

LTPAD – Theme of Parents Meeting August 2011

Factors Influencing LTPAD (Long-term Player/Athlete Development)

1. **The FUNdamentals**

Through the development of fundamental movement patterns, children develop a full range of physical and motor abilities (endurance, strength, power, flexibility, agility, balance, coordination and speed). In addition tennis activities also develop rhythm

- **Biological Age versus Chronological Age**

LTPAD is based on maturity, not chronological age. We all follow the same stages to maturity, but the timing, rate and magnitude of various qualities differs between individuals. This requires that appropriate instruction, training and competition programmes be designed according to the readiness of the player.

- **A Holistic Approach**

We understand that physical, mental, motor and emotional traits all mature at different rates. We consider the whole player and don't focus only on the technical and physical aspects of training.

- **Specialisation**

In very early childhood all sorts of different movements should be encouraged. When players start in mini tennis we still focus on the development of fundamental movement skills. In midi tennis there is a mix of further development of these skills and learning fundamental sports skills. In both of these phases a sampling of many sports is encouraged. At the end of the midi tennis phase and in transition to the full game of tennis more complex skills are taught in a more tennis-specific way. Two or three sports are the maximum number that can be engaged in at this time in order to facilitate the volume of training necessary to become competent at tennis.

- **Trainability**

This describes the responsiveness of players to a training stimulus at different stages of growth and maturation. We know the best periods of trainability and this is the basis of our programme planning.

- **Endurance**

Aerobic endurance is not a primary capacity in tennis. However endurance still plays an indirect role in tennis by helping recovery between

points and games, recovery between training sessions and after daily training. It is always trainable and we often use games or tennis routines in our programmes for this purpose.

- **Strength**

Tennis players move their own body weight in addition to the weight of the racquet and therefore relative strength (i.e. strength compared to body weight) is more important than absolute strength. High resistance and high intensity strength training is provided by body weight, partners, gym balls and medicine balls that do not load the skeleton with heavy weights.

- **Speed**

Speed is always trainable. Before puberty, speed development is likely related to nervous system development and improved coordination

- **Flexibility**

It is always trainable but is more easily increased in young players. It is important for amplitude and efficiency in technical skill performance

- **Skill**

Skill is always trainable but more easily increased in young players. Girls are at a mechanical advantage to learn complex skills before the onset of the growth spurt. For all players fundamental movement skills should be developed first as these are the building blocks for learning tennis skills.

- **Periodisation**

Periodisation provides the framework for organizing training, competition and recovery into a logical schedule to achieve optimum performance at the required time.

- **Calendar Planning for Competition**

The competitive calendar must support and be consistent with LTPAD. Different stages of development and different levels of participation have different requirements for the type, frequency and level of competition

- **The 10 Year Rule**

Scientific research has concluded that it takes a minimum of ten years, 10000 hours of deliberate training for a talented player to reach the highest levels. There are no shortcuts but what a journey!