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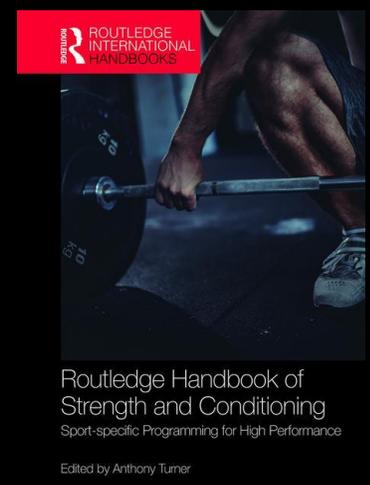
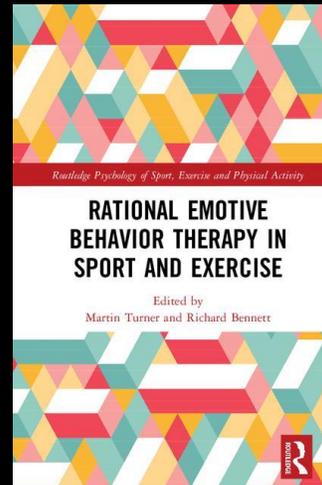
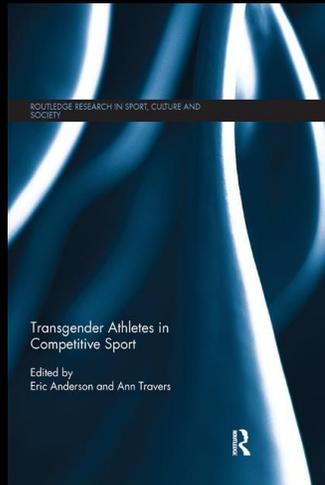
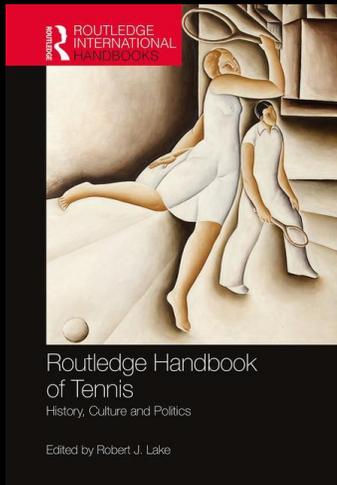
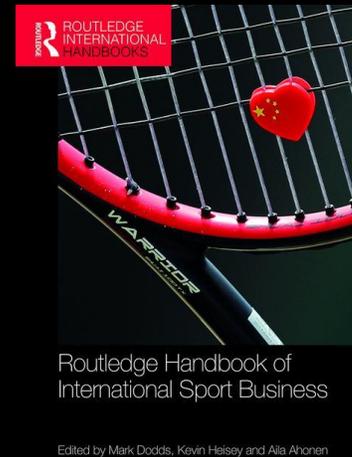
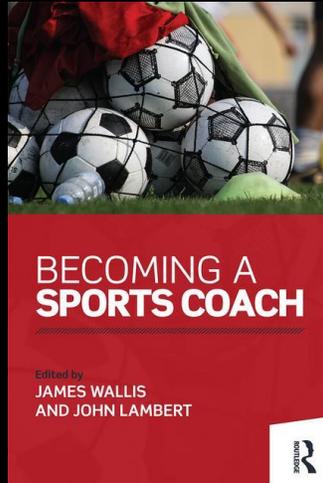
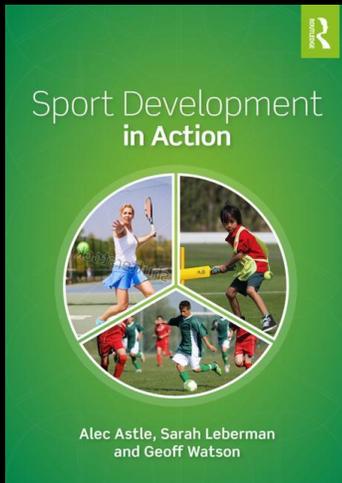
Understanding Tennis



TABLE OF CONTENTS

-  Introduction
-  1 • Introduction to the History and Historiography of Tennis
-  2 • Changing Focus in the Development and Delivery of Community Tennis
-  3 • Women's Tennis Association Efforts in Asian Markets
-  4 • Advantage Renée? Renée Richards and Women's Tennis
-  5 • Strength and Conditioning in Tennis
-  6 • Coach Athlete Relationship: a case Study of Women's Elite Tennis
-  7 • "Is it really that bad?": A case study applying Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) with an elite youth tennis player

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Introduction

Tennis is one of the world's most popular sports, as levels of participation and spectatorship demonstrate. Moreover, tennis has always been one of the world's most significant sports, an important case study of the intersection of gender, sexuality, 'race' and social class in sport and society. Tennis today is also a major international sport business, with the global tennis market worth hundreds of millions of dollars.

This FreeBook presents sample chapters that introduce some of the most important themes in tennis, from history and sociology, through business and development, to coaching and sport science. Aimed at students, researchers, coaches, and athletes themselves, this is essential reading for anyone wishing to better understand the game of tennis.

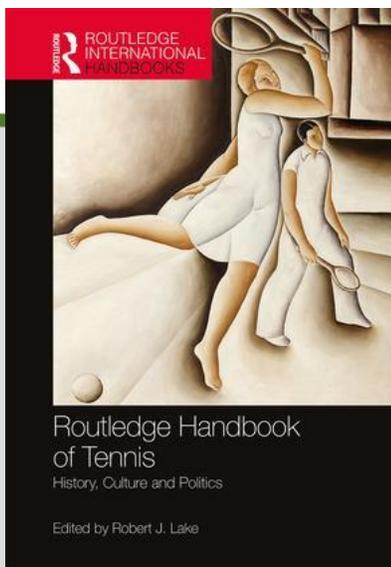
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CHAPTER

1

INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF TENNIS



This chapter is excerpted from
Routledge Handbook of Tennis
by Robert J. Lake

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INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF TENNIS

Excerpted from *Routledge Handbook of Tennis*

Few sports have undergone the marked developments that have characterized tennis over the past century and a half. While a handful of the world's most popular team and individual sports have experienced comparable international growth and the commercialization and professionalization of their players, competitions and governing associations, few have seen also such marked changes to how and by whom the game is played, in the technologies, tactics and playing styles employed, and in the broad and various demographics of participating players. In this regard, contemporary 21st century tennis, while not entirely unrecognizable from its earlier antecedents, has nevertheless undergone a remarkable and extensive transformation.

Adopting a broad perspective incorporating various methodologies and different theoretical and subject lenses, this edited collection aims to examine and comprehensively cover key aspects of the developing history of tennis, focusing in particular on the many connections with wider societal culture and politics. This present introductory chapter aims to provide a brief overview of key developments in the sport's history, effectively laying the foundations for the more nuanced and detailed analyses provided in the chapters that follow. It also provides a brief discussion of the sport's developing historiography, thereby locating this present edited collection within the expanding field of tennis research.

From garden game to global sport: a brief history of tennis

Throughout the sport's historical development, from when it emerged as a genteel garden-party pastime exclusive to the English upper and upper-middle classes in the early 1870s until now, in its highly professionalized, commercialized and internationalized form, important aspects of its culture have undergone rampant change. This has helped shift it from an exclusive, niche pastime to a popular, mainstream sport played in almost every corner of the world, and by all genders, classes and races. Of course, historically inveterate ideologies related to gender, class and race remain entrenched in the sport, continuing to color much of how and by whom the sport is played, watched, reported and assessed. This makes the sport's history highly nuanced, blending old traditions and deep-rooted ideologies with new value systems and contemporary social movements.



INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF TENNIS

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The sport's initial exclusivity partly stemmed from the fact of its connections to earlier racket games, particularly Real Tennis, which was played extensively among the European nobility and

royalty at its heyday in the 16th century (Gillmeister 1997; Lake 2009).¹ In Britain, numerous versions of what came to be known as "lawn tennis" were created and tested by members of the landed gentry throughout the 18th and 19th centuries in their attempts, amidst the burgeoning rational recreation movement, to recreate "tennis" in an outdoor setting (Lake 2015; Walker 1989). Available records suggest that almost all were short-lived – possibly because play was not particularly dynamic and the short rallies tiresome – and so it took the new mid-19th-century inventions of vulcanized rubber, the lawn mower and the garden roller to ensure more consistent and good bounces on grass, and therefore longer rallies and more interesting play between players (Todd 1979).

When Major Harry Gem and J.B. Perera in 1859 and Major Walter Clopton Wingfield in 1873 first played their own versions of lawn tennis, in Edgbaston and Nantclwyd respectively, exclusivity or at least respectability remained an important concern. While Gem publicly protested against Wingfield's claims to have invented lawn tennis (see *The Field* 21 November 1874), as he claimed that he and his Spanish friend Perera had been playing their own version of the game over a decade earlier and had formed the world's first lawn tennis club in Leamington Spa, they did not make attempts to extend its popularity beyond their small group of playing acquaintances (Holland 2011). Wingfield did, however, though his advertisements in *The Field* and *Vanity Fair* suggest that he was pitching it as a form of conspicuous consumption, to wealthy ladies and gentlemen players with a suitably sized patch of land upon which to lay their own court, and not, presumably, to the masses. That as a rule all players should be amateurs was widely assumed and, at this stage, unsaid.



INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF TENNIS

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While lawn tennis most closely resembled Real Tennis when it was first played, it is certainly the case that the new sport borrowed important structural and social aspects from numerous games preceding it, including also rackets, badminton, croquet and cricket. From Real Tennis was lent the sport's exclusive clientele, the scoring system (15, 30, 40, game; six games to win a set) and the initial rackets, with long handles and bent heads; from rackets was lent an alternative scoring system (games up to 15 points) that Wingfield recommended before the Real Tennis method became standard, alongside some of the sport's first players; from badminton was lent the high drooping net, which was lowered in 1882 to its standard 3.5 foot at the sides and 3 foot in the center;² from croquet was lent the sport's social (garden-party) settings, smooth manicured lawns and mixed-sex play; and from cricket was lent the all-whites clothing and club aspects (Alexander 1986). Interestingly, as golf emerged in Scotland and rapidly spread southward into England and beyond the British Isles, the two sports came to share more social aspects and, particularly in the US, both enjoyed popular presence within the country clubs springing up throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Baltzell 1996; Rader 1999).

Early play remained conditioned by prevailing norms in relation to social class and gender,

as etiquette demanded restrained play and sportsmanship and in the case of men playing with/ against women, also chivalry (Lake 2011; 2012). In time, playing styles became more dynamic as the edifice of amateurism slowly crumbled amidst the increasing competitiveness of players across all levels of competition. The social enterprise of earlier lawn tennis gatherings, especially in garden-parties, was soon replicated in exclusive, members-only clubs, which had the same purpose: to provide opportunities to spatially separate from the masses and mingle only with status equals. The mixed-gender component of the sport – a fairly staple feature in many settings from early on – also offered opportunities for romance, alongside more formalized efforts of parents to marry off sons and daughters with suitable partners from families of comparable social status (McCrone 1988).



INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF TENNIS

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The club aspects of British lawn tennis were replicated internationally and with impressive consistency. Spa towns and seaside resorts throughout Europe, especially in Germany, the Netherlands and Italy, became popular tennis destinations for the British stationed or travelling abroad, and in particular the French Riviera rapidly became the most fashionable location for lawn tennis play among wealthy British tourists, including the famous Renshaw brothers who made Cannes their winter training hub (Little 2014). The sport soon became a favourite for European elites, including, among others, the eminent King Gustav of Sweden, who constructed tennis courts and, as early patrons, hosted tournaments to satisfy increasing demand. When the sport initially arrived in the US some months after Wingfield's first boxed sets for Sphairistike went on sale – though debate remains as to exactly where and when lawn tennis was first played across the Atlantic (see Alexander 1974; Baltzell 1996; Gillmeister 1997) – the exclusive following remained as the game was adopted among the affluent, Eastern-seaboard elites and made its way into Harvard among other Ivy-League universities. The sport had evidently remained a form of conspicuous consumption, and America's private country clubs served similar function to their British equivalents, but often dwarfed them in size and opulence (Baltzell 1996). That early US National Championship matches were played at the opulent Casino in Newport, RI hints at the socio-economic status of the clientele who immersed themselves in lawn tennis culture. In Australia and New Zealand, despite the rhetoric of more democratic, free and less status-hierarchical societies, tennis clubs here also retained their social exclusivity and staunchly middle-class following (Falcous & McLeod 2012; Kinross-Smith 1987; O'Farrell 1985).

The effects of European colonization in particular helped spread the game rapidly throughout the world, as it became, much like cricket, a force for globalization. Lawn tennis established itself comfortably in many of Britain's overseas territories and dominions, but, unlike cricket, it often initially failed to galvanize the local indigenous populations so that it remained for some time a preserve of the white upper-middle classes. In fact, many new lawn tennis courts were laid in cricket clubs in South America and the West Indies (Reay 1951).



INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF TENNIS

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Similarly, in India and South Africa, lawn tennis clubs were locations for white settlers to separate themselves from the locals, though in time the indigenous populations began forming clubs and holding tournaments of their own (Odendaal 2003; Pal 2004). By the end of the 19th century, lawn tennis clubs, tournaments and associations had become established in six continents, but the tennis nations that were considered to wield the most power in international governance and host the most prestigious tournaments, namely Great Britain and the US, continued to set the tone for how the sport developed throughout the rest of the world. Their players and officials helped to characterize where, by whom and how the sport should be played, and largely determined the social character of clubs and tournaments.

The gradual development of inter-club play began as friendly social occasions rather than competitive affairs, and clubs proved just as enthusiastic about outdoing their neighbours in the opulence of their facilities and surroundings, and in attracting the highest-status patrons and members, as they were about actually winning (Lake 2015). The growth of local and national tournaments in Britain and elsewhere facilitated changes to the prevailing norms of how players should approach the game. This had a trickle-down effect, as elite-level players like brothers Reggie and Laurie Doherty from England and then later Norman Brookes and Tony Wilding from Australia and New Zealand respectively set the standards of more competitive play, while still retaining their flawless “gentleman amateur” personas. The rising status and international media coverage of Wimbledon and the US National Championships, along with the emergence of the Davis Cup competition, in which American players immediately set out with a more ruthless will-to-win mentality, brought international players increasingly into the spotlight in the early 20th century (Eaves & Lake 2017).

As international sporting competitions took on heightened, quasi-political relevance after the Great War, due in part to rising nationalist sentiments attached to sporting competitions

generally, the number of overseas competitors at Wimbledon, particularly in the men's draw, and the number of nations entering the Davis Cup increased rapidly (Smart 2007).



INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF TENNIS

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In the last Wimbledon Championships before the Great War, in 1914, 102 players from eight different nations (88 from Britain) entered the men's draw and 51 from just three nations (47 from Britain) in the women's, but growth and expansion throughout the inter-war period saw a huge rise in the number of players from overseas. Thus, by 1939, 128 men from 24 different nations (56 from Britain) and 96 women from 15 nations (68 from Britain) competed in the Singles Championships. The largest number of nations to compete in the Davis Cup before the war was eight in 1913, but in the 1920s the number grew steadily from six at the start of the decade to 29 at the end. Indeed, before the inaugural football World Cup in 1930, tennis was arguably the most international of sports, and the Davis Cup was competed for by more nations than any other sporting event, outside of the Olympic Games (Smart 2007). Indeed, as Lake and Llewellyn (2015) have argued, one of the key reasons the International Lawn Tennis Federation (ILTF) were unwilling to compromise with the International Olympic Committee on matters related to the inclusion of tennis in the Olympics, which ceased after the 1924 Games, was because tennis had the Davis Cup and was in such a healthy state generally that it did not need the Olympics as a key platform to showcase its star players. By the end of the 1930s, the Davis Cup in particular took on greater political significance, adjudged perhaps most famously by Adolf Hitler's attempts to use the possibility of German success against the US in the 1937 Inter-zone final for political expedience (Fisher 2009).

The inter-war period also witnessed the marked encroachment of national cultures upon

the sport. In the 1920s, French cultural representations, in particular, expressed through fashion and the *joie de vivre* exuded by many of their players – notably Suzanne Lenglen, the sport's first true global superstar, and the "Four Musketeers": Jean Borotra, Rene Lacoste, Henri Cochet and Jacques Brugnon – influenced tennis culture in profound ways. Artistic representations proliferated as aspects of the sport stretched into other areas of social life in many nations (Holland 2011). The quasi-political stand-off between Bill Tilden and the US Lawn Tennis Association (USLTA) over his alleged journalistic endeavours made front-page news (Carvalho 2009), and when the US was due to compete against France in Paris in the 1928 Davis Cup final with a threat of a Tilden ban hanging over their heads, political ambassadors and even, possibly, the US President Calvin Coolidge intervened to smooth out the kinks of international diplomacy (Deford 2004).



INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF TENNIS

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By this stage, the sport had its first true professionals, as Lenglen and the American number- one-ranked male player Vincent Richards, alongside a handful of lesser-known American and French players, signed contracts with promoter C.C. Pyle to tour major cities in the US and Canada in late 1926. Before this momentous move, many of the most sought-after amateur players lived fairly comfortably off their tennis talents; they asked for and duly received first- class travel and accommodations and claimed inflated “expenses” from tournament organizers who were desperate to fill their stands, but this was all done “under the table” (Jefferys 2009; Wilson 2014). Lenglen kick-started a trend of the top amateur players – as typically judged by Wimbledon or US National Championship success – leaving the high-status but less lucrative amateur circuit to cash in on their talents for a few years of professional touring. Alongside Tilden in the 1930s were Henri Cochet, Fred Perry and Don Budge, all of whom made their mark as amateurs before deciding to forgo the associated perks and prestige. So began a trend that, except for a brief period during the Second World War, would not cease until the late 1960s, when tennis officials internationally were forced to adapt and come to terms with the shifting realities of tennis players. No longer were players drawn exclusively from the wealthy upper-middle class, who approached tennis as a carefree pastime and could, therefore, support

themselves. Players were increasingly drawn from lower down the social scale; they approached tennis as a full-time vocation and sought fair reimbursement for their efforts, especially given that they were attracting fee-paying spectators in their thousands to tournaments internationally (Baltzell 1996; Jefferys 2009).

The commercialization of tennis continued after the Second World War, and by the late 1940s the “sham-amateur” or “shamateur” player collecting “under-the-table” appearance fees became an increasingly normalized, and even rationalized, figure within elite-level tennis (Jefferys 2009; Lake 2015). Also expanding were opportunities for the top amateurs to sign professional contracts. Most were from the US and Australia. The American player Jack Kramer, winner of six doubles and three singles championships, including Wimbledon in 1947 and the US National Championships in 1946 and 1947, followed his compatriots Don Budge and Bobby Riggs and left amateur tennis to pursue a professional career.



INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF TENNIS

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By 1951, he had taken charge of the main professional circuit and begun recruiting heavily from the amateur ranks, often signing new talent before they had reached their playing peaks. This pitched Kramer's pro tour diametrically against the main amateur circuit, which led Kramer to be regarded as an antagonist and threat to amateur tennis (Kramer 1979). Indeed, a Wimbledon or US Nationals championship remained the ticket to a professional contract, and the majority of male players, and a handful of female players, achieving this objective left the amateur circuit shortly thereafter. Between 1946 and 1967, ten of the 15 world-number-one male players signed professional contracts. In time, the repeated defection of top talent diluted the amateur pool and, inevitably, lowered the relative competitive standards of the leading amateur tournaments, including the four "grand slams" and the Davis Cup, which turned these tournaments into, essentially, qualifying competitions for the pro tour (Lake 2015). This was undoubtedly one of the main reasons why the Wimbledon Championships committee began to press for open tennis from the early 1960s, as a way of ensuring their tournament remained not only the most prestigious but also inclusive of the world's best players.

In the two decades prior to the eventual turn toward open tennis in 1968, the key sites on the men's professional tour, mostly ramshackle indoor arenas in American cities, became the prime location to witness the world's best male players.

There was often stern resistance to professional tennis among amateur associations and their affiliated clubs. In Britain, upon joining the pro tour, former amateur champions typically lost all perks associated with the clubs and tournaments where they previously were successful, including honorary memberships, and in many places they became, in effect, *personae non gratae* (Jefferys 2009). At the request of the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA), many amateur clubs declined to host professional tour events, despite the potentially lucrative payouts from gate receipts and sponsorship. Even more dogmatic were the Lawn Tennis Association of Australia (LTAA), which issued various bans on professional players, including a rule that forbade their affiliated clubs from allowing professionals to play within them (Fewster 1985). Mainstream media and the dominant tennis press at the time typically ignored their performances, as Kramer (1979, p.53) reflected: 'Pro tournaments were never part of the records. ... We played and we kept score, but somehow it wasn't considered worth remembering'.



INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF TENNIS

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According to the dominant narratives produced by those who played in it, the pro tour system itself was a physically exacting test of mental strength and stamina. Kramer (1979, p.192) spoke of the exhausting and repetitive match schedule, the tiresome travelling and incessant pressures to fill arenas and avoid getting ripped off by local promoters. Such was the fragility of his own mental health that, toward the end of his 123-match tour with Pancho Gonzales in 1949–50, he ‘cracked’ during a match, started ‘belting balls over the fence’ and repeatedly screamed, ‘I’m losing my mind!’. The Australian sensation Lew Hoad (1959) also wrote of how the repetitive grind had made him a ‘worried, hurt, moody figure, entirely lacking in confidence’. At times, when balancing multiple responsibilities – to endorse products, promote the tour, write articles for the press and conduct radio and television interviews – the uncomplicated amateur circuit must have seemed a far cry from his new life on the road. Spurred by the prospects of riches, nevertheless, numerous other Australians were to follow in his footsteps, in what became a long production line of amateur champions. After decades of development in a system seemingly more egalitarian and inclusive than in Britain, or even America, Australian tennis realized its destiny in the 1950s and 1960s as the top-ranked tennis nation.

In every Davis Cup competition staged between 1938 and 1968, Australia reached the final and, from 1950 to 1967, won it 15 times from 18 attempts. In the four major national championships from 1946 to 1969, Australian men and women posted a phenomenal record of winning 85 of the total 192 singles events contested; this represents an Australian victory in over 44% of all major championships during this time.

Margaret Court, winner of 24 major titles during her career, remains, as of early 2019, the most successful player in history of either sex – if not also one of the most controversial, given her newly adopted role as an outspoken anti-gay-rights campaigner – but given the nationalist sentiments expressed through the Davis Cup, it was Australian male players who generated the greatest public interest.



INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF TENNIS

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When teenaged Davis Cup newcomers Lew Hoad and Ken Rosewall defeated the experienced Americans in 1953, for example, Fewster (1985, p.52) reported: 'the Kooyong crowd erupted, throwing thousands of seat cushions into the air in a most un-Australian display of emotion'. Not only were Davis Cup matches typically 'played in a strongly nationalistic climate, with national flags, uniforms, anthems and civic receptions', but 'success in the Davis Cup was taken by many Australians as representative of much more than a mere sporting achievement. The victories seemed to symbolize Australia's recent shift away from Britain and outward to the world in general' (Fewster 1985, p.62). Therefore, alongside cricket, naturally, and the 1956 Melbourne Olympics in which the Australians achieved an impressive medal haul, Davis Cup tennis during this period was a key political platform to satisfy Australia's desire for international recognition and social, cultural and political independence from their colonial masters. As the spotlight was shone on Australian sporting practices and coaching methods, explanations proliferated among players and officials for their remarkable success, which ranged from their favourable climate and relatively low casualty numbers in the war, to the general standard of their facilities and more flexible amateur rules (Fewster 1985; Kramer 1979). Success seemed to breed success for the LTAA, as playing in the Davis Cup Challenge Round constituted a 'financial bonanza' with profits soaring to over £30,000 in the late 1950s (Fewster 1985, p.55), which allowed them to send their most promising players on international tours to America and Europe, and pay generous expenses for a full-time coach, Harry Hopman.

Aside from the indomitable Margaret Court and the majestic and graceful Brazilian Maria Bueno, a swathe of American women dominated the game during the 1950s and 1960s, achieving great success at Wimbledon and the US and French National Championships.³ The Wightman Cup, inaugurated in 1923 to pitch the best British and American female players against each other in an annual seven-match team competition, highlighted the two nations' relative ranks fairly accurately.



INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF TENNIS

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In the 17 competitions held during the inter-war period, the British won four. However, from 1946 the Americans did not lose a single cup over the next twelve years, winning seven of them by a clean-sweep. American women also dominated at Wimbledon, winning the first thirteen successive post-war singles championships. Severely hampered by the effects of war, it is certain the British were unable to divert or generate the resources necessary to develop talent at a comparable pace, but once the government's austerity measures had been entirely dropped in the early 1950s and British economic growth recovered, it was clear that broader

societal issues were only part of the problem; central was the fact that the LTA, and many of the clubs and schools affiliated to it, seemed unwilling to shed their amateur emphasis and commit wholeheartedly to the pursuit of developing talent (Lake 2016a). This had long-lasting consequences deep into the 20th century, if not beyond. Despite their apparent backward and conservative approach to developing talent during the post-war period, leading British administrators – within both the LTA and All England Lawn Tennis Club (AELTC) – showed themselves to be remarkably progressive when they led the global movement toward open tennis in the 1960s. Pressed by the need to reverse the decline of their own Championships and regain administrative control over the sport, officials from the LTA and AELTC campaigned internationally throughout the 1960s to remove the amateur/professional distinction and hold “open” tournaments (Lake 2015).



INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF TENNIS

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After several failed attempts to gain the necessary two-thirds majority needed in ILTF meetings to alter the rules, the AELTC risked expulsion from the ILTF and decided to hold an “open” Wimbledon in 1968 without official backing; they were supported by their own LTA, alongside the USLTA and other national associations, and many of the world’s top players. Their efforts were buoyed by the growing profits accrued through television broadcasting, upon which they were to increasingly rely, and the public’s apparent acceptance of professionalism in tennis, which was demonstrated the previous year when the British Broadcasting Corporation sponsored an end-of-season professional tournament at Wimbledon, featuring Rod Laver, alongside Hoad, Rosewall and Gonzales, which showcased a higher-quality standard of play than that seen at Wimbledon a few weeks earlier and drew large and receptive crowds (Barrett 1986).

Despite the risk of becoming ostracized from the international tennis community, an emergency meeting just three months before the Championships in 1968 finally gave official sanction to the Wimbledon committee, thus ushering in what became known as “open tennis”.

The first few years of the “open era” were tumultuous. In 1970, leading female players brought the politics of gender into tennis by boycotting ILTF/USLTA tournaments, because of the comparatively paltry share of prize-winnings directed toward the women. They established their own separate tournament circuit, led by Billie Jean King’s efforts to recruit corporate backing from Gladys Heldman (editor of *World Tennis* magazine) and Joseph Cullman (from Philip Morris tobacco) to create the Virginia Slims tour. By 1974, they had grown to such an extent that the ILTF was forced into a merger that precipitated the marked increase in prize-money for women (equal at the US Open from 1973 onwards) and the emergence of the Women’s Tennis Association (WTA) to act as a player’s union (Spencer 1997).

The men’s game was progressing through an equally turbulent period. Arguably, the ILTF’s sanctioning of open tennis did not go far enough in removing the amateur-professional distinction, which allowed professional tour operators to retain control over their contracted players and demand appearance fees for their participation in amateur tournaments (Evans 1993).



INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF TENNIS

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This led to several boycotts of the major championships in the early 1970s, and the creation of the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) as a player's union. The ATP was immediately called into action when, in 1973, the Yugoslav player Nikki Pilic was ordered by his national association to play in a Davis Cup match despite him being contractually obliged to compete in another tournament. Pilic was suspended by the ILTF due to his absence from the Davis Cup. Matters came to a head when the ILTF refused to drop its ban on Pilic competing at Wimbledon, and so the ATP ordered a mass walk-out. In all, 79 male players declined to participate in the 1973 Championships (including 13 of the top 16 seeds), and the ATP survived its first major political power struggle against an increasingly undermined ILTF.

The 1970s also brought racial politics to the forefront of attention with the efforts of Arthur Ashe – 1968 US Open champion and 1975 Wimbledon champion – who worked to shed

a spotlight on South Africa's apartheid regime (Hall 2014). Despite him suffering what he described as "the black man's burden" – essentially, being expected to represent all African-Americans and use his privileged status as a public figure to campaign for social justice – he nevertheless worked tirelessly to raise awareness of racial issues in sport and wider society (Thomas 2010). Certainly, the performances of black tennis players in the US had a long history, but players were undermined by overt racial discrimination and the fact their tournaments and successes were not reported by the mainstream (i.e. white-owned and controlled) press. Since the early 1890s, tennis had been played in historically black colleges and universities in the US, but African-Americans were excluded from obtaining membership in many white clubs and competing in amateur tournaments sanctioned by the USNLTA.

It was not until 1916 that black leaders therein helped form the American Tennis Association, which had as its remit to promote the sport among African-Americans through tournaments and increased media exposure (Harris & Kyle-DeBose 2007). Despite marked growth in participation numbers and tournaments, however, it was not until Althea Gibson showed potential to defeat the best white players were she and others of her color afforded opportunities to compete at the US Open, alongside Wimbledon and other ILTF/USLTA-sanctioned tournaments. Inevitably, it took Alice Marble, four-time US Nationals champion in the late 1930s/early 1940s, among other white players and officials, to collectively utilize their white privilege by publicly supporting Gibson's inclusion and sway the USLTA on the matter.



INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF TENNIS

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These pioneers, to which you can also add the Australian aborigine Evonne Goolagong and Frenchman Yannick Noah, blazed the trail for the likes of Venus and Serena Williams, James Blake, Gael Monfils and Jo Wilfrid Tsonga from the turn of the 21st century. In the US, as of early 2019, black players now occupy a position at the forefront of women's tennis. Indeed, in the 2017 US Open, three of the four semi-finalists (and both finalists) were of African-American descent, none of whom had the first name Serena.

By the late 1970s, the image of a millionaire superstar tennis player had become an accepted thing, as endorsements for the top players not only supplemented their prize-money but became their chief form of income. This has been the case for the top male and female players, but the greater publicity and media attention that women's tennis enjoyed from the 1970s onwards, alongside their successes in achieving guarantees for equal prize money at the major championships, did not necessarily align female players equally with their male counterparts across all aspects of tennis. Into the 21st century, the most lucrative product endorsement deals remain the preserve of the female players most able to match their on-court successes with "traditional" (i.e. white, heterosexual) ideals of femininity in tennis, which has also, over time, become increasingly hyper-sexualized (Schultz 2014). Anna Kournikova and Maria Sharapova are the two most obvious examples, but only the latter matched her success in obtaining endorsements off the court with tournament wins on the court. As an aside, their successes are also indicative of the ascendancy of female players from former Eastern-Bloc nations, especially the Soviet Union/ Russia and Czechoslovakia/Czech Republic. The production-line of talent developing out of Eastern Europe has been enhanced by the willingness of many owners of tennis academies in the US, such as the IMG Academy in Bradenton, Florida (formerly owned and operated by Nick Bollettieri), to house and develop these players.

Other than the ways in which both male and female players are represented in the media, advances in the strength, stamina and agility shown by players, the speed of play itself and changes in the dominant playing styles, are possibly the most glaring visual differences between early and modern versions of tennis. Alongside developments in talent identification, coaching and training that have had the cumulative effect of increasing the average size (height and weight) of the top male and female players, racket technology has also advanced to such an extent that new tactics and styles of play have evolved as players have learned to hit the ball harder, more cleanly and with more top-spin, and to utilize an increasing variety of strokes and shots to deceive or overpower their opponents.



INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF TENNIS

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The standards and precision applied to the perfection of balls and court surfaces have also become reduced to matters of science, and hawk-eye and other forms of 21st-century on-court technology allow play to be measured and calculated to the greatest extent (Wilson 2014). Yet despite these advances and the encroachment of science into the sport, the aesthetic of human movement has remained integral to spectator enjoyment of the game. Though such views are highly subjective, it has been argued that players like Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal are as enchanting to watch as those of the inter-war “Golden Age” (Wilson 2014), and the rivalries of top female players like Serena Williams, Maria Sharapova and Angelique Kerber arguably come close to matching the excitement of the classic matchups involving Suzanne Lenglen after the Great War.

From ace to academia: a brief historiography of tennis

Just as tennis has developed and grown, so too has its recognition and appeal as a subject of academic interest and value. Scholars internationally have come to appreciate the sport as an interesting site to examine wider society and the politics of identity in areas such as gender, social class, race and nationalism. Given the marked developments witnessed within the sport, scholars have also recognized its value as a subject to examine shifts in the amateur/professional status and ethos of its players and officials, alongside its globalization, commercialization, commodification and politicization that have collectively altered much of how tennis is played, watched, organized, funded and reported. Such marked changes have also brought interesting developments in terms of how the sport is represented in the arts and media, and few sports have enjoyed as much attention, collectively, in literature, poetry and artwork. This is particularly so in England where the sport occupies a unique and deep, historically-rooted cultural position.

This book is an edited collection of chapters authored by many of the leading, contemporary scholarly writers on tennis in the social sciences. The breadth of contributing authors comprehensively represents the scope of how the sport has developed in these ways, though it is imperative to note that tennis has historically not enjoyed the immense and long-standing popularity as a scholarly subject compared to the team sports of soccer, baseball, cricket, rugby, American football, ice hockey and basketball, which have tended to occupy hegemonic positions as far as scholarly writing on “Western” sport cultures is concerned.



INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF TENNIS

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This is possibly due to the inveterate cultural position that these team sports occupy in our modern societies, due in no small part to the processes of colonization, globalization and Americanization that, have over the last two centuries helped spread these North American/European cultural representations internationally, to the exclusion of other, perhaps more regionalized sport forms. The rampant and unremitting commercialization, professionalization, politicization and mediatization of these well-known team sports has brought them into popular consciousness in ways that more locally organized and niche sports have been unable to do.

As individual sports go, however – and tennis is principally an individual sport except when played in the Olympics and Davis Cup/Fed Cup (even doubles players are ranked as individuals) – tennis now compares well as a scholarly subject against other leading, predominantly individual sports such as golf, track-and-field/athletics, skiing, martial arts/combat sports, swimming and gymnastics. Part of the reason for this is that, like golf but unlike many other individual sports, the key foci for competition – and also, therefore, media attention – are its four annual major (grand slam) events and annual team competitions (Davis/Fed Cup, and Ryder Cup for golf); this is instead of relying on the quadrennial Olympic Games as its principal showcase,

which is not only less frequent but also saturated by coverage from dozens of other sports competing for attention. The international spread of tennis is further boosted, when compared to golf in particular, by the fact that each of the four majors is played in a different country (Wimbledon, French Open, US Open, Australian Open), rather than three of the four played in the US (USPGA Tour, Masters, US Open) as in golf, and its highest profile and revenue-generating international men's team competition limited to players from just the US and Europe, as is the Ryder Cup.



INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF TENNIS

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Moreover, what tennis offers above all other individual and, indeed, team sports, is the (near) equal representation of women in the upper echelons of wealth/income-generation, international fame and recognizability. Tennis sits proudly and inarguably atop the list of global, professionalized sports offering the smallest gap between male and female players in terms of salary/prize money and media attention, and it has done since the early 1970s, if not the inter-war period when Suzanne Lenglen and Helen Wills achieved comparable, indeed if not even greater, fame than Bill Tilden and Fred Perry. In the 2010s, Serena Williams and Maria Sharapova enjoy comparable recognizability and wealth as Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal, much as Steffi Graf compared to the equally dominant Pete Sampras in the 1990s, and Billie Jean King, Chris Evert and Martina Navratilova compared to Arthur Ashe, Jimmy Connors and John McEnroe in the 1970s and 1980s. Tennis was brought further into the limelight as a consequence of its role, and that of its star players like Billie Jean King, in the broader second-wave feminist movement. This coincided with the “tennis boom” of the 1960s and 1970s that witnessed the escalating popularity of the sport, as clubs and school/university campuses constructed courts and held tournaments as an outcome of its democratization. These combined elements helped develop tennis into arguably the highest profile, most comprehensively international, and most gender-equitable individual sport – i.e. rather than team sport – in the 21st century.

These facts alone can account to a great extent for the growing attention paid to the sport by writers and journalists over the last forty or so years, as the 1970s and 80s witnessed a marked increase in the number of tennis-related books, including coaching guides, biographies/auto-biographies and first-person journalist narratives being published (Lake 2016b). However, the historiography of tennis has revealed that a similar boom in scholarly writing on tennis has not followed the same path or trajectory. Alternatively, it could be said that the scholarly boom *has* occurred but is 20–30 years behind the participation boom, which perhaps is accounted for by the fact that historians do not tend to touch events until they have lost some of their immediacy. Aside from a spattering of scholarly books and journal articles from a small handful of writers, it is only since the mid/late 2000s that the sport has enjoyed increasing popularity as a subject matter of serious scholarly interest across the social sciences. Indeed, one aim of this book is to highlight the breadth of different types of scholars – those in the subjects of history, sociology, media studies & communications, leisure studies, sport management, philosophy, economics & business, politics, and gender studies – who have made important contributions to the subject matter in the last decade, as many of them are featured as authors/contributors in this book.



INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF TENNIS

Excerpted from *Routledge Handbook of Tennis*

That we are currently witnessing a “boom” in scholarly works in tennis within the social sciences is supported by statistical evidence. Taking into account the fact that the number of English language scholarly journals – and therefore also the number of journal articles being published – in the social sciences of sport has at least doubled since 2000, a very rough calculation of articles in the twenty of the most relevant scholarly journals in the areas of sport sociology, sport history, sport philosophy, sport media/communications, leisure studies, sport management, and sport and politics that mentioned the word “tennis” in their titles or abstracts has still shown a remarkable increase. Grouped by decade, the 1960s saw not a single article on tennis, but there were three published in the 1970s, 13 in the 1980s, and 14 in the 1990s.

Thirty-seven peer-reviewed journal articles mentioning tennis in their titles/abstracts were published across the top twenty journals in these fields in the 2000s, and in the 2010s, as of December 2018, an impressive 89 articles have so far been published. This marked growth in the scholarly interest in tennis can be observed in Table 1.1. Clear trends and themes are recurring in this burgeoning field of research. British and American tennis stands at the forefront of scholarly attention, and possibly for good reason, but to the neglect of tennis scholarship related to other geographical areas. At least in English-speaking academic journals, the wonderfully compelling history of tennis in France is largely neglected, bar a handful of articles on Lenglen and the Four Musketeers. Australian tennis enjoyed a noticeable increase in scholarly attention in the 1980s, but the leading researchers in this area have either retired or moved away from tennis, leaving this story of its early features, and the fascinating rise to prominence of Australia in the early post-war period in need of attention.

African and Asian tennis history, alongside aspects of its culture and politics, are conspicuous in their absence from scholarly attention, as is work on Canada, Mexico and much of Central and South America. While Heiner Gillmeister has done excellent work on German tennis, other parts of Europe have been overlooked, particularly in the East.



INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF TENNIS

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Beyond geographical imbalances, the subject matters of class, gender and race have been given greater attention – though the latter much more recently developed than the former two – and also increasingly national identity, but there are noticeable gaps in other areas. The structures of religion, disability and sexuality (broadly) remain woefully under-researched in tennis scholarship, and the appreciation of the need for “intersectional” analyses across all of these outputs is only just beginning to burgeon. Tennis within the realm of “sport for development” also needs attention, as do numerous other political or quasi-political aspects. Critical analyses of deviance, doping, corruption, match-fixing and other scandalous events and acts are needed, particularly to provide a more balanced exposé to complement, if not challenge, the work of tennis reporters and journalists who are always the first to cover these stories and thus shape the dominant narratives. While tennis media, both traditional and contemporary, has enjoyed considerable attention, particularly in relation to gendered representations, the arts has only recently been embraced as an area deemed worthy of critical examination. There is still much to do, and while commercial aspects have featured in analyses of sponsorships and various management matters, we are arguably only scratching the surface of interesting, relevant and impactful tennis-related research here. These areas highlighted are just a few of the many gaps in the literature, and as a consequence, this book must, inevitably, be considered more a point of departure for new research rather than a comprehensive synopsis of existing work in the field. Relative to other sports, and likely

Table 1.1 Articles published in twenty leading journals across various subjects in the social sciences of sport mentioning ‘tennis’ in its abstract by decade, 1960s–2010s

	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s
Articles published mentioning ‘tennis’ in its abstract	0	3	13	14	37	89

Sources: *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, *Sport in Society (Sport, Culture and Society)*, *Sociology of Sport Journal*, *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, *European Journal of Sport and Society*, *Sport in History (The Sports Historian)*, *International Journal of the History of Sport*, *Sporting Traditions*, *Sport History Review (Canadian Journal of Sport History)*, *Journal of Sport History*, *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy*, *Communication and Sport*, *International Journal of Sport Communication*, *Journal of Sports Media*, *Leisure Studies*, *Journal of Sport Economics*, *Journal of Sport Management*, *Case Studies in Sport Management*, and *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics (International Journal of Sport Politics)*.



INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF TENNIS

Excerpted from *Routledge Handbook of Tennis*

because of its late blossoming as a field of critical analysis generally, the field of social-scientific research on tennis is still in a fairly rudimentary, rather than advanced, stage. However, I argue that this fact, proudly and excitingly, represents a call-to-arms for researchers to fill these gaps and expose the sport – its players, officials, institutions, practices, ideologies and cultures – to the academic community and public as the fascinating and research-worthy subject matter it truly is.

How this book is organized

The remainder of this book comprises 44 chapters, which are loosely divided into three main parts, attending to various aspects of tennis history, culture and politics. The authors chosen were afforded considerable flexibility in terms of their approach and focus, and so the content of the chapters provides insights into how the various subjects intersect and overlap. Some chapters adopt a broad view, outlining major developments over time and space, while others offer a case study approach that is contextualized within broader themes and developments. This mix of approaches reflects the inherent complexities of the subject matter and highlights the different lenses to understand and analyse the processes through which a garden game became a global sport.

Part I examines historical developments in tennis, related chiefly to its commercialization, professionalization and globalization, and the emergence of tennis celebrities as an outcome. Brad Hummel and Mark Dyreson adopt a broad view and examine the important role of tennis patrons, commencing in the Middle Ages with Real Tennis before going on to examine the sport's contemporary financial backers. Contextualizing their work within the broader commercialization of the sport, their chapter sets the tone for one of the key developments that influenced the sport's trajectory particularly over the last century. Joyce Kay also examines leadership, in her discussion of grassroots tennis in the late 19th and 20th centuries and the important role of clubs and works' associations in fostering the game at a recreational level. Robert J. Lake, Dave Day and Simon J. Eaves then discuss developments for coaching-professionals during this same time period in Britain, particularly in terms of the practice of coaching itself alongside the improving status of coaches as individuals in traditional amateur club and tournament environments. Their achievements and struggles are set in the broader context of the sport's gradual professionalization and ongoing resistance to it from governing bodies like the LTA.



INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF TENNIS

Excerpted from *Routledge Handbook of Tennis*

The inter-war period remains a key era, when noticeable aspects and features of what might be termed “modern” tennis began to emerge, and Elizabeth Wilson examines the rise of female players as celebrities, especially Suzanne Lenglen who was arguably the first tennis “superstar” that transcended the sport. John Carvalho and Mike Milford build on this narrative of the interwar tennis celebrity in their analysis of Bill Tilden, focusing in particular on his struggles with the USLTA over his off-court journalistic activities. Kevin Jefferys examines the first major British tennis celebrity of this period, Fred Perry, and contextualizes his difficulties experienced merely in fitting into the British tennis establishment within wider class struggles of the time.

The professionalization of tennis, and the concomitant decline of amateurism, continued to be a key feature of the sport’s historical development throughout the post-war period, and Kristian Naglo’s detailed analysis of the great German tennis celebrities, Steffi Graf and Boris Becker, provides interesting insights into their marked differences and similarities as they became global superstars in the 1980s and helped shape a new German national identity. The subsequent analysis of Li Na, by Steve Bien-Aimé, Haiyan Jia and Chun Yang is also particularly revealing of the dual challenges of representing both a sport and an entire nation, and highlights, generally speaking, some of the continued struggles for female athletes in Asia.

The focus of the part then moves beyond some of the traditional hotbeds of tennis to examine, firstly, the sport’s globalization. Barry Smart weaves us through the sport’s spread internationally to expose the developing global tennis landscape in the context of its professionalization and commercialization. The spread of tennis to France – discussed in the chapter by Patrick Clastres – examines early clubs and associations before locating the insurgence of French tennis in the interwar period, internationally, within the broader contexts of French culture more broadly. Lenglen, again, is a key focus as are the “Four Musketeers”.



INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF TENNIS

Excerpted from *Routledge Handbook of Tennis*

Irish tennis has a rich history, but one punctuated with extreme highs and lows. Simon J. Eaves and Tom Higgins explain how Irish players in the 1890s were some of the world's best, and the Irish Lawn Tennis Championships second only to Wimbledon in international prestige, yet the decline of this tournament amidst broader socio-political developments precipitated the general decline of Irish standards internationally before the Great War. Arnošt Svoboda and Dino Numerato then discuss the impressive rise of tennis in Czechoslovakia and, more contemporarily, in the Czech Republic. Set in a Cold War context – before and after the “Velvet Revolution” in 1989 – the story reminds us how pivotal broader politics can be, and indeed has been, in efforts to develop talent and expose nationalistic regimes. Robert G. Rodriguez then examines the spread of tennis to Latin America, and his focus on Argentina provides rich insights on the politics of identity for, especially, their star players Guillermo Vilas and Gabriela Sabatini. Suvam Pal investigates the spread of tennis to India and focuses on the rise of India in the Open era as a powerhouse in the doubles game and the impact of colonization on key aspects of tennis culture in the Indian subcontinent. Mahfoud Amara's chapter exploring the social, political and business significance of tennis in the Middle East serves as another reminder of how great the need is to expand our analyses of tennis history outside of North America and Europe, especially given the notable recent rise of this region in global sport development and mega-event hosting.

Part II builds on the broader contexts introduced in the first section, especially the commercialization, professionalization and politicization of tennis to examine key aspects of culture and representation, covering gender, race, class, the arts and media. Suzanne Rowland commences the section with an examination of changes in tennis dress, dealing with primarily the shifting boundaries of class and gender throughout the interesting pre-First World War period. These were, especially for females, so vividly contrasted through the appearances (and play) of Dorothea Lambert Chambers and Suzanne Lenglen. Janine van Someren and Stephen Wagg then expand this discussion of gendered aspects of tennis culture in their biographical analyses of four leading post-war female British players. Helen Ditouras then provides a more contemporary view of how the feminine tennis body is celebrated and commodified but also sexually objectified in her examination of the phenomenon that is (or was) Anna Kournikova.



INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF TENNIS

Excerpted from *Routledge Handbook of Tennis*

The masculinity of Bill Tilden – as close to a true enigma in interwar tennis as you could find – is then given specific treatment by Nathan Titman, who examines the interesting and various ways that the media represented him throughout his career. This is compelling reading in the context of Tilden’s homosexuality and infamous incidents with younger male players that subsequently tarnished his image. Stephen Wagg then takes this discussion of masculinity in tennis forward from the 1930s to the early 21st century by examining challenges and contradictions related to the sustained “gentlemanly ethic” according to which male players are expected to behave. John Vincent’s chapter provides an overall analysis of gendered media representations of female tennis players – focused, primarily on the last two decades – and highlights their sustained marginalization. Travis R. Bell and Janelle Applequist then go into the specific ways in which the WTA, which formed in the early 1970s, works to sexualize female players as a means of enhancing the apparent commercial value of women’s tennis as a commodity. Their focus on a 2012 ad campaign entitled “Strong is Beautiful” highlights the contradictory representation of female players as both sexualized commodities and empowering athletes.

Race and social class then feature as key factors in the next two chapters. José M. Alamillo’s analysis of how Latino/a players, in particular Pancho Gonzales and Rosie Casals, have been racialized in the post-war period. Robert J. Lake then discusses developing playing styles in the broader contexts of class and gender, and within a set of parameters that worked to marginalize playing strokes and tactics which, before the Second World War, were deemed to exist outside the behaviour ideals of the hegemonic white, upper-middle class authorities.



INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF TENNIS

Excerpted from *Routledge Handbook of Tennis*

The section moves on to examine historical representations of tennis across numerous different mediums. Alexis Tadie provides two chapters here: the first is an examination of literary discourse, positioning tennis as an interesting focal point for mainstream writing; and the second continues in this vein and positions tennis within the history of literature and the visual arts more broadly. Jeffrey O. Segrave also analyzes tennis in mainstream literature to uncover cultural meanings of the sport, focusing in particular on the interesting interplay of tennis depicted as both “a game of love” and a highly professionalized and corporatized sport. Ann Sumner provides a rich analysis of how tennis has been depicted and portrayed in art throughout Europe and North America since the Victorian era, highlighting developments in cultural and social approaches to the sport.

Robert J. Lake and Simon J. Eaves then examine the history of journalism in tennis, commencing on the early role of journalists in the game’s incipient development in Britain, before examining some of the challenges experienced by key figures reporting during the inter-war and post-war periods. Nadina Ayer and Ron McCarville provide an interesting analysis of tennis culture as seen through an online tennis community, and explore the day-to-day uses and representations of tennis in the online forum. Katie Lebel and Karen Danylchuk take a broader look at the role of social media in the representation of top male and female players in the 21st century, and examine the interesting role of Twitter in particular as a creative marketing and public relations tool for contemporary players.

Part III focuses on politics and various social issues that have featured in critical discussions of tennis, particularly related to governance, nationalism and identity, and to race, gender, class and disability. Robert J. Lake commences by providing an historical overview of tennis governance as it developed, focusing particularly on the roles of the most powerful associations, namely the USLTA/USTA and LTA, alongside the ILTF/ITF. Alistair John and Brent McDonald conduct a case study analysis of the Australian Open and the inherent challenges related to the role of government in selecting the site and developing the infrastructure of Flinders Park in Melbourne.



INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF TENNIS

Excerpted from *Routledge Handbook of Tennis*

Matthew P. Llewellyn and Robert J. Lake then examine the politics related to the inclusion of tennis in the Olympic Games, focusing on its first 28 years as part of the Olympic movement, its subsequent separation, and eventual return in the Open Era. Stephen Wagg pushes us to understand issues related to nationalism in tennis, with an analysis of how tennis in Britain promotes and reinforces ideals and values of English national identity, especially through the media representations of its players and the flagship event, the Wimbledon Championships. John Harris takes this a step further to examine the interesting, varied and sometimes conflicting representations of Andy Murray as both a Scotsman and a Briton, focusing on key challenges faced and his, eventual, emergence as a more mainstream figure in British sport following his first Wimbledon victory in 2013.

The politics of race are then examined by Sundiata Djata through the history of African-American involvement in tennis, commencing with an analysis of the American Tennis Association, before going on to discuss important figures like Althea Gibson and the Williams sisters among others. Eric Allen Hall focuses specifically on Arthur Ashe and his efforts and struggles as a civil rights activist in the 1960s and 1970s. The “black man’s burden” he stated experiencing is particularly interesting, and his role in the anti-apartheid movement in South

Africa positions him as a pivotal figure in what was very much a global, rather than purely American, struggle. Kristi Tredway’s analysis then follows, of how gender and the politics of feminism featured within the formation of the rebel Virginia Slims tour in the early 1970s, focusing on the “Original 9” women who defied convention and challenged male hegemony by signing their famous \$1 contracts. Jessica Luther continues in this rich vein and focuses on Billie Jean King’s specific efforts to bring about change for women in tennis, and her famous “Battle of the Sexes” tennis match in 1973 – a story recently retold in a Hollywood movie – against the outspoken chauvinist Bobby Riggs. Lindsay Parks Pieper examines another important figure in the 1970s, the transgender player Renee Richards, whose battles with tennis officials in the US to enable her to compete on the women’s tour were uniquely contextualized in the broader struggles for gender equity at the time.



INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF TENNIS

Excerpted from *Routledge Handbook of Tennis*

Jayne O. Ifekwunigwe's analysis of the Williams sisters brings together discussions of race, class and gender into this insightful chapter that highlights the need for intersectional analyses, and Linda K. Fuller's chapter on the politics of identity for people with disabilities also pushes us to acknowledge multiple systems of oppression in what is a highly nuanced field and subject matter. The final chapter by Robert J. Lake discusses the manifestation of exclusion in tennis, specifically examining tennis clubs as sites where age and class if not also (implicitly) race and religious barriers intersect to create a unique matrix of domination that has, historically, seemed to pervade many clubs.

Notes

1 Real Tennis emerged simply as "tennis", but when its offspring "lawn tennis" became known popularly as tennis, thereby superseding its antecedent, the prefix *real* was added to the original version of tennis to differentiate the two games (Shneerson 2014).

2 Wingfield suggested the net should be six feet at the sides, but the committee for the inaugural Wimbledon Championships in 1877 opted for five feet.

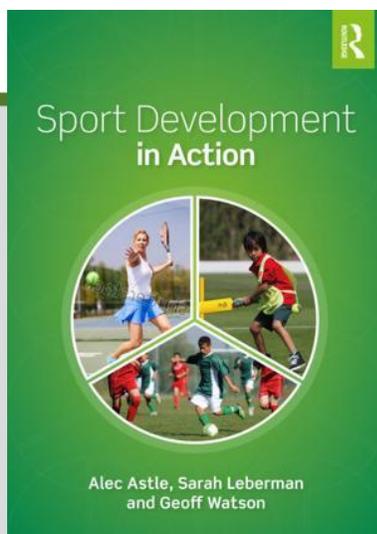
3 Until the late 1970s/early 1980s, the Australian National Championships/Open was often avoided by the top overseas players due in part to its geographical isolation and its lower status among the four major championships (Feinstein 1991).



CHAPTER

2

CHANGING FOCUS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF COMMUNITY TENNIS



This chapter is excerpted from

Sport Development in Action: Plan, Programme and Practice

by Alec Astle, Sarah Leberman, Geoff Watson

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CHANGING FOCUS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF COMMUNITY TENNIS

Excerpted from *Sport Development in Action*

Tennis is a traditional, organised, individual sport that has a history of conservative and exclusive attitudes, characterised by an over-focus on high performance and preference for the conventional version of the game played by adults in clubs. For this reason, it's been labelled an 'elitist sport', seen as played mainly by 'middle-to-upper classes' in Anglo-Saxon countries, such as Australia, the UK, NZ, and the USA. By the 1990s, challenged by change, the prevalence of these attitudes and perceptions, and presence of fewer high-profile international players, tennis in these countries began to suffer a significant decline in popularity and participation (Wilson 2015). However, this was not the case everywhere. Since the 1990s, tennis participation has grown steadily in Europe (Tennis Europe 2015), and substantial increases have been recorded in Russia and China, stimulated by tennis returning to the Olympic Games and the prospect of winning medals (Marshall 2011).

In this chapter, changes in community tennis in NZ are explored. Until the twenty-first century, tennis was volunteer-driven, dominated by clubs as the main source of competitive community tennis, with limited consideration for the involvement of schools, recreational, or casual players, and content to seek high-performance success, despite a lack of consistent evidence. Over time, tennis grew in popularity and numbers by sticking to what worked well, with few changes required to its delivery or organisation. Such stability is not always possible, however, as tennis found in the 1980s and 1990s, when challenged by social, economic, and demographic changes, its participation numbers tumbled. Although aware of this predicament and potential need for change, inertia restricted the ability of tennis to adapt. Tennis New Zealand (TNZ) lacked the leadership, capability, and resources to adjust its strategies and structures to counter these challenges. For tennis, "the social and technical consistencies that were the very sources of past success and tradition. . . [were also]. . . the seeds of failure once conditions" changed (Parent, O'Brien, and Slack 2012: 109).



CHANGING FOCUS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF COMMUNITY TENNIS

Excerpted from *Sport Development in Action*

After 2000, tennis NSOs in countries such as Australia (Tennis Australia, TA), the UK (Lawn Tennis Association, LTA), NZ (TNZ), and the USA (United States Tennis Association, USTA) began to take stock of community tennis and respond to customer demand to arrest the decline in participation. This necessitated they move outside their previous high-performance and club focus and embrace the wider community of potential tennis players. New development initiatives, based on a game-based approach and modified formats, were introduced to grow the base of their game. These initiatives, which originated from the International Tennis Federation (ITF) global development programme, established

in the 1990s (Bowers 2013), provided fun, age and stage appropriate tennis experiences for children, and opportunities for adults to play tennis for social and fitness reasons.

The catalyst for intervention in the UK and NZ, were the external funding inducements and specialist assistance from central government sport agencies, through their 'development of sport' policies to grow community sport participation (SPARC 2009; Sport England 2008). Since 2000 in NZ, SPARC and now Sport NZ, have provided capability and investment support to TNZ, enabling it to intervene 'top-down' to modernise and grow tennis at a community level.

This shift in direction by tennis NSOs is evident in the LTA Chief Executive's (CE) comment:

We think the growth is going to be in the parks. . . [i.e. casual, individual participation rather than in clubs]. . . We need to strike long-term agreements with local authorities. . . I looked at the old blueprint. It was all about high performance. This is about meat and potatoes.

(www.theguardian.com/sport/blog/2015/mar/17/tennis-decline-lta-wimbledon-andy-murray)

This 'meat and potatoes' realisation to take the game beyond tennis clubs was reinforced by TNZ's CE, who stated TNZ's goal moving forward was:

to provide and promote enticing products and services that encourage more participation by more people in more places. . . This can be achieved by

(i) growing the number of clubs and coaches offering existing participation programmes; (ii) developing new participation initiatives that meet the demands of the wider tennis community; and (iii) modernising and opening up tennis to the casual/ pay for play market.

(TNZ 2016: 4)



CHANGING FOCUS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF COMMUNITY TENNIS

Excerpted from *Sport Development in Action*

This chapter will:

1. Describe the origins and factors influencing the growth of tennis in NZ.
2. Consider how conservative attitudes, which preserved the status quo of tennis as an exclusive club-based, predominantly adult sport, and the sport's fixation on elite tennis and constant search for talent, impacted community tennis, contributing to its decline in popularity and participation.
3. Discuss the role of central government sport agencies in improving the organisational capability and integration of tennis in NZ, and TNZ's subsequent adoption of a holistic approach, which balanced its performance and participation aspirations, and fostered the emergence of its national development programme.
4. Explore TNZ's initial foray into development with a stand-alone, school-based initiative, the challenges this presented, and the lessons learned about incorporating initiatives into an integrated development pathway to grow and sustain tennis in schools and clubs.
5. Consider the influences of the ITF and TA on the type and intended audience of the initiatives TNZ introduced into its player development pathway.
6. Examine why and how TNZ changed the regional delivery of its national initiatives from SDOs to local tennis club professionals. Assess the impact of TNZ's intervention on participation in community tennis.



CHANGING FOCUS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF COMMUNITY TENNIS

Excerpted from *Sport Development in Action*

ORIGINS AND GROWTH OF COMMUNITY TENNIS

Modern tennis, known as lawn tennis because it was played outdoors usually on grass courts, began in England in 1850s. It evolved from earlier versions of the game played on hard indoor courts in Europe, mainly by royalty and aristocracy (Bowers 2013). Modern tennis, like other traditional, organised sports, which had their origins in Britain, was introduced into NZ during the 1870s by early British settlers. Initially, tennis was a social pastime (Wilson 2015), mainly for wealthy settlers, who played occasional games on grass courts laid in the gardens of urban mansions and large rural estates (Elenio 1986).

During the 1870s and 1880s, tennis grew in popularity as new waves of immigration bolstered NZ's population, transport and communications improved, and opportunities for engagement in sport increased. Tennis played an important social role in bringing people together in country districts with courts being established in local domains. This was often despite the lack of suitable playing equipment, rough court surfaces, and restrictive dress code and social disapproval of young women participating in such an energetic sport (Elenio 1986). Local clubs began to appear in different parts of NZ, formed by the independent efforts of influential volunteers, keen to establish tennis on a more permanent and continuing basis, for their own and others' enjoyment.

Historically, tennis was one of the very few sports in which men and women played alongside each other. Indeed, the mixed doubles in NZ's tennis championships goes back to at least 1886 (Elenio 1986). Tennis was probably the first sport in which women represented NZ, being selected for inter-colonial competitions against Australian states from as early as 1896 and a NZ women's team played against New South Wales in 1907. There was also a strong Māori involvement in tennis going back to the nineteenth century, with Māori playing tennis on the courts of large farms and sheep stations where they worked, especially in Hawke's Bay, or courts established on some *marae* (Māori meeting grounds). Leaders like Apirana Ngata encouraged Māori participation in tennis, both to promote Māori achievement and foster community identity (Aotearoa Māori Tennis Association 2006).

As club numbers increased in different regions, from the late 1870s they established Provincial Associations (PAs) to administer local inter-club competitions on their behalf and organise inter-provincial matches. In 1886, a national body, the New Zealand Lawn Tennis Association (NZLTA), was formed to run national tournaments and arrange international exchanges, particularly with Australia. The NZLTA and its PAs were voluntary organisations with honorary office bearers and committees (Elenio 1986).



CHANGING FOCUS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF COMMUNITY TENNIS

Excerpted from *Sport Development in Action*

In 1913, Australasia (Australia and NZ) was a founding member of the International Lawn Tennis Federation (ILTF) established to oversee the global growth and uniform development of tennis (Bowers 2013). The NZLTA gained separate membership of the ILTF in 1923, which in 1977 dropped the 'lawn' and became just the ITF.

By 1910, tennis had 9,376 participants, and despite the challenges presented by the First World War (1914–1918) and Great Depression (1929–1935), participation grew rapidly to 32,701 by 1940 (see Figure 8.1). This growth was stimulated by: the national achievements of NZ's first great tennis player and pioneering high-performance female athlete, Kathleen Nunneley, who won the national singles title 13 consecutive times between 1895 and 1907; the international success of New Zealander Anthony Wilding, who pre-First World War was the world's number one ranked player, winning eight Wimbledon titles between 1907 and 1914; the establishment throughout the country of more tennis clubs; the increased presence of tennis in organised sport programmes in schools; and construction by clubs,

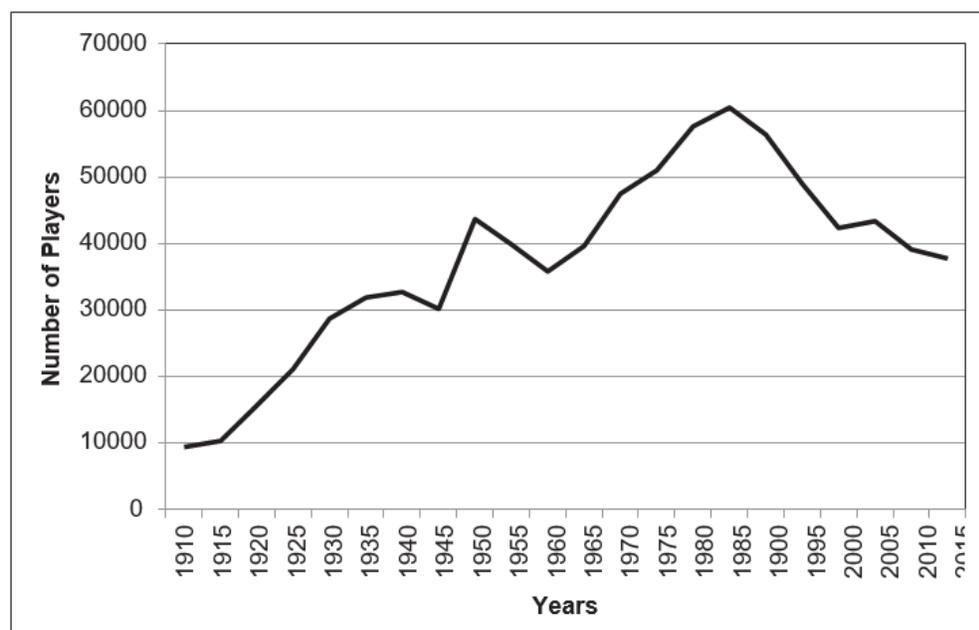


FIGURE 8.1 Registered tennis players in New Zealand, 1910–2015

Source: *Te Ara – the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/tennis; Tennis New Zealand Annual Reports.



CHANGING FOCUS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF COMMUNITY TENNIS

Excerpted from *Sport Development in Action*

schools, and local councils of more lawn and hard court facilities, especially in Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch. This growth, however, was curtailed by the Second World War (1939–1945), as many tennis club members served overseas with the armed services. By 1945, player numbers had dropped to 30,153.

In 1924, the Census and Statistics Office surveyed NZ's main sports (Census and Statistics 1925). Tennis was the third largest sport, behind rugby and horse racing. At that time tennis had 12 PAs and 19,967 participants. This comprised 11,673 males and 8,294 females, of which 18,045 were adult members of 302 tennis clubs, and 1,922 were school-aged players, 56% of them being girls.

After the Second World War the return of service personnel coincided with a period of economic prosperity in NZ. Higher prices for agricultural exports, industrial growth, rising affluence, increasing mobility, and urban growth and development, fuelled by rapid population growth in the post-war 'baby boom' years (1946–1964) saw the provision of further sports grounds and facilities by local councils. This increased access for many to sport, and combined with regulated working and opening hours, freed Saturdays for people to play club and school sport. Tennis club memberships grew, stimulated by promotional drives by the NZLTA and local clubs, tournaments were resumed, and schools were proactive in encouraging young people to play tennis, with many teachers facilitating this as volunteer coaches. By 1970, NZLTA had 21 PAs and participation had increased to 47,505, before peaking at 60,453 in 1985.

This increased popularity of community tennis also benefited from the rising profile of elite tennis in NZ during this period. This was attributable to three factors. First,

Auckland introduced an annual invitation tournament in 1956, which subsequently has grown in importance, attracting major international tennis players as it has evolved into the current ASB Classic Open tournaments for men and women – one of NZ's major summer sporting events (Romanos 2013). Second was the international success of a group of New Zealand players, the likes of Ruia Morrison, Brian Fairlie, Onny Parun, Marilyn Pryde, Chris Lewis, Russell Simpson, Kelly Evernden, and Brett Steven, on the world tennis circuit and Davis Cup competition. Third was the advent of television in NZ in 1960, and its increasing coverage of professional tennis, including the world Grand Slam tournaments, especially by pay television network Sky.



CHANGING FOCUS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF COMMUNITY TENNIS

Excerpted from *Sport Development in Action*

During the 1990s, however, tennis, like many traditional organised sports in NZ, was impacted by societal change and diversification of sport, recreation, and leisure activities (see Chapter 2), which saw its participant numbers slip to 43,365 by 2005 (see Figure 8.1). At this time, a similar trend was affecting leading tennis nations, such as Australia, UK, and USA, where a combination of: an over-focus on identifying and developing talent, international success, and winning, the prevalence of conservative attitudes and perception of tennis as an exclusive, elite sport, coupled with tennis being both an individualistic and relatively complicated game requiring expensive equipment and venues, saw its popularity fall as tennis participation declined (Wilson 2015).

In NZ, the NZLTA, which was volunteer-led and elite sport-focused, lacked the leadership, vision, capability, and financial resources to coordinate a national response to address this decline in community tennis. The sport itself was fragmented with 25 PAs and 489 clubs characterised by self-interest, duplication of effort, shrinking memberships, ageing facilities, and debt (TNZ 2004). Only 36% of clubs were considered well organised with modern facilities and coaching programmes, 53% had fewer than 50 members, and 64% had falling or static memberships (TNZ 2004). TNZ did not have a shared vision or coherent plan for community tennis, and any of its initiatives “were subject to veto at association level” (TNZ 2004: 13).

At a global level, the ITF in an effort to counter the decline in participation, implemented a global development programme to expand its influence beyond its traditional base, including the introduction of a game-based approach and modified formats to improve the relevance and appeal of tennis to a wider audience of potential participants (see Facts and figures 8.1 and 8.2).

FACTS AND FIGURES 8.1

Tennis: growing the global game

Although tennis participation has declined in traditional tennis-playing nations since the mid-1980s, the ITF has actively sought to spread tennis into new areas of the world. In 1976, it began a global development programme, which became operational in 1991 when regional development officers (RDOs) were appointed. Their role was to assist and advise national associations, conduct coach education courses, introduce children



CHANGING FOCUS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF COMMUNITY TENNIS

Excerpted from *Sport Development in Action*

to tennis, run player training workshops, organise regional competitions, and identify talented players. Currently, there are 10 RDOs spread across Africa, Asia, Central and South America, Oceania, and Europe.

The RDOs use the ITF's 'Tennis Play and Stay' campaign, with its slogans of 'serve, rally, score' and 'easy, fun, healthy' to attract children into tennis. They initially used 'Mini Tennis', a modified format, to ensure their enjoyment and continued participation. This represented a change of approach away from traditional repetitive coaching of technique, to getting youngsters on court just having fun playing modified tennis games, with little or no coaching (Bowers 2013).

In 1996, 'Tennis 10s' replaced Mini Tennis, to introduce children under 10 years to tennis. It used 'slower balls', giving them more time to play the game than regular tennis balls (see Facts and figures 8.2). In 2012, another initiative, 'Tennis Xpress', was launched using slower balls to allow adults to learn tennis.

The RDOs' activities have generated a significant increase in ITF membership, particu-
larly among developing countries, with over 100 countries committed to the 'Tennis Play and Stay' campaign.

Questions

1. When, why, and how did the ITF intervene in global tennis?
2. What campaign and modifications has the ITF introduced into tennis?
 - How has this changed the approach to learning to play tennis?
 - In a sport of your choice, what modifications have made it more relevant and appealing to (a) children and (b) adults?

FACTS and FIGURES 8.2

Slower tennis balls: a 'development in sport' innovation

The development of slower-bounce balls has made it easier and more enjoyable for play-
ers of all ages to learn to play tennis, compared to the previous use of faster, regular tennis balls. A sequence of slower balls, known as 'red, orange, green' after traffic lights, was adopted by the ITF in 2007 for youngsters involved in Tennis 10s: red being the slowest (75% slower than a regular ball), orange (50% slower), and green (25% slower) (Bowers 2013).

Since the adoption of slower balls, research has shown that children have more fun, hit more balls, and can use more tactics. The inclusion of slower balls in modified formats has been accompanied by the use of lighter, smaller racquets and reduced court sizes.

Since 2012, the ITF has made it obligatory for all under-10-year tennis competitions worldwide to use slower balls.



CHANGING FOCUS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF COMMUNITY TENNIS

Excerpted from *Sport Development in Action*

Question

Can you think of an equipment innovation that has improved the appeal of another sport, and what effect it has had?

COACHING AND DEVELOPMENT

During the 1920s and 1930s, there was limited effort by clubs to actively recruit and develop young players. Tennis was perceived as an adult game, and if young players played, it was alongside adults in tennis clubs, or in school-based competitions. After the Second World War, however, there was a growing awareness by the NZLTA and their PAs of the need to develop junior players, especially those with the talent to potentially become world-class players (Elenio 1986).

To facilitate this, NZLTA established a junior advisory committee in 1963, to organise visits by overseas professionals to conduct coaching clinics for young players, select regional training squads, provide national training and tournament opportunities, send junior teams to Australia and encourage some players to accept tennis scholarships at USA universities (Elenio 1986; Romanos 2013). From 1979, these responsibilities were assumed by a full-time coaching and development officer appointed by the NZLTA, although the junior advisory committee continued to provide recommendations on junior tennis.

A nationwide review of coaching in the 1970s prompted the development of a coaching programme. This involved local professional coaches in clubs and schools and established the foundations for a national coach education programme (Elenio 1986). While this provided a framework for coaching and training coaches, little consideration was given to matching this with the development of the community game to meet participants' needs and what they wanted to play. Each PA administered its own tennis competitions, and although there was a pathway for talented players, and the game was gradually diversifying to allow midweek ladies tennis and mixed, business house, twilight competitions for adults, there was no nationally coordinated development pathway for community players. Tennis was still seen as an adult game that children could play. In 1988, 'Kiwi Tennis', a modified game for children (5–12 years), was introduced to primary schools, as part the KiwiSport programme instigated by the central government sport agency, the Hillary Commission for Sport and Recreation (Hillary Commission 1988).



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Excerpted from *Sport Development in Action*

However, within clubs there were no nationally promoted modified tennis formats for junior players. Clubs and secondary schools were left to deliver their own playing opportunities, with committed coaches, mainly club professionals and teachers, being responsible for coaching and developing players. In secondary schools, annual inter-school fixtures were contested, especially between traditional single-sex schools, and by the late 1970s some of these schools had begun arranging their own overseas tours for promising players.

National primary–intermediate schools’ tennis competitions for individual boys and girls began in 1983, although since 1999 these have continued as separate North Island and South Island competitions. In 1993, national secondary schools’ teams tennis competitions were instigated for boys’ and girls’ school teams, and then from 1994 mixed teams. These various school competitions are run on a knockout basis, initially in each PA, then in each region, with finals tournaments being organised by the national body.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How was tennis perceived as a sport in the nineteenth century, and why?
2. What was the dominant tennis focus in NZ during the twentieth century of (a) community tennis, and (b) the national body?
3. What factors contributed to the decline in tennis participation at the end of the twentieth century?
4. How did the ITF respond to this decline?



CHANGING FOCUS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF COMMUNITY TENNIS

Excerpted from *Sport Development in Action*

A PLAN FOR RESTRUCTURING AND REVITALISING TENNIS

Until the start of the twenty-first century, tennis in NZ was governed and administered by TNZ, the national body which had replaced the NZLTA in 1989, and its now 25 autonomous PAs, each with its own agenda, constituent clubs and schools. TNZ remained primarily pre-occupied with breeding the next generation of talent and success of its elite players, while the PAs, through their clubs and schools, each fostered the development and delivery of tennis in their own communities.

In 2003, TNZ undertook a comprehensive 'health check' of the state of tennis in NZ, after several attempts in the 1990s to confront the issues facing the game (TNZ 2005). This was triggered by concern about the low profile of tennis in NZ, lack of success of its elite players on the international stage, continuing decline in participation in clubs, and fragmented structure of the sport. Subsequently, TNZ commissioned a group, known as the 'T21 working party', to examine the organisational structure of tennis within NZ, and report on options for the most effective structure for the future. Their report, 'For the Good of the Game' (TNZ 2004), indicated the existing structure of "25 Provincial Associations was so uneven in terms of population, turnover, capability, and responsiveness, that it did not offer a national infrastructure necessary to drive the promotion and development of tennis in New Zealand" (TNZ 2005: 2). It also recommended the need for more professional and strategic leadership and management by TNZ and its board, and the adoption of a more holistic approach to tennis as a sport.

The findings of the report were circulated throughout the tennis community, and after consultation with the PAs, it was agreed the organisation of tennis be restructured and a regional model adopted. Feedback on regional alternatives were sought and collated in the 'Maiden Report', after Sir Colin Maiden who coordinated it (TNZ 2006a). This report called for strong leadership by TNZ, consolidation of the PAs, and common strategic goals to be set across tennis as a sport organisation.



CHANGING FOCUS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF COMMUNITY TENNIS

Excerpted from *Sport Development in Action*

The report and need for restructuring were accepted. It required the 25 PAs to merge into six Regions, or remain autonomous, but linked to a region (TNZ 2006b). “It was believed that this would assist in creating an environment of collaboration, leadership, sustainability and growth in the sport” (Gryphon Governance Consultants 2011: 25). Although this has occurred, the work required to facilitate the change, level of engagement needed to get agreement, and having associations opt out and remain autonomous, added to its complexity and cost (Gryphon Governance Consultants 2011).

This process of restructuring and improvement in organisational capability was supported by the central government sport agency SPARC. They categorised tennis as a ‘revitalisation’ sport, and provided TNZ with substantial investment and professional advice over a three-year period (2006–2008), contingent upon TNZ’s willingness to change, improve its leadership, management, and capability, and complete the regional restructure (TNZ 2006b).

TNZ subsequently adopted a more corporate governance model, and with its six Regions worked to create a more vertically integrated structure for tennis in an effort to function as ‘one team’ (TNZ 2009). This collaboration provided TNZ with the opportunity to introduce a nationally driven, regionally delivered development programme, to address the ongoing decline in community tennis participation.

AN INCREASING FOCUS ON COMMUNITY TENNIS

Although ‘increasing participation’ was one of seven priorities in TNZ’s 2004–2007 Strategic Plan, community tennis continued to decline. This was attributable to both external factors, such as societal change and sport diversification and commercialisation; and internal causes, including: the conservative and exclusive attitudes of clubs, their members and professional club coaches, the latter keen to preserve the status quo and their livelihoods; the ageing base of club players, expense of upgrading depreciating club facilities and its impact on increasing club memberships, and the disproportionate focus on coaching elite junior players; the lack of age-appropriate, appealing formats for young people; and limited interest in, and accessibility for, recreational and casual players to club courts.



CHANGING FOCUS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF COMMUNITY TENNIS

Excerpted from *Sport Development in Action*

Although TNZ had insufficient capability and resources to address this decline, they realised the environment in which community tennis operated was changing rapidly, and that they “must find ways – actively – to meet the needs of the 21st century” (TNZ 2005: 6). Instead of continuing to just offer traditional tennis, clubs needed to be more attractive, inclusive, and ready to adopt change, take note of customer needs, and provide more appealing, alternative options of the game to enable “the thousands of people who first try tennis on public courts. . . to continue playing the game” (Vail 2007: 579) (see Case studies 8.1 and 8.2).

CASE STUDY 8.1

Community tennis opportunities in the UK

Rob Dearing, Head of Tennis Delivery and Innovation, Lawn Tennis Association, London UK.

Although tennis had its origins in England, where the sport subsequently grew in popularity and profile, by the 1990s its participation began to decline. Some suggested this coincided with the UK's dwindling presence in the sport at the elite level, others claimed it was related to the lack of public access to club courts for social, recreational players, the cost of playing, and/or the game being perceived as a middle- to upper-class sport. In the last decade, the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) has shifted its strategic focus from prioritised elite tennis to balancing this with improving community tennis, as indicated by its vision to have 'more people playing tennis more often'. The emphasis now is on both creating winners and using the publicity to promote participation, and investing in the grassroots to develop pathways for more players to participate, with the prospect of more talent emerging from a larger pool. The changing emphasis was evident in the LTA's whole sport plan for Sport England, and the latter's considerable funding support for the LTA to drive tennis participation not only in clubs, but beyond this traditional focus into schools, universities, and wider community through play for free, or pay and play in parks, indoor tennis venues and community facilities.



CHANGING FOCUS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF COMMUNITY TENNIS

Excerpted from *Sport Development in Action*

The LTA's strategic focus shift, reflected in its customer focused structures, initiatives, and campaigns, has seen tennis participation begin to grow following two decades of decline. It has devised a player pathway of different types of tennis opportunities and experiences to meet the needs and interests of a diversity of participants, beginning and entry-level Mini-Tennis, which comprises the ITF's red, orange, and green progression of modified formats for 3-10-year-olds. In addition to regular singles and double tennis tournaments, the pathway also includes new, more exciting and time-friendly modified competition formats, such as FAST4 in which first to four games wins; Touchtennis, a fast, five-a-side format played with shorter racquets, foam ball, and portable net on 12-metre courts on any flat surface; and similar to TNZ, Cardio Tennis and Tennis Xpress. The LTA also partners with the Tennis Foundation to make tennis more inclusive and accessible through Schools Tennis and Disability Tennis. Supporting its player initiatives, the LTA has a large-scale coach and volunteer development programme, which is essential to the continued growth of the sport. To further expand its participation base, the LTA has designed specific campaigns to attract social, recreational players (e.g. Great British Tennis Weekend, Tennis for Kids). These have sought to remove barriers to participation, such as: perceptions around cost access, awareness, and having someone to play with, by providing free options to trial tennis, then ongoing opportunities to play. These campaigns annually introduce over 60,000 adults and 20,000 children to tennis. The LTA invests in clubs to improve or install facilities realising players' experience of the game is critical to their retention. They have also introduced an innovative online court booking and tap in gate entry system, using the ClubSpark (www.clubspark.co.uk) technology platform. This allows individuals to reserve a court online, gain access on arrival without the need for staffing at the facility, and have floodlights automatically turned on for evening bookings. In its first 18 months of operation, over 19,000 recreational player used this system to book a court (average six bookings per person). The LTA sees considerable upside for this system in tennis.

Questions

1. Why did tennis decline in UK?
2. What has the LTA done to reverse this decline?
3. What effects have its (a) player pathway and (b) modified formats had on this reversal?
4. What is ClubSpark and how has it benefited tennis participation?



CHANGING FOCUS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF COMMUNITY TENNIS

Excerpted from *Sport Development in Action*

5. Are you aware of another sport with a similar facility access system for casual participants? If so, how effective has this been in increasing participation?

CASE STUDY 8.2

Junior and youth tennis in the USA

Craig Morris, General Manager, Community Tennis and Youth Tennis, United States Tennis Association, Orlando, Florida, USA

The United States Tennis Association (USTA) is the national body for tennis in the USA, with responsibility to promote and develop grassroots to professional tennis. In 2017, it had 653,054 members, down 5.6% from 2015, with 178,471 junior and youth and 474,583 adult members. From a community tennis perspective, a USTA review to address this decline revealed all its tennis initiatives were performance-oriented, and to engage more players would require the introduction of easier entry, recreational options that catered to their needs. Community tennis is delivered in the USA by multiple providers. The USTA offers competition tennis with rankings for individuals and teams of all ages. High schools and social, are available at facilities in parks, schools, hotels and resorts, gated or non-gated homeowners' association communities and through commercial tennis providers. Together they cater for the 18.08m people who played tennis in the USA at least once in 2016. Of these 9.86m were regular players (i.e. playing 10 or more times in the year), comprising 2.68m junior and youth and 7.18m adult players. In 2007, the USTA were early adopting and promoting the ITF's 'Tennis Play and Stay' philosophy to attract more children to play tennis. In 2017, the USTA launched 'Net Generation', a new, unified children and youth friendly programme, to attract the next generation of 5-18 year-olds to play tennis and inspire them to play it more often. The programme provides a pathway of junior and youth initiatives. It begins by introducing tennis to children in schools through physical education classes, followed by an easy entry into the sport using shorter courts, lower-bouncing balls and lighter racquets to have fun and learn the basics of tennis, before progressing through ages and stage appropriate initiatives that cater for the recreational or competitive needs of young players. The USTA has created a comprehensive marketing strategy to advertise 'Net Generation', which began with its launch at the US Tennis Open, and includes its own website (www.netgeneration.com) and app, through which parents can contact clubs and coaches approved to deliver Net Generation and enrol their youngsters. It has also enlisted 32 social media brand influencers, known as 'Netset Ambassadors', aged 5-18 years with a strong social media presence, to showcase Net Generation by



CHANGING FOCUS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF COMMUNITY TENNIS

Excerpted from *Sport Development in Action*

promoting the brand to their social media followers. Initially, the strategy has targeted and educated providers to sign up under Net Generation. This requires all providers, including coaches, teachers, and volunteers to be accredited by first going through a Safe Play orientation, which includes a background check.

Questions

1. How has the USTA sought to increase participation?
2. What novel approach has the USTA adopted to promote Net Generation directly to participants?
3. Are you aware of any other sports using social media? How effective has it been in promoting participation?

While the restructure of tennis gradually improved the organisational capability and integration within the sport, it was apparent that this would not deliver lasting change. This required TNZ to change its blueprint and adopt a more balanced, holistic approach to their sport, instead of its overprioritisation of elite tennis. The emergence of this approach is evident in TNZ's later strategic mission "to lead the sustainable growth of tennis in New Zealand and ensure success on the international stage" (TNZ 2012: inside cover). To achieve the former, and imprint lasting, positive change within community tennis, TNZ needed to formulate a national development programme with an integrated player pathway framework (TNZ 2004, 2007).

Fortuitously, the first step in creating this programme occurred in 2006, when two tennis CoachForce Officers, appointed by RSTs in Waikato-Bay and Canterbury, confronted by a lack of existing resources to attract youngsters into tennis and involve teachers as elementary coaches, collaborated to compile *Grasshoppers: New Tennis for Kids* (Wilkinson and Chalmers 2006). This resource, to support an entry-level, mini-tennis programme for primary school children (5–10 years), was subsequently adopted by TNZ as its first national development initiative (see Case study 8.3).



CHANGING FOCUS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF COMMUNITY TENNIS

Excerpted from *Sport Development in Action*

Case Study 8.3

Grasshoppers: Tennis New Zealand's first development initiative

Ian Francis, former National Game Development Manager, Tennis New Zealand, Auckland, New Zealand

Grasshoppers was an entry-level, modified mini-tennis initiative designed to create enjoyment playing tennis among primary school children (5-10 years) that would capture their interest and see them register as junior players in local tennis clubs. Researched and compiled by two CoachForce Officers during 2006, the influences of international tennis development and coaching best practice, KiwiSport modification, and FMS to improve children's physical literacy are evident in Grasshoppers. It was TNZ's first development initiative to increase participation. It presented a new games-based approach to tennis, moving away from traditional repetitive technique coaching, to a more 'learn whilst playing' experience of modified games; and used modified equipment (smaller racquets and courts, and slow-bounce tennis balls), which was not widely used at the time (see Facts and figures 8.1 and 8.2). This allowed it to be played on any flat surface, either outdoors or indoors. The Grasshopper manual provided a progression of 20 modified tennis games for 5-7 and 8-10-year-olds. Each game, with appealing titles, such as 'Funky Tunes' and 'Space Invaders', comprised an explanation of how to organise and play it, the equipment required, learning outcomes and game understanding questions. These games acted as user-friendly sessions for coaches to conduct primary school visits.

The implementation of Grasshoppers saw TNZ's RDMs and RDOs sign up primary schools to three-year agreements. These ensured each year trained local coaches delivered four 30-minute sessions of the programme to children, and teachers received in-service training to be able to continue delivering tennis and/or its basic sport and movement skills in their physical education lessons. After the in-school sessions, Grasshoppers tournaments were organised so children could play on local club courts to establish a link with them for their future involvement.

Questions

1. What is Grasshoppers? List three advantages it had over traditional tennis.
2. Who were Grasshoppers intended audience and where did it access them?
3. Do you know another sport who targets the school market? If so, how successful have they been in providing children with a 'taste' of their sport?



CHANGING FOCUS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF COMMUNITY TENNIS

Excerpted from *Sport Development in Action*

To drive its national programme, including the implementation of Grasshoppers, in 2007 TNZ, with SPARC sport development funding, appointed its inaugural national game development manager (NGDM). The decision to establish this position reflected TNZ's shifting focus to foster the development and future growth of community tennis, as opposed to their earlier preoccupation with talented player development.

The first task of the NGDM was to launch Grasshoppers. To achieve this, six regional development managers (RDMs) were appointed, one in each Region, later complemented by six regional development officers (RDOs) stationed in key PAs within these regions. This regional team provided the platform for the growth of community tennis in clubs and primary schools. They worked in clubs, using a Club Toolkit, to improve their capability and delivery of services, and implement Grasshoppers in primary schools to excite youngsters to the possibilities of tennis and encourage them to register as junior players in these clubs. TNZ to promote the benefits of tennis has since 2009 also run annual 'Come Play' national open day campaigns to encourage people to visit their local club and try tennis.

During this first phase of TNZ's national development programme, although club tennis player numbers continued to drop from 43,418 (2006/07) down to 39,102 (2010/11), the

number of children who sampled tennis through Grasshoppers in primary schools rose significantly from 4,000 (2007/08) to 62,713 (2010/11). Although Grasshoppers only provided a 'taste' of tennis, rather than regular participation, the interest it created raised the profile of tennis at community level. TNZ also began to register casual and recreational participants who played outside regular club-based competitions, and include them in their annual participation census. These players were mainly involved in regional 'business house' twilight competitions.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. When and why did TNZ respond to the decline in participation? Who influenced them to intervene 'top-down' into community tennis? What was the nature of this intervention?
2. What was the objective of Grasshoppers? How successful was it in achieving this objective?



CHANGING FOCUS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF COMMUNITY TENNIS

Excerpted from *Sport Development in Action*

A CHANGE IN DIRECTION

Although driven by the sport pyramid analogy of growing the base of club players to increase the possibility of discovering a future champion (TNZ 2011), there was emerging a 'bigger picture' understanding by TNZ to take the game outside clubs, and engage with the wider tennis community to capture the involvement of casual and recreational players. This was evident in the comment by TNZ's CE:

The challenge that lies ahead is how we continue to engage with all the participants who play tennis, in either organised or unorganised forms of the game, to ensure that we remain relevant and a first choice for those currently playing and for those youngsters who have perhaps tasted tennis through Grasshoppers.

(TNZ 2012: 4)

This thinking coincided with the start of a change in direction in TNZ's development programme, and was apparent in its strategic objective of 'more people playing tennis' (TNZ 2012: 5). A similar change occurred in UK, where the LTA's mission shifted from its previous 'winning' to its current 'more people playing tennis more often' (LTA 2016: 33) (see Case study 8.1). In NZ, this witnessed the appearance of a more inclusive approach to community tennis development, one focused not just on clubs, but on participants and their needs. This approach surfaced from an amalgam of factors:

- The appointment of a replacement NGDM in 2011.
- The ongoing disquiet about declining club numbers.
- The momentum created by Grasshoppers highlighted the need to introduce further participation initiatives and open up tennis to casual and recreational participants.
- The influence of ITF's 'Tennis Play and Stay' campaign, and its rule changes, which from 2012 required the worldwide use of slower bounce balls and smaller court sizes in all under-10-year tennis competitions (see Facts and figures 8.1 and 8.2 and Case studies 8.1 and 8.2).
- The increasing focus by SPARC on community sport, and the potential of tennis to grow participation in clubs and schools (SPARC 2009).



CHANGING FOCUS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF COMMUNITY TENNIS

Excerpted from *Sport Development in Action*

In 2009, SPARC shifted its focus to concentrate on community sport (SPARC 2009). It partnered with NSOs and RSTs to counter declining participation in clubs and schools. A community sport growth strategy was introduced in 2010 (SPARC 2010), with account-abilities attached to sport development funding to achieve specific community sport participation, contribution (volunteering) and capability outcomes (see Table 7.1). Select sports, with the potential to impact these outcomes, were targeted for specialist support and investment. Seven sports were targeted in 2010, and after collaborative partnerships were established with them, which required the formulation of whole-of-sport plans and community sport development programmes; a further seven sports, including tennis, were added at the end of 2011 (TNZ 2012).

As a targeted sport, community sport development specialists from now Sport NZ, worked with TNZ's new NGDM to: design a whole-of-sport overview identifying the development pathways underpinning the delivery of tennis; determine within these pathways the scope of community tennis; and then use this to draft a community tennis plan to grow participation. Further community sport investment from Sport NZ, allowed the NGDM to appoint two national game development officers (NGDOs), and sustain TNZ's funding support for its regional delivery network of RDMs and RDOs. However, not all clubs welcomed Sport NZ's investment to grow community tennis participation, especially of casual and recreational players, as it would not contribute to club membership and literally "turn them into little more than court-hire agencies" (Roughan 2012: A25).

In the meantime, despite Grasshoppers' success, community club numbers continued to decline. A review of Grasshoppers and its impact on junior club membership in 2012 (Tong 2012) revealed its effectiveness in introducing over 80,000 primary school children to tennis by 2010/11, but provided no evidence of a corresponding transfer of these children into club tennis. Indeed, the overall number of club players had dropped to 39,102 in 2010/11, which including a 10% decline in children under 12 years playing tennis (see Figure 8.2).



CHANGING FOCUS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF COMMUNITY TENNIS

Excerpted from *Sport Development in Action*

It was found, while Grasshoppers provided an exposure to tennis and generated interest in tennis in schools, it existed in isolation. It was a stand-alone, in-school initiative, not part of, or leading into, an integrated national pathway of age and stage appropriate, modified tennis initiatives for children in either schools or clubs.

There were also ongoing issues with club professional coaches concerned about the impact of school tennis and teacher coaches on their clubs and income, and Grasshoppers' dependency on local coaches and short-term KiwiSport funding. The review concluded that "a more holistic approach needs to be taken and an integrated participation pathway be created with flexible programmes to aid the continued development of young participants" (Tong 2012: 2).

The review advocated a new approach to address the lack of transition of participants from school to clubs, limited menu of appealing opportunities in clubs to attract and retain youngsters, and need for more trained grassroots coaches (Tong 2012). This new approach was underpinned by the design of a player development pathway, with an integrated series of age and stage appropriate mini-tennis initiatives catering for children's needs, which could be delivered in schools and clubs.

Grasshoppers would continue to be used in schools to provide a tennis experience for children, and the opportunity to actively recruit them into the proposed player pathway initiatives.

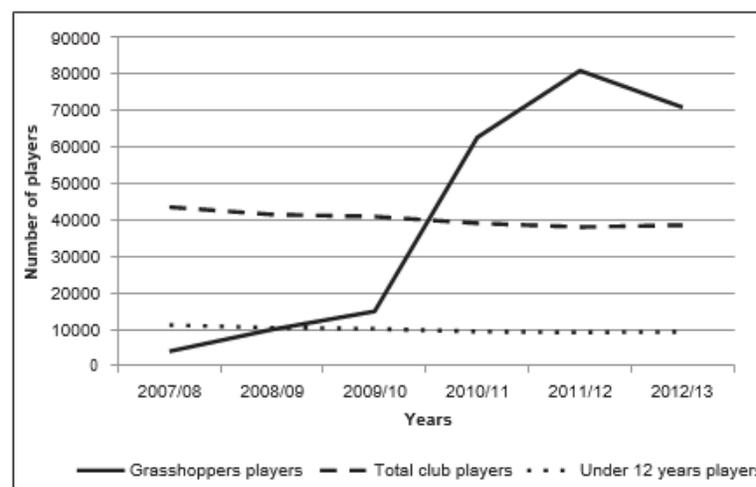


FIGURE 8.2 Grasshoppers school tennis players versus total club and U12 years club players in New Zealand, 2007/08 to 2012/13

NB: Before 2010/11 the statistics collected on children were for under 11 years.

Source: TNZ Annual Reports.



CHANGING FOCUS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF COMMUNITY TENNIS

Excerpted from *Sport Development in Action*

It was also envisaged a coach development pathway be configured to match the player pathway. This was to ensure there were sufficient 'grassroots' coaches trained to run Grasshoppers in schools, and assist professional coaches run future mini-tennis initiatives in clubs.

The emergence of TNZ's new approach was strongly influenced by two close affiliations: first, with the ITF through its global 'Tennis Play and Stay' campaign which introduced its Tennis 10s rule changes in 2012, stipulating all children under 10 years of age worldwide must play tennis with slower-bounce red, orange, and green balls on the appropriately sized courts, and more recently its Tennis Xpress initiative for beginner adults to play tennis using slower-bounce balls, rather than regulation yellow tennis balls (see Facts and figures 8.1 and 8.2); second, with TA and their endorsement of TNZ using and customising their tennis development initiatives – 'Tennis Hot Shots' for children, 'Cardio Tennis' for adults and coach education courses (TNZ 2014a).

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why did TNZ change the direction of its national development programme? What factors influenced this change?
2. What impact has the 'learning by playing' approach and slow-bounce tennis balls had on the development of the community tennis? How have they improved playing tennis, and for whom?



CHANGING FOCUS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF COMMUNITY TENNIS

Excerpted from *Sport Development in Action*

PLANS, PATHWAYS, AND PROGRAMME

Following the groundwork with Sport NZ to create a whole-of-sport framework of pathways to underpin tennis, the NGDM in 2013 used this as a blueprint to compile a community sport 'Participation Strategy' for TNZ (TNZ 2013). This focused on its central player development pathways of integrated opportunities for current and prospective club and school players, to engage both the untapped potential market of people who play tennis, and those who want to play tennis outside the formal membership structure. For example, Sport NZ's *2013/14 Active New Zealand Survey*, identified 209,000 adults over 16 years as having played tennis at least once in the previous 12 months (Sport NZ 2015) (see Pause and ponder 8.1). TA identified a similar latent demand to play tennis in Australia, especially for social and fitness reasons, with a preference for 'pay-to-play' to access tennis facilities, rather than becoming seasonal club members (Richards 2017). While the LTA introduced ClubSpark, an innovative online booking and entry system, to engage more casual and recreational players, who can now use an app to access courts in the UK (see Case study 8.1). For similar reasons, TNZ is keen to establish a comparable system "where people can download an app to their phone and book to play on a court at any participating club in the country" (Long 2017: B6). Launched in 2014, the Participation Strategy was endorsed by TNZ's Regions. It aligns with TNZ's Strategic Plan (2014–2017), and provides a blueprint for the future growth and development of community tennis in NZ (TNZ 2013). The strategy established an ambitious goal to increase tennis participation in NZ by 20% to 150,000 in 2017. This figure was calculated by combining all registered competitive and 'pay-to-play' casual tennis players. Improving the appeal and accessibility of tennis clubs, increasing participatory opportunities, expanding and reviving competitions, and enhancing the profile of tennis were all identified as key to achieving this goal (TNZ 2013).

To increase participatory opportunities, new initiatives identified in TNZ's player development pathways were piloted and launched. The first was 'Tennis Hot Shots' (see Case study 8.4), aimed at children (5–10 years), which allowed clubs to better cater for children's needs. It comprises a sequence of child-appropriate, mini-tennis opportunities, using the 'traffic light' progression of red, orange, and green slow-bounce tennis balls, modified equipment, and smaller court sizes (TNZ 2015b) (see Facts and figures 8.2), and offers a solution to bridging the gap between school-based Grasshoppers and clubs (TNZ 2015c) (see Figure 8.2). Tennis Hot Shots presents an option for children enthused by Grasshoppers in schools to now register in a pathway of similar child-centred tennis initiatives within clubs.



CHANGING FOCUS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF COMMUNITY TENNIS

Excerpted from *Sport Development in Action*

CASE STUDY 8.4

Tennis Hot Shots: Tennis New Zealand's entry-level initiative

Jamie Tong, National Game Development Manager, Tennis New Zealand, Auckland, New Zealand

Tennis Hot Shots was piloted by TNZ in 2013, then launched in 2014. It is a game-base, starter programme aimed at children under 10 years, played on smaller courts with shorter

racquets and slow-bounce balls, and uses the ITF's 'serve, rally, score' slogan to promote a practical 'learning through play' approach. This allows children to learn the skills of tennis, by having fun serving, rallying, and scoring right from the start, without coaching.

Tennis Hot Shots uses slower-bounce balls (see Facts and figures 8.2), so children can develop their skills as they are ready to progress through four sequential pathway stages, each designated by a ball colour and approximate age group. These include: Blue (3–5 years), Red (5–8 years), Orange (8–10 years), and Green (9+ years).

The Tennis Hot Shots programme includes: visiting primary schools to run introductory tennis awareness sessions to excite children to the possibilities of tennis and recruit them into clubs; training coaches to deliver Tennis Hot Shots; implementing Tennis Hot Shots in clubs as their entry level to tennis and the club; and running tournaments for children to test their Tennis Hot Shots skills. Tennis Hot Shots is supported by a coaching manual, equipment, and fence banners for coaches (TNZ 2015b). The manual contains detailed sessions for coaches, tailored to different ages and skill levels of children, with the duration, size of court and racquets used, and bounce of balls increasing progressively through the sessions (TNZ 2015c).

Tennis Hot Shots has its own website (www.tennishotshots.kiwi) and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/TennisHotShotsNZ) which offer information and allow players to share experiences and register online.

In 2014/15, Tennis Hot Shots involved 71,511 children participating at schools, through clubs, receiving coaching, or competing in tournaments. While the majority of children (61,241) just had fun sampling tennis in schools, 10,270 had a more intense experience being coached and playing in clubs and competitions. Although in its early stages, 180 or 58% of TNZ's professional coaches have been trained to deliver Tennis Hot Shots and it is being offered in 87 or 20% of NZ's tennis clubs.

Questions

1. What are the main features of Tennis Hot Shots as (a) a recruitment initiative, and (b) a playing programme?
2. Calculate the percentage of players that Tennis Hot Shots has transferred into clubs? How does this compare with an entry-level initiative in a sport you are familiar with?



CHANGING FOCUS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF COMMUNITY TENNIS

Excerpted from *Sport Development in Action*

Since 2014, TNZ has also added a number of alternative tennis initiatives for adults within its pathways who want to play for social and fitness reasons. Although not main-stream like Tennis Hot Shots, these initiatives, such as Beach Tennis, Cardio Tennis, and Tennis Xpress, are about engaging more casual, pay-to-play adults keen to play recreational tennis. Cardio Tennis is a group fitness-based initiative, combining tennis with cardiovascular exercise in an hour-long aerobic workout, set to fast-pace music. Tennis Xpress caters mainly for beginner adults, where a learn by playing approach, using slower-bounce balls and simple scoring, makes it easy to play.

To complement its 'Participation Strategy' centred on its player pathway, TNZ introduced its 'Coaching Strategy' in 2014, to create an aligned coach development pathway aimed at increasing the number and quality of coaches to meet its players' needs (TNZ 2014b). For each pathway stage, coaches receive appropriate educative opportunities to attain the knowledge and skills commensurate with the age and stage of the players they are coaching (TNZ 2014b).

Since TNZ introduced these club-based development initiatives, club professional coaches have been more receptive to implementing these in their clubs. Instead of their previous resistance to Grasshoppers, they realised the potential of these new initiatives to increase club player numbers, fill their coaching ranks and supplement their income. By 2016, 526 coaches had attended the new 'Coaching Strategy' courses, with 180 professional coaches qualifying to deliver Tennis Hot Shots in their clubs (TNZ 2016). This mindset change by the professional club coaches, and their increasing delivery of the new initiatives, has seen a decline in regional development staff. While a number of Regions still fund their own RDMs and RDOs, TNZ has significantly reduced its funding support for these positions.

This shift in regional delivery to using existing local club professional coaches in sports such as tennis and golf provides a viable, alternative option for programme implementation. If club professional coaches can be convinced of the value of the change and innovation associated with a national development programme, it provides these sports with an in-house source of full-time personnel committed to growing the sport and with it potentially their incomes.



CHANGING FOCUS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF COMMUNITY TENNIS

Excerpted from *Sport Development in Action*

The changing direction of TNZ, and its concern for greater market share of sport participants, saw it change its annual reporting of participation numbers. In 2015/16, instead of reporting just its regular club players, which had declined further to 37,740, and its casual participants which had increased to 21,555, it added a new category of 72,021 national pro-gramme participants, most of whom only sampled the sport through Tennis Hot Shots school visits. TNZ began to portray in its reporting it had over doubled its participation numbers to 131,316 (TNZ 2015a). TNZ even altered its strategic objective in line with this debatable statistic to lift tennis participation to 175,000 by 2020 (TNZ 2016). This highlights a key issue in sport development of there being no agreed official definition of 'participation' (Nicholson, Hoyer, and Houlihan 2011), to distinguish between regular participants and those just sampling a sport. It also reflects NSOs attempts to satisfy over-ambitious participation outcomes of national sport agencies and their investment accountabilities, and/ or present over-optimistic images of the health of their sport to appease stakeholders and sponsors (see Pause and ponder 8.1).

PAUSE and PONDER 8.1

~~Scepticism~~ about sport participation numbers

Reading media reports on the state of tennis participation in leading tennis countries such as Australia, the UK, and the USA, there is a conflict of statistics about whether the sport is growing or declining. The conflict arises from the source and method of collection of the statistics in these reports and reflect the adage that 'facts are stubborn things, but statistics are pliable'.



CHANGING FOCUS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF COMMUNITY TENNIS

Excerpted from *Sport Development in Action*

Mander (2013), with reference to tennis participation reporting in Australia, argues the selective use of statistics by NSOs is both misleading and counterproductive to assessing how their sport is performing in relation to the effectiveness of their development strategies. The problem is there is no one universal definition of 'participation'. In other words, how is a 'participant' defined, and then how is a 'regular participant' differentiated in terms of time and frequency of participation. A lack of clarity around these definitions has produced confusion and the arbitrary use of undefined participation statistics.

This has seen media select participation statistics that suit their storyline, and sports use broader and broader definitions of participation in their annual reports to satisfy central government community sport participation targets and investment accountabilities and inspire confidence in stakeholders. As Mander (2013: 2) suggests, because tennis participation in Australia remains undefined, "it seems to be morphing over time into a definition that is a long way from the number of people playing tennis".

Defining participation and gathering reliable, comparable data over time to measure and report on participation targets and trends is imperative if NSO development strategies and initiatives are to be effective.

Questions

1. Why is there scepticism over participation statistics?
2. Why do sports selectively use participation statistics? What advantages and disadvantages does this have?
3. How is a participant defined in a sport of your choice? Is this an accurate measure of regular participation?

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why did TNZ replace Grasshoppers with Tennis Hot Shots?
2. How was TNZ's development programme initially delivered? Why is this changing, and how?
3. Why is it difficult to measure participation in sport? How can this make participation statistics used by NSOs subject to different interpretations. How could the validity of these statistics be improved?



CHANGING FOCUS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF COMMUNITY TENNIS

Excerpted from *Sport Development in Action*

CONCLUSION

TNZ has turned a 'development of sport' corner in the last decade, intervening 'top-down' with Sport NZ's support to revitalise and grow community tennis. Historically, tennis in NZ was developed 'bottom-up' by influential volunteers; however, limited efforts were made to extend the game beyond clubs. Participation numbers peaked in the 1980s, and since then the popularity of the game has diminished, and with it a steady decline in those playing

community tennis. This was a consequence of a lack of awareness of the deteriorating state of the game, and a resistance to change by conservative club members and their professional tennis coaches steadfast on maintaining the exclusivity of the club domain, adult format of tennis, and ongoing search for talent. The latter was reinforced by TNZ's over-focus on high performance, and belief that international winning and success would inspire prospective participants to want to play tennis and reverse the downward trend in participation. The selection of tennis by NZ's national sport agencies, initially as a sport for revitalisation, and later targeted to grow its community game, enabled TNZ to improve its capability and that of its new regional centres, adopt a more balanced whole-of-sport approach, and have sufficient sport development funding to intervene to influence the development and delivery of community tennis. This saw a shift in mindset by TNZ, similar to the LTA in UK, away from primarily searching for talent to also fostering a 'play for life' enjoyment of the game, from focusing only on the club player to recognising casual and recreational participants, and from promoting just the traditional version of the game where TNZ's CEO suggests "we provide one size that fits all and expect everyone to fit into that" (Long 2017: B6) to introducing various modified tennis formats.



CHANGING FOCUS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF COMMUNITY TENNIS

Excerpted from *Sport Development in Action*

After being kick-started by Grasshoppers, which raised the profile of tennis in primary schools, but being stand-alone did not transfer youngsters into regular club-based competitions, TNZ has created integrated participation and coaching strategies and implemented aligned player and coach development pathways to grow and sustain community tennis. They have adopted and customised initiatives designed by TA and the ITF, especially Tennis Hot Shots, and incorporated these into its player pathway, and through its coach pathway trained club professional coaches to supplement their regional delivery network. These changes and innovations have revitalised community tennis, providing opportunities for competitive, recreational and casual players, and integrating tennis programmes within and between clubs and schools.

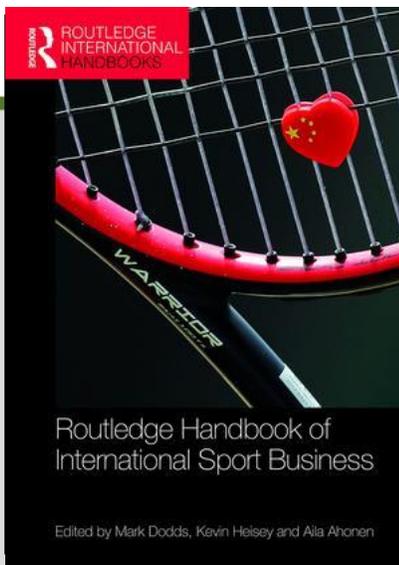
Early signs of TNZ's 'development of sport' intervention are promising. It has cemented entry-level initiatives into its pathway, however, it has yet to venture into secondary school tennis, and to date only introduced alternative social and fitness formats at the adult level. There is also work to be done to capture the casual, recreational tennis market, and qualify the participation figures used to measure its impact (Mander 2013).



CHAPTER

3

WOMEN'S TENNIS ASSOCIATION EFFORTS IN ASIAN MARKETS



This chapter is excerpted from
Routledge Handbook of International Sports Business
by Vicky Martin and Valentina Starkova
Edited by Mark Dodds, Kevin Heisey, Aila Ahonen

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WOMEN'S TENNIS ASSOCIATION EFFORTS IN ASIAN MARKETS

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Introduction

The history of tennis is rich and goes back to ancient times, with its rapid development in England in the nineteenth century. Tennis used to be played on the grass lawns of England and was considered a luxurious way of passing the time for elite society. However, tennis has changed dramatically since its introduction globally as a competitive sport. It has spread to all continents and is played in many countries. The Women's Tennis Association (WTA) tour was created over the years and, as an international organization, its goal is to promote tennis throughout the world. In 2009, Stacey Allaster, the CEO of the WTA tour, decided to pursue the Asian market and created a "Road Map" to Asia, with the idea of bringing more top players to Asia after the US Open. Asia is a great place in which to develop tennis and attract new fans to the game. With the successes of Li Na, the fanbase grew, and more tournaments were added to the Asian calendar. The China Open became a mandatory event of the year. However, there are problems associated with the move of tennis into Asia as the number of top players' withdrawals has increased. Many players believe that the added tournaments add more pressure to the already tight schedule.

Formative years of tennis

Tennis has a rich history with multiple stages to its development. In order to grasp current strategies of the tennis business, it is beneficial to review the history of tennis and its origins. Dunning, Malcom and Waddington (2004) researched the history of modern lawn tennis from its origins to the latter part of the nineteenth century. They argue that the game of what we now know today as "tennis" originated during medieval times and had distinctively different features from the folk games played in ancient times (Dunning *et al.* 2004). There is some evidence showing that ball games were played in the Greek and Roman empires (Dunning *et al.*, 2004). However, "[the games] were held in low esteem and not deemed manly in these patriarchal societies . . . winning and losing seem to have been of minor importance" (Dunning *et al.*, 2004, p. 104).

Tennis became very popular in England, both as a recreational modern-day activity for elite society, and as a highly regulated and competitive sport (Dunning *et al.*, 2004, p. 104). The sport rapidly developed on a larger scale "within the context of wider social processes



WOMEN'S TENNIS ASSOCIATION EFFORTS IN ASIAN MARKETS

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such as the development of a modern urban-industrial nation state and changing class and gender relations" (Dunning *et al.*, 2004, p. 104). Members of private clubs and respectable members of society had access to the game in the 1700s (Dunning *et al.*, 2004). They referred to it as "Field Tennis" and used any lawn surface they could find in their clubs or back yards (Dunning *et al.*, 2004). There were certain drawbacks to the ball that was used for the game of tennis, as it was not suitable for play on lawns (Dunning *et al.*, 2004). However, the game rapidly developed when Charles Goodyear discovered vulcanization as a treatment for the rubber ball (Dunning *et al.*, 2004). Vulcanization in essence increases the durability and elasticity of the ball (Dictionary.com). The ball had to be soft enough not to damage the grass, but at the same time bounce high enough for tennis players to be able to hit it back (Dunning *et al.*, 2004, p. 105). In December 1873, Major Walter Clopton Wingfield observed the popularity of "tennis" in England, and published a set of rules (Dunning *et al.*, 2004). Wingfield named the game "Sphairistrike" (Dunning *et al.*, 2004). The game originally looked like a mix of croquet and cricket, but was more elegant in form, with the scoring based on 15-point games, and the net was borrowed from badminton and tennis (Dunning *et al.*, 2004). The game "Sphairistrike" was an immediate success and began to replace both badminton and croquet as a new favourite activity of the higher classes (Dunning *et al.*, 2004).

During the nineteenth century, most dominant pastimes in England were "manly", requiring physical fitness and considered unsuitable for women (Dunning *et al.*, 2004). However, tennis was one of the sports that gave social opportunity to all ages and both sexes, and was considered as an activity suitable for women because it offered mild exercise (Dunning *et al.*, 2004). Ladies played exclusively at the privately owned country clubs (Dunning *et al.*, 2004). Slowly, women's tennis became more competitive even though women's events were considered less important than men's at that time. The Men's Singles Championship at Wimbledon was introduced in 1881, whereas the Ladies' Singles Championship was not introduced until 1884, and female athletes received significantly smaller amounts of prize money than that of the men's events. The men's tennis championships were the first to be played and the women had to wait patiently for the men to complete their matches before they could begin their own (Dunning *et al.*, 2004).



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Tennis became so popular that it spread out beyond the British Empire, mainly because the British army loved the sport and brought it to a new place every time it moved (Dunning *et al.*, 2004). Tennis was introduced to the United States in 1874 by Mary Ewing Outerbridge who played the sport while in Bermuda. Tennis was then introduced to Brazil and India in 1875, Germany in 1876, France in 1877 and Australia and Austria in 1878 (Dunning *et al.*, 2004). Unfortunately, there were many power struggles over who should be the main governing body of tennis. Finally, the matter was decided in October 1912, when the International Lawn Tennis Federation (ILTF) was founded in order to govern tennis throughout the world (Dunning *et al.*, 2004).

With the international growth of tennis, Yellis (n.d.) stated that tennis became more competitive and changed in many ways, such as being played with greater power, better equipment and more comfortable clothing. In addition, Yellis stated that tennis became more commercialized and evolved into an international sport business structure. Also, female athletes acquired a chance to be recognized internationally as gender barriers diminished significantly (Yellis, n.d.).

There has been a major shift with significant changes in the women's tennis professional tour, including an historic moment when women tennis players, for the first time in the history of the sport, were paid equal amounts in prize money as men at the Grand Slam tournaments. Equal pay occurred at the major four Grand Slam Tournaments: the US Open

WTA efforts in Asian markets

in 1973, the Australian Open in 2001, the French Open (Roland Garros) in 2006 and, finally, at Wimbledon in 2007 (Popovich, 2015).

The move of tennis into Asia

During the 1980s the growth in the sport of tennis continued its expansion around the world. According to Robson (2011), for the first time since computerized rankings were introduced in 1973, the entire top ten players in the WTA in 2011 hailed from different countries. Billie Jean King, former world number one tennis player, states:

[J]ust like advancements on technology, science and business are now originating more frequently from markets around the globe, professional tennis players are coming not just from powerhouses in America and Australia as they did previously but from many, many different countries.

Cited in Robson, 2011



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Billie Jean King points out that “[i]n [her] era, [they] didn’t have to play against the rest of the world, and now, tennis is truly global” (as cited in Robson, 2011). According to Robson, tennis was drifting away from the US, with the opening of new tennis centres all over the world providing more opportunities for potential players not needing to travel to the US to receive coaching and training. As a result of the shift from the US, Asia now recruits local talent and has developed new opportunities for bringing tennis into new markets for the Women’s Tennis Tour (Robson, 2011).

Marshall (2011) analysed the data from the rankings of the top 100 players in the world in the 2000s, and “for the first time, the likes of China, Thailand and South Korea were now being represented in the game’s elite”. The first revolutionary female athlete from China was Yi Jing-Qian who, in 2000, participated in her second Olympic Games and fourth Federation Cup appearance, and rose to her career highest WTA ranking of 70 (Marshall, 2011). After Li Ting and Sun Tiantian won gold medals in doubles for China in the Athens Olympics in 2004, their coach mentioned in the press conference the need as a country to invest in tennis in order to produce more top players (Marshall, 2011). The Chinese Tennis Association responded to this request and decided to invest \$725,000 in sending its women tennis players to compete abroad (Marshall, 2011). The efforts of the Chinese Tennis Association paid off when Li Na brought home the French Open Grand Slam title in 2011.

A former player and the ATP chairman, Chris Kermode, believes that “interest in the game in Asia, both on and off the court, is surging, with the emergence of Kei Nishikori as Japan’s first-ever top 10 male player” (Thomas & Borg, 2014). Kermode believes that it is just the beginning of the colossal spur of interest in tennis in Asia (Thomas & Borg, 2014). The ATP chairman thinks that tennis, as a global sport business, should expand its boundaries “into new markets, new territories, new audiences . . . that may have never seen tennis before” (Thomas & Borg, 2014).



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Marshall (2011) writes that tennis in China has been developing exponentially since the Olympic Games in Beijing. In 1988 China had one million recreational tennis players. The number grew to 14 million who can practice on 30,000 courts throughout the country. Moreover, the Chinese government is not going to stop the development at this point, but instead the goal is to have twice as many people playing tennis in the future (Marshall, 2011).

In addition, China is investing its money into tennis practice centres, providing training to 250 junior under-12 players, as well as to 100 junior coaches (Marshall, 2011).

Furthermore, China has invented its own amateur tennis league, the Open Rating Tour, which launched in 2009, and created the Michael Chang Mission Hills Tennis Academy in Shenzhen (Marshall, 2011). The WTA has also opened its own offices in the country and introduced a new event to the calendar in October, the China Open (Marshall, 2011).

Growth within smaller markets such as Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan is gaining momentum. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have produced top-50 players in the last decade (Marshall, 2011). Marshall states that Kazakhstan introduced a new event to the professional circuit, the President's Cup, and its rapidly growing Davis Cup team is also becoming recognized internationally. These additions to tennis in Kazakhstan make the game more popular and increase the interest of the domestic fans. Therefore, Asia may be the future tennis destination due to multiple factors such as the globalization of tennis and investments made by Asian countries. China will continue to grow the most of all other Asia Pacific countries because its plan is to make more investments in tennis (Marshall, 2011).



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Women's tennis expansion into Asia

Chinese tennis tournaments are rapidly developing. For instance, in 2008 there were only two WTA events in the region; however, 11 tennis events are scheduled to take place in 2015. The entire Asia Pacific had only seven tournaments in 2014, and 22 tournaments are scheduled for 2018 (Abulleil, 2014).

The first milestone that signified the development of the growth of women's tennis in Asia happened in 2009 when the former WTA's CEO, Stacey Allaster, represented the players and the tournaments of the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour for the first historical Beijing/ China Open tournament (chinaopen.com, 2013). There are four mandatory premier events (Indian Wells, Key Biscayne, Madrid and Beijing) with prize money of \$4.5 million (chinaopen.com, 2013). Allaster stated that the Beijing Open became the foundation for Chinese tennis and that it was her plan to stay focused on the fans to make tennis more popular in the region (chinaopen.com, 2013). She was determined that working with the China Tennis Association would help to educate and increase the fan base in China.

The move of women's tennis into Asia can be explained in terms of gross domestic product (GDP). Allaster explains that "[t]he WTA's growth strategy . . . is predicated on identifying markets that have 'the greatest propensity for GDP growth'" (SportsPro, 2015). She also explains that it is vital to implement the tennis business infrastructure within those markets "so that when the champion arrives, [the WTA is] ready and in a position to build her brand and the brand of the WTA" (SportsPro, 2015). Another milestone occurred when Stacey Allaster made the most significant decision of deciding to bring the Women's Tennis Final Elite Eight Tournament to China (espnW, 2015). Similarly to Kermodé's belief in the current development of Asian tennis, Allaster stated that having ten different countries represented by the top ten WTA players signifies the depth and globalization of women's tennis due to an increased number of tournaments in Asia Pacific (Marshall, 2011).



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Marshall argues that “[t]he last 30 years have seen the sport move into new markets . . . attracted wider audiences and encouraged young talent in a way that would have never seemed possible just a couple decades ago”. In addition, with the popularity of the former world number two athlete Li Na, China will have more young tennis players who will make an impact on the tennis elite in the future (Marshall, 2011).

Li Na’s “captivating personality and no-nonsense approach” also helped to bring people’s attention to tennis in China (Marshall, 2011). Li Na’s exceptional personality could play a significant role in the future. As an ambassador of tennis, she now potentially transforms tennis in China and beyond in the whole Asia-Pacific region. When she won the French

WTA efforts in Asian markets

Open in 2011, Allaster named her win “the most important of the decade” because it boosted the interest of fans in the Asian region (Wilson, 2013). The WTA reported that the French Open final in 2011, when Li Na defeated Francesca Schiavone 6–4, 7–6, was watched by 116 million TV viewers in China (Wilson, 2013). Allaster points out that “[Li Na] will be an inspiration and create more Li Na’s. But she transcends China, she is the first Asia-Pacific champion” (Wilson, 2013). Li Na, “who has influenced the continent like no other athlete had ever done” already contributed to the growth of tennis in the whole Asia-Pacific region (Abulleil, 2014). Allaster stated that:

When I joined the WTA, my goal was to leave the organization on a stronger footing, and I feel a humble sense of pride in what we have all accomplished here. I have focused on what it means to be a champion and I have tried to be a strong role model for women to encourage success in the sports industry.

espnW, 2015



WOMEN'S TENNIS ASSOCIATION EFFORTS IN ASIAN MARKETS

Excerpted from *Routledge Handbook of International Sports Business*

In addition, Allaster is fond of China because she has seen pioneering work in the National Basketball Association (NBA) by the Commissioner and the international President, David Stern and Heidi Ueberroth, who were active in the Asian market 30 years ago. Allaster says “[Heidi] was out in those Asian markets, building before [the WTA] came along David is such a visionary” (SportsPro, 2015). Allaster is persuaded that with the global expansion of tennis, China should be the next strategic priority for the WTA to expand its operations into eastern Asia's culture. China is a huge strategic opportunity for growth and tennis development for the WTA tennis tour (Wilson, 2013).

Although Stacey Allaster retired in 2014, she left a footprint, and the WTA will build on this in the future (Abulleil, 2014). Allaster, who was named by *Forbes* magazine as one of the most powerful women in sports, had served as Chairman and CEO of the WTA since 2009 and stepped down on 2 October 2015 (Dunn, 2014). She was mainly focused on:

global growth with Asia Pacific being the strategic priority, maximizing the fan experience through product innovations; securing a record number of new sponsors; ensuring the financial success of the sport; and enhancing the health and well-being of the athletes, while also fighting for gender equality.

Dunn, 2014

Allaster says the women's tennis tour is becoming stronger especially with the prize money equality introduced in recent years (Wilson, 2013). The increase in popularity of the women's tour could mean that more sponsors may be interested in being associated with the WTA tour. For instance, the most renowned sponsors for the WTA include Dubai Duty Free, Oriflame, Jetstar and Western Union and the new “multiyear and multimillion dollar” sponsorship with Xerox. Allaster goes on to argue that “growth in sponsorship revenue has come about because of the needs of global brands to be more diverse” (Wilson, 2013). Moreover, “[T]he WTA . . . now has more events in Asia than it does in Europe” (Wilson, 2013).



WOMEN'S TENNIS ASSOCIATION EFFORTS IN ASIAN MARKETS

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During Allaster's tenure, she made immense changes in women's tennis. For example, "[t]he WTA and Perform Group signed a record setting, half-billion-dollar, 10-year live media rights deal in 2015" (espnW, 2015). In addition, prize money rose from \$68.8 million in 2007 to \$130 million in 2015 (espnW, 2015). In 2015, the contracted revenue the WTA generated was \$1 billion (espnW, 2015). There was a 22.5 per cent increase in TV audiences in 2014 (espnW, 2015). Most importantly, Allaster achieved a goal of moving tennis into Asia, creating 13 events scheduled for Asia-Pacific in 2015 (espnW, 2015). One of the events is the WTA Finals, which will be held in Singapore in 2018 (espnW, 2015).

Expansion of the WTA into Asia-Pacific regions

The WTA Finals are now being played in Singapore. According to SportsPro, the WTA will benefit with a 35 per cent increase in revenue after the event. In addition, Allaster admits, "The event . . . is the 'financial engine' that drives the WTA business . . . as well as the 'crown jewel of the organization that provides the halo for the brand'" (SportsPro, 2015). The WTA will greatly benefit from moving tennis into the Asia-Pacific, and all the efforts of the WTA should pay off when tennis becomes a popular sport in the region (SportsPro, 2015). Since 2008 Allaster primarily focused on building a "solid Asian swing, post-US Open" schedule in the Asia-Pacific (SportsPro, 2015).

Furthermore, Allaster adds that the WTA's goal is to host six events in China in the 2015 season, with five of them to be a post-US Open series of tournaments. The ultimate goal is to focus the attention of the fans on Asia and China (Zhuhai Official Website, 2015). In the future the plan is "to build the event brand by virtue of resources of Hong Kong and Macao" (Zhuhai Official Website, 2015). There are six advantages that Zhuhai have outlined as being beneficial for the city and the event branding:



WOMEN'S TENNIS ASSOCIATION EFFORTS IN ASIAN MARKETS

Excerpted from *Routledge Handbook of International Sports Business*

1. Top location – Hong Kong, Zhuhai and Macao international metropolitan area.
2. Top environment – Zhuhai is China's most liveable city, while Hengqin is an ecological island between urban scenery and natural landscape.
3. Top grade – it is China's third largest female tennis event.
4. Top players – each competition is between strong players.
5. Top venue – Zhuhai Hengqin International Tennis Centre is built according to top international standards.
6. Top partners – APG has the experience of operating 30 international tennis events and more than 30 international events (2015).

Furthermore, the WTA could have a very noticeable impact on the Asia-Pacific region culturally, as the working culture differs there from that of the West. For example, Allaster mentions that she felt inspired in Asia when she handed her business card to a young woman; she looked at it, and she looked at Allaster and said, "I have never received a business card from a woman with a CEO title" (SportsPro, 2015). Allaster felt respected in China and also thought that she would take "a lot of pride in that and responsibility to be successful and to inspire the youth and to set a good example and to share [her] experiences with them" (SportsPro, 2015).

The WTA will benefit from the partnership with Singapore in a variety of ways. First of all, the partnership with Singapore is the largest financial partnership ever completed in the history of the WTA (Dunn, 2014). The Women's Final event of the year was transformed from a six-day tennis event into a ten-sport entertainment spectacle, featuring many elements of entertainment, such as a Mariah Carey concert (Dunn, 2014). "The WTA is on top of the world" was the message that the former CEO of the WTA, delivered after the first time the season-ending showpiece was held in the Asia-Pacific region (Abulleil, 2014). In addition, the WTA implemented "a year-long campaign for the Road to Singapore that led to the WTA Finals, which for the first time brought past, current and future champions under one roof in a format designed to create a fan festival" (Abulleil, 2014).



WOMEN'S TENNIS ASSOCIATION EFFORTS IN ASIAN MARKETS

Excerpted from *Routledge Handbook of International Sports Business*

Second, this partnership with Singapore is extremely beneficial for the WTA. The deal comprises five editions of the WTA Finals in Singapore from 2014 to 2018 (Abulleil, 2014). The women's year closing event started in Boca Raton in 1972 with prize money of \$100,000 (Abulleil, 2014). Today, it has grown to \$6.5 million, equal with the men's year-end event (Abulleil, 2014). Furthermore, successful partnership with Singapore has led to the opening of a new WTA office in the city, and one more office being opened in Beijing with the goal to develop tennis in China exclusively (Abulleil, 2014).

Currently, BNP Paribas is a title sponsor and SC Global is a presenting sponsor of the WTA Finals (formerly named the WTA Championships) (Abulleil, 2014). With 54 tournaments in 33 countries on the WTA calendar, the season-closing event is "the largest source of net revenue for the WTA" (Abulleil, 2014). Allaster pointed out that the net revenue "comes with the commercial relationship that [the WTA has] with the World Sport Group, Singapore Tourism Board and Sport Singapore" (Abulleil, 2014).

Another strategy to develop tennis in the Asia-Pacific region is the introduction of the WTA Elite Trophy Zhuhai. Allaster strongly believes that the growth strategy in Asia-Pacific works because there is "\$5 trillion in GDP [in Asia-Pacific] within seven hours of Singapore" (Abulleil, 2014). One of Allaster's major plans is to establish an elite tournament in Zhuhai

– "WTA Elite Trophy Zhuhai" (Zhuhai, 2015). The WTA's CEO met with Li Lingwei (Deputy Director of the General Administration of Sport of China's Tennis Administration Centre and Deputy Chairman of the Chinese Tennis Association), Long Guangyan (Deputy Director of the WTA Elite Trophy Zhuhai Preparatory Committee), and the Vice Mayor of Zhuhai attended the conference and delivered a speech (Zhuhai, 2015). It was reported that the newly established event "will be held in Zhuhai for five consecutive years from 2015 to 2019" (Zhuhai, 2015).

The organizers of the Zhuhai event strongly believe that in recent years "tennis has been developing rapidly and rising strongly in China" (Zhuhai, 2015). In addition, Chinese tennis players have achieved many successes internationally, thus captivating the interest of the domestic people who have become focused on the game (Zhuhai, 2015). Interestingly, the WTA Elite Trophy Zhuhai is one of the three top tennis events held in China (Zhuhai, 2015). According to Zhuhai, "[t]he event is a mandatory tournament [with] round robin system" and gives 700 points to the winner with a total prize money of \$2.15 million.



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Currently, the WTA has more than “2,500 players, representing 92 nations, competing at the WTA’s 54 events and four Grand Slams in 33 countries, with total prize money this year being some \$100m” (Wilson, 2013). Overall, there has been 70 per cent increase in women’s prize money despite the world’s economy (Wilson, 2013).

Problems associated with the move of tennis into Asian markets

The WTA’s “Asian swing” begins right after the final Grand Slam, the US Open event in New York (AFP, 2015). However, some players are not able to handle the tight WTA schedule, and have to withdraw from the majority of the Asian tournaments. The WTA recently opened an office in Beijing as well as increasing the number of tournaments within China to eight. There are 23 tournaments in Asia, which is nearly 40 per cent of the tour (AFP, 2015). The Wuhan Open in China was inspired by the success of their own highly ranked tennis player Li Na, and was launched in 2014 (AFP, 2015). Unfortunately, Li Na was never able to participate, as she retired on the eve of the tournament, stating that her injuries would not let her compete (AFP, 2015). With the increase in the number of tournaments, there were unfortunately five retirements from the Wuhan Open in 2015, including in the tournament final (AFP, 2015). Garbine Muguruza retired in the final, passing the trophy to Venus Williams (AFP, 2015). Muguruza stated in her post-match interview: “I’ve played a lot of matches from Tokyo to here. So every time, you’re like, I’m more tired. Next day, I’m more tired” (AFP, 2015). Similarly to Muguruza, Caroline Wozniacki and Victoria Azarenka were excited on the third day of the tournament after their wins. However, they lost their matches on day four to lower-ranked opponents, stating that they were tired after a long year on the tour.



WOMEN'S TENNIS ASSOCIATION EFFORTS IN ASIAN MARKETS

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World number two, Simona Halep, also lost to Britain's rising star, Johanna Konta. Halep stated: "It's very tough. Every day I'm thinking about the holiday. But I have to stay concentrated" (AFP, 2015). Konta, in turn, decided to withdraw from the next tournament, the China Open, stating that there was not enough time between tournaments allowing her to recover sufficiently to play at her best. Her match would have been played the next day at Beijing, after she lost to Williams at the Wuhan Open. Similarly, Belinda Bencic of Switzerland got to the final of the WTA Pan Pacific Open in Tokyo, where she lost to Agnieszka Radwanska. The following day, Bencic also made the decision to withdraw from her first match at the Wuhan Open, only 38 minutes into the match. She said that she still wanted to play the following week in Beijing, but "it is just end of the season and all the players are really tired" (AFP, 2015). Therefore, the Asian swing could face potential difficulties in the face of injuries and fatigue on the women's tour.

Furthermore, the new season begins in January in Australia, allowing only a few months of rest for the athletes and, as a result, many players withdraw from their first matches. For example, Serena Williams retired after 15 games into her match at the Hopman Cup exhibition match in 2015 due to her inflamed knee injury (Bodo, 2015). Sharapova and Halep followed Williams and withdrew from the Brisbane tournament, which indicated that the women pros might not have had enough time to recover during their post-season break (Bodo, 2015). These are some good examples of the "precautionary" withdrawals that upset tournament directors around the world (Bodo, 2015). In 2009, the WTA tour tried to prevent the frequent withdrawals from happening and created a "Road Map" for all the tournaments in a year.

In addition, the WTA calendar has expanded in the off-season since 2009. The length of the off-season is eight weeks. The new CEO of the WTA, Steve Simon, believes it to be difficult for many female athletes to get through the tight schedule and thus does not want to extend the schedule for the players (Clarey, 2015). Simon does not want to compress any tournaments and make the players play more in the shorter time frame, which could be unhealthy (Clarey, 2015). The two goals of the Road Map were to create a two-month break for the players and to make room for the Asian swing. However, it did not work and it transpired that the Asian market was hit the hardest with the number of the withdrawals.



WOMEN'S TENNIS ASSOCIATION EFFORTS IN ASIAN MARKETS

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Simon is aware of the Asian swing move and is opposed to the idea of ex-CEO Allaster's focus on the development of tennis in China. He states: "We need to make sure we respect the region and don't oversaturate it" (Clarey, 2015). Further, in his opinion, since tennis is such a global sport, it has to be developed globally in such regions as North America, Europe, India and South America and anywhere it makes sense (Clarey, 2015).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the history of tennis in its early stages, the globalization of the game in the last decades, the move of tennis into Asia and the current problems associated with that move have been explored. Tennis has become an extremely global sport, and people all over the world love the game. Tennis has changed dramatically since its first introduction in England in the nineteenth century. With the efforts of the WTA, and the tennis tour becoming more global in nature, the tour since 2009 has focused on Asia.

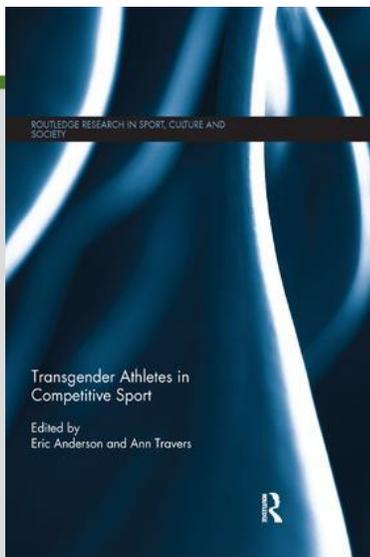
Stacey Allaster contributed enormously in developing a whole new Asian swing and the WTA Final in Singapore. However, the Asian swing has experienced problems with the withdrawals of top female tennis players due to the tight schedule. The WTA, like any global organization, is trying to expand while overcoming current obstacles in the process.



CHAPTER

4

ADVANTAGE RENÉE? RENÉE RICHARDS AND WOMEN'S TENNIS



This chapter is excerpted from
Transgender Athletes in Competitive Sport
by Lindsay Parks Pieper
Edited by Eric Anderson, Ann Travers
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ADVANTAGE RENÉE? RENÉE RICHARDS AND WOMEN'S TENNIS

Excerpted from *Transgender Athletes in Competitive Sport*

Newcomer Renee Clarke cruised by top-seeded Robin Harris, 6–1, 6–1, in the finals of the 1976 La Jolla tennis tournament. Clarke's precise baseline shots and powerful serves proved too much for Harrison. While her 6'2" frame awed the crowd, it particularly impressed San Diego reporter, Dick Carlson. He originally researched her for background information to produce a feel-good story about a remarkable local athlete. Instead, Carlson aired an expose that pushed the new star into the spotlight. He identified Renee Clarke as Renée Richards, the former male professional tennis player Richard Raskind. The discovery of a male-to-female trans athlete in women's tennis immediately raised eligibility questions and sparked protest.

Moreover, when Richards announced her intention to compete in the 1976 US Open, she challenged the classification structure of tennis. Like most sport organisations, the United States Tennis Association (USTA) and Women's Tennis Association (WTA) divided participants into male and female categories. Richards's very presence complicated these rules. She also surfaced just as women's tennis was making significant strides in both professional opportunities and payments. Viewing her as a threat to sex-segregated contests, and a menace to the newly popular women's tour, the USTA and WTA barred her by instituting a chromosomal check for all female participants. Richards consequently sued. A victory in the New York Supreme Court paved the way for her inclusion on the women's tennis circuit; however, the ruling extended only to Richards, and did not provide blanket acceptance for trans athletes in sport (DeMartini 2014). She participated in the 1977 US Open, lost in the first round, and retired from sport four years later.

Richards's athletic career demonstrates the importance of gender norms in the determination of sex in women's tennis. She overtly challenged biological conceptions of sex but also performed stereotypical understandings of femininity. Significantly, Richards repeatedly downplayed her athleticism – to diminish concerns of her supposed biological edge – and highlighted her weakened physique. Journalists similarly responded to accusations of advantage by focusing on her feminine appearance, while the reaction from female tennis players largely centred on questions of fairness. Although many argued that trans athletes threatened the sex-segregated blueprint of sport, an overview of Richards's time on the women's circuit instead illustrates a reaffirmation of binary understandings of both sex and gender.



ADVANTAGE RENÉE? RENÉE RICHARDS AND WOMEN'S TENNIS

Excerpted from *Transgender Athletes in Competitive Sport*

Two sides of the net: a sex divide on the court

Before appearing in the women's division of the local California tournament, Richards participated in men's matches. She enrolled at Yale University and captained the tennis team. As a Yale Bulldog, Richards won the 1953 Men's Eastern Junior Indoor Championship. She later graduated from the University of Rochester Medical School in 1959, started an ophthalmology practice, and continued to compete. In 1964, she won the New York State men's clay-court title and, in 1972, ranked sixth nationally in the men's 35-and-over division. Despite finding success in medicine and athletics, Richards remained discontent. "My feeling for appropriate masculine behaviour came from more observation and impersonation than it did from any internal mechanism", she wrote in her 1983 autobiography *Second Serve: The Renée Richards Story*. "A lot of times I was like a man from a foreign country trying to blend in with the population" (111). Richards underwent sex reassignment surgery in 1975 and moved to California for a fresh start. Her success in the La Jolla Junior Veteran's Championship the following year ended her anonymity. The press immediately picked up the story and headlines appeared around the world.

Her decision to continue competing not only ensured more news coverage, but it also caused policy changes. When Richards announced her plans to participate in the 1976 US Open, the USTA and WTA banned her by enacting the Barr body test. This method, also known as the buccal smear test, checked competitors' chromosomes. The International Association of Athletics Federation (IAAF) and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) had already instituted the technique, purportedly to detect male imposters in elite sport.¹ Sport officials incorrectly argued that all women possessed XX chromosomes and all men possessed XY chromosomes.² In 1967, the IAAF introduced the Barr body test as a requirement for all female track and field athletes; the IOC followed suit the next year for all female Olympians (Pieper 2016).

Tennis officials thus had the Barr body test at their disposal in 1967. The USTA and WTA did not mandate the check until Richards appeared on the tennis scene nine years later. Disregarding warnings from scientists who argued that chromosomes did not unequivocally identify sex, the organisations used the precedent established by the IAAF and IOC. They instituted sex testing for the 1976 US Open to eliminate "persons not genetically female" from competition. Although worded broadly, the policy was aimed at Richards. Richards (1983) argued that "they knew in all likelihood I could never pass such a test, though it is not infallible proof of sexual identity" (343).



ADVANTAGE RENÉE? RENÉE RICHARDS AND WOMEN'S TENNIS

Excerpted from *Transgender Athletes in Competitive Sport*

The USTA and WTA's decision to bar Richards from women's tennis stemmed from two false assumptions: that sports are fair and men possess a biological advantage in all athletic events. In a 1976 USTA press release explaining the new practice, the organisation suggested that "entry into women's events at the U.S. Open, the leading international tennis tournament, of persons not genetically female would introduce an element of inequality and unhappiness into the championships". The WTA echoed this idea. *New York Times* reporter Neil Amdur summarised the organisation's position as "it's damn unfair to a woman who has devoted her whole life to tennis to lose a sport in a draw to a man" (15 August 1976, 147). The new regulation, and the USTA's and WTA's defence of it, illustrates what sport scholar Heather Sykes (2006) refers to as the "unfair advantage discourse". This discourse falsely assumes that relatively higher levels of testosterone guarantee athletic success, that all male competitors are better than all female competitors in all sporting activities, and that men will undergo sex changes to reap the benefits of women's sport. Research on testosterone is inconclusive regarding the likelihood of gains in strength, and muscularity is not the only attribute necessary for sporting success. Plus, no man has ever changed sex for the sake of sporting victory.

Despite evidence proving the unfair advantage discourse erroneous, the USTA and WTA held firm. "If I was allowed to play", Richards recalled (1983), the tennis organisations believed "the floodgates would be opened and through them would come tumbling an endless stream of made-over Neanderthals who would brutalize Chris Evert and Evonne Goolagong. Of course, this was sheer nonsense" (345). Nonsense or not, Richards needed to fight for entrance to the women's tour. One way she sought to dispel assumptions of her supposed advantage was to perform stereotypical femininity.



ADVANTAGE RENÉE? RENÉE RICHARDS AND WOMEN'S TENNIS

Excerpted from *Transgender Athletes in Competitive Sport*

Richards's performance of femininity

The USTA and WTA believed that Richards's biology gave her an unfair advantage in tennis. "They think of me as bionic woman", she explained in a 1976 *New York Times* interview. So Richards regularly resisted such sentiments. "I'm not the world-beater they think I am", she argued (18 August 1976, 61). To help quell any misnomers about her athleticism, she displayed conventional femininity and highlighted her weakened physique, in line with Judith Butler's notion of gender performativity (1990). According to Butler, gender is constructed through the performance of acts that mirror social ideals. Richards's repetitive performances of femininity were important for her eventual inclusion on the women's circuit.

To prove her womanhood, Richards made herself the epitome of femininity in three ways. First, she outwardly upheld gender norms with makeup, nail polish, jewellery, and dresses. At a press conference following the La Jolla tournament, Richards appeared in "distinctly female" clothing, complemented by matching peach nail polish and "graceful gold pierced earrings". Second, she readily enacted stereotypes of female behaviour. For instance, Richards described herself as a newly emotional person. She claimed that hormone treatments had lifted her mood, but also left her off balance. "The hormones seemed to induce in me an uncharacteristic sense of well-being, even though my emotional swings increased markedly", she explained (2007). "I had laughing fits and crying jags, but they seemed natural and even therapeutic" (235). Her use of "natural" is striking. It suggests an essentialist notion of gender that reaffirms the belief that women as a group are more sensitive and irrational than men. Third, and more significant in the realm of sport, Richards downplayed her athleticism and emphasised her weakness. She did so to abide by social protocol that views female athletes as inferior to male athletes. Thus, to prove to the USTA, WTA, and her competitors that she did not have an unfair advantage, Richards highlighted her weaknesses.

She repeatedly described her reduced muscle mass, increased tiredness, and weight loss as signifiers of her womanhood. Even more overtly, Richards publicly equated losing with being a woman. Writing in *Second Serve*, she (1983) described playing tennis with male friends. "They were amazed at my skills ... but, when I missed a ball, they were quick to blame it on my being a woman", she wrote. But Richards's male competitors were not alone in labelling her mistakes as feminine.



ADVANTAGE RENÉE? RENÉE RICHARDS AND WOMEN'S TENNIS

Excerpted from *Transgender Athletes in Competitive Sport*

"I didn't mind these jibes because they affirmed my womanliness", Richards wrote. "Even the putdowns were welcomed reinforcements" (238). This behaviour, of course, upheld the idea that femininity and athleticism are oxymoronic. As sport philosopher Knutte Jonsson (2007) explains, these biological arguments of difference help "legitimate the gender hierarchy ... by seeing women's (inferior) gender roles as something that is natural" (245). Richards's enactment of stereo- typical femininity therefore not only upheld society's ideals about gender, but also reinforced cultural practices that mark sport as a male space.

Journalists also regularly made note of Richards's outward appearance. Reports discussed her "high cheekbones", "sharply defined eyebrows", "shapely legs", and general attractiveness. *New York Times* writer Charles Friedman described Richards as "stylish and statuesque in a light blue tennis dress with a flared skirt and large loop earrings" (20 July 1977, 34). Although the presence of a trans athlete threatened to upend society's beliefs about the division between men and women, reporters largely covered Richards in the same (pejorative) way as they did other female athletes. As sport scholars Susan Birrell and Cheryl Cole (1990) explain, this type of coverage reproduced, rather than challenged, dominant understandings of sex and gender. They argue that the media upheld the "assumption that there are two and only two, obviously universal, natural, bipolar, mutually exclusive sexes that necessarily correspond to stable gender identity and gendered behavior" (3). Although many positively commented on Richards's carefully constructed appearance, not everyone was happy to include her in women's tennis.

Richards and the women's liberation movement

Richards may have viewed her lesser capabilities as justification for entrance to the women's tour, but her opponents on the court largely disagreed. When director of Tennis Week Open, Gene Scott, invited her to participate in an August 1976 tournament, twenty-five of the thirty-two women scheduled to compete dropped out in protest. The number two seed Ann Kiyomura told reporters that the reason for the mass exodus was because "We all feel she's still a man and it's just not fair" (*Chicago Tribune*, 21 August 1976, 4).



ADVANTAGE RENÉE? RENÉE RICHARDS AND WOMEN'S TENNIS

Excerpted from *Transgender Athletes in Competitive Sport*

Similarly, Wimbledon runner-up Janet Newberry argued that “We are not prepared to commit ourselves to a women’s tournament in which a man is playing” (*Los Angeles Times*, 21 August 1976, C2). The WTA also revoked its sanction of Tennis Week Open on the premise that “there is a man in our tournament” (*Los Angeles Times*, 20 August 1976, E1). Presumptions of an unfair advantage again underlined these concerns. Some people also thought that including Richards diminished the gains women’s tennis had only recently earned. In connection with the women’s liberation movement, professional female players had established a professional tour for women in 1970 and continued to fight for equal purses to the men. Richards thus not only raised questions of fairness and advantage, but also highlighted the precarious nature of women’s professional sport.

With the implementation of Title IX, and with support from the women’s liberation movement, women’s sport grew. Title IX stipulated equal sporting opportunities for men and women, increasing female participation at the high school and collegiate level. In professional tennis, Richards appeared on the scene just as Billie Jean King and other tennis players were advancing women’s events. King was among the first to embrace the cause of women’s tennis. The vocal advocate led the fight for equality and convinced eight of the top tennis competitors to start the Virginia Slims Tour in 1970. Shortly thereafter, King earned \$117,000, becoming the first female athlete to breach the 100-grand mark. Her easy defeat of Bobby Riggs in the 1973 match billed as “The Battle of the Sexes”, also provided justification for the expansion of women’s sport. King’s on-court efforts buttressed the women’s movement and provided a strong symbol of successful female entrance into traditionally male realms (Ware 2011).

Consequently, some feared male-to-female trans athletes diminished the achievements of women’s athletics and belittled the goals of the women’s liberation movement. Gloria Steinem (1983), for example, embraced the unfair advantage thesis and wondered “if Richards had changed identity only to prove that any man, even a former one, could beat any woman” (227–228). Similarly, self-identified radical feminist Janice Raymond (1979) expressed even more hostile opposition to the possibility of trans inclusion in sport. She argued that “transsexuals” were men reconstructed in the guise of femininity in order to subvert women’s progress.



ADVANTAGE RENÉE? RENÉE RICHARDS AND WOMEN'S TENNIS

Excerpted from *Transgender Athletes in Competitive Sport*

Raymond argued that Richards's campaign for inclusion was an attempt to dismantle the recent achievements of women's tennis. Raymond claimed that Richards had "succeeded in hitting the benefits of sex discrimination back into the male half of the court. The public recognition and success that it took Billie Jean King and women's tennis years to get, Renée Richards has achieved in one set" (xiii).

Richards continued to gain public recognition. When the Tennis Week Open tournament rolled around, only seven of the original thirty-two enlisted athletes participated. Richards defeated Cathy Beene, 6–0, 6–2, Caroline Stoll, 6–2, 0–6, 6–1, and Kathy Harter, 6–4, 7–6. Then, in front of a sell-out crowd of 36,000, she lost to seventeen-year-old Lea Antonoplis, 7–6, 3–6, 0–6, in the semi-finals. Her performance left many unimpressed. As *New York Times* reporter Amdur succinctly put it, "So what was all the fuss about" (29 August 1976, 141)? Beene commented that "I thought she would be a much stronger player than she was" and "she's not as strong or powerful as I anticipated" (*Chicago Tribune*, 22 August 1976, B3). When Richards failed to demolish other female competitors as initially expected, those opposed to her started to ease up on their protests. She continued to compete in tournaments – those not sanctioned by the USTA or the WTA – and many athletes came to a similar conclusion. As Richards (1983) recalled in *Second Serve*, "most of the women [the USTA and WTA] were supposedly protecting didn't want to be protected. In fact, they were on my side" (346). But because the tennis organizations remained unmoved, Richards sued for access.

Renee Richards vs. United States Tennis Association

In 1977, Richards filed suit against the USTA, WTA, and the US Open Committee. She argued that their refusal to allow her entrance to the women's tour was discriminatory and a deprivation of her civil rights. The case focused on three issues: the reliability of the Barr body test in the determination of sex, how to define sex, and the reaction of female athletes. When the New York Supreme Court ruled in Richards's favour on 16 August 1977, the decision opened the door for her to compete on the women's tennis circuit.



ADVANTAGE RENÉE? RENÉE RICHARDS AND WOMEN'S TENNIS

Excerpted from *Transgender Athletes in Competitive Sport*

The court first heard arguments regarding the use of chromosomes as a prerequisite for competitions. Richards's lawyer argued that the Barr body test was "insufficient, grossly unfair, inaccurate, faulty and inequitable" in the determination of sex (*Richards v. United States Tennis Assn.*, 2). The doctors who testified on her behalf argued that a phenotype test was more accurate. Phenotype tests take into consideration an assortment of characteristics, such as anatomy and bodily appearance. The USTA refuted the argument by pointing to the IOC's use of the buccal smear test. Furthermore, the tennis organisation speculated that by removing the control method, a torrent of male imposters would flood women's tennis.

Next, Richards and the USTA attempted to provide a definition of sex. Famed sexologist John Money testified on behalf of Richards. He argued that a person's sex depended upon a variety of factors, including internal anatomy, external genital appearance, endocrine balance, somatic structure, psychology, and chromosomes. For the USTA, chair of the Department of Medicine at Stanford Medical School, Daniel Federman, prioritised the Y chromosome in the identification of sex. According to Federman, chromosomes are the most important factor when considering one's sex.

Finally, female athletes submitted affidavits for both sides. King supported Richards, arguing that she did "not enjoy physical superiority or strength so as to have an advantage over women competitors in the sport of tennis". Contrastingly, Françoise Dürr, Newberry, Kristien K. Shaw, and Vicki Berner claimed that trans athletes possessed a biological edge and pointed to Richards's height, strength, and wingspan as proof.

After taking all the arguments into consideration, Judge Ascione ruled in Richards's favour. He mandated that the USTA and WTA accept her in the women's category for all future tournaments. According to the decision, the singular use of the Barr body test in the determination of sex was "grossly unfair, discriminatory and inequitable, and violative of plaintiff's rights" (*Richards v. United States Tennis Assn.*, 6). To use the chromosomal control in conjunction with other measures, such as anatomical, legal, physical, and social features would suffice, he noted. And on those counts, Richards was a woman:

In that her external genital appearance is that of a female, her internal sex is that of a female ..., she is psychologically a woman, and, as the result of the administration of female hormones, she has the muscular and fat composition of a female.

(*Richards v. United States Tennis Assn.*, 1)



ADVANTAGE RENÉE? RENÉE RICHARDS AND WOMEN'S TENNIS

Excerpted from *Transgender Athletes in Competitive Sport*

As with the media coverage of Richards, the decision upheld – rather than challenged – dominant understandings of sex and gender. Rather than question the sex-segregated, binary-gender-dependent nature of sport, Ascione merely modified the boundaries of womanhood to uphold a binary. Instead of questioning sex and gender barriers, the New York Supreme Court simply readjusted the criterion for women participants. Furthermore, the ruling pertained to Richards alone. Without setting a direct precedent, Ascione essentially guaranteed that all future questions would be considered on a case-by-case basis. Richards was permitted because she reaffirmed, not dismantled, the sport structure.

With the legal victory, Richards competed in the 1977 US Open. She lost in the first round, 1–6, 4–6, to Virginia Wade. While Richards never dominated the competition as many feared she would – and we can speculate that issues relating to her inclusion would have played out differently had she demolished her opponents as expected – she did find minimal success in doubles events. In the 1977 US Open, she and partner Betty Ann Grubb Stuart reached the finals. Richards also reached the semi-finals in mixed doubles at the US Open with partner, Ilie Năstase. After only four years playing professional women's tennis, Richards retired in 1981.

Her name mostly remained out of the headlines for three decades. Then, in 2007, she reappeared in the spotlight. In a series of interviews, Richards vigorously opposed trans inclusion in sport. She called the IOC's 2004 Stockholm Consensus – which permitted trans athletes access if sex reassignment surgery, legal recognition, and hormone therapy had been completed – “a particularly stupid decision” (*New York Times*, 1 February 2007, F1). Citing a natural masculine advantage in elite competition, she further suggested that the decision “is going to come back and haunt them” (*The Advocate*, 27 March 2007). Richards's protests shocked many who pointed out that such policies would have allowed her to compete. Yet, her opposition seemed to stem from her beliefs about gender: sporting prowess is a male achievement.



ADVANTAGE RENÉE? RENÉE RICHARDS AND WOMEN'S TENNIS

Excerpted from *Transgender Athletes in Competitive Sport*

Conclusion

Richards's short stint in women's tennis illustrates the importance of gender expression in the identification of sex. At first, fears of a male biological advantage in sport led the USTA and WTA to enact the Barr body test. To counteract her supposed threat to the gender status quo, Richards highlighted her femininity and undermined her skills. Her endorsement of stereotypical gender norms worried leaders of the women's liberation movement, as did her fight for inclusion at the exact moment when women's tennis was on the rise. Yet, Richards's performance of conventional femininity helped her in the courtroom. The New York Supreme Court ruled her legally a woman, but stopped short of setting an influential precedent.

As shown in Richards's career, masculinity and femininity played a significant role in the determination of manhood and womanhood. On the

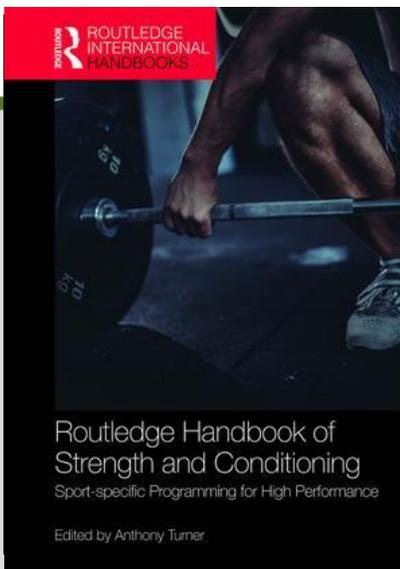
surface, Richards's fight for inclusion in women's tennis appeared to challenge society's conception of sex; however, her outward appearance, performance of stereotypical femininity, press coverage, and legal victory all served to uphold a sex and gender divide. The reaffirmation of dichotomous sex and gender, in turn, further cast sport as an activity for men. It was only when Richards showcased her femininity and highlighted her weakness that people agreed she should play on the women's tour.



CHAPTER

5

STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING IN TENNIS



This chapter is excerpted from
Routledge Handbook of Strength and Conditioning
by Emily Fanning, Floris Pietzsch
Edited by Anthony Turner

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Tennis as a sport enjoys worldwide participation, with an estimated 75 million people playing each year (Pluim et al., 2007). It is a unique sport as it is played both indoors and outdoors, at altitude and sea level, with large temperature and environmental variations, on clay, grass, carpet and hard court surfaces. Matches have been known to last from minutes up to 11 hours and 5 minutes (Wimbledon, 2010) and across multiple days if needed (weather dependent). The tournament schedule places large travel implications, as players are expected to move countries and even across continents on a weekly basis. This requires adjustment to time zones, environmental conditions and recovery from the general fatigue of travelling itself. Due to the nature of tournaments adopting a knock out structure, a player and coach will not know how many matches will be played in any given week, requiring large flexibility in periodisation and planning. Indeed, ranking determines the level of tournament in which a player can compete; however, making the cut is dependent not only on a player's ranking but on that of others entered in that tournament during that week, and this element of unknown leads to unclear long-term tournament scheduling. Players and coaches who have previously experienced poor form may subsequently add additional tournaments onto their schedule, and therefore it is no surprise to see the top 10 players only competing in 18–22 tournaments a year, where others enter into 32 plus, which subsequently results in less recovery and training time (WTA, 2016). There are approximately 2250 male players competing on the ATP tour, and 1300 female players on the WTA tour. Tennis is deemed an “early specialisation” sport, as many participants dedicate their time to this sport and even leave school as young as 12 years old, but the average age of the top 100 players is 26 years for men and 24 years for women. Approximately 70% of top 100 junior ranked players go on to achieve a pro ranking, but players can now expect to take 4.1 years from achieving their first senior ranking point to entering into the top 100 ranking. This is an increase from 3.4 years in 2000. Bane et al. (2014) has found similar findings within the ATP, where transition time has increased significantly between 1985 and 2010. There are some potential explanations for this duration increase, such as the introduction of the age eligibility ruling (AER) in 1995 within the WTA, which aimed to increase career longevity and decrease injury, burnout and premature retirement (Otis et al., 2006).



STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING IN TENNIS

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Junior players are restricted upon how many senior tournaments they can enter during any particular year, and a new player advisory panel (PDAP) developed educational literature, workshops and advice on key identified stressors on such topics as sports science and medicine services, media training, athletic assistance and general career development (Otis et al., 2006). When evaluated over 10 years, premature retirements in female players (<21 years) reduced from 7% to under 1% of players, and median career length increased by 43% relating to 3 more playing years. It has been suggested that improvements and developments in sports science, strength and conditioning, as well as increased financial rewards have all contributed to this (Bane et al., 2014).

A growing body of evidence that suggests significant positive impacts of strength and conditioning for tennis performance (Reid and Schneiker, 2008; Fernandez-Fernandez et al., 2009; Kovacs and Ellenbecker, 2011; Roetert et al., 2009). Clearly, strength and conditioning coaches have a large array of additional considerations that are unique to tennis and that have large implications when designing and implementing training programmes. The aim for this chapter is to provide the reader with the necessary information to understand the demands of the sport, highlight key areas of injury occurrence and prevention, and also aid your programme design.

Athletic demands

Kovacs (2009) described tennis as a game of unpredictability, with point length, shot selection, court surface, strategy, match duration, environment and the opponent having the ability to significantly affect the physical and physiological requirements of matchplay. Typically matches last on average 1.5 hours (Kovacs, 2007), but they can last as long as 5 hours, of which effective playing time has been found to be 20–30% on clay courts and 10–15% on hard courts, creating exercise-to-recovery ratios of ~1:2 (Fernandez-Fernandez et al., 2008; Kovacs, 2006; Groppe and Roetert, 1992).

Average point length is 8 seconds, varying from 3–15 seconds, during which 4–15 changes of direction can be made which can equate to over a 1000 changes of direction per match (Fernandez-Fernandez et al., 2014a; Kovacs, 2009; Cooke et al., 2011). The mean is 8.7 changes of directions in each point; each of these can create a load of 1.5–2.7 times bodyweight on the knee (Kibler and Safran, 2000). The vast majority of these movements are lateral movements, 20% forwards and less than 8% backwards, requiring players to be good movers in all directions (Kovacs, 2009). The mean distance covered is 3 m, 80% within 2.5 m of the player's ready position, 10% between 2.5m-4.5 m and fewer than 5% are over 4.5 m.



STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING IN TENNIS

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These distances can accumulate to 8–15 m per point and 1300–3600 m per hour dependent on a multitude of factors such as player level, opponent and court surface (Fernandez-Fernandez et al., 2008; Kovacs, 2009; Roetert and Ellenbecker, 2007). This can result in 300–500 high intensity efforts and approximately 1000 shots during a three set match (Fernandez et al., 2006; Reid and Schneiker, 2008).

Tennis research has largely reported that it is the sport specific skills that are most important, such as the ability to handle the racket and stroke skills (Smekal et al., 2001; Reid and Schneiker, 2008). Conflicting evidence exists regarding the relationship between specific physical qualities and performance, culminating in the overall conclusion that performance cannot be attributed to one component of fitness (Ulbricht et al., 2015; Roetert et al., 1996). However, as the game continues to evolve to become more dynamic, characterised by rising stroke and serve velocities, it has also been accepted that to be able to compete effectively at elite level, players require high levels of physical fitness (Fernandez-Fernandez et al., 2009; Ulbricht et al., 2015). It is also unlikely that having high levels of technical, tactical and psychological skill alone without physical fitness will allow a player to reach their full potential (Reid and Schneiker, 2008). Effective stroke production requires efficient movement and ability to repeatedly sprint and generate explosive force, amongst other factors; evidently these are physical abilities as opposed to technical skills, which facilitate the stroke being executed in the first place (Girard and Millet, 2009).

Physiology and endurance

Tennis comprises high intensity efforts interspersed with periods of variable duration and low intensity activity, inclusive of active recovery between points (10–20 s) and seated rest during changeovers and set breaks (90 s and 120 s, respectively) (Fernandez-Fernandez et al., 2009). Metabolically, tennis has been described as a moderate intensity anaerobic sport, with aerobic recovery phases, and as a result is devoid of high levels of acidosis. Mean maximum oxygen uptakes ($\dot{V}O_{2\max}$) of 60–70% and mean heart rates 70–80% (HR_{max}) are in agreement with this summary (Reid and Schneiker, 2008; Fernandez et al., 2006; Kovacs, 2007). Metabolic analysis during matchplay has shown ATP-PC is the predominant energy supply during points, with exceptionally long rallies using anaerobic glycolysis to replenish ATP and recovery phases utilising aerobic oxidation to supply energy (Smekal et al., 2001).



STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING IN TENNIS

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Fatigue has been shown to negatively affect physical components such as running speed and power production, as well as technical skills such as stroke technique, ball velocity and accuracy, and cognitive skills such as concentration and decision making (Davey et al., 2002). In a sport without fixed time limits, S&C coaches must attempt to prepare their athlete for a whole spectrum of different competitive scenarios, and this has led to the recommendation that it is more beneficial to train the anaerobic energy systems whilst maintaining sport-specific work:rest ratios, as this will allow the development of both systems.

Strength and power

Due to the reactive and unpredictable nature of the sport, the vast majority of movements are done under substantial time pressure, with the serve being the only movement which the player has complete control over. Consequently, good levels of both concentric strength and eccentric strength are required for constant acceleration and deceleration of both the upper and lower limbs. Players need to be able to quickly absorb and generate forces through various ranges of motion and positions, and subsequently effective use of the stretch-shortening cycle is essential. Development of muscle stiffness and resultant higher ground reaction forces enables players to cope with the high eccentric loads associated with decelerating at speed and increased power output corresponds to faster movement responses (Kovacs et al., 2008; Kovacs, 2009). Similar to other sports, production of forces for tennis strokes is in a mostly proximal to distal sequence, requiring complex coordination of the kinetic chain through different planes of movement. Successful stroke performance is dependent on the summation of forces through the kinetic chain and out into the ball, which dictates racket head speed and ball velocity, two key skill performance factors (Kovacs and Ellenbecker, 2011). Underpinning these factors are strength, rate of force development and plyometric ability, in addition to synchrony of all links in the kinetic chain for optimal performance (Kovacs and Ellenbecker, 2011). Presently, it is not possible to track the transfer of mechanical energy in 3D movement, but it is generally accepted that the majority of force responsible for accelerating a racket comes from the transfer of force from the larger muscles of the legs and trunk (Roetert et al., 2009). Biomechanical analysis has identified key motions within the chain; in particular, knee flexion and extension, 3D trunk rotation and high rotational angular velocities of the upper arm play a significant role in racket head and ball velocity (Reid and Schneiker, 2008).



STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING IN TENNIS

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Understanding that optimal performance with minimal injury risk comes from maximal activation of all links in the chain, without weakness, imbalance or dysfunction within any segment, should enable the S&C coach to programme effectively to the individual needs of their athlete.

Speed and agility

Needs analysis would suggest that acceleration speed, ability to change direction quickly, first step quickness and lateral movements are important determinants of tennis performance (Salonikidis and Zafeiridis, 2008). Some research has highlighted that agility may be the first factor to influence junior tennis performance; however, these are largely based on the correlation between success and pre-determined change of direction (COD) tests and not in line with the current definition of agility (Young and Farrow, 2006). In other sports, COD testing could not discriminate between higher and lesser skilled players, this potentially highlights that cognitive elements like perception and decision making time which differentiates between elite players and the levels below them, as opposed to the speed and accuracy of their movement alone; this is likely to be the case in tennis (Farrow et al., 2005). There are tests in existence assessing reactive tennis specific movement patterns in response to random light stimuli, but still a dearth of information to establish how performance in this correlates to tennis performance and subsequently if agility is in fact a key determinant of success (Cooke et al., 2011). Despite a lack of empirical evidence, it is irrefutable that given the high movements demands, the development of efficient movement patterns, speed and agility is essential, and could be the differentiating factor in the success of players of similar skill levels. Although tennis is a sport where skill is essential, it is the multifaceted interaction between technical and physical ability that enables successful performance (Reid and Schneiker, 2008; Fernandez-Fernandez et al., 2014b).

Injury

Substantial research has been done into the epidemiology, aetiology and prevalence of injuries in tennis, and is an essential area for strength and conditioning coaches to understand to enable successful program design. Variation in the definition of injury, data collection methods and study populations makes it difficult to accurately report the prevalence and incidence across a wider population of players. However, the repetitive nature and complex biomechanical demands of the sport have been shown to result in characteristic sport-specific injury patterns and musculo-skeletal adaptations (Ellenbecker et al., 2009).



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Injury incidence

The average reported incidence of injury across all tennis populations is relatively low, ranging from 0.04–3.0 per 1000 hours of play and with a variance in annual frequency of 0.05–2.9 injuries per player per year (Pluim et al., 2006). This is comparable with other non-contact sports and considerably lower than in team sports.

Injury type and prevalence

The majority of documented injuries can be defined as overuse injuries, including tendinopathy, chronic muscles strains and joint instability caused by repetitive microtrauma characteristic of the sport. High training volumes are widely accepted from a young age as a key to success, and this in combination with demanding tournament schedules, puts all players, especially young elite players, at high risk of this type of injury (Pluim et al., 2015). The most regularly recorded overuse injuries are tendinous issues predominantly affecting the elbow, shoulder and knee, lower back pathology and thigh muscle strains. Macrotrauma such as sprains, fractures, dislocations, joint injury and contusions tend to occur less frequently as a consequence of a one-off event (Kibler and Safran, 2000).

Injury location

Tennis is a highly demanding, multifaceted sport and this has consequently lead to recording of injuries in all areas of the body. The most frequently injured area is the lower limb with research reporting 39–65% of injuries occurring here, followed by the upper limb at 24–46% and lastly the head/trunk region with 8–22% of all recorded injuries (Ellenbecker et al., 2009). Specifically, the ankle and thigh have been shown to have the highest frequency in the lower limb, the shoulder and elbow in the upper limb and the lower back in the head/ trunk region (Kibler and Safran, 2005). Acute injuries more commonly present in the lower limb, whilst chronic injuries have been seen to be more prevalent in the upper limb and trunk (Abrams et al., 2012). Minor injuries such as blisters, abrasion and cuts to extremities are commonplace.



STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING IN TENNIS

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Lower extremity

This region is most prone to sprains and strains, and injuries occur twice as frequently as upper extremity injuries. Specifically, it is more susceptible to macrotrauma, with lateral ankle sprains and tears of the hamstring, calf, adductors and quadriceps being the most prevalent injuries in tennis (Kibler and Safran, 2005; Pluim et al., 2006).

Muscle and ligaments strains of the hip, knee or ankle may be acute or chronic in nature. Acutely, this type of injury is usually associated with rapid change of direction, acceleration and deceleration movements inherent in the sport or related to fatigue. Chronically, strains mainly occur due to insufficient rest or rehabilitation from previous injury or as a consequence of acquired muscular contractures restricting movement (Kibler and Safran, 2005; Bylak and Hutchinson, 1998).

Overuse injury of the knee joint of skeletally mature players most often manifests as patellofemoral joint pain and patellar tendinitis, and in young players this presents as Osgood-Schlatters disease (tibial tubercle apophysitis) (Bylak and Hutchinson, 1998). Overload of the lower leg and foot can present as stress fractures, shin splints, Achilles tendinitis and plantar fasciitis, particularly amongst those who play predominantly on hard courts, with the latter two conditions affecting primarily older players (Kibler and Safran, 2000).

Upper extremity

The term “tennis elbow” has been adopted in reference to lateral epicondylitis because of its high prevalence, with reported percentages of players affected ranging from 37–57% in elite and recreational players. At elite level, there is actually higher incidence of medial epicondylitis (golfer’s elbow) caused by overload on the serve and forehand strokes which make up 75% of the game (Ellenbecker et al., 2009). The wrist is also prone to similar conditions primarily affecting the extensor tendons, and most susceptible to this are those who play with lots of top spin or have altered mechanics due to poor technique or ineffective use of the kinetic chain (Kibler and Safran, 2000).



STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING IN TENNIS

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The shoulder is subject to repetitive tensile loads at high velocities of 1700° per second and above, and this can bring about deleterious maladaptations. As a key component of the kinetic chain, the shoulder has to deal with the summation of force generated by the legs and trunk (Roetert et al., 2009). These forces are highest during serving, demanding high rotational velocities and extreme ranges of motion, placing stress on the shoulder complex not dissimilar to those documented in other professional throwing athletes, such as baseball pitchers. Subsequently, similar injury patterns are seen on assessment, but whereas most “throwing” athletes have the amount of throws per week monitored and limited, this is not the case for tennis players. Professional players have been documented having significantly higher volumes on serve count alone than their throwing athlete counterparts, without allowing for the additional loads created by the groundstrokes (Johnson and McHugh, 2006). As a consequence of this one-sided overload, presentation of “tennis shoulder” is common, this term referring to an altered posture with the dominant shoulder sitting in a more depressed, internally rotated position and generally associated with one or a number of other clinical findings (Kibler and Safran, 2000) The most common of these being glenohumeral internal rotation deficit (GIRD), muscular strength imbalance between anterior and posterior muscle groups, scapular dyskinesis, joint laxity and sport acquired hypermobility (Kibler and Safran, 2000). These maladaptations, without appropriate monitoring and management, contribute to increasing the risk of rotator cuff and labral pathology and impingement (Abrams et al., 2012).

As rotator cuff inflammation is one of the most prevalent injuries of the shoulder amongst all ages and levels of player, prevention of these maladaptations should be a key part of any physical program. Although largely due to overuse, in the young this injury is generally secondary to instability and in older players typically related to degeneration of the tendon or labrum (Kibler and Safran, 2000).



STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING IN TENNIS

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Trunk

Lower back pain (LBP) is one of the most recurrent complaints of competitive tennis players, especially in junior populations, caused by the repeated demand for flexion, extension, lateral flexion and rotational movements of the spine. The spine also plays a pivotal role as part of the kinetic chain, functioning as a transfer link between the upper and lower limbs, capable of generating force to accelerate the arm and attenuating force to decelerate the racket after contact (Maquirriain and Ghisi, 2006). The most common cause of back pain is muscular strain, especially of the central paraspinal musculature and the quadratus lumborum, which can occur acutely, but is more often linked to chronic overuse. More serious spinal pathology, such as spondylolysis and spondylolisthesis, is often seen in elite players as a consequence of overload, particularly on the serve, as has been found in other sports with repetitive extension requirements (Ellenbecker et al., 2009). The prevalence of this type of pathology may be higher than reported, as shown in a study by Alyas et al. (2007). They identified 28 out of 33 asymptomatic adolescent players were found to have at least one abnormality on MRI as a result of acute or chronic stress (Alyas et al., 2007). Further research is needed, but current evidence recording 50% of elite players experiencing back pain at least once, and 30% reporting to suffer chronic back pain, with such high prevalence it is recommended that extensive preventative measures are taken to reduce risk of injury in this area (Ellenbecker et al., 2009; Abrams et al., 2012; Marks et al., 1988).

Acute muscle strain or tear of the abdominals, in particular the rectus abdominus and obliques of the non-dominant side, occurs usually with indirect trauma hitting overhead strokes and serves. The most common mechanism is during forced concentric contraction of the rectus abdominus during the throwing (acceleration) phase of the serve, whilst the spine is hyper-extended, especially during a kick or topspin serve where this posture is more pronounced (Maquirriain et al., 2007). As with the lower back, conditioning programs should attempt to prepare the athlete to cope with the loads placed upon the trunk throughout multiple planes of movement and various velocities.



STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING IN TENNIS

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Gender

The majority of literature agrees that there is no statistically significant difference between gender on the rate of injury (Pluim et al., 2006). Male players show decreased flexibility in comparison to their female counterparts and it is well known that inflexibility plays a part in the pathophysiology of injury (Kibler and Chandler, 2003). Low flexibility in adolescent populations exacerbates injury risk, especially during growth, and in tennis the areas most affected by this discrepancy between bone growth and muscle length is the lower back, knee and shoulder (Kibler and Safran, 2005). The maladaptations caused by repetitive tensile overload in tennis further decrease flexibility, and this has been shown to worsen with time (Kibler and Safran, 2000).

In tennis, female players are 4–6 times more likely to sustain serious knee injuries like ACL injuries than males; this disparity is currently attributed to anatomical, hormonal and neuromuscular differences (Hewett et al., 2005). This type of injury most commonly occurs as a non-contact incident, during sports involving a lot of cutting, pivoting and jumping movements (Hewett et al., 2005). Anatomical factors such as Q-angle are non-modifiable and control of hormonal factors influencing laxity of ligaments and tendons are outside the remit of the strength and conditioning coach. There is substantial evidence showing training to improve strength and neuromuscular control of the lower limb significantly reduces risk of ACL injury (Hewett et al., 2005). Given the high demands for change of direction, jumping and single leg landing in tennis, it is recommended coaches seek to achieve optimal biomechanics in these movements, as the recovery time for an injury like this may have a major impact on the career success and ultimately career length of a professional player.

Skill level and volume of play

At present there appears to be no link between skill level and incidence of injury, although this information may be misleading (Pluim et al., 2006). Less skilful players often have poorer technique and control of the vibration forces translated into the racket arm, as well as possibly lower level sport specific conditioning, all of which would suggest a greater predisposition to higher injury rates (Abrams et al., 2012). However, advanced playing level generally means greater volume of play, of which there is a positive correlation to increased injury rate (Abrams et al., 2012). Due to their technical proficiency, elite players are also able to produce, and are subject to, superior forces and velocities that place them under larger stresses, contributing further to injury risk (Pluim et al., 2006).



STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING IN TENNIS

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Tennis specific factors

Tennis is one of the few sports to be played on multiple surfaces, which create their own unique physical and physiological demands, as a consequence influencing injury type; however, there is limited empirical evidence in this area. Hardcourts have been found to have the highest injury rate and amount of incomplete matches, most likely due to increased speed of the ball, accelerations and torques, in comparison to clay or grass (Girard et al., 2007). Consequently, acute injuries are usually associated with the rapid accelerations and decelerations of both lower and upper limbs needed to cope with these higher velocities and forces. The reduced frictional coefficient of clay enables longer, slower rallies with a higher ball bounce, which changes both movement mechanics and contact height during groundstrokes (Fernandez-Fernandez et al., 2010). Both sliding on clay and high contact points require strength throughout wider ranges of motion in much higher volumes than on other surfaces. Given the unstable nature of clay as a surface, slipping injuries causing strains and sprains particularly of the adductors and ham-strings, are a risk for any player not conditioned for or proficient at sliding (WTA, 2016). The increased rally length demands enhanced muscular endurance to withstand fatigue and ability to generate power from positions which do not occur as frequently on other surfaces (Johnson and McHugh, 2006). Therefore, court surface, as well as other individual tennis specific factors, such as grip position, racket properties and gamestyle, should be considered when programming for an elite player.

Fitness testing battery

When undertaking any assessment, the strength and conditioning coach must always understand the importance of validity and reliability of any methods chosen. It is also important to understand the typical coefficient of variation for each method of testing to ensure correct interpretation of data.



STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING IN TENNIS

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There are many different assessment methods to choose from, which are typically weighed up against cost, time implications, simplicity, accuracy and of course whether they are valid and reliable. Field tests are typically cheaper, easier to administer, time efficient and allow for more participants when compared to lab based assessments, but may not be as reliable or accurate. Adherence to strict protocol should minimise inter and intra administrator variability which subsequently should improve reliability. It has been suggested that field based tests are more

Table 25.1 Functional movement screening (FMS)

Tests

<p>Deep squat Hurdle step * In-Line lunge * Shoulder mobility * Active straight leg raise * Trunk stability <u>push up</u> Rotatory stability *</p>	<p><u>The</u> scoring of tests consists of four possibilities ranging between 0–3. Zero is given if the athlete feels any pain during any exercise. A score of one is given if unable to complete the movement pattern. Two is given if the athlete can perform the exercise but requires some form of compensatory movements to complete it. Three is given when an athlete completes the exercise without any compensation. * denotes which tests require scores on both sides of the body and the lowest score is used as part of an overall score.</p> <p>A total maximum score of 21 is possible along with an asymmetry score.</p>
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Table 25.2 Tennis functional movement screening (TFMS) (LTA, 2011)

<p>Active shoulder elevation Wall press up (single arm) * Shoulder rotation * Pectoralis minor muscle length <u>Thoracic spine</u> rotation * Knee to wall * <u>Modified thomas test</u> * Hip rotation (internal and external rotation) * Active knee extension * Quadrant (lumbar spine clearing test) *</p>	<p><u>The</u> scoring of tests consists of four possibilities ranging between 0–3. Zero is given if the athlete feels any pain during any exercise. A score of one is given if unable to complete the movement pattern. Two is given if the athlete can perform the exercise but requires some form of compensatory movements to complete it. Three is given when an athlete completes the exercise without any compensatory movement. * denotes which tests require scores on both sides of the body and the lowest score is used as part of an overall score.</p> <p>A total maximum score of 27 is possible along with an asymmetry score.</p>
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STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING IN TENNIS

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Table 25.3 Physical performance tests (LTA, 2011). Data adapted from Cooke et al. (2011) of a 15 year old player

Assessments	Example	Z-scores	
5m sprint	1.07	1.01	Age and gender specific data is used to calculate <u>standardised scores</u> (Z scores) which represent the distance between the raw scores compared to the population mean in units of standard deviation. This allows comparison and identification of strengths and weaknesses across each assessment (Cooke et al., 2011).
10m sprint	1.97	-0.02	
20m sprint	3.55	-1.57	
Forehand agility	2.48	0.04	
Backhand agility	2.33	0.68	
Forwards & backwards movement	3.63	-0.24	
Planned agility	7.7	0.23	
Reactive agility	8.35	1.26	
Vertical jump	40	-0.56	
Squat jump	35	-0.49	
Forehand medicine ball throw (1kg)	14.96	0.78	
Backhand medicine ball throw (1kg)	13.36	0.69	
Overhead medicine ball throw (1kg)	9.28	1.04	
Yo-yo <u>intermittent</u> recovery test	1680	1.00	

ecologically valid and are better suited to the demands of intermittent sports such as tennis (Fernandez-Fernandez et al., 2014b).

The Lawn Tennis Association in Britain designed a comprehensive method to evaluate their junior and professional players. Tables 25.1 and 25.2 detail the musculoskeletal screening and Tables 25.3 and 25.4 detail the fitness assessment and the physical competency assessment. Although the application of the original Functional Movement Screening has received some widespread attention, there is still some debate over its effectiveness in identifying risks to injury, but as one of a wider array of assessments can still prove useful when evaluating athletes' injury risk (Bishop et al., 2015). The Tennis Functional Movement Assessment was designed to identify



STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING IN TENNIS

Excerpted from *Routledge Handbook of Strength and Conditioning*

Table 25.4 Physical competencies (LTA, 2011). To achieve in any given level the participant must satisfy strict form such as range of motion and alignment of limbs. *denotes a deliberate “capping” of expected/desired strength level

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Squat	1 rep	10 reps	5 reps 50%BW	5 reps 125% BW	5 reps 150% BW
Lunge	1 rep	10 reps	10m walking lunge 10% BW	10m walking lunge 20% BW	10m walking lunge 40% BW
Single leg Squat	1 rep	5 reps	10 reps	5 reps 10% BW	10 reps 10% BW
Forward Hop and hold	1 rep 50% of standing height	3 reps of 60% standing height	3 reps of 70% standing height	3 reps of 80% standing height	3 reps of 90% standing height
Lateral hop and hold	1 rep 50% of standing height	3 reps of 60% standing height	3 Reps of 70% standing height	3 reps of 80% standing height	3 reps of 90% standing height
Push up	3 reps	10 reps	30 <u>reps</u> male 20 <u>reps</u> female*	30 <u>reps</u> male 20 <u>reps</u> female*	30 <u>reps</u> male 20 <u>reps</u> female*
Pull up	1 rep supine pull	10 reps supine pull	5 reps supinated grip pull ups	5 reps wide pronated grip pull ups	5 reps wide pronated grip pull ups 30% BW

musculoskeletal imbalances that may contribute to the most common injuries and provide a means to objectively measure potential risks to injury. Like the FMS, the TFMS is judged similarly; each test can gain a score of 3 as long as there are no compensatory movements to complete any task (LTA, 2008). The USTA sports science committee have adopted a similar methodology (Fernandez-Fernandez et al., 2014b).



STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING IN TENNIS

Excerpted from *Routledge Handbook of Strength and Conditioning*

The physical performance tests shown in Table 25.3 are the chosen tests by the LTA to assess each key component of fitness for tennis. The planned and reactive agility tests have been designed (Cooke et al., 2011) to incorporate perception and decision making, which requires the athlete to make fast adjustments dependent upon the situation. The stimulus provided by the assessment fulfils a key criteria (Young and Farrow, 2006) differentiating agility from change of direction.

Table 25.4 details the physical competencies assessment range from level 1 to 5, which aims to demonstrate exemplar exercises and exercise progressions. The levels suggest a pathway within key exercise streams that any athlete can progress along throughout their athletic development. The key focus and aim of the physical competencies is to assess an athlete's ability to perform key exercises with a mastery level before progressing to repetitions of high quality movement and finally progressing onto added resistance (LTA, 2011). Should any athlete be developed in one exercise stream over another, then more consideration and time can be administered to correct any shortfalls.

Researchers have used physiological skill based tests to better understand the fatigue mechanisms in tennis, demonstrating that fatigue reduces performance outcomes (Davey et al., 2002; Lyons et al., 2013; Cooke and Davey, 2008). One key finding suggests that stroke performance (stroke accuracy multiplied by ball speed) places significant additional physiological strain compared to running alone, and implies training incorporating whole body involvement may positively influence stroke performance via improved stroke efficiency.

Programming

A long term athletic development plan should be as specific as possible to a given sport, linked to the physiological, mechanical and neurological characteristics, but not at the expense of inadequate fundamentals in strength, stability and robustness, which are the cornerstones of athletic success. An understanding of training outcome for specific training prescription is vital to aid optimisation of time available (Reilly et al., 2009).



STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING IN TENNIS

Excerpted from *Routledge Handbook of Strength and Conditioning*

As Figure 25.1 demonstrates the availability of your athlete may be very low providing minimal opportunities to achieve the required number of training sessions to generate significant adaptations of fitness. Although the WTA recommends just 23 tournaments per year, many will attempt much more (WTA, 2016). At professional level most will identify a short end of season transition period before undertaking the one and only clear off-season period. Coaches must determine where their time is best spent and adopt more long term planning, which should include developments of training programmes specifically designed to sit alongside actual competition weeks. These have typically been described as “travel programmes” (Reid and Schneiker, 2008; Jeffreys and Moody, 2016) and require a high amount of flexibility due to the uncertainty of match participation per week.

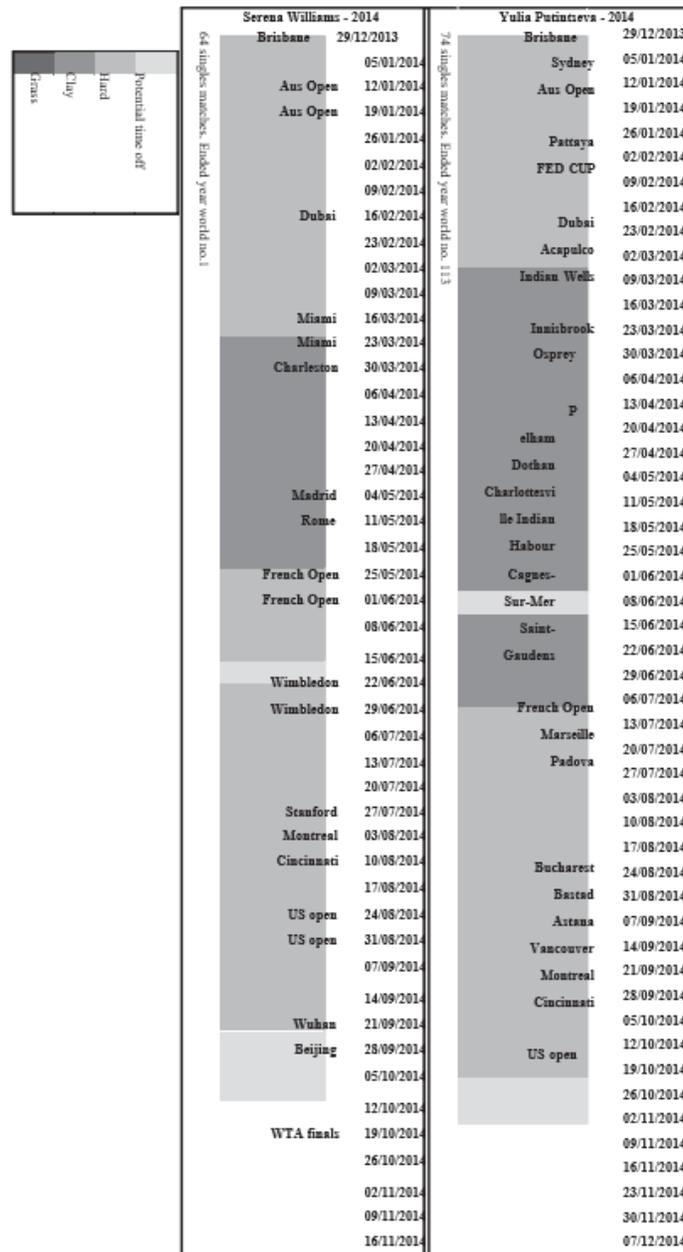
To ensure the stimulus of training does not result in a detriment in performance requires a greater need of effective load monitoring. GPS units are an increasingly popular modality, but their use in tennis has been shown to underestimate the distance covered (Duffield et al., 2010), and use within competition is problematic. Hawkeye data has made progress quantifying tennis movements (Reid et al., 2016) but lacks internal and perceptual information, not to mention that most players do not have access to such data. Many practitioners now adopt a method by multiplying the duration of the activity by the perceived exertion (RPE) as a means to quantifying “load” which has been suggested to have a dose-response relationship between training loads and illness, injury and soreness (Gomes et al., 2015; Jeffreys and Moody, 2016; Drew and Finch, 2016). However, every athlete’s capability to withstand training load will vary, so care is required when interpreting load data. We know that should a tennis player be successful during a tournament week their ability to perform may be affected by on-going fatigue (Ojala and Häkkinen, 2013; Murphy et al., 2015; Gescheit et al., 2015; Murphy et al., 2014). Improving tolerance to withstand repeated matchplay will therefore increase the likelihood of success. Serena Williams’ and Yulia Putintsevas’ 2014 tournament calendar (Figure 25.1) illustrates two very different tournament structures, which is partially imposed and added to by choice. It is common for young enthusiastic players to extend their year to try and achieve additional world ranking points at a detriment to potential rest, recuperation and opportunity to focus upon physical preparation which consequently limits the player’s potential to succeed. Periodisation in professional senior tennis is complex, but coaches working with juniors may find that a temporary fall in ranking but increased development in athletic ability may be the superior long term solution to high level performance.



STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING IN TENNIS

Excerpted from *Routledge Handbook of Strength and Conditioning*

Figure 2.5.1 Yearplans for two female players indicating two different approaches to tournament structure planning. Note how many potential training weeks are available





STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING IN TENNIS

Excerpted from *Routledge Handbook of Strength and Conditioning*

The physical competencies produced by the LTA (2011) offers one method for athlete development and the author suggests development of these should be a high priority along with resolving musculoskeletal deficiencies identified via screening. Players who don't achieve level 1 physical competency may be better placed to reduce tennis time to ensure successful long term athlete development.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sun
AM	Warm up – on court agility/ movement focused (30mins)	Warm up – injury prevention based (30-45mins)	Warm up – glute strengthening based (30mins)	Warm up – plyometric based (30mins)	Warm up – injury prevention based (30-45mins)	Warm up – plyometric based (30mins)	
AM	Tennis drilling (90-120mins)	Tennis drilling (90-120mins)	Tennis – match play (90-120mins)	Tennis drilling (90-120mins)	Tennis drilling (90-120mins)	Tennis – match play (90-120mins)	
PM	Tennis match play (points) (60-120mins)	Tennis technical/specific (60-120mins)	Recovery	Tennis match play (points) (60-120mins)	Tennis technical/specific (60-120mins)	Recovery	
PM	Strength training (60mins)	Recovery		Strength training (60mins)	Physio support		
	Recovery			Recovery	Recovery		

Figure 25.2 A typical full training week for a professional player. Training weeks can vary hugely depending upon training experience and the desired focus of the training. This represents a typical training week that aims to train all key areas of tennis performance and may shift according to a particular focus, i.e. more agility/plyometric training. Endurance training can be designed within the on court tennis “drilling” sessions where heart rate intensity can be monitored, which alleviates the need to add an additional session within a busy training week



STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING IN TENNIS

Excerpted from *Routledge Handbook of Strength and Conditioning*

As already mentioned, tennis requires a large amount of power, and developing strength will undoubtedly realise any subsequent power development (Reid and Schneiker, 2008). Novice athletes may still gain significant strength gains following 1–3 sets of 8–12 reps with 60–70% intensity, intermediate and advanced athletes will require multiple sets 1–8 reps with 80–100% intensity (Kraemer and Ratamess, 2004). There is a strong rationale to develop good muscular endurance, which is also important to reduce the risk of injury (Reid and Schneiker, 2008). Strength endurance may reduce the decrement of power output as the match continues. Medicine ball use enables coaches to train athletes within their natural environments through tennis specific movement patterns, incorporating the ball as a form of overload, and offers a valuable method to improving muscular endurance and can allow for technical foot-work patterns to be developed (Roetert et al., 2009). These sessions can be part of a warm up session or a stand-alone session, and using work to rest ratios similar to match play demands is recommended, as previously mentioned. The coaching of technical movement patterns can fall upon the strength and conditioning coach, requiring a high degree of technical knowledge.

Glute

1. Side lying hip extension flexion 03044



Bent knee. 45 second holds
2× each side

2. Bridging 00.70



Bent around knees
2×30 reps squeezing butt

3. Band hip ER 01145



2×15 each side
use band

Core

4. Band hip abduction 02048



Holding MB (1-2kg)
2×16-20reps

5. Hip flexion rotation 02245



Rotation + shoulder touches
3×45-60 seconds - try not to shift weight too much

6. Supine spine rotation 04905



2×16-bent knees

7. Alternating shoulder extension flexion 03632



Dead bugs
3×20 reps progress to light dumb bells or drinks bottles

Shoulder

17. Band rotator cuff-ER. 00584



Elastics setting the shoulder
2×10

18. Band rotator cuff-ER. 00581



External rotation keeping shoulders set
and putting a towel between elbow and body

19. Band lateral raise 04114



Good posture **start** with hands close palms facing
each other **pull** wide keeping shoulders down 2×10
**Keep upright position and pull band tight ensuring a slight
pause at the end of each rep. 2×10**

20. Band seated row 00594



Strength

8. Walkout push up 01216



2×8 with 2 press ups per walk out rep

9. Lateral lunge deep squat 01201



2×8 each way

10. Lunge walk rotation 01202



2×16
8 normal and 8 open - add rotation after perfect rep

11. Split jumps 01386



3×20

Plyometrics

1. Tuck jumps acceleration 00285



1×8 each way

2. Lateral bound acceleration 00284



1×6 each way

3. Forward leaning knee lift 01507



2×20 reps (fast and tall)

4. Rapid hip abduction adduction 00739



2×16 reps

5. Chimber acceleration 00293



1×5 off each leg



STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING IN TENNIS

Excerpted from *Routledge Handbook of Strength and Conditioning*

Figure 25.3 A typical travel programme designed for players during a competition phase where they have access to gym facilities and the goal is to maintain fitness. Players will need guidance on when to perform these exercises, depending upon match play scheduling. For instance, plyometric and strength training would not typically be advised within 3 days prior to competition

stance forehands and backhands, movement to and from wide balls, inside in and inside out forehand, volleying and the smash. Secondly movement training may be more “metabolic” in nature and aim to target the specific energy systems and using work rest ratios that resemble match play (Kovacs, 2007; Kovacs, 2004), which will differ slightly depending upon court surface (Fernandez-Fernandez et al., 2010). Thirdly, “mechanical”, which aims to correct and improve poor body positioning and movement in acceleration and deceleration. It may also include the development of clay court movement which differs to hard court movement due to the nature of the surface. An example of specific court training may include the use of slide boards in the preparation for clay court tennis (Kovacs, 2009) in the gym and specific sliding with balance on the court surface.

Injury prevention exercises should look to correct any already identifiable areas of weakness or instability. As previously discussed, Kibler and Safran (2000) have identified some common maladaptations seen in tennis players. A typical programme will consider all areas and programmes are designed to incorporate specific exercises within warm ups, strength training sessions and specific injury prevention sessions to address these maladaptations.

Conclusion

Having worked within the sport for several years, we hope to pass along the importance of fully understanding the necessity of individualising the programme based on the athlete’s needs and requirements in combination with their readiness to train. The programme design should be influenced by performance data, a multitude of screening methods and long term development goals. This should also include considerations surrounding the stage of development of the athlete: maturation, emotional readiness to train, training history and attitude.

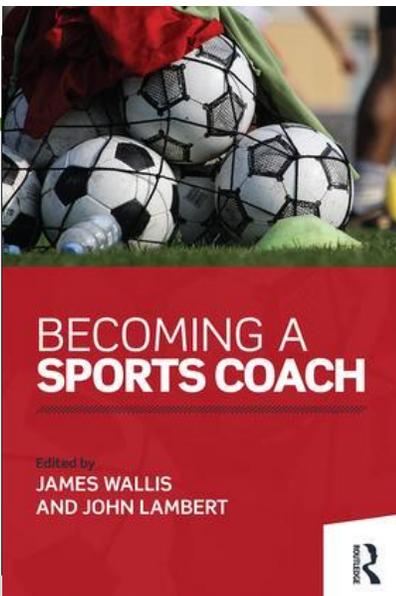
The opportunities to carry out training blocks are minimal due to the nature of the tournament calendar, and all coaches will need to be able to adapt training daily. Developing good reliable and valid methods to quantify training and competition load will be paramount to ensure the correct balance of training stimulus to secure adaptation versus excessive load, resulting in a decrement of performance. The art of coaching and communicating with our athletes should not be underestimated; as coaches, we can always be improving the knowledge and skillset we apply to our programming.



CHAPTER

6

ATHLETE-COACH RELATIONSHIP: A CASE STUDY FROM WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL TENNIS



This chapter is excerpted from

Becoming a Sports Coach

by Flo Pietzsch and Heather Watson

Edited by James Wallis, John Lambert

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ATHLETE-COACH RELATIONSHIP: A CASE STUDY FROM WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL TENNIS

Excerpted from *Becoming a Sports Coach*

This chapter provides reflective observations on an athlete-coach relationship spanning more than five years within elite British tennis. It will draw upon Floris Pietzsch's experiences as the strength and conditioning coach working alongside Heather Watson, a high-level British tennis player. It is intended that, through personal reflections, it will provide an understanding of some of the elements that contribute to maintaining an effective athlete-coach relationship and which can positively impact on performance.

The relationship between athlete and coach is fundamental to the overall efficacy of the coach's role. As Jowett and Cockerill (2002: 16) observe,

The effectiveness of coaches' tasks of providing technical, tactical and strategical instruction, as well as other tasks of planning, organizing, evaluating, directing and supporting depend upon the relationship between coach and athlete.

In short, to be an effective coach requires an effective relationship to be built between athlete and coach. The case study discussed will present a harmonious athlete-coach relationship and how this was achieved. On reflection there are critical questions that emerged that have the potential to enhance future practice. This chapter will attempt to provide some answers to questions such as:

1. How was the relationship built?
2. How, as a team, did we overcome challenging issues that threatened to undermine the bond between athlete and coach? Issues such as accountability of performance, scheduling of tournaments and overcoming differences of opinion were common and required action.
3. What lessons were learned by all parties within the team and how can knowledge of these experiences offer guidance to other coaches?
4. What does literature on psychological needs theory and the development of autonomy tell us about athlete-coach relationships?
5. How can coaches use theory to better inform their practice?



ATHLETE-COACH RELATIONSHIP: A CASE STUDY FROM WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL TENNIS

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1. What lessons were learned by all parties within the team and how can knowledge of these experiences offer guidance to other coaches?
2. What does literature on psychological needs theory and the development of autonomy tell us about athlete-coach relationships?
3. How can coaches use theory to better inform their practice?

The chapter is written from the perspective of a practitioner who operated within a successful team of player, technical coach and strength and conditioning coach supported by the National Governing Body over the course of five years. These experiences will be subjected to reflective analysis in order to identify and evaluate both deliberate and implicit actions that contributed to the development of this delicate relationship. There will be an attempt to make sense of the complex nature of these interactions with reference to relevant theory from the field of social psychology. One principal aim is for the reader to use this knowledge and the applied examples to shape future contact with athletes.

The context: working with Heather Watson

Heather Watson's 2012 season offers several examples of how coaching has influenced her behaviours and performances. It is these experiences that this chapter shall draw upon to exemplify coaching processes that can be extracted and applied elsewhere. Floris Pietzsch was the strength and conditioning coach working within a small team who spent approximately 25 weeks a year alongside Heather in both training and competition periods or by providing remote support during the rest of the year. Floris was tasked with the development of her physical conditioning and to reduce the likelihood of injuries.

Finishing 2011 on a career high of being 90 in the Women's Tennis Association rankings (90WTA), and being one of only five women aged 19 or younger in the top 100, the upcoming 2012 season was full of promise and expectation. A largely successful off season training block was hampered by an injury on the very last day of the five-week block, resulting in Heather having to pull out of the first tournament of the year and reducing any potential momentum prior to the Australian Open, which began later in the month.



ATHLETE-COACH RELATIONSHIP: A CASE STUDY FROM WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL TENNIS

Excerpted from *Becoming a Sports Coach*

With very little match preparation Heather's confidence was low, and it was not surprising to see her world ranking drop in the first months of the season. The injury proved a challenge for the team and it took time to overcome the disappointment of missing key tournaments. It took much longer than expected to build the performances back up to the level required to compete on the WTA tour.

From a poor start the 2012 season progressed with a high degree of success. Heather's season began with disappointment but finished with a career high ranking (49WTA) whilst also winning the Osaka Open, which ended a 24-year drought of any female British tennis player winning at the WTA tour level.

Figure 9.1 illustrates how Heather's ranking began poorly but improved during the year. The following section will present carefully considered literature that can inform the development of athlete-coach relationships along with personal insights into

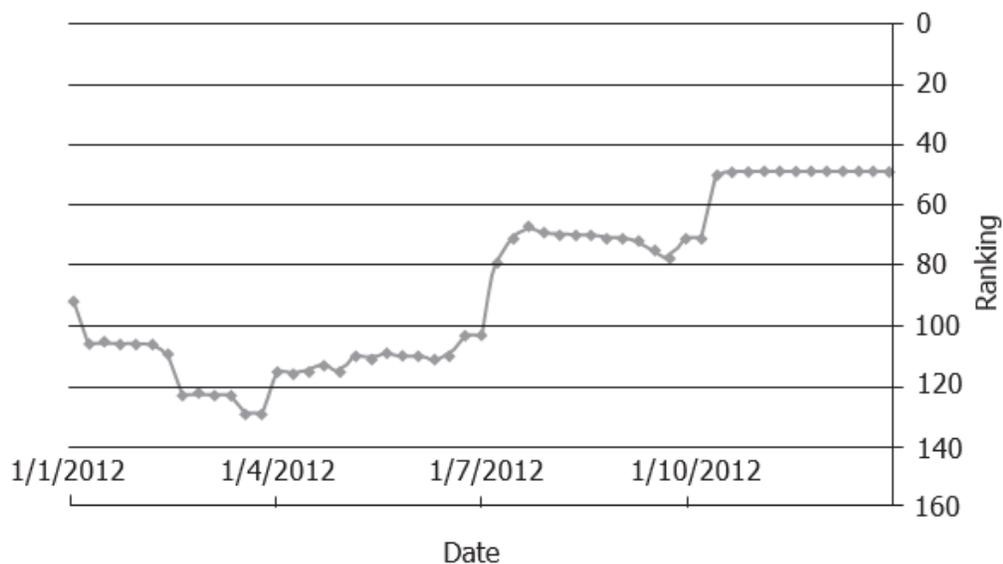


FIGURE 9.1 Heather Watson's career ranking in 2012; note the initial dip in ranking post injury before a significant win in the Miami Open propelled her ranking for the rest of the year



ATHLETE-COACH RELATIONSHIP: A CASE STUDY FROM WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL TENNIS

Excerpted from *Becoming a Sports Coach*

the application of relevant theories that contributed to an upturn in performance through the 2012 season. Included in this section are both coach and player reflections, together with some questions which are intended to encourage readers to interrogate aspects of their own practice.

Selected literature on athlete-coach relationships

Despite research within the field of athlete-coach relationships being described by Wylleman in 2000 as 'unchartered territory', there has been an increase in scholarly activity around this subject in recent years. There is research describing the varying types of social power available to coaches that might bring changes in behaviour in their athletes (Raven, 1959; 1993; 2008). In 2003 the European Federation of Sport Psychology held a special issue symposium on 'relationships in competitive sports' which aimed to encourage further research into the area. Since that time there has been significant growth in the study of theoretical concepts relating to athlete-coach relationships.

Social power

The concept of social power describes how one might be able to persuade others to follow their directions or instructions (French and Raven, 1959; Raven, 1993; 2008). Social power can be divided into six categories: legitimate, expert, informational, coercive, reward and referent. Each is now briefly considered, along with observations from the coach and athlete on the nature of their relationship.

Legitimate power describes the natural influence a coach might have upon their athletes as the very nature of their job is to impact upon their athletes' behaviours.

The coach therefore feels that they have legitimate power to instruct athletes to perform certain tasks, but this on its own will not be enough to secure a positive coach-athlete relationship. An individual's confidence, trust and respect are not earned by simply holding a coaching role, and therefore it will be the behaviours of the coach that will decide the longevity of social power (Jones *et al.*, 2003; Potrac *et al.*, 2002). Should the athlete develop a lack of confidence in their coach's ability then legitimate power may quickly evaporate.



ATHLETE-COACH RELATIONSHIP: A CASE STUDY FROM WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL TENNIS

Excerpted from *Becoming a Sports Coach*

Expert power refers to the potential positive impact that perceived expertise may have on maintaining power in a given relationship. Generally, coaches are appointed based on their level of expertise, as this is a key ingredient to being a successful coach. Whilst the athlete maintains a positive perception of their expertise, the coach can exert influence upon the athlete's behaviour. However, this expert power can be gained and lost depending upon the coach's demonstrations, technical knowledge or win/loss record (Potrac *et al.*, 2002). Some coaches may choose not to perform demonstrations in front of their athletes if they feel inadequate, which might result in a loss of respect from their athletes.

Coach reflections

Reflecting back upon my six years of working within elite tennis I can see how many athlete-coach relationships failed to work. Many appointments at this level are made purely on coach reputation, which normally means reviewing the list of high-level achievers a coach has previously worked with. This may be very important experience that a coach brings to the team, and it also evidences to a certain extent the potential capability of a coach, but it does not detail the coaching style or methods preferred by that coach. These may clash with the values and expectations that the athlete may have. For example, the approach to training methods in tennis is quite varied. One coach might value a high work ethic involving early morning training sessions with long hours on the court whereas I have also observed other coaches preferring to focus more on quality and much less on training volume. The authors' recommendation is to allow for a trial period where both parties can evaluate each other's approach and create an agreed course of action.

Informational power refers to the ability to suggest a course of action based upon information that is provided. This is subtly different to expert power as it stipulates that the athlete has listened and understood the information and would proceed with a course of action based on this information (Cassidy *et al.*, 2004).

For example, informing your athlete how endurance training benefits sports performance should provide them with a rationale as to why endurance training is required. It may be possible to reflect upon times where coaches have felt the need to persuade athletes to perform a technique or undertake a training session which could have been supplemented by additional information to create a bigger 'buy-in' by the athlete.



ATHLETE-COACH RELATIONSHIP: A CASE STUDY FROM WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL TENNIS

Excerpted from *Becoming a Sports Coach*

Another example might be the need to provide a strong rationale as to how a drill relates to specific game play before the player includes it in their regular training regime. This is particularly useful if athletes are reluctant to fulfil the activity with the desired intensity or you feel that they are not fully committed to the task.

Coach reflections A good example that I can draw upon in my work with Heather was her dislike of endurance training. On the court or in the gym she would be a hard-working professional but endurance training, such as running on the beach, which is something we did regularly during the gruelling training blocks during the off season, was a tough session for all of us. As a coach I had trouble motivating her to do these and to do them at the desired intensity and for Heather it simply was not an area of fitness training that she enjoyed doing. Initially, I just gave my instructions to her, providing only the necessary information to complete the session. I did not provide a specific rationale as to why we were doing certain sessions. It was not until I received feedback from Heather that I realised that she did not know why we were carrying out certain types of sessions. I think as coaches we quite often make assumptions with our athletes. I had assumed that it was perfectly clear why we were undertaking running sessions.

I decided to tackle the problem by holding a short meeting to discuss the reasons behind all of my coaching strategies. Not only did it allow Heather to gain valuable information but she also learned something about training principles. It also acted as a means to our sharing our goals for our development, and we even planned targets to reach. I learnt that involving your athletes in the process can be highly valuable.

Our meeting coincided with immediate results in the tennis court post-training blocks. A clear pattern emerged which showed that after a hard 2–3 week training period with many intense fitness sessions we saw some of her most impressive tennis performances. This provided the team with positive feedback and helped gain additional adherence from Heather.



ATHLETE-COACH RELATIONSHIP: A CASE STUDY FROM WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL TENNIS

Excerpted from *Becoming a Sports Coach*

Athlete reflections

I used to dread the morning runs! They were tough and took a really long time. As a tennis player I'm used to constant breaks and time outs between points but the morning runs really didn't give me that. We ran 4 miles 3-4 times a week and still trained as normal during the days, so I was tired a lot. Although I hated doing the sessions I valued them as I knew how much fitter they made me.

Coercive power is generally considered to be a more negative approach that a coach might utilise, and it refers to handing out punishment or negative feedback to gain the desired response from your athlete. Potrac *et al.*'s (2002) research amongst elite football coaches suggested that the occasional rebuke of athletes can sometimes be necessary, but that persistent repetitive negative communication will have a detrimental effect upon the athlete-coach relationship.

This method is something that I have used previously and now try to avoid wherever possible. Stern negative feedback, used sparingly, can have a positive impact on players as it signifies a high level of displeasure which might create shock and have immediate impact. This works on the premise that players want to please their coaches and having caused some displeasure may result in some extra efforts on their part. However, when my expectation of effort or application has not been met, rather than showing my own displeasure, I would now typically put the onus on the athlete to recognise when they have fallen short of my expectations.

Reward power is something that all coaches have at their disposal, as they hold the power to provide rewards to their athletes. It may well be a tangible reward such as letting them off the last exhausting drill or having an afternoon off, but in particular it relates to the feedback and approval that many athletes value, appreciate and at times even crave from their coach (Raven, 1993).



ATHLETE-COACH RELATIONSHIP: A CASE STUDY FROM WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL TENNIS

Excerpted from *Becoming a Sports Coach*

It has been suggested that the effectiveness of reward power will depend upon the athlete perceptions as to whether the reward was justified or not. Too much high praise or too frequent praise may not have much impact upon your athletes, especially if it is not fully earned.

Referent power is arguably the most important type of power that influences athlete behaviour, as it refers to the development of respect for the coach which is based on a degree of admiration. It is 'founded on an individual's identification with another person and his or her desire to be like that person' (Cassidy *et al.*, 2004: 179).

Athlete reflections

To make it as a top tennis player you have to self-motivate and push yourself. When you are on the court you are almost completely alone apart from a cheer or two from your team and that's tough to manage. However, I guess I'm like most people. Who doesn't like positive encouragement and praise? For me it is really important to get some feedback on how I'm doing. I want to know I'm doing it right and doing it well.

If I don't respect my coach then why would I work with them? Of course I want to work with someone who has similar ideas and concepts to those I have. Mutual respect is definitely needed if it's ever going to work.

Heather's comments display that respect is vitally important and support theoretical positions on athlete-coach relationships. It is clear that respect and cooperation can be achieved through good communication, which involves paying attention to athlete's ideas, feelings and feedback. As a coach we may intuitively use one method of social power more often than others without being aware of the potential consequences or benefits of each. For example, coercive power may typically be considered as having a negative influence, but it might also result in a very fast change in behaviour which in certain situations may be preferred. Likewise, the use of

information power could be considered a more positive method and result in additional learning, but might require more time and effort than is available. In practice, we may find ourselves using several of the key concepts of social power within our own coaching and raising one's awareness of this could have significant benefits to both athlete and coach.



ATHLETE-COACH RELATIONSHIP: A CASE STUDY FROM WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL TENNIS

Excerpted from *Becoming a Sports Coach*

Coach reflections

In elite sport the expectation of achievement is extremely high. The coach is not held entirely accountable for the results of the player, as players should place a large emphasis on themselves. However, you may find yourself under pressure from the National Governing Body, the club, the parents, agents or the players themselves. All too often the coach is sacked due to poor results and time is a luxury that you might not have. Therefore, as a coach you need to decide where best to spend your resources of time and commitment. Do you opt for swift changes without informational power as it may be better to make short-term gains, or do you opt for the longer process which might develop the athlete's understanding for the longer term? This might result in a few tactical changes for immediate impact followed by some time dedicated to technical changes or behavioural/attitudinal changes which take considerably longer. For these reasons it's best to choose coaching strategies carefully.

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

1. Can you recognise how informing Heather about the rationale for endurance training helped her understand its importance to her tennis career?
2. Can you reflect upon some of your own experiences either as a coach or as an athlete and identify where legitimate, expert and information power has been apparent?
3. Can you also recognise when this has been beneficial to you as a coach?

The 3Cs model

As a consequence of Jowett and Meek's (2000) research on athlete-coach relationships, they proposed the 3Cs model. The 3Cs model highlights the importance of developing closeness, co-orientation and complementarity. Closeness refers to developing feelings of trust, respect and feeling close to your coach or athlete. Co-orientation refers to communication and developing the ability of self-disclosure and opening-up of core values and beliefs which enables feelings of closeness. Finally, complementarity refers to how well the coach and athlete engage with one another and how well they cooperate (Jowett and Cockerill, 2002).



ATHLETE-COACH RELATIONSHIP: A CASE STUDY FROM WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL TENNIS

Excerpted from *Becoming a Sports Coach*

These three elements are important determinants of athletic relationships (Jowett and Meek, 2000). Feeling cared for, feeling respected and feeling valued are important to athletes and can have a positive effect upon self-confidence and, in turn, motivation (Jowett and Cockerill, 2002).

Making an effort to really get to know your athlete and taking the time to learn what makes them tick will have a positive impact upon your relationship and also on your athlete's motivation. It is important to know what values and beliefs are held dear to them so you can empathise better and relate to each other more closely. These form important building blocks for long-term successful athlete-coach relationships.

When we think back to our own coaching we can probably find examples where we all too often have simply dictated the form of the training session. Typically, we see this as one of our main functions and ultimately it is our job to decide what activities our athlete should be undertaking. It is a 'we know best' way of thinking. When I first started coaching I would have constantly reverted to this type of delivery as I was extremely rigid and inexperienced with my methods. Experience has taught me that if I want an engaged, hard-working and motivated athlete they need to be involved in the process, understand why we are doing certain things and have the opportunity to contribute ideas (see Chapters 6 and 7 for examples of athlete-centred practice).

Similarly, feelings of distrust or feeling unattached, or lack of understanding, competing interests and non-committal behaviours can negatively affect your athlete-coach relationship and potentially have a negative impact upon performance. Interpersonal conflicts can represent a failure in some of the key determinants of relationships and reflect a state of imbalance between the coach and athlete. This can be described 'as experiencing discord between oneself and significant others' (Scanlan *et al.*, 1991: 112). A study by Greenleaf *et al.* (2001) found that conflicts typically arose from disagreements on training, perceived power and motivational climate.



ATHLETE-COACH RELATIONSHIP: A CASE STUDY FROM WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL TENNIS

Excerpted from *Becoming a Sports Coach*

The 3Cs model can be used to assess agreement and compatibility between coach and athlete, or stimulate conversation for relationship enhancement by identifying areas where coach and performer are not in full agreement. Figure 9.2 illustrates one hypothetical example of a comparison between an athlete's view of the coach and the coach's view of the athlete. Here we can see that there is agreement in the closeness component but a possible incompatibility or disagreement in complementarity and co-orientation. Therefore, the coach's perceptions do not match the perceptions of the athlete.

Coach reflections We may feel that we already cater for all the needs of our athletes, that we understand our athletes well and that our athletes recognise the efforts we make for them. However, we should tread carefully when making these assumptions. It is important to have good two-way communication to ensure conflict and misunderstandings are avoided where possible. This is especially true when working with athletes for a long period of time. Through my own reflections on working with Heather, I can now see much more clearly the emotional developments any individual would make when growing from a

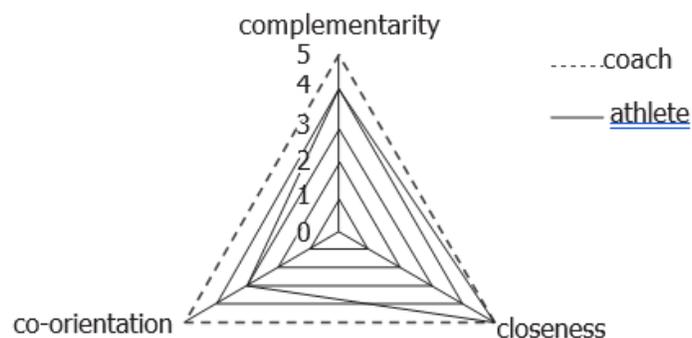


FIGURE 9.2 Coach's view of the athlete and athlete's view of the coach (adapted from Jowett and Cockerill, 2002)



ATHLETE-COACH RELATIONSHIP: A CASE STUDY FROM WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL TENNIS

Excerpted from *Becoming a Sports Coach*

junior tennis player into a seasoned professional. It would be irresponsible of me to continue talking, interacting and communicating with her in the same manner that I did when she was only 16 as a young inexperienced player, compared to a 20-year-old who is preparing for a third round at Wimbledon. My initial methods could quite easily be interpreted as controlling, patronising and restrictive to a senior player. Instead I adopted a more reciprocal method of coaching aimed at developing collaboration, joint understanding and team work.

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

1. Take some time to reflect upon your own athlete-coach relationship. Can you identify with the 3Cs model?
2. Can you recognise examples of closeness, co-orientation and complementarity with your athletes?
3. Consider opening a dialogue with your athletes to investigate perceptions of the athlete-coach relationship through use of the 3Cs model.

Self-determination theory

A significant determinant of a successful athlete-coach relationship is maintaining and developing our athlete's motivation and well-being. Since self-determination theory (SDT) (Deci and Ryan, 2000) has gained general acceptance as a motivational construct, there has been interest in how the social environment affects individual psychological well-being. In particular the theory suggests that coaches can create the social environment that has the 'capacity to influence the physical growth and development as well as the psychological and subjective well-being of their athletes' (Felton and Jowett, 2013: 130). SDT is grounded in the idea that humans desire satisfaction in the three basic needs of autonomy, perceived competence and relatedness (Deci and Ryan, 2000). Autonomy refers to the need to feel empowered to make choices or take actions that are self-determined.



ATHLETE-COACH RELATIONSHIP: A CASE STUDY FROM WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL TENNIS

Excerpted from *Becoming a Sports Coach*

Perceived competence refers to the need to feel capable and able in the environment. Relatedness refers to a sense of belonging to the task and being understood and connected with others (Felton and Jowett, 2013). There is evidence to suggest that an athlete's satisfaction with their relationship with a coach, along with their feelings of well-being, are enhanced by a perception that the coach is working primarily in the athlete's best interests (Lafreniere *et al.*, 2011), and therefore incorporating features of self-determination would be conducive to this. We are motivated intrinsically to perform tasks when we possess an internal drive and enthusiasm towards the activity; 'I enjoy hitting tennis balls' is an example of this. Alternatively, extrinsic motivation is where one is driven by external rewards. These might be the outcomes of the activity, such as payment for winning a match or fulfilling a coach's instruction to gain a reward.

If a behaviour is not intrinsically motivated but internalised and self-endorsed, much like the example of Heather running on the beach, then the motivation is termed self-determined. If an athlete feels pressured to fulfil a task or action through force, obligation or guilt then the motivation is termed non-self-determined. Research tells us that athletes who are either intrinsically motivated or self-determined will have a more optimal functioning (Mageau and Vallerand, 2003), greater persistence, greater concentration and will generally perform better (*ibid.*; Gillert *et al.*, 2010).

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

1. Reflect upon your own coaching experiences and identify whether your processes afford athletes an opportunity to experience autonomy, perceived competence and relatedness.
2. Can you identify when your athletes have been self-determined or intrinsically motivated and how you or the environment facilitated this?



ATHLETE-COACH RELATIONSHIP: A CASE STUDY FROM WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL TENNIS

Excerpted from *Becoming a Sports Coach*

The application of SDT to coaching practice has been the focus for a number of researchers who have found that autonomy supportive coaching practices predict improved athlete well-being (Baard *et al.*, 2004; Deci and Ryan, 2000; Blanchard *et al.*, 2009; Felton and Jowett, 2013). That is to say, coaches who strive to empower and provide free or guided autonomy environments would appear to stand a better chance of facilitating success compared to more controlling and coercive coaches. Therefore, it should always be a goal for coaches to consider incorporating autonomy whenever possible so that the athlete feels that their opinions count and matter. This view resonates with both my philosophical position and my most successful experiences in elite tennis coaching.

Research by Bartholomew *et al.* (2011) has shown that the inverse is also apparent, in that 'ill-being' can be experienced through a lack of autonomy, relatedness and competence. Therefore, the controlling coach who does not provide harmonious cooperation, joint decision-making, team cohesion or positive feedback will run the risk of developing ill-being within their athletes. This in turn has been linked to a manifestation of further more negative behaviours in the athlete, such as burnout, depression or eating disorders (Bartholomew *et al.*, 2011). Aide *et al.* (2008) found that mere perceptions of low autonomy resulted in higher reported levels of exhaustion, both physical and mental. Therefore it is feasible that a coach may actually be trying to provide a positive social environment that supports the three basic needs of SDT but an athlete is failing to recognise it. When athletes perceive that decisions are out of their control, and not self-determined (whether they actually are or not), then they can feel that their emotional and physical investment is draining.

Coach reflections

There are times when the coach and athlete do not see eye-to-eye on certain matters or difficult conversations need to take place that might test the robustness of the athlete-coach relationship. A common example involving Heather, the technical coach and myself was when deciding upon the upcoming tennis schedule, including which tournaments she should play and when the training block should take place. In tennis there are many possible choices that can be made. For the very top players it is easier as they gain entry into all the top tournaments due to ranking. Lower-ranked players face decisions such as playing a lower-ranked event which guarantees entry into the main draw, or deciding to play qualification rounds in a higher-level event.



ATHLETE-COACH RELATIONSHIP: A CASE STUDY FROM WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL TENNIS

Excerpted from *Becoming a Sports Coach*

The number of tournaments to enter, travel implications and court surface changes are other factors to consider. Flying from the USA to Australia then Asia followed by the Middle East to gain entry to the high-level tournaments is a tough assignment for a player. Add playing for your country in the Federation Cup within that time period and it is clear that somewhere along the line the elite athlete trying to maintain peak performance is going to struggle. This could link with many factors such as time zone changes, temperature/climate variables or possibly court surface changes, which are believed to be linked to increasing risks of injury. Viewed collectively it can be appreciated that scheduling becomes a hot topic within any professional tennis team. Who makes the decisions – the player, coach, parents, agent, or National Governing Body? Often there is no set method or overall decision-maker and these choices tend to be talked about and discussed at length within the team.

When relating the example of scheduling Heather's season back to SDT and the 3Cs model we considered that open communication and cooperation allowed Heather to feel some autonomy and relatedness, as her ideas and suggestions were considered by all team members. Heather therefore felt her opinions mattered and were valued, and ultimately she had the power to make the final call. An example was when Heather wanted to play two tournaments in the Middle East as they were high-profile, high-level events but the coach felt that they involved too much travelling and an alternative option was better suited. Opinions were shared from each member of the team.

Ultimately, Heather as the player made the final decision after reviewing all the opinions in detail and in this case agreed with the coach's opinion based upon his experience and judgement. Therefore, although Heather wanted to play these events she recognised that the coach had vast experience and she demonstrated her respect and trust (closeness) by following his advice. The example demonstrates good open channels of communication (co-orientation) and shared views and goals (complementarity).

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

1. Reflecting upon some of your athlete-coach relationships, can you identify how you have overcome difficulties? Were compromises made?
2. Have your athletes already started showing signs of wanting to be more autonomous?
3. What can you do to help develop autonomy for your athletes?



ATHLETE-COACH RELATIONSHIP: A CASE STUDY FROM WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL TENNIS

Excerpted from *Becoming a Sports Coach*

Developing closeness, complementarity and co-orientation within relationships to a positive level is likely to lead to satisfaction of the basic needs of competence, autonomy and relatedness (Felton and Jowett, 2013). The notion of satisfying basic psychological needs also correlates with self-determined forms of motivation (Deci and Ryan, 2000; Mageau and Vallerand, 2003; Gillert *et al.*, 2010), illustrating the benefits of finding ways to incorporate these principles in practice. An athlete-coach relationship which develops high levels of co-orientation, complementarity and closeness can make it easier to agree on the 'difficult' decisions inherent in coaching.

Coach reflections

When Heather was a younger junior player the relationship was significantly different to how it was when she was a seasoned professional. At the beginning the coach and the National Governing Body would dictate the schedule that she would be undertaking. This was partly due to the fact she was too young and inexperienced to make the best choices at that age, but also because it was the Governing Body which was financially contributing the most to the development of the player. As time moved on Heather became successful, and a transition period occurred whereby the internal power within the team, along with the influence of the Governing Body, underwent a transition.

It is not easy to identify when this transition begins, nor are there any guidelines on how to best manage such a transition. I do not believe we identified this natural maturation early enough and arguably failed to fully empower her as a senior professional athlete. When Heather wanted more autonomy and decision-making power we felt that on some occasions that she did not have the experience to make the best choices. As is the case with physical training the 'phasing' of autonomy and control to the athlete needs to be gauged carefully. Too little could damage relations, too much could lead to anarchy! Judging and implementing gradual delegation to the athlete, training them to use their autonomy with respect, is a significant challenge, but if successful can have significant rewards and could assist in sustaining long-term relationships.

Athlete reflections

Having spent time on the tour I have certainly learnt a lot. I now know much more about what works for me personally and what doesn't. Not everyone responds to the same way of training or structure and therefore my opinion definitely matters. It is important that coaches listen to their players' opinions and take them on board to work together.



ATHLETE-COACH RELATIONSHIP: A CASE STUDY FROM WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL TENNIS

Excerpted from *Becoming a Sports Coach*

Conclusion

The inter-relationships of coach, athlete and support staff do invariably break down or run their course. Why this occurs can often be due to incompatibilities between the personality types, leadership styles or coaching styles (Jowett, 2003; Canary and Stafford, 1994). In the case of individual coaches working within tennis it is more typical for coaches to experience a trial period before more official contracts are exchanged, and it is the professional player who holds the power of employment. However, break-ups in successful, longer-standing athlete-coach relationships can be explained by shifting opinions or perceptions of the roles and responsibilities within the team, or when goals become conflicting rather than shared (Jowett, 2003; Canary and Stafford, 1994). It is also possible that commitments change within members of a team. It has been speculated that a significant factor in the Lendl-Murray relationship ceasing was that Lendl wanted to pursue his own ambitions.

Heather Watson's 2012 season ended with huge success as she won the WTA Japan Open in Osaka and in doing so became the first female British player to win a WTA title in 25 years. It also secured a top 50 ranking. Figure 9.1 shows the year did not go initially to plan and the team had to deal with a prolonged difficult time prior to this victory. Breaking a run of poor form is never easy but contributing to a turn of fortunes in this case was collective hard work, dedication and the strength of the athlete-coach relationship.

Athlete reflections

The event (Osaka 2012) will always be special to me. Clearly I played well but the accumulation of several hard weeks prior to the event helped me to prepare physically and mentally for the event and it resulted in everything coming together. You need a team around you nowadays in tennis and I'm grateful I have support.

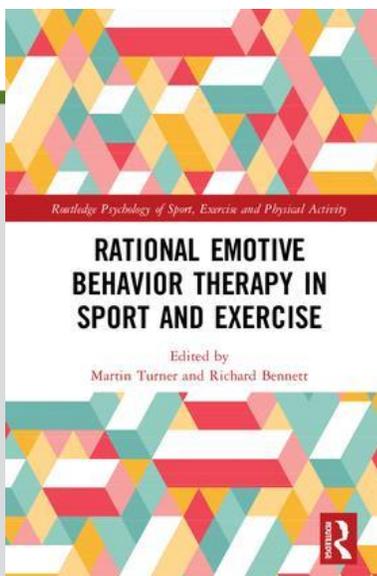
In summary, the intention of this chapter is to highlight some of the key aspects contributing to a successful athlete-coach relationship. Readers are invited to relate their own coaching experiences to and work within some of the theoretical frameworks discussed here. Understanding your athletes' needs as well as their specific physical and technical requirements is paramount in developing a secure, harmonious athlete-coach relationship. Understanding what actions you can take to enhance the relationship with athletes is no less significant, and may be achieved through embedding some of the principles and considering the reflective questions presented in this chapter.



CHAPTER

7

“IS IT REALLY THAT BAD?”: A CASE STUDY APPLYING RATIONAL EMOTIVE BEHAVIOR THERAPY (REBT) WITH AN ELITE YOUTH TENNIS PLAYER



This chapter is excerpted from

Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy in Sport and Exercise

by Andrew Wood and Charlotte Woodcock

Edited by Martin Turner, Richard Bennett

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Introduction

My (first author) decision to become a sport and exercise psychologist was conceived during the final year of a degree in sport and exercise science, a pursuit that combined my passion for sport and human behavior. From a young age I became frustrated with the disparity in performance between training and competition that I experienced. When starting as a ‘neophyte’ practitioner I was armed with a toolbox of psychological skills ready to improve an athlete’s performance and life for the better. Such a utopic state was short-lived, and soon I had told myself that I was clearly no good. Indeed it was an irrational and unhealthy story I had unwittingly concocted, but also a common experience reported by trainee sport psychologists (Tammen, 2000). It was only when a fellow trainee commented on the pressure I had been placing on myself, a belief that I had to provide the cure-all solution, did my irrational bubble burst. Two and a half years later I find myself nearing the end of a PhD that explores the effects of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) on performance, as well as continuing my training to become a chartered sport and exercise psychologist. During this period I have been immersed within REBT and share a rational philosophy towards life that inherently underpins my applied practice. These ‘core conditions’ include: empathy towards others, unconditional acceptance (i.e., viewing humans to be fallible and too complicated to be globally evaluated), genuineness, and humour (Dryden & Branch, 2008). Over time I have felt a weight of expectation lift, hereby experiencing greater freedom, enjoyment, and, dare I say, success as a practitioner, a response that has been mirrored by many athletes I have applied REBT with.

Context Using the following case, we provide a detailed account into the application of REBT with a nationally ranked youth tennis player. We also detail changes in the player’s ability to self-regulate over the course of the intervention. REBT is traditionally a psychotherapeutic model (David, et al., 2005), and in sport it occupies a chasm between therapy and cognitive behavioral coaching.



“IS IT REALLY THAT BAD?”: A CASE STUDY APPLYING RATIONAL EMOTIVE BEHAVIOR THERAPY (REBT) WITH AN ELITE YOUTH TENNIS PLAYER

Excerpted from *Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy in Sport and Exercise*

Acknowledging the boundaries of our professional competence, we describe its application as mental skills training, empowering the athlete with an approach to enhance performance and pro-actively reinforce an athlete's mental health. Both authors were involved in the initial consultation with the client, whereby a collective approach provided us with an adequate view of the client's problems and resulting solutions (Pitt et al., 2015). The first author delivered the entirety of the intervention and provides the narrative of the case. The second author examined changes in self-regulation strategies prior to and after the intervention.

Presenting issue

Tom (pseudonym) was brought to our attention by his father who had requested sport psychology support. Accordingly, we arranged an introductory consultation session. Whilst drawing heavily upon cognitive behavioral techniques within our practice (i.e., the what) within this initial consultation we utilized a client-centered humanistic approach (i.e., the how) to glean important contextual information, whilst building a strong therapeutic alliance (Turner & Barker, 2014).

Tom was a nationally ranked, 17-year-old tennis player who was deciding whether to pursue a career as a professional tennis player, and like with many other sports, the amateur ranks were financially demanding. Subsequently, he had given himself one year to make it onto the ATP world-ranking list. Tom was ambitious and presented an unyielding, outcome-focused goal for the upcoming season. Accordingly, this seemed to exacerbate the demanding and unhelpful pressure he was placing upon himself to be successful. By his own admission, Tom was struggling to perform consistently and was frustrated about not fulfilling his potential. When playing tennis, he would be preoccupied with what significant others were thinking and anxious about underperforming, in the belief that it would reflect badly on him as a player and person. Tom felt he had little control over his emotions, leading to unhelpful anxiety and angry outbursts during crucial moments of a game (i.e., losing the first set, break points, and umpire's decisions). He was unable to effectively self-regulate his performance. He mentioned, “When things are going well it's great, but when they are not you can definitely tell”.



“IS IT REALLY THAT BAD?”: A CASE STUDY APPLYING RATIONAL EMOTIVE BEHAVIOR THERAPY (REBT) WITH AN ELITE YOUTH TENNIS PLAYER

Excerpted from *Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy in Sport and Exercise*

Needs analysis

Tom's pre-occupation with others' thoughts, his experience of distressing emotions (e.g., extreme nervousness and anger), maladaptive behaviors (e.g., shouting, poor body language), and a rigid outcome goal suggested that he was harbouring irrational beliefs. The irrational Performance Beliefs Inventory (iPBI; Turner et al., 2016) was used to quantify Tom's irrational beliefs. In comparison to normative values, Tom reported high scores on composite irrational beliefs (normative value = 20.93, Tom time-point 1 = 24.50) and low frustration tolerance (normative value = 23.05, Tom time-point 1 = 28.50), a combination of which is commonly associated with increased unhealthy anger expression (Jones & Trower, 2004). Typically, practitioners have utilized the canon of psychological skills (Andersen, 2009), such as self-talk, pre-performance routines, relaxation, and imagery, to enhance performance in tennis players (Mamassis & Doganis, 2004). Albeit a valuable cornerstone of applied sport psychology, such techniques may be unable to challenge the underlying beliefs that may hinder a player's ability to overcome challenges in the pursuit of their respective goals (Turner, 2016a). Tom wanted to enhance his control over his emotions and better regulate his actions on court, prior to and during tennis matches, ultimately ensuring he was able to perform closer to his potential on a more consistent basis.

The intervention

We predicted that the adoption of a new rational philosophy would offer a long-term solution to the disruptive performance issues he was currently experiencing. We also predicted that this would cement the foundations upon which skills could be taught to further manage symptoms that were having a debilitating effect on his performances. The context of Tom's case also afforded an extended period in which to work. Tom's competition life meant he lived a somewhat nomadic lifestyle, often competing at national and international tournaments for several days at a time, thus contact between us would be limited and sporadic.

The notion of working towards redundancy as a sport psychologist presents a poor business model, that is, not being a crutch for the athlete who becomes overly reliant on the support and guidance of the practitioner. Nevertheless, we firmly believe that effective sport psychologists can present athletes with greater awareness, enhanced perceived control over their emotions, and greater clarity regarding the mental aspects of their sport. Indeed, effective REBT might allow Tom to autonomously manage and respond adaptively to challenges across varying contexts.



“IS IT REALLY THAT BAD?”: A CASE STUDY APPLYING RATIONAL EMOTIVE BEHAVIOR THERAPY (REBT) WITH AN ELITE YOUTH TENNIS PLAYER

Excerpted from *Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy in Sport and Exercise*

The intervention was delivered over nine sessions, spanning 6-months, with each session lasting for 60-minutes. Using the ABC(DE) framework (Ellis & Dryden, 1997), sessions 1 to 7 were focused on REBT and were separated into education, disputation, and reinforcement phases (Turner & Barker, 2014). Sessions 8 and 9 consisted of developing Tom's ability to employ psychological skills that would help him manage difficult symptoms prior to and/ or during competition.

Sessions 1 and 2: building the foundations

The education phase was conducted across two sessions. The aim was to help Tom understand that it was his beliefs (B) that determined his emotional and behavioral consequences (C), rather than the adversity alone (A) (Dryden & Branch, 2008). It was important to ensure Tom developed a strong foundation around the ABC(DE) framework that would provide the building blocks for subsequent phases. REBT is traditionally associated with an active and directive approach (Dryden & Neenan, 2015), however, practitioners might flexibly shift between that and a client-centered approach. In particular, I have found the adoption of Motivational Interviewing (MI; Miller & Rollnick, 2012) techniques an invaluable way to better educate, understand, and elicit the client's beliefs, which can be difficult to access and change. To begin, I asked Tom to describe a challenging situation that he had recently encountered (A) and how he then responded (e.g., thoughts, feelings, and actions). Tom spoke of having very negative thoughts, which led to angry outbursts (i.e., shouting and throwing his racquet) (C) when he was losing to an opponent who he thought he should have been beating (A). As a between-session practice I asked Tom to complete an A-C diary of his week. This task encouraged Tom to reaffirm the content of the previous session, as well as serving as a method to gauge his engagement in the REBT process.

At the beginning of the second session, we initially reviewed Tom's A-C diary. Following this, I encouraged Tom to pick the most poignant A-C example and consider how he would want to feel if this situation was to arise again.



“IS IT REALLY THAT BAD?”: A CASE STUDY APPLYING RATIONAL EMOTIVE BEHAVIOR THERAPY (REBT) WITH AN ELITE YOUTH TENNIS PLAYER

Excerpted from *Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy in Sport and Exercise*

Tom highlighted that he wanted to feel annoyed but not extremely angry, to not berate himself and/or his opponents for his performance, to focus on tennis specific processes, to maintain confident body language, and to uphold an energetic tempo that was characteristic of his game (see Figure 14.1). This process elegantly emphasized to Tom the unhelpful vs. helpful distinction in how individuals respond to adversity, as well as setting clear emotional, cognitive, and behavioral goals in respect of what he wanted to achieve.

Session 3: taking control

Following session 1 and 2, we began exploring and eliciting his beliefs about the adversity (A) and the consequences (C). Here, an emphasis was placed on ownership and control over his response to adversity. This realization was met with the surprise that he alone was able to decide, rather than being dictated to by the situation.

Although a simple concept, from Tom’s perspective, it was not something that he had previously considered. To begin exploring his beliefs, I asked Tom what he was telling himself about the situation (A) and how he then responded (C). Because irrational beliefs are often held implicitly, athletes will commonly offer cognitive consequences (i.e., “what is the point”, “this isn’t going well”) rather than their irrational beliefs. I reminded Tom of this and offered suggestions as to what I judged the core beliefs to be. After some discussion, the poignant beliefs were welcomed with a smile of realization (see Figure 14.1, left column). Once the initial set of irrational beliefs had been established it became clear for Tom that he had been placing much greater pressure upon himself, in comparison to the pressure that the situation alone afforded. When using terminology such as irrational and rational it is important to normalize, rather than stigmatize, beliefs as being ‘abnormal’. Alternatively, terms such as helpful and unhelpful or illogical and logical beliefs could have been used interchangeably. For Tom, this served to quell unhelpful meta-cognitions about being anxious, normalizing the ubiquity of human fallibility.



“IS IT REALLY THAT BAD?”: A CASE STUDY APPLYING RATIONAL EMOTIVE BEHAVIOR THERAPY (REBT) WITH AN ELITE YOUTH TENNIS PLAYER

Excerpted from *Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy in Sport and Exercise*

Activating Event (A)	
Situational: Losing to an opponent	
Adversity: “I know that I am a better player than my opponent”	
Irrational Beliefs (iB)	Rational Beliefs (rB)
Demand: “I would like to beat opponents who I know am better than, therefore I absolutely must”	Preference: “I would like to beat opponents who I know am better than, but I do not absolutely have to”
Awfulizing: “If I do not win then it would be awful”	Anti-Awfulizing: “It would be bad but certainly not terrible if I did not win”
Low Frustration Tolerance: “It would be unbearable if I lost”	High Frustration Tolerance: “Losing would be uncomfortable, but not impossible to tolerate”
Depreciation (Self): “Losing would make me a complete failure”	Acceptance (Self): “Losing does not make me a complete failure. I cannot be defined by the outcome of a single match”
Unhelpful Consequences (C)	Helpful Consequences (E)
Emotional Consequence: Unhealthy anger	Emotional Consequence: Annoyed
Behavioral Consequence: Aggressive behaviors (e.g., throwing racket, shouting at opponents)	Behavioral Consequence: Strong and confident body language. Maintained energy and effort throughout the game
Cognitive Consequence: Negative self-talk and losing match focus	Cognitive Consequence: Helpful self-talk (i.e., focus on processes)
Performance Consequence: Struggle to regain momentum and then lose consecutive points and/or games	Performance Consequence: Minimize/nullify a dip in performance and regain match momentum

Figure 14.1 Example of Tom’s first schematic representation of the ABC model



“IS IT REALLY THAT BAD?”: A CASE STUDY APPLYING RATIONAL EMOTIVE BEHAVIOR THERAPY (REBT) WITH AN ELITE YOUTH TENNIS PLAYER

Excerpted from *Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy in Sport and Exercise*

Sessions 4 and 5: disputing and replacing irrational beliefs

When applying REBT, one aims to match the pace and content of the sessions with the client, and in Tom’s case he was verbalizing a strong understanding of the ABC model. Nevertheless, the education phase merely provides the building blocks for the next and most important phase within the REBT intervention process. Disputation (D) can sometimes be a challenging process, however, my experience suggests younger athletes are more open to abandoning their irrational beliefs and adopting new rational beliefs. I highlighted with Tom that we would not dispute his inference of the adversity (A), and instead would accept that it was true. Often in tennis, players will encounter situations outside of their control (e.g., strong opponents or umpires making ‘bad’ decisions) and REBT promotes a shift to a focus on what they can control (e.g., their own thoughts, feelings, and actions) to help them attain their goal, which is often winning. To systematically dispute each irrational belief three main strategies were adopted, namely empirical, logical, and pragmatic disputation. I first disputed the demand (see Figure 14.1). The following section illustrates some of the questions that were used for each rational argument:

Empirical disputation

“Where is the evidence to say that you must beat your opponent?”, “Is there a law of the universe which states that you must?”, and “Where is it written that just because you really want to, that you really must beat your opponent?”

Logical disputation

“Does it logically follow that because you want something, that you absolutely must have it?”, “Just because I want a Ferrari does that mean I must be given one?”, and “Where is the logic in your demand?”



“IS IT REALLY THAT BAD?”: A CASE STUDY APPLYING RATIONAL EMOTIVE BEHAVIOR THERAPY (REBT) WITH AN ELITE YOUTH TENNIS PLAYER

Excerpted from *Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy in Sport and Exercise*

Pragmatic disputation

“How helpful has this belief been so far for you?”, “Where has this rigid demand you have been placing on yourself got you so far?”, and “How do you feel and behave when you tell yourself that you must?” During the disputation phase a combination of didactic and Socratic approaches was used to ensure a focused and collaborative process (Dryden & Branch, 2008). REBT poses philosophical questions, and giving Tom time and space to cogitate over these questions was important to ensure that he did not feel overloaded. It was during these moments when the fundamental shifts in Tom’s philosophy began. When disputing irrational beliefs I often encounter conditional musts, which are both empirically and logically rational.

It is helpful if these are made distinct from the core irrational demands to avoid confusion for the athlete. For example, if Tom needed to proceed to the next round of a tournament, he would ‘have to’ beat his opponent. This disputation process was repeated with Tom’s awfulizing, low frustration tolerance, and self-depreciation beliefs (see Figure 14.1 – left column). Helping Tom to realize that there is no evidence for these beliefs, we worked through creating rational alternatives for each belief. Importantly, the three main strategies used to dispute irrational beliefs were also used to reaffirm the new rational beliefs.

In Tom’s case he largely agreed with the disputation process, however, it is not uncommon for athletes to propose their irrational beliefs have/are helpful for their performances. To negate what can become a philosophically difficult conversation I will ask athletes to reflect on several key questions. For example, asking, “Would it be fair to assume that these irrational beliefs have been helpful for you?”, “Is there any evidence to suggest that you cannot be successful with rational beliefs?”, and “What might the benefits be of holding rational beliefs, not only in performance but also in day-to-day life?” Quite often this resistance is down to a misconception that rational beliefs create indifference.



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Here practitioners might articulate that rational beliefs change the quality of the motivation rather than reducing its intensity. Indeed, researchers (Turner, 2016a) have drawn comparisons between irrational demands such as ‘ought to’ and ‘have to’ with internalized external regulations, where the perception that one should or ought to engage in an activity is considered a hallmark of introjected regulation (e.g., Gillison, et al., 2009). The disputation process was then repeated with different adversities that were not restricted to sport.

Sessions 6 and 7: reinforcing a new rational philosophy

The main reinforcement phase was conducted over two sessions and incorporated cognitive, emotional, and behavioral techniques (Dryden & Branch, 2008).

Rational credo

Tom’s newly established rational beliefs were adapted into a shortened mantra that he would re-read prior to and during matches. Rational credos are commonly used in REBT practice to help reaffirm a rational philosophy (Dryden, 2007) and are only recently being used with athletes (e.g., Turner, 2016b).

Big I and Little I

To dispute and reinforce Tom’s irrational beliefs around self-depreciation, I used the *Big I and Little I* technique. Tom was asked to draw a large ‘I’ and within this draw little Is, labelling each aspect of his life that contributed to defining who he was. These included being a tennis player, a brother, a son, and a loyal friend to name a few. This exercise allowed Tom to visually comprehend that he could not wholly rate his being based on a single aspect. Indeed, together we discussed how humans are not all good or bad, but contain varying aspects of each.



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Badness scale When Tom rated losing as terrible it would be imply there was nothing in this world that was worse than losing, exaggerating the ramifications of failure more than the situation warranted. Prior to a match, the prospect of losing was awful, in turn elevating Tom’s fear of failure and causing him to feel extremely anxious. The *badness scale* provided an effective and engaging way of challenging his awfulizing beliefs (Turner & Barker, 2014). Firstly, Tom was asked to place a series of adversities unrelated to sport on a scale of 0–100% in badness (e.g., getting a cold). I then asked him to place a series of tennis-related adversities on the same continuum (e.g., dropping two break points during a final). Expectedly, he placed these adversities much higher on the badness scale. Finally, I then asked Tom to place a series of major adversities (e.g., losing a loved one) on the badness scale. It was at this point Tom expressed a chuckle of realization, recognizing

his awfulizing beliefs were irrational and that losing a match was not the end of the world. Ultimately, the badness scale enhanced Tom’s ability to take perspective. Tom kept the badness scale in his tennis bag and referred to it whenever he started to feel overwhelmed by a situation.

The use of metaphor

During our sessions together, Tom referred to his earlier self as a landmine. Here I used this metaphor to reinforce distinctions between a helpful and unhelpful consequence. Consequently, Tom suggested that he wanted to be more like a homing missile: calculated, efficient, and smart, yet able to inflict damage on his opponent (metaphorically). The use of metaphor directly informs the athlete’s internal dialogue (e.g., Lindsay, Thomas, & Douglas, 2010), and provides a clear image of the desired state Tom wanted to achieve.



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Behavioral strategies

The one-to-one sessions were conducted in a relaxed space away from tennis; nevertheless irrational beliefs can become primed during stressful and challenging situations (David, 2003). Therefore, over the sessions I introduced behavioral tasks to help Tom reaffirm his new rational beliefs. Firstly, I asked Tom to actively seek challenging situations (i.e., major tournaments), commonly known as in- vivo exposure (Froggat, 2005). This experiential process aimed to test the validity of his fears (e.g., losing makes him a complete failure), deawfulize his belief that underperforming was terrible, and negate his avoidant behavior through falsifying his irrational beliefs. I also asked Tom to act against his irrational beliefs and take greater risks during moments of a game that he perceived to be crucial (e.g., break points, first game, set points) with the aim of interrupting his irrational self-talk when he felt notably anxious.

Sessions 8 and 9: psychological skills

By the end of the reinforcement phase Tom appeared to be making good progress, articulating his understanding of the ABC(DE) model, reporting reductions in irrational beliefs, and reflecting on between-session practices. After consulting with Tom, I decided to introduce specific psychological skills that would further provide him with the ability to manage symptoms that may hinder his ability to perform. I have found the application of REBT with psychological skills a fruitful combination, whereby the effects of the latter become amplified after experiencing a fundamental shift towards a rational philosophy. Firstly, ‘trigger’ terms generated by Tom were used as a focusing strategy at pre-determined scenarios prior and during a match. These included: ‘explosive’, ‘risk’, and ‘never give in’. These were further supplemented with ‘be smart’, ‘aggressive’, and ‘tactical’. To reduce Tom’s uncertainty, we reviewed both controllable (e.g., preparation, thoughts) and uncontrollable (e.g., opponent, outcome) factors.

Finally, I introduced rapid relaxation techniques that would reduce the somatic symptoms of anxiety that he frequently encountered prior to important matches. Following session 9 Tom noted that he felt sufficiently equipped, mentally stronger, and more independent in his approach to tennis. We agreed to end our regular one-to-one sessions at this point, whilst maintaining regular drop-in sessions to monitor his progress.



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Outcome analysis

Irrational beliefs

Over the course of the intervention, Tom reported decreases in composite irrational beliefs as well as reductions in the core beliefs of low frustration tolerance and demand, both commonly associated with anger expression (Jones & Trower, 2004; see Figure 14.2). The adoption of a rational philosophy is not simply characterized by the frequency and endorsement of self-reported irrational beliefs, but also expressed by the presence of emotions and behaviors that facilitate goal achievement. Considering this, less is understood about the effects on behavior (Szentagotai & Jones, 2010) and athletic performance (Turner, 2016a). The context of elite tennis afforded a fitting medium to investigate the effects of REBT on Tom’s ability to self-regulate.

Self-regulation: preintervention

Irrational beliefs are likely to undermine attempts for adaptive regulation, such as setting and striving for controllable process goals, functional use of psychological

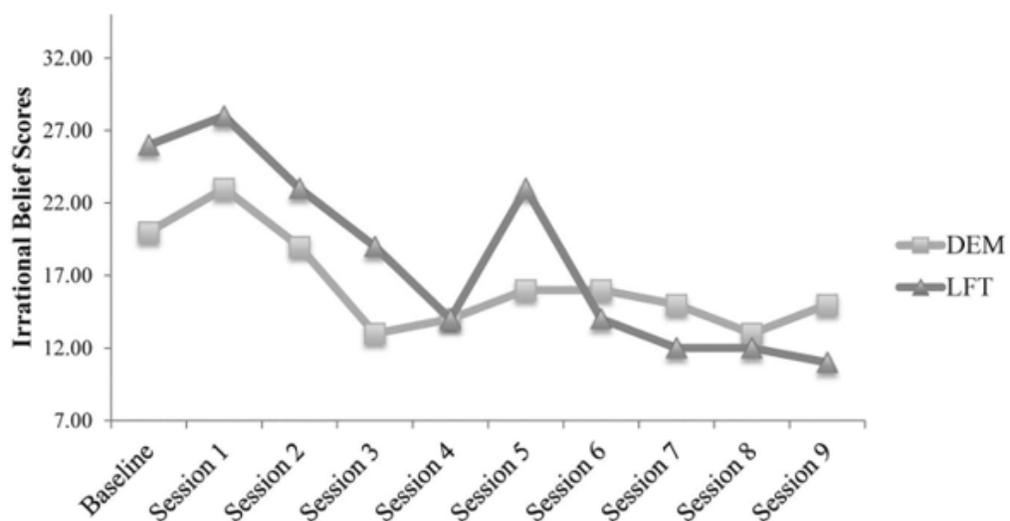


Figure 14.2 Tom’s self-reported irrational beliefs scores on a session-by-session basis



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skills to focus on the task, monitoring goal progress, as well as fair performance appraisals (Zimmerman, 2000). An increase in Tom’s emotional control and rational beliefs was argued as a likely outcome of better self-regulation, and formed an important component of intervention evaluation. Tom’s on-court behaviors and his ability to self-regulate were monitored through two semi-structured interviews prior to the onset of the intervention and following programme completion. An interview schedule, drawing on Zimmerman’s (2000) three-phase cyclical model of self-regulation, targeted Tom’s tournament goals (forethought phase), performance strategies (performance phase), and evaluation and reaction (self-reflection phase).

Tournament goals

Tom had identified process (improve his backhand) and outcome (win the match) tournament goals. Clearly defined strategies were identified for mastering his backhand, as Tom described, “Technically looking to accelerate my left arm more and drop the racket more”. Conversely, Tom did not seem to have any pre-planned strategies for determining match results, as he explained, “I don’t really have a say [in] how I’m going to win the match, or how I’m going to go about it, it is pretty much compete in the match and play your game”.

Performance strategies

During the tournament, Tom’s outcome goal took precedence over his process goal. Tom stated, “I got caught up in the tournament and focused more on my result than my backhand”. Focusing on his outcome goal meant Tom reacted to match situations rather than pro-actively utilizing controllable strategies for goal attainment. Part of this reaction manifested in Tom’s emotions, motivational drive, and confidence levels, which seemed to co-vary with the momentum of the match. Tom commented, “the score helped when I was leading. I felt a little bit more confidence” and when Tom was behind, he told himself, “I need to get going putting a little bit of pressure on myself”. A tendency to prioritize outcome goals is often seen in athletes who are still developing adaptive self-regulatory processes.



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Evaluation and reaction

Tom's outcome focus led to a performance evaluation based on the result: "If I won the match it was a success, but if I didn't that was bad". Although Tom lost the match, he felt he played well. Tom could recognize several performance-based goals, which he could take forward, including "higher percentage first serves" and "to be more aggressive". A pre-occupation with outcomes can undermine athletes' subsequent motivation, however, Tom showed more adaptive forms of self-regulation in identifying potential improvements based on less than desirable performance outcomes (Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 1997).

Self-regulation: post-intervention

Tournament goals

Following the REBT intervention, Tom's tournament goals centered on performance and process. Tom described his match aims to be "aggressive and enjoy myself" and "play the best I can". Pre-planned controllable strategies enabled Tom to direct his efforts towards achieving these goals and included, "Doing what I did before, adhering to routines, making sure I warm up . . . make sure my body is warm . . . and be aware that I'm going to play a match". Although outcome goals are not inevitably detrimental to performance, Tom's preference towards process and performance goals enabled him to focus on key strategies he pre-planned for success.

Performance strategies

Consistent with his goals, Tom consistently used his strategies throughout the match, displaying a more controlled and less reactionary approach compared to pre-intervention. Although Tom remained aware of the score, it did not influence his emotions. Tom stated, "I wasn't really getting angry, the guy was making a lot of balls but I wasn't getting angry" and "I'm just so calm and I'm not letting anything affect me". This more consistent approach may be viewed as inflexible and unable to adapt to the dynamic challenges athletes face during performance. However, this did not seem to be the case for Tom, whose calmness reflected reduced anxiety over outcomes. This allowed for an adaptive analysis of his game: "Instead of worrying about the shot, or the result, I'm worrying on what I can do to make myself better and win matches".



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Evaluation and reaction

Like pre-intervention, performance evaluation was based on goal progress. Tom's process and performance goals meant goal attainment was not dependent on factors beyond his control. Tom reflected on his achievement and stated, “I know that I have achieved the things I wanted to coming into the match”, and “things I wanted to do I did, and I know that was trying my hardest”. Evaluations based on controllable strategies lead to higher levels of self-satisfaction and reflect higher quality self-regulation processes.

In summary, Tom increased the quality of self-regulation processes from pre-intervention to post-intervention. He progressed from being merely reactive to the challenges faced on court, to relying on a more pro-active approach, implementing pre-planned strategies to achieve controllable self-set goals. Tom attributed these positive changes to the REBT work he engaged with. In summarizing the impact of REBT, Tom stated:

My beliefs have changed..... I've just rationalized everything – is it that bad if I lose a tennis match? And that's really helped me. It's put me in a better

frame of mind going into matches and leaving matches, and I think that helps me to just not get angry on court. I feel pretty calm which obviously allows me to perform better.

Being able to rationalize his beliefs meant that Tom could set and strive towards adaptive goals. Adopting a more rational outlook enabled Tom to effectively employ routines and psychological skills without unhelpful reactions to an unfavourable adversity becoming a barrier.



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Critical reflections

The intervention with Tom was received positively, however, time between sessions was often sporadic and on some occasions the momentum from the previous session would often be lost. Here I felt as though I was unable to provide an engaging and impactful tool that Tom could use away from our sessions together to further reaffirm his rational philosophy. Practitioners would be wise to give equal attention to both face-to-face and between-session practice tasks and to keep sessions close together. Furthermore, the use of technology (i.e., smart- phones) may offer a platform for practitioners to reaffirm the rational principles acquired during the intervention.

Sport psychology support is rarely a perfect science and this case offers no exception to this rule. REBT is seemingly logical within its application, however, it can also be a challenging and nuanced endeavour that requires continuous reflection and development. For example, practitioners may slightly misinterpret the theory of REBT, fail to clarify semantics surrounding REBT terminology, or mismanage the balance between directive and client-centered methods during the disputation phase. These are just some examples that I have encountered that may lead to ineffective application. To this end, whilst I may never offer the perfect intervention it is important that those who practice REBT are aware of and able to evaluate bad practice. Ultimately, for sport psychologists who are looking to adopt REBT, it would be prudent to accumulate a strong theoretical grounding in REBT as well as completing practitioner qualifications.