

TENNIS Changes by Ray Collins

Lately when it comes to tennis, I've been feeling like an encyclopedia salesman looking for a pay-phone. Tennis has gotten confusing. The game I thought I knew so well has changed before my eyes.

Handshakes

What happened to just shaking hands after the match? Now when you approach your opponent(s) at the net after the game, you're thrust into a weird game of handshake roulette. Will it be a high-five, a fist bump, or an angled hand-shake?

I don't know how many times I've put my hand up for a slap and gotten a fist in the palm. It was especially troubling when a female partner gave me a fist bump into my palm: It left a ring mark in my hand.

Having said this—and as much as I'm for tradition—I don't miss shaking hands

with my sweaty opponents after matches anyway. Some of them squeezed my hand so hard, my tennis elbow was more vulnerable from the handshake than the match itself!

Besides, if we were to fist-bump through the course of our life, think how less often we'd get colds?

Clothes

I have a nice wardrobe full of tennis shirts and shorts that I need to take to Goodwill.

Men aren't wearing tennis shirts anymore. They've raided George Jetson's closet. No more classic white shirts with collars. Now it's skin-tight, no collars, and sleeves optional. Expensive glossy T-shirts. Those sleeve-less numbers only work if your first name is Raphael, and even then they're still a little corny. Recreational guys with spare tires and white flabby arms flop-

ping around need to cover up.

And shorts are no longer shorts. Now they're Capri pants. Oh well, at least with this new style I can hold three tennis balls in my pocket.

Strokes

Turn sideways, step into the ball and follow through over your shoulder, right? Not anymore. Cookie-cutter form is out the window. Now there's a neutral stance and an open stance, too. Load up the back leg, swivel the hips, come across your chest, check your watch and wind up over your bicep with your palm facing the net.

This doesn't look and feel like the game I grew up playing!

Having said all this, I have to admit I don't miss my old cotton shirts that weighed about five pounds after the match. And wow, I can really whip my new forehand with the new style! Just be careful with those fist-bumps.



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