

# PLATFORM TENNIS

## What is Platform Tennis?

Platform tennis is an American racquet sport played by thousands of people of all ages and ability levels across the country. Developed to be enjoyed outdoors in cold weather, it offers vigorous outdoor exercise combined with friendly interaction and is now enjoyed throughout all of the four seasons. This unique game attracts people who desire fresh air, competition and social engagement - even on a chilly winter's day or night. The sport creates and builds strong communities, because most facilities offer compact courts and warming huts, which are a fun place to gather and be active together.

The game is played on an aluminum deck about 1/3 the size of a tennis court and is surrounded by a 12' high superstructure with taut, 16-gauge "chicken wire" fencing that allows play off the walls, as in racquetball and squash. The court surface is infused with grit so that play can continue in inclement weather. Players often colloquially refer to platform tennis as "paddle" or "paddle tennis".

Platform tennis is a great game on many levels. Unlike golf or tennis, learning to play is relatively easy. In addition, strategy is equally as important as raw power. In that sense, platform tennis entails the power and speed of tennis mixed with the strategy and patience of chess. It is, as a consequence, highly addictive.

Because of the screens, points often last much longer than in tennis so players are moving more and stay warm, no matter the temperature. Want a quick glimpse of the game in action? Look up the APTA on YouTube.

#### NOTES:

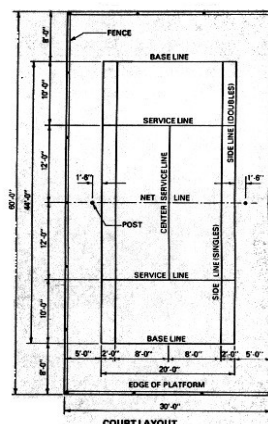
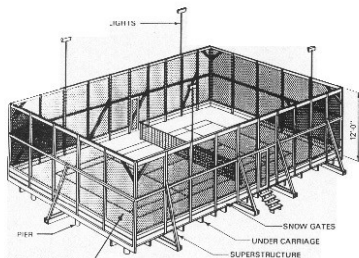
All measurements for court markings are to the outside of lines except for those involving the center service line, which is equally divided between right and left service court.

All court markings to be 2" wide.

Fencing required - 12'-0" high with 16-gauge hexagonal, galvanized 1" flat wire mesh fabric.

For net post details see manufacturers' literature.

Net height to be 3'-11" at posts and 2'-10" at center court.



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## Why is paddle tennis the ideal sport for communities and park districts?

- It helps increase use of often under-utilized city parks during the winter
- It offers a truly affordable winter sport option where few often exist
- It can be played by and between both men and women and by all age groups
- It is the only racquet sport you can play outdoors all year-round and, in any weather, rain, snow or shine
- The facility can be self-funding through memberships and court fees
- It provides a healthy, more vibrant community during the fall and winter months
- It is easy to learn but hard to master; most players fall in love with it immediately
- The courts are relatively inexpensive to maintain
- It is a very social game, due in part to the small size of the court
- Platform tennis courts take up less space than tennis courts and can be built on sloped land or in low and wet areas where tennis courts may be prohibited
- Three platform tennis courts can fit in the space of one tennis court, so three times the revenue potential

## What active players say about platform tennis:

*"It's the very best outdoor activity in town that is affordable to all age groups. Camaraderie, friendship, competition, social play, great time after the play in the hut, girl's night out, men's and ladies' leagues, party rentals, you name it this sport provides it. The club is the place where members bring their friends and family to spend quality time together." Ania Kazakevich, Manager, Head Professional Wilmette Park District*

*"Paddle tennis is a blast, and the culture is one of good sportsmanship no matter where you go in the country." Alyce Dwyer, Jamestown, RI*

*"One word, addictive, my kids love it, my husband loves it. We can spend time together".*



*A men's game at the North Boulder Recreation Center, Boulder, CO*



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## Municipal Platform Tennis in Winnetka, Illinois: A Success Story

One of the most vibrant public platform tennis facilities is located in the northern Chicago suburb of Winnetka. While paddle was initially a sport reserved for members of private clubs, in 1978 a few enthusiastic residents of Winnetka joined together to convince the Winnetka Park District that there was enough demand to justify allocating park land to build a couple of platform tennis courts. The Winnetka Platform Tennis Club (WPTC) was formed to provide a mechanism to raise funding and manage the paddle programs that would be offered to residents of the Village and surrounding communities. WPTC was tasked with raising 100% of the funds needed to build the courts and to provide for all of the annual maintenance costs. WPD created a Platform Tennis Enterprise Fund to own and manage the courts and hut.



As the only public option at the time, new members flocked to the facility, and two more courts were added to meet demand. By 2000, the original hut, described by one member as “nailed together one weekend by a couple of guys,” became crowded and obsolete. Working with member and local architect Gary Frank, the WPTC conceived, funded and built an award-winning paddle hut in 2004. Demand continued and the club built courts 5 and 6 on land adjacent to the hut in 2008.

The club is continuing to add programs to meet demand, including adding a Sunday Night Men’s league with local clubs, a Monday night Women’s paddle league, and, in the off-season, the Viking Spring Platform Tennis League.

“The Women’s Monday Night League is a huge success”, according to board member and Monday Night coordinator Sacha Alexandra. “It is great that Winnetka can meet the needs of working women who are unable to play in the NSWPTL during the weekday.”



The club recently teamed up with neighboring Wilmette to provide a Sunday night North Shore League to accommodate overflow demand at both clubs from the Men’s weeknight league. Greg O’Neil, club pro, commented “it’s a great way to inaugurate new players to WPTC by playing local matches, and providing them instruction in our Paddle School each Sunday just before their matches.”

APTA (AMERICAN PLATFORM TENNIS ASSOCIATION) [WWW.PLATFORMTENNIS.ORG](http://WWW.PLATFORMTENNIS.ORG)

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WPTC now has 375 members with 23 men's travel teams, 11 women's travel teams and an active program of clinics for adults and juniors of all skill levels. The club manages all the league play, social events and tournaments, while the clinics are provided by WPD.

As a result of these new programs, the WPTC is now bursting at the seams and has approached the WPD about adding two additional courts and expanding the hut. "Over the past year, WPTC and WPD has identified land adjacent to the Paddle Hut to construct courts 7 and 8 and we plan to begin construction in Spring/Summer of 2021, making Winnetka, once again, the largest public platform tennis facility in the country," stated Colin Cross, President of the WPTC board.



## IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME

For many municipalities, platform tennis is a wonderful option for outdoor recreation during the long winter months. Competitive play combined with the social aspect of "après paddle" creates a winning combination for the players, and the community. In Winnetka, platform tennis is the largest adult recreation program offered by the Village and it also has the highest ratings of all programs offered.

Winnetka isn't the only public option in the Chicagoland area. Hinsdale, IL built courts in 1985, followed by numerous other suburbs over the years. Today, there are ten public platform tennis facilities in the Chicagoland area with a total of 50 courts, versus 44 private clubs with 141 courts. Since public facilities tend to be larger than private, they account for 38% of total teams in the CPTC league. The public facilities are the breeding ground for the sport, with many players introduced to paddle at a public facility.



A great example of paddle's growth potential is illustrated by the 2013 addition of public facilities in Wilmette, IL and Glenview, IL, clubs within three and six miles of Winnetka, respectively. Each public club started with four courts and a hut, but quickly grew to six courts. In 2012, Winnetka had 24 men's teams and six courts. Now, these three nearby public clubs have a total of 18 courts and 68 men's teams. That's 324% growth over an eight-year period, proving that paddle is a sport that cries out for public facilities. If you build it, they will come.

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## Places where municipal platform tennis thrives:

Basking Ridge, NJ  
Bronxville, NY  
City of Deephaven, MN  
City of White Plains, NY  
Garden City Recreation, NY  
Glen Ellyn, IL  
Greenwich, CT  
Hinsdale, IL  
Lake Bluff, IL  
Maplewood, NJ  
Mount Lebanon Township, PA  
North Boulder, CO  
North Park, PA  
Princeton Recreation Department, NJ  
Scarsdale Recreation Department, NY  
South Orange Village, NJ  
Springfield, IL  
Town of Darien, CT  
Town of New Canaan, CT  
Upper St. Clair Township, PA  
Wilmette, IL  
Winnetka, IL

## Cost Estimates

Of course, the costs for creating a platform tennis facility will vary depending on a variety of factors such as location, site condition, and prevailing job wages. However, to give you an idea, here is an estimate for one court:

New Court: \$115,000 to \$140,000

Used Court: \$85,000 to \$110,000 depending on condition, availability, and type.

Yearly Maintenance: \$300 for first four years.

Resurfacing (when needed): \$4,000

Lights are inexpensive, but heat can be costly if not controlled by maintenance crew or club.

Propane bills can be between \$2,000-\$10,000. (In areas where snow is infrequent, ground-level courts constructed on concrete pads may be a less expensive option; contact court manufacturers for details.)

## What is the APTA?

The American Platform Tennis Association (APTA) is the governing body of the sport of platform tennis. It is a non-profit organization whose 22,000 members and more than 275 member facilities are found in 41 states and 2 foreign countries.

To further its mission to govern and grow the sport of platform tennis, the APTA has a grants and loans program to create, maintain, and cultivate public-access facilities throughout North America. The APTA also maintains a website, publishes Platform Tennis Magazine, offers free clinics and exhibitions, makes grants and loans to public-access facilities, and underwrites a national junior program. More than 160 tournaments, a Grand Prix Series, and more than 40 National Championships are sanctioned by the APTA annually. It also provides tournament support and Live Scoring for many of its national ranking tournaments. To preserve the rich history, the APTA hosts and updates the Platform Tennis Museum Hall of Fame and Virtual Museum.



For more information, contact the American Platform Tennis Association (APTA), the primary resource for everything platform tennis in North America, at 1-888-744-9490. You can also find us on Facebook and YouTube.