

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SERVE DURING THE INTERNATIONAL AT TENNIS FEDERATION WOMEN'S CIRCUIT CHAMPIONSHIP IN NAIROBI

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ABSTRACT

The serve is considered as the most important, frequently occurring and ultimate stroke in a tennis match. The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of the serve during the International tennis Federation (ITF) women's singles champions in Nairobi. The championship was played on murram courts and was organised on knockout basis. Winners and losers in 21 matches were observed using a manual charting system and a video camera. The frequency and outcome of the first and second serves were tallied in terms of no-errors/good (e.g. in, aces and wins) and errors/faults (e.g. out, double fault and wrong court). The direction of good serves as they landed in the service court were also recorded in terms of right, middle and let landing. Two observers who were conversant with the game of tennis and match analysis charted each match. The video-recorded matches were played to cross check the accuracy of the manual charting. Descriptive statistical analysis using mean scores and percentage tabulation showed that all the winning players in each match made least errors on their serves compared with the losing players. More errors were made on the first serves than on the second serves. Most serves landed in the middle of the service court than in the right and left service courts. Service errors decreased with progressive tournament stages. The outcome of this study confirmed the percentage theory in tennis that those players who make few errors eventually emerge as winners of a tennis match. It is important that the serve should not be neglected during the teaching and coaching of tennis players.

Key words: Tennis serve, errors, wins, women's singles championship, and percentage theory.