

## WELCOME TO COACHES REVIEW !

Welcome to this issue of ITF Coaches Review which features articles from Argentina, Canada, Colombia, Czech Republic, Great Britain and the South Pacific. The subjects include Advice on Developing a Good Clay Court Game by Daria Kopsic and Fernando Segal, Improving Decision Making by Josef Brabenec, Advanced Drills by ITF Coach Ivan Molina, and Developing a Professional Attitude by Frank Zlesak.

The release of this issue coincides with the staging of the 9th ITF Worldwide Coaches Workshop in Barcelona, Spain from 9-15 October. 250 coaches from some 80 ITF member nations will be attending this unique educational forum. In the next issue of ITF Coaches Review, we will have a comprehensive report on the workshop and for the benefit of those not in attendance, will be reproducing some of the excellent material presented.

The Worldwide Workshop will mark the end of the first term of the ITF Coaches Commission. Established in 1992, following a proposal at the 7th ITF Worldwide Coaches Workshop in Dublin, the Commission advises the ITF on matters related to coaching. The Commission met six times during its term and accomplished a number of important objectives:

- The Coaches Commission presented a report with recommendations to the age eligibility commission in 1994. The final recommendations of this age eligibility commission closely resembled those of the Coaches Commission and will ensure that girls as young as 14 will no longer be able to compete in top level professional events.
- The Commission were instrumental in the establishment of the ITF Coaches Review, which now acts as a forum for new research in tennis.
- They helped to produce a new Level I syllabus to assist member nations of the ITF wishing to educate and certify their coaches.

- At the request of the Coaches Commission, the Committee of Management agreed to include a coaches category for "awards to services to the game". This recognition is aimed at improving the status of coaching.
- Finally, the programmes for the Worldwide Coaches Workshops have been formulated by the ITF Coaches Commission.

The hard work and excellent advice provided by the Coaches Commission members, has been much appreciated by the ITF development staff. We would like take this opportunity to thank the following coaches who served on the Commission from 1992-95:

Charles Applewhaite (Great Britain)	Alberto Riba (Spain)
Tom Gullikson (USA)	Lynne Rolley (USA)
Carlos Kirmayr (Brazil)	Richard Schonborn (Germany)
Daria Kopsic (Argentina)	Masaru Uchiyama (Japan)
Pierre Lamarche (Canada)	Ron Woods (USA)

A new Commission for 1996 and 1997 will be appointed by the Committee of Management.

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

We do hope you enjoy our 7th issue of Coaches Review.



Doug MacCurdy  
General Manager

Dave Miley  
Development Administrator

## THE COMPREHENSIVE COACHING SYSTEM

By Ivan Molina (ITF Coach - Colombia)

### THE COMPREHENSIVE COACHING SYSTEM: Some Examples of Drills

When working with high-performance players, coaches should be aware of the need to ensure that every drill they use on the court encompasses all four basic components of the game of tennis, namely: the technical, the tactical, the physical and the mental side. Without a comprehensive coaching system that incorporates all the above-mentioned aspects in a proper fashion, it will be extremely difficult to reach planned goals.

After making sure that all training drills take into account the four basic components, coaches should help players view the court as divided into three clearly distinct target areas.

Let us say, for instance, that coach "A" asks player "B" to "hit the ball cross-court". The target area for the player's cross-court shot extends to half of the opponent's court and, therefore, offers him a substantial margin for error. Such a general objective is too vague and lacks the specifics to provide the player with the information he needs in order to learn to "hit angles", and to use the court geometry in a more effective manner.

Fig. 1 shows the suggested division of the court surface. It can be explained as follows: The different target areas, "Zone 1", "Zone 2" and "Zone 3", are adjacent to each other on the court. They are contained in bands formed by straight lines running parallel to, and approximately 1.50m from the singles sidelines. Zone 1 is a target area for sharp-angled cross-court shots. Zone 2 is a target for "moderately wide" offensive shots played, more often than not, with the aim of "opening up" the opponent's court. Zone 3 is primarily a target area for deep defensive shots. Once the players have assimilated this basic information, we can begin to work with them in a more systematic fashion that takes into account all the basic components mentioned earlier.

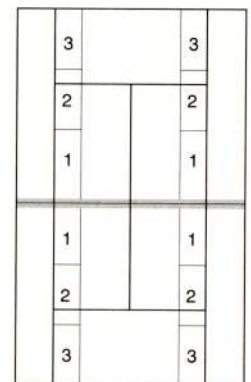


Fig. 1

## HOW TO USE THE "TARGET AREAS" IN DRILLS: A Few Examples

Let me now describe a few selected drill examples, in order to illustrate the use of the above mentioned "target areas" in drill situations.

### 1. Cross-Court Forehand Rally Drill

2 players. One of the players tries to direct his shots to Zone 3 (deep shots). The second player aims for Zone 2 (playing wide shots to "open up" the opponent's court). Both players must hit the ball and recover towards the centre of the court (not remaining in the forehand corner of the court after playing their shots).

**Advantages of the Drill:** This drill allows players to work on their stroke-production technique, their footwork, their accuracy and consistency, and also their concentration and their ability to recognize different ball speeds and spins.

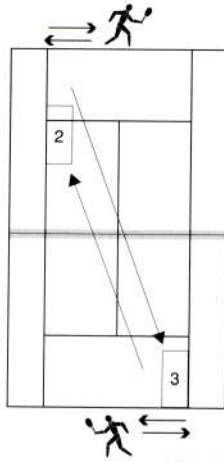


Fig. 2

### 2. Cross-Court Backhand Rally Drill

2 players. One of the players directs high balls to Target Area 3. The other player can aim either for Zone 2 or Zone 3. After each shot, both players must try to recover to the centre of the baseline.

**Advantages of the Drill:** Using this drill, players can develop their ability to change the rhythm of the rally, and work on their technique, their movement, their consistency and shot accuracy and their ability to focus.

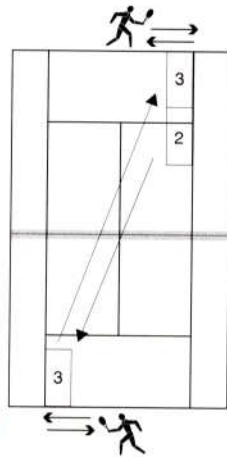


Fig. 3

### 3. Drill Variation:

**Players play Backhand Cross-Court Rallies and then try to close out the point.**

Same initial situation as in the above drill. However, after hitting the ball 3 to 5 times during the backhand exchanges, each player may try to close out the point by directing shots down the line to the open court (on the opponent's forehand side).

**Advantages of the Drill:** In addition to the advantages listed for the basic drill, this variation helps players develop their ability to play winning shots and to react to the opponent's reply (since he will undoubtedly try to play the ball back).

### 4. Reversed Forehand Rally Drill

2 players. Using forehands only, the players exchange inside-outside shots from the backhand corner, aiming for target areas 2 and 3. After each player has executed 3 to 5 shots, they may try to win the point by playing down the line.

**Advantages of the Drill:** This drill helps players improve their technique, their footwork and their tactical ability to "open up" the court (using the inside-outside forehand). It also allows them to work on their alertness, their perception and reaction skills, their accuracy and their concentration.

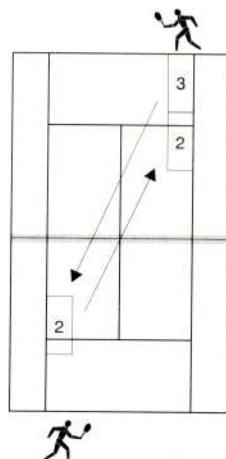


Fig. 4

### 5. Volley Drill

2 players. One of them is at the net, starting at the "T" position. The other player is on the baseline, near the centre mark. The net player directs two shots to target areas 2 or 3, and then tries to put away the third volley by playing the ball to the other side and announcing beforehand whether he is aiming for target area 1, 2 or 3.

**Advantages of the Drill:** Using this drill, players can improve their volleying technique, their reaction and perception skills, their tactical ability to create winning openings from the net, their footwork, their concentration and accuracy, and their decision making abilities.

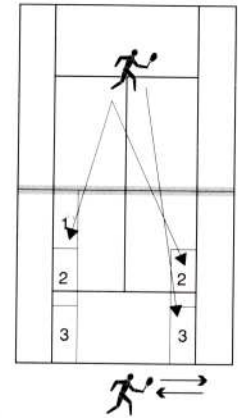


Fig. 5

### 6. Net Approach Drill:

**Players execute a Top-spin or Slice approach shot followed by a Volley**

2 players, or 1 player working with the coach. Players rally from the baseline first. The player who plays the approach has to announce the target area to which he intends to direct his shot. The baseline player tries then to pass him, and the player who has advanced to the net tries to put away the ball, previously announcing the target area for his winning volley shot.

**Advantages of the Drill:** This drill allows players to improve their ability to play from both the baseline and from the net, and thus helps them develop an all-round game. Players can enhance their self-confidence and determination to approach the net, as well as their perception and anticipation skills, their tactical ability, their reflexes, their capacity to take decisions under time pressure, their footwork and balance, and their capability to analyze the opponent and to identify his weak points.

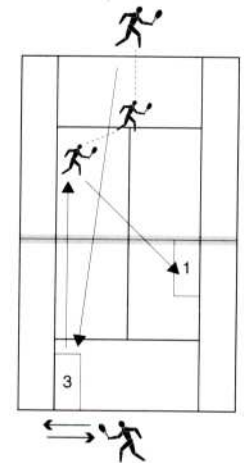


Fig. 6

### 7. Serve and Return Drill

2 players. The server can place the service at will. The player returning service should direct his shots to target area 2, and try to return cross-court most of the time. After the return, the players must play out the point.

**Advantages of the Drill:** This drill situation allows players to work on their technique, their consistency and accuracy, their ability to "play the percentages", their concentration and reaction skills, and their ability to focus during match-play, and it helps them develop "quick hands".

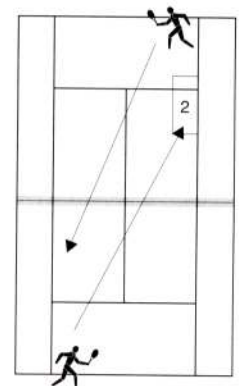


Fig. 7

These are just a few examples of drills that can be used for coaching and training purposes. All the drills described above incorporate the basic components of a comprehensive coaching system. They can of course be modified in many different ways. It is up to the coach to adapt and utilize them in a way that will best help to develop his players' talents.

# HOW TO HELP WITH CORRECT DECISION MAKING

By Josef Brabenec Sr (Canada)

To teach a young player (13-16 years of age) how to think correctly on his own during a match, is one of the most difficult tasks any serious coach faces. Many coaches and parents try to solve this problem by standing near the fence giving verbal or sign language instructions to their proteges after each point. Any such behaviour is of no help or solution; it is detrimental to any young player's future development.

To get a partial understanding of a young player's tactical thinking ability you may try the following exercise:

Make two young players play a training set and tell them that they may take up to 3 points (one point at a time, or 2 points followed by one point) any time they feel during a set.

This "handicap situation" will give a coach an indication of how these players think and whether they are really aware of the score. As a rule of thumb the "smart" player will always use those points against the opponent's serve. Consider the situation when Player A serves, trails 0-30 and at this moment his opponent, Player B, will take two points to break. Such a decision is not tactically smart. Player B should have played another 2 points in that game. If he wins one of the next 2 points the score will be 15-40 and

- he may not need to use any bonus points if he wins the 5th point
- he may need to use only one bonus point if he loses the 5th point
- if Player B loses the 3rd and 4th point then he may take the two bonus points to break.

Tactically sound thinking for Player B would be to play the third point and if he loses it to 15-30, then he may take one bonus point. With such decision he will create a situation of 15-40 i.e. two break points, high pressure situation for the serving Player A.

This type of training matches with handicap bonus points, will create many other situations other than the one described above, which will reveal to the coach the tactical thinking ability of a young player. The players decisions, being right or wrong, can be discussed at the end of the practice by the player and the coach. The correct decisions will be reaffirmed and emphasized, the wrong decisions discussed, explained, corrected, and correct decisions recommended for future situations.

I have found this a type of training situation revealing for me as the coach and very helpful for the young players.

## AWARENESS OF STANDARDS

By Paul Dent

*This article first appeared in "Coaching Excellence"  
and appears with the permission of the LTA Coaching Department*

In summarising my observations of the playing characteristics of the top U18 juniors in the world at the French Open this year, I have attempted to produce a player profile that our developing juniors should be striving to attain.

**Main tactical objective: dominate the point at every possible opportunity**

**When serving:**

- use the serve to dominate the point from the start
- serve and then attack with the forehand
- be aggressive with your second serve

**When returning:**

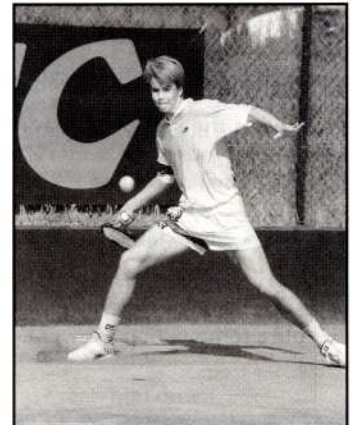
- consistency of first serve return - intention of no 'free' points off first serves
- intention to attack the second serve at every possible opportunity
- counter-attack second serves by playing the return on the rise and at shoulder height to retain a dominating court position

**When both back at the baseline:**

- force opponent to make errors through: sustained pressure; positioning up to the baseline; hitting from 3/4 court whenever possible; few 'cheap' points through consistency and proper decision making; use of the whole court; increased playing tempo e.g. even on clay, many rallies of

eight strokes were often completed in less than 15 seconds

- aggressive decision-making 'shopping list', i.e. player first looks to attack, then to counter-attack and then, if none of these is a percentage option, an 'aggressive defence' response is produced e.g. purposeful top-spin moonball or 'neutralising' slice backhand



**When approaching or at the net:**

- to pressure your opponent with the threat of playing the delayed approach ('ghosting in')
- dominating and pressurising from mid-court using power, accuracy and/or hitting on the rise

**When opponent approaching or at the net:**

- intention of making the net player 'earn' the point
- accurate passing shots with disguise
- attacking top spin lobs off both wings

The following words and phrases which came to the forefront of my mind whilst observing these players are, I feel, key in completing the technical, mental and physical components of the profile of a world class U18 junior:

- 'Very fast racket head acceleration just prior to impact'
- 'Early positioning of body behind the line of the oncoming ball'
- 'Sensation of crunching into the ball and rolling after impact rather than moving up the back of the ball during contact'
- 'Penetrating your opponents court with weight of shot and depth'

- 'Contact point which is solid and stable and which repeats time and time again throughout the match'
- 'One point at a time'; 'fighting spirit'; 'we'll meet again soon' attitude!; 'emotional control'
- 'Athletic'; 'elastic, powerful quadriceps and calves'; 'explosive upper body rotation'

This was once again a very enlightening trip for me. The opportunity to evaluate the playing characteristics of the top juniors in the world and to 'talk coaching' with other performance coaches from home and abroad in that environment is one of the best forms of coach training that a committed performance coach could wish to have.

## GUIDELINES TO DEVELOP A GAME ON CLAY

*By Daria Kopsic and Fernando Segal (Argentina)*

For the last 25 years, Argentina has been a country which has produced players that are specialists on red clay courts. Names like: VILAS, CLERC, SABATINI, JAITE, MANCINI, PEREZ ROLDAN and many others, have made it possible for our tennis to be known around the world. We will outline below a series of guidelines that coaches should take into account when developing a player on clay:

### 1. Apply more topspin to the shots, playing the ball very high over the net.

Winning points on clay requires patience and avoiding unforced errors. This is often achieved by playing the ball high over the net, with a wider margin, creating a high bounce that does not allow the opponent to put pressure on your game. Many times this shot can become an attacking, aggressive shot.

### 2. Prepare your player mentally to accept long rallies.

On clay one must be prepared to work the point, playing many shots; because the surface is very slow, winners are harder to execute.

### 3. Help your player to use body rotation efficiently.

The open stance position allows the transfer of body weight to the ball through the efficient use of rotational movement (ankles, knees, hips, torso, shoulders, forearm) (kinetic chain).

### 4. The ball should be played with depth.

Playing the ball deep prevents the opponent from putting pressure on your game, and it is often the best way to "work" the point to a final resolution.

### 5. One needs to take time to develop a "strategy" on clay.

A variety of shots as a strategy is fundamental, so it is necessary to take time to practice this. Players should try to execute a combination of height, angle, depth and speed on their shots.

### 6. For the serve, use topspin and angles rather than just going for power.

A high bounce on the serve, together with a good angle, will help to gain the initiative and should be followed with a pressure stroke, for example a drive.

### 7. Use the combination of high shots with a lot of topspin, and then semi-flat shots, to advance towards the net.

Using high shots allows you to put pressure on the opponent and to force a short ball. For short balls one should use a semi-flat stroke looking for winners or enough pressure to go to the net.

### 8. Do not attack all short balls.

It is important to learn to recognize which short balls can be attacked, since a badly executed approach will result in the player being easily passed at the net.

### 9. Use the strategy of physically tiring the opponent since the surface allows it.

Physically tiring is accomplished with tactics such as playing consistently 1 and 1 (one shot alternately to each side), or 1 and 2 (alternate with shots to the same side twice to wrong foot the opponent).

### 10. Use serve angles when serving.

The placing of the ball in short angles, when they are combined with deep shots, can physically wear out the opponent as it forces the player to cover more court and creates open areas to attack. By using an angled serve, one forces the opponent to cover between 9.5 metres or 11 metres, according to how one uses them. (Using one angle - 9.5 metres; using a combination of two angles - 11 metres.)

### 11. Practice sliding on lateral or forward movements.

Correct sliding helps the player to perform a more precise approach, and gets support for the transfer of body weight. However it is important to slide only when it is required by the shot.

### 12. Try to get all the shots.

It is psychologically important to develop an attitude of "hustling" after all the shots since clay is a slow surface that allows you to retrieve many difficult situations. Getting a lot of balls back will have a very noticeable negative influence on your opponent.



### 13. Use variation on your defense.

A combination of high, short, cross-court and down-the-line passing shots should be used. Use the topspin lob also as a weapon and to keep the opponent guessing.

### 14. Learn to use the drop-shot.

The combination of using deep shots with a lot of topspin forcing the player backwards, with a drop-shot, makes the opponent change direction and then run the maximum distance. This is very effective on clay.

### 15. Use the time between points.

Train as if it was a match, taking time to control your body and mind. On clay, points are longer, and more difficult to finish. There is a greater chance of fatigue and it is very important to play each point at the highest physical and mental level. It is paramount to use the time between points for regeneration.

### 16. Perform a hard physical preparation.

Do heavy load exercises with special emphasis on strength, power and flexibility. The body must be able to apply constant power to the ball despite fatigue.

### 17. Play four or five set matches when you practice.

On clay, playing matches is a physical and mental test of the player's shape. Playing long practice matches will help you to achieve the best condition to improve the performance in the third set, which will be easier if you get used to playing five sets.

In future issues of Coaches Review we will start to offer a series of articles which will guide you in various aspects (technical, tactical, physical and mental) to help your players achieve a high performance on this surface.

## HOW TO COUNTER SPECIALIST STYLES

By David Sammel

*This article first appeared in "Coaches and Coaching" and appears with permission of the LTA Coaching Department*

### 1. Serve and Volleyer

The serve and volleyer expects many free points and wants the opponent to get a complex about their return of serve. He thinks that if he can put away some good returns and passing shots early in the match, the opponent will panic and start to try for better and better returns and passes. When a serve and volleyer serves well it is easy to feel that they are unbreakable.

#### How to Counter:

- try to make as many returns off the first serve as you can, even if they give him an easy volley. Giving the serve volleyer a high volume of balls to put away pays off later in the match when the pressure is high
- attack the second serve, not specifically with pace but by moving up the court to get the ball back faster and rush the volleyer. It is then very important to make him volley for a second time or hit an overhead. Do not go for rash passes off good volleys - make him play. Again, the pay-off comes later in the match!
- be patient. Do not panic but sit and wait for the loss of focus - the game that has a double fault, the missed easy volley or many first serve faults. It often happens after one or two great service games
- try to hit as many returns to the feet as possible, not neglecting the return down the middle

### 2. Good Returner

This player makes a high volume of returns and hits the ball well in front, rushing the server. He wants to create the following feelings:

- not knowing where to serve to get an easy point
- being afraid of the return and therefore not serving and volleying any more

#### How to counter:

- serve into the body more. It is harder to step into the ball when it is coming at you. Do not look for the easy point, expect a return. Do not rush the first shot or volley - make

him play his second shot of the rally. They rely on quick points. This player is a tough customer so do not panic. Run hard and work hard to give him a high volume of second shots

- try to mess up his range by mixing up the serve and volley game. In other words, sometimes wait for the return, then go in to take a few more chances with bigger second serves
- prevent giving him easy games on his own service. This allows him to concentrate exclusively on his strong point - breaking you with good returns

### 3. Clay Court Specialist

This player will wear you down until you lose reason and patience and start slashing at balls looking for the quick winner, or attacking the net without rushing and unbalancing him first.

#### How to Counter:

- if you are not a similar player you know you have to attack well - therefore most important is your frame of mind. Accept that:
  - a. you will be passed
  - b. you will watch some top spin lobs land
  - c. it may take you a while to break him down
  - d. you need to look forward to the moment when he actually becomes erratic and gives you a few freebies

#### method of attack:

- a. your own serve is your biggest weapon in this fight - use it well to keep them off balance. Approximately 60% three quarter pace first serves, concentrating on placement (including to the body) so that your first serve percentage remains high. 40% hard serves so he can never settle down to one pace and you can get a few free points
- b. serve and volley up to 50% of the time especially at 30-40, 40-30 and advantage points
- c. the two big shots in your attack arsenal after the serve are the second shot off the return and the return of serve. If the

second shot is a volley, volley **behind the player** a lot and cut off volleys short (not drop volleys but turning away volleys across court)

- d. any time the second shot is off a shorter return you should attack that ball to take command of the point and create chances for the 'cut in'
- e. when you attack the net do not forget one of the most neglected approach shots - deep down the middle to jam them up and take away a clay-courter's lifeblood - passes made on the run creating angles. Select your down the middle shot to force him to hit a backhand, e.g. if he regularly runs round the backhand (to hit an inside-out forehand like Courier or Graf) then your 'down the middle shot' might actually be further over to his backhand side

#### return of serve:

- a. make a high volume of returns off first serves using height. Do not be too proud to stand well back to achieve this initially. As you get used to his serve, you can step up into the court to rush him more
- b. returning second serve - step up into the court, hit it early and attack it to rush him and take control of the point. (Remember hitting a ball early and attacking it does not mean rushing or hitting hard only.) If you see the opponent is in trouble, cut in and sometimes approach directly after the return

#### Warning!

Just because you hit a good second shot or return does not mean that you keep control of the point. Often the opponent will counter with good length and spin. In this case, settle down and play the point looking for an opportunity to attack. Do not press to take control - play for it.

### 4. Net Rusher

A net-rusher wants to rush you until you panic. The player often approaches the net on a 'bluff' and relies on the pressure of you having to pass him so often that it wears you down.

#### How to Counter:

- watch the ball and play your shots as you normally would, ignoring the odd, amazing dive volley! Once he knows you are not rushed to pass him and do not mind him winning a fair share of the points when he has hit a good approach shot, this player has little left
- make the opponent play a high volume of volleys and overheads
- take any chance you get to go in. Rarely do 'chip and charge merchants' hit good passing shots themselves

### 5. Big Hitter

This player tries to blast you off the court and overpower you. He will usually start well and is a good front runner. Awesome when playing well, however:

#### How to Counter:

- hustle and use height. It is imperative that this player is made to hit 3 or 4 big shots to win the point, as often as possible
- swing early and meet his big shots in front so you can use his pace to get in on him, thus making him hit passing shots forces the pace, causing him to hit hard and lose control. Your state of mind: ignore his great shots, work hard and do not be intimidated; be convinced he will run out of big shots if he has to hit enough of them, and once he begins to miss and hesitate, it's over

### 6. Angles/Early Ball/Deceptive Pace Player

This player wants to break your rhythm and more importantly prevent you from establishing any rhythm at all. He will mix you up and rush you by deceptive play because he holds the ball on the strings well. He mixes pace, and varies his serves, can generate surprising pace when moving forward on the ball, and time a return off a big serve. A very difficult customer, however:

#### How to Counter:

- apart from possibly the serve they have few gears to step up the pace
- their game is based on timing, with less margin for error when they move the ball to create angles. They are prone to making mistakes in batches
- play back to the opponent, e.g. if he hits a cross-court angle, hit the ball back cross-court in order to reduce the angles, unless you feel confident of hitting a winning shot down the line
- get under the ball well to keep a good length because then it is harder for them to move the ball around. It also leads to important approach opportunities. Be low, alert and agile at the net because if you start to read the passes from this player, he is dead because he cannot beat you with pace. Stay low, to give them a problem - the heavy ball!!
- your state of mind - do not be concerned if you feel disjointed or unbalanced by this player at times - you cannot avoid it. He will cut you with little cuts and you need to thrust a sword through him before you bleed to death. Get him to feel over-powered by hitting big shots, volleys, serves and overheads when you get a chance. Don't get cute and try to out-manoeuvre him when you can kill the ball
- if you play the same way as this player - play the percentages more

Within the above styles of player, you may also need to take in to account the following characteristics:

#### The Cut-In Specialist.

Don't watch for him coming in. Watch the ball and realize that when in trouble sometimes go for the big shot, and off the backhand slice, go down the line because this is the most difficult place from which to hit an effective volley.

#### All Rounder.

Play your game and wait because even these solid players make mistakes. You must take some chances to unbalance them.

#### Very Tall Players.

Hit at them when they are at the net. The lob is not wasted because if they hang back sometimes it is easier to get the ball at their feet.

#### Very Fast Players.

These players recover quickly and can reach shots that are played away from them relatively easily. Therefore, a good tactic is often to place the ball behind them in the spot they have just come from, thus wrong-footing the player.

# GAINING MOMENTUM

By Nick Lawrence (Rover National Training Coach Lawn Tennis Association)  
This article first appeared in "Coaching Excellence"  
and appears with the permission of the LTA Coaching Department

Having spent the summer watching countless matches both in this country and abroad, I feel compelled to write about a subject that I believe to be a crucial factor in deciding the outcome of many contests.

The subject is **momentum**. During all close tennis matches there will inevitably be periods where one player is dominating her opponent and vice versa.

I have a strong belief that great players acquire the ability to **weather the storm when the balance is against them and to take maximum advantage when the flow of the match is in their favour.**

During many of my post match 'chats' with players, I became very aware that a number of them had not realised the ebb and flow of the match they had just competed in. There were countless examples of players winning important rallies on a slow clay court - mentally destroying their opponent's confidence and then serving a double fault on the next point - thereby **losing the momentum**; i.e. throwing away the mental initiative just gained!

I became aware that as a coach, it was my responsibility to try to prevent players from 'shooting themselves in the foot'.

I heard an eminent coach once describe a tennis match as a 'war', with every point a battle within that war. This analogy is an excellent way of helping young players understand momentum. Obviously the more battles you can win in succession, the more likely you are to win the war! Some research conducted by the German Tennis Federation has shown that the player who wins more series of 3 points in a row throughout a match, will win. Hence the phrase **'three in a row starts the flow!'** This phrase relates to a useful teaching tool in developing momentum within matches, which I often use during matchplay practice sessions:



## 3 in a row:

In a normal singles situation, player 'A' serves and, over a period of time, attempts to win **3 points in a row**, which constitutes **1 goal**. If she wins **6 points in a row**, she gains **3 goals** and **9 points** gains **6 goals**. The same scoring system also applies to the receiver. The drill becomes extremely enlightening when one of the players hits an ace, a good smash, or fights hard for a well earned point. It also becomes very informative when a player serves a double fault, misses a smash, or fails to make a drop-shot!

It is an excellent opportunity to develop 'thinking' players, enabling them to **sense** and indeed **see** when their opponent is psychologically up or down. Players quickly learn how a winning smash can give them the upper hand in the next point and also how they must try to forget a poorly executed drop-shot within seconds!

Ian Barclay has often expressed the view that **the player who wins a point with an aggressive smash will often win the next point.**

To conclude, I feel strongly that our players must learn to build momentum within themselves during practice, so that it becomes a natural tactic in a match. Every opportunity to get positive energy flowing must be taken.

I think that one of the finest examples of momentum in recent times must be the performance of Andre Agassi at the 1994 US Open. He firmly believed that winning the tournament was his destiny, and after beating Chang in the quarter-finals, his momentum took him all the way!

The challenge to us as coaches is what fosters this momentum during a match and maintains it in consecutive matches, e.g. in a tournament.

# THE 400 POINT BALL CONTROL TEST

By Dan O'Connell (ITF Development Officer - South Pacific)

Some juniors lack discipline and organization in their practice habits. In many cases the players just "hit" and cannot judge or measure their progress.

The purpose of the ball control tests are to make players aware of their weaknesses by providing objective feedback that is often missing in practice. These tests replace the lack of competition in practice by introducing scoring tests.

These fun games can be used by tennis pros during one hour group lessons, or the entire test can be given to the students during a week long camp.

To conduct these tests the teacher will need two ropes of 33 feet in length. In each test, scoring areas are marked off in six foot sections. To provide consistent results, it is most important that the scoring areas are exactly six feet.

There are 400 total points to be gained. 200 points can be earned in two groundstroke tests. The other 200 points are earned in tests on the overhead, the volley and the serve.

As mentioned, each test has a separate scoring system.

The 400 point ball control test also has a total scoring system.

## POINT RANKING CATEGORIES: 400 POINTS POSSIBLE.

Champion:	over 300 points.
Tournament player:	270 to 299 points.
Advanced player:	240 to 269 points.
Average player:	200 to 239 points.
Beginner:	under 200 points.

# THE 40 BALL GAME

The 40 ball game is a “fun” test that measures groundstroke depth.

## PURPOSE

To increase the students’ awareness of depth. Once aware of their depth problems, players will pay more attention to this important aspect of the game. The scoring system gives players a chance to monitor their depth scores and to compare results with others.

## HOW TO PLAY THE 40 BALL GAME

The teacher feeds all 40 balls from the service line so that they land behind the other service line. Balls are fed without a pattern, using a variety of height, speed and spin. Balls are fed to the forehand and backhand (approximately 20 to each side).

## HOW TO SCORE

There are 7 scoring marks. Balls hit into the net are marked N, balls landing short (in the service box area) are marked S, wide balls are marked W and those landing long are marked L. Points can only be scored when a ball lands in the 3 six foot sections of the backcourt (divided by ropes). Balls landing in the shallow section score 1 point, those landing in the mid section score 2 points and balls landing in the deepest section score 3 points.

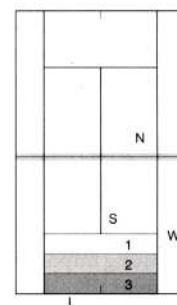
When each of the 40 balls lands, one of the players will yell out the result (one of the seven scoring marks). The scorer records the result on the scoring card. A sample score card is attached.

## POINT RANKING CATEGORIES - 120 POINTS POSSIBLE

Champion:	80 points or more.
Tournament player:	65-79 points.
Advanced player:	50-64 points.
Average player:	40-49 points.
Beginner:	under 40 points.

## FEEDBACK

When players review the results of their score card, they become aware of their depth problems. If too many balls land short or into the net, players realize changes are needed. Play this game several times and watch the scores rise. The 40 ball game proves that control of depth can be improved - if you concentrate on it!



# THE 80 BALL GAME

The 80 ball game is a “fun” test that measures groundstroke passing shot proficiency.

## PURPOSE

To develop footwork for the beginner, direction for the advanced player and passing shots for the tournament player.

## HOW TO PLAY THE 80 BALL GAME

The teacher feeds all 80 balls from the service line so that they land behind the other service line. Balls are fed without a pattern, using a variety of height, speed and spin. Balls are fed to the forehand and backhand (approximately 40 to each side).

## HOW TO SCORE

The 80 ball game is a series of eight tests in which each student hits 10 balls for a total of 80 shots.

The forty minute drill requires six students of similar playing ability, 30 tennis balls and two 33 foot ropes. Each rope is placed parallel to the single sidelines; exactly six feet inside the singles line. The objective is to hit the balls into the proper target areas. One point is scored for each shot landing in the target area.

The game is divided into two halves. In the first half, the students participate in four forehand tests. The first two measure the skill of hitting the forehand down the line and the third and fourth tests record the forehand crosscourt shot. Each student hits 40 balls.

In the second half, each student participates in four backhand tests - two down the line and two crosscourt for a total of 40 shots.

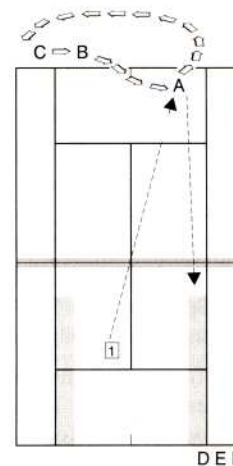
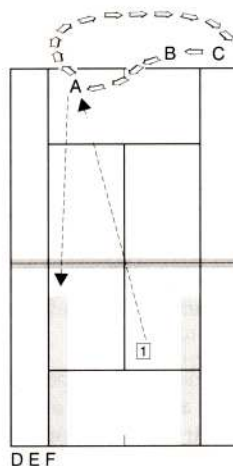
The teacher feeds the balls from the service line so that they land behind the other service line, allowing the student to hit them inside the baseline. The student runs to the ball and tries to

hit it into the target area. After hitting one ball, the student runs to the end of the line and waits for her next turn.

In every test, each student hits 10 balls. The students who are not hitting balls retrieve them and record the number of good shots landing in the target area.

## POINT RANKING CATEGORIES - 80 POINTS POSSIBLE

Champion:	70 points or more.
Tournament player:	65 - 69 points.
Advanced player:	55 - 65 points.
Average player:	40 - 54 points.
Beginner:	under 40 points.





# THE SERVE TEST

Ten balls are served into the deuce court and ten balls are served into the advantage court. Balls landing in the deepest six foot area of the service court earn two points and those landing into the shallow area of the service court earn one point. Of course, faults do not earn any points.

The point scoring area is divided by a rope.

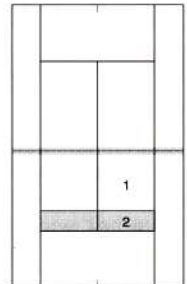
A total of 20 balls are served for a grand total of 40 points.

When participating in the 400 point ball control test, the serving test will be taken three times, with the best two scores recorded. A grand total of 80 points can be earned from serving.

The test is organized to break the rhythm of the server, in order to make it more like a normal game. After two serves, the server must walk to the net before hitting the next two serves. While walking to the net, the server is asked to think positive and to visualize hitting two point serves.

## POINT RANKING CATEGORIES: 40 POINTS POSSIBLE.

Champion:	32 points or more.
Tournament player:	28-31 points.
Advanced player:	24-27 points.
Average player:	20-23 points.
Beginner:	under 20 points.



# THE VOLLEY TEST

The player is positioned six feet from the wall and hits as many alternating forehand-backhand volleys as possible, in 20 seconds.

One point is earned for each volley hit against the wall. Balls must clear net level and the player must keep behind the six foot line.

The teacher will need a stop watch. It is best to have two scorers to count the points earned (if scores are different the average may be taken).

A maximum of 40 points can be earned.

When participating in the 400 point ball control test, the volley test will be taken three times, with the best two scores

recorded. A grand total of 80 points can be earned in the volley test.

## POINT RANKING CATEGORIES: 40 POINTS POSSIBLE.

Champion:	40 points.
Tournament player:	35-39 points.
Advanced player:	30-34 points.
Average player:	20-29 points.
Beginner:	under 20 points.

# THE OVERHEAD TEST

The teacher lobs ten balls to the student, with the aim being for the student to smash the balls into the deuce side of the court. Balls landing in the shallow portion of the deuce court earn one point and those landing in the deep area of the deuce court earn two points. Overheads not landing in the proper half of the court do not earn points.

The teacher lobs ten more balls to the student, with the aim being for the student to smash the balls into the advantage side of the court. Balls landing in the shallow area of the advantage court earn one point and those landing in the deep area of the advantage court earn two points.

The deep area begins six feet behind the service line, extending to the baseline. This area is divided by ropes.

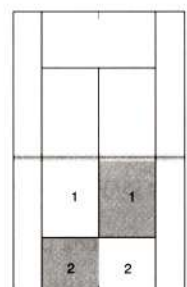
A total of 20 balls are smashed for a grand total of 40 points.

When participating in the 400 point ball control test, the overhead test will be taken twice, with only the best score being recorded. A grand total of 40 points can be earned.

When the student is hitting the smash into the deuce side of the court, the teacher will feed balls from within the baseline, on the advantage side of the court.

## POINT RANKING CATEGORIES: 40 POINTS POSSIBLE.

Champion:	30 points or more.
Tournament player:	27-29 points.
Advanced player:	23-26 points.
Average player:	20-22 points.
Beginner:	under 20 points.



# BUILDING UP A PROFESSIONAL ATTITUDE

*By Frank Zlesak (Czech Republic)*

All coaches should realize that to develop a professional attitude in young players is a long term process that takes many years. With this in mind we should start influencing players in this area at a very early stage - actually from the very beginning of their tennis careers!

Of course responsibilities and tasks that we give them should be appropriate to their age! The following are undertakings that I feel are reasonable to expect from players of different ages. By increasing their responsibilities and consequently their self-confidence and independence - a kind of "embryo" for a real professional attitude is put in place.

## UNDER 12

- prepare things themselves
- packing their bags before practice (racket, balls, spare shirt, bottle of water etc.)
- always be on time for practice
- learn basic tennis rules (how the game is counted, the time between points and changeovers etc.)

At this age "the less is more" but on the other hand we should be very consequent with these few demands!

## UNDER 14

At this age they should:

- warm-up correctly before practice and matches, without being asked or supervised by the coach
- develop a correct drinking regime (stick to it even when practising)
- send in entries for tournaments themselves
- find their doubles partner themselves
- deliver their rackets for restringing, ask for required tension etc. themselves

## UNDER 16-18

### In practice:

Whether playing with or without the coach present, the player at this age should:

- practise with quality and intensity at all times (full concentration and best effort)
- maintain emotional control (both in practice and matches)

### During tournaments:

The players should:

- book practice courts and get practice balls themselves

- arrange different practice partners (not only team mates). When I took a team of Finnish players to the South American Junior Circuit in 1992, I instigated a rule that the players could not practise with their own team mates. They had instead, to find a practice partner from another country. This ensured that they played with different players, it helped to build self confidence, and also helped to prepare them for the future when they would not be travelling with a team and would have to find their own practice partners.
- arrange wake-up calls
- scout their next opponents themselves
- maintain good eating habits (choose the right foods - plenty of fruit and vegetables, pasta, fish, white meat; if necessary go and buy proper things instead of eating junk food)
- find their own, most effective way to prepare for matches
- put everything into their bag for the match (including blister tape, spare laces, pieces of chocolate or bananas, spare shorts, shirt and socks, soft grips, towel etc.)
- string their own rackets (when home)
- fully understand the tournament levels (junior, satellites etc.), ranking system, tournament rules (when to sign for lucky-losers list, for doubles) and know the tennis rules in detail
- find out when their next match is

Often the above tasks are performed by the coach as the coach feels that this is the job of the coach. Whilst the coach should assist the players at this age in performing these tasks (advice etc.), the job of the coach is, as far as is possible, to make the player less coach dependent and able to stand on his or her own two feet. Remember the coach/parent etc. will not always be with the player!

In conclusion, let me summarize the idea. By gradually giving increased responsibility to young players, we build up and create their independence and self confidence, that leads them, very naturally, to a professional attitude. The ultimate goal of coaches should be to make the players less dependent on us!

# FREQUENT FLYER BLUES – JET LAG AND OTHER CONCERNS

*By Carl Petersen (Canada)*

## JET LAG

Almost every traveller has a story about jet lag, how it affects them or what they do to combat it. Jet lag can be defined as the cumulative physiological and psychological effects of rapid air travel across multiple time zones. Jet lag is scientifically referred to as a disruption in the body's circadian rhythms or biological clocks. Circadian (meaning "about a day") rhythms run in 24-26 hour cycles and are seen as oscillations in the physiological systems (body temperature, heart rate, strength, etc.).

These rhythms are synchronized by diet and meal timing, sunrise and sunset, rest and activity as well as social contact. Normally these rhythms happen at the same time every day. However, when crossing multiple time zones (3 or more), your body's biological clock is desynchronized with time cues from the environment. Travel from west to east compresses time, and travel from east to west extends it, causing the dysrhythmia that affects travellers.

Physical effects of jet lag include changes in blood pressure and heart rate, fatigue and general malaise, insomnia, headache, indigestion, drowsiness and losses in reaction time and coordination. Psychological effects include general disorientation and mood swings with feelings of irritability.

## DEHYDRATION

In addition, long flights cause dehydration because the high altitude and low humidity (<10%) pulls the moisture out of passengers' bodies. Consumption of alcohol and caffeinated beverages compounds this dehydration problem.

Although some people adjust better than others, jet lag and dehydration are both serious problems for travellers. The following are some tips from frequent flyer pros, athletes, and coaches who cross continents more frequently than most people cross the city.

## TIPS TO COMBAT JET LAG AND DEHYDRATION WHILE TRAVELLING

1. Before and during your flight, consume a diet high in complex carbohydrates (fruit, vegetables, pastas, breads). This maximizes glycogen (muscle fuel) storage and the water stored with it helps prevent dehydration.
2. Avoid fatty food during this time to allow easier and more rapid digestion.
3. Consume plenty of cool fluids (bottled water, juices, clear soft drinks). Start with 2 cups before take-off and at least 1 cup per hour of flight. If you drink alcohol or caffeinated beverages (coffee, cola), take 2 glasses of water for each consumed. Better still, avoid these altogether since they promote dehydration.
4. Set your watch to the new destination time and try to eat and sleep accordingly. Also, stretch and move around the aircraft as much as possible.
5. Upon arrival, get out in the sunshine and avoid dark places. If you must sleep, it should be no longer than 1-2 hours. Then get up and onto the new time as quickly as possible. Get out for a little exercise to help loosen up. Try a warm-up and stretch of about 20 minutes followed by a light 15-20 minute run and then 5x20 metre sprints. This should be done about 4 hours before bed since it releases muscle protein in the blood and helps trigger the sleep mechanism.
6. Eat fast carbohydrates with dinner (potatoes, corn, sugar). This also helps trigger the sleep cycle. Sleep 8-10 hours only. Sleeping late will postpone adaptation and make you feel more tired. For breakfast and lunch the next day, eat meals high in protein.
7. Take a warm bath or shower prior to bed. If a sauna is available, try a warm shower (20 seconds) then relax for 5-10 minutes. Repeat 2-3 times and finish off with a warm to cool shower. This European tradition will aid your recovery from jet lag, but be sure to drink plenty of fluids. Utilizing relaxation techniques can help promote a good night's sleep too.

## MORE KEYS TO HEALTHY FLYING

1. Cloudy ears can be cleared by yawning, chewing gum, or pinching your nose and blowing out. Decongestants can help but may increase dehydration.
2. You are at increased risk for colds and flu because several hundred people from all parts of the world are breathing the same air, your air. As well, the low humidity and oxygen levels dry out the nasal membranes, allowing a menagerie of bacteria or viruses to enter your system virtually unchecked. Drinking plenty of clear fluids and avoiding alcohol and smoking can help. As well, try soothing nasal sprays or creams (not decongestants) and use eyedrops to eliminate germs in the corners of the eyes, especially if you wear contact lenses.
3. To help prevent motion sickness, avoid reading and do not eat too much. Keep away from alcohol or aspirin since both affect the inner ear, making you feel worse. Try leaning your head back and relaxing. Looking up at a 45 degree angle and staring at a fixed object can also minimize discomfort.
4. To decrease the likelihood of indigestion (the digestive tract expands as a result of low cabin pressure), avoid fatty foods (hard to do), eat half of what you are given (easier) and move around the plane to promote digestion.

Prevention is the key to avoiding the maladies of flying. Precautions taken early on and observed throughout your travel will not only decrease the severity of jet lag and dehydration but will ensure you arrive healthy and happy.

# TENNIS MEDICINE

By Carl Petersen (Canada)

## WHAT CAN I DO FOR MUSCLE CRAMPS?

Muscle cramps are not limited to poorly conditioned weekend athletes, they may strike even the fittest. Understanding how and why they occur is the first step to avoiding them.

A cramp occurs when a muscle or part of it suddenly, painfully and involuntarily contracts for a period of time. While similar to the nocturnal calf cramps we have all experienced, exertional muscle cramps occur with activity and can affect other muscles including the quadriceps and hamstring.

Cramps are caused when the nerves supplying the muscles hyperactivate due to fatigue, low blood sugar, inadequate

conditioning, over-exertion or anxiety. The biggest culprit though, is dehydration which, while most common in hot, humid conditions, can also occur during a tennis match. Don't wait until you are thirsty to have a drink; a cup of water each thirty minutes is a good start, but for each drink of alcohol or caffeine add two more cups.

If a muscle cramp occurs, treat it based on the location and severity. A mild cramp requires gentle stretching and massage or ice massage. If the cramp persists, then stop; continuing is painful and dangerous due to loss of muscle control. Severe cramps require complete rest. Drinking water in all exercise situations may be the best form of prevention and treatment.

## ITF JUNIOR TOURNAMENTS ARE A GOOD INDICATOR

By Dave Miley/Jackie Nesbitt (ITF)

With the dramatic increase that has taken place over the last decade in the number of satellite and futures tournaments, players between the age of 15-18 are often left with a difficult decision:

- a) to play on the ITF junior circuit
- or
- b) to skip this level of events and to go straight from national junior tournaments to the entry level professional events (satellite/futures circuits).

The new age eligibility rules for participation in professional events will no doubt ensure that more juniors participate in junior events.

However, there are obvious advantages for young talents in focusing first on attaining a high junior world ranking:

- Accommodation for the players and the coach is provided free of charge at almost all ITF junior events. At satellite/futures tournaments, the players are responsible for their own expenses.
- Because the junior tournaments provide accommodation for the coach, it is more likely that the player will have the benefit of a travelling coach whilst playing these events.
- At the junior level, the players are competing and interacting socially with their peers which, from a developmental point of view, would appear to be preferable. At the satellite level, the juniors are often interacting with players quite a lot older, some of whom are finishing their careers and are perhaps lacking a "professional attitude".

Recent figures released by the ITF's Juniors Department show that another reason to focus on the junior game first, is that

it is a good indicator of future success at the professional level. The following figures show the number of top 10 ITF junior world ranked players that eventually reached the top 100 in men's and women's game:

	Boys	Girls	
1985	4	4	
1986	7	7	
1987	7	5	Average number of boys 5.2 per year
1988	6	6	
1989	8	6	Average number of girls 5.1 per year
1990	2	4	
1991	3	4	

These figures suggest that if you achieve a top 10 end of year junior world ranking you have a 50% chance of breaking into the top 100 of the men's and women's rankings.

It would appear that a good career path for a top national junior to follow would be:

- i) First of all to attain a top 2, 18 & under, national ranking in their country.
- ii) Then focus on the junior circuit and try to achieve a top 20 junior world ranking - this will ensure direct acceptance into the Group A events (including the four Grand Slam Junior Tournaments). The junior could still play a few weeks of professional events per year for experience.
- iii) Finally once the player has achieved a top 20 ranking in juniors, he/she should then focus on improving his/her professional ranking by playing mostly satellites/futures events along with the prestigious Group A Junior events.



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