



“Tennis Academy Mickey” – presented by Völkl Tennis & The Walt Disney Company

Light-Right™ racquets combined in unison with an innovative teaching program, equals double-fun and instant gratification of achievement for children.

Munich, 8 May 2003 – The time for debate is over! As others are still speculating about the status and unhealthy future regarding youth-tennis, and how we can again make tennis popular to today’s children, Völkl Tennis and the Walt Disney Company have taken action.

A jointly developed concept making playing tennis easier than ever for children between the ages of three (3) and nine (9) years old has been achieved! This allows today’s children to discover a sport that is not only healthy and fun, but will become a lifetime-sport for them:

“Tennis Academy Mickey” – presented by Völkl and Disney!

The right equipment – the foundation for fun and success

In the development of a joint concept designed to encourage Kids’ Tennis, Völkl and Disney first concentrated on the much needed improvement in tennis equipment – specifically, racquets and balls. Until now, a child’s only option was to start playing tennis using a racquet weighing over 200+ grams – the weight of today’s average adult racquet. The negative result was having a child who is more than willing to participate, but had in their hands a racquet that was too heavy, too long, or completely unbalanced for their specific needs. The enjoyment of the game was simply lost due to the racquet hanging by their side because it was too hard for them to handle correctly.

Introducing the: “Mickey 21”, “Mickey 23” and Mickey 25”. Völkl Tennis has developed a completely new technology called: “LIGHT-RIGHT”™ that for the first time ever, perfectly matches a tennis racquet to a child’s physical size and ability. The new racquets are not only extremely lightweight, but are also correctly designed to be the proper length, properly balanced and easily manoeuvrable – thus, “LIGHT-RIGHT”™. Now a child can simply concentrate on learning how to learn to play tennis and enjoy the sport as intended.



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At the same time as the racquets were being developed, the need for special tennis balls was also focused upon. Standard tennis balls are designed to be used by traditional-adult (heavy) racquets, and are made to perform at a pace much faster than a child can play at. Völkl and Disney successfully developed three (3) specifically different balls that match the three (3) different racquets, and are unique in having their own exact weight and “bounce-ability” required by each level of ability. Also as a part of this new high-tech “Mickey-Collection” is the visual fun only Disney can offer. All models in the new racquet and ball product line carries the fun Mickey Mouse logo that will double the fun factor of tennis for the very young.

“Tri-coloured learning program” – individual and optimum support

Just as important as having the proper equipment is, so is the need for a professional teaching program. In order to encourage and develop a child’s enthusiasm for the game of tennis a consistent training program being delivered by highly-trained personnel’s is a must. In close collaboration with internationally renowned coaches, Völkl Tennis and Disney have come up with something very special. Children who want to learn how to play tennis at one of “Tennis Academy Mickey” are initially split according to body size into three different groups.

The smallest are equipped with the red-coloured “Mickey 21”, the lightest and shortest racquet, children the next size up are handed the orange-coloured model “Mickey 23”. The green racquet “Mickey 25” is the longest of the racquets and intended for the tallest children. The children are then provided with red, orange or green tennis balls according to their racquet and walk onto the court with equipment tailored to their physical requirements.

This new program doesn’t end there! Along with the correct equipment, proper coaching, the “Tennis Academy Mickey” also has a specific way of how to use a standard tennis court. A special Disney-designed net along with an adjustable baseline that allows a shorter court for smaller players and a longer court for taller players – or for different abilities of skill. For example, if a child with a red racquet and a child with an orange-coloured racquet are on the same court, the base line of the court half occupied by the smaller player is moved closer to the net than the opponent’s base line. In combination with the ultra-light, easy to handle racquets, this handicap principle allows players of different skill levels to compete against one another and individually enjoy their own playing.



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“Tennis Academy Mickey” – international training network

Starting in January 2004, selected tennis schools and coaches initially in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, will have the chance to open their very own “Tennis Academy Mickey”.

The basic requirement, besides having prior sport and educational training, will be in the attendance of all interested coaches in a technical course where the program’s concepts and how-to-do’s will be taught. This is an intensive class that will assure the proper instruction of having a “Tennis Academy Mickey”. If the course is passed successfully, then the participating tennis schools and coaches will receive an extensive equipment package from Völkl and Disney – allowing them to then begin offering children the chance to play and learn tennis within a fascinating and motivating Disney atmosphere.

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