

ITF Coaches Education Programme



Coaching Beginner and Intermediate Players Course

Knowing your beginner and intermediate tennis players

Why people come to play tennis

- Youngsters motives for participation:

Main motives	Less important motives
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve playing level.• Become physically fit.• Improve skills.• Make new friends.• Keep in shape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Satisfy parents or friends.• Feel important.• Be popular.• Burn energy.• Rewards and prizes.

Reasons why children dropout of the sport



- Not as good as they wanted to be.
- Not enough fun.
- Wanted to play another sport.
- Did not enjoy the pressure.
- Boredom.
- Did not like the coach.
- Training was too hard.
- Not exciting or entertaining enough.

Players motives



- Players always play due to a combination of motives:
 - Intrinsic motives to play tennis include love of the game and desire to achieve a given level of competence and be successful.
 - Extrinsic motives include:
 - tangible (e.g. trophies and money) or
 - intangible (e.g. recognition and adulation) rewards.

HOW PLAYERS PERCEIVE SUCCESS AND FAILURE



- Players' perceptions of success and failure can significantly influence their tennis performances.
- Players will develop certain expectations of success or failure.
- The expectations are situation-specific - a product of how players perceive the difficulty of the task ahead as determined by:
 - their own skills, abilities and
 - degree of effort
 - those of their opponents

Causes of the players' successes and/or failures



- **Internal:** Bad feelings, injuries, physical fitness or behaviour.
- **External:** Ability of the opponent, officiating, court surface, ball type or audience.
- **Stable:** Ability.
- **Unstable or transitory:** Weather, luck or effort.

Causes of the players' successes and/or failures



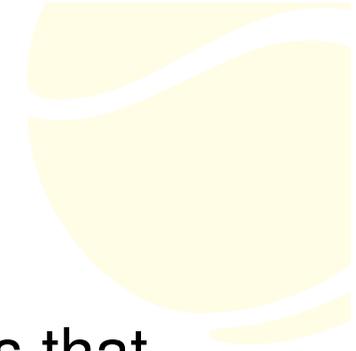
	Internal	External
Stable	Ability	Officiating
Unstable	Effort	Weather

- Players that look to external causes for failure tend to be anxious
- Players who search for relatively stable causes are likely to show less anxiety, greater emotional maturity and tend to be more realistic.

Assisting players to realistically perceive success or failure

Situation	Approach of the coach
Chances are that the player will lose the match due to an inferior playing level	The coach can ask the player to redefine the concept of winning/success. Success may include exceeding a personal best and/or posting a given score.
The team is playing in a team competition	It is likely that each team member will perceive their own as well as their team's prospect of success or failure differently. Use group 'pep' talks together with one-on-one conversations with players to ascertain how individual players feel.
Before the match	Try to be honest with players; accurately assessing their prospects. Do not underrate nor overestimate opponents in an attempt to 'fool' players. Help them to set realistic and achievable goals (i.e. winning or achieving a personal best).
After the match	Avoid discussing the causes of success and, more particularly, failure immediately after matches. When doing so, players often attribute failure to external unstable causes. However, when matches are analysed after players cool-down, shower etc, players tend to explain the outcome using more internal stable causes.

BURNOUT



- The exhaustive psycho-physiological responses that result from frequent, sometimes extreme, and largely ineffective efforts to meet excessive demands.
- Caused by chronic, high levels of stress and dissatisfaction that stem from environmental stressors such as:
 - overtraining,
 - too much stress,
 - staleness,
 - inadequate recovery,
 - external pressure to win,
 - travel commitments,
 - disagreements with management or parents,
 - and/or trying to juggle multiple roles

Techniques to know your players better

- Most successful coaches:
 - Understand their players particularly well.
 - Appreciate why their players play, and what they want from the game.
 - Make concerted efforts to spend time with their players away from the ‘work’ environment so as to foster a healthy coach-player relationship.

Methods coaches can use to better get to know their players

- Asking players questions about:
 - their likes and dislikes,
 - how they see themselves
 - how they see their tennis, studies, friends, etc.
- Listening to them carefully.
- Being a good observer in a wide variety of situations.
- Talking to others (e.g. former coaches, friends and family members) who know or who are friendly with the players.
- Asking the players to periodically evaluate their lessons.
- Understanding the physical or mental disabilities of disabled players so as to best cater for them.

How to meet your players' needs

If we don't know what players want, it becomes infinitely more difficult to plan sessions to meet their expectations!

What players want in private tennis lessons

- Individualised programme.
- Learn at their own pace.
- Hit more balls, and thereby improve more quickly than is possible in a group lesson.
- Play with a professional.
- Expect the coach to have mastered the technique being taught, and be able to use it when demonstrating and when playing.

What players want in group tennis lessons



- Pre-planned organised programmes (e.g., workshops, camps, leagues with instruction). Players in these programmes:
 - Expect an interesting programme, and that they will have a chance to “learn, move and compete”.
 - Look forward to meeting friends and finding new playing partners.
- Customised group lessons for players that gather together to work on select aspects of tennis play that are of collective interest.
 - Coaches should approach these lessons as they would a private lesson.
 - A lesson of this type should never just resemble a collection of individual private lessons for the group members.

Catering coaching to meet players' needs



If your players want	Your coaching strategy will involve:
To learn and improve new skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrating when appropriate.• Allowing players to play and to hit lots of balls (provide repetition).• Emphasising key teaching points in the drills and games.
To have fun	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Planning a large number of games and enjoyable activities that incorporate all players.• Being enthusiastic.• Emphasising any relevant teaching points in the drills and games.
Affiliation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organising plenty of team games.• Asking players to wear the same clothing.• Assigning special roles or routines to each player.
Excitement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Varying practices.• Integrating other sports.• Including novel events (tournaments etc) in typical lessons.
Exercise and fitness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keeping explanations and demonstrations short, with an emphasis on action!• Encouraging players to warm-up and cool-down by performing a variety of different activities.• Reinforcing conditioning aspects of drills and games.
Competitive challenge and winning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Planning competitive games.• Rewarding all participants.• Organising challenging activities for all players.

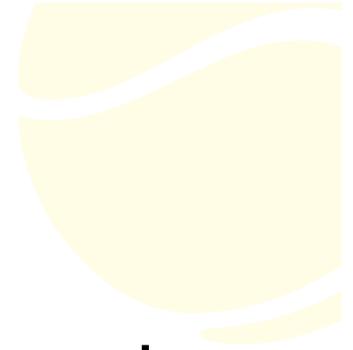
How to meet your players' needs

- **Provide opportunities for fitness and skill development:**
 - Plan circuit-type activities
 - focus on helping players to improve their physical and playing skills.
- **Develop realistic expectations and views of success:**
 - help young players define what winning means to them
 - It should involve much more than just beating opponents.
 - It should represent trying hard, behaving, playing well and going for it!
- **Give feedback:**
 - Offer praise frequently but sincerely
 - Reward effort just as much as outcome.
 - Use positive sandwich strategies to assist players improve.

How to meet your players' needs

- **Don't be afraid to modify:**
 - Adapt skills and activities to help players experience success.
 - Modify rules to maximise action and participation.
- **Good atmosphere:**
 - Create an environment that minimises any fear associated with trying new skills.
 - Promote camaraderie between players.
- **Keep practices and games exciting:**
 - Be enthusiastic!

MAINTAINING A CHILD'S INVOLVEMENT IN TENNIS



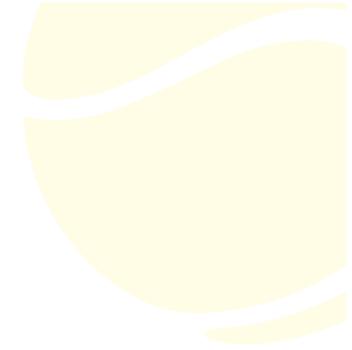
- It's important for coaches to understand that:
 - It is not **children** who have to adapt themselves to tennis, but **tennis** that has to be adapted to children.
 - 'The children should come first, the students second'.

ADAPTING THE GAME TO THE CHILD



- **The emotional sphere:**
 - Enjoyment is central to the learning process.
 - Children tend to progress most effectively:
 - in climates that install confidence and safety
 - with coaches that are supportive and positive.
- **The motor sphere:** Psychomotor development should be of primary educational concern, particularly between the ages of 5 and 7 when children have not yet:
 - Become fully aware of their bodies.
 - Undergone complete brain lateralisation.
 - Fully developed spatial perception.
 - Established control of time.
- With dexterity and co-ordination still developing, workshops involving various games (hockey, football, frisbee...) can help children develop a diverse but robust motor platform.

ADAPTING THE GAME TO THE CHILD



- **The social sphere:**
 - Individual differences tend to be pronounced, yet children need playmates.
 - Teaching tools in the form of games, relay exercises, and stories can help to integrate children into a group.
- **The intellectual sphere:**
 - The language used by children differs from that used by adults.
 - Instructions need to be short, clear and specific.
 - Coaches must try and use simple and concrete words.