

# Tennis tips

By DAVID W. STEWART

The moment has arrived — you have been asked to play doubles and your partner has taken his position and is about to serve. You know where you are supposed to stand and you take your position at the net. Deep inside you shudder to think that a ball might be coming your way. There is no rule that says you have to be at the net, but you should want to be there.

Doubles, even at the club level, has become an aggressive game. The team that controls the net will generally win. So there you are at the net — what do you do?

The first step is learning the proper grip. It is important to select one grip that you don't need to change from forehand to backhand. Most top players use the continental grip for volleying. The continental hand position can be found by placing the V formed by your thumb and forefinger at the midpoint of the wide part of your racket's grip.

At the net you don't have the time to switch grips. Some players try to change and their volleys can be seen going everywhere but over the net.

The second step is to get into position. You should hold the racket up and out in front of you with the tip pointing straight ahead. Think that every ball is coming right at you. In this position you're ready if the ball does come in your direction and if it doesn't — there's no harm done.

So there you are, alert with the right grip and the proper stance. Your partner serves and your opponent hits it at you. What do you do? You can stand rooted to the spot and pray the ball misses

The closer you can play to the net the easier it is to return the ball. But partner serves and your opponent hits it at you. You can get too close and become vulnerable to the job. The exact position depends upon how quick

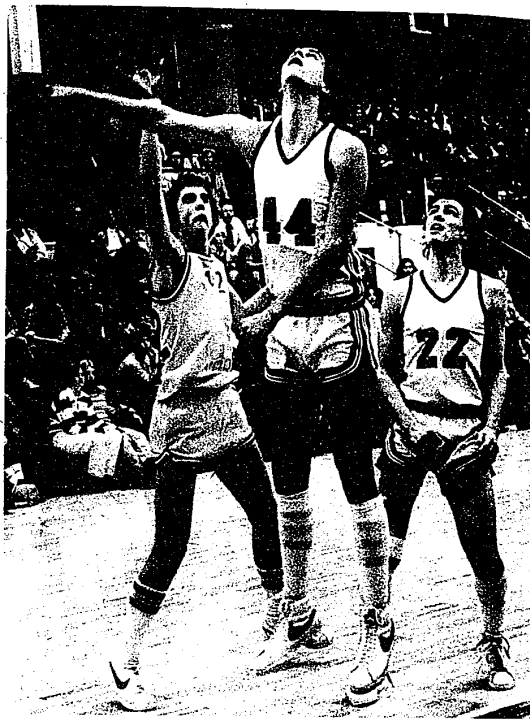
you, you can duck and leave it for your partner, you can volley it for a winner, or you can do as most people — swing and miss.

Never swing when you're at the net. You don't have the time. Balls hit at the net generally have so much speed that all you need to do is block them. Keep your elbow in front — jab at the ball like a boxer. If your elbow is in front, your racket is in front. Keep your wrist locked and block the ball. When you block a ball, your racket becomes a wall and walls return shots.

When your opponents find out that you can volley, they will stop trying to hit the ball past you and start lobbing it over your head. You then have to learn an overhead smash or your net game will suffer. The overhead swing should be short and lethal. It is an offensive shot when hit inside the service line.

Think of the swing for the overhead as similar to hammering a nail. No big wind up — just a short swing like you would use to pound a nail into the wall. The shorter the swing the less room there is for error. Hit the ball hard with the arm fully extended at point of contact.

Never be concerned about where you are going to hit it. Just hit the ball and let your opponent worry about getting it back. Most players' feet are embedded in concrete when they see an opponent about to hit an overhead.



Scott Russell, shown here during his prep days at Southfield High School, has signed to play basketball at Ferris. (Staff photo)

# Russell picks Ferris State

Ferris State College has announced the signing of Scott Russell of Farmington Hills to a national basketball letter of intent.

Russell, a 6-7 forward, graduated from Southfield High School in 1978. Last year he attended West Texas Junior College in Snyder, Texas, but saw limited action on Coach Nolan Richardson's squad which finished fourth in the National Junior College Championships last year.

Russell is the tallest of the players recruited by Ferris Coach Jim Wink and assistant Gary Waters this year. His addition completes what a Ferris spokesman termed a "banner year" for the state college's recruitment.

Russell had a fine prep career under Don Kamm, the former Southfield basketball coach who has retired. His sen-

ior year was marred by a tragic injury during warm-ups for the squad's state district contest with Plymouth Salem.

Russell caught the ring finger on his right hand in the basketball netting, and lost almost one-quarter of his finger. The injury has not affected his play (he shoots primarily with his left hand). Without him, Southfield lost to Salem 53-48.

A co-captain during his senior season, Russell averaged 18 points and 16 rebounds a game. He shot 52 percent from the floor and was instrumental in helping Southfield capture the Southeastern Michigan Association championship. The team finished the year with a 19-3 record.

His West Texas Junior College team lost only two games all season.

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you are, but there are two correct starting positions: One for when your partner is serving and the other for when your partner is receiving. When your partner is serving, stand approximately six feet back from the net and about three feet inside the singles sideline. When your partner is receiving stand just inside the service line and about half way between the center service line and singles sideline.

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