

TENNIS WITH MARTIN

Written by

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Based on my countless matches with Martin

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EXT. WHITE SPACE

NATE (V.O.)  
I like to play tennis.

EXT. MARTIN TENNIS COURT - DAY TIME

NATE and MARTIN are walking onto a public tennis court with their bags. They place their bags down and take their rackets out.

NATE (V.O.)  
One of the people I play tennis with is a guy named Martin. If you were to look at us side by side, you'd think I'd have the clear advantage.

EXT. WHITE SPACE

NATE (V.O.)  
I'm younger by over 20 years. I'm taller, stronger, fitter, and faster! I am also an experienced tennis player!

EXT. MARTIN TENNIS COURT

NATE and MARTIN are on opposite sides of the court.

NATE (V.O.)  
But no matter what I do...

MARTIN  
You will never beat me.

NATE (V.O.)

I've never won against him! When we get into heated rallies I'll hit a decent shot and just as it's going over the net, he'll smile.

MARTIN

(Laughs)

NATE (V.O.)

When I see that smile I know I lost the point.

MARTIN appears behind the ball and hits a perfect backhand. The ball whooshes past NATE. NATE puts his head down.

MARTIN

Hey you're supposed to hit the ball!

NATE (V.O.)

But you know what? I'm tired of losing! So I started to take mental notes while I played him. I began to try different tactics on him. Like moving him side to side! Rushing the net! Over powering him!

NATE swings his racket like a baseball bat. The ball goes straight over the fence.

MARTIN

Hey, the courts are over here. We are playing tennis, not baseball!

NATE (V.O.)

Nothing I try works! The only way I can beat Martin is by getting better overall!

(MORE)

NATE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
There is no quick fix! And the only  
way to do that was to play more. I  
started to challenge random people.

EXT. PUBLIC TENNIS COURTS - DUSK

NATE confidently struts onto public tennis courts and  
challenges a person sitting down.

NATE (V.O.)  
Everybody plays tennis a little  
differently so playing against new  
people helped me get used to  
watching the ball. I learned to  
stay focused because I had no idea  
what to expect. My anticipation  
improved drastically. And after  
playing countless new people and  
beating them, I challenged Martin  
to another match.

NATE is lying on his back.

NATE (V.O.)  
Six zero six three. I did even  
worse than normal! Losing didn't  
make me want to give up. It  
actually made me try harder!!

EXT. WHITE SPACE

Nate stands looking at replays of various points during his  
match with MARTIN

NATE (V.O.)

And then I realized something there  
a group of 3 games in our match  
where I played really well. If I  
could play that way all the time I  
would definitely win.

EXT. PUBLIC TENNIS COURTS

NATE is intensely practicing.

NATE (V.O.)

During my practice I started to  
focus on how I felt during those 3  
games. I wanted to recreate the way  
I played by becoming the person I  
was during those games! How my body  
felt, my emotions. The noise in the  
air. The experience started to add  
up and I was able to hit the ball  
harder and more consistently.  
Without much effort I was now  
beating people who used to give me  
trouble.

EXT. MARTIN TENNIS COURT

Martin hits a winner past Nate.

NATE (V.O.)

Except for Martin!

EXT. WHITE SPACE

NATE is seeing training hard with each of his statements showing him getting a more intense expression on his face.

NATE (V.O.)

So I started to run! Do push ups!  
Sit ups! Stretching! I even became  
more competitive in normal day to  
day things! Throughout all of this,  
I could hear his voice.

MARTIN (V.O.)

Training to beat me? You mean  
training to lose against me.

EXT. MARTIN TENNIS COURT

NATE is looks determined as he walks onto the tennis court behind MARTIN.

NATE (V.O.)

I was feeling very good. I  
challenged him.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. WHITE SPACE

The score towers over NATE.

NATE

Six zero. Six zero. Six one. Maybe  
no matter what I do, the gap  
between us is too big.

(MORE)

NATE (CONT'D)

I haven't been playing tennis for very long so maybe it's foolish of me to even think I can beat someone who has that kind of experience over me. I can't beat him. Maybe experience trumps age.

EXT. MARTIN TENNIS COURT

MARTIN

Yeah, you can't even beat me in your dreams!

NATE (V.O.)

Forget that! I'm going to beat Martin!! Even more training!

EXT/INT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS

The scene changes matching the action in each sentence.

NATE (V.O.)

I began to watch more tennis on TV! I began to play only tennis video games! I focused on strategy. I honed my skills. I became extremely focused when I played other people.

INT. INDOOR TENNIS COURTS

NATE is playing against MARC. MARC hits a winner past NATE.

NATE (V.O.)

Every time I lost a post I would try harder!

NATE hits a similar winner back at MARC but faster.

EXT. MARTIN TENNIS COURT

NATE and MARTIN are walking onto the tennis court. NATE has a subtle grin

NATE (V.O.)  
I challenged him again. This time  
was different.

MARTIN  
Hey Nate, you look confident today.  
Confident until we start playing  
then you just get scared.

NATE and MARTIN are rallying.

NATE (V.O.)  
His statement got in my head at  
first and I was playing poorly. But  
then I remembered all my training.  
The improvement in my game was  
real, I just needed to believe in  
myself.

MARTIN  
Hey you going to serve the ball?

NATE (V.O.)  
Let's do this. And I started to  
play the best tennis I've ever  
played. Hitting winners,  
constructing points and most  
importantly, not missing. I was  
holding my service games. So was  
he. The games were dead even.

(MORE)



NATE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

We were having a real contest of skill. This is the best I've ever done against him! We were all tied up at 4 - 4. It's my serve. I need to win this game. I need to focus.

NATE breaths for a moment and his a perfect serve.

Big serve! Ace! Three more points and this game is mine.

MARTIN

You're going to have to do better than that.

NATE (V.O.)

The battle continues. We both get two more points making it 30-30. This is a huge point. We play out an intense point. I win it. Okay. I have a game point. Time to win it. I double fault. It goes to deuce. Whoever wins two points in a row wins the game.

NATE points at MARTIN intensely.

NATE (V.O.)

Never give up. I'm so close. He won't beat me today.

MARTIN

I like your confidence. Too bad

NATE (V.O.)

I'm shaking. I feel the pressure. I need to get my mind focused!

(beat)

Deuce is such a weird word.

(MORE)

NATE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Actually, the way tennis is scored  
is so weird.

MARTIN  
Hey you going to serve the ball?

NATE (V.O.)  
Ah, my mind wandered. Lets do this.

NATE and MARTIN play out a point. Martin appears at the net  
and plays a drop shot.

NATE (V.O.)  
What?? I was too focused on  
focusing!

NATE darts towards the ball and gets it just in time but  
MARTIN lobs it.

NATE (V.O.)  
  
I've never seen him play this way.  
He made such a difficult shot look  
easy. No time to admire him. I've  
got to outdo him with this point.

NATE double faults.

NATE (V.O.)  
Errrr that was anti climatic. It's  
4-5. I'm down. If he wins this game  
he wins the set. I can't let that  
happen. I chase down every ball but  
Martin has become a backboard. He's  
playing in a way I've ever seen  
before. It reaches forty fifteen!  
His set point. I can't let it end  
here. This is the closest set I've  
had with him! I'm still in this!!

NATE and Martin play out a rally, NATE hits a huge winner.

NATE (V.O.)  
Forty thirty!!!

MARTIN misses his first serve.

NATE (V.O.)  
Okay! He missed the first serve!  
I'll attack this one.

They play out a very intense and physical rally which MARTIN wins in dramatic fashion.

NATE (V.O.)  
I should have seen that coming. So close.

NATE and MARTIN shake hands.

MARTIN  
Hey Nate, that was a good set.

NATE and MARTIN put their rackets away. MARTIN wipes his face off using a TOWEL.

EXT. PARKING LOT

NATE and MARTIN are walking towards their cars. NATE has a frown on his face. NATE stops walking and looks down.

MARTIN  
Hey Nate! You did good today!

MARTIN tosses the TOWEL at NATE. NATE smiles.

NATE  
Same time next Sunday?

MARTIN  
Yeah!

NATE and MARTIN continue walking.

NATE  
One of the people I play tennis  
with is a guy named Martin.  
(beat)  
And I'll definitely beat him!  
(beat)  
Next Sunday!!!!

FADE TO:

EXT. PHOTO OF TENNIS COURT

A photograph of the real NATE and MARTIN.

Roll credits.