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Editorial

Welcome to Issue 51 of the ITF Coaching & Sport Science Review.

This is a monographic issue of the ITF Coaching & Sport Science Review, devoted to "Tennis 10s". "Tennis 10s" is tennis for 10 & under players played with slower red, orange or green balls on the appropriate sized courts. The ITF plans to change the rules of tennis so as to eliminate the use of the regular tennis ball for 10 and under competition from January 2012. For this issue, many experts have collated their expertise to help inform the coaching community of the importance of this new ITF initiative. The ITF recommends that 10 & under training and competition should not be played with a regular ball but instead players should train and compete with the slower balls.

The articles will highlight issues associated with coaching and organizing competition for 10 & under players and how using slower balls will help more easily develop efficient technique and also allow players of this age to implement advanced tactics that previously, in most cases, could not be performed using a regular yellow ball.

Some of the tennis experts who have contributed to Issue 51 include:

- Line Declercq, Flemish Tennis Federation, Belgium
- Jolyn de Boer, Executive Director, Tennis Industry Association
- Kirk Anderson, Director USTA Recreational Coaches and Programme
- Sandi Procter, Director of Tennis, Bromley Tennis Centre, UK
- Mike Barrell, evolve9
- Mark Tennant, inspire2coach
- Patrick McEnroe, USTA
- Victor Cabral, Director of Research and Coaching, Portuguese Tennis Federation.
- Wayne Elderton, Head of Tennis Canada Coaching Development and Certification
- As well as ITF experts Dave Miley, Miguel Crespo, Mark Bullock and James Newman.



We would like to thank all the experts for their contribution and help with this issue. Furthermore, we hope that these articles generate a great amount of discussion between coaches, academies and federations around the world about the most effective way to introduce under 10 players to the great game of tennis. More information and resources about the "Tennis10s" campaign including endorsements from top players including Roger Federer Rafael Nadal, Sam Stosser and Elena Jankovic can be found at www.tennis10s.com.

The programmes for the five ITF 2010 Regional Coaches Conferences, commencing with the first in Pretoria in September, can all be found on the ITF coaching weblet (www.itftennis.com/coaching) as well information on how to register to attend. The ITF are pleased to announce that the keynote speakers include Machar Reid (AUS), Antoni Girod (FRA), Jofre Porta (ESP), Eliot Teltscher (USA), Pancho Alvarino (ESP), Beni Linder (SWI), Mark Tennant (GBR), Mike Barrell (GBR), Rémi Leurs (FRA) and Frank van Fraayhoven (NED).

The ITF Regional Coaches Conferences are conducted in partnership with Olympic Solidarity and the Regional Associations (ATF, COSAT, COTECC, and CAT) and the dates for each of the Regional Coaches Conferences are as follows:

- African - Pretoria, South Africa, 18 - 21 September.
- Central American & Caribbean - Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, 20 - 24 September.
- South American - Mar del Plata, Argentina, 5 - 9 October.
- North African - Hammamet, Tunisia, 6 - 9 October.
- Asian - Subic Bay, Philippines, 2 - 6 November.

In addition the European Coaches conference which is organized by Tennis Europe and part funded by the ITF and Olympic Solidarity will take place in Moscow from October 15th to 17th.

Coaches who are interested in attending these biennial Regional Coaches Conference can enter through their National Associations who have received detailed information regarding the conferences. We hope you enjoy this 51st edition of Coaching & Sport Science Review.

Dave Miley
Executive Director,
Tennis Development

Miguel Crespo
Research Officer,
Tennis Development/Coaching

Scott Over
Assistant Research Officer,
Tennis Development/Coaching

Serve Rally and Score...The ITF tennis Play and Stay Campaign and Tennis10s

Dave Miley (ITF Executive Director, Tennis Development)

ITF Coaching and Sport Science Review 2010; 51 (18): 3 - 4

ABSTRACT

The ITF launched a global campaign in 2007 aimed at increasing tennis participation worldwide. Tennis...Play and Stay centres around the slogan of "Serve Rally and Score" and seeks to promote tennis as easy, fun and healthy. Fundamental to the campaign is the use of slower red, orange and green balls by coaches working with starter players, which help to ensure that the first experience of tennis is a positive and dynamic one, involving playing the game (serving, rallying and scoring). The Play and Stay campaign led to the launch of Tennis10s in 2009.

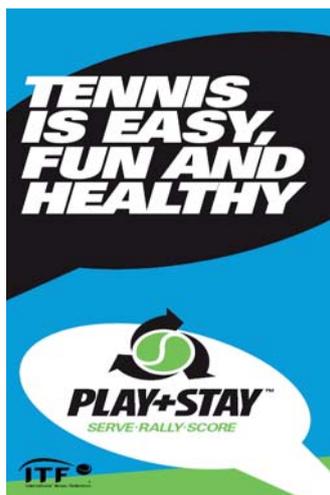
Key Words: Tennis 10s, Play and Stay, beginner tennis.

Corresponding Author: dave.miley@itftennis.com

WHY WAS TENNIS...PLAY AND STAY INTRODUCED?

In 2002 the ITF Intro to Tennis Taskforce was established with the aim of looking at how tennis could be better introduced to starter players. The taskforce included experts in tennis participation from some of the world's top tennis federations and coaching bodies.

The Taskforce recognised that, whilst tennis is growing in many nations, some of the more established nations are facing challenges related to participation resulting primarily from lifestyle changes that have occurred. The key finding was that our sport seems to be good at attracting people but is not as good at retaining them. The taskforce saw the need to adapt the sport to the needs of the customer, the starter player, and to agree a common position related to starter tennis.



The key messages of the Tennis...Play and Stay campaign are:

- Tennis is easy ...when coaches working with starter players use slower red, orange or green balls
- Tennis is fun....when starter players serve, rally and score from the first lesson
- Tennis competition can be fun...and formats and scoring systems exist to suit all lifestyles
- Tennis is healthy...research conducted in 2006 by the ITF and published in the British Journal of Sports medicine supports this
- Tennis is a sport for all and all players should have a rating which helps them to find players of a similar level to play with

The ball is key!

Using the right ball with starter players is crucial to player retention. There is no doubt that the slower balls give players more time and control and make it easier for them to rally. Yet when the campaign started it was estimated that less than an estimated 10% of coaches worldwide were using slower balls with starter players, That is why the promotion of the slower balls to coaches is a key element of Tennis...Play and Stay and Tennis 10s.

Slower Balls, Smaller courts, Better Juniors!

The slower balls are not just important for developing starter players; high level juniors benefit as the balls help them to more easily develop efficient technique and allow them to implement more advanced tactics than could not be performed using a normal ball on a full court.

Adults...Play tennis fast!

Some of the major nations, including France, have had a lot of success with the slower balls in introducing tennis to adults and they are a major focus of Play and Stay. Just like children, if adults cannot serve, rally and score on a full court with a regular I ball – their coach should use a ball where they can.

Coaching players with disabilities

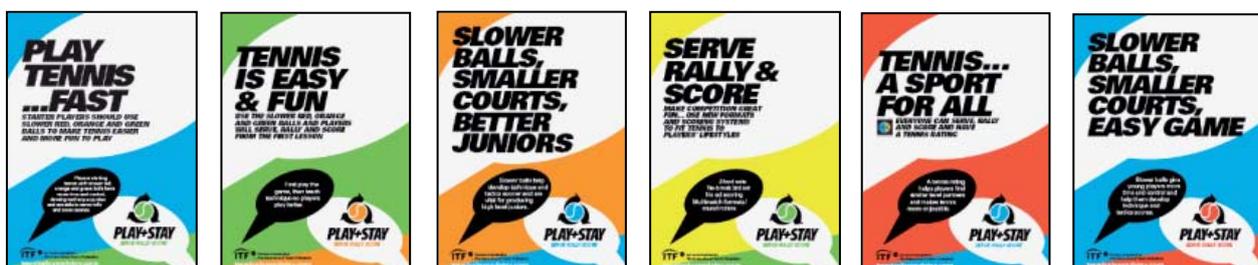
Slower balls can be most helpful when coaching players with disabilities and can dramatically increase their enjoyment and success in tennis, see Mark Bullock's article later that tackles tennis for 10 and under players with disabilities.

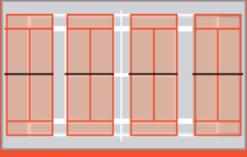
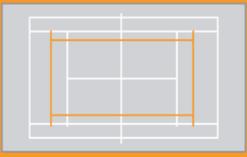
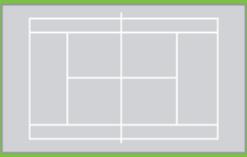
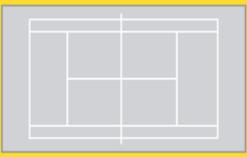
What about Technique?

Some coaches ask where technique fits in when the emphasis is placed on getting starter players to serve, rally and score from the first lesson. The answer is that technique is still very important and once coaches have used the slower balls to give players the taste of playing tennis, they should then look to give the players relevant technical (and tactical) instruction that can then help them to serve, rally and score more effectively. This is in effect the simple definition of the Game Based Approach, which is sometimes misunderstood by tennis coaches.

The Game based approach

The game based approach is fundamental to the Play and Stay campaign. This is the foundation of all coaching at all levels. Whether the coach is working with starter players or with advanced players all instruction should relate to helping the players to better play the game. All instruction given should be relevant to helping the player to implement tactics. In simple play and Stay language the game based approach can be defined as "Serve rally and score...and then give relevant instruction (Technical, tactical, physical or mental) to help the player to serve rally and score more effectively!"



STAGE	AGE	BALL	COURT	RACKET *(Dependent on the size of the player)	SCORING OPTIONS
	5-8 years	 (Foam or Felt) 75% slower than a yellow ball	 11-12m (36-39ft) x 5-6m (16-19ft) Net Height: 80-83.8cm (31.5-33in)	Up to 23" (43-58cm)*	1 x tiebreak to 7 or 10 Best of 3 tiebreaks to 7 1 x short set to 4 Timed Matches
	8-10 years	 50% slower than a yellow ball	 18m (60ft) x 6.5-8.23m (21-27ft) Net Height: 80-91cm (31.5-36in)	23-25" (58-63cm)*	Best of 3 tiebreaks to 7 1 x short set to 4
	9-10 years	 25% slower than a yellow ball	 Full Size Court	25-26" (63-66cm)*	1 x short set to 4 Best of 3 short sets to 4 (3rd set as match tiebreak)
	11 years and over	 Yellow Ball	 Full Size Court	26-29" (66-73.7cm)*	Any scoring system within the Rules of Tennis

What is Tennis10s?

Tennis10s is tennis for 10 and under players played with one of the slower red, orange or green balls. Tennis10s was introduced to give formal guidance on the use of the different red, orange and green balls and courts with competition for 10 and under players (see Table).

At the ITF AGM in 2010, the ITF will ask member nations to vote on a rule that will mean that only slower red, orange, or green balls may be used in official competition at 10 and under, and that yellow ball may not be used. The ITF will seek to introduce this rule from 2012, giving nations time to adapt to the rule where necessary. At present although many players use the slower balls in training, competition is usually played with the regular yellow ball which makes little sense. Once the competitions are using the slower balls, the coaches will all of course have to use the balls in training.

Is it more difficult for coaches to organise the lesson using different balls and courts sizes?

Some coaches are concerned that the logistics of using different balls and court sizes will make their lessons more complicated to organise. However learner centred coaching means doing the right thing for the student...not doing what is easiest for the coach! It does require more organisation but the smaller courts can be set up very quickly by using throw down lines, more players can be organised to play on each full tennis court and the slower balls last longer than normal balls. So there are many advantages in using slower balls and smaller courts, including the most important ones of a more positive and dynamic first experience for the starter players and increased retention by making the game easier and more fun.

SUMMARY

The overall reaction to the campaign and to the launch of Tennis10s has been overwhelmingly positive. The major nations have been very supportive of the proposed rule change for 10 and under competition and the ITF will work with all federations to help ensure the rule can be implemented with success.

Tennis 10s also has the committed support of the ATP and WTA tours with some of the top players including Federer, Nadal, Stosur and Jankovic all recording video messages in support of Tennis10s.

To back up the campaign the ITF has produced a range of promotional material and coaching tools in a number of different languages all branded with the Tennis...Play and Stay and Tennis10s logo. To view these materials and for other important information related to Tennis...Play and Stay readers should go to www.tennisplayandstay.com or www.tennis10s.com.

The ITF believe that the launch of Tennis...Play and Stay and Tennis10s has had big impact on tennis worldwide and we hope that coaches will recognise and support the changes that these 2 projects have brought to how the game is coached for starter players and for 10 and under players

Remember... Tennis coaching is not a sport. Tennis is the sport! Our job as coaches is not simply to teach technique. Our main role is to organise people to play tennis so that they experience the best part of tennis...serving, rallying and scoring! Let's use the slower balls to ensure that as many people as possible have the chance to Serve, Rally and Score and to enjoy and stay playing our great sport!

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Why slower balls and smaller courts for 10 and under players?

James Newman (ITF Participation Officer)

ITF Coaching and Sport Science Review 2010; 51 (18): 5 - 6

ABSTRACT

Tennis 10s and its supporters promote that slower balls and smaller court sizes help children to play with more success. This article aims to present the rationale behind this argument, to look specifically at how using slower balls and smaller courts is beneficial for 10 and under players.

Key Words: slower balls, smaller courts, modified equipment

Corresponding Author: james.newman@itftennis.com

WHY SLOWER BALLS?

Slower balls give players more time and control making it easier for them to rally and to develop advanced tactics and technique. An optimal striking zone on most groundstrokes is between waist and shoulder height; the slower balls ensure the ball will most often land within this strike zone for young children, whereas the traditional yellow balls frequently bounce above their head.



Table 1 shows the average height of boys and girls by age, according to the World Health Organisation, whilst Table 2 shows the ITF approval specifications for the Red (Stage 3), Orange (Stage 2), Green (Stage 1), and traditional yellow balls. The rebound heights of these balls can be compared with the average child heights in Table 1, showing that:

- The yellow ball rebound height (135-147cm) is above the average height of children age 5-9 (110-133cm), whilst at age 10 (138.7cm), most balls in the range will rebound either in line with or above the player's head
- Red ball rebound height (85-105cm) is best suited for children aged 5-8 (110-127.4cm)
- Orange ball rebound height (110-115cm) is best suited for children aged 8-10 (127.4-138.7cm)
- Green ball rebound height (118-132cm) is best suited for children aged 9 and especially aged 10 (133-138.7cm)

Table 1. Average height of males and females combined (World Health Organisation, 2007)

Average height* of...	Male and Female combined (cm)	% of 19yr old Adult Height
5 year old	110	64.8
6 year old	116	68.3
7 year old	121.8	71.7
8 year old	127.4	75
9 year old	133	78.3
10 year old	138.7	81.7
19 year old adult	169.85	100

*Average height is for end of month 1 in each year

Table 2. ITF rebound height specifications for approved balls

Rebound height (range) of...	(cm)
Standard Yellow ball	135-147
Green (Stage 1) ball	118-132
Orange (Stage 2) ball	110-115
Red (Stage 3) ball	85-105

The consequences of the ball rebounding above the player's head are that, most shots are either:

1. Played very early, way inside the court with little control (players generally move away from this tactic due to the difficulty to control the ball and the inability to recover a good court position), or
2. Played deep behind the baseline as the player waits for the ball to drop, then returns it very high (moon ball) over the net to force their opponent to contact the ball very high, or push them far back behind the baseline, or
3. Contacted above head height with an extreme grip, increasing the risk of injury by placing excessive load on the arm (Kibler, 2002), and limiting the ability to control shot direction or be offensive

Apart from the bounce height, the velocity of the ball through the air and at rebound is slower. The slower balls are pressureless and lower in mass which causes this reduction in velocity, and the Red balls (stage 3) are also larger than the standard tennis ball, so move slower through the air. This reduced velocity gives children with basic or developing sensori-motor skills, more time and control so that they can rally successfully, by perceiving, moving to, positioning around, and striking the ball.

In summary, using the slower balls with young children makes it much easier to rally, allows children to implement advanced tactics and technique, and reduces the risk of injury from extreme grips.



Why Smaller Courts?

The smaller courts used in Tennis 10s are scaled to the size of the player, making movement patterns more realistic and enabling smaller players to cover the court and implement advanced tactics.

Table 3. Court length and width and % of traditional court length and width

	Court Length (m)	% of Traditional Court Length	Court Width (m)	% of Traditional Court Width
Traditional Court	23.78	100	8.23	100
Orange Court	18	75.7	6.5	78.9
Red Court	11	46.3	5.5	66.8

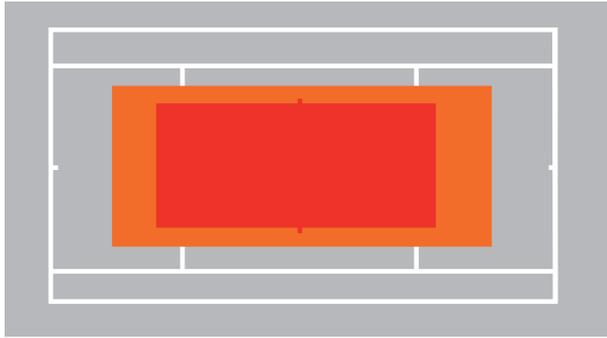


Table 3 shows the court sizes, and the % of those dimensions compared to a traditional (full size) court. When these % ratios are compared to children's height as a % of adult height, we can observe the following:

Red Court

Red court width is 66% of traditional court, whilst a 5, 6, 7 and 8 year old are 64.8-75% of adult height, this shows that the court size % is very suitable for this age group. The red court length is only 46.3% of a traditional court, although this is a lower %, we must consider that children in this age group have limited depth perception as their vision is still developing (Haywood & Getchell, 2005), meaning the shorter court makes it easier for them to judge the ball and to position around the ball, even if they judge it late.



Orange Court

Orange court width is 78.9% and length is 75.7% of a traditional court. Orange courts are commonly used by players aged 8-9, who are on average 75-78.3% of adult height. These percentages show that the Orange court is almost perfectly scaled to the size of the player and should create virtually identical footwork patterns, and tactical possibilities as an adult would have on the traditional court. Of course by moving these shorter children onto the full court, we can expect that their number of steps would be 25% greater, meaning footwork and tactical patterns become unrealistic when compared with the adult game.

In summary, smaller courts are scaled down to be representative of the game an adult plays on the traditional sized court. The only exception is the length of the Red court which is smaller to assist young children with limited depth perception (Haywood & Getchell, 2005).

Why not operate a system by height?

As this article has so far focused on height, many will ask why taller players should not progress sooner. In theory height is possibly a good way to progress children, however practically it is flawed for two reasons:

1. The practicality of moving children based on height would require some 'official' measurement, and the thoughts of 'shoes on or off', 'height at entry or height at start of event', and disputes from parents eying up players who look a cm too tall are ridiculous, but potentially real, dilemmas.
2. Success and improvement are crucial factors in retaining players in tennis, but so are socialising and belonging. Many children want to be where their friends are. We could say the same by age but anecdotal experience indicates that players have more 'same school year group' friends than 'older/younger school year group' friends

Age is by no means the perfect method of categorising players but it is probably the best, practical method available.

SUMMARY

Many argue that their children can play with the yellow ball and full court, however, as discussed, the tactics are most often limited to moon balls played deep behind the baseline, little redirection of the ball or offensive play occurs, and almost no approach and net play. The variety and intensity of play that can be attained by children using slower balls and smaller courts is of a considerably higher level to that which can be achieved on the big court with a high bouncing ball.

Tennis must be adapted to the size and motor level of the players, and should not be seen in the 10 and under age group as equipment for beginners or lower ability players but based on the size of the player, similar to little league baseball and mini soccer. Finally, shorter rackets are absolutely fundamental for smaller players (Crespo & Reid, 2009), however that is another article!

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Incoming!: Reception skills

Mike Barrell (Evolve9, Great Britain)

ITF Coaching and Sport Science Review 2010; 51 (18): 7 - 8

ABSTRACT

Reception skills are crucially important in the development of young tennis players, indeed many of the mistakes or difficulties a child experiences in rallying come down to their ability to perceive and receive the oncoming ball. This article highlights the importance and practicalities of developing reception skills.

Key Words: Reception, Perception, Receiving Skills

Corresponding Author: MikeBarrell@evolve9.com

Tennis is often listed as a “sending and receiving” sport. In fact I would change that to “tennis is a receiving and sending sport!” Only the serve starts with the sending process. The remaining shots all start with the reception process. Reception is the core skill of our game and without it you just can't play!

With ‘Serve, Rally, Score’ now being our mantra in Tennis 10s and understanding that a child will perceive themselves a tennis player only when they can rally; reception is key to successfully working with young players. Yet still much greater emphasis placed on the mechanics required to send the ball than those to receive it.

Some challenges for children in receiving are due to:

- A still maturing eyesight
- Lack of experience, limiting their opportunity to use certain aspects of anticipation
- Difficulties with de-centring (applying various pieces of information to a problem or situation)
- The application of effective visual search and cue utilisation
- Complex coordination of movement required to accurately position themselves once they have processed the visual information

There are also challenges from the different characteristics of ball flight that are provided by the nature of the game itself:

- Two flights of the ball (from racquet to bounce and then from bounce to racquet)
- Different speed and height combinations
- Varying degrees of spin

As with most aspects of working with 10 and under players, this is further complicated by a player that is constantly developing both physically and cognitively. A six year old doesn't see the world in the same way that a 9 year old does, and has different physical and coordinative capabilities. We are not just dealing with a changing game but also a changing child. However, many of the challenges that the game and the development of the children presents can be overcome.

Ready

Creating time for a player is crucial at an early age. A great ‘ready condition’ is important from the start, setting the player in an alert position and helping them to understand that they will have to move from this position. Setting the simplest of visual clues is also important. Encouraging a player to react at the point the ball strikes the opponents strings, gives the most concrete visual clue to the player. Part of creating this condition is to ensure that we set a movement cycle in place also so that players develop good recovery habits right from the start. Too many static hitting drills can inhibit this and ideas like standing on a spot should be avoided as they serve to further inhibit a player's natural movement.

Space

Creating court boundaries may not seem essential to supporting the development of reception skills, but actually they are crucial. The boundaries (baseline and sideline) determine the

characteristics of the ball within that space. Making a wider court will mean that a player understands that they will have to move more laterally and a longer thinner court will reduce lateral movement and mean that a player must only move forwards and backwards. Changing the size and shape of the court will mean that as coaches we can create a relevant level of challenge and success for players.



Reaction Time

Once you have clearly set the player and space to start the process it's really important to ensure that players react quickly enough. A simple drill to start is to get them to call out if the oncoming ball is going to their forehand or backhand or if the ball will land short or deep. To ensure that players read the oncoming ball at its earliest place, add a third player at the net who must call out a key word as the ball crosses the net. The receiving player must call out the direction (or depth) before the net player calls out ensuring that they react to the ball before it reaches their side of the net.

This also creates the start of the anticipation process, as players implicitly start to read the hitters racquet face and swing to help in their decision. This can be further enhanced if the coach changes their swing shape or body position when feeding balls.

Watch the Ball

How many times have we said this as coaches? But just watching is not enough in fact we need to focus on the ball and block out other information. This “visual selection” is important as young players find it hard to stay focussed. Some players may “see the ball” very clearly but not identify the key points in the flight of the ball. A simple practice without rackets is to clap when the ball hits the ground. Do this with a partner and try to see if both players clap at the same instant. Add an extra degree of complexity by trying to clap at the ball's peak as well.

A few simple focus drills once a player is rallying could be

- Write numbers on the balls and players must call out the number that they see
- Use different coloured balls that must be hit to different places. Green balls cross court and orange balls down the line.
- Opposites. When one player hits topspin the other must hit slice and vice versa.

Anticipation

Of course by far the most sophisticated element of reception is anticipation. There are a few things that you might consider to help players to gain more insight.

- Do as many drills as possible with a partner at the other end. Players need to get used to observing and reacting to the opponent.
- Explain the geography of the court. As they move into orange tennis help them to understand the percentages.
- Encourage them to watch the body position and racquet face of the opponent
- Link shots together logically in drills to ensure that players understand what are the likely sequences

During the 6 – 10 age group players are going through greater physiological and cognitive development than at any other time. Their bodies are growing and developing, including the maturation of their eyesight which does not meet adult levels until the very end of this age group. And while red, orange and green evolves into not just a participation programme but also a player development model we must consider the part that reception skills play, not just in helping kids to play but also in helping them to play better!

Flights

Most young players do not struggle with the perception of direction of the ball, however tennis provides its own unique challenge due to most shots being hit after two flights of the ball (from racquet to bounce and then from bounce to racquet). Most young players do a good job of assessing the first flight of the ball and we know this because they move very close to the bounce. In fact most move way too close. The challenge for us is to help them move into a position that allows them to make a comfortable contact in a position of strength. In short they have to make room between the bounce and the impact point and usually this means striking a ball as it falls.

Before moving to explain this let me say that there is a big difference between hitting on the rise intentionally and hitting on the rise because you are simply in the wrong position (by accident).

Some drills and tools that we can use to help players with this are:

- Catching the ball in an upturned cone, bucket or baseball cap. This encourages players to back off and catch the ball as it falls
- Hitting after two bounces. Encouraging players to move away from the first bounce and create space
- Controlling the ball with a foot or knee. Players instinctively move back to find space to do this.

These practices can be used for short periods (just a few minutes) and sandwiched by periods of hitting. Players will quickly transfer the skill into their rallying skills finding space between the bounce and the hit and not rushing the ball.

SUMMARY

Reception skills are fundamental to the development of young players, and should receive as much if not more focus the stroke mechanics – as without reception skills children will not be able to implement good technique in a game situation.

10 and under Competitive Framework in Belgium

Line Declercq (VTV, Flemish Federation)

ITF Coaching and Sport Science Review 2010; 51 (18): 9 - 10

ABSTRACT

The Flemish Tennis Federation (VTV) has taken several steps to create a successful competition that is adapted to every level under 10. The competition is monitored closely to make improvement possible when necessary. By that, the number of children participating in competition has increased significantly in recent years.

Key Words: customized competition, KidsTennis.

Corresponding Author: line.declercq@vtv.be

INTRODUCTION

A lot of young children play tennis, but a minority participates in competition. However, competition can be very fun and also an important factor in the tennis development. By creating different formats and taking appropriate initiatives, the participation in competition can be positively influenced.

VTV competition structure under 10

The mission of VTV is to provide tennis for all levels and ages. Therefore VTV has developed a customized competition for everyone, also under 10. There are 3 official competition formats under 10: Kinder Toer, Volkswagen Tour and Interclub. The Interclub is a team competition that is played with the same match format as the Volkswagen Tour. The Kinder Toer and Volkswagen Tour are 2 individual tournament circuits with categories under 10. They target a different type of player:

1. Volkswagen Tour

Boys and girls play separately. The categories are divided in 2 series: series 1 focuses on the better players, series 2 is for everyone. The matches are played in a table with elimination. There is a Volkswagen Tour ranking that leads to the Masters at the end of the season, the Flemish Championship.

CATEGORIES 2010	SERIES	RATING	AGE
B 10 - G 10 (FULL COURT)	1	Open (transition ball)	10
	2	Open (transition ball)	10, 9*, 8* and 7*
B 9 - G 9 (18M - 6,5M COURT)	1	Open (soft ball)	9 and 8
	2	Open (soft ball)	9, 8 and 7

* Only possible to participate if the player achieves enough points in B9 or G9



2. Kinder Toer

The series are the colors of the VTV education concept Kids Tennis. The children are aware of their color through the KidsTennis programme in the club. Kinder Toer is a mixed round robin competition where the age limits are not very strict. The results are not important and there is no ranking. If a player enters 5 times, he or she gets an invitation for the Kinder.

Series 2010	Ball	Age limits	Recommended age	Court
White	/	°10 and younger	5 and younger	/
Blue	Foam ball	°10 and younger	5 and 6	
Red	Foam ball	°10 and younger	7 and 8	
Orange	Soft ball	°10 and younger	9 and 10, talented 8	
Green	Transition ball	°10, °11, °12	10 and recreational 11, 12	

Managing the competition

It is important that a player enters the circuit adapted to his or her needs. At this age the experience of competition can determine the future participation. VTV has created a guiding table to make sure a player enters the right competition. This is for example the guideline for a 9 year old:

AGE	BEGINNERS	ADVANCED PLAYERS	TALENTED PLAYERS
9 YEARS	Kinder Toer Orange (Orange court and soft ball)	Kinder Toer Orange (Orange court and soft ball) VW Tour B/G 9 series2 (Orange court and soft ball)	VW Tour B/G 9 series1&2 (Orange court and soft ball) VW Tour B/G 10 series2 (if player has 30 ranking points B/G 9 series 1 or 2) (full court with transition ball)

Over the last decade the participation in competition has increased a lot (Volkswagen Tour entries: 18.000 to 35.000). The success of Kim and Justine brought more people to tennis in Belgium, but it was important that the offer of tournaments was sufficient enough. By several initiatives benefiting the club, we made sure that clubs started to organise a tournament of the Volkswagen Tour and that it was interesting for players to enter.



The Kinder Toer has grown a lot in the last 3 years (Kinder Toer entries: 8000 to 20.000). The most important change was the implementation of KidsTennis in the tournament circuit. By doing this, young players have the opportunity to play a competition that is linked to their education.

The strategy of VTV in managing the customized competition is to make sure that the different initiatives reinforce each other. Coaches education, Youth Fund, Marketing, Elite, regional support team... they all influence the competition and the different groups involved (trainers, kids, parent, clubs,...). The competition is closely monitored and continuously adapted to the needs and demands of both the participants and organizers. A big advantage in Belgium is the number of clubs (tournaments) at a short distance, but it requires a lot of effort to ensure the quality of every tournament.

Ranking and Rating

VTV uses both a ranking and a rating system for the Volkswagen Tour. The ranking system is a cumulative system where players earn ranking points from R16. There is a ranking for each series in the Volkswagen Tour. The ranking is processed weekly and used to determine the seeds in the draws when players are rated equally. For the final ranking the best 8 singles results are taking into account (for series 1 also doubles results are included). The top 8 players in each series can participate in the Masters at the end of the season. The players in series 1 compete for the Flemish and the Belgium title.

The rating system is a year system, also used for the adult players. The rating takes into account all the matches played in official tournaments. If you win a match, you get a number of points according to your own rating in comparison with the rating of your opponent (if the opponent is 3 ratings and lower you don't receive points). If you lose, you only lose points when the rating of the opponent is equal or lower.

According to the total number of points at the end of the year, you receive a higher, lower or equal rating. If you go up, you can take several steps, but if you go down, you can only take one step at a time.

The rating system is used to divide the series of the Volkswagen Tour, so everyone can play at their own level and the matches are more balanced. Only half of the points can be earned in comparison to the adult competitions. The youth players can't go up too fast so if they reach the adult competition, the rating has a correct value. In addition, the rating of the youth players is always reviewed by a committee, and if necessary adapted, so the differences and changes in the rating of youth players stay minimized. On top of this, players 10&under can only receive the lowest rating, unless the committee decides the ranking should be higher. These measures ensure that it is very exceptional that youth players go down in the rating system.

CONCLUSION

VTV has succeeded in getting more young children to enter a competition by offering a competition structure that is adapted to different type of players at that age. The initiatives taken to increase the participation are situated in different areas. One of the most important changes was the introduction of KidsTennis in the competition format.

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How the tennis industry will be affected by Tennis10s

Jolyn de Boer (Tennis Industry Association)

ITF Coaching and Sport Science Review 2010; 51 (18): 11 - 12

ABSTRACT

The mission of the Tennis Industry Association (TIA), the not-for-profit trade association for tennis in the U.S., is to promote participation growth in alignment with the USTA and support the economic vitality of everyone in the industry. The TIA helps oversee grassroots initiatives including Tennis Welcome Centers, facility registration of QuickStart Tennis, and owns Cardio Tennis. This article looks at the impact of Tennis 10s in the United States as well as its potential global impact for those in the industry.

Key Words: Beginner Players, Cardio Tennis, Tennis 10s.

Corresponding Author: Jolyn@TennisIndustry.org

In the United States our version of Play and Stay is called QuickStart Tennis (QST). QST was formally introduced in the U.S. about 2 years ago, so this is a much newer product for our coaches and industry compared to the rest of the world. Since its introduction it has been generally well-received overall and today there are approximately 1,600 facilities in the U.S. that are using the QST play format for their 10-and-under programming.

Thus far one of our bigger challenges has been changing people's perceptions in regards to what tennis should look like for kids 10 and under. We know the task of educating children, parents and coaches on the benefits of playing with age-appropriate equipment and courts will be ongoing. Those who see QuickStart Tennis in action understand it and see the immediate results, and are very favorable towards the format.

As is the case in most countries, many coaches have used low-compression balls and/or modified courts in their past instruction. QuickStart Tennis (and Play and Stay) is the complete package consisting of 6 components: age, net height, ball, court size, racquet and scorekeeping.

So in 2 years how has QuickStart Tennis impacted the industry and affected the market?



Tennis Participation

From 2004 to 2009, the number of children ages 6 to 17 playing tennis in the U.S. increased 28% from 8 million to 10.2 million. Last year, U.S. tennis participation, for all ages, reached more than 30 million participants as reported in research conducted for the TIA and USTA. Supporting studies by The Physical Activity Council has seen tennis growing 43% since 2000 and gaining the #1 rank among traditional sports. We attribute this extensive increase in participation to many factors – including but not limited to - the unified industry grassroots efforts, the fact that tennis is easily accessible and affordable, especially

in today's economic market, and to the healthy images portrayed by the pro tour's positive role models.

As more and more parents become aware of QST and more and more coaches adopt the format, we are confident that QST will have a major impact on the 10-and-under age groups, allowing children to learn quickly and play sooner. In the two years, since its launch, participation for this age group is up 40%, retention has increased from 45% to 63% and 20,000 parents and coaches have received QST training.

We have found that when parents know about QST—and when QST programming is accessible to them—it helps to put tennis on a par with other popular sports that have kids' versions, including basketball, baseball and soccer, as a viable choice for younger children. Also important is that QST is safer for children with age appropriate equipment and courts, and they can play in the QST format with their friends on or even off the tennis court.

Consumers/Parents

As we continue to expose more and more consumers to QST we appear to be attracting more adults to our sport as well as kids. Anecdotal evidence from facilities and teaching professionals across the U.S. tells us that parents are realizing the use of low compression balls makes the game much easier for them, too. In addition, tennis is seen as a "family" activity—hook young children on tennis, and we're finding there's a good chance parents will start to play. The USTA also offers community "workshops" for parents, teachers and others to help with QST programming.

Through programs developed by the USTA and other groups, tennis using the QST format is also being introduced to more and more children in school physical education programs and in after-school intramural programs. Coaches are also seeing the benefit as their players can progress at a fairly rapid rate to where they can play a match in as little as two weeks of practice.

Competition

One key to growth in the 10-and-under segment is having more competition using the QST play format, which would encourage more facilities (and teaching pros) to make the decision to program with the QST format. The USTA's Jr. Team Tennis program incorporates the QST format for its 10-and-under participants. More than 80,000 young players are currently involved in JTT programs throughout the U.S., according to the USTA. Because QST allows kids to start playing right away, even the youngest participants in JTT can experience the thrills, and fun, of playing with their friends as part of a team, while developing the skills that will enhance their long-term enjoyment of the sport.

Coaches/Teaching Professionals/Tennis Facilities

Tennis teaching pros and facilities that have embraced QST programming are finding that it is quite profitable. One of the keys is that—particularly with 36-foot courts (four of them fit within a normal 78-foot court)—many more children are on court at one time,

increasing the revenue per court. In many instances, as mentioned above, parents are willing to help out on the QST courts.

Anecdotal evidence also suggests that many facilities that have active QST programming are experiencing growth in membership, as more families join once their children are involved in QST programming—and this again leads to more tennis play, lessons and court time booked by adults. In 2009, a majority of facilities offering the QST format rated it as “excellent” or “good.” Approval rating was strong for QST offered in all settings, including public parks, private facilities and school/college facilities.

Many early adopters of QST who have added programming and permanent courts have seen great results in reaching hundreds of kids in their local communities and developing the infrastructure at their facilities with this broad base of young children who will be retained for future, ongoing programming.



Equipment Manufacturers / Retailers

For racquet manufacturers, QST has the potential to reap great rewards as it becomes part of the playing culture in the U.S., and retailers have an added opportunity to attract new customers with QST packaged product. The TIA produces more than 80 research reports annually for the industry including census shipment reports which have been trending upward – especially for youth racquets. Recently, the TIA further defined this reporting to include QST specific equipment for balls and racquets and will soon be able to trend this data. The manufacturers are working closely with the USTA to ensure – red, orange and green balls, nets and racquets are more readily available for the marketplace. Key is also to getting them widely distributed and visible at facilities across the country in addition to communicating and messaging that QuickStart is the way to start playing tennis.

Court Construction

The court construction industry stands to benefit by the push to have permanent 36- and 60-foot courts built, or to have permanent QST lines put onto regular 78-foot courts. Multi-court QST facilities have been built, and some court builders are recommending to facilities that QST courts be built on pieces of land not big enough for a normal-size court. Also, when court builders add QST lines to existing courts, they’re able to “inspect” facilities and recommend any other repair work that may need to be done.

The USTA has been a key source for QST court construction and for lining courts. The USTA Technical Department offers free assistance to facilities and parks adding courts. And the USTA’s Facility Assistance Services has a program to help subsidize 50% of the cost of painting permanent lines for 36- and 60-foot courts to facilities or organizations that apply. (The Rules of Tennis allow USTA National/Sectional/District events or tournaments to be played on courts with QST lines, and recently the Intercollegiate Tennis Association approved a rule allowing college matches to be played on courts that also have QST lines).

Conclusion

While smaller courts, transition balls and shorter racquets have been used to teach kids in the past, the unified “packaging” of QuickStart has everything in sync - age, racquets, balls, court sizes, net height and scoring. Everything is set up so a child can succeed and get in the game fast. Our U.S. culture for youth is very dependent on organized play, practice and competition however research shows that organized youth sports such as soccer, basketball and baseball are negatively impacted as kids age-up and drop out. QuickStart is being positioned to not only attract more kids to tennis and get them in the game earlier, but will keep them there. When children succeed in tennis at an early age with pathways developed for their continuing involvement, we will create players for life. And that means this industry continues to grow and remain vital in all areas: participation, teaching and coaching, facilities and court construction, equipment manufacturing and more.

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Helping children to learn scoring and rules

Sandi Procter (Great Britain)

ITF Coaching and Sport Science Review 2010; 51 (18): 13 - 14

ABSTRACT

'Serve, rally and score' - this article is about how scoring and rules are learned alongside the skills needed to serve and rally, progressing to a full understanding of tennis rules and scoring.

Key words: Counting, rules, competing, tennis specific rules, tie breaks, short sets

Corresponding author: Sandi.Procter@bromleymytime.org.uk

INTRODUCTION

Tennis is a game with scoring and rules, and learning about them is as important as other aspects of the game. So we must include them in our teaching from the very beginning.

Scoring is a measuring tool and in its simplest form is counting and can be done in anyone's first lesson. Even three year olds can count to three! Tennis specific scoring requires an understanding of tennis rules, and simple rules can also be included in anyone's first lesson. Competing is fundamental to the final objective and the reason for rules and scoring.

Coaches can and should create activities in which children learn basic rules incidentally rather than consciously. They enjoy counting skills and measuring their success, and as they gradually improve their ability to serve and rally, they also learn to compete, and with that comes the desire to score. Tennis specific scoring is more explicitly learned and easily done when everything else is in place. First the tie-break and later full tennis scoring.



Counting

Counting is good fun, and very satisfying for starter players. In the first place it's a way of measuring success and improvement and in the second place it can be competitive when children are ready to understand that concept.

Players can count an individual skill, and a cooperative skill with a partner or in a team.

Examples:

- Catch a ball after a bounce
- Throw overarm at a target
- Self-rally into a small area on own or alternately with a partner
- Running round cones

Coaches can set the counting in different ways depending on the ability of the children to count. The very young can count to three

then win a cone and start again. After a time they can count how many cones they have. Older players can count how many in a set time or how many in a row and remember their highest score and try to beat their personal best. Competitively they can count and race to see who gets to a certain number first.

Examples:

- Catch a ball after a bounce and after three catches collect a cone. How many cones at the end?
- Throw overarm at a target. Five attempts. How many out of five hit the target?
- Self-rally into a small area. How many hits in twenty seconds?
- Running round cones. Who can run round ten cones first?

It's good for their concentration to count for someone else, or count with someone else in a synchronised activity.

Examples:

- Self-rally with a partner. One player hits ten while other player counts.
- Self-rally with a partner. Each has their own ball and the hitting is at the same time for both balls. Count together

Counting activities and skills will continue to be a part of a tennis lesson even when a player can play and score points. Counting skills are sometimes a better measure of improvement than match results because they are individual and not affected by an opponent. This is important for retaining the long term interest of young players.

Rules

In lots of activities, coaches can include simple rules that help children understand the concept of rules and the importance of adhering to them.

Examples:

- Catch a ball after one bounce
- Stand behind the line to throw at a target
- Self-rally into a small area with feet outside the area
- Run round the cones. If you touch a cone, go back to the beginning

Tennis specific rules

Some tennis specific rules have already been learned. For instance, when the other player misses the ball or hits the ball into the net, the rally ends. That's easy!

More tennis rules can be learned whilst learning to serve and rally. The first is about court boundaries. Define a court boundary with marked lines and then explain what is 'in' and what is 'out' and that 'on the line' is 'in'. Children often don't watch the ball to the very end of its flight, so do activities to practise calling balls in and out, and get them to act as umpires for each other.

The 'only one bounce' rule may be difficult. Play games where children have to count bounces to help them to watch the bounces and then explain that it's the first bounce that counts.

Some serving rules can be learned well before they are able to serve from the baseline. First the rule about standing behind a line, then the concept of two chances. Set up two serving areas on the court and players have two chances to serve into each area. If it's 'in' the first time, they move to the other area. If it's 'out' they have a second serve. Remember also to teach players the let rule.

Other rules come with competing.....

Competing

Competing must be carefully introduced, ensuring that players understand the rules and the scoring, and that the game is always fair.

Counting individual skills can be a good place to start competing when they are ready. Coaches can congratulate the player with the highest score. Ideally that player should consequently be challenged in the next game with a more difficult task so that someone else wins. This results in lots of winners.

The first team games do not involve cooperation. They can be in teams but still do an individual skill such as self-rally. The blue team players collect blue cones and the red team players collect red cones for every rally of five. Count up all the cones for each team at the end. Later, teams can play cooperative games against other teams.

Introducing an opponent can be done during small skill counting games. They can count for each other and see who gets the most, and then can go on and play against another opponent.

During serve and rally activities the players can be helped to understand the ways they win a point against an opponent.

1. the opponent misses the ball
2. the opponent hits ball into net
3. the opponent hits the ball out
4. the opponent lets the ball bounce twice
5. the opponent does a double fault on serving
6. the opponent hits the ball with anything other than the racket

Counting and remembering the points is difficult because children of this age have difficulty focusing on more than one thing at a time, and as they are concentrating on hitting the ball. So it helps if they collect cones, put pegs on their shirts or on the net, or put a ball in a hoop for all the points they win.

Soon they gain confidence and don't need the scoreboard. They can umpire each others games and be encouraged to call out the score after every point and check that both players agree.

Tennis specific scoring

If players can confidently play and count points, and can serve diagonally, they are ready to learn to score a tie break. This should be while players are in the red stage and it should be easy with all they know already. The complication of where to stand to serve and return for each point each point will need some explicit teaching help and extra resources.

For instance, put out coloured cones at the side of the court and each player is allocated a colour. Cones the right way up mean serve from the right side and upside down cones mean serve from the left side. Each time a point is played the ball is moved to the next cone indicating who should serve and from which side.



Or encourage teenage players or parents to help. Give them tie break scoresheets to help them.

SALLY	1R	2	2	2L	2R	2	2	2L	2R
ROBBIE	0	0L	1R	2	3	4L	5R	6	7

R= Right L= Left

Best of three

Tennis is a game of best of three and players need to experience this idea so that they understand that even if they lose the first set or mini tie-break, the match is not over and they can win the next two and still win the match. Players in lessons can play the best of three points to learn this concept and later the best of three mini tie-breaks.

Full tennis scoring

Moving on from tie-break scoring to full tennis scoring is easy. Since players are now about nine years old they can rotate playing and umpiring and use simple scoresheets to help them. Soon they will be ready to play and score their own match.

Tennis Scoring scoresheet

1	Server: Sally	r15	L15	R30	L40	R40	L40	RG
	Receiver: Robbie	0	15	15	15	30	40	
2	Server: Robbie	R15	L30	R30	L30	R40	LG	
	Receiver: Sally	0	0	15	30	30		
3	Server: Sally	R15	L30	R30	L40	G		
	Receiver: Robbie	0	0	15				

SUMMARY

Scoring and rules ultimately give purpose to technique and tactics and should be given a fair share of attention in lesson time. The approach is an integrated one. There is no "Today we are going to learn the rules" or "Today we are going to learn how to score". They are learned alongside the learning of physical, technical and tactical skills almost unknowingly to the players. They are all part of the game. One day, however the coach may say "Today we are going to play a tie-break" and it will be easy because the foundations are all in place.

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A QuickStart tennis study

Kirk Anderson (USTA Director of Recreational Coaches and Programs)

ITF Coaching and Sport Science Review 2010; 51 (18): 15 - 16

ABSTRACT

Quickstart Tennis is a USTA format that incorporates the Tennis 10s format within the US market, one of the leading 'Quickstart' clubs in the US is Midtown in Chicago.

Key Words: Quickstart Tennis, Tennis 10s, Case Study.

Corresponding Author: kanderson@usta.com

INTRODUCTION

Midtown Tennis Club has long been a leader in tennis teaching, player participation and competition in the United States. Midtown is primarily a tennis club with 18 indoor courts and fitness facilities. Founded in 1970 by Alan Schwartz and his father, the club has 36 tennis professionals and, in addition to membership and court revenues, generates 3.5 million dollars of lesson revenue annually.

Butch Staples, Midtown's Head Professional and one of 78 QuickStart National Workshop trainers, was selected to conduct one of the USTA pilot programs for the then named 36/60 program in 2007. The pilot was created to study the feasibility and acceptance of a format using modified balls, shorter racquets and smaller courts. The Midtown courts were modified for play by using temporary and tape lines and portable nets.



Staples made some sweeping changes in his teaching methodology and selected and trained some of Midtown's teaching professionals to use the new system for players 10 and under. The lessons became more game based with more activity, hitting and play. Midtown had to overcome resistance from parents who objected that their kids were not learning the proper way by developing their strokes on regulation sized courts with "real" yellow balls.

Staples and his team of professionals also added kid-friendly non-elimination tournament competition for young players in the form of round robin and compass draw tournaments initially using red balls on 36 foot courts and orange balls on 60 foot courts. All tournament play was based on the six QuickStart Tennis specifications; court size, age, net height, racquet length, ball and scoring format.

Within the course of a year, parents were believers as they saw the tremendous progress of their children and their ability to play at a high level by using courts, balls and racquets that fit the child. Retention greatly increased because young players were having fun because they could play the game successfully. Regularly scheduled tournaments served to showcase the skills and tactics these children were learning.

Midtown soon had to create several levels of competition for red court and orange court players. Just recently, a green court level was introduced for 10 and under children using a 78-foot court for players who displayed mastery in tournament play on the orange court.

Leah Friedman, Director of Junior Develop at Midtown stated, "Up until a couple of years ago, our largest obstacle was convincing the parents that their children could actually learn to play on courts to scale for young children. Now that the game is fun and fair and the parents see very positive results, they have become our best sales force for the program."

The results speak volumes for all of the work Staples and Midtown's dedicated professionals have done, and the support they received by the Midtown management team. Lesson revenues for this age group are up 42% in the past 4 years. Pros are able to teach more hours because the standard court can be used by four to five group clinics and even private lessons when using a 36 foot red court. Two group clinics or private lessons are possible when using a 60 foot orange court. Staples is even experimenting with a combination of 36 foot and 60 foot courts on one standard sized court for maximum efficiency.

Lesson revenues in every category; clinics, camps and private lessons have increased because the program is very successful and the retention is far greater than it was when kids were learning in a traditional manner with very few opportunities for competitive play. Revenues are created by more lessons per court, more kids in the program because of better retention, additional tournament and special event revenue and even a significant increase in family memberships to the club.



One example of an additional special event for young children not previously offered at Midtown Tennis Club is a monthly QuickStart Tennis Pizza and Movie night. Parents can drop their children off and kids participate in organized play on red and orange courts, along with a movie and pizza on a Saturday night from 6:00- 9:00 PM.

Perhaps the greatest testament to the under 10 activities at Midtown is that the children involved develop an amazing love for the game which

may keep them active in tennis for years to come. That love began with wonderful, nurturing, kid friendly instructors and grew with their abilities made possible by the 10 and under format that enabled them to experience the fun of playing tennis rather than just learning strokes.

Butch Staples, a long time tennis professional and one of the top coaches in the United States sums up his excitement and professional satisfaction very well when he says, "The success of our Junior Development Pathway using the QuickStart format has been the most incredible journey of my career. To see the results after four years of children who began on the red court and who are now outstanding green court players is extremely rewarding. The true bottom line is that we have more young children playing and staying in the sport."

Midtown is a great example of a successful program that pioneered the QuickStart Tennis play format both with instruction and competition. They overcame some initial resistance from parents and even reluctance from some of the traditional teaching professionals. With perseverance to the program and keeping the six QuickStart Tennis specifications in synch with young players, the results have not only changed the perception of the parents and pros, but also completely altered how young children are introduced to learning, playing and competing in the 10 and under age group.

The General Manager of Midtown, Michael Mahoney is very proud of the success of the teaching professional staff and very pleased with the increase in participation. Mahoney offered, "The success of Midtown's junior program is attributed to Butch's leadership, the direction of Leah Friedman, who oversees junior development, and Midtown's dedicated professionals. All of our 10-and-under activities are here to stay. We look to the future of our junior tennis which we believe will reveal the players' continued improvement and participation in tennis."

Longtime owner and a legend in the tennis club industry, Alan Schwartz, makes a very compelling final comment. "QuickStart Tennis has turned 'tryers' into 'stayers' and 'stayers' into 'players.' QuickStart is the closest thing I have seen to a silver bullet to grow our sport."

SUMMARY

Quickstart Tennis has grown across the US since it's launch in 2008, clubs like Midtown are already seeing the benefits of retaining and developing players by scaling the equipment to suit the children involved.

Wheelchair tennis and Tennis 10s

Mark Bullock (ITF, Wheelchair Manager)

ITF Coaching and Sport Science Review 2010; 51 (18): 17 - 18

ABSTRACT

Wheelchair Tennis in the 10 and under age group requires a great deal of growth, this article looks at some of the barriers for children in this age group and how tennis could be presented better to them.

Key Words: Tennis 10s, wheelchair, barriers to learning.

Corresponding Author: mark.bullock@itftennis.com

There are a relatively small number of wheelchair tennis players in the 10 and age group. However, it is estimated that for example there are some 770,000 disabled children under the age of 18 living in the UK and it is reported that many of them are routinely excluded from play, sport, leisure and physical activity. Only a proportion of these children will have a physical disability and be eligible for wheelchair tennis but the numbers are not insignificant and these children should be included in sports activity. It would seem likely that disabled children in other countries share similar experiences.



There is very little research into sports delivery for this age group in disability sport. There has been some work done in the area of play, as opposed to sport, for children with a disability. Disabled children are frequently over protected and denied access to challenging and risky play. Lack of accessible transport and accessible tennis facilities coupled with discriminating attitudes and parents' tendency towards overprotection mean that many disabled children rarely leave their home.

Currently there are not enough junior wheelchair tennis players to compete in age categories. The majority of competitive wheelchair tennis play is for juniors is 18 and under. Junior tournaments in wheelchair tennis are not broken down into further age categories at this stage as there are insufficient numbers playing. If possible it seems sensible to have players of a similar age competing with each other but at this stage numbers do not allow this. In addition boys and girls often compete together.

Strength is a factor at this age for children with a disability. In terms of developing wheelchair tennis juniors suitable age groups in the future might be 14 & under and 18 and under. The principle of the Play and Stay Campaign and the smaller courts and slower balls apply to tennis for people with a disability. Wheelchair users are far more likely to enjoy tennis and be retained in the sport if they serve, rally and score from the first session. Perhaps all 14 and under wheelchair tennis should be played with the green ball. If players play 18 and under then the regular ball can be used.

Which ball to use with young wheelchair tennis players? Clearly it makes sense to use a lower bouncing ball with players who are seated. Some research needs to be done as to the suitability of different balls. Is the red ball the most appropriate ball for players aged 7 and 8 playing in a

wheelchair? Perhaps the second bounce from a red ball is too low so the orange ball may be more appropriate.

The disability of the player is a factor in addition to strength. Some children may have an upper limb disability and need to tape the racket to their hand. Some children may be in a power wheelchair. Whatever the circumstances the player should be encouraged to push as much as possible.

Limited availability of sports chairs for this age group and the cost of having to frequently change the wheelchair due to the player's growth is a possible barrier to participation for this age group. A chair in the UK is in the region of £2000 an expensive outlay for a child that is growing.

It is vital that young wheelchair users are integrated and included in PE and physical activity. A key factor in ensuring that children with a disability are introduced to sport is that they are integrated into mainstream PE sessions. The lesson can be differentiated by using an appropriate ball, court size and rules for the wheelchair user. In addition parents should play ball games with young wheelchair users at home.

Research carried out by the Playwork Inclusion Project has demonstrated that

attitudes are the biggest barrier to inclusion. Experience and research with able bodied children suggests that the best time to learn new motor skills is between the ages of 8 – 12. There is no reason to think that this would be different for children with a physical disability. Disabled children (wheelchair users) need to develop throwing and catching, wheelchair skills (starting, stopping and turning) alongside their able bodied friends.

Much more research and information is required about wheelchair tennis for this age group to establish best practice in introducing and retaining children in the sport.

Possible actions

Assess who is attending your coaching sessions and who is not. What are the barriers?

Make sure you publicise your project widely to disabled children and their families in your community via Family Information Services, schools, disability groups, doctors/dentists surgeries, local shops and websites.

Coaches/clubs should be proactive in including disabled children. (Disability Training may be required).

Consult with disabled children and their parents to find out what support they need in order to participate.

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Tactical and technical development considerations for 10 and under players

Wayne Elderton (Tennis Canada)

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ABSTRACT

This article will outline the advantages of using the Red/Orange/Green approach to U10 development for building foundational tactical and technical skills.

Key Words: Game-based Approach (GBA), Red/Orange/Green (R/O/G)

Corresponding Author: EldertonW@NorthVanRec.com

Training and competing with the Tennis 10s system allows players to develop their tactics (and associated technique) in ways not available to younger players using a regular ball on a full court. With Tennis 10's, they will actually be able to play like they would when they fully mature (in contrast to playing a 'junior' game and then having to change it later).

The Tennis 10's system is very conducive to using a Game-based Approach to coaching. A simple definition of GBA is: "Get players to play then, help them to learn to play better". The scale appropriate balls, courts and equipment allow players to play with some success right away. In addition, it makes tactical and technical fundamentals easier to develop.



TACTICAL DEVELOPMENT

Tennis is a game, and the goal of any game is to win. Tactics are the 'during game goals' players must perform to win more points (or lose less). In development, the job is to help players master the tactics they will need when they are mature players. Here are a few tactical aspects affected by scale:

- **Style of Play Development:** Kids on a full-size court have far more ground to cover than if the court is scaled. The result, they tend to hit high arcing balls to give time to chase shots down. The style of play becomes very defensive. With Progressive Tennis, players can successfully explore all-court, counter-puncher, or net rushing styles. They even come to the net regularly (something rarely seen when kids use full-sized equipment and courts since it is far too difficult to cover the court).
- **Mastery of Court geometry (space):** The proportional space and ball characteristics promote a better understanding and proficiency in managing the geometry of the court. This affects lateral movement as well as moving into the net, not to mention the appropriate recovery locations, angles and timing of these movements.
- **Phase of Play Development:** With full-sized play, defense is the primary phase utilized. The other phases of play (attack, forcing, counter, and a proper neutral rally) are all difficult to successfully execute. Scaled tennis allows all the phases to be developed.

- **Shot Selection Development:** Varying the ball is extremely difficult with regulation equipment and courts. Players get stuck hitting high arcs to the middle of the court. Angles, spins, drives and drops are all available with the scaled equipment (We know because we observe players in our program doing them). Plus, using the appropriate court size and ball speed promotes proper decision-making and critical timing of the decisions.

Why would a coach settle for a player who is just consistent when they could also have the ability to play and make decisions like the ones they will use when they are older?

Basic tactics

One key goal for 10 and under development is to build a smart player. Juniors are notorious for being, 'mindless ball hitters'. This is unfortunately reinforced by the type of training they often engage in. Developing basic tactical play in an All-Court style will give the player the most options for their future. The following is a list of basic tactics players need to master early. These are aspects of controlling time and space in a match which is much more relevant and practical if Tennis 10's is used.

- Keep the Ball in Play
- Direct the Ball
 - To the same side (e.g. To an opponent's weakness)
 - To different sides (Move the opponent)
- Control Height (gain time when needed)
- Take the Net

Every one of these should be explored and nurtured through drilling and match play



TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT

Tactical development is not the only thing at stake. If tactics with Tennis 10's are more in line with what they will use as mature players, so is technique since technique is only a means to perform tactics. Here is a quick summary of just some of the technical elements that are easier to develop:

Groundstrokes

- **Racquet Acceleration:** One of the skills that sets advanced players apart from the rest is controlled racquet acceleration. The lighter, slower/lower bouncing balls allow for increased racquet acceleration through the impact zone, which helps many advanced actions. In contrast, when children use adult balls, courts and racquets, it encourages deceleration and more 'blocking' actions.
- **Grip:** Using the scaled equipment makes it easier to develop "eastern" grips (minimizing the full "western" grips that regular balls and courts entice younger players to use).
- **Swing Path:** Players can develop leveling and attacking actions easier as well as control various trajectories (high, medium and low arcs). Regulation balls promote higher arcs and extreme low-to-high actions as players try to 'survive' the higher/faster bouncing balls and cover the oversized court. Although players eventually must learn to receive high and low balls, there are less extremes, and the high and low balls are proportionate to the player's physical size.
- **Biomechanical Linkage:** The slower, softer balls make it easier to use good rotation from the ground up without the psychological fear of sending the ball out. More balls bouncing at waist level provide repetition for good rotation. Players can be more relaxed. With regular balls they will often tighten up in order to not, 'lose the collision' with the adult ball.
- **Reception Skills:** Set-up of the body, racquet and footwork are affected by the ball received and the size of the space being covered. Training and playing with disproportionate balls, courts, and racquets adversely affect the development of these motor patterns.

Volleys

- **Reception Speed:** Players can develop all the volley actions (catch, touch, punch, etc.) and are not stuck only 'blocking' the faster regulation balls. Their footwork will become easier to develop because of the proportionate space they learn to cover.
- **Biomechanical Linkage:** If players are not stuck blocking, they can use the ground force more effectively ("volley with their feet"), which allows better overall use of the body. Good balance is easier to train since they don't have to stretch to cover an oversized area.



Serve

- **Biomechanical Linkage:** Lighter ball allows for a better overhead throwing action using all the segments of the body from the ground up. Mechanics change with inappropriate ball weight and distances.
- **Grip:** It is easier to develop a continental as the ball is lighter and the player doesn't feel the need to use a forehand or 'fry pan' grip to send the heavier ball further.

It is interesting to note that coaches have developed all these elements with younger players using regular balls and courts. However, the way they do it is to use their own ball control skills through feeding to deliver balls to the player lower, slower, from closer distance, etc. Why create this 'false world' when all the ball control characteristics will occur naturally with the Tennis 10's equipment? (as well as happening

during play and not just in training with the coach feeding). Younger players can obviously be developed and play on a full court with regular balls, the real question however is, what approach is more effective for developing their long-term skills?

CONCLUSION

The ITF has endorsed this method as part of their world-wide Tennis... Play and stay initiative (www.tennisplayandstay.com). The majority of countries are on board with more on the way. Hopefully, this will be the dawn of a new era to encourage growth and retention of young tennis players. Parents and coaches have an unprecedented opportunity to cooperate to make tennis more accessible for young children and improve their long-term development pathway.

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Psychological issues when dealing with 10 & Under tennis players

Miguel Crespo (ITF Development Research Officer)

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ABSTRACT

Most 10 and under play tennis because they love the sport. Coaches and parents are responsible for providing the right atmosphere that will keep them in love with tennis for their whole life. In order to achieve this properly, there are a series of psychological issues that should be taken into account. In this article we will present the general psychological characteristics of 10 & under players as well as some of the aspects that should be developed at this period.

Key words: psychology, children, 10 and under, attitude, responsibility.

Corresponding Author: dualde@xpress.es

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF A 10 AND UNDER

The emotional experience of tennis is an important part of most 10 & Under players' life. Pleasure / displeasure, tension / relaxation and a plethora of other feelings are inextricably linked to the game and exact their own unique influence on each player's emotional experience.

In the following table adapted from González & Ochoa (2003) the psychological characteristics of players 4 – 10 are summarised.

AGE	INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS
4 TO 6 YEARS OLD APPROX.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxious, impatient. • Poor concentration span. • Selfish. • Only want to play. • Minimal social interaction. • Learn through imitation.
7 TO 10 YEARS OLD APPROX.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater capacity to concentrate. • More interest in interacting with groups. • Growing interest in sports. • Great disposition to learning. • Competitive tendencies.

Very small children are egocentric in nature, they think they are the centre of the world. As their body grows, they also develop emotionally and intellectually and their social skills are fostered by school. When they reach their 10th birthday they start to be more inclined to developing relationships with others. They gradually understand themselves better and their role within society. They usually dislike being alone and they need the approval of the group mates. They begin to prefer group play and interaction. Besides, they improve their ability to understand, interpret, reflect, analyze, think and respect the rules (Le Blanc & Dickson, 1997).

DEVELOPING ATTITUDE, MATURITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

Success in tennis is about much more than just winning matches; it is also about developing the right attitudes, which if done successfully can accelerate learning and improve competitive performance (Wilson, 2001). Effort, fair play, team spirit and responsibility are among them.

We should remember that by gradually giving increased responsibility to young players, coaches build up and create their independence and self-confidence, which in turn very naturally moulds the right attitude for tennis and life.

Zlesak (1995) recommends that players of different ages set basic goals to guide them in developing the adequate attitude. When the 10 &

under group he recommends the following:

- Be on time for the lesson.
- Bring their racquet, water, etc., to the court.
- Bring the necessary equipment for the lesson (balls, cones, etc.).
- Collect balls when indicated.
- Behave on court.
- After the lesson collect all the equipment used.

One crucial aspect for developing the right attitude is punctuality. Miranda (2001) recommends that being on time is an important issue for the adequate running of all tennis lessons. Even though 10 & Under players attend the lessons "to play tennis while having a good time", the coach should remind them that it is not correct to be late as a sign of respect to other peers, the coach and to oneself.

Entrusting children of all age categories with greater independence, but also responsibility, while maintaining the positive backing of their parents is optimal for their personality development and their social skills (necessary to optimise relations with coaches, peers, idols and, if need be, to the public).

BUILDING SELF-ESTEEM AND CONFIDENCE

Self-esteem, or the feeling about oneself, is one of the crucial mental qualities to be developed in children. Coaches and parents should, by all means possible, create the atmosphere to help children feel good about themselves. It is believed that the most important phase in the development of self-esteem occurs during the 10 & Under period.

Coaches can use different strategies that will increase the self-esteem of young tennis players such as: reward effort, not just ability; use inclusion and not only elimination games; provide specific, and not general feedback; give praise and smile often; ask for suggestions and finally; tell them how good they are...we all love that!

One way of adequately building self-esteem in 10 & Under tennis players is adapting the game of tennis to their characteristics. They should certainly not be playing adult tennis. If tennis equipment and rules are appropriately adapted to meet the mental and physical needs of young players, they will hit more balls, get more rallies and learn a better technique and tactics that will make them more skillful.

With adapted rules, adequate competition formats, a shorter racket, a slower ball and a smaller court players will in turn experience more success and have more fun!

HELPING CHILDREN TO TAKE DECISIONS

Where should I stand? How should I hold the racquet? When should I play deep? What is best when playing at the net? Tennis is a quick and complex decision making sport. According to Brabenec (1981) a tennis player makes 900 decisions per match.

Research has shown that experience has a role in quick decision making (Goulet et al., 1989). Ten & Under players are beginners with limited experience. They can not process information very quickly so their decision making process is slow. As stated above, the poor concentration that children show at this age does not help to make fast and good decisions.

How can coaches help in the decision making process of 10 & Under players? By adapting the game, the equipment, the competition and the rules to their characteristics, the coach will create a comfortable atmosphere that assist players in discovering the important cues and patterns where to focus as well as the process and consequences of correct and incorrect decision-making.

IMPORTANCE OF PRACTICE

For many decades it has been known that children learn most quickly and easily between the ages of 8 – 12. The human brain reaches the highest potential for learning at those ages and we, tennis coaches, have been advised to work hard and conscientiously to obtain maximum results (van Fraayenhoven, 2001).

Harwood (2000) indicated that practice is rehearsal. Kids of this age can learn quickly, but they can also learn negative skills quickly as opposed to positive ones. Some of the skills that can be learned at this period include: thinking positively, appropriate mistake management, positive body language, quality effort levels, and correct routines and rituals.

Mental effort should be consistently high at this period because children concentrate poorly at this age and they learn and develop mental and technical skills quicker. Telling is not enough...they'll forget. Some aspects that could be considered are emphasising 'watching the ball' and play games which bring their attention to the ball as well as establishing 'body language,' 'point routines' and 'positive self-talk' rules for the sessions (Harwood, 2000).

A WORD ON PARENTS

According to Sledr (2001) the detachment of a child from parents when he goes to kindergarten or school is even more augmented in tennis by the relative independence of the tennis player on the court. However, parents often expect from the child satisfying of their own needs and so put an excessive pressure on him.



Harwood (2000) suggests that coaches should work with parents in order to educate them. They are a valuable resource in the mental training of the children. Parents need to be educated about reactions to winning and losing. They need 'language guidelines' for tournaments so that they can have a function at the matches that you are unable to watch. Parents are underrated in terms of tasks and actions that they can perform which will support your on court practice.

Harwood & Knight (2009) in a study examined the stressors experienced by British tennis-parents. Results showed that parents experienced

a diverse number of competitive stressors indicating the particular difficulties they faced before, during, and after matches involving their child, opponents, other parents, and officials.

Bois et al. (2009) found that the presence of both parents in a match was associated with higher pre-match anxiety. Besides female tennis players perceived greater parental pressure than most other participants. Parenting directive behaviours and pressure were associated with pre-competitive anxiety for all tennis players.

The results of research reinforce the importance of parents possessing the necessary skills to cope with the psychological, developmental, and logistical demands of competitive tennis.

FINAL THOUGHT: KEEP IT FUN!

Play is crucial in children's life. They love it. Coaches should avoid monotonous activities during the lessons that only will demotivate children from the lessons. Coaches should recognise the relevance of the children social and mental development within tennis by programming fun sessions full of team games, cooperative skills, and fair play as the basis of their activity. We will be promoting long-term involvement in tennis by instilling a love and passion for it through fun and varied activities.

Thus, it is crucial to plan the lessons with fun activities that motivate children to see tennis as a fun and easy sport to play. Coaches should be creative and be continuously focused on the likes and opinions of their students. Then tennis will be truly an unforgettable experience for all.

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Competition formats and considerations for 10 and under players

Mark Tennant (inspire2coach, Great Britain)

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ABSTRACT

This article suggests a series of key considerations to offer competition for 10 and Unders that provides a positive and rewarding experience.

Key Words: Tennis 10 and Unders, appropriate competition, competition formats

Corresponding author: mark@mttennis.co.uk

Since 2007, the ITF Tennis...Play and Stay campaign has highlighted the importance of appropriate competition and the use of different competition formats for young players. The more recent launch of the ITF Tennis 10's campaign has increased this focus yet further, stating that from 2012, the ITF aims to introduce a rule that will mean that all 10 and under competition must be played by using the appropriate red, orange or green ball.

Whilst this is an enormous step in the ITF's drive to improve the way in which tennis is introduced and taught to players aged 10 and under, there are other vital considerations which must be considered alongside the use of slower balls and smaller courts in order to make competition a vital part of the development of a young tennis player.

This article poses a number of key questions which we need to consider if we are to get the provision of competition for young and developing tennis players right at 10 and Under level:

1. what is appropriate competition?
2. what are the key characteristics of 10 and under players?
3. what do these characteristics tell us about which are the best competition formats for 10 and Under players?
4. what is the ultimate competition for 10 and Unders?



APPROPRIATE COMPETITION

It has frequently been said that appropriate competition drives the sport. It should also be understood that it is the role of the coach to organise competition at local or club level, both within and outside of lessons. Competition that is attractive and varied and that is not stressful, threatening or result-oriented is what we should be aiming for with 10 and Unders. If we achieve it, we have a means of growing the sport and increasing the amount of competitors, rather than just the amount of players, who participate.

So, appropriate competition for 10 and Under players means it must be:

- suitable – the same type of competition is not necessarily right for all 10 and Under players.

- simple - Formats and scoring systems need to be simple, so that players understand what to do and how to play and score.

- consistent with emotional maturity - Young players are emotionally immature, and often do not know how to react to winning and losing.

- about being with friends – at a young age, tennis should be a fun sport to enjoy with friends.

- short – children can get tired and bored quickly, especially if they are not stimulated

Getting it wrong by offering competition which is not so appropriate may mean:

- excessive pressure on young players

- negative impact on performance

- developing low esteem and motivation

- a developing lack of self confidence

It is certain that these effects will result in players disliking tennis.

SOME KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF 10 AND UNDER PLAYERS

Once we understand what is meant by appropriate competition, we next need to consider a few characteristics of young tennis players:

- even the best 10 and Under players in the country are still 10 and under! This means that even though they may be very good at tennis, they will still behave like young children. Resist the temptation to make them grow up too soon.

- 10 and under players are not far from fully grown, so need balls that bounce lower and courts that are smaller

- 10 and under players are immature. It's not their fault; they are just young kids who lack experience and don't always know how to react in certain situations. Winning and losing are not always easy to deal with, some are more competitive and driven to win than others and young children find it difficult to understand that the reason they lost is because the opponent is simply a better player.

- children get upset or give up when they don't understand. To starter players tennis scoring is not logical, and it takes time to learn the rules and how to score. If this is not handled sensitively and players are not taught the rules and scoring, competition becomes more threatening and stressful

- kids love to play games, so tennis needs to be a game they can play with their friends. Players who lose more often than they win may find this hard to accept. Playing in a team and being with friends de-emphasises the result and reinforces the social aspects of the sport

Understanding young children and the different formats available to us means that appropriate competition can more easily be organised.

Competition could range from being:

- more social to more competitive and serious
- lots of shorter matches to straight knockout
- team to individual
- singles to doubles
- 15 minutes to 1 week
- 5 minute matches to 2 hour matches

WHICH COMPETITION FORMATS ARE BEST FOR 10 AND UNDER PLAYERS?

We can categorise competition in a number of different ways, but for the purpose of this article, we'll do so by saying that competition can either be:

- elimination formats (traditional knockout events, where half of the players are eliminated at the first round)
- round robin formats (where players are placed in boxes with other players. During the event, every player plays the others in that box. Winners progress to a next round or directly to a semi final or final depending on numbers)
- rotation formats (where players play matches against everyone else in their group before all players are rotated so that they are given a new opponent every round)
- challenge formats (league- or pyramid-type formats usually played over a longer period of time where players challenge others above them to a match, and where players change places in the league according to results)

FORMAT	ADVANTAGES FOR 10 AND UNDERS	DISADVANTAGES FOR 10 AND UNDERS	OK FOR 10 AND UNDERS?
ELIMINATION	None	Weakest players lose early on Half the players eliminated at first round	No
TEAM	Playing with friends De-emphasises results	None	Yes
ROTATION	Variety of opponents Many short matches in short space of time	None	Yes
CHALLENGE	Social element of challenging friends to a match	Best done over longer period of time, so can take a long time to complete all matches	No

It is important to understand the advantages and disadvantages of each format by considering what we know about young children and the way they play and view tennis at a young age. From a participation point of view, elimination formats clearly suit the best players and

are detrimental to younger, weaker or starter players. The thought of facing a stronger player in the first round with the realistic prospect of losing in the first round is not appealing. It is therefore safe to conclude that elimination formats should not be used with players aged 10 and under, but instead should be replaced by formats where players are guaranteed a certain number of matches regardless of result. Hence team and rotation formats are best suited to younger players.

One final point to consider is that many shorter matches are better than one or two long ones. This is because it allows the players to play a greater variety of opponents, and also gets them to practise and gain experience in the vitally important start and finish of each match. If you have the choice, a format that allows you shorter matches is best!

HOW LONG SHOULD COMPETITION LAST?

It is not the length of the competition that will make it a great event, but making it last too long may have a detrimental effect. Young children and those who are new to competition will find that matchplay is a very new concept to them, and so should be introduced gently to it. It is wise to start with competitive games and short matches within lessons, before entering kids into longer, more formal events. Red events will typically last no more than 3 hours, increasing to 2-4 hours at orange. By the time players are at green level (and therefore aged 10 years old), 1-2 day events are acceptable.



THE ULTIMATE 10 AND UNDER COMPETITION

In summary, here's a list of essential criteria for 10 and Under competition:

- team-based
- singles or doubles, or both
- no longer than 3 hours and 8 and under, and 2 days at 10 and under
- more shorter matches, rather than one or two long matches
- things to do between matches (off court activities and games and a social aspect such as a barbeque at the end)
- prizes or rewards for winners, but also for performance-based criteria such as best competitor, fair play award, most valuable player
- a simple and transparent scoring and organisation system which everyone can see and understand

By following these criteria, there is no reason why competition cannot drive 10 and under tennis!

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Tennis 10s and Play and Stay in Portugal

Vitor Cabral (Director of Research and Coaching, Portuguese Tennis Federation)

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ABSTRACT

The advent of Play and Stay meant an opportunity to be taken strongly, in a small country eager to make a dent in world class tennis. A world standard on how to introduce the sport to beginners is a powerful message and leaves little margin for coaches to argue a different approach. However trying to change tradition is often very hard, even with powerful marketing tools and science support.

Key Words: Play and Stay, National case study.

Corresponding author: vitor.cabral.fpt@hotmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Coaches tend to keep using old methodology, sometimes 20 or 30 years old, regardless of empiric or scientific evidence. It is natural tendency to slip into comfort zones, repeating the same process of teaching over and over again. Even with research proving a staggering 70% dropout rate of the sport, coaches resist change.

Clearly the task was daunting, but possible. A key aspect in any project of this kind is the perception that objectives are attainable only through a long term approach. If we change the way coaches introduce the game to kids, competitive results will only appear in ten years or so.

IMPLEMENTING PLAY AND STAY

A strategy was established to promote a slow but sure transition to the new methodology, ensuring that the use of the slower balls and court sizes would become the norm, in a few years time. First phase would imply integrating the Play and Stay concept in all the activities of the Coaches Education and Research Department of the Portuguese Tennis Federation (FPT). This started in 2006 when the concept was already mature and was imbedded in the coaches manual and multimedia CDs for coaches courses (all levels), coaches updates (mandatory every three years for Portuguese coaches), and in School Tennis manuals for Physical Education Teachers. From 2006 until the end of 2009 more than 130 tennis courses, seminars and updates were conducted, reaching 1500 coaches and more than 600 Physical Education Teachers. Leaflets and other media were produced and sent to clubs and regional associations.



Estoril Open 2009, using kids in a Level 2 Coaches Course

Although effective in passing the concept, this was clearly not enough to produce the desired effect. People were interested but to make a real change in courts more had to be done. It clear from the get go that competition was the real key for the implementation of the new methodology and materials. Our goal was to make this approach to

teaching tennis a standard in every Portuguese tennis club and that would be impossible without competition.



Three year old playing during Davis Cup tie in 2008

10 & UNDER COMPETITION

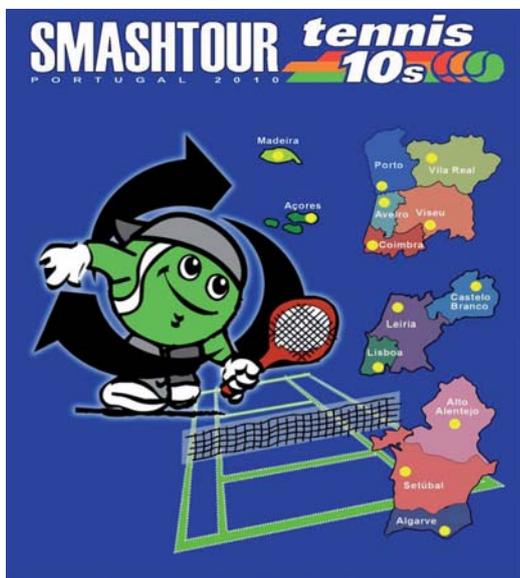
Using as a base a nationwide program for talent ID, the FPT started to do official under 10 competition based on Play and Stay standards: U-10 = green level and U-8 = orange level. First regional tournaments started in late 2006 and early 2007, with Porto leading the way. The rest of the country quickly went in and by June 2007 (during the official ITF launch, the FPT did a simultaneous launch at the National Stadium in Lisbon) the FPT could present a number of successful experiences with this concept.

The structure of the competition was set up dividing the country in three continental zones (north – based in Porto, center – based in Lisbon, and south – based in Faro in the Algarve) with two more with the Azores and Madeira islands. Regional official tournaments were held, with nationals coinciding with the National Masters competition. In 2008 the total number of official competitions passed 50, with the system being overwhelmed with more and more people wanting to participate. Great care was taken with this process, giving lectures to the parents about tennis competition and always providing a healthy competitive environment for the kids (not a very easy task). In 2008 the total number participants was 1803, with kids, parents, clubs and coaches engaged.

The experience of all this process was always exchanged with international knowledge and during the last Tennis Europe Specific Theme Conference, in Rotterdam, the FPT tweaked the age groups, giving more flexibility to the orange group by overlapping the ages allowed. This was implemented seamlessly revealing the maturity of the all process.

INTEGRATING TENNIS 10S

The FPT was always in close collaboration with the ITF and a great proponent of the introduction of Tennis 10. As soon as this project was unleashed, Portugal adopted the logo immediately, always combining the Play + Stay campaign now with Tennis 10. Coaches Education courses and updates continuously gave the coaches a perspective of the evolution of all the processes (that was very fast evolving), leaving the less active and progressive coaches (not so keen in their own education as coaches) really feeling obsolete with their colleagues.



SmashTour 2010, with the Tennis 10 logos incorporated

Topping all this activity, the FPT was using every tennis event to promote the strong logos of P+S and Tennis 10. Davis Cup, Fed Cup and the Estoril Open are a classic example of the capability of the FPT to draw attention to all this. In the first semester of 2010, the FPT organized P+S events 2 Davis Cup ties, one Fed Cup and the Estoril Open, getting a lot of media attention, culminating with the event with Roger Federer for the first time playing with kids in a P+S event. The media attention, especially TV, gives a strong image of credibility to the all process. On top of all this 2009 and 2010 were the best years ever for Portuguese players, smashing all previous records in ranking and titles with players like Gil, Michelle Brito and Rui Machado.



Federer with Play and Stay, at the Estoril Open

SUMMARY

We can say for sure that the implementation of the official under ten competition was key to consolidate Play and Stay as standard methodology of introducing tennis to kids. Without it the task would be much difficult, if not impossible. Summarizing, it is our strong opinion that successfully implementing P+S in any country depends on the conjunction of:

- Coaches Education passing the information relentlessly;
- Organizing official under 10 competition;
- Using all events (tennis or others) to promote the program;
- Link everything together, involving top players and coaches in the process.

The importance of slower balls and smaller courts in developing high performance 10 and under players

Patrick McEnroe (USTA)

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ABSTRACT

Slower balls and smaller courts at the 10 and under ages are very important tools for developing high performance players and it is vital that "performance" coaches worldwide understand and believe this.

Key Words: Tennis 10s, High Performance.

Corresponding author: McEnroe@usta.com

Most coaches now accept that Tennis10s (slower balls and smaller courts) are important for increasing participation by making it easier for the 10 and under players to play the game from the start. However in the USA we still have work to do to convince some coaches working with high performance players of the benefits of slower balls and smaller courts in developing high performance players.

As the Director of High Performance for the USTA and a former professional player, I was at first somewhat skeptical about how slower balls and smaller courts could help develop top players. It was difficult for me because, like most coaches and former players, I was trained as a junior on a full court with a regular ball and that's how our tournaments were as well. However, after observing the introduction of Quick Start Tennis (the USTA version of Tennis10s) I am now completely convinced that the rule change being introduced by the ITF regarding 10 and under competition will be a very positive step not only for increasing tennis participation but also in the development of performance players. The rule change eliminating the use of the regular ball in 10 and under competition from 2012 onwards will mean that the slower red, orange and green balls will be used in all 10 and under competition worldwide. I am sure that once the tournaments all use the slower balls and smaller courts, the coaches will follow suit and use them in training their 10& under players to prepare for tournaments.



To me the benefits of using slower balls and smaller courts for developing young performance players are obvious but here are just some of the positive things that I have observed:

- With the slower balls and smaller courts, the young players can implement advanced tactics that they could never hope to implement on a full court with a regular ball. Tactics such as serve and volley; approach and volley and attacking ground strokes are only possible because the ball is bouncing lower and because the players have a little more time. They can approach the net and feel confident that they can cover most passing shots and lobs. The slower balls and smaller courts

certainly encourage the players to make more tactical decisions than they would do on a full court

- The lower bounce and the difference in ball trajectory facilitate the development of a wider range of strokes with more efficient technique in most cases.

- The lower net and relatively bigger service box (the player is closer) allows the players to develop a more attacking first serve at an early age

- The smaller courts make it easier for the players to cover the court and the slower balls make it possible for the players to stay close to the baseline and to take the ball early.

- The slower balls allow the players to develop and generate more racket speed while still maintaining reasonable control of the ball

- Because of the lower bounce, there is less chance of the players developing extreme grips and so more chance to develop a more all round game and less risk of injury at later stages

- There is more chance of the players to use one handed backhands either as their basic topspin shot and/or to use one handed slice backhands as a variation

- The slower balls and smaller courts encourage players to use spin and angles in order to move their opponent as this is usually the only way that they can maneuver them out of position on the smaller court. On a bigger court, spin and angles are less important as the high bounce of the ball and the larger size of the court often is enough to put the opponent under pressure with little need for spin and angle.

One of the big objectives of a coach should be to help build independence in their players. With the red and orange balls, very young players find it much easier to practice all of the game situations (serve and return: approach and pass and baseline game) even when the coach is not present. Previously the coaches would often have to use basket feeding in the lessons (usually dead ball feeding) to simulate the advanced tactical situations but the players struggled in practice and in match play without the coach present to do anything other than use ground strokes.

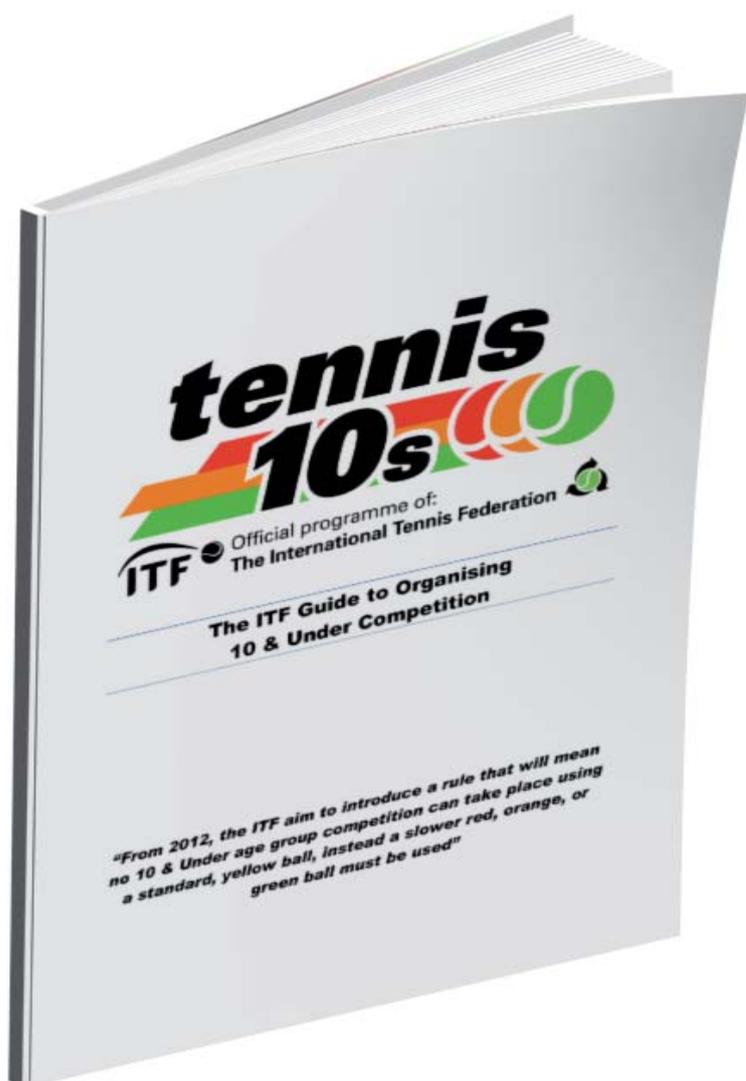
I have observed that the players in the USA who have come through red and orange tennis over the past few years display similar technical and tactical characteristics as top professionals. It's so exciting to see! The development of these characteristics at an early age will no doubt save performance coaches valuable time that previously was spent developing these tactical characteristics after age 10 or on fixing flaws in players technique that often develop in those early years because of the high bouncing ball.

In short.....I am convinced!

Tennis 10s is going to change tennis for the positive.....by helping to increase tennis participation.....but also in making it easier to develop high level players!

If you are a performance coach.....don't get left behind! Get on board.... and support Tennis10s now!

New Tennis 10s Manual



TENNIS IS FUN, WHEN YOU SERVE, RALLY AND SCORE!

Tennis10s is the 10 and Under component of ITF Play and Stay, and is focussed on increasing levels of participation in tennis and providing a more appropriate development pathway for young players, including appropriate competition.

Tennis10s is the way tennis training and competition can be best presented for all players aged 10 years and under. The principles are very simple:

1. Create the best environment

- appropriate sized court
- slower balls
- shorter rackets

2. Present appropriate competition

- shorter, multi-match formats and events
- team and individual matches
- simple scoring systems

....and that you should serve, rally and score from the start!

Download the Tennis 10s Manual (ENG) here

<http://www.tennisplayandstay.com/downloads/Tennis10sManualENG.pdf>



ITF Ltd, Bank Lane, Roehampton,
London Sw15 5XZ
Tel: 44 20 8878 6464
Fax: 44 20 8878 7799
E-mail: coaching@itftennis.com
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e-mail: coaching@itftennis.com
Address: Avda. Tirso de Molina, 21, 6º - 21, 46015, Valencia (España)

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ITF Ltd, Bank Lane, Roehampton,
London SW15 5XZ
Tel: 44 20 8878 6464
Fax: 44 20 8878 7799
E-mail: coaching@itftennis.com
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