The Tennis Tournament.

The Tennis Tournament is at last finished. It has not proved as much of a success as it ought, in spite of the large list of entries; and, indeed, it never will until we have the facilities for good playing that we at present lack to such a lamentable extent. But, poor as the grounds were, some exceptionally good playing was seen; and it was proved conclusively that we have ample material for making a worthy showing in the tennis arena.

It is safe to say, however, in addition, that the few good players at the Institute will positively refuse to take any interest in another tournament unless better grounds are provided on which to hold it.

Playing on poor courts is, of all things, the most detrimental to a man’s game. He is constantly confronted with difficulties, chief among them poor bounds, which would never occur on a good court, and which make it impossible for him to follow out any definite plan of action. On this account, in the best matches of the tournament, skill in handling the racket under the most difficult conditions was the only means of winning. All systematic work in forcing one’s opponent back from the net by judicious lobbing, passing him down the side lines, and nearly all of the many methods of good play, had to be abandoned. One could seldom judge where the ball would reach, or where to take it on the racket. As a result, a series of exceptionally erratic bounds could hardly fail to discourage one or the other of the players; and a match would be given up which, under the proper conditions, would have been hotly contested to the last point.

By far the most interesting match was that between Horton and Johnston for first place in the singles. The weather was perfect for tennis, and the court was in as good a condition as the rough ground would allow. The match was to be the best three in five sets,—the winner receiving the championship cup for 1890. Horton had had an easy time of it from the first round, not having lost a set; while Johnston had played four matches, one of them a very close one.

At noon, on Tuesday, November the 4th, the players took their positions on the court, Johnston serving the opening game. Every point in the first set was hotly contested, but two games were won by more than two points; while the only love game was won by Johnston on four very poor bounds in Horton’s court. Johnston won the first, second, fourth, fifth, seventh, and eleventh games; Horton, the third, sixth, eighth, ninth, tenth, twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth. Johnston was within one point of the set twice; but a ball an inch out of court in one case, and a fine “place” by Horton in the other, enabled the latter to pull out.

The second set was an easy one for Horton, —Johnston getting but three games, the first, sixth, and eighth. Horton had been playing a brilliant game; while Johnston appeared to lack confidence in his ability to play a net game, acting on the defensive and the impression that Horton would win gained ground.

This opinion was strengthened after he had obtained a lead of five games to Johnston’s three in the third set. But at this critical point Johnston took a wonderful brace, with the result that Horton failed to score in the ninth game, and got only the first and fifth points in the tenth. This tied the score, and excitement ran high. Johnston kept up his steady work, and before Horton could pull himself together, had won the set, 7-5.

Johnston won the first game in the fourth set, but Horton, by careful work, checked his opponent’s advance at this point, and won the next three games handily. Johnston then braced again, and tied the score, taking the next two games in addition. The ninth game was a hard-fought one, Horton finally winning it. He only needed the next to tie the score, when he would still have the advantage of two sets to one, but Johnston was playing too