

Charting a match through a parent's eyes

Match charting is the foundation of CourtSide. This is the full picture of how it works, why we made each choice, and why it's deliberately *not* built like every other charting app — because you're not an analyst scoring two strangers. You're a parent in the stands, watching your own child.

"Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you. Ponder the path of your feet; then all your ways will be sure." — Proverbs 4:25–26

The difference that changes everything

Every other tennis charting app is *symmetric*. There are two players, treated as equals — "Player 1" and "Player 2" — and you assign each shot to whoever hit it. That's the correct design for a coach scouting both sides, or a ranking system, or an analyst. It is the *wrong* design for a parent.

A parent isn't refereeing a contest between strangers. You have **one** child you care about, **one** phone, usually **one** free hand, and one goal: *help my kid get better*. So CourtSide flips the whole model around a single anchor.

Your child is "the player." The person across the net is "the opponent." Every screen, every button, every stat is organized around what *your child* did. You never think in "Player 1 / Player 2." You follow one path — your own child's.

A NORMAL CHARTING APP

"A forehand winner was hit." → you decide which of two equal players gets it. Neutral. Built for analyzing a matchup.

COURTSIDE

"What did **Joven** do this point?" → the question, and the answer, always center on your child. Built for developing one player.

Start with one tap. Go as deep as you want.

You're charting live, often nervous, sometimes one-handed. So charting has four depths, and you can switch between them mid-match. Tap as little or as much as the moment allows.

Score Only One tap: who won the game. Just keep score.

Basic Serve in/out and the outcome — winner, error, ace, double fault.

Detailed Adds the shot — forehand or backhand — and where it went.

Full Adds court position, serve placement, and your read on his mental state.

WHY FOUR TIERS

A brand-new tennis mom can start by tapping who won — and still walk away with a real match record. A seasoned tennis dad can capture an inside-out forehand. Same app, same child, growing with the family instead of overwhelming the beginner. Low floor, high ceiling.

How we think about a single point

Here's the heart of it. After every point you answer one question — *"Who won this point?"* — and then the app asks the only thing that matters for development: *"What was your child's role in it?"* There are exactly six ways a point can end, and for each one we capture the piece that teaches you something about your kid.

WHAT HAPPENED

WHAT COURTSIDE RECORDS (AND WHY)

Your child hits a **winner**

His winning shot + direction. *His weapon — how he ends points on his own terms.*

Your child **forces the error** (he wins)

His **forcing shot** + direction, and the opponent's error wing. *The aggressive shot that broke the opponent down — see below, this is the big one.*

Opponent **gives it away** (their unforced error / double fault)

Just the outcome — a free point. *Your child didn't do anything to learn from, so we don't make you tap detail you don't have.*

Your child's **unforced error** (he loses)

His shot, direction, and *how* it missed (net/long/wide/shank). *His own mistakes are the #1 thing to work on.*

Your child's **forced error** (he loses)

His shot + direction, and the opponent's forcing shot. *What beats him — his defensive exposure.*

Opponent is **too good** (their winner / ace)

The opponent's winning shot. *That's the record of how your child got beaten.*

WHY ORGANIZE IT THIS WAY

Because the parent's real question is never "what happened in the abstract?" It's "what did *my kid* do, and what does it tell me?" Every row centers the detail on your child; the opponent appears only as context or as the reason your child lost the point.

The shot that wins points — without being a winner

This is the change that matters most, and it's the clearest example of the parent's lens in action. Picture it: Joven crushes a heavy forehand, the opponent stretches wide and nets the reply. **Joven won that point** — with his forehand. He earned it.

But a normal charting app records it as the opponent's error, on the opponent's racket, and throws Joven's forehand away entirely. The shot that actually *won the point* vanishes from your child's record. That's backwards for a parent.

A forced error is your child's offensive achievement, not just the opponent's failure. So when your child forces the error, we record *your child's forcing shot* — the weapon that did the work — right alongside the opponent's miss.

You saw: Joven's forehand forces the opponent into a netted reply. **Joven wins.**

Joven won → Forced error → What did Joven hit? Forehand, inside-out →

What did the opponent miss? Forehand

It works both ways. When your child gets *forced into* an error, we record his shot under pressure *and* what the opponent hit to force it — so you learn what beats him, not just that he missed.

WHY IT'S WORTH THE EXTRA TAP

In Joven's real 6–3, 6–3 win over Stellan, he *forced 9 errors*. Without this, all nine of those points would say "the opponent missed a forehand" — and you'd have zero record of how your son actually won nearly a third of the points he took. Now you do.

"Is he hunting his forehand?" — inside-out and inside-in

The best junior baseliners run around their backhand to hit a forehand instead. It's a tell — it means the player is *aggressively looking for his weapon*. A plain "forehand, cross-court" can't capture that the kid moved his feet to make it happen.

So on a forehand, the direction choice isn't three options — it's five:

Cross-court

Down-the-line

Middle

Inside-out

Inside-in

Inside-out and inside-in are forehands hit *after running around the backhand* — one captures direction *and* footwork in a single tap.

WHY ONE TAP, NOT A NEW STEP

Inside-out and inside-in already *are* directions (out goes to the opponent's backhand, in goes down the line). Folding them into the direction button means no extra work courtside — but it unlocks a "run-around forehand %," your direct answer to "is he hunting his forehand?" Backhands keep three options; run-around backhands are rare.

Every button names the player

The single most confusing moment in charting is "wait — whose error was that?" We removed the guesswork entirely: every prompt says the name out loud.

CONFUSING

"Unforced Error"

"Winner"

"What shot?"

Whose? You're left to remember.

COURTSIDE

"Joven's Unforced Error"

"Stellan's Winner"

"What did Joven hit to force it?"

You always know whose shot you're logging.

The hardest call stays yours — and we keep the real words

Forced error versus unforced error is the most subjective judgment in tennis. We thought hard about softening it with friendlier words. We decided against it: the families CourtSide is built for already speak this language fluently, and dumbing it down would insult them.

You make the forced/unforced call — that's the parent's job, and you're qualified to make it. We keep the standard tennis terms and teach the nuance in onboarding, rather than inventing watered-down words a tennis family would never use.

WHY WE TRUST YOU WITH IT

In Joven's real match the split was 9 forced, 14 unforced for the opponent — a deliberate, coherent read of a dominant, aggressive win. That's not a coin flip; that's a parent who knows the difference. The data backs the decision.

What we deliberately don't do

- **No "Player 1 / Player 2."** No neutral, two-sided model. Your child is always the subject.
- **No rankings, leaderboards, or "who's better."** CourtSide compares your child to *themselves over time* — never to other kids.
- **No gamification.** No streaks, trophies, or confetti. Calm clipboard at the fence, not a slot machine.
- **Record once, view two ways.** Every shot is stored consistently against whoever hit it. A simple "My child / Both players" toggle on the summary lets you widen the view *without* ever changing what was recorded — so your season-long trends can never be corrupted by charting one match differently than the next.

WHY "RECORD ONCE" IS NON-NEGOTIABLE

Everything that makes CourtSide valuable — trends, progress reports, a coach's view — adds matches up over a season. If two matches were charted by different rules, that whole picture turns to noise. So the parent's choices live at the *display* layer, never the recording layer.

What it all adds up to

Here's the same Joven vs. Stellan match (6–3, 6–3 win) read back as a parent's development conversation — every line is something you can act on:

- **How he wins:** 34 winners *plus* 9 forced errors — he's genuinely aggressive, not just waiting for mistakes.
- **His weapon:** the forehand, decisively (15 forehand winners to 4 backhand) — and now we can see how often he *runs around* to hit it.
- **His pattern:** he systematically attacked the opponent's forehand side (19 forehand errors forced out of Stellan).
- **The clear thing to work on:** 10 double faults in a straight-sets win — the obvious next conversation.

A normal charting app would hand you a neutral box score of two players. CourtSide hands you *your son's game* — what's working, what's a weapon, and what to work on Monday.

What's intentionally not here yet

The forcing-shot and run-around-forehand numbers are brand new, and right now they live **on the individual match summary only**. We have deliberately *not* rolled them into the season-long **Trends** view or fed them to **AI Reflect** yet.

WHY HOLD BACK

These stats sit on top of the forced-vs-unforced judgment — the hardest call in charting. Before we let them shape long-term trends or AI-written feedback, we want to confirm they're being charted *consistently* in real matches across real families. A development metric that looks precise but is captured unevenly is worse than none. So: prove the data in live charting first, then wire it into the bigger picture. Per-match insight today; season trends once it's earned trust.

The short version

CourtSide charts a match the way a parent actually watches one: **one child at the center, every tap telling you something about them, the opponent kept only as context.** Start with one tap, go as deep as you like, and never lose track of whose shot you just recorded. That's the foundation — and it's deliberately unlike any charting app built for someone other than a parent.

CourtSide — match charting for competitive junior tennis families. Built on Proverbs 4:25–26: keep your eyes on your own child's path.

Internal walkthrough · charting model as of the May 31, 2026 design (forcing-shot capture + inside-out/inside-in forehands). See [docs/charting-model-spec.md](#) for the build spec.