

Mini Tennis

What I'm about to describe as mini tennis no doubt exists in many different forms under many different names all over the world. This is just the version I have found to be the most fun and the best at building skill.

RULES

The court consists of just the two service boxes on each side, both for singles and for doubles. The doubles alleys and the area behind the service line are out of bounds.

The serve is delivered from behind the service line to the service box diagonally opposite. Only one serve is allowed per point. The ball must be bounced, then hit from a contact point below the waist. If the ball touches the net on a serve, then goes in, the serve is replayed (a let).

Scoring is similar to [table tennis](#). Each turn at serving lasts for four points. A game is won when one player reaches seventeen by a margin of two or better. Deuce and ad are not used: the score continues a normal arithmetic count. A long game might end at 27-25, for example. The number of games to play in a set or match is still undetermined.

End changes are made after each game.

Volleys and overheads are illegal. The ball must bounce before being hit.

The rest of the rules are the same as standard tennis.

TACTICS

Your best weapon in mini tennis is **angles**. In any racquet sport with a net, simple geometry dictates that as you get closer to the net, you can hit sharper angles. In mini tennis, every ball you get is a short one, so you can regularly pull your opponent well into and even beyond the doubles alley. In a good match, you'll end up running as much as you do in full-court tennis, if not more. In mini tennis the interval between strokes is shorter, so you end up running more constantly. I like to run my opponents from side to side, then hit behind them once in a while.

For most players, **slice groundstrokes** will provide the best way to control the pace and depth of the ball and keep it low. Topspin isn't easy to use on such a short court, but it's a potent weapon for those who can control it.

Drop shots can work, but they're dangerous. Your opponent is much closer to the net than in full-court tennis, so only an extremely short drop shot will pay off. Your opponent is not allowed to volley, so you can sometimes pull her forward, then hit past her before she gets all the way back.

Serves are not as big a weapon as they are in full-court tennis. The best servers I've seen use heavy topspin, which is somewhat easier to control when you are hitting a ball you bounce to yourself as on a serve. For players who can't deliver the topspin, the next best option is to hit low and deep, usually flat rather than sliced. Anything high and short will be put away easily by a good receiver.

