



**P**latform tennis is an American racquet sport enjoyed by thousands of people of all ages. It is the only racquet sport that players can enjoy outdoors in cold weather. This unique appeal attracts people who desire fresh air, competition, and social engagement — all on a chilly winter's night.

The sport is played at private clubs, public facilities, and in backyards at both highly competitive and purely recreational levels. Because it is easy to learn, it is enjoyed by players as young as eight and as old as old bones allow.

**The Court:** The game is played on an elevated aluminum deck 1/4 the size of a regulation tennis court (a 60' x 30' deck with a 44' x 20' in-bounds area.) The court is surrounded by a 12' high superstructure with taut, 16-gauge "chicken wire" fencing which allows play off the walls, as in racquetball and squash.

The base of a platform tennis court is usually enclosed, allowing for a heating system beneath the deck (propane, natural gas or kerosene.) The heating system melts ice off the aggregate deck surface, allowing athletes to play outdoors in all weather conditions. Most courts have lighting systems for nighttime play. While the official platform tennis season runs from Fall through Winter, the game can be enjoyed year-round.

**The Rules:** Platform tennis is a doubles sport with two players on each side of a 34" high net. Rules of the game are identical to tennis with a few exceptions: only one serve, serves that touch the net are played, and what many consider the best thing about platform tennis — the ball can be played off the screened walls.

**The Equipment:** Platform tennis paddles are made of a composite material with aerodynamic holes drilled in the head. Paddles are approximately 18" long. The spongy, rubber ball measures 2.5" in diameter. A flocking material on its exterior keeps the ball from skidding.

**The Strategy:** According to Dick Squires, author of *How to Play Platform Tennis*, "Patience and ball placement are more effective assets than sheer power and speed."

**The Name of the Game:** Players often refer to platform tennis as "paddle," as in "Are you playing paddle tonight?" With the re-emergence of paddle tennis on the West Coast (basically, a down-sized game of tennis,) this has many people confused. To further the problem, there is paddleball (an urban sport played against a single wall) and padel (much like paddle tennis, invented in Mexico in 1968.)

**The Commitment:** The American Platform Tennis Association (APTA) and the Professional Platform Tennis Association (PPTA) provide leadership, organization, and support for the sport. Platform tennis clinics and camps advance the skill level on the court. The Platform Tennis Hall of Fame pays tribute to star athletes and innovators. Court and equipment manufacturers expand the sport's horizons. Platform Tennis Magazine and a handful of web sites focus attention on the sport. And a growing number of people are out there playing hard and having fun.

