ITF COACHES REVIEW

Issue 9 AUGUST 1996

WELCOME TO COACHES REVIEW !

Welcome to issue 9 of ITF Coaches Review which features articles from Argentina, Britain, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Holland, Ireland, Poland and Switzerland. The subjects covered include an article on improving mental training by Frank Dorsky PhD, a retrospective analysis of two successful junior players by Piotr Unierzyski, compiling a mental profile of a tennis player by Frank van Fraayenhoven and Victor Mion, and developing female tennis players by Daria Kopsic and Fernando Segal. The article by Hrvoje Zmajic of Croatia will no doubt generate considerable discussion among coaches working with junior players. It appears from his research that the vast majority of successful junior players are born in the first third of the calendar year. Svatopluk Stojan, former National Coach of Switzerland gives us the benefit of his vast experience of assessing talent in the article, "From Talent to Champion - The Role of the Coach".

Coaches working in Asia and South America may be interested in attending the ITF Regional Coaches Workshops which take place later this year. Full information on the ITF South American Coaches Workshop and the ITF Asian Coaches Workshop appear on the back page.

Many of our readers who are working with high level junior players will understand how difficult it is for players, especially those from less developed tennis nations, to gain the competitive experience necessary to make a breakthrough into the top levels of the international game. With this in mind the **ITF's Touring Team Programme** which is funded by the Grand Slam Development Fund, continues to assist talented young players from ITF member nations to gain valuable competitive experience outside of their region.

At the **junior level**, the ITF has 12 regional teams participating each year in tournaments under the guidance of an ITF coach. The ITF pays for all of the expenses of the team members. The pinnacle of the Junior Team Programme are the two 18 & Under International Teams which participate in tournaments in Europe each summer. The International A Team, pictured above, is made up of players who have achieved a top 30 ITF Junior World ranking and participates each year in eight weeks of high-level tournaments including the Italian Junior Championships, the junior event at Roland Garros and the Junior Championships at Wimbledon.

To give an indication of the size of this Junior programme, in the 6 months since 1 January 1996 125 players from 56 nations have benefited through inclusion on ITF Junior touring teams.

At the **professional level**, the ITF has three teams operating on a full-time basis. The teams are:

- ITF Men's Satellite Team for players ranked lower than 350 on the world rankings coached by Ivan Molina from Colombia.

- ITF Men's Challenger Team for players ranked higher than 350 on the world rankings coached by Jacques Hervet of France.

- ITF Women's Team for players ranked higher than 500 on the world rankings coached by Daria Kopsic of Argentina.

By providing a travelling coach and advice on all aspects of competing on the international circuit, the ITF Professional Touring Teams are clearly accelerating the transition of players from the junior level up through the professional ranks. At the professional level the ITF pays for the salary and expenses of the travelling coaches while the players are responsible for paying their own travel and accommodation costs.

Some of our readers may be working with high level players that might like to be considered for inclusion in our Touring Team Programme, either at the junior or professional level. If so, the players should contact their National Association who, in turn should make a formal application of behalf of the player to the ITF's Development Department in London.

We hope that the articles in Coaches Review continue to generate a lot of discussion among coaches around the world. If some of our readers are interested in commenting on any of the articles published in Coaches Review we would be happy to receive your letters and if we feel the comments are of interest, we may publish some letters in future issues.

Once again, we would like to thank all the coaches who have contributed articles for this issue of ITF Coaches Review. If you have any material that you deem relevant and worthy of inclusion in a future issue, please forward it to us for consideration.

We do hope you enjoy our 9th issue of Coaches Review.

Doug MacCurdy
General Manager

Dave Miley
Development Administrator

A RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS OF JUNIOR GRAND SLAM WINNERS

PROFILES OF ALEXANDRA OLSZA AND MAGDA GRZYBOWSKA AT THE AGE OF 12

By Dr. Piotr Unierzyski (Poland), University School of Physical Education, Poznan Poland

Thanks to the remarkable progress made by two teenage players Alexandra Olsza (born in 1977) and Magda Grzybowska (born in 1978), Poland now has the chance to become a new power in women's tennis. Alexandra won the 1995 Wimbledon junior titles (singles and doubles) and Magda won the Australian Open junior title last January.

There were many reasons for this success, and one of the most important was having the opportunity to be members of ITF teams last year.

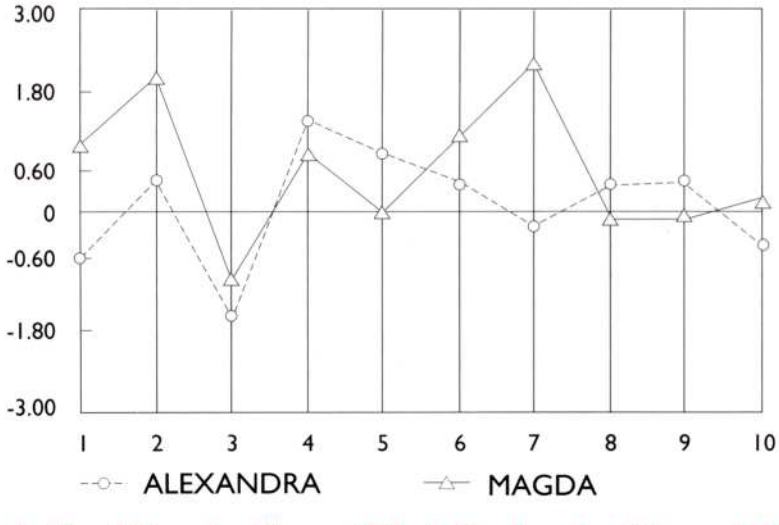
However, the aim of this article is not to describe the girls' training methods "on their way to the top". I would prefer to look at them in this instance from the development point of view. Everybody knows that perfect training conditions and the best possible support from their national federation or coach are not sufficient factors in themselves to make a future champion.

Picture: Paul Zimmer

Magda Grzybowska

It is absolutely crucial to have a basic level of abilities at the beginning of a tennis career. However, although these abilities are not so important during early junior years, it is vital to develop the majority of them (eg. speed and agility) between the ages of 10 and 12. The graphs show the profiles of both players between the ages of 10 and 12, (6-7 years ago). It can be seen that both players were not champions on every trial in comparison with their peers. In the majority of tests they were average (eg +- 1 standard deviation) in comparison to the top 50 Polish 12-year old players.

It can also be seen that both Alexandra and Magda were retarded in biological development. This slow biological development can cause a lower level of motor abilities and hence worse results in tournaments at the beginning of puberty. This, however is not so important in predicting future potential. Alexandra is a good example of this as, at the age of 12, she was only about no. 10 in Poland.



Profiles of Alexandra Olsza and Magda Grzybowska at the age of 12.

It is interesting to note that both girls were much quicker than average - as we know, reaction speed (an inborn ability) is one of the most important factors affecting performance in modern tennis. Magda was already much taller (now she is 184 cm) and more powerful. Alexandra was a relatively small but very agile player with a sufficient level of leg power. Both girls were around the average in all tested psychological features (mental strength, achievement motivation and on the intellectual level).

This retrospective analysis of these two successful players allows us to make some important practical conclusions:

1. From the point of view of talent identification, it is important that a player has no big "gaps" in any ability or factor limiting performance, even at the age of 10-12. For example: a slow player can be a champion at the age of 12 but can never be at the age of 20.
2. Since it is almost impossible to have all predispositions on a maximal level (eg. speed versus endurance) a talented player ought to have at his/her disposal all (or almost all) abilities on a good (eg. average or better) level.
3. Because it is possible to develop most abilities to an optimum level before puberty (eg. agility and speed) the all-round basic development at the early stages of a player's career can be crucial for future success".

FACTORS SHOWN IN GRAPH:

1. Height
2. Slimness index (Rohrer index)
3. Biological development index (shows if a person is accelerated or retarded)
4. Starting speed (ability to accelerate) - speed in 5m run
5. Agility - time in shuttle run 9 x 6m
6. Dynamic power of legs - distance in standing broad jump
7. Dynamic power of arm and trunk - distance in 2 kg medicine ball throw
8. Physical resistance (by Strelau)
9. Achievement motivation (by Wiederschal-Bazyl test)
10. Intellectual level (Raven Matrix Scale)

ARE THE TOP TENNIS PLAYERS BORN IN JANUARY?

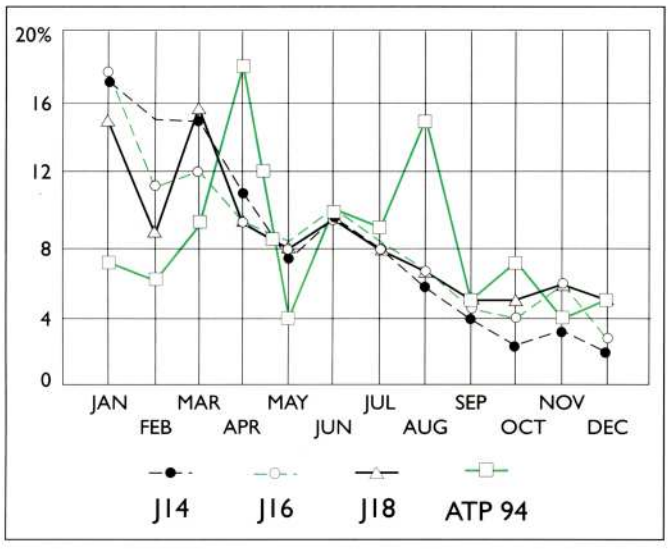
By Hrvoje Zmajic (Croatia)

THE IMPACT OF BIOLOGICAL AND CHRONOLOGICAL AGE ON CLASSIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE JUNIOR CATEGORY TENNIS PLAYER

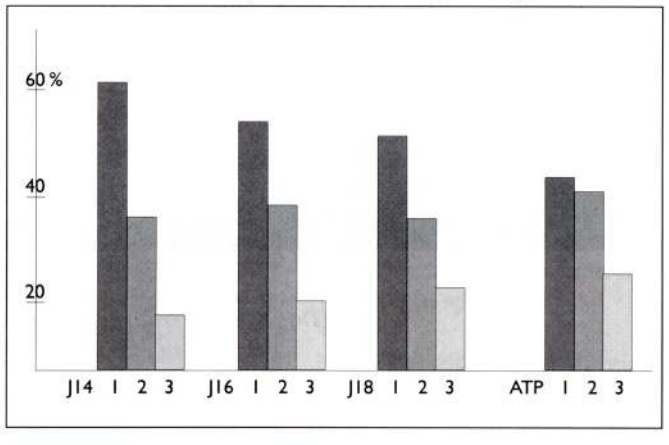
Junior tennis players from 12 to 18 years of age are in the period of the most intensive growth and development. Growth refers to increases in the size of the body or its parts, and development in the tempo and timing of progress toward the mature adult state (A.D.G. Baxter-Jones). An individual's maturational status is referred to as their biological age. The biological age among children of the same chronological age can be significantly different, and this affects the level of their achievements. Significant development of physical performance and its effect on outstanding tournament achievements in the junior category, especially the period of 13 to 16 years of age, has been confirmed and discussed in the works of authors such as J. Wieneck and P. Unierzyski. The consequence of this is the fact that the biologically more mature players among the younger Junior category (ex. 14 years) are usually always top ranked (A.D.G. Baxter-Jones).

GRAPH 1 shows the monthly distribution of birth dates and GRAPH 2 shows the distribution for the beginning (JAN to APR), middle (MAY to AUG) and the end (SEP to DEC) of the year. The data in the graphs are on the members of the Junior National Teams that competed for European Junior Cups (for boys under 14, under 16 and under 18 years of age from 1990 to 1995). To compare these results with the mens', we will show the final ATP ranking list from 1994 (the best hundred players).

GRAPH 1



GRAPH 2 **1**. Jan to Apr; **2**. May to Aug; **3**. Sep to Dec.



From the above graphs we can conclude the following:

- More than 50% of players competing in European Junior Cups in all categories are born in the first four months of a year.
- The number of players born in the first four months within a year decreasing from 14 to 18 year olds and the number of players born in the last four months of a year are increasing from 14 to 18 year olds.
- ATP final ranking list for 1994. The monthly scheme of birth dates within a year is significantly different from Junior categories, but even so the smallest number of the players were born in the last four months of the year.

GIVEN THE FACTS SHOWN IN THE GRAPHS WE MAY POINT OUT SOME PROBLEMS:

- Why are there so many talented juniors (especially in younger categories) who did not achieve adequate results in professional tennis?

Because many of them were biologically more advanced than the average of their chronological age. They achieved great results in tournaments because of their early development of different characteristics such as speed, strength, endurance as well as mental maturity.

- Why are there so many instances of "burn out and drop out" of young players?

Because parents and coaches very often do not take into consideration the difference in biological age of their children / players while using methods of training and by comparing their progress with the best players in the same chronological category.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

Experienced coaches should not only think about chronological age, but in addition to other factors, should observe either consciously or unconsciously the players' biological maturity by taking into account secondary characteristics of gender, while evaluating the junior player's talent. For example body hair, height, size of the hands and feet, stage of development of the muscles etc. We could avoid subjectivity in our evaluation by using certain scientific methods for establishing the biological age. If we

knew the actual biological age, we would then also be able to compare different players in terms of quality. This would help us to deal more objectively and successfully with the following problems:

- Knowing the actual biological age of the best players in different age categories, we could improve our selection methods by comparing our own players with the best players from the same biological age group that can compete in different age categories.

- Using this method we would also be able to recognize more precisely the players who have a potential to succeed later, yet currently only achieve satisfactory but not outstanding results in junior tennis.

- When evaluating the talent of biologically advanced players between the chronological ages of 13 and 16 it would be useful to take into consideration the results achieved in the age category that is one step ahead. This would enable them to compare more precisely the standard information used for the evaluation of a child's talent in junior categories (the tests of physical performance, the quality of performance on court, psychological tests etc.)

- Another advantage of such a method is the possibility for better and more precise training which would certainly decrease the possibility of "burn out".

- We would also be able to set more realistic and appropriate goals for our players. For this purpose it would be necessary to find out the real biological age for the best junior tennis players in different age categories on international and national levels of competition. After a few years of examination of the real biological age we could also recognize the possible development patterns for the successful players that had a "faster, slower or normal" growth and development curve.

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PRE-MATCH ROUTINES

By Jim Taylor, Phd (USA)
(This article first appeared in "USTA SPORTS SCIENCE FOR TENNIS" and appears with the permission of the USTA)

Routines are one of the best ways for tennis players to prepare themselves for competition. Pre-match routines are valuable for several reasons:

1. They ensure completion of every important aspect of match preparation

2. Routines increase the familiarity of situations and decrease the likelihood of unexpected things occurring

3. They build consistency of thought, feeling and action

4. Routines increase feeling of control and self-confidence, and reduce anxiety

5. Regardless of the importance of a match, by using a well-practised routine, you will condition your mind and body into feeling that this is just another match

A pre-match routine should be composed of everything you need to do to be totally prepared for competition. This includes:

- Meal preparation
- Early morning physical warm-up and stretching
- Tournament site inspection
- And finally, mental preparation

There is no ideal pre-match routine to follow. Rather, routines are personal so you should develop one that suits your particular needs. To do this:

1. Make a list of what you need to do before a match

2. Then create the routine by deciding when is the best time to complete each part of the routine

3. Finally, follow this routine before every match

Within a few months it will become second nature and it will ensure that you are totally prepared to play your best tennis.

Jim Taylor is a Sport Psychologist in Aspen, Colorado.

HOW TO DEVELOP FEMALE TENNIS PLAYERS

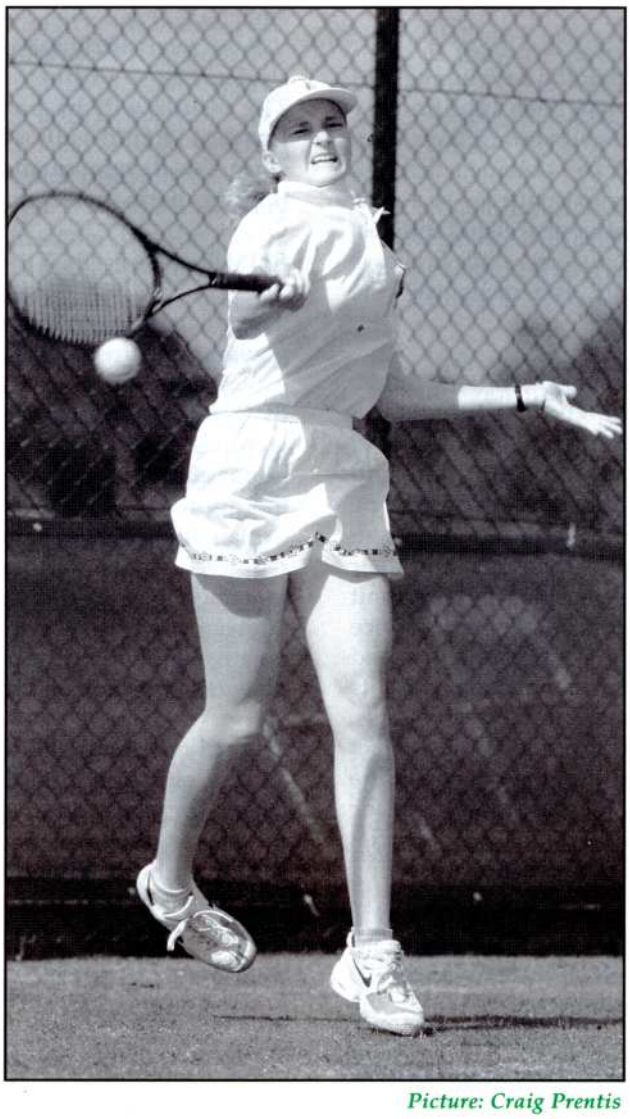
By D. Kopsic and F. Segal (Argentina)
(Daria Kopsic is also coach of the ITF Women's Professional Touring Team and the ITF Junior Girls' Touring Team)

In order to work successfully with female tennis players, coaches need to have an adequate understanding of a wide range of very specific issues related to the introduction to sports and the progression in training of female athletes. The coach's expertise in these areas will have a direct influence on the future performance of every female tennis player. By way of illustration, let us consider the following case history, in order to analyse the circumstances and draw the appropriate conclusions:

THE "MARIA STORY"

Let us pretend that we are performing a "mental exercise", and visualise the following "scenario"...

This is a situation most of us are familiar with. It happens time and again all over the world. We are in a tennis club. Among the club players, there is Maria. She is fifteen years old and a promising young player. Maria has been very successful in national competitions, and has already developed a fairly good level of play. Since her childhood, she has been training together with a group of male players, as part of the junior development programme of her club. Today, she is taking part in a standard service practice session, in which she has to perform different kinds of drills, together with the other members of the group. Let us watch her closely and see what happens:



Picture: Craig Prentis

When Maria serves, we notice some important discrepancies, both in terms of power and performance, between Maria's service motion and that of her male colleagues. However, Maria has always had exactly the same kind of instruction provided to the other members of the group. So, What is going on? What is wrong?...

And here is where the questions arise: as coaches, how must we interpret such a situation? How must we react to it? What is the solution to this problem? Are girls taught in a different manner to boys? Is it a matter of different skills? Should female players receive different instruction or be trained in a different way from their male counterparts?

In order to answer all these questions, we must take certain facts into account: Experience shows us that, at the beginning of any development programme with both female and male players together in the same group, it will be generally observed that males have already developed the foundations for the basic motor skills, such as jumping, running, throwing and catching. This is due to the fact that, from a very tender age, males tend to actively develop a wide range of movement patterns through their taking part in all sorts of games and activities with a very high physical emphasis. This gives them a "head start" at the initial stages of the learning process because, from the very beginning, they are familiar with the movement patterns required in sports.

On the other hand, girls generally do not have a chance to develop their basic motor skills before they take up sports. This can be due to several reasons, i.e.: complete lack of previous athletic experience, inadequate participation in activities enhancing motor skills development at the appropriate age, or to other types of factors.

Even worse, if we use the first day of the training programme as a reference, girls and boys do not develop from the same starting point as far as their motor skills are concerned. In this connection, the differences that showed up in Maria's service motion (though she had been introduced to the service technique at the same time as the rest of the group) are a consequence of a discrepancy in her motor skills development that will directly impair her future performance as a player.

As a possible remedial measure, therefore, we must consider providing girls with some degree of athletic conditioning **prior to the beginning of training**. Moreover,

it is imperative that we take into account the skills and abilities of girls themselves, **independently of the skills and abilities of their male counterparts**.

What we are trying to point to with our "story" is this: these problems can be solved. However, coaches need, first of all, to understand how male and female athletes develop at different ages, and to have an adequate knowledge of the social, psychological, physiological and biomechanical factors that affect the learning process.

So, what exactly are the factors that ought to be taken into account?

First of all, coaches must understand the basic gender-related differences. This will enable them to develop a training approach that is both suited to the characteristics of each student and is conducive to his/her progressive development.

Secondly, coaches must realise that the development of motor skills at a very early age has been traditionally more easily accepted and encouraged among boys than among girls. The "motor experience" obtained through performing many different movement patterns at a very early age facilitates the acquisition of tennis-related abilities, such as those required to learn the service, since it allows the student's body to "understand and recognise" the correct service motion.

A fundamental point that ought to be considered is this: although the above mentioned gender-related discrepancies are evidenced in the different approaches to learning, as well as in the levels of dedication and performance shown by males and females, they can't be directly traced back to biological differences. Although women generally have shorter arms than men and their muscular structure is slightly different, which tends to limit their acceleration capability, the performance of the service motion cannot be evaluated in terms of power and speed alone, but must also be judged in connection with its biomechanical efficiency, accuracy and effectiveness. Consequently, as every good coach knows, the correct development of tennis related abilities, together with the right kind of training effort and the required motivation for the enhancement of the student's motor skills, are of crucial importance to guarantee the future performance of aspiring professional tennis competitors. Such an approach will help to reduce the differences observed between male and female players at the beginning of the training programme.

We must take into account that while boys tend, generally speaking, to play with toys that promote the development of their motor skills, girls usually engage in games and activities which are either of a much more "passive" nature, or tend to require a greater use of their hands.

SOCIAL FACTORS RELEVANT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF FEMALE TENNIS PLAYERS

As we have stated above, the coach's attitude and his/her knowledge and understanding of the player's social context are highly relevant from the point of view of the player's behaviour in game and competitive situations. **First and foremost**, the coach needs to take into account that, in general, males are "motivated" from a very early age to "play" or to participate in "games". This is a socially well-accepted fact that promotes their motor development. Girls, on the other hand, are not equally encouraged to develop their motor skills through similar games or activities at an early age. This, all coaches must understand, has a direct influence on the future performance of every female tennis player. And here is a **second fundamental point**: coaches should recognise the existence of this stereotyped attitude and try to compensate for it by endeavouring to develop at a very early stage girls' motor abilities and their capacity to acquire new skills.

Therefore, coaches should be ready to recognise, through observation and analysis, which specific motor skill area needs to be developed, and to plan the necessary remedial drills or activities. A prompt identification of girls' basic motor abilities, which are relatively easy to establish at an early age, will go a long way to enabling the coach to find the necessary solutions and to help them increase their performance level.

From a very early age, coaches should constantly engage students in co-ordination-enhancing drills or exercises. The results will be harvested later on in their career. Coaches should gather a wide selection of such drills, since the development of the player's motor patterns requires permanent reinforcement.

SOME IDEAS ON TEACHING

In this area of training, all improvements achieved by players are directly related to the teaching philosophy professed by the coach. It is crucial that coaches understand that player performance is not the product of physical qualities alone, but the combined result of the player's motor abilities together with the right training approach , the appropriate motivation and practice, the necessary explanations of the different movement patterns and the required feed-back from the player. Moreover, coaches must help players understand the basic principles for the strategic use of the service, and constantly look for ways to positively reinforce the effect of training and to encourage players to develop and improve their strokes.

Finally, coaches should take into account that, in this kind of situation, praise and criticism can be a decisive factor. They should convey the right information, to enable the player to be clearly aware of the progression of her stroke, without giving her too many technical details, which could have a negative effect, and avoiding constant criticism or exaggerated praise.

The tone and the manner in which coaches provide criticism or praise can be of paramount importance for the stroke's "growth" and its future performance. The main emphasis of any practice session must be placed on the effort and dedication shown by the player with a view to developing new skills in connection with a stroke. This is what should be rewarded and strengthened.

In conclusion: it is important for coaches to understand the different factors that may influence the development of female tennis players, such as: social factors, factors related to their introduction to sports, their physiology, their personality, their "interpretation" of technique, as well as all the differences highlighted during joint training sessions with male players. The knowledge of all these factors will allow coaches to develop women players' own identities and help them reach their maximum tennis potential.

USING SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED CONSEQUENCES TO ACHIEVE TOURNAMENT LEVEL INTENSITY DURING PRACTICE SESSIONS

By Bobby Bernstein and Edgar Giffenig (USA) - Palmer Tennis Academy

One of the biggest challenges for a tennis coach is maintaining tournament level intensity during practice. The nature of the game allows players to practice at intensity levels well below those needed during competition. In other sports there are natural consequences for lapses in intensity. A boxer pays physically for losses in concentration by getting hit, in the same way that a gymnast pays when falling off the uneven bars. In team sports coaches and teammates help maintain ideal intensity levels by putting pressure on the athletes. In other individual sports such as track and swimming the desired level of intensity is an integral part of the task assigned by the coach. For example, a track coach having the athletes run 4 x 440 in a specified amount of time, is directly prescribing the effort level expected. As one can see, the main problem a tennis coach faces is that tennis as a sport does not have any of the above mentioned mechanisms to help athletes maintain an ideal intensity level. Tennis players can still make great shots with little or no effort as well as miss shots even when maintaining ideal intensity levels. However, we as coaches know, maintaining high intensity levels during every practice session is the key to reaching ones' potential. Our goal is to make our players understand this, and not accept anything less. We therefore developed a system that provides natural consequences to lapses in intensity and focus.

The programme is based on a simple set of exercises that are used as consequences to lapses in intensity. These exercises are meant as reminders and in no way should be viewed as punishment. The system minimizes the need for a subjective evaluation by the coach, and makes the player responsible for its' implementation. In our experience we have found that there are five rules that help keep practices at optimal levels of intensity. These five rules are:

1. Keep your feet moving.
2. Split step every time your opponent begins their forward swing.
3. Never let the ball bounce twice.
4. When at the net, stay low and use your legs.
5. When at the net never let any ball go over your head.

The exercises that we use as consequences for not following these rules mimic the exact movement patterns that the athlete executed poorly.

1. If their feet are not moving, they will move their feet in place as fast as they can for five seconds.
2. If they are not split stepping, they will call out "Split Step" as their opponent starts their forward swing executing a perfect split step at the same time.
3. If a ball bounces twice, they will start at the baseline, run to the service line, shadow a stroke and backpedal to the baseline. They will do this three times at full speed.
4. If they are not in a low position at the net or if they are not moving their feet, they will start in the middle of the service box in a low position, step diagonally forward, shadow a volley and return to the service line. They will alternate forehand and backhand volleys, three times at full speed.
5. If they get passed cleanly by a lob, they will sprint to the net, touch it with their racket, turn, move back and shadow an overhead. They will repeat this three times at full speed.

It is important that these consequences be applied regardless of the effort level exerted by the player. For example, any time the ball bounces twice, exercise number three should follow, even if the player tried very hard to reach the ball on one bounce. It is essential that subjective judgement be minimized for the system to work effectively. The goal of the programme is to teach the players to react automatically and explosively as soon as the opponent hits the ball. Making exceptions will cause the player to start analyzing whether a shot is reachable or not, therefore losing a step towards the ball. Once you establish the rules there should be no room for bargaining.

It has been our experience that once a player understands these rules and follows them, he or she will have a clearer understanding of how intensity in practice can help improve his/her game.

Moreover, you can apply this system to any area of the game. Using specific consequences for mistakes made in specific areas targeted by you, should help improve the effectiveness of each practice session. Taking this into consideration each coach can use their imagination to develop their own consequence system based on what their players need.

MENTAL TRAINING: A LOT LIKE PHYSICAL TRAINING

By Frank Dorsky, PhD (USA)

(This article first appeared in "USTA Sports Science for Tennis" and appears with the permission of the USTA.)

When I ask tennis coaches what they are doing to condition their athletes physically, they talk about road work, weight programmes, cross- training and periodisation.

When I ask about mental training, the answers are very different. "I played the Jim Loehr video", or "I had a sports psychologist give a lecture", are typical replies.

These two types of training have much more in common than most coaches realise. Here are some ways mental training is very much like physical conditioning.

Mental training is something you do, not something you talk about

An athlete cannot gain the endurance to run a marathon simply by attending a lecture or reading a book. The book or lecture might provide important training tips, but the training still needs to be done on the road and in the gym. The same is true of mental training. A sport psychologist can provide the path, but the player must do the training both on and off the court.

Mental training is a gradual process

Physical training is a slow process. Changes in the strength of muscle, for example, are almost too small to measure from one day to the next. Only after weeks and months do significant changes emerge. Growth is also gradual with mental training, and it cannot be rushed.

Mental strength is gained from responding to stress

To gain muscular strength, we ask muscles to lift slightly more than they are accustomed to lifting and then to rest for a day. These are the principles of overload and adaptation, which lead to steady, progressive growth. Mental strength develops in the same way. The stresses of competition help players to gain strength in their ability to relax, to concentrate and to overcome negative emotional responses.

Too much stress will be destructive: Too little will prevent growth

If athletes try to lift too much weight, or lift too often, their muscles will break down and they will become weaker, not stronger. If they lift only one a month, there will be no benefit. Similarly, tennis players who compete in highly stressful matches for far too many days or weeks in a row are likely to burn out and lose, rather than gain emotional control. Players who compete only rarely, on the other hand, will be mentally 'starting over' each time they put themselves on the line. The key, in terms of both mental and physical training, is for players to challenge their systems, give them a chance to recover and then challenge them again.

Mental training is a long-term process

The gradual process of the stress-recovery cycle will lead to very dramatic growth mentally and physically, but the gains should be measured in months and years, rather than hours or days of training.

Mental training is reversible

Just as with physical training, if players stop working out, they will gradually lose the gains they have made. This is well illustrated by tournament players who complain they lose their tournament toughness after only three or four weeks away from competition.

Armed with this knowledge, we understand that what we do each day will strengthen or **weaken our mental toughness and that we can build on-going programmes to improve our mental strengths.**

Here are a few tips to help you DO mental training with your players, rather than talk and think about it:

1. **Compete.** Put players on the line often enough to help them adapt to the stresses of competing and to learn how to respond.

2. **Have players in plenty of situations where they are expected to win.** Matches where they have "everything to lose and nothing to win" are important for developing self-control. Eventually, they will win most of these matches, which will build confidence and teach them the mental skills needed to close out matches.

3. **Teach players to become aware of their level of muscular tension and notice when their errors are caused by this problem.** To become a top competitor they need to know when they are even slightly tense and to develop skills of muscular relaxation.

4. **Have players become aware of how they think about their tennis and learn to think only constructive and focused thoughts.**

5. **During every warm-up, have players spend a few minutes becoming relaxed, focused and energised.** Work on these skills separately and your players will see these mental skills grow.

6. **Have players set mental training goals and work on their mental skills during practices** - keeping muscles relaxed, staying mentally calm, remaining positive, maintaining high energy, and staying focused. Players should pick only one (or at the most two) mental goals at a time. They shouldn't worry about tactics or technique during these practices. Remember, the mental skills are at least as important as the physical ones.

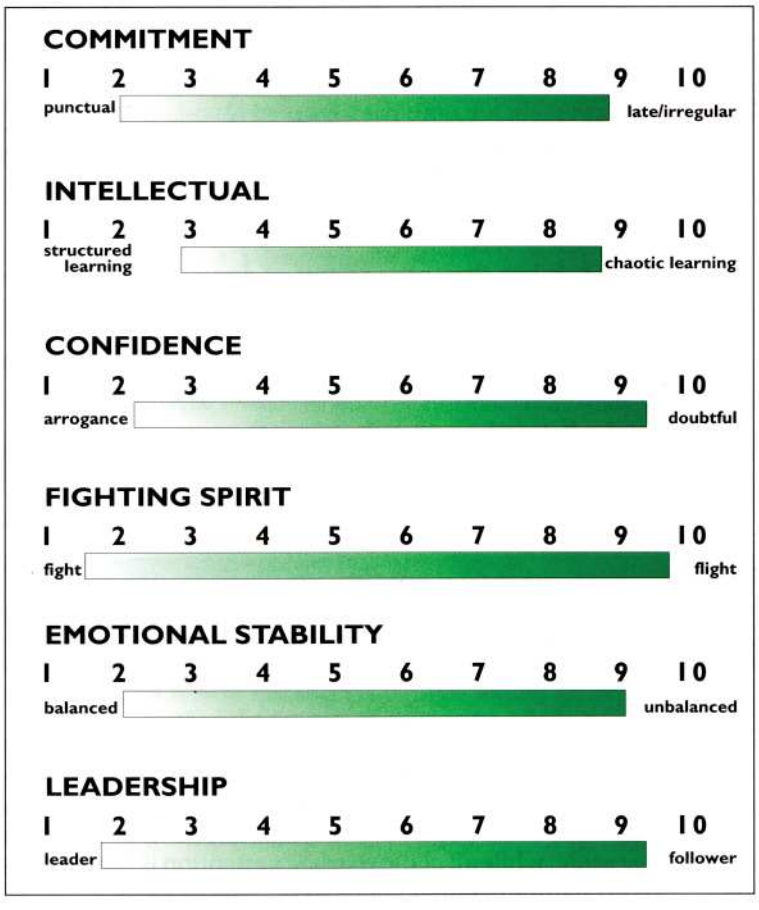
7. **Players should set difficult goals for their "inner-climate" during matches.** The quality of their mental control will determine how well they play, and the setting of challenging goals has been proven to lead to the best results.

8. **Have players set long-term goals for improving their mental skills.**

HOW TO MAKE A MENTAL PROFILE OF A TENNIS PLAYER

By Frank van Fraayenhoven and Victor Mion (Holland)
(The following extract is taken from Frank and Victor's presentation at the 9th ITF Worldwide Coaches' Workshop in Barcelona.)

1. Think of a player you know very well and make a mental profile using the following six parameters:



2. Make a priority list for the player with the most important item on top.

Now, for the parameter that you gave number 1 priority, answer the following questions:

- What will be the effect on the player's tennis of improving this aspect? (why is this area important for their game?)
- How much time do you think is necessary to improve this number one factor?
- Is it a matter of knowledge, understanding (insight) or application?
- What will be the first concrete step to improve this?

The following questions are suggestions for the tennis coach. Of course, other comparable questions can be equally effective. The result of this test, together with the observations made by the coach should enable the coach to determine which mental skills are efficient and which are not.

Before rating these mental aspects from zero to ten, the coach has to realise two things:

1 Many players have difficulties rating their self-image.

2. The questions asked by the coach and the observations made by the coach have to be constructive and objective. Every coach knows that it is very hard not to watch in a subjective way.

COMMITMENT:

This aspect has to do with the respect with which players treat their own game, but it also has to do with the way they think of tennis in a larger perspective.

Q. If the coach asks the player (and the members of a group) to continue the team practice as he/she is leaving the court, does the player still give 100% effort?

Q. Imagine that, because of injury, the player is not able to play matches or to practice on court for a period of time. What will they do instead of playing tennis?

Q. Does the player like reading tennis books? If so what are his favourites (tennis history, tennis stories, memoirs, instruction)?

This has to do with always giving 100%, not only in a physical but also in a mental way.

Q. Does the player like playing a third set - enjoy the tussle with their opponent?

Q. Does the player always have to hate their opponent in order to be 100% competitive?

Q. Does the player like practices in which they have to work their heart out?

CONFIDENCE

With this aspect, the coach will not only be able to check the player's confidence, but will also get an idea in which perspective the answers of the other skills have to be seen.

Q. Are there still positive thoughts after the player has badly lost the first set of a match? Can they still think positively or do they have a tendency to become negative?

Q. Is losing a match equivalent to loss of confidence?

Q. Preparing for each match, does the player always have a positive, negative or just a realistic attitude to it?

INTELLECTUAL:

This aspect has to do with the learning ability of players and the way they set goals for themselves during practices:

Q. Is the player able to analyse their own game on slow and fast courts?

Q. Is the player able to make a list of their stronger and weaker points on both slow and fast courts?

Q. Do they always have a goal which they are currently working on?

EMOTIONAL STABILITY:

This aspect has to do with the way players react in stressful situations. There are all sorts of problems a player has to deal with during play. If the player is able to stay balanced in these situations, they will produce an optimal performance:

Q. Does the player like playing 'big points' in a match? Why (not)?

Q. Does the player feel challenged when the momentum or match-flow is against them? Why (not)?

Q. Can they stay cool and still think rationally in these situations or do they have a tendency to become emotional?

LEADERSHIP:

This aspect has to do with getting and taking your responsibilities whenever is necessary on court, as well as off the court. This is possible when the player reacts as a grown-up, knowing exactly what their tasks are:

Q. When the player plays a game of soccer during a tennis warm-up, are they one of the motivators who feels responsible for the whole team?

Q. When they play a game of doubles, which of the two players will be the leader?

Q. Is the player also the leader when playing with a more experienced or better player?

Q. Is the player always well-prepared for a match or does someone often have to remind them not to forget their things?

TALENT IDENTIFICATION

By Josef Brabenec (Canada)

If an experienced coach observes 3 courts, each with 8 children aged 7 to 10 years of age performing exercises such as throwing and catching a ball, running relays with a paddle and ball, jumping over a simple hurdle, etc, it will not take much time to spot on each court one or two kids who are much more "talented" than the others. However, what do we mean by the word "talented"?

TALENT - that magic expression which makes people (especially parents) feel too good, too often, too soon. People usually use the term to refer to the natural motor skill of one youngster compared to other youngsters. Unfortunately, using the word "talent" in such a case can be very misleading. True talent requires much more than mere physical skill. It must include such attributes as desire, determination, drive, courage, self-discipline and LOVE for the sport of tennis. Before telling somebody that they have "talent", I feel I have to be sure about their attitude and ambitions. This usually takes much longer than the one or two weeks which are sufficient for assessing a promising level of stroke technique.

When observing two players with a similar level of stroke technique competing in a match, it is almost always the one who most wants to succeed who will emerge victorious. It is relatively easy to discover youngsters with a natural gift or "talent" for stroke production. They are usually very visible. Discovering those who have a deep determination to succeed within themselves is much more difficult. It requires more time, more understanding and more patience from the coach. Unfortunately, too often the youngsters who do not show "eye catching" stroke technique at the beginning (the first one or two years) are cast aside, while all of the coaches's attention is given to so-called naturally gifted youngsters.

My experience has been that the youngsters who had problems mastering stroke technique in the first one or two years, but had determination and persistence, enjoyed much more success later and for a much longer period of time than those who acquired the stroke technique easily, without problems and without much work at the beginning. Why? It is simple. Those who are naturally gifted have often never learned the benefits of hard work and determination, because their beginning success came easily. Their initial physical skill gave them a kind of instant supremacy.

Those who encounter real problems at the beginning with stroke technique, have first to learn to work hard and patiently for every little improvement. Every minute success motivates them for further effort. When they finally achieve the desired level of stroke proficiency, they are AUTOMATICALLY equipped with an appreciation of effort, perseverance and hard work and the benefits arising from them. They are also able to apply those assets when playing matches. For me those mental qualities are much more important in judging talent, but they are also much more difficult to assess. Also, compared with simple "skill-talent", they are very, very rare.

HOW TO ASSESS YOUR OWN SERVE

by Miguel Miranda (Chile)
ITF Development Officer - South America

OBJECTIVE:

To allow the player to assess his own serve at regular intervals

EQUIPMENT REQUIRED:

A basket with a specific number of balls - 40 or 50. The same number should be used each time the player carries out the exercise.

LEVEL FOR WHICH THE EXERCISE IS APPROPRIATE:

Intermediate and Advanced.

PROCEDURE:

The trainer fixes a spot, or limit, for the second bounce of the serve, drawing a line outside the normal court lines. If the player is very advanced, this could be at the back netting. The limit can be closer to or further from the baseline, depending on the skill of the player, whether it is a man or a woman, etc.

A side limit line must also be drawn, to measure the angle of the serve.

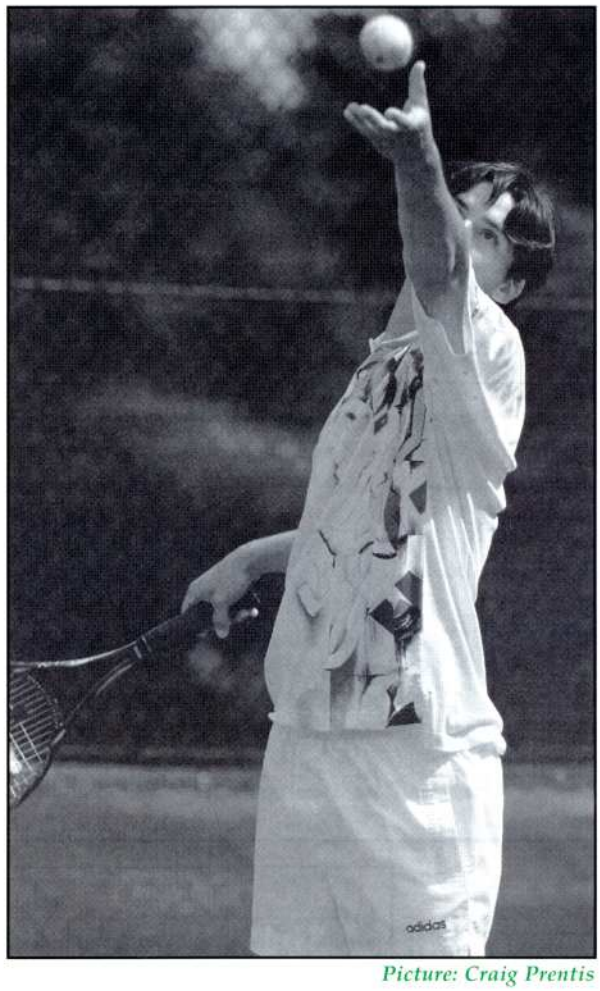
The player begins with a first serve. If this serve is good (regardless of where the second bounce lands) he or she carries out another first serve. If the original first serve is bad, he carries out a second serve. The player continues this way, serving exactly as he would in a match - a good first serve is followed by another first serve, a bad first serve is followed by a second serve.

POINTS AWARDED:

Points are awarded for the second bounce of each serve as follows:

1.	Second bounce of first serve behind the limit	4 points
2.	Second bounce of first serve between the limit and the baseline	3 points
3.	Second bounce of serve within the court	1 point
4.	First serve fault	0 points
5.	Second bounce of second serve behind the limit	2 points
6.	Second bounce of second serve between the limit and the baseline	1 point
7.	Second bounce of second serve within the court	0 points
8.	Double fault	- 4 points

The maximum points awarded for the second bounce of the first serve (4) is higher than those awarded for the second bounce of the second serve (2), in order to promote the accuracy and consistency of the first serve.



Picture: Craig Prentis

There is also a "punishment" of -4 points for a double fault.

The player must keep his score until he has played all the balls in the basket. The next time he carries out the exercise he should aim to improve this score. His point count will help him to assess the accuracy of his serve.

Alternatively, "targets" can be set and points doubled if the target itself is hit. No points are awarded, though, for anything other than a bull's-eye!

POINTS TO NOTE:

- This exercise can be carried out by the player, during a training session, without the direct supervision of the coach
- It promotes the development of a deep and consistent first serve
- It is recommended for the middle of a training session, when the player is well warmed up
- The only disadvantage of this exercise is that another player cannot practise the return of serve, as the ball has to be allowed a second bounce!

MEN'S PROFESSIONAL TENNIS

By John Treleven/Dave Miley (ITF)

We felt that the following statistics, courtesy of the ITF's computer department, might be of interest to our readers. It is interesting to note that over 68% of the players in the top 100 are 24 years or older. This re-emphasises our belief that the vast majority of male players don't break into the top 100 until they are at least 22 years old.

Players should not therefore be discouraged if they don't make an immediate breakthrough after junior tennis into the top levels of the professional game. Instead they should use the time between the end of their junior career to develop the tools of their trade, playing on a wide variety of surfaces to build up an all-round game so that after three to four years of hard work at the satellite and challenger levels, (or after four years of a tennis scholarship) they are ready to make the breakthrough into the top 100.

Figure 2 shows that the US and Spain have the most players in the top 100 at present. However the future looks very bright for Spain as Figure 3 shows that they have 16 players in the top 100 of players aged 23 and less, double the number of the second ranked nation Germany.

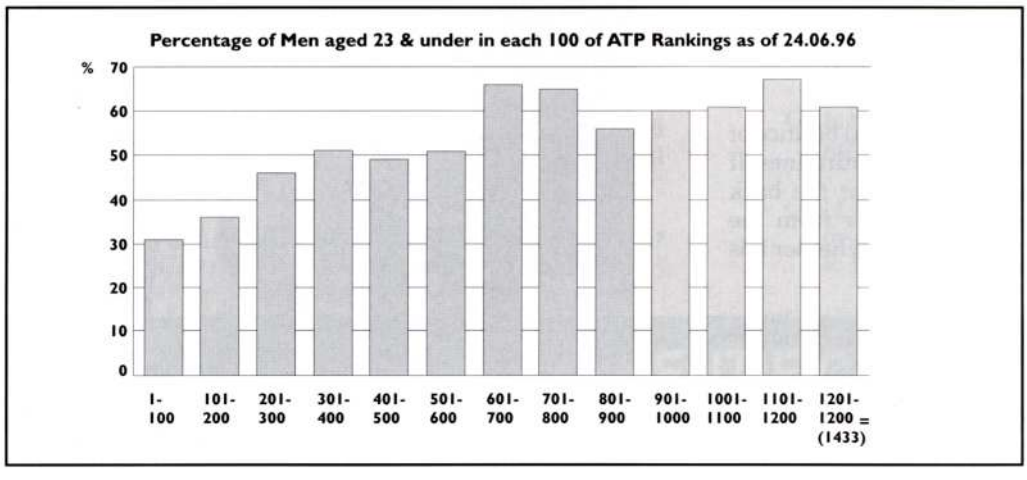


Figure 1

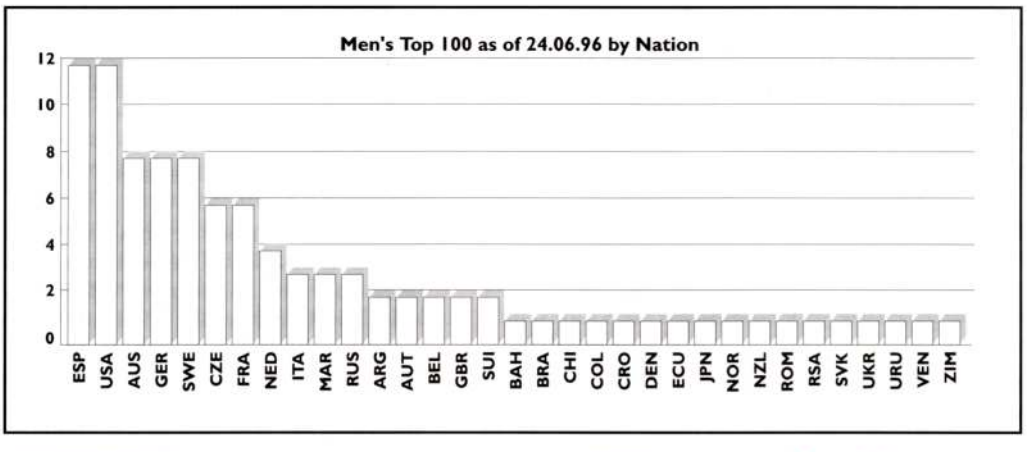


Figure 2

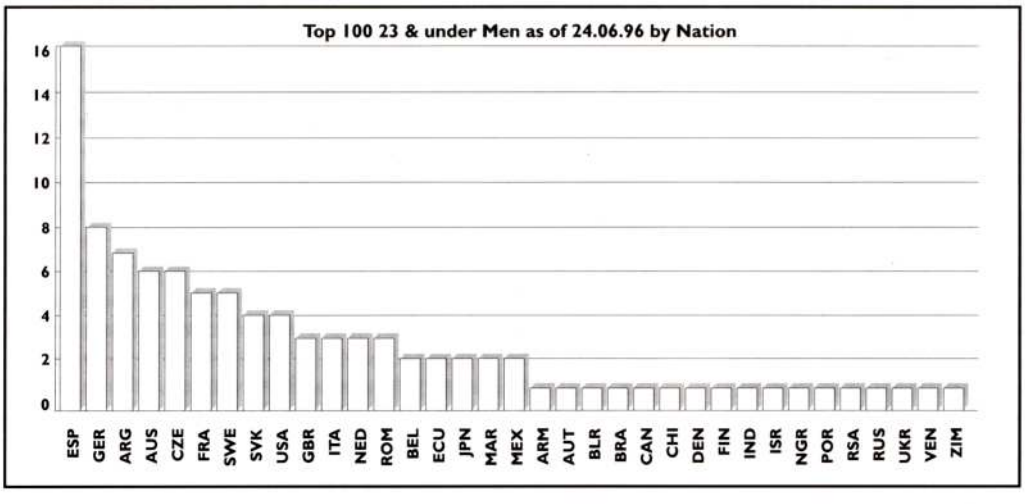


Figure 3

ANTICIPATION - SKILLS AND DRILLS

By Peter Farrell (Ireland)

The lightening thought process which enables a player to calculate in advance his opponent's next move - often with devastating effect - is to me one of the most exciting aspects of tennis.

Given the pace of the modern game, anticipation and counter-anticipation skills are vital. A good definition of anticipation, courtesy of my pocket dictionary, is "the ability to act before another, often so as to thwart....to foresee and deal with in advance".

Some coaches work on anticipation skills only with "better" players. I believe we should start to develop these skills at beginner level. Jack Groppel has written in `World Tennis' magazine, that "anticipation is almost totally learned and depends on the amount of court experience a player possesses".

Here are some ways that I think you can improve anticipation:

TEACHING ANTICIPATION

1. Encourage your players to scout future opponents - looking for patterns, favourite shots, shots the player never attempts etc. A knowledge of what an opponent can and cannot do makes the anticipation process faster and more effective.

2. Faced with a situation that requires anticipation, teach your players to ask themselves the $64,000 question - "what would I do next if I was my opponent?". Getting inside another player's mind is central to successful anticipation. It is also very disconcerting for the opposition.

3. Run a video of a professional tournament match. Press"pause" during a rally and ask your pupils what the next shot will be. Have them give technical and tactical reasons for their prediction. Play on to see who is right and then discuss.

4. Use the following drills to provide players with multiple opportunities to work on anticipation (and counter-anticipation) skill. In each drill the coach (C) feeds a ball to player (A), so that (A) has a relatively easy opportunity to win the point. As a result player (B) is forced to anticipate. This in turn encourages (A) to counter-anticipate.

SCORING SYSTEM

The player who has to anticipate (B) scores three points if he wins the rally. The player with the easy chance to play a winner (A) scores one point if he wins the rally.

Alternatively, (B) scores:

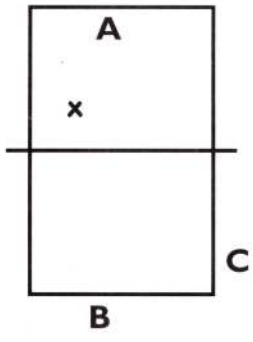
- one point if he gets his racket to the ball off (A)'s first shot, even if he cannot get it back into play
- two points if he gets A's first shot back into play, even if he subsequently loses the rally
- three points if he wins the rally
- again, (A) scores one point if he wins the rally

DRILL ONE

Coach feeds a high, short ball bouncing at X.

A has a high mid-court forehand put-away.

B must anticipate.

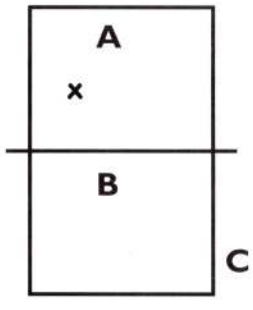


DRILL TWO

Coach feeds a short ball bouncing at X.

A has an easy passing shot.

B must anticipate.

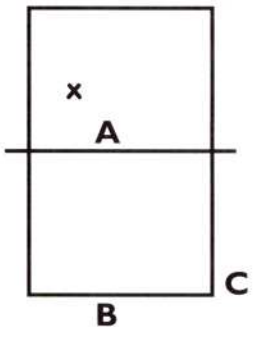


DRILL THREE

Coach feeds a short lob to A.

A has an easy smash.

B must anticipate.

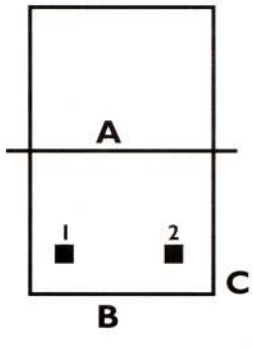


DRILL FOUR

Coach feeds a shoulder high volley to A.

A aims at either target 1 or 2.

B must anticipate.



FROM TALENT TO CHAMPION - THE ROLE OF THE COACH

By Svatopluk Stojan (former National Coach of Switzerland)

"A tennis champion is born, not made!" said the experts in England in the time of Fred Perry who, without the help of any coaches, won all the Grand Slams and was table-tennis world champion besides! Today, both players and experts would say that "A tennis champion is both born AND made!" They agree that all players need the help of a coach in order to be successful.

So, how much can a coach influence the development of a talented junior? Let us have a look at the following simplified formula:

$$\text{TENNIS CHAMPION} = \frac{\text{PRACTICE} \times \text{ORGANISATION} \times \text{COACH} \times \text{GOOD LUCK} \times \text{TALENT DEVELOPMENT}}{\text{OBSTACLES}}$$

In my opinion, the most important factor in this formula is the talent of the players themselves. Even the best coach has no chance if he has no real talents at his disposal. Another interesting factor in the "champion formula" is their luck - the player in finding a good coach and the coach by conducting an intensive talent search and selecting the player and through a willingness to learn from other successful coaches.

TALENT SEARCH AND SELECTION

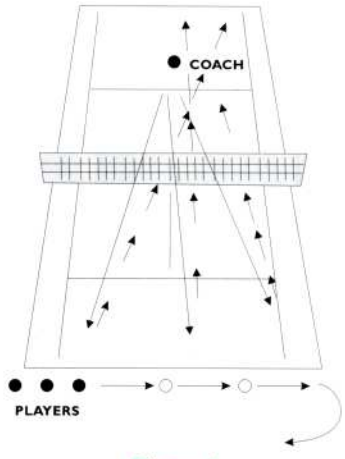
Some parents see their child playing with nice strokes and sound movements and immediately think they have a second Pete Sampras or Steffi Graf at home. Some coaches evaluate the player's level only according to what they see (ie according to their movements). But in tennis, there is not one, not two, but three types of talent. Considering the career of the future champion, we have to distinguish between MOVEMENT TALENT (the ability to learn quickly and correct the tennis movements), COORDINATION TALENT (the so-called invisible technique, which is closely connected with "ball-feeling", skill, timing and which **alone** decides the quality of strokes) and the COMPETITION TALENT (the ability to use the trained technique in a match in the best way and to cope well with the match atmosphere etc). The existence of these three talents in tennis makes the development prognosis for a young player by a coach quite difficult.

An experienced coach is able, during a few lessons, to roughly evaluate the movement talent and, if appropriate, make a negative diagnosis. More difficult than this is the determination of coordination talent, because even the best coach can't see this invisible technique. However, the most demanding thing of all is the evaluation at an early age of the competition talent, which undoubtedly helps make a good player a champion. In performing a talent search and selection we have to respect the following common rules:

For every 100 players with good movement talent there is probably only ONE player who has true coordination talent. And for every 5,000 - 10,000 players with movement talent there is only ONE player, who possesses all these three talents in the required high level. This is then the so-called **supertalent** and the search for such a junior is one of the main goals of each and every tennis association and of every aspiring high performance coach.

SUPERTALENT - THE CURIOSITY BETWEEN TALENTS

A supertalent is a young player who, with optimal training, has a real chance to find a way into the top 200 men or 100 women in the world (ie can make a living on the Circuit). The level of the players competition talent is the deciding factor. If we accept that today in the world about 90 million people play tennis, then only every 300,000th player is a potential champion. In Switzerland for example, with 260,000 players, this champion supply should be fully exhausted with only ONE player.



Picture 1
Wrong exercise - the players don't cover the court for the next stroke.

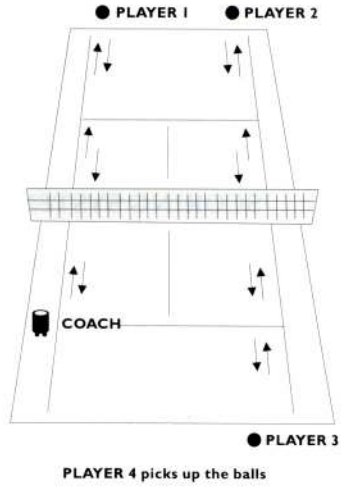
MOVEMENT TALENT DEVELOPMENT

There are surely no secrets for the readers of ITF Coaches Review on how to develop tennis movements. Therefore, here are just three short remarks:

After the player reaches a certain level, all the exercises have to correspond to real match situations. For example, don't practice volleys standing too close to the net. In a match, the first volley, which is the most frequent, the most difficult and the most important one, is usually hit around the service line.

In practice, after each stroke, you should cover the court for the next stroke, like in a match. For example, an exercise involving 4 players forming a row parallel to the baseline and running from the left side, performing three forehand-strokes - from the left corner, then from the middle and them from the right corner (see picture 1) would in my opinion be inappropriate.

Sometimes during group-training, the coach stays on one half of the court and 3 or 4 players on the opposite side hit alternatively back to the coach one or two strokes. This isn't an optimal practice exercise. In the same time that the coach hits 100 strokes, each of the players only hits 25 strokes. So the person practising most on the court is the coach himself. Only one or two strokes and then a



Picture 2
An exercise with 4 players

break is a nonsense. To develop the movements quickly and correctly, you have to perform at least 10-20 strokes at once, without breaks. It is also obvious, that in this case the use of practice time is insufficient - one player in action, the other three are waiting... The following exercise with 4 players is much more effective (see picture 2)

The coach corrects the forehand movements of player 1, for example. Beside him, players 2 and 3 practice against one another according to the coach's instructions, player 4 picks up the balls and recovers. After some minutes the players change to the left, the coach now works with player 4.

COORDINATION TALENT DEVELOPMENT

When you carefully observe a tournament player in a match you will find out that sometimes he has good strokes and other times faults but that, in most cases his movements were the same. And in a few cases, surprisingly, his movements were not even 100% correct and, in spite of this good strokes resulted. That means, there must also be other factors than just movements which decide the quality of the strokes.

We know today, that the decisive part of the stroke is the moment when the racket makes contact with the ball (the hitting moment) and that this "invisible" part of the technique is produced "blindly" as a result of preconditioned optical impulses.

Until today, most coaches and also the players have been giving attention exclusively to the visible technique, ie to the movements. No one was interested in conscious improvements of the invisible technique, though the real stroke efficiency depends on it entirely. This doesn't mean that it is no longer necessary to improve the movements. Obviously the better the visible technique, the greater the chance of optimal hitting of the ball. But, we also have to train the invisible technique!

How can we practise and develop something we cannot see? The first and most important step is to accept the fact that besides the movements, other reasons exist, which are decisive for the quality of the strokes. Then, we have to try to find out when the invisible technique has to be corrected. Above all, when the movements are sound and in spite of this a fault results, a clever coach searches for the causes in the invisible technique, ie in insufficient coordination.

The manner in which a player solves the situation of hitting balls under pressure gives us a "fast" hand or not. Last but not least, do not forget the following fact: Missing the optimal hitting point (which with baseline-strokes is about 10-20 cm in front of the front hip) is the most common cause of errors. An experienced coach will be better able to determine the point of contact, if he observes the player from the side.

Therefore, to improve and develop this invisible technique, we have to EXTEND the traditional technical training by adding coordination exercises. examples of which have previously been published in ITF Coaches Review. I would like to emphasise the great importance of such exercises and to encourage co-ordination talent development.

COMPETITION TALENT

Competition talent is a combination of different mental properties essential for playing high level tennis. Is it possible to improve all of these properties through correct training? Many articles and books exist where various methods are described. Therefore, in the scope of this short article I would like to direct your attention only to some important mental activities, which until now were discussed only very superficially.

During the rallies, before each stroke, the player anticipates, makes decisions and performs actions implementing these decisions. Let us take a short look at anticipation. I believe, that when the player doesn't get in a good position for the stroke, in about 70% of such cases the reason is poor anticipation and only 30% is due to insufficient speed. Therefore, it is worthwhile to do more to develop this property.

Anticipation is to a certain level an inborn quality. In addition, however it is a combination of experience, decision making and courage. To improve your anticipation, look at the top players on television and try to guess the placement of their balls just before they hit them. Their stance, the type of backswing etc. could be a great help in your decision. When a player learns to forecast in critical situation and "what kind of return the opponent is able to do", and covers the corresponding part of the court in advance, then he has done much to increase his anticipation.

The optimal player's behaviour in breaks has been described by many tennis experts very comprehensively: The importance of rituals before service and return; the behaviour of top players after each point; focusing only on the next point and others are well known and accepted. But I am unsure whether the "positive" reaction of the player after a wrong decision of the umpire or after hitting an unforced error in a critical situation is always best. The common feeling is, that in such cases the player should only react very positively - no self-discussion, no shouting, no angry grimaces. When I was a national coach I trained many players who were very explosive in such situations. And, after some time, I was successful in convincing these players to hide their feelings and remain calm. I was satisfied, the parents and the officials were satisfied... But inside they were still full of anger and dynamite, and then they played worse than before. The players objected: "Before, after my outburst, the whole incident was finished and forgotten immediately and I was able to play and fight better" Please don't misunderstand me, I'm not recommending that players swear loudly or slam their rackets, but I can well understand their human need to react. I find it acceptable for a player to encourage himself twice or three times during a match and spontaneously cry out "Not again, come on John!", or if he protests quietly against a third wrong decision by a linesman. He can learn to do it with humour, but he should not overstep the limits as did the young player who asked the referee: "What is the name of your dog, mister umpire?" "What, you have no dog? You are blind without a dog?"!

USE YOUR COMMON SENSE!

If you as a coach would like to help to develop a tennis champion or just a good player, remember the following facts:

FROM TALENT TO CHAMPION - cont...

1. Without real talents, even the best coach has no chance. First, the coach needs to discover if the junior possesses an exceptionally high level of all three necessary talents - movement, coordination and, most importantly, competition. I believe that the difference between a good and a great player doesn't lie in the technique, nor in the physical condition or in the tactics, but in the psychological, mental strength.

2. Because the prognosis of talent development is very difficult, to select a great player, you have to start with many young, talented players. But, gradually step by step, you will identify those juniors who have no chance, according to the following hypothesis:

   Everybody has inborn limits in all properties, for example in SPEED, AGGRESSION, ATTACKING ABILITY, CONCENTRATION, SELF-CONFIDENCE, in ANTICIPATION etc. A small gymnast can not be expected to set a world record in putting the shot. A responsible coach must, after 1-2 years of training, try to discover these limits and if necessary to honestly inform the player and his parents as soon as possible about the real chance. This should be one of the coach's main duties, especially if he works for the national or regional association. It is in everyone's best interest to discard from cadre (national) training players who do not have a real chance to become champions. As an honest coach, you are in a very curious situation. On the one hand, through the elimination of "untalented" juniors you liberate the players and their parents from unrealistic hopes and expectations, save them any disappointments and reduce the training costs, but on the other hand, you cannot expect any gratitude from either the players or from the parents. This is fundamental to a coach's vocation, and if you can't accept it and you expect to receive gratitude, then you should change your job as soon as possible....

3. As a coach you have also to consider what the player can do if unsuccessful or after his career. An alternative has to be prepared in advance. Of course, the player can work as a trainer / coach. But this step has to be made from a positive conviction and not as a last resort.

Anyway, I have a small comfort for the "unsuccessfuls", their parents and coaches. The years spent attempting to make a breakthrough into the top levels of professional tennis are not a waste. Through intensive, hard training and travelling all over the world learning languages, they learn about life and, in the long run, are better able to solve their daily problems than their friends who spent their youth studying hard at school.

THE 8TH ITF ASIAN COACHES WORKSHOP

The 8th ITF Asian Coaches Workshop will be held in the picturesque Changi Village, Singapore from 13-18 October 1996. The workshop is arranged in conjunction with the Asian Tennis Federation and the Singapore Lawn Tennis Association, and is being administered by the SLTA Registry of Coaches. There will be a full programme covering topics both on and off court; confirmed speakers are Miguel Crespo (Spain), Jacques Hervet (France), Doug MacCurdy (ITF), Suresh Menon (ITF) and Richard Schonborn (Germany). Detailed information has already been sent to all National Associations in Asia; if you would like to attend, please contact your National Association for more details. The closing date for entries is 6 September 1996. We look forward to seeing you in Singapore.

THE 6TH ITF SOUTH AMERICAN COACHES WORKSHOP

The 6th ITF South American Regional Coaches Workshop will be held in Santa Cruz, Bolivia from 19-24 November 1996, and in Bogota, Colombia from 25-30 November 1996.

International speakers at both venues include Doug MacCurdy (ITF), Richard Schonborn (Germany), Louis Cayer (Canada) and Dave Miley (ITF). At both venues top South American coaches will also make presentations.

Full information and entry forms will be available through the National Associations in South and Central America by early September for coaches wishing to apply. Entries must be made through National Associations, but why not put the dates in your diary now?

International Tennis Federation

Palliser Road, Barons Court, London W14 9EN

Tel: 44 171 381 8060 Fax: 44 171 381 3989 / 381 2871

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