THE PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF A HIGH PERFORMANCE PLAYER

Introduction/Foundation Phase

Age of Player: 6-12
Years in Phase: 2-4

Learning Theme: Fun & Fundamentals

What to Teach

Physical Skills
- Agility, balance, coordination
- Throwing, jumping and running
- Encourage participation in other sports
- Promote development of athleticism

Tactical
- Height and depth
- Dynamics of the tennis court (space and time)

Technical Skills
- Focus on basic striking skills with progression to sound stroke fundamentals
- Proper swing path & technique
- Acceptable grips
- Racket head acceleration

Mental Skills
- Enjoyment of sport
- Sportsmanship & respect
- How to score
- Working with others

Type of Instruction & Coaching
- Developmental coach
- Entry-level program with focus on fun and fundamentals

Type of Competition
- 6-10 hours of structured weekly tennis activity
- USTA district and state tournaments

Refinement/Transitional Phase

Age of Player: 10-20
Years in Phase: 4-10

Learning Theme: Training and Competing

What to Teach

Physical Skills
- Complex coordination
- Continual participation (formal or informal)
- Injury prevention & fitness testing
- Pre-puberty focus (endurance, flexibility and core stability)
- Post-puberty focus (maximal strength, speed, power)

Tactical
- Development of personal gamestyle
- Defense and offensive skills
- Principles of high percentage play
- Clay court tactics
- Doubles skills

Technical Skills
- Fundamentally sound strokes, ready for competition
- Use of power and spin
- Multiple weapons

Mental Skills
- Positive attitude towards winning and losing
- Goal setting
- Self-discipline
- Emotional control & error management
- Relaxation skills
- Concentration skills
- Practice and match preparation

Type of Instruction & Coaching
- High performance coach
- Established developmental plan
- Systematic training program (groups and private)

Type of Competition
- USTA Sectional & National Tournaments/ITF events
- At age 11, maximum of 40 tournament matches per year
- At age 14, a maximum of 75 tournament matches per year
- At age 16, a maximum of 90 tournament matches per year

World-Class Performance Phase

Age of Player: 15-30+
Years in Phase: 4-10+

Learning Theme: Personal Excellence

What to Coach

Physical Skills
- Individualized training: speed, strength, endurance, power, flexibility and core stability
- Injury prevention & fitness testing

Tactical
- Ability to adjust to opponent, court surface and environment
- Ability to impose personal tactics on opponent
- Clearly defined gamestyle

Technical Skills
- Complete technical mastery as it relates to personal gamestyle
- Multiple weapons
- Ability to generate power

Mental Skills
- Self-responsibility and independence
- Motivation
- Distraction control
- Able to positively deal with stress
- Competitive readiness (pre-match, during match, post-match)

Type of Coaching
- High performance coach
- Physical trainer/strength coach
- Network of sport science specialists

Type of Competition
- ITF Group A events
- Collegiate Tennis
- Futures & Challengers
- ATP & WTA Tour Tournaments
- Grand Slams
- Davis Cup & Fed Cup

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