

AskTheExperts



Dust Magnet

Q: I like to keep my stringing area clean, but when I string a racquet with a polyester string, it's a magnet for dust. Do you have any recommendations for avoiding this problem?

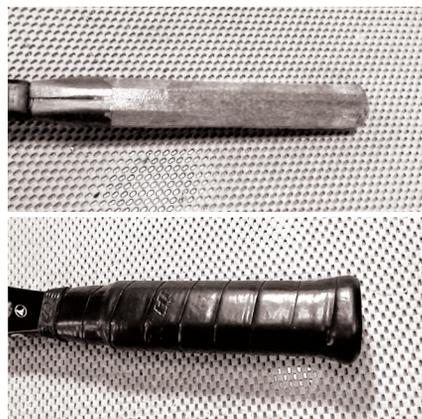
A: Some strings are more prone to holding a static charge and attracting debris than others, with polyesters high on the list. I don't have a good solution for this specific problem, other than keeping your work area as clean as possible—which you are clearly doing already. If your work area is carpeted, try covering the floor with a large mat, as nylon carpets can also create static.

Other stringers suggest keeping a shop rag on hand to wipe down the string before starting. I have also heard that dampening the rag with a fabric softener product helps reduce static. But before trying that, I would check with the manufacturer to see if there is any chance that it could harm the string. Best of luck.

Butt Cap Modifications

Q: I read with interest your Q & A about "Flared Butt Caps" in the March 2019 edition of Ask The Experts. I have the

opposite question: I prefer a more rounded butt cap—is there any way to achieve that? For example, my current racquet is a Wilson Four BLX 105. The butt cap is too flared for me. Is there any way to reduce the flare? Can you substitute a different manufacturer's butt cap for Wilson's?



A: Most butt caps have some flare to them, but as you note, the angle of the flare can vary, as can the edge. Some butt caps have a rounded edge, while others are sharper. You should be able to find one that meets your need and swap them out. Most brands have slight variances in the shape of their handles, so fitting another brand's cap may take some work to either stretch it or fill the void to make a snug fit.

If the butt caps you're finding all have too much flare, all is not lost. I worked

with a collegiate tennis player once who preferred the hockey-stick feel of his racquet handle, with no butt cap. When I prepared his racquets, the butt caps were removed, and the grips were then applied from the end of the bare handle. We used black paint to color the butt of the handle for aesthetic reasons, and used an extra application of 3M double-sided tape to make the grip material adhere better, although you can expect it will unravel more easily.

I would caution that using this method makes the racquet harder to hold, especially on serves and overheads, so be careful.

Stencil Ink Clogs

Q: I cannot find a bottle of white stencil ink that doesn't clog up the tip before I go through the entire bottle. I'm wondering if you've tried different inks, and which one you might recommend. I've asked this to other stringers, and many are frustrated and have stopped using white ink. What do tour stringing teams use?

A: That is a problem that has frustrated stringers for decades and there is no simple answer. It happens with all stencil ink, but white is usually the worst.

At pro-tour events, the ink gets constant use and doesn't have time to dry out. We usually start with fresh bottles and go through several bottles of each color.

At one time, Gosen sold replacement felt tips for stencil ink bottles, so changing to a new tip would extend the life of the bottle. Check with your suppliers to see if they are still being sold.

Other remedies I've encountered include storing your stencil ink bottles in the refrigerator and placing them upside down, so that the ink pad stays wet. I have not personally tried the fridge storage, but often at tournaments the bottles are stored upside down. Just be careful that the caps are in place and secured! ■

We welcome your questions. Email them to bob@racquettech.com.