

Part 3

Fundamental Motor Skills & some ideas!

After enjoying some R & R along with some wonderful Tennis I've had the time to reflect on my first 2 pieces. Here is a small follow on from both of them:

I still feel that modified Tennis programs are in general not overly well understood by you're average Mum and Dad out there. There is some very brief detail in the previous piece and I want to add one important element here:

Modified Tennis mission - To create the fun learning environment that allows our students to develop personally & socially. No matter how well as coaches/teachers we & our programs manage to achieve this one problem remains. Just how little time is spent in that "ideal" place. I won't start on the rat race that is our modern lifestyle these days, but it is frustrating to me that it's hard to get most of the parents I see everyday on-board & more involved with their little person's progress. As parents you have more time/opportunity to guide, - less than we'd like but more than the coach - not always the Knowledge. Knowledge is power, so to that end here's my point. For most youngsters the best way to start practising Tennis is not to pick up a racquet at all! It can be a hindrance especially if your 4, 5 or 6 year old doesn't have the beginnings of good Fundamental Motor skills. Run, jump, hop, skip, move with balance and track moving objects are key. How to use ones body first then how to use tools like a racquet or bat. Hand-eye coordination yes, but that doesn't quite cover it. The full range of body movements and varied action is best. That is why you may see your coach take the racquets away. The kids may look to be just throwing & catching, but there great and necessary FM skills too. Cross-training or more age appropriately "Cross-playing" is just what I mean. All sports, outdoor & indoor *activity*, dancing, you name it. One of the few areas western society is trailing less affluent cultures is in development of these same Fundamental Motor skills and basic coordination of our children. They simply have to DO more! And making it easier is often not really helping them at all. Doing chores is another helpful activity and in more ways than one! *Let me know if you can get them to buy that one, please!*

For more info please refer to much more learned oracles than yours truly & develop your searching skills on the awesome Internet. Oh & remember your local coach wants your feedback too! The only useless question is the unspoken one.

Lastly I really do need to lift my game from part 1 where I got borderline grumpy old man ranting - Pointing out all the shit with no "Sor bent" - So here, as modest as they are, are some of my own, very rough ideas:

Dear TA,

Let's initiate a national recognition strategy with 3 parts: Firstly a

Australia Day **TENNIS Australian of the year**: To be non current player based; from Administrators, volunteers, coaches, parents, helpers, etc... In unison with the States, whose own winners are then the national award nominees. This should tie in well with your current marketing. Please forward to your people!) Secondly; lets work out some

Reward/recognition scheme for Clubs/Coaches – Based on their Quality & quantity contributions to fostering the game. Coaches who start players off and grow love of the sport, but never get even credit for it or help in passing the stars on to the Academies, etc... Real support/action. Plus...

A strategy for serious support of smaller clubs/centres amalgamation or consolidation if needed to be self sufficient & long term viable. Substantial help for major centres/clubs that want to replace Rebound ace(or any old courts) with Plexicushion. Lastly; a

Junior Racquet "round-up" for disadvantaged kids to get out there & play. Either here in Australia or other nationalities.

Along with an innovation competition to solve the Re-string vs replace racquet "challenge" – Be smarter, think green & reduce waste!

When the going gets tough keep the "grassroots" going!

Best wishes,

Joe Pettit

It's very skeletal I know but, please let me know what ***you*** think!