



Tennis New Zealand Coaches Newsletter

COACHFORCE

Tennis New Zealand

November 2009

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Hi Coaches,

Welcome to the November edition of the TNZ Coaches Newsletter.

This month there are a range of articles for you to digest. For you technical buffs make sure you check out the information on the backhand volley,

serve and stances.

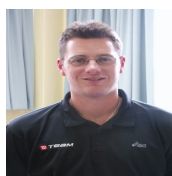
As well as this, if you're looking for a new fitness drill to do on court read the fitness test designed by Pat Etcheberry and give it a go with your students.

Lastly, there are some coach opportunities at

TNZ which may appeal to some of you.

Enjoy.

Stefan Knap



TNZ Coaches Workshop—Edgar Centre, Dunedin, September 2009

Presenters - Peter McCraw and Craig Bell

47 coaches from the Southern area attended the September workshop, making it the most participated course held in many years. Coaches travelled from as far as Queenstown to Invercargill to attend.

Peter McCraw - National Director of Coaching, presented to the 16 high performance coaches - three main topics - body dominance, playing to the score and mental factors that influence tactics.

On Sunday Peter held one-on-one assessments for local players which were a great benefit to both students and coaches.

I worked with 31 full & part time coaches, presenting technique on the serve and volleys, and showing them drills & games incorporating these strokes.

On the Sunday, I conducted a doubles clinic for 32 of the top children from the Southern region, covering movement, poaching & tactics. This proved to be fun and informative for all involved.

Coaches had the opportunity to participate in an open forum where the coaches had a chance to ask questions and network with others from outside their area.

This was an effective way of sharing information, and helping each other to increase their knowledge.

Following the forum - Lan Bale, Shaun Paringatai, Steve Dries and Simon Body held on court sessions with all the coaches, covering topics such as tactical drills, grasshoppers tennis, backhands & forehand stroke production.

On behalf of Tennis New Zealand, Peter & myself, we'd like to thank all the coaches who gave up their time to participate in the workshop, especially those who had travelled from out of town and to Lan, Shaun, Steve and Simon for helping with on-court sessions.

Special thanks to Julia Scott (recently appointed President of Tennis Coaches New Zealand) who helped organize a very professional weekend. Her drive and energy was a major factor in making this workshop so successful.

Craig Bell



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TNZ Assistant Junior Coach (AJC) Course

The final TNZ Assistant Junior Coach Course for 2009 will be held in the Central Region at the Renouf Tennis Centre in Wellington on December 4, 5 & 6.

The course is ideal for secondary school students, Polytech, University, School of Education students, Teachers and Part-time coaches, beginning their coaching career and contemplating a career in Tennis coaching.

To register for the course please contact Katie Oman, the Regional Development Manager for Tennis Central.

Katie@wellingtontennis.org.nz

The Backhand Volley

One of the tougher shots in the game to master is the backhand volley.

Much of the problem lies in the fact that because the back of your hand is facing the incoming ball, you don't have a lot of support on the racquet handle. This leads to a weak wrist that can collapse on impact, causing your volley to float. Some refer to this as the dreaded "chicken wing" volley (because your hitting elbow pops out), but no matter what you call it, the results aren't attractive.

The first thing you should do to correct this problem is strengthen your wrist. When I was starting out on tour, I wasn't that strong and I suffered from the occasional limp wrist on the backhand volley. At the time there was a pro named Jeff Borowiak who practiced his swing with a 1-pound weight screwed between his strings.

He gave me one of those homemade gadgets to help with my volley. I would practice my technique with the heavier racquet and after 10 to 20 swings I could feel my arm getting tired. But I was building up strength, and once I took the weight out of my racquet, it was easier to volley. Now there are training tools like Powerdisc (powerdisc.tennis.com), which can be attached to your racquet to add weight; you can also simply hold a 1 to 2 pound dumbbell in your hand and simulate proper backhand volley technique.

The next step is to practice the volley the right way. Many players work on their volleys by standing a couple of inches from the net and hitting slam dunks. This encourages you to take a big swing and smash the ball away.

Instead, practice your backhand volley from the service line. That's where most of your first volleys are going to be, and if you play doubles, many points will be played from the spot. If your backhand volley is reliable from midcourt, it's going to work fine as you close in on the net.

As for technique, I liken the backhand volley to a karate chop. Start out in the ready position and turn your shoulders to take your racquet back while stepping forward with your front foot at the same time. If you don't do it in tandem, your body can get out of sync. Use a short backswing, rarely allowing the racquet to get behind your back, and take an assertive step forward.

The more aggressive you are with your feet on the volley, the more forceful you'll be with the shot. Make contact out in front with a firm wrist and follow through toward your target for a penetrating volley.

Written by Brad Gilbert

www.tennis.com



Commonalities for the Serve

In the serve, there are a number of commonalities that are prerequisite for the most efficient and effective execution of the stroke. These are the fundamentals that should be evident in every serve:

- 1. A stable base.** The feet should be aligned, spread, and positioned sideways, allowing for knee flexion and the development of rotational momentum of both the lower and upper body.
- 2. The simultaneous movement of both arms.** The tossing arm follows the line of the body rotation as the hitting arm goes in the cocking position (closed racket face). This closed racket position is best achieved with a proper service grip (continental). With the arms working together in this manner, you will be better able to achieve the desired trunk and shoulder rotation.
- 3. The hitting phase.** The beginning of this phase is highlighted by the rotation of the hips, trunk, and hitting shoulder. This is followed by a deceleration of the right hip (blocking), which allows for the transfer of energy to the

shoulder and arm. The shoulder internal rotation (leading elbow) influences the racket drop continuity and the acceleration of the elbow forward.

- 4. The extension phase.** The racket begins its rapid ascent on edge. This permits optimal internal rotation of the shoulder and pronation of the forearm.
- 5. Contact.** At this point, a complete extension of the hitting side is demonstrated. The pronation of the forearm and the outward rolling of the wrist continue through impact.
- 6. Deceleration.** After the powerful action of hitting the ball and the ensuing extended follow-through, the player recovers balance.

Note: Any jumping that occurs is incidental and is a result of the upward thrust of the legs pushing against the ground.

Excerpt from: World Class Tennis Technique, Roetert & Groppe

Creating a Learner—Centered Environment

To be successful, lessons must include fun and improvement. A good learning environment motivates learning because it includes goal setting, a sense of success, organization, and a Coach that drives the process. To remember the components of an effective learning environment, use the word M.O.T.I.V.A.T.E.

M Measurable Goals:

Ask the question, "How do they know they are getting better?" Every skill must have a way of measuring success. Both coach and player need to know how to perform the skill correctly to gauge improvement and continue practicing effectively.

O Optimal Challenge:

If a task is too easy a player will lose motivation and focus. They will look unskilled when in reality they are bored. If a task is too difficult a player will also lose interest and focus. Use the 70% rule. A task should be challenging enough that they fail in 30% of the attempts but are able to succeed 70% of the time. In groups, each individual can be given different goals to create the right challenge level.

T Tangible Goals:

"Imagine this target" is not as good as putting a hula hoop in place. Any time a goal is seen, heard, or felt, it is easier to measure and achieve. Fun learning environments are creative and colorful.

I In Safety:

Injuries are de-motivating. A safe and secure environment for both player and coach aids learning. Monitor the spacing & movement of students, the placement of the equipment, and if the court is clear of balls or other potential hazards.

V Variety:

Repetition is important in the learning process. Repetition alone can become boring. To encourage repetition, a variety of games and drills should be played using the same skill.

A Activity:

Waiting in line is no way to learn. In every session all participants should be active. Players like to feel as if they have had a workout, not participated in an on court lecture. In every drill, ensure every player has an activity to do. More activity requires effective group management techniques. A coach must map out the movement pathways for where the participants start, go, and finish activity. Set up a way to gain attention of the group (whistle, command, etc.). Organize the personal space of each individual and the boundaries of their activity areas.

T Targeted Positive Feedback:

Positive reinforcement is a tool that allows a coach to reward a player for doing a skill correctly. This will encourage the player to repeat the correct skill over and over. If a coach makes the most noise when errors occur, the player gets focused on mistakes to avoid, rather than on the goal of correct performance. The result is a fear of failure that will hurt confidence and long-term psychological development.

E Enthusiasm:

Positive attitude and passion for players learning the sport is contagious. A coach who projects an enthusiastic image

Test Your Tennis Fitness

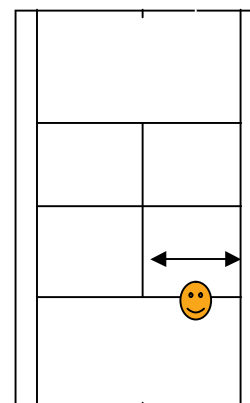
World-class trainer Pat Etcheberry, who's worked with players like Andre Agassi, Justine Henin, Pete Sampras, and Monica Seles, designed this test to help players assess their fitness level for tennis.

1. Stand in the centre of the service box.
2. Quickly move from side to side, touching the singles sideline and then the centre service line with your racquet. Continue back and forth for 30 seconds, keeping count of the number of lines you touch.
3. Rest for 30 seconds, then do it again. Remember to count the number of lines you touch.
4. Rest for another 30 seconds, then do

the drill for one final 30-second period, again counting each line you touch.

The number of lines you touch on the first round measures how fast you are. The number from your second go-round tells you how quickly you recover after a long point. The number you get on your final try measures your stamina. Your goal should be to get around the same number on each round.

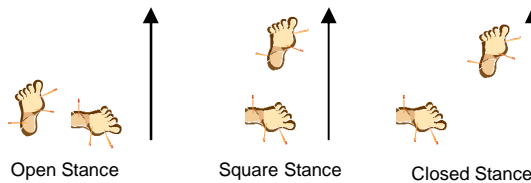
Etcheberry says that a 40 year old male should aim for 34 lines, while a woman of the same age should hit the lines 28 times. A 14 year old boy should hit 33 lines while a 14 year old girl should hit 29 lines.



Stances

Once a player is in position for a groundstroke, there is a variety of stances from which the stroke can be executed.

The stance used affects how the body can be used to create the stroke (coordination and transfer) and how it can transition into the recovery for the next stroke (balance and inertia). Stances fall on a continuum between an open stance and closed stance. An open stance has the player's feet facing the target, a square stance has the body turned to align the feet with the target, and a closed stance has the front foot moved beyond the square stance position along the target line.



A stance is most stable in the direction where the base of support is the widest and, conversely, is easiest to initiate movement in the directions where the base of support is more narrow.

A square stance has the base of support elongated toward the target. This maximizes the stability and ability to shift body weight in this direction, but motion to the side quickly leaves

the base of support so it is easier to fall into locomotion in these directions. The advantages of the square stance forehand are the ability to use leg drive to shift body weight forward through the hips, trunk, arm and the shot. In theory, this means that the square stance could have greater ball speed and accuracy than the open stance. The disadvantage of a square stance is that the lateral recovery for this shot is farther than for the semi-open or open stance.

An open stance has much of the base of support and body weight closer to the recovery point than a square stance. This improves the recovery time and can improve the time to reach the opposite sideline by about a tenth of a second. The disadvantage of the open stance is that the stroke relies more on body angular motion to create racquet speed.

Emergency forehands and many backhands are often hit from a closed stance. In general, this is theoretically less desirable than a square stance based on the principal of coordination and transfer of energy. The coupling of forward motion to hip rotation is one of the first key transfers of energy in many tennis strokes, but the positioning of the forward hip forward of the target line tends to limit the rotation that can occur horizontally around this hip. This limits some of the transfer of energy or angular momentum from the legs to the trunk.

References: Biomechanical Principles of Tennis Technique, Duane Kludson, Ph.D.

Coach Employment Opportunities at Tennis New Zealand

Suitably qualified and experienced coaching professionals are invited to consider the coaching positions that are currently being offered by Tennis NZ.

These positions are part of ongoing enhancements to coaching and peak performance that will see greater support for our international level players – junior, post junior and open level, as well as for the development of coaches at all levels through the coach education program. There is a specific emphasis in the area of international peak performance and providing world class support 'on the road' for aspiring talent.

The positions advertised are the following:

- Fed Cup Captain
- Davis Cup Captain
- Peak Performance Coach
- Coach Education Coordinator

All positions are contract positions with initial 12-24 month appointments, which vary in nature. The DC and FC positions are based on a certain number of weeks per year. The precise number of weeks 'on the road' and in 'training blocks' will be discussed at interview, immediately thereafter with the successful applicant, and then as the role evolves over time and the needs of the players are understood. The Peak Performance Coach role is full time, whilst the Coach Education Coordinator role is described as .6, or roughly three days per week.

All applicants should note:

- Applications for Davis Cup Captain and Fed Cup Captain close on Tuesday 10 November.
- Interviews for Davis Cup Captain and Fed Cup Captain are expected to be held in Auckland shortly thereafter.
- Applications should be addressed to The Panel c/o steve@tennisnz.com
- Applications should be all in one 'Word' document including the covering letter and the CV.
- Applications should clearly state which of the role/s the application relates to.
- Applications for Peak Performance Coach and Coach Education Coordinator close on Tuesday 17 November.
- Interviews for Peak Performance Coach and Coach Education Coordinator are expected to be held in Auckland shortly thereafter.
- Applications should be addressed to The Panel c/o steve@tennisnz.com
- Applications should be all in one 'Word' document including the covering letter and the CV.
- Applications should clearly state which of the role/s the application relates to.

For more information visit www.tennisnz.com