



# Parent-Player Tennis Training Program Evaluation

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## INTRODUCTION

- The United States Tennis Association (USTA) has developed a Parent-Player Tennis Training Program to build a player-parent-coach team in order to relieve the stress and pressure that can often reduce the enjoyment of the game for the youth athlete.
- The program was also designed to promote overall player development. By using a system of team-building, parent profiling, written agreements, stress management training, problem solving, and mental toughness training the program hopes to bring parents to a new level of understanding and personal effectiveness with their child.

## PURPOSE

- The purpose of this study was to evaluate the Parent-Player Tennis Training Program's usefulness and effectiveness from the feedback of players, parents, and coaches who had participated in the program.
- Participants for this study were 15 player-parent-coach triads. Player participants were from a variety of regions across the country who were between 9 to 18 years of age. The mothers and fathers who also participated ranged in age from 32 to 58 years. To evaluate perceived changes based on the program, each member of the triad completed a separate assessment questionnaire before and after participating in the Parent-Player Tennis Training Program.
- The players' questionnaire focused on topics such as stress, emotional control, discipline, future tennis plans, self-esteem, attitude toward tennis, relationship with parents, relationship with coach, feedback, and the coach-parent relationship. Parents answered similar questions, such as player discipline, player self-esteem, relationship with the player, as well as items such as the coach-player relationship and parental commitment to the player's tennis.
- Parents also completed a background information survey. The coach questionnaire contained items similar to those asked of the players and parents that addressed topics such as player characteristics, player-parent-coach relationships, and parental commitment to the player.
- Finally, all three members of the triad completed a summary program assessment that measured their perceptions about the weekly meetings, the program questionnaires, the *Parent-Player Tennis Training Program* book, the supplementary book *Net Results*, and the total program package.

## RESULTS

- Players' reports indicated no significant differences in the key issues addressed by the program (e.g., discipline, self-esteem, player-parent-coach relationships) before and after participation in the Parent-Player Tennis Training Program.
  - However, there were numerous small positive changes in several areas such as stress, future tennis plans, relationship with mother, and emotional control.
- Similar to the players' responses, the parents and coaches did not report significant changes in the key program areas in the post-assessment as compared to the pre-program assessment, yet small positive changes were evident (e.g., attitude toward player's tennis, player's stress, parent-player relationship, parent-coach relationship, and player's tennis plans).
- In general, players, parents and coaches responded very favorably in their evaluation of the effectiveness of the Parent-Player Tennis Training Program.
  - The area that was judged to be most effective was the component that helped to develop communication between the coach and the parent.
  - There were no significant differences in how the members of the triad rated the program in the effectiveness evaluation.
  - All components of the program were rated useful.
  - While all groups rated the *Parent-Player Tennis Training Program* book to be useful, coaches rated it significantly higher than the players and parents.
- Participants were also asked to openly comment on the program. The following are some of their responses:
  - "I thought this program helped me a lot with dealing with the many factors of tennis. Thank you." (a player)
    - "...We were headed in the wrong direction with a talented, motivated player. The knowledge gained will help guide throughout his career. Without the program, would not have had a chance to work toward this goal effectively." (a parent)
  - "This program should be continued twice a year with a new team each time" (a coach)
  - "...The books were great." (a coach)
  - "...This program was excellent – we all benefited from the program!" (a coach)
  - Several changes for the program were recommended based on the analyses of the aforementioned results.
    - The amount of time required to complete the program should be reduced. This change may lead to more participants remaining in the program for its entire duration.
    - The amount of paperwork associated with the program should be reduced.
    - The program should be used with players early in their relationships with tennis and the specific coach.
    - The books should be used as an integral part of the program.

## COACHING IMPLICATIONS

- Overall, the *Parent-Player Tennis Training Program* was judged to be useful and effective by players, parents, and coaches.
- Some of the small positive benefits that were found as a result of the program were player discipline, self-esteem, player-parent-coach relationships, and parent attitudes toward player's tennis.
- It is suggested that by engaging in the program early in a player's career with a new coach, this participation may be more useful in promoting healthy tennis development and relationships among the parent, player and coach.
- The program was rated equally useful by all three groups. Therefore, participation in the program not only benefits the player and his or her development and enjoyment of the game, but can also positively impact the involvement and enjoyment of coaches and parents who are involved in youth tennis

## REFERENCES / RESOURCES

Loehr, J.E. & Kahn, E.J. (1987). *Net results: Training the tennis parent for competition*. Brattleboro, VT: Stephen Greene Press.

