

# Evaluation for Novice Players

## *A Charting System for Coaches of Novice Players*

Bob Love USPTA (Master Professional)

**INTRODUCTION:** Many years ago I was faced with the challenge of choosing players for a singles line-up. **PROBLEM:** These players were NOVICES! How could I decide which player should play 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> singles?

**USUAL WAY:** Most coaches would have simply played a “challenge match” and place the winner at 2<sup>nd</sup> singles. **HOWEVER**—challenge matches imply that the players have valid competitive skills, but these players did not have those skills.

**OBJECTIVES:** In my opinion (based on over 35 years of coaching), I believe that there are two objectives for novice players. My charting system needed to measure them. Therefore I designed a chart to show the following:

- 1) Evaluate the ability to get the ball into play.
- 2) Evaluate the ability to keep the ball in play.

A **GOLDEN POINT** was one in which a player hit the ball over the net **THREE** times.  
This would include the serve or return.

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**CHART:** The attached chart shows the format I designed for evaluating novice players.

**Player:** Name

**Set Score:** The LEAST IMPORTANT number on the page.

**First Serves:** With a tally mark, show the number of successful first serves.

**Second Serves:** Use a tally mark to show the number of successful second serves.

**Double Faults:** Use a tally mark to show the number of double faults.

**Service Returns Missed:** Use a tally mark to show the number of missed returns.

**Golden Points:** Use tally marks to show the number of times a player successfully hits three balls over the net. This includes the serve or return of serve.

**Short Balls Missed:** Tally how many “short” (within 10 feet of the net) shots are missed.

This is especially important if the player misses a truly “set up” shot which should be an easy stroke. For example: A missed overhead smash.

**Comments:** This space is for any unique observations a charter might make.

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### An Anecdote

In 1977 I was coaching a high school team and faced with the dilemma outlined above. **JOHN** was a 6-3 basketball player and a very good athlete. He was eager to play singles as he looked forward to competing. He was highly coachable but his tennis experience consisted of playing social tennis during the summer, mostly with his girlfriend. **SAM** played four or five tournaments each summer without much success and seemed erratic in practice. Therefore I designed this charting system to evaluate their BASIC SKILLS.

**Results:** JOHN: Missed NO service return and had NO doubles faults. He also missed only ONE short shot out of 5 attempts. He had only 4 GOLDEN POINTS, but I observed that this was because SAM failed to keep the ball in play.

SAM: Missed 5 service returns and had 3 doubles faults. He flailed at 6 short balls and missed 4 of them. BY THE WAY—SAM “WON” THE SET 6-4.

**Verdict:** JOHN played 2<sup>nd</sup> singles and had a 11-2 record. SAM played 3<sup>rd</sup> and had a 7-6 record. John’s success was clearly based on hit ability to put the ball into play and keep it there.

**MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!!!**

# Evaluation for Novice Players

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**OBJECTIVES:** 1) Evaluate the ability to get the ball into play.

2) Evaluate the ability to keep the ball in play.

Definition "Golden Point": Hitting the ball over the net **THREE** times.

**Player:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Set Score:** \_\_\_\_\_

**First Serves:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Second Serves:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Double Faults:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Service Returns Missed;** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Golden Points:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Short Balls Missed:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Player:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Set Score:** \_\_\_\_\_

**First Serves:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Second Serves:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Double Faults:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Service Returns Missed;** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Golden Points:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Short Balls Missed:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

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