

Prince Precision Tuning Center

The Prince Precision Tuning Center (PTC) is a machine that allows you to measure the weight, balance, and swingweight of tennis, racquetball, squash, and badminton racquets. Even though many of these measurements are available to USRSA members, published measurements are representative only, which means that any given customer's racquet may differ from the published specs. If a customer wants specific specs for his racquet, the Prince PTC allows you to generate your own before-and-after measurements to see what changes are needed (if any), and what effect your changes have made once you're done.

The dealer price of the PTC is \$1,799. For a limited time, Prince is offering a \$300 discount off this price and is including a free one-year USRSA membership worth \$109.

Setting up the PTC requires some easy assembly, using included tools. Prince recommends leveling the PTC during set-up, and the swingweight tester houses a bubble indicator for this purpose.

PROS

The PTC combines three measuring devices in one compact package. The PTC's "footprint" is less than that of three separate units, and the attractive design gives it an impressively professional appearance. At 20 inches wide, 13.5 inches deep, and 9.5 inches high, the PTC is small enough and light enough (just over 20 pounds) that it can easily be transported, although, as with any precision device, you should pack it with care for shipping.

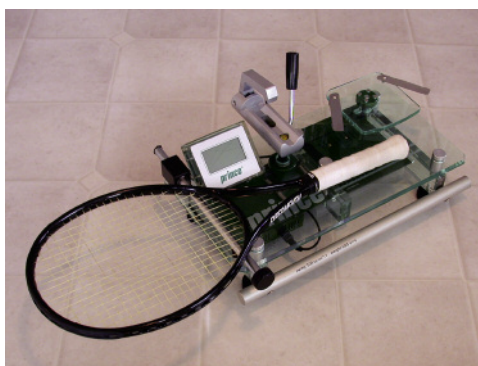
The scale measures mass in grams. The clear glass platform is about the same size as other scales, but on the PTC, there are two flip-out "wings" to support oversize racquets, a very nice touch. The large LCD screen shows the scale reading with one-half gram resolution. Readings are accurate to within one gram.

The balance board measures racquet balance in centimeters and inches, and the scale is etched into the glass for good legibility. The front of the balance bar is flush with the front of the PTC, but it slides out to handle extra-wide racquets. The surface

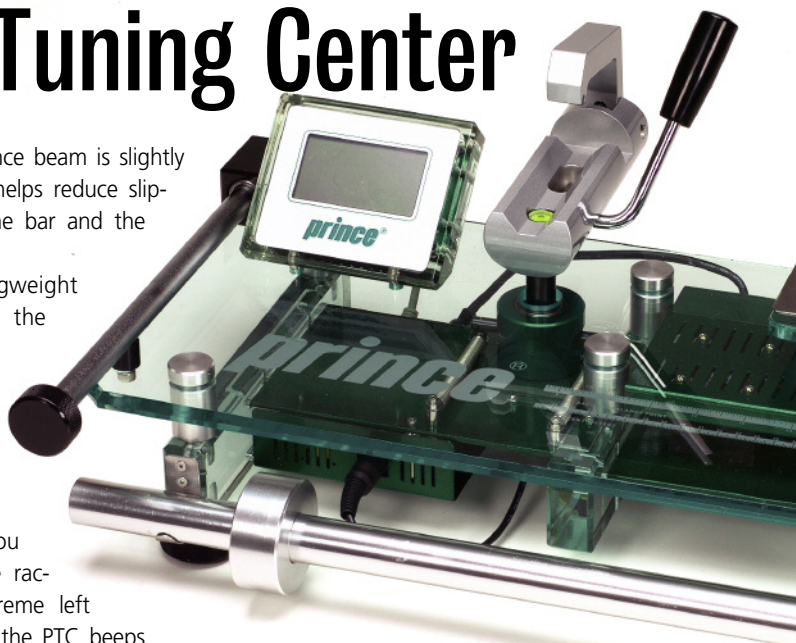
of the steel balance beam is slightly textured, which helps reduce slip-page between the bar and the racquet.

The swingweight tester features the industry-standard spring-loaded snap-over clamp to hold the racquet handle. After mounting the racquet, you simply rotate the racquet to the extreme left and hold it until the PTC beeps, then release the racquet. The read-out appears on the LCD screen, both as a numeral and as a scale that reads from 0 to 400. The swingweight tester makes use of a state-of-the-art optical sensor for generating readings. Swingweight readings are in $\text{kg}\cdot\text{cm}^2$, and correspond with industry-standard readings from other machines, so you'll know immediately if you're in the ballpark or not.

The PTC can be configured to allow swingweight testing of racquetball racquets, which is difficult or impossible on some other machines, and the range of swingweight readings is wide enough that you can test everything from badminton racquets to super long, super head-heavy tennis racquets. In the case of the latter,



the scale at the bottom tops out at 400, no matter how much higher the actual reading shown on the numerical display. Readings are accurate to within $2 \text{ kg}\cdot\text{cm}^2$.



The PTC comes with a calibration bar that allows you to check both the scale and the swingweight tester. Adjustments are easily made with the included screwdriver.

The PTC also comes with a translucent cover, an owner's manual, and a one-year warranty. The voltage is selectable between 110V and 220V.

The modular design of the PTC is said to allow Prince to add more features later.

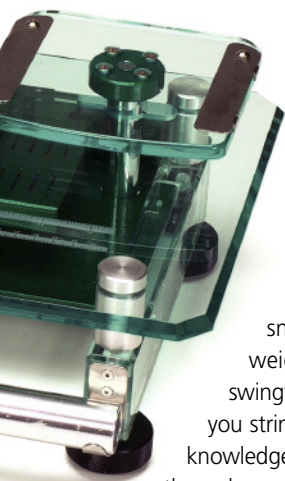
CONS

The only drawbacks to the PTC are that it currently offers no method for testing racquet flex or stringbed stiffness. However, most tennis players—even those wanting matched racquets—are not going to buy additional frames to replace existing frames that are otherwise good except for the flex. Stringbed stiffness, which is good to check as a quality control step after stringing, is of limited use over time, if for no other reason than that tennis players are not accustomed to having the stringbed stiffness checked as a gauge for when to restring.

CONCLUSION

Prince foresees a big growth in racquet customization, and machines such as the PTC make that possible. Even if you currently have a scale and balance board, the compactness and calibration ability of the PTC are big selling points, as is the fact

that it looks great in your shop. It does lack flex and stringbed stiffness testing, but it's also less expensive than units with these features, and the scale and balance board are superior in the PTC. If you simply must have flex and stringbed stiffness readings, there is equipment out there that do only these tests, and the combined cost of the PTC and the outboard flex tester is less than that of an all-in-one unit.



With the PTC, it's a snap to gather the weight, balance, and swingweight of each racquet you string. Communicating this knowledge to your customers lets them know that you know your craft and that you care about their equipment. Even if they don't make use of your customization facilities, these customers are likely to tell others of your attention to detail, which can spell more stringing work, if nothing else.

For customers who already have multiple racquets of the same type, you can sell them on customization that will make each racquet a "favorite." For customers who have a bag full of various frames from over the years, you can work with them to learn the attraction of each frame, correlate that with the measurements you're able to take, and then suggest new racquets that will play similarly (or better).

The PTC will also allow USRSA members to make fuller use of the on-line tools at RacquetTECH.com. These tools eliminate most of the calculations you will need to make during customization, suggest new frames that might match old frames based on your PTC measurements, and ease conversions (such as from points to inches or centimeters).

To get a free DVD showing the PTC in action, contact Prince at 800-2-TENNIS, or on the web at www.princetennis.com. ▶



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