

Eye Protection for Real Tennis and Rackets

The T&RA strongly recommends that eye protection should be worn.

There are no eyewear standards yet for Rackets or Real Tennis, although it is the T&RA's desire for there to be such standards. It is recommended that eye protection is worn that conforms to the Standards for Eye Protection in Squash: UK - BS7930.1; USA - ASTM F803; Canada - CSA P400; Aus/NZ - AS/NZS 4066; International Standards Organization - ISO 18527-2.

The following information has been compiled (without prejudice) to assist our members in making an informed decision which type, brand and model to wear.

This advice is offered regarding the factors that are considered of most importance when selecting a set of protective eyewear: -

1. Generally, it is thought that it is an advantage if the model of eye protector has an obviously **strong polycarbonate frame** and offers some protection to the temple of the wearer. It is thought that temple protection is more important for Rackets (and perhaps also for Real Tennis doubles), where the chances of a direct shot or a deflection from the side or from behind is significantly greater.
2. Although polycarbonate eyewear may be advertised as very strong, there must still be some possibility of **deformation of the glasses** on direct impact. The stronger eyewear will likely suffer less deformation and therefore at the moment it is thought that it should better protect the eyes.
3. The **wider the field of view** the better. Some goggles have thick frames and padding around the inside of the polycarbonate lenses which might interfere with (or more likely distract) peripheral vision. In general the models with 'wrap-around' lenses or larger lenses will give better peripheral vision.
4. Be wary of considering **lens-less frames** for use at Rackets. The reason is that in some models the aperture for seeing through may not be small enough to totally prevent a Rackets ball touching the eye. The protection offered by strong lens-less glasses is thought to be much better than not wearing glasses at all, but it is better if any even slight touch to the surface of the eye can be prevented. Lens-less glasses are less likely to be a problem with the larger Real Tennis ball but assessment of whether in a hard impact the Real Tennis ball could make contact with the eyeball should also be a consideration.¹
5. Models with **soft silicone nose-pieces**, as opposed to solid, hard nose-pieces that are integral parts of the frame, are usually more comfortable to wear. Such a feature is highly recommended for Rackets, where the chances of an impact from a collision with an opponent's or partner's racquet or body is much greater than at Real Tennis. Note that if the width of the nose bridge is too small it can cause the protectors to rest too high.

¹ Note that this aspect will also depend on the particular shape of the wearer's face (for example, whether eyes are more prominent on the face or not).

6. Some models have a **strip of foam** attached to the top bar of the protectors, above the lenses, that sits on the eye-brow. This feature has two benefits; a) it gives extra protection from any impact, due to the cushioning effect of the foam, and b) it may help to reduce the problem of sweat running down onto the inside of the lens.
7. Something that is not predictable by even trying on eye protectors in a shop is the problem of **misting up**. Many of the eye protectors are marketed with ‘anti-mist’ coatings which don’t seem to be totally effective. If this is likely to be a significant problem for you then it is probably best to choose an eye protector which has plenty of room and ventilation around the eyes – examples of such are the iMask and also the lens-less eye protectors. Wearing a headband and/or a cap will help to minimise misting up problems.

A set of photos of glasses which exhibit some of the characteristics described above are at Annex A. The T&RA cannot at this stage offer any guarantee regarding the efficacy of these examples of eyewear. The photos are shown to provide members with an understanding of the important characteristics and are presented in no particular order.

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Annex A - Examples of current eye protection in use

Polycarbonate, wide uninterrupted field of view, good distance from the eyes, likely to have very good anti-mist properties



Polycarbonate, “bubble” lenses so slightly further away from the eyes than many glasses, comfortable nose bridge



Annex A - Examples of current eye protection in use

Polycarbonate, larger lenses than many and thus good field of view, comfortable nose bridge



Polycarbonate, wide field of view



Polycarbonate, comfortable nose bridge



Polycarbonate, wide field of vision



Annex A - Examples of current eye protection in use

Polycarbonate, strong frames (Pelota eyewear), can be lens-free (for anti-misting)



Annex A - Examples of current eye protection in use

Polycarbonate, lens-free



Polycarbonate



Annex A - Examples of current eye protection in use

