



Yonex equips the sport's hottest star, Naomi Osaka, winner of the last two Grand Slams. Novak Djokovic and John Isner couldn't have more different playing styles, and the characteristics of their Head and Prince frames reflect their disparate games.

the racquet? Most people wouldn't feel that, but to a lot of these players, that's a big difference."

Before the 2019 season, Jean-Christophe Verborg, international sports marketing director for Babolat, adjusted the strings on Dominic Thiem's racquet to help him hit a heavier ball. In Florida, the up-and-comer Felix Auger-Aliassime was making similar tweaks.

Thiem began playing with Babolat in 2014, not long before solidifying his place inside the ATP Top 20, while Auger-Aliassime has been swinging Babolat frames long before joining the professional ranks. Their lengths of time with the company pale in comparison to its most famous endorsee, Nadal, who has played with Babolat racquets since he was 11 years old. It's a model used by many racquet companies, who scout the junior ranks and tournaments to establish long-term relationships from an early age.

AP, GETTY IMAGES

#### RECREATIONAL TECH

## Should You Make The Switch?

Anyone who's ever hit a forehand can't help but be transfixed by the feats that the professionals pull off with their racquets, which look like magic wands in their hands. But while Grand Slam glory is unattainable for all but the absolute best, that doesn't mean you shouldn't be willing to experiment with your equipment to get the most out of your game.

Brian Jordan, director of tennis at the Grand Hotel in Fairhope, AL, works with a variety of players, from high-school athletes to top-ranked juniors to adults and club players competing in leagues. When he's developing a player, he monitors and adjusts their frames as they get older.

"With juniors, I tend to ease them into a player's racquet," he says. "I start them off with something that generates more spin. As they get older and develop more muscle, they'll transition to a frame that offsets the change: instead of hitting the ball two feet out, it'll come back to a couple of feet in."

It's usually a different process for adults, Jordan finds, as they've grown more accustomed to the type of racquet they feel comfortable with.

"Adults tend to keep their racquets, and experiment with types of string and different tensions," he says.

If players are looking to switch frames, Jordan suggests demoing different

options, but it's crucial to put a racquet through the rigors of match play as opposed to just knocking a ball back and forth.

"People get in the rhythm of hitting," he says. "I recommend getting out there and playing a set to put the racquet through all types of conditions."

With modern racquet technology, Jordan says players shouldn't hold back if they feel their game needs something extra—citing the fact that many professionals are always looking for a similar edge.

"Federer, Nadal, Djokovic: All three of those guys have made a switch," he says. "There's no reason the average player shouldn't be willing to switch, too."