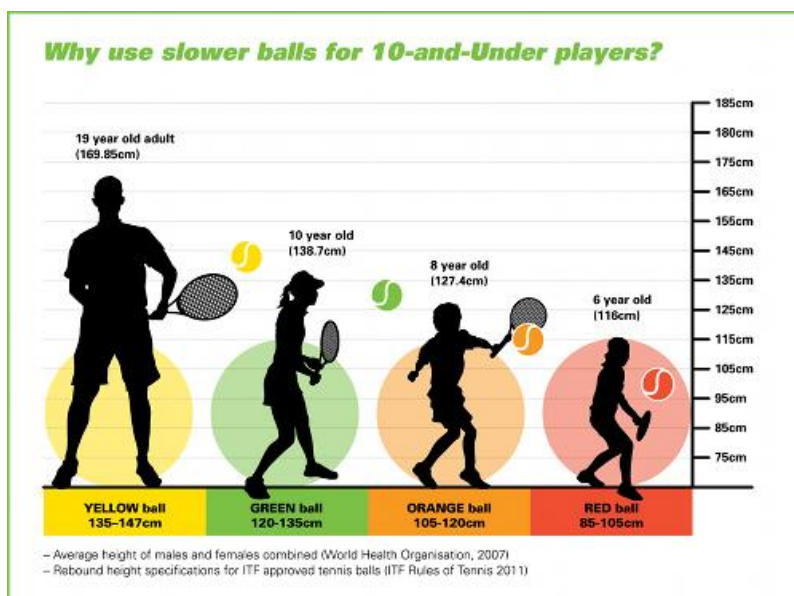


What is Little Aces?

Little Aces is a community tennis project funded by Tennis Canada to introduce affordable and accessible **progressive tennis** programs into schools, gyms, community leagues, clubs and parks and recreation departments. With a focus on children under the age of 12, the program provides new participants to the game of tennis an opportunity to combine practice and play.

Progressive Tennis introduces the sport of tennis in a fun and interactive way and ensures immediate success for young players aged 5-12. Using modified tennis balls, racquets, nets and courts, young players are properly equipped to enjoy rallies and learn the fundamentals of the game early on. Skills are developed more quickly than in traditional teaching methods, allowing for an easy transition to full court. Tennis Canada fully endorses Progressive Tennis and is developing programs and competitive structures across the country to give more players the opportunity to experience its positive benefits. Progressive Tennis is used as a developmental tool to allow young children to improve their overall tennis skills faster so they can transition to the regular court with more ease. Progressive Tennis allows youngsters to train and compete with courts and equipment which are better suited for their size.



Edmonton has been selected by Tennis Canada to be the next community to introduce the **Little Aces Progressive Tennis Program**. Along with community, business and local government partners, Tennis Canada has financially invested in this project to help grow the sport. The goal of the program is to encourage Edmonton youth and families to live healthy, active lifestyles by playing tennis. Edmonton was selected because of its long standing tradition of well organized community partnerships, sound infrastructure and a proven track record for innovation and excellence, among other reasons.

The Little Aces strategy is all about offering an integrated pathway and continuum of activities and programs so young participants can have access to progressive tennis activities all year round. Initially the strategy will focus on offering U12 pathway and progressive tennis during the **SUMMER** period where **parks and recreations centres and summer/community tennis clubs** will primarily be involved. In the meantime, **the schools board and school partners** will prepare their schools members for the launch of tennis activities in schools for the **FALL/WINTER/SPRING** seasons. The school program should then feed the **community team tennis league** to be offered in municipal and school gymnasiums during the **WINTER** and **SPRING** season. Lastly, talent ID pathway participants will have an opportunity to feed into the top development centres in the cluster. These youngsters are able to train in competitive programs throughout the year.

What is Community Team Tennis?

Community Team Tennis (CTT) is a key ingredient in the Little Aces strategy. It is an exciting new tennis program that provides children an opportunity to combine practice and play. With a focus on skill development through match play, CTT motivates participants to stay in the game for life!

Specifically, it is a team tennis league where a tennis skill is introduced at the beginning of a session followed by friendly competition between teams. Even though skills are introduced, the emphasis is on match play and fun! It is an environment where kids play among their peers and it encourages team spirit, tolerance, cooperation, self motivation, and respect. No experience is necessary. Even parents can be involved and are welcomed. Basic training is provided to parents interested in becoming team coaches.

The Edmonton Little Aces Launch

This inaugural launch is strategically one of the most exciting moments of the Little Aces strategy. It represents an opportunity to introduce partners' progressive tennis activities and programs, to showcase young tennis models and to attract the community families and the general public to actively engage into the sport of tennis. On that day, all efforts in terms of organization, promotions will converge to offer the Little Aces programs and activities to your population.

April 30th, 2012 Little Aces Launch - 200 volunteers needed to help set world record!

April 30th has been chosen as the official launch date of Edmonton's Little Aces project and Tennis Alberta will be looking for about 200 volunteers to help with the event to be held at the University of Alberta's GO Community Centre. Children from local schools will be bussed to the sports centre for the day to participate in the World's Largest Progressive Tennis Tournament! Local politicians, sport figures and media will be on hand to help make this a spectacular, one-of-a-kind event, putting tennis front and centre in Alberta's sports scene. If you are interested or have a team, family or organization who would like to be involved with this amazing event, please contact Mary or Jill at 780-415-1661 or mary.manley@tennisalberta.co.

How Do Community Leagues Benefit from Little Aces?

Community Leagues are an integral part of the Little Aces pathway. Edmonton's unique community league structure is conducive to developing a well organized community tennis program city-wide. Some of the benefits to communities who choose to become involved in the Little Aces program include:

- Increased grass roots tennis participation and community engagement
- Diversified programming – increased opportunity for kids to engage in sport
- Provision of necessary tennis equipment – racquets, balls, nets – for local schools
- Professional development for teachers
- Increased volunteer capacity in community
- Increased usage of outdoor courts
- Introduction of healthy lifetime activity to wider community
- Access to other Tennis Alberta programs such as Rogers Rookie Tour and Le Petit tennis

For more information on the Little Aces program or how to get involved contact Mary Manley at 780-415-1694/ mary.manley@tennisalberta.com or Jill Groves at 780-644-0440/ jill.groves@tennisalberta.com