

Grand Slam Point Sequence – WTA Tour

A Study into the Sequence of Points in Tennis

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Introduction & Background

The study attempted to investigate the sequence in which points were won and to explore the connection between this and winning games, sets and matches. The intended use of the study was to assist in the tactical development of junior tennis players.

It's a common misconception that you need to win the large majority of points in a match to win. In fact, a winning percentage of 51% is enough to secure victory. The number of points therefore seems less important than the sequence in which they are won. There are 18 possible score combinations in tennis.

0-0, 15-0, 0-15, 15-15, 30-15, 15-30, 30-0, 0-30, 30-30, 40-15, 15-40, 40-0, 0-40, 40-30, 30-40, Deuce, Ad+, Ad-

Methodology

- The study was conducted at the 2006 Australian Open (Hard Court – Rebound Ace), Roland Garros (Clay Court) and Wimbledon (Grass) Championships.
- It charted Women's Singles Main Draw matches over the duration of each tournament. Matches were selected at random.
- The score was recorded after every point for the duration of the match. The score was then classified into six categories.

Categories

1. **Winning 1st Point** and reaching a score of 30 first.
2. Reaching **30 first** and winning the game.
3. Being **30-0 up** (0-30) and winning the game.
4. Being **30-15 up** (15-30) and winning the game.
5. The winner from **30-30** (Server or Returner).
6. The winner from (40-40) **Deuce** (Server or Returner).

Results (The below results are illustrated in Figure 1.1)

1. **Winning 1st Point** and reaching a score of 30 first.
 - The player who won the first point got to 30 first 78% of the time.
 - There was a 10% advantage to the server.
 - This equates to 8 in 10 games.
2. Reaching **30 first** and winning the game.
 - The player who reached 30 first won the game 75% of the time. There was a 22% advantage to the server.
 - This equates to 7 in 10 games.
3. Being **30-0 up** (0-30) and winning the game.
 - The player who achieved 30-0 up (0-30) won the game 80% of the time.
 - There was a 20% advantage to the server.
 - This equates to 8 in 10 games.
4. Being **30-15 up** (15-30) and winning the game.
 - The player who reached 30-15 up (15-30) won the game 68% of the time.
 - There was a 16% advantage to the server.
 - This equates to 6 in 10 games.
5. The winner from **30-30** (Server or Returner).
 - The Server won the game 60% of the time.
 - The Returner won the game 40% of the time.
6. The winner from (40-40) **Deuce** (Server or Returner).
 - The Server won the game 63% of the time.
 - The Returner won the game 37% of the time.

Grand Slam Surface Point Sequence (Clay / Grass / Hard Court)

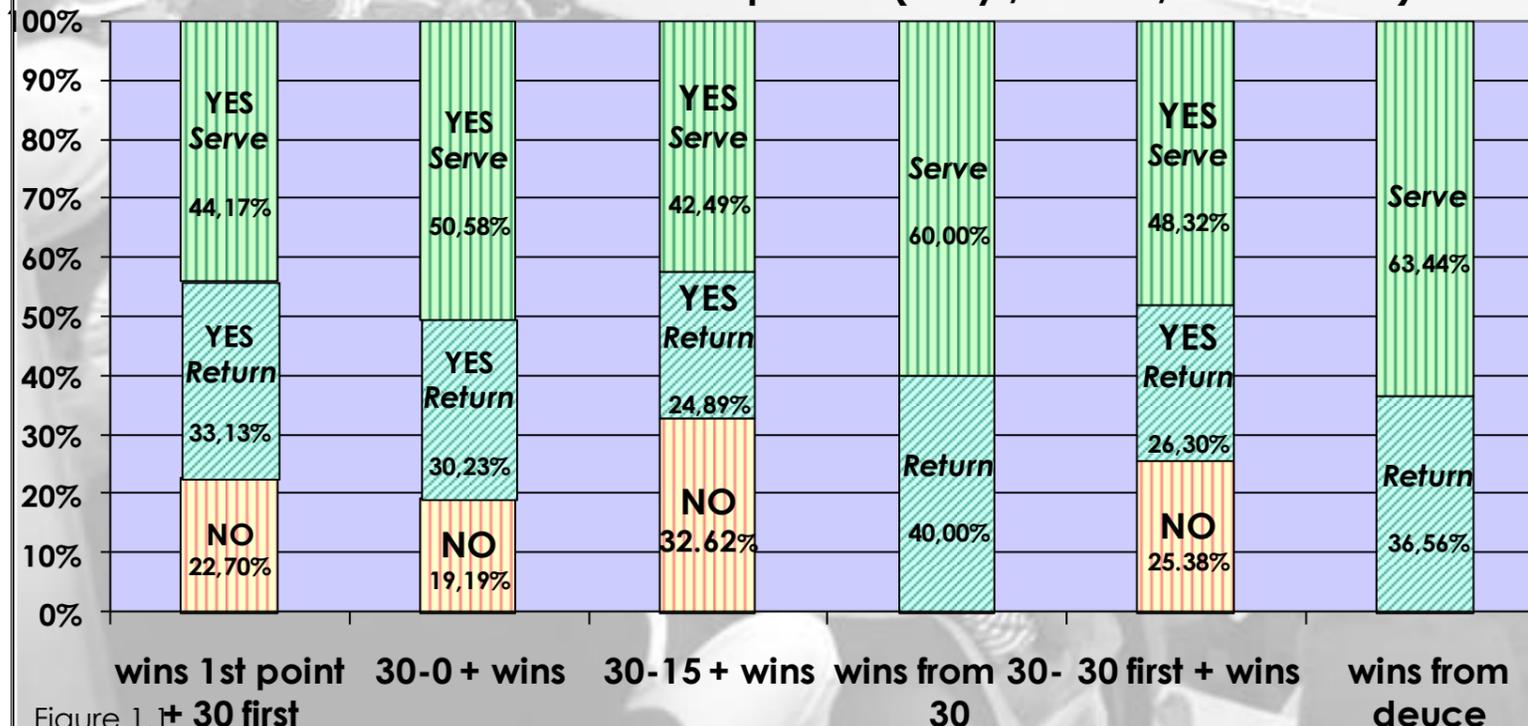


Figure 1.1 + 30 first

Conclusion

- Not all points in tennis have equal weighting. While the total number of points won in a match is important, the sequence in which a player wins points is of more importance.
- The significance point sequence has on determining the outcome of a match necessitates players be educated on it's importance.
- Knowledge of point sequence should serve as a platform from which players build tactical intentions and act as a framework for decision making during a match.