

Babolat RPM Blast Rough 16



Babolat RPM Blast Rough is a textured geometric monofilament polyester string. According to Babolat, it offers maximum spin thanks to its octagonal cross-section, surface roughness and “cross-linked silicone,” which allows the string to “bite” the ball better.

Babolat says RPM Blast Rough is designed for competitive and performance players seeking the highest levels of spin, along with great response and control.

RPM Blast Rough is available in 16 and 17 gauges in black, red and yellow. It is priced from \$15 for 40-foot sets, with quantity price breaks available.

For more information or to order, contact Babolat at 877-316-9435, or visit www.babolat.com/strings. Be sure to read the conclusion for more information about getting a free set to try for yourself.

In the Lab

We tested the 16-gauge RPM Blast Rough in black. The coil measured 38 feet, one inch (Babolat assures us the length of the retail sets will be 40 feet). The diameter measured 1.26 mm prior to stringing, and

1.24 mm after stringing. We recorded a string-bed stiffness of 73 RDC units immediately after stringing at 60 pounds in a Wilson Pro Staff 6.1 95 (16 x 18 pattern) on a constant-pull machine.

After 24 hours (no playing), string-bed stiffness measured 69 RDC units, representing a five percent tension loss. Our control string, Prince Synthetic Gut Original Gold 16, measured 84 RDC units immediately after stringing and 77 RDC units after 24 hours, representing an eight percent tension loss. In lab testing, Prince Synthetic Gut Original has a stiffness of 217 and a tension loss of 11.67 pounds, while Babolat RPM Blast Rough 16 has a stiffness of 206 and a tension loss of 18.21 pounds. RPM Blast Rough 16 added 16.5 grams to the weight of our unstrung frame.

The string was tested for five weeks by 26 USRSA playtesters, with NTRP ratings from 3.5 to 5.5. These are blind tests, with playtesters receiving unmarked strings in unmarked packages. The average number of hours playtested was 29.9.

No playtester broke the sample during stringing. Six reported problems with coil memory, one reported problems tying knots, none reported friction burn and one reported other problems.

On the Court

Our playtest team appreciated the Spin Potential of Babolat RPM Blast Rough, ranking it 12th highest in this category of the 196 strings we have playtested for publication to date. Our team also ranked RPM Blast Rough well above average in Durability, Resistance to Movement and Control. As a result, Babolat RPM Blast Rough ranked well above average overall.

No playtesters reported premature fraying or peeling, one reported buzzing and one reported notching. Two playtesters broke the sample during the test period, one at six hours and one at 65 hours.

Conclusion

Competitive and performance players are bound to value RPM Blast Rough’s features. It received the highest durability rating of Babolat strings we have tested, as well as the best rating for Resistance to Movement. For players who want to look at more than numbers, the shape and texture of RPM Blast Rough are obvious selling points.

If you think that Babolat RPM Blast Rough might be for you, fill out the coupon on the following page to get a free set of string to try. —Greg Raven

Playtester Comments

“While challenging to install initially due to the texture, the string held tension well and allowed for excellent spin without changing my swing path. This would be a great string for a moderate- to high-level player seeking more spin and durability.”

4.0 male all-court player using Wilson Burn 100S strung at 54 pounds CP (Wilson Revolve 17)

“This string is my new favorite. I played a week-long, high-level tournament with it,

Playtester Ratings:

Ease of Stringing
(compared to other strings)
Much easier: 2
Somewhat easier: 3
About as easy: 11
Not quite as easy: 9
Not nearly as easy: 0
Overall Playability
(compared to the string played most often)
Much better: 2
Somewhat better: 5
About as playable: 5
Not quite as playable: 11
Not nearly as playable: 3
Overall Durability
(compared to other strings of similar gauge)
Much better: 6
Somewhat better: 6
About as durable: 11
Not quite as durable: 3
Not nearly as durable: 0
Rating Averages
From 1 to 5 (best)
Playability: 3.3
Durability: 4.2
Power: 3.3
Control: 3.6
Comfort: 3.1
Touch/Feel: 3.1
Spin Potential: 3.9
Holding Tension: 3.3
Resistance to Movement: 3.9

along with a lot of balls hit in practice and teaching sets. Great pop. Spin is excellent and it still hit well after nine sets. I did not feel that it lost tension over that time."

5.0 male baseliner with heavy spin using Wilson Blade strung at 54/53 pounds CP (Kevlar/Nylon 16)

"This string played very well. Had good pop on the serve. Comfortable on ground-strokes. Not bad touch with volleys." 4.0 male serve-and-volley player using Prince Textreme Warrior strung at 35/37 pounds LO (Prince Warrior Hybrid Touch 16)

"Nice feel, making the string easy to install. The texture was great for spin and bite." 5.0 male serve-and-volley player using Wilson Pro Staff RF strung at 55 pounds LO (Gamma Live Wire Pro 16)

"This felt like a good working string that is average and predictable, which is a compliment. At the right price it would make a good stock string for someone who wants

a softer feel." 4.0 male baseliner with moderate spin using Babolat Pure Drive strung at 55 pounds CP (Babolat VS 16)

"If I liked an all-polyester string bed, this would be a candidate." 4.5 male touch player using Babolat Strike strung at 55/52 pounds CP (Babolat VS/Babolat RPM Blast 16/17)

"Pretty good string. Nothing out of the ordinary." 5.0 male all-court player using Wilson BLX 5 strung at 55/57 pounds LO (Wilson NXT 16/17)

"Not a bad string, but not something that I would use." 5.0 male all-court player using Head Prestige strung at 58 pounds LO (Prince 16)

"Not my favorite string. It was harsh and hurt my arm." 3.5 male baseliner with heavy spin using Wilson BLX Blade 98 strung at 58.5 pounds LO (Wilson Natural Gut 17) ■

(Strings normally used by testers are in parentheses. For the rest of the tester comments, visit tennisindustrymag.com.)

FREE PLAYTEST STRING PROGRAM

Babolat will send a free set of RPM Blast Rough to the first 500 **USRSA members** who cut out (or copy) this coupon and send it to:

USRSA, Attn: Babolat String Offer, 310 Richard Arrington Jr. Blvd. North, Suite 400, Birmingham, AL 35203 or fax to 760-536-1171,

or email the info below to: stringsample@racquettech.com.

Offer expires Jan. 15, 2017. Offer only available to USRSA members in the U.S.

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USRSA Member number: _____

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