

# TENNIS NEUTRAL

## Nick Kyrgios Foundation's "Tennis Neutral": User Story

### Thomas Hatcher-Nee

At 16, **Tom Hatcher-Nee** reckons he's in for the long haul. Ask for his favourite player and he'll say John Millman. Why? Because Millman really only came to prominence in his late '20s. Tom is doing well, with a growing wealth of national and international experience, titles and an increasing number of ITF points to his credit. But he reckons, like Millman, he's years away from his breakthrough into the very top rank of players. And that, like Millman, he'll keep going till he gets there.



*In action at 2023 Pizzly Cup*

"Millman is a great trainer," says Tom, "Works his arse off."

"Sam Grothe is another player I really admire. He was never at the top as a junior but he got by. Then he came good, really good, as an adult."

While not as big as Grothe, the leftie makes up for what he lacks in size and power with speed and intelligent ball placement. And he's putting time in at the gym as he continues to grow.

With his determined and mature approach, Tom gets a lot of support. He's quick to thank parents, coaches including Alan Jones, Milo Bradley, Brydan Klein and James Frawley, and Tennis ACT.

"I'm training a lot and they're always there to support me."

Tom gets good support from the Tennis Neutral app as well.

"Especially when playing someone higher ranked," he says. "Use to be if I was playing someone I thought was better, I'd go all out from the get-go, swinging too much, narrow margins, and be down a set before I settled."

"Now I check Tennis Neutral before the match and see what UTR expects. I start out with that in mind and if I'm on par after a set, I turn it up from there. Better outcomes.

"Otherwise I might check Tennis Neutral afterwards. One thing I've noticed is that if our UTRs are close it's basically about winning the match to get the UTR positive bonus. That's good to know."

He reckons though, that the app is not for everyone.

"For the younger players, it could be a distraction. For them, maybe better if their parents have Tennis Neutral and help their kids."



## The “Tennis Neutral” app



Tom and state schools teammates check results on the app

- download from Google’s PlayStore and Apple’s AppStore
- for competitive players, parents and coaches engaging with UTR
- set ‘UTR positive’ target scores for matches
- lower stress levels
- nuance knowledge of player performance under different circumstances

Available worldwide since 2023, the NKF’s Tennis Neutral (TN) app takes the UTRs of any two players and returns the ratio of games that UTR’s algorithm predicts the players will win in a match, together with example results. It can also take a match result and determine for which player the result is UTR positive.

“Inspiration for the app came from the stress many younger players were under because they didn’t know what score they needed to get a UTR positive result,” said TN producer Ric Curnow. “Knowing where the neutral point lies removes most of that stress, regardless of the actual match outcome.”

The app was developed around an algorithm derived by a team of volunteers from the Australian National University, building on earlier work by PhD students from Columbia University in the US.



A promotional banner for the Tennis Neutral app. On the left, a smartphone displays the app's interface with two main sections: "Predictor" and "Calculator". The "Predictor" section asks to estimate the UTR neutral point between two players and has a "Go to the Predictor" button. The "Calculator" section asks if a match result is positive or negative relative to a player's UTR and has a "Go to the Calculator" button. The background is green with a large yellow tennis ball graphic. On the right, the text "TENNIS NEUTRAL" is written in large white letters, followed by the tagline "Estimate where the UTR neutral point lies between players with different UTRs." At the bottom right is the NKF foundation logo, which consists of a stylized 'N' and 'K' in purple and green, followed by the word "foundation" in blue.

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Estimate where the UTR neutral point lies between players with different UTRs.

