

# COACHES & COACHING

Coaches and Coaching challenges you to be the best coach you can be

ISSN 0951 5410

£2



Agassi's quality hitting actions are instantly recognisable, but are the other performance fundamentals even more important to him? Find out on page 15

## LICENCED TO COACH CHARLES APPLEWHAITE, THE DIRECTOR OF COACHING

In the last issue of Coaches and Coaching, I highlighted the proposed introduction of a Licenced Coach Scheme. The aim of the Licence Scheme is to encourage all coaches to keep up-to-date with current developments in tennis through on-going training and personal development. If coaches are going to be effective in raising standards of play and enjoyment of the game then it is important that we are up-to-date in our knowledge of the modern game and in all aspects of the coaching process.

One of the main objectives for any coach must be to 'sell' the game of tennis to everyone, from the beginner trying out the game to the player aspiring to the higher levels. All coaches should be trying to improve their communication skills and learning how to promote and market their services to the game.

All coaches should also recognise the fact that new techniques and tactics are being constantly developed. Today's players are reaching higher levels of fitness and mental preparation than ever before. Current

equipment is changing the speed and dynamics of tennis. This means that if we want to keep up to date and be professional in improving our knowledge (and ultimately our level of coaching), we must all critically assess our own strengths and weaknesses and then improve those areas in need of attention.

We have over 6,000 LTA qualified coaches on our database (who all receive Coaches and Coaching magazine free of charge). However, from the information on our database of in-service training events organised by the PTCA and Local Coaches Associations approximately 900 attend just one in-service training event a year (which may be as little as three hours training). Therefore, over 85% of qualified coaches on our database do not attend any form of tennis-specific on-going training. (Five out of six coaches reading this article are in this category). Is that fair and proper to British tennis players?

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The Coaching Department's Licence Scheme will commence in 1996. To gain a licence, coaches will be expected to earn  
(continued on page 3)



THE COACHING DEPARTMENT  
Committed to coaches

Issue 21, Autumn 1995



## AWARENESS OF STANDARDS

Call it as you see it!

Katie Warburg managed to interview some of the world's best coaches at Wimbledon this year. Read what they had to say on **page 10**



## BUSINESS OF COACHING

### A-Z of Tennis Rackets

Whether you still keep yours in a press or have progressed to using a thermobag, find out everything you ever needed to know about rackets on **page 12**

## INFORMATION UPDATE

### Champion Coaching

Find out if there's a Champion Coaching programme near you on **page 25**

### Coach Education

Anne Pankhurst looks at different coaching behaviour and (just before you become paranoid) also how to create an effective NVQ file on **page 8**

### Licensed to Coach

Taking a leaf out of the USTA's book, the LTA is developing a Licence Scheme for coaches - read all about it on **page 1**

### New clinics reach over 1500 children

Not content with awarding over 56,000 achievement badges, this summer Yoplaite teamed up with adidas to provide free clinics for 1500 kids - read more on **page 11**

## New Coaches

Looking for coaching work? Help is at hand on **page 11**

## New Corporate Image for Coaches

Discover the new image being created for coaches on **page 3**

## Tournament Update

A highlight of some of this winter's tournaments are on **page 25**

## PHYSICAL CONDITIONING

### Maximise your training by using match statistics

Unless your player has a very unique playing style, jogging for 3 miles will not help their fitness for tennis! Polly McCarthy describes on **page 18** how to get fit for tennis

## SPECIAL NEEDS

### Disability Awareness

Find out details of a course to raise your awareness of coaching players with a disability on **page 17**

## SPORTS MEDICINE

### Medical Support for Tennis, Part 3

Dr Michael Turner tackles the delicate procedure involved in being drug tested on **page 22**

## TECHNICAL/TACTICAL

### County Training Manual 14-16

Search out issues 19 and 20 for recommendations on what to teach players aged 6 to 13. Now it is time to discover the priorities for players aged 14 to 16 on **page 14**

## Hint and Tips

Are you convinced that your players maximise their practice time when hitting with peers? Check out Ketih Reynolds advice on **page 21**

## How to Shape your shots

One of the world's top coaches, Rick Macci, gives a simple explanation of how to teach effective topspin and slice on **page 4**



## Tactical goals for different skill levels

Miguel Crespo outlines different tactics for beginners, intermediate and advanced players on **page 5**

## Teaching Beginners How to Play the Game

Phil Veasey describes on **page 24** how to help beginners get the most out of tennis

## The 5 Performance Fundamentals

Keith Reynolds describes on **page 16** the 5 Performance Fundamentals which are vital for developing 'thinking' tennis players

## THE PTCA

### PTCA Report

Christine Tinker highlights the free legal advisory service for members on **page 26**

### PTCA Tennis Academy

The PTCA offers coaches several opportunities to attend in-service training with a pupil. Giorgio Bugnatelli describes his attendance of such a workshop on **page 27**



## RECIPE 2: THE UNDERSPIN GROUNDSTROKE:

**Angle of Attack.** The head of your racket must move into impact on a high-to-low angle of attack. Very steep for a drop-shot, more shallow for a baseline slice.

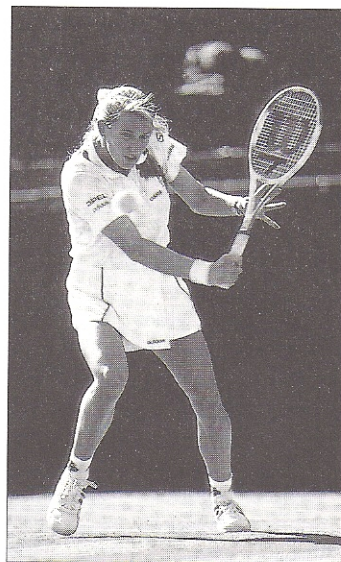
**Angle of the Racket Face.** The bottom edge of your racket will lead only slightly for the baseline to baseline slice. More so for sharp angles toward the sideline.

**Swing Plane.** Since you are probably on the defensive and have run out of time, a full shoulder turn is out of the question. Take the head of your racket outside the line of your target and draw it in and across your body. Down the target line as far as possible for baseline strokes, more sharply for tight angles.

**Racket Head Speed.** Underspin is very efficient for length and depth. Don't over-hit if you're going for the baseline. You might be alright if you float the ball a little

in a pinch. Since sharp angles require a more tightly wrapped package, you'll need more racket for the shot to hold its line.

Now you know a few things the world's best players know and just how your bullet-proof club champion walks through the draw like he is dressed in kevlar. Leave that flat and straight ball in the locker room and master the racket skills that will help you compete like a winner.



Graf hitting backhand slice

## TACTICAL GOALS FOR DIFFERENT SKILL LEVELS - A STEP BY STEP PLAN



Miguel is based at the National Coaching School, Royal Spanish Tennis Federation. He is the speaker at the forthcoming PTCA Conference from 26-30 November

*Miguel Crespo*

Some coaches seem to have forgotten the tactical side of the game. They think that tactics should be learned during matchplay and not in regular practice. This could be explained because they are good at technical aspects (grips, shots, corrections) but they do not know exactly what, how and when to explain the tactical concepts their players need, to develop a proper game.

In this article we present a progressive plan to set tactical goals (what) for different skill levels (when) and the way to apply them on court (how).

### STEPS OF TACTICAL DEVELOPMENT for beginners:

stages. Players should learn to:

- direct the ball where they want to (open court)
- send the ball where it comes from
- send the ball to the opposite side
- change directions (i.e. one to the forehand side and the next one to the backhand side)
- play to one side only (i.e. four balls in a row to the backhand side)
- play 'counter-step' (i.e. one ball to the forehand and two balls in a row to the backhand)

Basket drills or rally drills with the coach are the best ways to practise basic direction skills with beginners.

### Depth

This ability is the last one in the first stage of tactical development. Players discover the importance of depth when it is better for them to keep their opponent in the back court or when they have to make him come into the net area. Basket drills or rally drills with the coach are the best ways to practise basic depth skills with beginners. The coach in the middle of the court asks the player to hit the first ball to him, hit the second close to the net and hit the last one to the back court. Multiple variations can be done.

The general goal at this stage is to develop the basic tactical concepts of the game. Some specific tactical goals that should be learned at this stage are the following:

### Consistency:

This concept is a combination of control and security. Since this is the basic tactical goal at all stages, it should be learned as soon as possible. The coach should emphasize consistency drills (rally aiming to hit the ball over the net 5, 10, 15, 20 times without missing).

### Height:

This concept is used early by beginners to keep the opponent in the back court or to pass him when he is at the net. Students have to learn not only to play high balls but low and waist high balls also. Rally between the coach and student is the best type of practice: coach asks player to hit one ball to his feet, one to his body and the last one over his head but into the court. Multiple combinations of them can be done.

### Direction:

This is a basic tactical idea that should be used in all



**Return** - pass the ball over the net. Do not make any mistakes on the second serve return

**Court geometry** - court coverage (angles theory), court zones (three zones theory), tactical footwork, shot direction (play down the line to approach and cross-court to rally), direct the ball where it comes from for safety

**Points patterns** - attack in the two first points of each game, when you are ahead, when you are down 0-40, 15-40 or in the first match ball

### **STEPS OF TACTICAL DEVELOPMENT for advanced players:**

The general tactical goal at this stage is to develop a personal style of play. Some specific tactical goals that should be learned at this stage are the following:

#### **Anticipation:**

This goal is basic in shots like return of serve, volley, mid court game, passing-shots, etc. Coaches should teach the player to get as much information as possible from the opponent's movements and characteristics and from the game situation (score, etc). When the player is able to do this he has to use his experience and knowledge to analyse what his opponent is going to do, and then he has to react as quickly as he can. Anticipation is improved through match observation of basic tactical patterns, ball drills, court coverage drills, doubles practice matches, matchplay practice situations, etc.

#### **Percentage play:**

This tactical aspect is often applied on the serve, the approach and the net game, but it can also be used for baseline play, winning shots, types of errors (forced and unforced), etc. For proper percentage play, the player should focus on:

- his own strong points
- his opponents weaknesses
- the match situation

Coaches should teach the player to think during change overs and between point periods to analyse what is happening in the match. The best way to practise percentage play is in matchplay practice situations in which the coach can interrupt between points and question and make comments during change-overs.

#### **Shot selection:**

This goal could be taught in early stages with the three court zones theory (red, yellow and green) and through basic tactical patterns (what to do in different given situations). Shot selection is the ability to choose one specific tool (shot, movement, etc.) according to player, opponent and situation characteristics. Coaches should ensure that players have a wide variety of possibilities in each situation (good technique) before starting with shot selection procedures.

The process to learn this tactical goal is the following:

- observation
- selection
- post shot analysis
- and feedback

Shot selection is improved through match observation of basic tactical patterns and matchplay practice situations with continuous communication between coach and player.

#### **Match analysis:**

This issue could be partly introduced in the previous stage with basic tactical match plans, point patterns in practice, and fundamentals of post-match evaluation. Match analysis is the ability to make plans in advance, to apply them on court and to obtain valuable conclusions. Coaches can use computers, score-cards, notes, video tapes or other procedures to explain what should be done. Players have to start their matches with a clear main tactical plan and several secondary alternatives. At the end of the match and after the analysis they have to keep in mind two or three positive conclusions that can help them to improve their game. Match analysis is improved through matchplay practice situations and observing matches.

#### **Personal style of play:**

At this stage of development the player should have a personal style of play based on his particular technical, physical, tactical and mental characteristics. The coach has to put together all the tactical knowledge of the player to define his style of play. The main styles of play are the following:

- aggressive baseliner
- counterpunching baseliner
- serve and volleyer (net rusher)
- all-court player

The defensive style of play has practically disappeared. Personal style of play can be improved through matchplay, practice situations in which the coach varies the game conditions: serve and volley, return and volley, baseline play, all court play etc.

#### **Adaptation to different situations:**

This concept refers to the ability of adapting one's game to the opponent's game-styles and to situations that might vary from one moment to another: weather conditions (wind, rain, sun, lighting, etc), officials decisions, audience reactions, unexpected situations, etc. These aspects can be improved through matchplay practice situations.

#### **Conclusion:**

In our opinion tactics should be taught in a progressive step by step system. This methodology will allow the coach to present new concepts and ideas that will improve the tactical awareness of the player in the different stages of his development.