

## Orange Ball Competition

Orange Ball Tennis is played using the fundamentals of the ANZ Tennis Shot Shots Program with modified courts, low compression balls and modified racquets. Orange Ball play is designed for kids who have graduated from the Red Dot Balls (oversized balls and 25% compression).

The TA guide is Orange Ball play is targeted at kids aged from 7-10 years. Obviously this is a guide and there will be some children that have a reason to play in this competition for longer than others, while other kids of this age will be playing with yellow balls. This is where tennis has an advantage over many other sports as it is not an age-based sport, rather an ability-based one.

The Orange Tennis Ball has 50% compression of a yellow ball. It is the same size as a yellow ball but as a result of the lower compression, it moves slower through the air and does not bounce as high as a yellow ball. This makes it easier for kids to hit the ball and become involved in a rally easier, thus gaining greater skills and confidence as they progress through the ANZ Tennis Hot Shots program.

Orange Ball matches are also played on a modified court with 'drop lines' put on the court to mark court boundaries and the net is slightly lowered too. If you do not have 'drop lines' at your club, please let me know so I can attempt to organise some for you.

As this will be the kids 'first taste' of competition, it is vitally important that we get the teams entering this competition to be genuine Orange Ball ability. If the child can play with green dot balls or even yellow balls, then the Orange Ball team is definitely not where they should be. The TG Junior Committee trusts the clubs will work with their club coach to ensure this is the case.

This is very exciting that we are able to offer the kids the chance to start playing competition in a fun, non-pressure environment earlier. The hope is we will not lose as many kids to other sports as they are not yet good enough to play competition until they reach green ball ability, as it was in the past. Hopefully many of the kids will enjoy the experience and continue on up the grades over time.

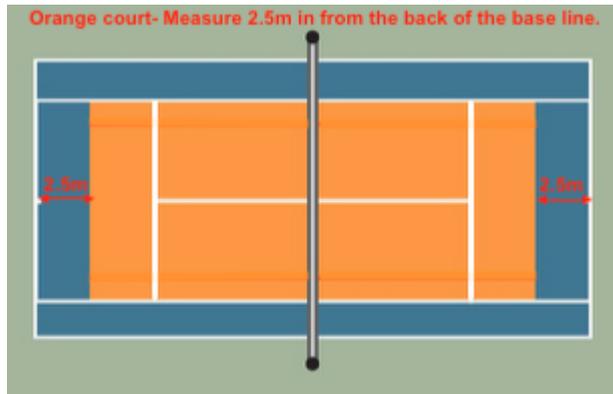
It is also a fantastic opportunity to get the parents out on the court helping and learning the rules and scoring of tennis. Hopefully this will not be so much of an issue when they get to the green dot ball sections!

Please read on for information about the basics of the Orange Ball Competition.

## What courts do they use?

Orange Ball matches will operate on a court 18 m long.

The only change from a normal court is drop lines will be placed approx halfway between the baseline and service line. (Measure 2.5 m from the baseline, as demonstrated in picture below).



For our competition, normal side lines will be used for both singles and doubles sets. The reduced court size is fundamental in offering every child the opportunity to play an all court game and enjoy the sport relevant to their age and ability. Along with the reduced court size the net will be lowered to 80 cm. The Orange Ball has 50% compression of a yellow ball.

## What balls do they use?

Orange Ball matches are played with orange balls. As with the green ball sections, they do not need to be new each week, please just ensure the balls are in good condition. Unless the balls get damaged by weather, the balls should last the whole season.

## What is the format for each match?

The TG Junior Committee wanted to try to introduce the orange ball kids to the format of the TG Competition that they will play each week as they improve and move up the sections; but at the same time, we wanted to make it achievable for the kids starting out.

Each week there will be 4 sets of singles and 2 sets of doubles.

Each of the 4 players in the team will play a set of singles and a set of doubles each week. Where a team has more than the minimum 4 players on any given week, the singles and doubles sets will be shared amongst the players in attendance.

## How are the matches scored?

All matches in the TG Orange Ball Competition will be played with the first player to 4 games being the winner. No tie breaks will be played. If the score become deuce in a game, 'sudden death deuce' will be played. If this happens, one more point will be played in this game and the winner of that point, wins that game. For the sudden death duce point, players will play the point standing in the positions they do at the start of a game.

## What happens if kids aren't very good at serving?

If a player isn't the strongest serve they can still play TG Orange Ball Competition. There are a number of different modifications which makes serving easier for all players.

- First serve
  - Players should try an over arm from the modified baseline
- Second serve
  - If the player is confident they can hit the second serve in from the modified baseline then they can serve over arm from there for their second serve.
  - Player can also choose to move forward to the service line and drop hit the ball into the service box or even over arm throw it into the service box.

## What happens when it is really windy with orange balls?

If you encounter a VERY windy day, you will find the orange balls are so light they will get blown away so the kids will not be able to successfully play points. If this is the case, on these occasions, we would recommend you allow the kids to play with the green dot balls. This will help the kids to try and get some rallies going.

## Where do players position themselves in singles and doubles?

Part of the role of the parents being on the court as well as umpiring is to assist the players in their positioning on the court. The server must be standing behind the baseline, without their foot touching any part of it when they serve and the returner needs to be correctly positioned to return the serve on a first serve. As listed above, where a child is having trouble serving, they may come up to the service line to drop hit or throw their second serve.

During a doubles game the players need to be positioned in the correct positions before the point starts and move the correct way between points.

As these children are new to tennis and will not have the required skills to volley, we recommend all players in doubles start a point by standing at the baseline.

## What are some important tennis rules which I need to know?

Tennis Geelong understands that some parents and volunteers may not know all the specific rules of tennis. Some of the not well known rules are listed below:

- If a player hits a return of serve on the full without the ball bouncing, the server gets the point.
- During doubles once a player chooses a side to return on, they can't change for the remainder of the set. For example if Player A chooses to return on the Deuce side (right hand side) then they can't move to the Advantage side (left hand side) for the next return game.
- At the end of every odd numbered total game (1, 3, 5, 7, 9 etc.), the players change ends. This means the score could be 1/0, 2/1, 3/0, 3/2.

Whenever one of the more complex rules has been broken, parents should educate the players about the rule firstly by asking questions. For example: "What happens when you hit the return on the full?"

\*Remember that TG Orange Ball Competition will be in most cases a child's first competitive tennis experience; take the opportunity to teach participants the game of tennis and educate them through practical examples that they can relate to.

## Something important for everyone to remember

All throughout the match and after the kids have finished playing, parents and volunteers should always be positive towards all players, not focusing on who won or lost; remembering that the TG Orange Ball Competition is all about exposing kids to a fun, friendly environment and learning how to play the game of tennis. Please remind kids at the end of each match they play to shake hands with their team mate (in doubles), the opposition player(s) and of course the umpires!