

Web based coach education: An example of a platform for tennis coaches

By Miguel Crespo Ph.D. (International Tennis Federation)

Since the start of the ITF Coaches' Education Programme, its main goal has been making nations self-sufficient in coach education and providing coaches the most up-to-date information possible. In July 2004 www.itftennis.com/coaching was launched and it became an invaluable tool for thousands of coaches across the globe. In 2005 the ITF started its e-learning project including on-line presentations available for download covering a wide range of tennis specific sports science topics in English, French and Spanish.

Coaches taking part in some courses are recommended to complete all 20 modules and quizzes for the preparation or follow up of the courses. This is a very cost effective way of reaching a wide audience. Coaches study on-line prior to attending a course and the ITF provides the most up-to-date information in English, Spanish and French for free.

In order improve the quality of the resources, www.tenniscoach.com was launched in July 2007. The website offers videos of presentations at ITF Coaching Conferences, video clips of exercises and drills for players of all ages and skill levels, biomechanical video analysis by ITF coaching experts of top players, over 1,000 sequence photographs of all the best players in the world, more than 50 e-learning modules directly linked to ITF courses, expert contributions from leading coaches from every corner of the world, articles from ITF Coaching and Sport Science Review in html format, and exclusive one-to-one interviews with world renowned tennis experts and touring professionals and coaches. In November 2008, the Spanish version of tennis icoach was launched.

The next step has been to produce a platform that would help coaches customise their education and long-life-learning process. The benefits include: an individualised education, a live updated database, the evaluation of the specific individual competencies needed by each coach, the assessment of the skills and knowledge for that occupation, the identification of the gaps coaches have in their education, and provision of the relevant information coaches need to improve their competencies.

The platform takes the coach through a step-by-step process that identifies the areas to improve and guides them towards the resources in www.tenniscoach that will assist them in this process. The ITF Customised Coaches Education Platform (ITF CCEP) is designed to act as a user-friendly tool that will help not only coaches but national associations in their quest for quality individualised coaches' education for professional development and long-life-learning programmes.

Biography of the presenting author

Miguel is responsible for the International Tennis Federation (ITF) Coaches Education Programme. He is the Editor of the ITF CSSR, co-ordinates research and writes books and scientific articles. Miguel holds a Ph.D. in Sports Psychology and a B.A. in Philology. A member of the ITF Coaches and Sport Science and Medical Commissions, the IOC Children and Adolescents Working Group, the European Coaching Council, and the International Council for Coach Education, he also lectures at the Universidad Miguel Hernández in Elche.