

TENNIS IRELAND LONG TERM PLAYER DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY

All our courses are based on the Long Term Player Development Pathway and the following outlines the seven different phases of the Model:

Phase 1: The Active Start Phase – NURTURE. Age 0-5 years

The main objective of this phase is for children to be introduced to mainly unstructured, and some structured, active play that incorporates a variety of body movements. Children at this age need to develop the ABCs of movement – Agility, Balance, Coordination and Speed. The ABCs are essential for developing fundamental movement skills and fundamental movement skills will later provide the foundation for fundamental sport skills. Together, fundamental movement skills and fundamental sport skills form the basis of 'physical literacy'.

An early active start enhances development of brain function, physical coordination, gross motor skills, posture and balance. An active start also helps children to build confidence, social skills, emotional control and imagination, whilst reducing stress and improving sleep. Children in the Active Start Phase should see physical activity as a fun and exciting part of everyday life.

Parents, guardians and minders have a big responsibility to provide daily opportunities for the children in their care. Daily active movement experiences dispersed throughout the child's day will provide optimum growing and learning development. Time is needed to learn Active Movement skills.

Avoid Inactivity. We know that many hours of TV/DVD watching and playing on computer and game consoles, limits the development of the brain/body system as well as providing opportunities for extra food snacking. Set time limits and be selective. Participants should be introduced to the early part of Tennis Ireland Skill Awards and progress at their own pace.

Level of Coach

Parents and Guardians should take the lead in developing physical literacy skills during this Phase.

Phase 2: The Fundamental Phase - EXPLORE. Age: Males 6-9/Females 6-8 years

The main objective of this phase is to consolidate previous taught skills from the semi structured Active Play Phase implemented by parents and guardians. Children should also learn all the fundamental movement skills using a well-structured, positive and fun approach.

Tennis skills should be introduced, with an emphasis on fun, skill development and modified games through the red and the early stage of the orange programme. Appropriate and correct running, jumping and throwing techniques are taught using the ABC's of athletics. Speed, power, strength and endurance are also developed. Participation in as many sports as possible is encouraged. The development of fundamental movement skills will contribute significantly to future player achievements. Participants should be introduced to the Tennis Ireland Skill Awards and progress through the Skills at their own pace. When they can complete the Skills in all five awards participants should be introduced to the ITN 10.3.

Level of Coach

The minimum standard of coach required to work in this phase is a Tennis Ireland Level 1 Coach.

Phase 3: The Learning to Play & Practice – ENCOURAGE. Age: Males 9-12/Females 8-11 years

The objective of this phase is to consolidate and further develop previous taught skills. Children should also learn the specific tennis skills in conjunction with the fundamental sports skills, from a range of other sports. These skills form the cornerstones of all player development. Players make the transition from orange to the green court to the yellow ball which is why the Phase is divided into two Stages, with the skills that need to be developed in the components becoming progressively more challenging.

Fundamental movement skills should also continue to be developed during this phase. If fundamental motor skill training is not developed between the ages of eight to eleven and nine to twelve for females and males respectively, a significant window of opportunity has been lost, compromising the ability of the young player to reach his/her full potential. Technically, strokes are grooved at a higher rhythm. Children should continue to participate in multi-sports & sports that complement tennis. Participants in the early stages should be encouraged to progress from ITN 10.3 in the Red Court to ITN 10.2 in the Orange Court. In the later stages participants should progress accordingly to the ITN 10.1 Green Court and ITN 10 in the full court. The top eight ranked under 12 players will be allocated an ITN 8.

Level of Coach - Level 1/Level 2

The minimum standard coach required to work in the first stage of this phase is a Tennis Ireland Level 1 Coach.

Phase 4: The Training to Train Phase - ENHANCE. Age: Males 12-16/Females 11-15 years

The objective of this phase is to consolidate and further develop previous taught skills, and to address the two critical periods of physical development, namely the aerobic base and strength of the players. It should be noted that both aerobic and strength trainability is dependent on maturation levels, not chronological age. Players who miss this phase of training will not reach their full potential. The participants entering this stage will be allocated an ITN 10 and progress accordingly. The top eight ranked under 14 players will be allocated an ITN 6 and the top eight ranked under 16 players will be allocated an ITN 5.

Level of Coach - Level 1 - Level 2 - Level 3

The minimum standard Coach required to work in this Phase can vary depending on whether the players involved are recreational, club or performance players.

Phase 5: The Training to Compete Phase – CULTIVATE. Age: Males 16-18/Females 15-17 years

The objective of this phase is to consolidate and further develop previous taught skills and to optimize fitness preparation, individual skills and performance. During this phase, high intensity individual and event-specific training is provided to players. Tennis skills are performed under a variety of competitive conditions during training. Special emphasis is placed on optimum preparation by modeling training and competition. The participants entering this stage will be allocated an ITN 10 and progress accordingly. The top eight ranked under 18 players will be allocated an ITN 4.

See the Irish Competitive Player Grid for further information at -

http://www.tennisireland.ie/player_database/guide_for_irish_players

Level of Coach - Level 1 - Level 2 - Level 3

The minimum standard Coach required to work in this Phase can vary depending on whether the players involved are recreational, club or performance players.

Phase 6: The Training to Win Phase – PERFORM. Age: Males 18+/Females 17+ years

This phase of player preparation aims to maximize fitness preparation and individual skills, as well as performance. All of the player's components are now fully established and players are trained to peak for major competitions. Training is characterized by high intensity and relatively high volume with frequent periods of rest. The participants entering this stage will be allocated an ITN 10 and progress accordingly. The top 10 ranked Irish players will be allocated an ITN 2. Players with ATP/WTA Rankings will be allocated an ITN 1.

See the Irish Competitive Player Grid for further information at -

http://www.tennisireland.ie/player_database/guide_for_irish_players

Level of Coach - Level 1 - Level 2 - Level 3

The minimum standard Coach required to work in this Phase can vary depending on whether the players involved are recreational, club or performance players.

Phase 7: The Active for Life Phase – PROMOTE.

This final phase refers to the activities performed after a player has permanently retired from a high level of competition. The aim of this phase is to retain players for the ever growing multi-graded veterans game, coaching, sport administration, officiating, TV or radio presenting, or any other sport-related career. The participants entering this stage will be allocated an ITN appropriate to their current standard of play and could decrease or progress accordingly. See the Irish Competitive Player

Grid for further information at -

http://www.tennisireland.ie/player_database/guide_for_irish_players

Level of Coach - Level 1 - Level 2 - Level 3

The minimum standard Coach required to work in this Phase can vary depending on whether the players involved are recreational, club or performance players.

THE COMPLETE PATHWAY DOCUMENT CAN BE DOWNLOADED AT -

http://www.tennisireland.ie/coaches/player_development_pathway

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