

Affiliated Club Development Manual

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1. Introduction

Active clubs are the key to the success and growth of any sport, and our affiliated clubs are at the heart of Irish tennis. At Tennis Ireland, we have monitored the major developments Ireland has undergone over the past 15 years and we know that the needs of Irish clubs and players have changed. A diversity of sports and hobbies have become available in recent years, putting pressure on tennis clubs to ensure that they still are a major draw for people of all ages looking to keep physically and socially active. All stakeholders in Irish tennis must take these changes into account and plan accordingly if they are to maintain and develop their crucial role in the sport.

In response to developments in tennis internationally and within Irish sporting culture and society, there are three programmes in particular that we recommend all Irish tennis clubs should consider implementing. They are:

- Appointment of a Director of Tennis;
- The International Tennis Federation's 'Play and Stay' Programme;
- Construction of indoor courts.
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A successful tennis club is a club that can satisfy the needs of all its members of all ages, at all levels of ability. Our role at Tennis Ireland is to assist, advise and support our affiliated tennis clubs so that they can provide world-class facilities and activities to their members in 21st century Ireland. This Club Development Manual has been drawn up precisely with that aim in mind, and will equip clubs with the information and policies they need to grow and prosper in the future. 00

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2. Director of Tennis

There is a tendency for club committees to – understandably - focus on their own interests when planning and organising events. A very social committee may sacrifice competitions for off-court activities while a committee of parents may focus all their energies on junior events.

However, people join tennis clubs for a diversity of reasons, and should be catered to whether they want to improve their fitness or their game, compete regularly or just play for fun.

We strongly recommend that clubs recruit a specialist in tennis to run on-court programmes. Appointing a good Director of Tennis will greatly improve the smooth running of on-court activities and competitions, giving all members of all abilities plenty of chance to play, compete and improve their game. It will also reduce pressure on voluntary committee members to plan all programmes and activities. A club with a reputation for making the best use of its courts facilities and catering to a wide variety of needs will attract prospective members from far and wide.

2.1 Identifying a Director Of Tennis

The ideal candidate is an experienced coach. He/she should have a full understanding of the Tennis Ireland Player Pathway and the ITF Play & Stay Programme along with computer skills, management experience and experience in working with volunteers and committees.

Another suitable candidate is a retired person with management experience. This individual should be a respected club member with experience serving on club committees. Tennis Ireland has developed an 18-hour module specifically designed for directors of tennis and all appointees should complete this.

The precise job description for a Director of Tennis will vary, given the unique needs of each clubs. At some clubs this could well be a full time position, other clubs may need the services of a director one or two days per week.

The Director of Tennis will:

- Hire on-court staff
- Plan, design and schedule all on-court programmes
- Manage and monitor the implementation of programmes
- Develop programmes year on year

A successful Director Of Tennis will:

- Attract new members and improve the experience and satisfaction of existing members

- Ensure the full use of the clubs facilities
- Generate income for the club.
- Provide continuity.
- Ensure that all coaches and volunteers in on-court programmes are working on the same principles.

2.2 Contracting a Director of Tennis

Prior to either party signing a contract, Tennis Ireland strongly advises that independent legal advice is sought.

The coach can be directly employed by the Club, whereby a Contract of Employment will be entered into and as a result the Club will be responsible for deducting tax (PAYE) and National Insurance and providing the other benefits that being employed offer (Guaranteed income, paid holidays, statutory sick pay, maternity pay etc.

In essence, the club as the employer has more control over the duties of the coach, and at the same time the coach has a greater level of security. The package may be a straight salary with a variety of duties or perhaps a lower salary plus a commission on each lesson given.

If the D.O.T. is self-employed, the agreement is for providing services and is NOT a contract of employment. As a self-employed person, he/she will have the right to work elsewhere and will determine how he/she works at more than one venue. Small clubs, who often will not be able to offer much work to a club, may well use as their Director of Tennis a coach who coaches at a number of venues.

As a self-employed person, the D.O.T. is responsible for his or her own tax and social security affairs. The D.O.T. does not have the controls that an employee may have put upon them, but also does not have the level of security that an employee has.

Clubs recruiting a Director of Tennis should draw up a full job description and contract. See appendix 2 for samples.

3. Play and Stay

The ITF Play and Stay programme is revolutionising the way that beginners – adults and children alike – are experiencing tennis for the first time by making it fun and playable from day one.

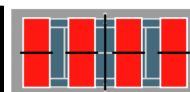
Key Components:

- Serve rally & score should be all players` first experience of the game.
- With modified balls, rackets and courts, players of all ages and abilities can truly experience playing the game from their first time on court.
- Clubs and coaches play a key role in achieving this objective by actively promoting slower balls and smaller courts for beginner adults & children (see below).
- With Play & Stay in mind, it is recognised worldwide that the “Games Based Approach” is the most effective method of teaching tennis.

Tennis is easy...if you use the right ball!



Red - ideal for Mini Tennis!
11. 5 x 5.5 metres/36 ft court



Orange – 50% slower and ideal for starter players of all ages!
18 metre x 6.5 metres/60 ft court



Green – 25% slower and ideal for an introduction to the full court!



Adapted competitions

A further recent development that tailors tennis to players' diverse needs is ITF supported changes to competition formats and scoring systems, which better fit with players' abilities and lifestyles. There are now a host of innovative scoring systems including change, elimination, group, rotation and team formats. They can be viewed in detail at www.tennisplayandstay.com

4. On-court Club Development

This guidance assists the director of tennis –professional or voluntary – to organise on-court activities for members of all ages and abilities. He or she should break down membership into four broad categories – recreational seniors and juniors and representative seniors and juniors. A key task of the DOT is to facilitate and encourage movement between those categories where appropriate.

4.1 ITN

Every player should have an International Tennis Number. This is a number from one to ten that equates to a player's level of ability. The ITN is an ITF worldwide initiative, fully adopted and supported by Tennis Ireland. Further details of this programme are available at www.tennisireland.ie/itn.php. Assigning players with an ITN will facilitate clubs and coaches in designing on court activities to satisfy the needs of all players.

4.2 Senior Recreational Players

Round Robins

The Round Robin is a popular internal competition. A referee should be appointed to ensure that the competition runs smoothly and is fair. An entry form should circulate to all members. Entrants are placed in graded sections with five in each. Each player contacts and plays all four opponents in one month.

Scoring systems can vary from full matches to 15 games. A promotion and relegation process is put in place where the top two with the most points in each section go up to the section above and the bottom two are put down to the section below.

Team Tennis

Team Tennis can be organised in a variety of ways. One example is where men and ladies are mixed together to form a team of four or six players. The teams are put into groups like as in the world cup format and they play out the competition over a set period of time.

Club Championships

Most clubs organise internal championships over the summer months involving, singles, doubles and mixed doubles events. Each event has a consolation event incorporated into the championships so the lower level players have an opportunity to compete at their own standard of play. If the entry is large, a number of graded sections can be organised using the ITN as a measure of ability.

Graded American Tournaments

A calendar of American Tournaments set on a monthly basis over a specified time frame using the following guide:

On the first Friday of every month the competition will be for ITN 10s and 9s

On the second Friday of every month the competition will be for ITN 8s and 7s

Triangular/Quadrangular

Invitational events with clubs in the region for non-league participants using the ITN to match up abilities.

Cardio Tennis

Cardio is now available at many clubs. It is a fun group activity featuring drills for all players of all abilities that gives a high-energy workout to improve aerobic fitness.

Coaching

Coaching should be made available to all members in form of graded group and private lessons. Special sessions to improve particular aspects of technique should also be offered.

4.3 Senior Representative Players

League Preparation

Club captains, team captains, selection committee and the Director of Tennis work to establish the following:

- Criteria for selection and other criteria including doubles pairing, attendance at practice etc.
- Team practice schedules to be set with minimum disruption to other members
- Selection of coaches to work with teams
- Physical training – is an external fitness trainer required?

Open events

Graded open events are organised regionally every year and calendars are sent to registered clubs and posted on the Tennis Ireland website.

4.4 Junior Recreation/Representative Players

Most of the same activities for senior recreational players are suitable for junior players if modified to suit their age and ability. There are also a number of additional child-specific programmes that should be implemented to ensure maximum participation, enjoyment and achievement of junior players.

At the start of every programme, a parents meeting is crucial so that they are informed of all programmes available to their children. It is also an opportunity for the Director of Tennis, the officials and the coaches to meet the parents and explain their philosophy

The tennis 10's programme

The ITF strongly recommend that players aged 10 and under do not train or play competition with a regular yellow ball on a full court, but instead train and compete with a red, orange or green ball on the appropriate sized court. Using these slower balls will help players to develop the most efficient technique, and to implement advanced tactics, that in most cases could not be performed using the yellow ball on the full court. Tennis 10s is part of the ITF's 'Tennis...Play and Stay' campaign. By 2012 the ITF will have in place as part of the official rules of tennis that all under- 10s must play in the appropriate court with the appropriate ball and using multi-match and team competition formats.

Fun competitions for under-8, under-9 and under-10 mini-tennis kids should be once a week on Saturdays and Sundays, organised by volunteers and parents.

Skill awards

Skill Awards are for young children are not yet at the stage where they can serve, rally and score in the red court. They involve a series of individual ball and racket skills to be achieved by the children and a Certificate of achievement from 1 -6 is awarded as the child completes each level. The awards are available from Tennis Ireland.

The Skill Awards is the first step to competition for 6 - 8 year olds and Skill Award days should be held at least twice per term so the children have something to aim for to motivate them to improve and stay in the game.

Blitz Events

A series of Blitz events are organised for clubs on a regional basis. The Blitz is a team event whereby young children travel to other clubs to meet new friends and compete in a stress free environment. For further information on how your club can come involved contact the Regional Development Officer with tennis Ireland.

Camps

Weekly Camps over school holiday periods are a good way to keep children interested and active. Camps should be offered for all junior players.

Integration into the Senior Section

Junior members should be integrated into Round Robins, Club Championships and league teams of the Senior Section as they become ready to advance. The ITN is a valuable tool for ensuring this can be done with relative ease. There will be some members from this section that may become ready to move into the Junior Performance Programme.

4.5 11-18 year old recreational players

This age group and level of player is a critical category of member as they are the possible future backbone of the club in years to come. However, there are high drop out rates for this category of player nationwide and not many clubs have made any commitment to tackling the issue.

The needs of this section of membership should be addressed in the same way as the Senior Recreational Section and a group of volunteers should be appointed to work with the Director of Tennis to design and implement a programme of activities to attract back those who have left the game and keep existing members in this category. Years of experience tell us that teenagers enjoy activity and competition but can be put off by lots of coaching and instruction.

Graded competitions using the ITN, inter club friendly-matches, representation in the Junior Leagues and integration into the club senior teams and internal competitions are crucial. Offering supervised social time is also important to maintaining this section of members.

4.6 Junior Performance/Representative Players

Tennis 10's Performance

Tennis Ireland has a Long Term Player Development Pathway and it is a good tool to use in the design and implementation of a performance programme. Performance groups are selected based on the ability of the children, the willingness of the child to participate and the commitment of the parents. The coach to pupil ration should be 1:6.

Performance sessions and hours per week

Starting at under-8 in the red court talented children should meet to train three times per week for hour-long sessions. As the players advance with age and ability the volume of training increases to four hours per week in the orange court.

The volume of training increases right through the age groups, with opportunities for the best children to advance to regional squads and the National Academy.

Performance Path

The Director of Tennis, the Junior Committee and the Children's Officer should strive to coordinate the club squad training, private training and regional training so that talented players can receive the necessary quality time and training in order to develop to their full potential.

The Director of Tennis should consider using external expertise like physical trainers, sports psychologists and nutritionists to work with players, parents and coaches involved. The Director of Tennis should work with players, coaches and parents to establish what competitions all the players should be striving to compete at club, domestic, national and international levels. All training should be based around a competition plan.

Talent Identification for under-10 children

If a parent has been advised by their child's teachers and coaches that their son or daughter has sporting talent and the parents have aspirations for him/her to progress in tennis, Tennis Ireland has set up a process where parents or guardians can submit a video of their child playing to their regional coach.

On receipt of the footage, the coach will analyse the child's ability and come and watch them play in competition if they are of the opinion that the child is talented. See <http://www.tennisireland.ie/clubs/parents>

We strongly recommend that parents/guardians do not inform their child that they are using approaching the regional coach to avoid disappointment. This information should be kept at the discretion of the parents or the guardians and if they are using this service, we strongly recommend that they do not inform their child what is involved and make the video as if it is for their own record.

5. Indoor courts

Why Indoor Courts?

- Our wet climate - and according to some experts its going to get worse!
- Guaranteed playtime is critical for the modern, busy adult.
- Covered courts enable a club to maintain a consistent on-court programme to satisfy all members needs.
- Only `temporary planning permission` is required if the bubble is inflated just for part of the year.
- Funding opportunities potentially available through TennisIreland.
- Indoor courts can be a source of income through court fees.
- Indoor structures are less expensive now than previously.

Appendix 1 – sample timetabling for medium to large club

| On court program during school term | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|---|---|--|--|
| Time | Monday | Tuesday | Wed | Thurs | Friday | Sat | Sunday |
| 6-8am | Private/Squad Training - 3 Courts | Private/Squad Training - 3 Courts | Private/Cardio Training - 2Crts | Private/Squad Training – 3Crts | Private/Cardio Training - 2Cts | Cardio Tennis Training 2 Cts | Private/Squad Training - 3 Crts |
| 9am-12pm | Ladies organized play- 6 Courts 4 courts left for casual play | Ladies Coaching – 3 Courts 7 Courts left for other play | Ladies organised play – 6 Courts 4 courts left for casual play | Ladies Coaching 3 Courts 7 Courts left for other play | Ladies organised play – 6 Courts 4 courts left for casual play | Internal Senior and Junior Competition – 6 Courts | Internal Senior and Junior Competition – 6 Courts |
| 12-3pm | Private Coaching Casual play & internal senior competition | Private coaching Casual play & Internal senior Competition | Private coaching Casual play & Internal senior Competition | Private Coaching Casual play & Internal senior Competition | Private Coaching Casual play & Internal senior Competition | Internal senior And junior Competition – 6 courts | Internal senior And junior Competition – 6 courts |
| 3-7pm | Red, Orange, Green & Full Court Program – 6 Courts 4 courts for casual play | Red, Orange, Green & Full Court Program – 6 Courts 4 courts for casual play | Red, Orange, Green & Full Court Program – 6 Courts 4 courts for casual play | Red, Orange, Green & Full Court Program 6 Courts 4 courts for casual play | Red, Orange, Green & Full Court Program – 6 Courts 4 courts for casual play | Internal & External Senior and Junior Competition – 6 Courts 2 Courts for casual play | Internal & External Senior and Junior Competition – 6 Courts 2 Courts for casual play |
| 7-11pm | Club night – 8 Courts | Internal competition 5 Courts League Training 3 Courts Graded coaching – 2 Courts | Club night – 8 Courts | Internal competition 5 Courts League Training 3 courts Graded coaching - 2 Courts | League Training 6 Courts | | |

| On court program during school holidays | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| Time | Monday | Tuesday | Wed | Thurs | Friday | Sat | Sunday |
| 6-10am | Private/Squad Training 3 Courts | Private/Squad Training 3 Courts | Private/Cardio Training 3 Courts | Private/Squad Training 3 Courts | Private/Cardio Training 3 Courts | Private/Squad Training 3 Crts | Private/Squad Training 3 Crts |
| 10am-1pm | Ladies organized play- 5 Courts Junior Camp – 3 courts 2 courts left for casual play | Ladies Coaching – 3 Courts Junior Camp – 3 courts 4 Courts left for other play | Ladies organised play – 5 Courts Summer Camp – 3 courts 2 courts left for casual play | Junior Camp – 3 courts Senior and junior competitions - 5 Courts | Summer Camp– 3 courts Senior and junior competitions - 5 Courts | Internal Senior and Junior Competition – 6 Courts | Internal Senior and Junior Competition – 6 Courts |
| 1-6pm | Red, Orange, Green & Full Court Program – 6 Courts 4 courts for casual play | Red, Orange, Green & Full Court Program – 6 Courts 4 courts for casual play | Red, Orange, Green & Full Court Program – 6 Courts 4 courts for casual play | Red, Orange, Green & Full Court Program – 6 Courts 4 courts for casual play | Red, Orange, Green & Full Court Program – 6 Courts 4 courts for casual play | Internal & External Senior and Junior Competition – 6 Courts 2 Courts for casual play | Internal & External Senior and Junior Competition – 6 Courts 2 Courts for casual play |
| 6-10pm | Club night – 7 Courts League Training 3 Courts | Internal competition 5 Courts Graded coaching – 3 Courts | Club night – 7 Courts League training 3 courts | Internal competition 5 Courts Graded coaching– 3 Courts | League Training 6 Courts | Casual Play and additional Coaching | Casual Play and additional Coaching |

Appendix 2 – Sample contract and job description for Director of Tennis

1. This is a contract for services i.e. Director of Tennis remains self employed
2. Agreement Between _____ and the _____ Club / centre
3. _____ shall be the Director of Tennis and as such will have responsibility for all on court activities at the _____ Club
4. The D.O.T. will have Honorary Playing Membership of the Club.
5. All coaches that the D.O.T. wishes to employ to work at the Club must first be vetted by the General Committee, or its representative, whose decision as to whether the coach in question is acceptable shall be final and binding.
6. The Club will pay the D.O.T. € ____ per year for his/ her services to be paid on a monthly basis. In respect of this fee the D.O.T. will perform the duties as per the attached schedule.
7. The D.O.T. will be responsible for the conduct of all contracted staff at all times at the Club.
8. No other person may coach / train at the Club, except with prior consultation and agreement of the D.O.T.
9. The D.O.T. will have the right to attend General Committee meetings and will be a member of appropriate sub-committees i.e. tennis committee, tournament committee, junior development committee etc.
10. Development reports will be made to the sub-committees and thereby to the General Committee at quarterly intervals.
11. The D.O.T. will be responsible for the promotion and scheduling of all on court programmes.
12. The D.O.T. will determine the hourly charges of all contracted coaches for lessons each year and advertise them accordingly.
13. The D.O.T. and staff will be responsible for providing themselves with public liability insurance up to €2.5 million for all purposes and eventualities.
14. The D.O.T. shall ensure that the Club is always provided with an up to date copy of the public liability insurance policy for all coaches.
15. In the case of disputes, immediate corrective action should be taken by the D.O.T. until details of the dispute are brought to the Chairperson of the appropriate Committee or the General Committee, whose decision shall be final.

16. There shall be a six monthly review of this agreement, to be completed by 1st January and 1st July of each year.
17. Two months notice in writing is required on either side for termination of this agreement.
18. This agreement may be terminated immediately by the General Committee if the coach is in breach of any aforementioned conditions, and fails to rectify the situation upon notification of such a breach.
19. The D.O.T. and his staff will endeavour to promote the interests of the Club at all times, give Club Members priority for coaching and be available to assist the Club in organising Tournament, Exhibitions, Club Nights, etc. (see attached schedule)

Director of Tennis _____

Club _____

Club Chairperson _____

Club Secretary _____

JOB DESCRIPTION FOR THE DIRECTOR OF TENNIS

- To plan, schedule and promote annual on court activities
- Organise Assessment Days
- Allocate ITN to all members
- Divide the members into coaching and competitive groups, for recreational & performance
- Hire coaches for all training programmes
- To train the coaches and organise workshops
- Train volunteers in organising competitions and social tennis
- Organise parents meetings and present the plan for the year
- Meet appropriate sub committees
- Liase with local schools and the coaches in the schools
- Devise structured plan for recreational and performance programmes
- Organise competitive and social play opportunities (internal & external)
- Liase with the Senior Development Committee

JOB DESCRIPTION FOR SUB COMMITTEE

- To manage the Director of Tennis
- To Meet D.O.T. before and during each term – 6 times per year
- To assist D.O.T. with planning
- To assist with the implantation of competitive and social play
- To approve coaches for programme
- To review D.O.T.'s contract
- To liase with and report to the main committee

