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Fun games for larger groups of beginner tennis players

Miguel Crespo (ITF)

Introduction

“Children cite ‘fun’ as the primary reason for participation in organized sport and its absence as the number one reason for youth sport attrition” (Visek, et al., 2015, p. 424).

Fun, enjoyment and happiness are considered as one of the most, if not the most, relevant aspects to ensure motivation, engagement and retainment in sport and tennis (Bum & Jeon, 2016). Play is crucial in children’s life. They love it. Coaches should avoid monotonous activities during the lessons that only will demotivate children from the lessons. Coaches should recognise the relevance of the children social and mental development within tennis by programming fun sessions full of team games, cooperative skills, and fair play as the basis of their activity. Coaches will be promoting long-term involvement in tennis by instilling a love and passion for it through fun and varied activities. Thus, it is crucial to plan the lessons with fun activities that motivate children to see tennis as a fun and easy sport to play. Coaches should be creative and be continuously focused on the likes and opinions of their students. Then tennis will be truly an unforgettable experience for all (Crespo, 2010).

In this presentation, examples of fun games for large groups for beginner players will be shared with the coaches. Following the justification for the reasons they should be used and the reflection on their validity for skill acquisition at all levels of the game, the proposals will be presented in a structured and systematic way. One method coaches can follow to use the games is the following: (1) no equipment; (2) with ball; (3) with racket; (4) with racket and ball. This can be combined with some of the fundamental motor skills: (a) agility; (b) balance; (c) coordination; (d) speed, as well as with other cognitive-mental skills: (i) motivation; (ii) concentration; (iii) emotional control; (iv) self-confidence, and social-value skills: (+) cooperation; (*) opposition; (#) respect; (&) inclusion; (\$) discipline, etc. (Gül, et al., 2020).

The coaches can develop a matrix of fun games for beginner players in large groups that can not only be used with kids and adolescents, but also with adult beginners. It is hoped that the games shown during the presentation will include some of the fundamental tenets of fun as described by sport-specific research (Visek, et al., 2019): (a) *contextual*: Games and Practices; *internal*: Learning and Improving, Trying Hard, and Mental Bonuses; (b) *social*: Being a Good Sport, Team Friendships, and Team Rituals; and (c) *external*: Swag, Game Time Support, and Positive Coaching.

References

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