechanisms. Clubs who have dated external winding mechanisms are encouraged to contact their respective state / territory association's Facilities representative, regarding a possible inexpensive alternative to reduce exposure to public liability.

Nets Information Sheet

Centre straps

The centre strap is used to ensure that the centre net height is limited to .914mm (3 ft). It is a 50mm wide strap with a height adjusting non-corrosive buckle that prevents slippage when tensioned. At the bottom is a noncorrosive hook used to attach the centre strap to the centre strap ground anchor. The centre strap ground anchor, where installed, is to be made of non corrosive material and attached to either a concrete base or a concrete footing, in the centre of the net line.

Singles sticks

Singles sticks have a dual use; firstly, they emulate the netpost's function of establishing the outer net height for singles matches; and secondly, they are marked against which the centre height of the net is gauged. For singles games three singles sticks would be required.

Maintenance

As with all tennis facilities and equipment, tennis nets require some degree of maintenance to ensure their ongoing use and longevity.

Nets

Net bands tend to wear and weather and may require repair or replacement. The net braiding strands may break and require repair. The net will ultimately require replacement depending on conditions.

Cable wire

Check for corrosion, damage to covering and damage caused to the net band.

Net posts

Touch up nicks and scratches on coated net posts to preventcorrosion.

Winding mechanism

Lubricate the winding mechanisms to ensure ease of use.

Centre strap & post

Check for strap deterioration and condition of the buckles.

Lifecycle costs

Court owners need to be aware that net equipment does not last for forever. They have to provide for any maintenance costs and the ultimate replacement.