

Member Spotlight: The Racket Bracket

Joe Cohen, an engineer at a bio-tech company in San Diego, used to struggle with the game of tennis. Although he picked up other sports naturally, it amazed him at how difficult this sport was to learn. One evening, while playing with his colleague, Vince Darmohusodo who also teaches tennis on the side, Cohen became so frustrated that he almost threw in his tennis towel and gave up. But Cohen had never been a quitter, so the two engineers put their heads together to try and figure out why many beginners and natural athletes have a hard time learning the sport.

As the two men began analyzing the sport they realized that the wrist is one of the reasons that it is so difficult to achieve accuracy when hitting a tennis ball. The main reason is the way peoples brains use the wrist. According to the men's studies they found that "the wrist was built to make highly variable adjustments when handling objects like a fork or for power to throw a rock. When a tennis ball approaches a first time player, their natural response is to use their wrist to hit the ball at whatever height it arrives. Why should they adjust their feet when the wrist is perfectly suited to make contact with the ball at almost any height and with considerable power? The problem is that the player then has an infinite number of contact points to choose from when using the wrist and none can be optimized for accuracy and consistency."

Cohen and Darmohusodo decided in order to overcome this problem a beginner tennis player needs to immobilize the wrist. So they started thinking about how they could actually force this immobilization on a player. They experimented with many different prototypes and designs and finally came out with an end result which they call The Racket Bracket.

The Racket Bracket keeps a players wrist in a tight configuration so in order for him to make contact with the ball he has to be in the right position with his body and feet. "Once the brain stops relying on the wrist, you start to bounce on your feet more and focus on positioning and lining your shots up in a more consistent fashion," says Cohen. "And that is what we believe is one of the core fundamentals to learning tennis."

It took several years for the men to get the prototypes, patent, trademark and a web site up and running for the product because they were full-time engineers by day and tennis inventors by night. Cohen says that the product was something they would have abandoned at any moment if it hadn't been working, but it was working and people were having success with it.

They began taking The Racket Bracket to tradeshow and at first they were lumped into a group of other products that people thought were just gimmicks. But two years ago during a USPTA Tradeshow in Las Vegas the industry began to accept the product as something that really worked and the sales and

successful results have been coming in ever since. They have currently sold several thousand Racket Brackets worldwide and are hoping with the use of new web marketing those numbers will double sales by next year.

“The second I started hitting with the Racket Bracket, I could feel the different muscles in my body that I was using and knew right away what I had been doing wrong for all those years prior,” says Cohen. “I feel like tennis can be a very frustrating sport and I hope our product can become the basic tool for every beginning tennis player.”