

what research tells us about ... junior tennis

By Miguel Crespo and Karl Cooke (ITF)

The Role of parental involvement in youth sport participation and performance.

Male and female tennis players attending a regional tennis academy, with a median age of 13, provided information about the role their parents play in their tennis game, their self-esteem and their rankings.

This information was used to examine the association between parental support and parental pressure and the players' enjoyment of tennis. Players who reported a high level of parental support reported significantly greater enjoyment of tennis, viewed tennis as a more important part of their lives and fell lower in state ranking than players who reported a lower level of parental support.

The data provided no evidence that parental pressure is an important influence on the participation and performance of young tennis players.

Hoyle, R.H. & Leff, S.S. (1997). The Role of parental involvement in youth sport participation and performance. Adolescence. Spring.

Is an 11-year-old tennis player indifferent to competition stress?

The best 16 young players in the Auvergne region of France (mean age 10.9) took part in a study to evaluate stress in competition situations, compared with that observed during a training session. Anxiety levels were measured with the SCAT Questionnaire (Martens) and the results of salivary cortisol tests.

No significant differences in stress levels were found between competition and training situations. Cortisol levels did not change during training. A moderate increase was noted during the first two rounds of the Auvergne championships competition, with no difference in the third round. The researchers conclude that the high levels of stress described in adult tennis players are not found in young tennis players.

Pandelidis, D. Et al. (1997). Is an 11-year-old tennis player indifferent to competition stress?. Arch. Pediatr. March.

Competitive stress in junior tennis players

The article states that children tend to lose concentration when under constant pressure and the loss of concentration interferes with performance, leading to injury. Some experts suggest that highly stressed players may use injury as an acceptable alternative to risking failure in high pressure competition or to quitting.

The effective management of stress in adolescent players can reduce injury, enhance performance, and prevent premature burn out.

Seven males and three females tennis players aged from 11-15 participated in a study which evaluated the effectiveness of a model to address competitive stress. The phases of the model are the following: Quality of life, Health problems, Behavioural causes, Predisposing, enabling and reinforcing factors, Intervention strategies, and evaluation of the programme.

Results showed that the model helped to find the most pervasive

health problem identified in junior elite tennis players of the sample, i.e., stress illness. Evaluation strategies will determine if the interventions reduced stress and enhanced performance in the players.

Dunlap, P. y Berne, L. (1991). Addressing competitive stress in junior tennis players. JOPERD, 62, 1, January, 59-63.

Player and parent perceptions in junior tennis

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of players and parents regarding the importance of winning and losing, sustaining effort during competition, and sport-related behaviours of players and parents. 101 players and 45 parents completed questionnaires designed to address the areas of interest. Results determined that: 1) Winning is very important to the players and over one-third of the parents, 2) Only 5% of the players and 7% of the parents indicated that they become upset following loses in which players put forth considerable effort, 3) 33% of the players indicated that their parents had caused them embarrassment during tennis matches. Because adults serve as role models to young athletes, educating parents about appropriate tennis-related behaviours is warranted.

DeFrancesco, C. & Johnson, P. (199). Athlete and parent perceptions in Junior Tennis, Journal of Sport Behaviour, vol. 20, no. 1, 29-36.

Burnout in competitive junior tennis

The study reports results from a project designed to examine burnout in competitive junior tennis players. 30 junior tennis burnout and 32 comparison players completed a battery of psychological assessments. Results showed that burnout players had: 1) higher burnout scores, 2) less input into training, 3) were more likely to have played college tennis, 4) more likely played up in age division, 5) practice fewer days, 6) were lower in external motivation, 7) were higher in amotivation, 8) reported being more withdrawn, 9) were less likely to use planning

copying strategies. It was concluded that in addition to a variety of personal and situational predictors of burnout, perfectionism plays a particular important role.

Gould, D., Udry, E., Tuffey, S. y Loer, J. (1996). Burnout in competitive junior tennis players: I. A quantitative psychological assessment. The Sport Psychologist, 10, 322-340. Gould, D., Udry, E., Tuffey, S. y Loer, J. (1996). Burnout in competitive junior tennis players: II. Qualitative analysis. The Sport Psychologist, 10, 341-366.

Mental training programme for junior tennis players

The article presents a model of mental training programme for junior tennis players. The contents of the programme were the following: Introduction, profile of elite players, goal setting, keeping a log, video

analysis of play, imagery, relaxation and energising, coping with mistakes and losing, the day of the competition, coping with stress, anxiety and anger, the importance of the body image, what to do between points, games and sets, attentional focus, post competition review, analysis of game performance.

The programme was developed in 10 sessions. The integration of observations from matches with material obtained from the interviews provided a strong base for a mental training programme.

In conclusion, the programme was considered to be successful and reinforced the belief that children over 11 years of age can cope with mental skills training.

Davis, Ken. (1992). A mental training program for elite junior tennis players. Sports Coach. 15 no. 3., 34. July-September.

general guidelines for submitting articles to ITF coaching and sport science review

Format

Articles should be word-processed preferably using Microsoft Word97, but other Microsoft compatible formats are accepted. The length of the article should be no more than 2,000 words, with a maximum of 4 photographs to be attached. Diagrams should be done using Microsoft Power Point or any other Microsoft compatible software.

Author(s)

When submitting articles please state the name(s), nationality, academic qualification(s) and representation of an institution or organisation that you wish to appear in the article.

Submission

Articles may be submitted at any time of the year for consideration for future publication. A 3.5" (90mm) microdisk (IBM formatted) should be sent with the article saved on it, plus a printed copy of the article and copies of the photographs or diagrams to be included. These items should be sent by post to: The Development Department, International Tennis Federation, Bank Lane, Roehampton, London, SW15 5XZ, England or to Miguel Crespo ITF Development Research Officer, C/ Pérez Báyer, 11,10-A, 46002 Valencia, España. Or by Email to Miguel Crespo <dualde@xpress.es>.

Note

Please note that all articles commissioned for ITF Coaching and Sport Science Review may also be used in on the ITF's web site, ITF Online. The ITF reserves the right to edit such articles as appropriate for the Internet. All articles online will receive the same credit as in ITF Coaching and Sport Science Review .