

Editorial

The word love has many meanings. One of them is used on the tennis court, and not necessarily because the players desire each other. Compared to other sports like basketball, football or golf, tennis has an arguably more confusing method of score-keeping. One point brings a player to 15, two to 30, and three to 40. Having a score of zero or nil signifies *love*. That the first point in a set doesn't count as one, nor the second as two, and so on, may result from the fact that in France, where the sport was invented in the early 13th century, tennis was sometimes played for money. With each point a player could earn 15 *denier*, the local currency at the time. Why zero points is called love remains unclear, though. Is it because the game was invented long before zero found an application in practical European arithmetic in the 17th century? Or is it because, up to the 16th century, leather balls filled with sand and wool were still used in the game, sometimes having a dangerous or even deadly effect on the players?

The starting score of love:love could be read as an invitation to the opponents to treat each other tenderly, but the Oxford English Dictionary provides two more plausible theories behind tennis's affectionate name for nil. The first theory is that the word 'love' sounds similar to the French word *l'euf*, meaning 'an egg', where again the egg shows a similarity to the number zero, this time in its shape. But regardless of characteristics of sound and form, the second and more likely theory refers to the phrase 'to play for the love (of the game)'. The idea here is that if a person is playing purely for the love of the game they are less likely to be getting paid for it, thereby earning nothing/zero/nil.

The 11th issue of Pfeil Magazine does not contain any other contributions about tennis. Rather, it looks into a multitude of other meanings behind the word *love*: a positive affection and strong physical feeling which can be addressed to a friend, family, food, God, an object, or to an amorous partner or partners. This issue questions the expectations which go along with love, whether that love is returned or unanswered. Relationship patterns and role distributions are surveyed, vulnerabilities are assessed, and besides that the Love issue is also about a pregnant male seahorse, infatuation with a smiling rock, sports and much more.

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Loveletter