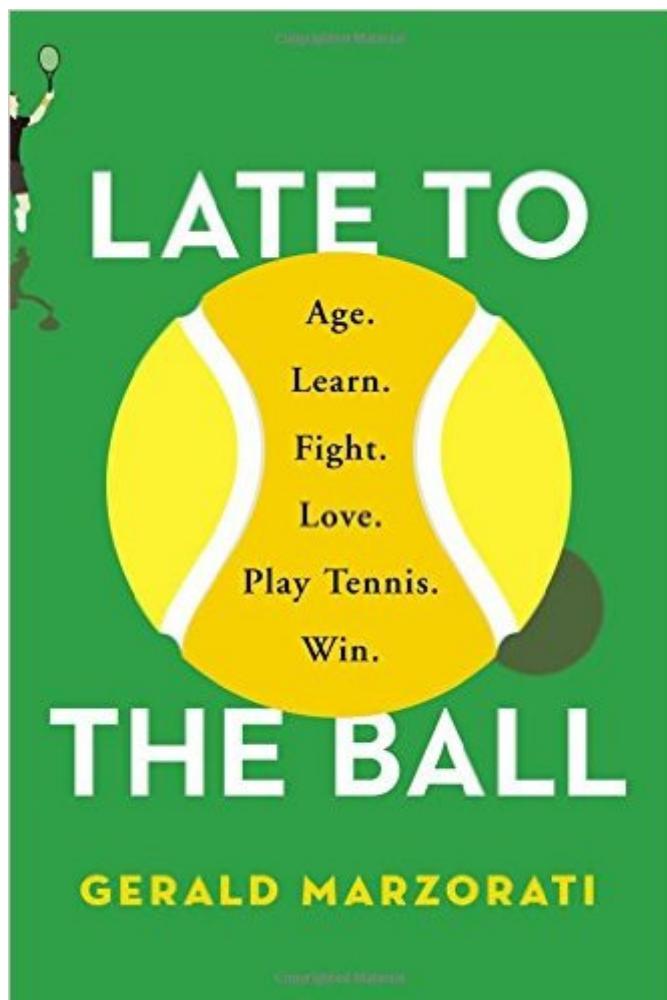


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# Late To The Ball: Age. Learn. Fight. Love. Play Tennis. Win.



## Synopsis

An award-winning author shares the inspiring and entertaining account of his pursuit to become a nationally competitive tennis player at the age of sixty. Being a man or a woman in your early sixties is different than it was a generation or two ago, at least for the more fortunate of us. We aren't old yet. But we sense it coming: Careers are winding down, kids are gone, parents are dying (friends, too), and our bodies are no longer youthful or even middle-aged. Learning to play tennis in your fifties is no small feat, but becoming a serious, competitive tennis player at the age of sixty is a whole other matter. It requires training the body to defy age, and to methodically build one's game—the strokework, footwork, strategy, and mental toughness. Gerry Marzorati started playing the game seriously in his mid-fifties. He had the strong desire to lead an examined physical life, to push his body into the à œencore of middle age. In *Late to the Ball* Marzorati writes vividly about the difficulties, frustrations, and the triumphs of his becoming a seriously good tennis player. He takes on his quest with complete vigor and absolute determination to see it through, providing a rich, vicarious experience involving the science of aging, his existential battle with time, and the beautiful, mysterious game of tennis. *Late to the Ball* is also captivating evidence that the rest of the Baby Boomer generation, now between middle age and old age, can find their own quest and do the same.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

About a week ago, I read an article in the Wall Street Journal about Mr. Marzorati's new book about his journey to become a seriously good tennis player despite his age (late 50s/early 60s). After

reading that WSJ article, and as a 63-year old who many years ago had a decent club-level game, I knew I had to buy this book. I started reading the book this morning, and I quickly read the first 74 pages. Here is the impact the book has already had on me: I went out to my garage and found my old tennis bag. Then I went to my local sporting goods store and bought a tennis ball machine and a box of balls (as I know no one with whom to play). In the late afternoon, I went to my local public courts, set-up the ball machine, and in the process of doing so I noticed a father going through drills with his daughter on the next court while his wife looked on. I made a comment to him that his daughter had a beautiful backhand. That started a 45-minute conversation about tennis, our tennis backgrounds, tennis injuries, the joy of being on the court, etc. I had yet to hit my first ball, and I had already met a very nice tennis family. I hit cross court forehands and backhands, volleys, and ended the session with some serves. It was a beautiful late afternoon/early evening, and it felt wonderful to be back on a tennis court. Before heading home I stopped at the grocery store to pick up a few items. The clerk asked me if I had been swimming; that's how much I had perspired during my session. I ordered three books on *by David Foster Wallace* after reading about him in Chapter 11 of Mr. Marzorati's book. On eBay I found an old hardcover first edition of *Levels of the Game*, and I bought it.

Marzorati is a bit of a fraud. Strong language, so let me explain. This book appears to have begun as a story of a tennis fan who took up the sport himself in his 50's, and by working very hard with tennis coaches (including some of the best in the country) and even a tennis therapist, and through practice, practice, practice - and sheer force of will - by his 60's became one of the top tennis players in his age group in the country. But he didn't become one of the top tennis players in his age group in the country. He admitted that, so no fraud there. Instead he became a respectable NTRP 4.0 level player, had some successes at the sport, and even held his own in an open tournament. Not sure if this story is worth writing a book about, but that's what Mr. Marzorati did. He wrote a book about that. But there's still a problem. You can look Mr. Marzorati's USTA tennis record up on [tennislink.usta.com](http://tennislink.usta.com), and it is far from impressive. Is he an NTRP 4.0? Yes and no. The NTRP computer didn't rate him 4.0. He rated himself 4.0! He is a self-rated 4.0! How did he do in USTA matches? As of 8/13/16, he played 22 matches above the 3.0 level and won precisely 0 of them. He lost all 22 matches, and most in very one-sided fashion. From his scores - including one match where he partnered with a 4.0 and lost to two 3.5's - he appears to be \*at best\* a weak 3.5 player. More likely a strong 3.0. Now of course there is nothing wrong with being a very mediocre tennis player. One can still get good exercise and enjoy the game. But is it worth writing a book about that?

And is it honest for Mr. Marzorati to pass himself off as a solid, perhaps strong 4.0? This reviewer thinks not. A separate issue.

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