



## Topic 5. PSYCHOLOGICAL PREPRATION IN TENNIS

### *Module I. Training in sport tactics and physical condition of athletes*



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# CONTENT

- The **importance** of mental strength
- The mental **challenges** of tennis
- What is mental strength?
- The most important **aspects** of mental strength in tennis
- How it can be **taught to on court**





## IMPORTANCE OF MENTAL STRENGTH

- “The most important thing in competitive tennis is.. **to perform well under pressure**“. **Chris Evert**
- Coaches and athletes claim that 70 to 90 percent of a **victory is decided mentally**.
- Perfect technique, control of movement, taking the right decision, attitude and behavior all require **mental toughness**.





## Tennis is an extremely stressful sport -> mental challenges of tennis:

- An individual sport
- No coaching
- Self-umpiring
- Open-skilled sport
- No time clock
- Many play variations
- Every mistake is visible
- Parents
- Overall invested time
- Time between points
- Time between points
- All year sport
- Ranking
- Tournament schedule
- Sport of mistake
- Money





## WHAT IS MENTAL STRENGTH

- Mental toughness (MT) refers to the idea of **being able to push past failures** by remaining positive and competitive. (Dr. Jonathan Fader)
- MT reflects not only an effective coping mechanism as a reaction, but also **allows individuals to proactively seek out opportunities** for personal growth.
- **4 interrelated parts (Clough):**
  - Control (keep anxieties in check)
  - Commitment (to be deeply involved)
  - Challenge (to see threats as opportunities)
  - Confidence (the believe in your own worth)



# MOST IMPORTANT MENTAL SKILLS IN TENNIS

- ✓ **Motivation** (challenge)
- ✓ **Concentration** (commitment)
- ✓ **Emotional Control** (control)
- ✓ **Confidence** (confidence)



# MOTIVATION

- **Types of motivation**

  - Intrinsic

  - Extrinsic

- **Motivational problems**

  - No motivation

**Reasons can be** too many tournaments, too much stress (burnout), too easy tasks (boredom), high expectations leading to disappointments.

  - Always blames outside factors for failure

- **No control over the situation**

  - Wrong motivation

- **Players compete only for rewards, other people regards or fear of losing**

  - Over motivation

- **Too many emotions, irrational decisions, burnout**



# BURNOUT

- Burnout is a feeling of exhaustion and reduced working capacity. It is the result of extreme stress physical and mental.
  
- **Environmental factors**
  - Overtraining
  - Too much stress
  - Too many tournaments
  - Pressure from parents, management and coaches
  - Too much traveling
  
- **Personal traits**







# CONCENTRATION

- Concentration is an attentional process that involves the ability to focus on the task at hand while ignoring distractions. (Aidan Moran, The Oxford Handbook of Sport and Performance Psychology, 2012)
  
- **Types of concentration**
  - External
  - Internal
  - Broad
  - Narrow





## EMOTIONAL CONTROL

- The control of one's emotions during tennis play is of paramount importance both for high performance and enjoyment of the game.
- **Important terms**
  - Arousal
  - Anxiety
  - Stress
- **Four types of reaction to stress**
  - Tank
  - Anger
  - Fear/Choking
  - Accepting the Challenge/Fight





# CONFIDENCE

- **Confidence** -> the belief that one can perform well in any situation practice or match.
- **Self-esteem** -> the person's sense of personal worth and value.
- **Learned helplessness**





## “THE ZONE”

- Peak performance
- Supreme focus
- Playing instinctively
- Having fun
- Time perception changes
- Feeling control

**“The Flow “ by Csikszentmihlyi -> balance between challenge and ability**

→ Boredom (too easy)

→ Anxiety (too hard)



# TECHNIQUE

- Visualization
- Progressive muscle relaxation and autogenic training
- Concentration exercises



# IMPLEMENTING MENTAL TRAINING IN PRACTICE

## Emotional control

- Drills  
ex.: reach 20, every mistake you go down 2
- Between rally behavior  
ex.: after a miss, positive body language and feedback

## Concentration

- Drills  
ex.: certain number in a row; playing with distractions
- Between rally behavior  
ex.: eye control





# IMPLEMENTING MENTAL TRAINING IN PRACTICE

## Motivation

- Drills
- ex. : setting their own target
- The role of the coach
- Creating a drill with rewards, making it fun

## Confidence

- The role of the coach
- Setting achievable , but challenging goals.
- Giving them opportunities for success.





## IN-MATCH ROUTINES

- When serving
- When returning
- The 4 phases according to Loehr







# NOT EVERYTHING IS MENTAL

- Body issues
- Technical problems
- A superficial understanding of tactics





# THANK YOU!

*For more information follow the presentations of **TC4DC** program*

