



## WHY HAS TENNIS THIS STRANGE SCORING SYSTEM?



Bonjour. My name is Pierre. Pierre Baron de Coubertin and I know everything about the Olympics. Really. For example. Do you know why tennis has such a strange scoring system? I do!



Tennis is a sport that has evolved over the years. Most historians think it started with the French monks. They liked to play a game that involved their bare hands and very hard balls. It was a very popular game. But also very painful. So they started to use rackets, and the sport moved from indoor to outdoor. The field transformed from a hourglass form to today's rectangular form. The balls became better and better and later wooden rackets were replaced by carbon ones. So you could hit harder. The net umpire was replaced by a machine – which was I think a shame and not good for entertainment. And a hawk-eye was introduced, so there are no more discussions about the ball being in or out. But all that time the strange scoring system remained the same.

Fifteen love..... Thirty love.... Forty Love.... Game

The most heard story is that it came from using a clock as a scoreboard... It started with 15 (pause), 30 (pause), 45 (pause), 60 . However to make sure you could not win a game by one point, the idea of deuce (which means two to play) was introduced... and to make sure the score stayed within the 60 ticks they changed 45 to 40. So if it was 40 – 40, the first player to score got 10 points, and if he scored again the clock moved to 60... or back to 40 if he missed...

Simple, right?

But why do they say fifteen LOVE? It most likely comes from the French word for egg, l'oeuf. Because, of course, an egg looks like a zero.

But why say egg when you just can say zero? Nobody knows... but the French later understood it was strange and changed l'oeuf to zero. The English speaking people however kept saying love. I think it is because it sounds so nice. It is after all the most beautiful word in the English language... And they do *loove* the game. And of course they have forgotten it originally meant egg. Because let's be honest even for tennis birds Fifteen – Egg sounds very, very strange....

**Really!**

