



Topic 7. COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

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



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



CONTENT



- The role of sports in general
- The role of organized sports
- The athletic triangle
- Communication during the three development stages
- Coaches' expectations of parents during the early years
- Coaches' expectations of parents during the middle years
- Tips for parents according to the ITF Tennis 10s programme for this stage
- Coaches' expectations of parents during the elite years
- Parents' expectations of coaches
- Criteria for selecting a coach
- Coaches' expectations of players
- Players' motivation of their sport
- Coaches – Parents meeting
- Possible problems
- Final remarks





I started teaching tennis in the mid 1950s. Not a day goes by where my mind doesn't say, "here we go again." My toughest lesson is not with my students - but with their parents.

Nick Bollettieri, 4 December 2013



The Role of Sports in General



The importance of sports, especially of youth sports, in today's society lies in:

- its function as a counterweight to the increasing lack of exercise with all its consequences,
- its alternative to the growing influence of the new media, such as cell phones, personal computers, play stations, etc.
- its impact on the psychological development of young people,
- its well documented health benefits as well as
- the life lessons learned through active participation.



The Role of Organized Sports



- Without financial and emotional support as well as time commitment, most athletes would find it difficult to get a foothold in organized sports.
- That is where parents come into play. Normally, they get – whether they like it or not – involved in their children’s athletic careers.
- That is also where problems often start or do not start:
 - Over-enthusiastic or even fanatical parents put a lot of pressure not only on their children but, unfortunately, also on their offsprings’ coaches.
 - Moderate and restrained parents tend to provide the right balance between facilitating enjoyment and challenging the athlete to develop their skills.





The Athletic Triangle

The athletic triangle consists of

- the athlete
- the parents and
- the coach

→Everybody in this triangle has to take on certain roles, shoulder certain responsibilities and display certain behaviors required to ensure success.

→They all should have a common philosophy.

→The relationships within this triangle can have a profound influence on the psychological and, to a certain extent, also on the physical development of the young player.

- Naturally, parents and coaches have the players' best interest in mind.
- If, however, animosities and differing opinions overshadow the triangle, the positive development of the player is in danger, often culminating in the players' ending their athletic career.





Communication during the Three Development Stages

Experts never get tired of emphasizing the importance of parents and players knowing their expected roles, responsibilities and expectations, while also calling attention to the experience that these factors typically change with the age of the players and the level of athletics.





Coaches' Expectations of Parents during the Early Years

Positives:

- Providing transportation
- Providing emotional, logistical, and financial support
- Providing the opportunities and the resources
- Providing push to play, but without applying pressure
- Exhibiting emotional control
- Emphasizing fun
- Stressing good on-court conduct

Negatives:

- Being negative, yelling, or getting angry
- Placing too much pressure on child, over-pushing
- Losing healthy perspective (being over-involved)





Coaches' Expectations of Parents during the Middle Years

Positives in addition to the aspects listed in phase one:

- Providing supplemental coaching/instruction
- Keeping tennis in perspective
- Ensuring good coaching
- Stressing/instilling hard work

Negatives in addition to the aspects listed in phase one:

- Too much tennis talk
- Emphasizing winning/results
- Pressuring child
- Reacting emotionally at matches
- Restricting player's social life
- Being negative/critical
- Being over-involved (not giving enough space to player)





Tips for Parents according to the ITF Tennis 10s Programme

Support:

- Stay parent
- Do not try being a coach
- Do not attend every single game/match, tournament

Encouragement:

- Encourage good behaviour in practice and match
- Further the player's becoming independent
- Support effort not result

Respect:

- Teach to respect the rules, the opponent, the coaches





Coaches' Expectations of Parents during the Elite Years

Positive aspects:

- Taking on off-court responsibilities, such as nutrition, sleep, equipment, etc.
- Stepping in and providing advice when the coach is not available
- Supervising drills and practice matches

All this, of course, is only possible if the parent is familiar with the high technical aspects of the sport.

Negative aspects:

- Emphasizing winning
- Being negative/critical or lacking communication with child
- Not allowing player to be independent
- Being over-involved with the player's tennis
- Controlling of the player
- Having problems with the coach



Parents' Expectations of Coaches



A positive relationship between coaches and parents is an essential precondition for young athletes to be successful and continue their sport.

General expectations parents have of their youngsters' coaches:

- High amount of variety, fun, free play and creativity
- good demonstrations with a focus on basics
- fair and consistent treatment
- criticism focused on the correction of skills and not on the player
- regular communication with parents about schedules, home practice tips, counselling on equipment, etc.

What must not be forgotten is the fact that most young athletes participate in sports for one reason – to have fun.



Criteria for Selecting a Coach



Choosing a good tennis coach can be a challenge:

Find out about their

- qualifications and certification
- level of professionalism
- dedication, motivation and passion
- level of play
- years and kind of experience of teaching
- results teaching players
- communication ability and personality
- knowledge about how to keep their players safe and healthy



Coaches' Expectation of Players 1



What coaches usually expect from their players:

- good sportsmanship
- respect towards teammates, coaches, and officials
- winning and losing like a winner
- showing willingness to learn and work hard
- informing the coach immediately if players are going to miss a game or practice
- being willed to practice on their own while at home





Coaches' Expectations of Players 2

Breaking down these expectations for the players' development stages means that they should

- Under 12:
 - Pack their bags before practice (racket, water bottle, etc.)
 - Always be on time for practice
 - Learn basic tennis rules (how the game is counted, changeovers etc.)

- Under 14:
 - Warm up correctly before practice and matches
 - Developing a correct drinking regime
 - Find their doubles partner themselves
 - Deliver their rackets for restringing



Coaches' Expectations of Players 3



Under 16 – 18:

- In practice:
 - Playing with or without coach, the player should:
 - Practise with quality and intensity at all times
 - Maintain emotional control (both in practice and matches)
- During tournaments:
 - Book practice courts and get practice balls themselves
 - Arrange wake-up calls
 - Scout their next opponents themselves
 - Maintain good eating habits
 - Put everything into their bags (including blister tapes, grips, towels, etc.)
 - Fully understand the tournament levels
 - Evaluate their performance after a match



Players' Motivation for their Sport



Many coaches still mistakenly place the athletes' underlying motivation for participating in sports – first and foremost - on winning.

Research, however, reveals that the top motives of young players are

- having fun,
- challenging their abilities and exploring their limits,
- improving their skills and learning new skills,
- being with friends or making new friends.

With this in mind, coaches are well advised to critically examine their motivational priorities and make sure to create an environment where not everything revolves around the win-loss record.

By the way, the players' main sources of stress are being yelled at by coaches, parents, teammates, and fans.



Coaches - Parents Meeting 1



As soon as the coach is aware of the expectations of players and parents alike, the coach is better prepared to tackle the problems that may crop up in the course of the season.

One of the most practicable and helpful measure of preventing possible conflicts at their roots is the beginning of the year parents' meeting.

This meeting should be

- obligatory for one or both parents
- the players' presence depends on the coaches' preference
- the details of the meeting have to be communicated via e-mail, phone or written invitation
- the meeting should not last much longer than 60 minutes



Coaches – Parents Meeting 2



In the meeting the head coach should stick to the following agenda:

- Introducing himself/herself and his/her assistant coaches
- Outlining the coaching philosophy, goals, rules, and policies in detail
- Reviewing player and parent expectations for practices and competitions
- Presenting practice and game schedules, including information on expected athlete, parent and fan behavior
- Having parents introduce themselves to other parents





Dealing with problems that arise during the season

Organising an initial meeting at the beginning of the year, however, is no guarantee that issues do not crop up during the season. If this is the case, it is important that the coach

- discusses the problem with everybody involved in a fair two-way communication,
- is open to the other's views,
- considers the possibility that they might be wrong,
- remembers why parents and coaches are there,
- reminds parents that putting too much pressure on their offsprings can impair their sport enjoyment and hinder personal growth,
- explains that the problems have to be solved in a timely way to avoid players being negatively affected.



Final Remarks on Communication



Purpose of Communication:

- Persuade
- Evaluate
- Inform
- Motivate and inspire
- Solve Problems

Types of Communication:

- 50% to 70% is nonverbal (facial expressions, body positioning, gestures, intonation, etc)
- The rest is verbal (spoken or written)

Effective Communication:

- Devote enough time to get to know the players and their peculiarities
- Be present at all times and give the player your full attention
- Treat your player as unique and tailor your approach to their needs
- Be clear with what you want to share with the player
- Treat your player in a way you would like your player to treat you.
- A good sense of humour and a smile generally go a long way.





THANK YOU!

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

