

# Short Tennis Development in China: A Comprehensive Review of Development, Implementation and Educational Value

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## Abstract

This paper reviews the development and implementation of short tennis in China and its educational value. By analysing several studies, this paper finds that short tennis has been widely promoted and applied in China, especially in enhancing children's physical and mental qualities with remarkable results. The curriculum and scientific training programme of short tennis are crucial for the development of children's interest and skills in the sport. Studies have also shown that short tennis has a positive effect on children's coordination, speed, endurance and teamwork. Although there are some challenges in the promotion process, such as the limitation of venues and equipment, and the lack of professional coaches, these problems can be effectively solved through policy support and educational improvement. The paper concludes with suggestions for future research to further promote the development and popularisation of short tennis in China.

**Keywords:** Short Tennis, Child Development, Physical Quality, Mental Quality, Educational Value

## Introduction

As a form of sport suitable for children and beginners, short tennis has been widely noticed and promoted in China in recent years. The sport is not only important for improving students' physical fitness and cultivating sports interests, but also plays a key role in promoting the popularity and development of tennis. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the development history of short tennis in China, its implementation strategies and its multiple values for education.

Short tennis is a kind of children's tennis training programme developed for children's physical and mental development (Wen, Zhang, & Long, 2019). As a simplified and reduced version of formal tennis, short tennis has all the connotations of tennis and is suitable for the physiological and psychological characteristics of children of all ages from 4 years old and above, it is an effective method of children's initiation training and a scientific way to connect with formal tennis (China Tennis Association Youth Tennis Development Alliance, 2016). Short tennis is not only a sport, but also an educational tool for comprehensive development.

Research shows that short tennis has a significant role in cultivating students' social adaptability, improving physical coordination and developing psychological quality(Xu, 2022)(Xiao, 2022) (Dong, 2018). The training content of short tennis is scientific and rich, which is in line with children's physical and mental development, and can develop children's intellectual, emotional and physical qualities, so as to promote children's comprehensive and coordinated development(Wang, 2023). In addition, as a kind of interesting sports activities, short tennis can stimulate children's interest in sports and help them develop the habit of lifelong exercise(Wang, 2019). This is not only in line with the requirements of quality education, but also provides strong support for the implementation of the national fitness programme. The popularisation and promotion of short tennis has laid a solid foundation for cultivating future tennis talents and expanding the tennis population (Liang, 2020).

### **Methodology**

At present, the research on short tennis in China shows an increasing trend. By checking China Knowledge Network, Wanfang and other search sites, it can be found that the total number of relevant literature issued is about 294 articles. Under the active promotion of domestic policies, scholars' enthusiasm for research on short tennis and the teaching of primary school students is also increasing, and more and more scholars are devoting themselves to it, which plays a positive role in promoting the development of tennis and short tennis. The research mainly focuses on three aspects: firstly, the investigation and research on the current situation of short tennis in various regions; secondly, the feasibility study on the promotion of short tennis; and thirdly, the research on the teaching and training of short tennis and the influence of children.

In this review, we systematically reviewed and analyzed existing literature to explore the development, implementation, and educational value of short tennis in China. We conducted literature searches using databases such as China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), Wanfang Database, and Google Scholar. Keywords included "short tennis," "child development," "physical education," and "promotion of short tennis in China." We included relevant literature published from 1990 to 2023. The inclusion criteria required the literature to involve the promotion and implementation of short tennis in China, as well as its impact on children's physical and psychological development. Irrelevant literature, such as studies focusing on the development of short tennis in other countries or literature not related to educational value, was excluded. We systematically categorized and summarized the selected literature, extracting and analyzing key data and conclusions to determine the promotion strategies, implementation effects, and educational value of short tennis. A comprehensive analysis of the results from different studies was performed, identifying commonalities and differences to provide integrated conclusions and recommendations. Through this methodology, we systematically reviewed the development process, implementation status, and potential educational value of short tennis in China, providing a theoretical foundation and practical reference for future research and practice.

### **Development of Short Tennis**

This section will discuss in detail the development of short tennis in China, including its introduction, promotion and key milestones.

Short tennis is a sport that follows children's physical and mental developmental characteristics and load capacity, and follows the principles of tennis, using scaled-down

equipment and courts to gain knowledge and enjoyment of the game (China Tennis Association, 2000). Short tennis originated in Sweden in the late 1970's and was known as mini tennis (Chen & Zhao, 2020), then gradually became popular in Europe and the United States and rapidly spread worldwide. In 1990, the International Lawn Tennis Association formally recognised and accepted the sport as a development project, and in 1995 the International Tennis Federation (ITF) formally formulated and published the Short Tennis Promotional Plan, recognising that short tennis is the ideal method of children's training. The short game was recognised as the most ideal method of training for children (China Tennis Association Youth Tennis Development Alliance, 2016).

In 1993, short tennis was introduced into China, and in 1996, the State General Administration of Sports issued a notice on "Regulations on Promoting and Carrying out short tennis in China", and began to promote and popularise short tennis in China (Yan, 2018). In the same year, short tennis was identified by the Chinese Tennis Association as "the hope project of Chinese tennis" (China Tennis Association Youth Tennis Development Alliance, 2016), and in 1998, the Chinese Tennis Association formulated and promulgated the "short tennis Junior Star Promotion Competition System", which provided a standardised competition and evaluation system for the promotion of short tennis in China. In 2008, short tennis was included as a topic of the "Eleventh Five-Year Plan" scientific research programme, and was developed and studied in the curriculum of Physical Education and Health. In 2015, in order to further carry out the directive spirit of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council on youth sports, implement the "Medium- and Long-Term Plan for Cultivation of Competitive Sports Reservists for Olympic Sports" of the General Administration of Sport, and comprehensively deepen sports reform, the Chinese Tennis Association has developed and promulgated the "Short Tennis Junior Star Promotion Game System". Planning", comprehensively deepen the sports reform, and explore a new way of the market economic law of tennis project, the China Tennis Association Children's Tennis Development Union was established, which creates an opportunity for children who are willing to learn tennis to communicate and compete, and builds a platform for children's physical and mental development. In 2017, the General Office of China's Ministry of Education issued a Notice on the Pilot Work of National Youth Campus Tennis, and formulated the Basic Standards for National Youth Campus Tennis Characteristic Schools (for Trial Implementation) as a way to promote the development of campus tennis, thus further exploring the value of tennis in nurturing people (Liang, 2020). Short tennis has been listed by the National School Sports Federation as one of the first batch of emerging sports to be promoted to the whole country (Chen, 2018).

### **Implementation of Short Tennis**

Short tennis has been widely promoted and applied in China, mainly using specialised equipment and facilities. These facilities not only enhance children's interest in the sport, but also effectively reduce sports injuries (Xu, 2022).

a. Small courts: Standard tennis courts are larger, while short tennis courts are about one-third the size of a standard tennis court, similar to the size of a piece of badminton court (Yan, 2018), which is more suitable for children. China has added to its short tennis courts a teeing area shaped like a standard tennis court, with a length of 3.7 metres and a width of 3.05 metres, allowing children to have the same experience as on a standard court (Liang, 2020).

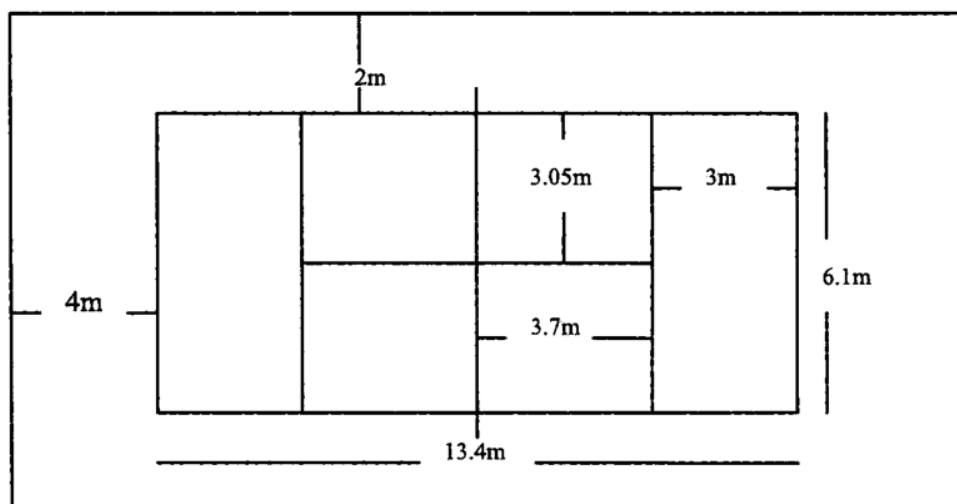


Figure 1 Short tennis court standards set by China

b. Slow tennis ball speed: The short tennis ball is a lightweight sponge ball used to standardise the technical movements of children under 6 years of age. However, since the sponge ball is very different from the regular tennis ball, in order to be able to practice better with the standard tennis ball, a transition tennis ball (red, orange, green) has been developed for children aged 7-12 years old, which has a lower air pressure of 25%, 50% and 75%, respectively, so that it has more impact on the impact of the ball, which has more impact on the formation of the standardised technical movements (Yan, 2018).c. Small short tennis racquets : Short tennis racquets are similar in shape and material to traditional regular tennis racquets, but are lighter in weight and smaller in size, being 50-70% of regular tennis racquets in terms of weight and size. The weight of the racket is normally between 140g-220g(Wang, 2019).



Figure 2 Short tennis Transitional tennis

In recent years, short tennis has developed rapidly in China. The introduction and promotion of short tennis has benefited from the strong support of China's policies and the active participation of all sectors of society. The State General Administration of Sports and the Ministry of Education have issued policies to include short tennis in the physical education programmes of primary and secondary schools, encouraging schools to offer short tennis courses to cultivate young people's interest and skills in tennis. Against this background,

schools and communities all over the world have launched short tennis activities to provide more children with opportunities to participate in tennis and promote their all-round development. However, the promotion process still faces some notable challenges. For example, equipment and venue constraints are a major issue. Although the venue and equipment requirements for short tennis are low, it is still difficult to meet the demand in some areas with limited resources (Xu, 2022). In addition, the lack of professional coaches also limits the promotion of short tennis. Short tennis needs professional coaches to provide guidance, but at present, many districts lack sufficient professional coaches, which has a certain impact on the quality of the programme (Shi, 2014). The lack of social and parental awareness of and attention to short tennis, leading to low participation, is also an important challenge (Wang, 2019).

### **The Educational Value of Short Tennis in China**

#### *Skill Development*

As a child-friendly form of sport, short tennis helps students develop basic tennis skills. Using smaller rackets and softer tennis balls, short tennis is suitable for children's physiological characteristics, enabling them to master and practise basic tennis skills more easily. For example, basic movement drills such as in-situ racket, catching the ball with both hands and hitting a stationary ball can effectively improve children's forehand and backhand hitting skills (Wang, 2019). This adaptive design not only helps students learn faster, but also lays a solid foundation for their tennis skills.

#### *Physical Fitness Improvement*

Short tennis significantly improves the physical fitness of Chinese children and children who are beginners. Studies have shown that children trained in short tennis perform significantly better in physical fitness tests such as the 50 metre run, lung capacity, rope skipping and seated forward bending (Tang, 2022). The training content is scientific, rich, in line with the physical and mental development of children, and can enhance children's strength, speed, flexibility and endurance (Wang, 2023). In addition, short tennis training has a significant effect on the development of children's displacement and control movements, especially in improving body coordination and reaction speed (Shi, 2014). Qin Jing pointed out in her study that short tennis promotes the development of various aspects during children's sports, improves children's flexibility, coordination, speed, endurance and explosive power, and also mobilises the coordination of the whole body and completes the coherent movement from the waist to the elbow (Qin, 2006).

#### *Cultivation of Psychological Quality and Enhancement of Social Adaptability*

Short tennis is not only beneficial to physical health, but also plays an important role in the enhancement of psychological and social adaptability. Liu Jianhua and Ding Li believe that short tennis brings many benefits to children's physiological and psychological development. Short tennis can help children to develop the good qualities of endeavour and progress (Liu & Ding, 1998). Sun Baobing pointed out that short tennis has the following effects on the psychological quality of primary school students: short tennis improves students' courageous quality; short tennis improves students' ability to solve difficulties; short tennis improves students' interpersonal relationship; short tennis can sharpen students' willpower (Sun, 2020). Participation in short tennis training can enhance children's self-confidence and develop teamwork and social skills. For example, through team games and co-operation

training in short tennis, children can learn how to work with others and improve their communication skills and team awareness. In addition, the fun and competitive nature of short tennis can stimulate children's interest in participating and bring great enjoyment(Xu, 2022).

## **Conclusions & Suggestions**

### *Conclusions*

The Chinese short tennis programme has shown significant advantages in education and social development. Firstly, through the training of short tennis, children were able to master basic tennis skills, such as forehand and backhand stroke techniques, which improved their athletic ability and interest. Secondly, short tennis has a significant effect on children's physical fitness, including improved co-ordination, sensitivity and balance). In addition, short tennis also has a positive impact on children's psychological and social adaptability, enhancing self-confidence and developing teamwork and social skills.

In summary, short tennis, as an emerging children's sport, has shown great potential and value in its development and implementation in China. Through policy support and the joint efforts of schools and communities, short tennis has played an important role in promoting children's physical and mental health, enhancing the quality of education and promoting fitness for all. In the future, with more research and practice, short tennis will play an even greater role in physical education and national fitness in China.

### **Suggestions**

Although the development of short tennis in China has achieved remarkable results, there are still some challenges in its implementation and popularisation, such as the limitation of equipment and venues, the lack of professional coaches, and the lack of social and parental awareness of short tennis. To address these challenges, improvements can be made by renovating existing sports facilities, training more professional coaches, and raising social and parental awareness.

Future studies should further expand the sample and geographical coverage to explore the impact of short tennis on children of different age groups and backgrounds, as well as the effectiveness of its implementation in different educational settings. Through these studies, the benefits of short tennis can be better understood and enhanced, providing theoretical support for its promotion and popularisation across the country.

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