

**TENNIS IRELAND**

**LIFELONG**

**PARTICIPATION**

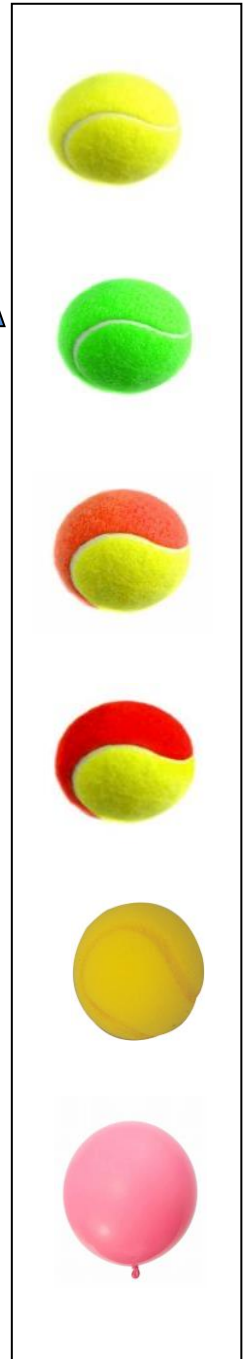
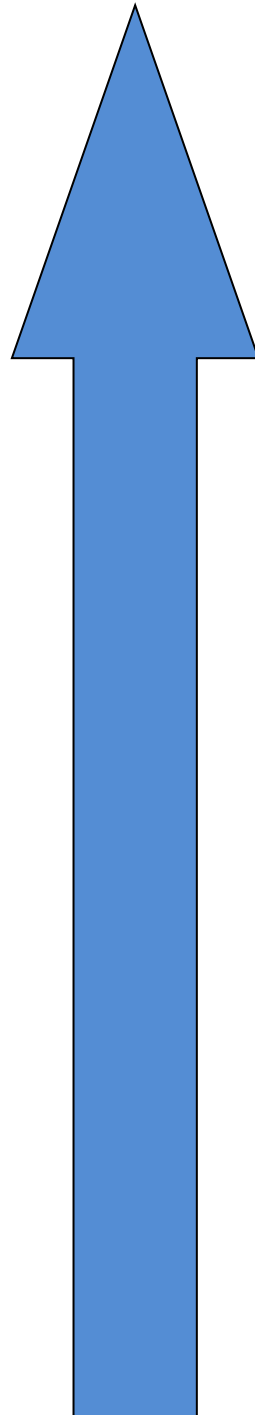
**AND**

**LONG TERM**

**PLAYER**

**DEVELOPMENT**

**PATHWAY**



## Introduction

The Lifelong Participation and Long-Term Player Development Pathway was compiled by the Director of Development for Tennis Ireland, Roger Geraghty, using his own experiences and knowledge acquired from working in the game for 46 years coupled with resources produced by a variety of International Institutions listed at the end of the document.

The Pathway Document provides information for parents, teachers, coaches, officials, and players, on the progressive capacities that need to be developed for participants to achieve excellence in tennis, while at the same time, promote life-long participation in our sport as one of the best health-enhancing physical activities participants can do.

The pathway is based on empirically and scientifically relevant information, which indicates when certain capacities may best be developed in participants.

The model looks to develop the individual by covering the tennis specific components of technical, tactical, physical, and psychological areas, whilst intertwining the components of personal, lifestyle, parental, educative, and competitive experiences.

The approach is holistic from the cradle to later life and through a collaborative approach from all stakeholders, will make a positive impact on the health and well-being of the future adult population in our society and indeed, go a long way towards maintaining participants in tennis as their chosen sport for life.

## External information

There will be times when we will signpost readers to certain websites for further information. We will not, however, be providing links to the recommended sites as in our experience, the links expire or change as amendments are made to the information. If you enter the website name in the search bar though, you should be able to get access to the information.

For example, "The Irish PE Curriculum".

## Why do people participate in Sport?

Participation in sport and physical activity is influenced by a variety of factors.

The increase in sedentary lifestyles, the decrease in work-related physical activity, and reduced leisure-time activity identifies a trend towards physical **inactivity**.

Research shows, however, participants tend to stay in sport and physical activity if their first experiences are positive ones.

Positive experiences are generally characterised as those that are fun and that provide a sense of achievement and opportunities to learn and apply new skills.

If adults and young people enjoy their early experiences of sport and physical activity, they are more likely to stay involved in the long term!

We also need to be cognisant of the fact that participants enter our sport at different ages and for various reasons. For example, participants are introduced to tennis as young as 5 years of age, as teens or as adults. And some of the reasons they get involved are, to give

something back, because their children are involved, to become an official, a coach or a committee member.

### **Increase opportunities for participation.**

All sports at the early stages, should promote a learner-centred perspective with an emphasis on increasing opportunities to participate in various sports and physical activities within schools, clubs, and communities.

Such opportunities should provide a level of personal success and achievement for each participant. In the early years, a multi-sport approach should be promoted, with choice and specialisation coming later in the participant's development.

Focusing on fun, skill development, individual needs and maximum participation will encourage people to stay involved and achieve success at all levels in line with their choices and potential, thereby reducing dropout rates and enhancing physical activity involvement across the lifespan.

The essential elements of a learner-centred approach to sport and physical activity are fun, personal achievement and physical literacy in line with the needs, choices, and capacities of each person.

A clear understanding of a player's developmental level (as opposed to his or her age) will help coaches appropriately tailor the training of the skills taught and the relevant competition required to guide their tennis play.

### **Youth Dropout**

At the ITF World Participation Conference in July 2022, Amanda J. Visek, a Professor in the Department of Exercise & Nutrition Sciences at the George Washington University and Karl Davies from the research, sport Science and adult learning department with the USTA, presented their findings following a series of engagements with hundreds of youth sport players, parents, and coaches.

The much-publicised research resulted in the creation of innovative fun maps identifying over eighty determinants of Fun.

The presentation is available on the ITF Academy Platform or if you google Amanda Visek Fun Maps, you'll find the research. Alternatively, google the Podcast Series from Beyond the Club entitled "81 Determinants of Fun in Youth Sport" presented by Ben Hook and Sam Elliott, where there's some good discussion generated around the Fun Factors

### **Balance between coaching and level-based competition is critical.**

Appropriate Level based play drives all sports and there needs to be a balance between coaching and competition at all levels.

Just like senior members of our sport, junior members enjoy the challenge of testing their skills against a player close to their level of play.

Like us all, we like to play in organised competition where every match we play, we know the outcome will be uncertain, while at the same time, we know we have a chance.

These are what we call quality matches and competition organisers should be striving to run events where the participants experience quality matches on a regular basis regardless of their level of play.

Later in the document, rating, and the World Tennis Number (WTN) is presented, and it is through rating we can introduce level-based play for all our members to good effect.

Junior teen members deemed to be recreational players just like the average club players, need space and time to play and socialise in their environment. We have developed a Blueprint for Youth Development which advocates the creation of a Youth Club within the club.

The document is available through our Regional Development Officers.

### **An effective sport for life model**

A quality sport for life model will help facilitate participants who wish to pursue a pathway to competition and excellence at the highest levels as well as those participants who are happy to play our sport for exercise or recreational reasons. The latter of course has the bigger numbers of participants in Tennis.

By promoting the development of fundamental movement skills and specific sports skills, the expectation is that, from the broader base, it accommodates a high number of participants, and therefore, there is a better chance for participants to find their way if they choose high performance involvement in sport.

It is also envisaged that by developing a wider range of fundamental movement skills and specific sports skills, players will be able to attain higher and more sustained levels of success at all levels.

The Pathway will also help to provide a participant-centred basis for planning and decision-making, present a basis on which to evaluate the structure and effectiveness of training and competition programmes and offer a framework for the audit of programmes at each phase of a player's development.

### **Planning and Resourcing Sport and Physical Activity**

In promoting a culture of healthy physical activity, the role of physical education, youth sports, participation and performance are all linked.

If we focus on the common building blocks that all young people need, we will reduce costs and time and increase the benefits associated with sport and physical activity participation.

A collaborative approach is the most effective!

### **Physical Activity**

Recreational sport and physical activity should be accessible to all, encompass all age groups and cater for all abilities. All involved in delivering tennis should aim to equip children and young people with the skills they need to be involved in our sport and physical activity so that they remain involved throughout their life in line with their choices and capabilities.

Sport and physical activity have the potential to be positive habits that can enhance an individual's lifestyle and has important implications for health.

## **Sport**

Sport is a healthy leisure activity that gives participants a chance to experience enjoyment and level-based competition and acquire positive outcomes such as enhanced physical and mental health, optimal challenges, social interactions, skill enhancement and physical development.

Involvement in sport is considered an important 'character builder' for participants. Through participation, individuals can have fun and enjoyment, learn, and develop life skills, make new friends, and experience sport in a way that will enhance their personal growth throughout the course of their lives.

These benefits will occur through a positive approach to sport that places the needs of the individual first and winning and competition second.

Participation in youth sport can enhance academic performance and reduce school dropout and can be positively correlated with educational attainment and adult career achievements.

To be effective, however, programmes should provide opportunities for youth participation and leadership of activities that emphasise the development of life skills within the context of a sustained and caring adult-youth relationship.

With Lifelong Participation in mind, particular emphasis should be placed on the 'Active Start' (Nurture) the 'Fundamental' (Explore) and the 'Learning to Play and Practice' (Encourage) phases, which are common to both the recreational side and indeed the excellence side of the pathway.

All three phases are essential for a safe, educational, and multi-sport experience to sport and physical activity.

In addition, the first three phases provide the foundation for lifelong and/or performance involvement and participation in sport

## **Four Opportunities**

There are four opportunities for continued involvement in the Lifelong participation and the Long-Term Player Pathway development model available to participants:

### **Active living**

Active living is not a formalized exercise program or routine. It's the incorporation of physical activity, or any form of movement, into everyday life. For example, walking to the store or biking to work.

### **Active recreation**

Active recreation is **leisure time** activities of a more structured nature often requiring equipment and taking place at prescribed places, sites, or fields.

Like for example, attending an Aerobics Class or a Cardio Tennis Session. The emphasis for recreation tennis is to attract as many participants as possible into our sport.

### **Organised sport**

Organized sport can be defined as physical activity that is directed by adult or youth leaders and involves rules and formal practice and competition.

### **High Performance**

High performance sport is sport at the highest level of competition, where the emphasis is on winning targeted competitions.

Each opportunity aims to accommodate an individual's preference to the extent to which they wish to continue and develop their involvement in sport and physical activity. The deliverers of sport and physical activity need to be aware of the participants needs and considerations for the effective implementation of Tennis for all, including rates of participation, retention and dropout, early specialisation, and late entry to sport and physical activity.

### **Physical Literacy**

Physical Literacy is an individual's ability to "read" what is going on around them in an activity setting and react appropriately. It's the gateway to physical activity and it's vital in influencing children to grow up enjoying physical activity and reap the benefits of being active. The consequence of under-developing physical literacy for children, is withdrawal from physical activity leading to an inactive and unhealthy lifestyle.

***Physical literacy is as important to young participants as reading literacy, numeracy, and music.***

### **The Physical Literacy Progression**

The development of fundamental movement skills is essential for growth and development. Physically literate children will be able to participate in a wide range of physical activities and settings and progress through and effectively perform more complex skills used in sports and leisure activities.

### **If you can .....**

If you can run, you might take part in the following –

Football, basketball, volleyball, rugby, tennis, squash, track, and field,

If you can throw, you might take part in the following –

Cricket, baseball, rugby, basketball, football, Olympic handball, tennis, bowling

If you can swim, you might take part in the following –

Swimming, diving, water polo, kayaking, scuba, sailing, surfing

For some really good information on Physical Literacy, Google the following documents which are two excellent publications from Canada.

### **‘Active for Life’**

### **‘The Physical Literacy Handbook for Early Child Educators’**

Please note, I’m not providing links to any recommended sites because they can be discontinued, or the link may change when the content is updated. Therefore, readers have a better chance of finding the resource if they type in the title of the document into their browser.

### **The 10-year Rule**

Several publications in the past including both of our previous editions of the Pathway have suggested that it takes approximately 10 years or 10,000 hours of serious training (after the development of physical literacy) for a player to achieve an international elite level of competitiveness within his/her sport.

There are no shortcuts. Player development is a long- term process. It takes well-planned programming followed over an extended time frame to develop quality tennis players. It is important that we plan, track, and monitor players progress, not rush it. Short-term performance goals must never be allowed to undermine long term player development.

The model emphasizes that physical literacy is the foundation for:

Being active, healthy, and engaged in physical activity for life, and/or achieving personal best performances at all levels of competition.

The ten components of development have been chosen to holistically guide the development of the participant. While the programme is very extensive, it has been designed to guide you in understanding the key skills to be developed at the different phases and to assist in developing a pathway of development for young children, youth/teenage and adult players.

The Lifelong Participation and the Long-term Player Development Pathway provides a framework for all those involved in delivering the game of tennis at all levels in Ireland.

So, it's a systematic approach with a view to maximizing potential and increasing the enjoyment of participants in our sport using a stage-by-stage approach. The Model outlines an optimal development plan based on growth, development, and maturation for individuals of all ages and abilities to participate in tennis.

### **The Lifelong Participation and the Long-term Player Development Pathway will help:**

- ▶ Make tennis enjoyable for the participant.
- ▶ Create a pathway of development.
- ▶ Foster the development of good people who play, coach, or officiate in our sport.
- ▶ Recruit and retain players of all standards within our programmes.
- ▶ Implement relevant activities for the appropriate skill and age levels.
- ▶ Understand a player's development in relation to their skills.

Irish tennis strives to attract more participants to our sport. At the same time, we want to retain current players, and raise standards to the best we can.

Part of our plan is to produce more players, better players, and better structures and indeed we plan to place Tennis up there as a leading recreational activity and the most welcoming in Irish sport.

Currently (2023), we have around 71,500 players at all levels of ability participating in tennis. Without the tremendous support and dedication for our game by the Schools, Parks, Clubs, Coaches, Competition Organisers and Volunteers, we would not be able to achieve the level of participation or attract new members to the game.

When you take into consideration the 0-5 and the over 75 age categories, however, at best, 1% of the total population participate in tennis.

As stakeholders we have a duty to deliver tennis in a way that will attract participants from all demographics and encourage a love for our sport, through raising standards, nurturing players of all abilities and satisfying their needs to the point that they will aspire to a lifelong involvement in tennis.

Delivering well-thought out, effective programs that are adaptable to the diversity within Irish communities will increase participation way beyond the current 1% of the population



who play our sport and ensure players of all levels in Ireland, enjoy tennis for life and no doubt, we will achieve our vision for tennis in Ireland.

**Roger Geraghty**

Tennis Ireland Director of Development

## **TENNIS IRELAND LIFELONG PARTICIPATION & LONG-TERM PLAYER DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY**

### **Important Aims for those leading Tennis**

When working with players of all levels we've always got to keep in mind the 4 broad aims that come out of all publications and represent what safeguarding guidance is all about.

#### **The first principle is that -**

##### **Tennis should be a fun and healthy experience for all!**

All players, whether they are young children, teenagers, or adults, have the right to enjoy the positive aspects of sport and to participate in an environment which protects them from any kind of abuse and harm.

Participants also have a responsibility to participate in sport in a way that promotes the best practice guidelines outlined by their club which includes adhering to the Code of Conduct as well as showing appreciation for their coaches, teammates, opponents, and indeed, competition officials.

#### **The second principle is that -**

##### **Tennis is welcoming and inclusive!**

Our Game is regarded by many as an elite sport dominated by middle class participation, which correlates with the fact that on a good day, only 1% of the population play tennis. Diversity & Inclusion is one of the core challenges facing society today and we should be all striving towards making tennis a sport that is open to all regardless of, social status, economic circumstances, or ethnic backgrounds.

And indeed, cost should never be a barrier to prevent potential participants from playing any sport, including our game.

All participants should be valued and treated in an equitable and fair manner regardless of ability, age, gender, religion, social and ethnic back-ground or political persuasion.

Players, irrespective of ability or disability should be involved in sports activities in an integrated and inclusive way, whenever possible, thus allowing them to participate to their full potential alongside other participants.

### **The third principle is to -**

#### **Promote fair play, respect, ethics & integrity!**

We can all make tennis a fun and positive experience for everyone by promoting values such as respect and fair play and by supporting and encouraging those who make it possible for us all to play our great sport.

Fair play though, is much more than playing within the rules. It incorporates the concepts of friendship, respect for others and always playing within the right spirit.

Fair play is defined as a way of thinking, not just a way of behaving. It incorporates issues concerned with the elimination of cheating, gamesmanship, doping, violence (both physical and verbal), exploitation, unequal opportunities, excessive commercialism, and corruption.

### **The fourth principle is to -**

#### **Adopt best practice in safeguarding procedures and policies!**

With the best interests of the participants in mind, we must foster best practice in safeguarding procedures and policies throughout the tennis sector.

Having a Code of Conduct in place for all stakeholders and the insistence of adherence to the various codes and indeed consequences and possible sanctions for any serious breaches, will go a long way towards sorting out potential problems before they even arise.

The message we have been driving home to our clubs on a regular basis is that once we are involved in providing activities and services for children and vulnerable adults, whether we represent a club or an NGB, we are all Safeguarding Officers and we have a duty of care!!!

### **Tennis Ireland Coaching Pathway Levels**

#### **Important**

It's critical for both insurance and safeguarding purposes that all stakeholders are aware of the Tennis Ireland four levels of coaching. It's even more important that everyone deploys the coaches only at the level they are trained to work at.

The Pathway for coaches and the levels involved are explained below, and the definitions are repeated a number of times in this publication.

### **Level 1 – Play Tennis Course**

The goal of the Tennis Ireland Level 1 course (PT Course) is to help participants understand how to introduce tennis to *beginner players* of all ages and organise and deliver tennis sessions in a fun and effective learning environment in Schools, Parks, Clubs and anywhere a tennis court or micro/mini courts can be set up.

### **Level 2 – Coaching Beginner to Intermediate Players Course**

The goal of the Tennis Ireland Level 2 course (CBI Course) is to provide the participants with the skills required to promote tennis at a grass-roots level, introduce participants to tennis through the modified courts, to coaching players up to junior and senior club competition level.

### **Level 3 – Coaching Advanced Players Course**

The goal of the Tennis Ireland Level 3 Course (CAP Course) is to provide participants with the competencies to teach tennis to intermediate and advanced players involved in open regional competition and leagues.

### **Level 4 – High Performance Course**

The goal of the Tennis Ireland Level 4 Course (HP Course) is to prepare coaches to work with advanced players and those striving to become professional players involved in National & International competition

### **Licensed Coaches and Continuous Professional Development - CPD**

The objective of our Licensing Program is to ensure our coaches are up to speed with all the statutory requirements around safeguarding, they keep themselves up to date in CPD, have registered with Tennis Ireland and are working at the appropriate Level.

When Coaches register with Tennis Ireland for their License, they receive free annual membership to the ITF Academy.

The Academy is an online learning platform with a host of Educational Resources which facilitates with ease our coaches to amass their annual CPD points.

#### **Guided Learning**

The ITF Academy has a Guided Learning Service for coaches involving surveys coaches can select and take based on the level of tennis they wish to focus their learning.

The surveys ask a series of questions and following the coaches' responses, the system determines a list of recommended courses through advanced machine learning.

## **Deploying Coaches**

It is important that all individuals or organizations who employ or contract coaches, (e.g., clubs, schools, parks, parents, and players), use the services of licensed coaches only.

We'd like to remind readers that Licensing is one of our safeguarding requirements under "recruitment" and coaches who are licensed are also vetted and have safeguarding training completed.

*(See note below about expiry dates).*

The licencing scheme runs on an annual basis from January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup> of the year in question and clubs and other stakeholders deploying coaches, should ensure they conduct checks on the expiry dates of the verification documents produced for safeguarding training, vetting, and provide evidence that they have achieved the necessary CPD points.

We would also like to remind our members that, our safeguarding policies and procedures highlight the importance of using appropriately qualified coaches for the job at hand.

Clubs wishing to know the Level of a particular coach and if he or she is licensed, can check the Tennis Ireland website.

## **Tennis Coach Ireland**

Tennis Coach Ireland's is our Irish coaches association, and its main function is to inform and represent the Irish coaches on all matters related to teaching and developing the game.

Around three hundred coaches consistently registered with TCI each year and its membership of Male to Female members is currently approximately 2-1. So, 67% to 33% respectively.

Tennis Ireland and Tennis Coach Ireland work closely together in areas like our licensing scheme where TCI manage the CPD part of the scheme and the NGB provide support to the association through an annual grant towards their operations and further support through the provision of free membership to the ITF Academy for all Licensed Coaches.

## **Clubs & Coaches**

It's crucial that clubs work closely with their coaches and involve them in the clubs plans and provide more security for the Profession by having written terms and conditions agreed between both parties.

## **Officiating in Tennis**

Just like quality coach education is imperative for players success at all levels, the same holds true for the training of officials.

The delivery of well-run level-based events with a high standard of officiating is paramount to create an enjoyable and safe environment for all competitors.

The Competitions Department and the Irish Tennis Umpires Association (ITUA) are working in conjunction with the ITF on the development of a pathway for tennis officials and to work towards ensuring officials engaged with all ages and abilities are appropriately trained.

## **The Seven Phases of the Lifelong Participation and Long-Term Player Development Pathway:**

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

The main objective of this phase is for participants to be introduced to mostly 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 screen time, limits the development of the brain/body system as well as providing opportunities for extra food snacking. Set time limits and be selective. It's recommended that the children are introduced to self-competition activities like the NGB's achievement/skill awards programmes and progress at their own pace.

### **Level of Coach**

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

Coaches should consider training parents and guardians on the types of activities they can do with the children in 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 Start 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 ABCs 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.

It's recommended that the participants are introduced to self-competition activities like the NGB's achievement/skill awards programmes and progress through the Skills at their own pace. When the players show competence in the skills, coaches should consider their readiness for introducing them to low key matches on micro and red courts. The same approach should be taken for the players advancing to the orange court or indeed any other progression. Remember though, it's not a race to the yellow ball and coaches need to be robust in their decisions to move a player on to the next colour code and if necessary, seek a second or even third opinion from a more experienced coach. And of course, parents should trust the coach's judgement.

## **Level of Coach**

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

A Level 1 Coach has completed the Tennis Ireland Play Tennis Course and is trained to introduce tennis to ***beginner*** players of all ages, organising and delivering tennis sessions in a fun and effective learning environment in Schools, Parks & Clubs.

For players deemed to be showing talent, however, a Level 2 Coach or higher is required.

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

The objective of this phase is to consolidate and further develop previous taught skills. Participants 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 will be lost, compromising the ability of the young player to reach his/her full potential. Technically, strokes are grooved at a higher rhythm. Players should continue to participate in multi-sports & sports that complement tennis. Participants in the early stages should be encouraged to remain in the red court until he or she is ready to progress. (Remember, it's not a race!) Then in the middle stage aim to progress from the orange to the green court. (It's critical for good technical and tactical development that children progress only when they are ready which should be decided by the coach)

In the later stages, participants should progress accordingly to the Green & full court. Once the players are playing in the full court, they should have a WTN, and they should be competing in a level based competitive environment. It's important that the competition selected for the players is appropriate to their ability.

## **Level of Coach**

The minimum standard coach required to work in the first stage of this phase is a Tennis Ireland Level 2 Coach. A Level 2 coach has completed the Tennis Ireland Coaching beginner to intermediate players course and is qualified to work with and develop beginner to intermediate players of all ages and competitive players at club level.

For players approaching the Training to Train and 4th Phase of the Pathway, however, a Level 3 Coach is required. A Level 3 Coach has completed the Tennis Ireland Coaching Advanced Players Course and is qualified to work with and develop intermediate to advanced players of all ages, and competitive players up to 14 years of age.

There may be some quality players who are 12 and under who may require a higher level of training from a Level 3 Coach.

All players with a Tennis Ireland Pin and compete in organized play and competitive events delivered through Tennis Ireland's Tournament Software will be allocated a World Tennis Number for singles and doubles.

You can read about the WTN further on in this document.

## **At this point players will have a good base for a game for life**

Just coming back to what we said earlier in relation to the Lifelong Participation part of the pathway, and about the first three phases providing the foundation for lifelong participation and or performance in sport.

If players are guided carefully through the first three critical phases, nurtured well, and provided with many opportunities to explore and receive lots of encouragement along the way, they should have a good grounding to either play recreationally, at level based organised play, or indeed, show talent coupled with aspirations to strive for excellence.

A clear understanding of a players developmental level (as opposed to his or her age) is crucial and will help coaches appropriately tailor the training of the skills taught and the relevant competition required to guide their tennis play into the future.

## **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 a WTN and progress according to their success in competitive events.

### **Level of Coach**

The minimum standard Coach required to work with the best players in this Phase is a Level 3 up to u14 and a Level 4 Coach up to U18 Level. A Level 4 Coach has completed the Coaching High Performance Players Course and is qualified to work with and develop players at all levels.

### **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 optimise 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 modelling training and competition. The participants entering this stage will be allocated a WTN and progress according to their success in competitive events.

### **Level of Coach**

The minimum standard Coach required to work with the best players in this Phase is a Level 4 Coach. A Level 4 Coach has completed the Coaching High Performance Players Course and is qualified to work with and develop players at all levels.

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

This phase of player preparation aims to maximise 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 characterised by high intensity and relatively high volume with frequent periods of rest. The participants entering this stage will be allocated a WTN and progress according to their success in competitive events.

### **Level of Coach**

The minimum standard Coach required to work with the best players in this Phase is a Level 4 Coach. A Level 4 Coach has completed the Coaching High Performance Players Course and is qualified to work with and develop players at all levels.



## **Phase 7: The Active for Life Phase – PROMOTE**

Within this stage, there are three types of participants.

The new participant entering at any age. The recreational participant who is active for life. And the competitive (or former High Performance) participant who is no longer training to be professional, but still enjoys competing regularly.

The participants entering this stage will be allocated a WTN appropriate to their current standard of play and could decrease or progress accordingly.

### **Level of Coach**

For the new participant and the active for life players, the Level of coach required would depend on their capabilities and what they wish to achieve. And an understanding by the coaches of the players developmental level (as opposed to his or her age) is crucial and will help coaches appropriately tailor the training of the skills taught and the relevant competition required to guide their tennis play.

The retired professional player, however, may want to become involved in the ever-growing multi-graded veterans' game, coaching, sport administration, officiating, TV or radio presenting, or any other sport-related career.

Mentors and Life-skill Coaches are best suited to quality players entering this phase

### **Player Development Phases & Components**

The ten components of the model have been chosen to guide the development of the player holistically. Each one of these areas is critical to development, and although each one may be more critical at a certain point of development, each contributes to the overall development of players.

The following is an outline of the seven phases and the ten components that accompanies the phases.

### **The Phases**

The Active Start Phase - NURTURE

The Fundamental Phase - EXPLORE

The Learning to Play and Practice Phase - ENCOURAGE

The Training to Train Phase - ENHANCE

The Training to Compete Phase - CULTIVATE

The Training to Win Phase - PERFORM

The Active for Life Phase – PROMOTE

## **The Components**

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT

TACTICAL DEVELOPMENT

MENTAL DEVELOPMENT

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

LIFESTYLE DEVELOPMENT

PARENTAL ROLE & SUPPORT

EDUCATION

COMPETITION

LEVEL OF COACH

## **The World Tennis Number**

The World Tennis Number is a number assigned to tennis players of all levels which reflects their playing ability. The aim of the rating programme is to encourage more players of all ages, genders, and abilities to enjoy more meaningful tennis experiences more often.

There is a clear focus on recreational players and providing lots of level-based matches and a more enjoyable experience for all.

The system delivers a user-friendly and inclusive system that determines a player's ability level and can be applied to recreational and competitive tournament matches worldwide and it's an online community that will connect tennis players all over the world.

All players with a Tennis Ireland Pin and compete in events delivered through the Tennis Ireland Tournament Software are allocated a World Tennis Number for singles and doubles.

## **What's the difference between Rating & Ranking?**

Rating is a number assigned to a player that reflects their current level of playing ability across all competitions they play in including but not limited to internal club competitions, schools, parks, leagues, provincial, regional, national, and international events.

A ranking reflects the relative positions of players on a ranking list within a well-defined circuit/tour (i.e., Juniors, Seniors, Professional, etc.) based on how far they have progressed in those tournaments.

The World Tennis Number is one scale, aimed at all players of any age, ability, and gender. One of the best things about tennis is that players of any age and gender can enjoy playing together if they are of similar standard.

Players from any country will be able to obtain a World Tennis Number either via their own National Association's website or directly via the World Tennis Number website / mobile application.

The World Tennis Number is powered by a well-tested and objective mathematical calculation. It is based on the player's performance in matches relative to the strength of their opponent and the principles behind its calculation is published for all players to see. There is a separate World Tennis Number for doubles play alongside the singles number. The Rating System updates on a regular basis and is calculated by assessing one's match performances. If new results for one's opponents are added or an opponent's World Tennis Number changes significantly then one's World Tennis Number may also change.

### **How does one get their initial number?**

Adults can take a short self-assessment to determine an appropriate starting level. As they play their rating will become more accurate based on verified match results. Children need to play matches to receive a World Tennis Number.

### **Remember**

Simplicity and championing the concept of level-based play are the key objectives of the World Tennis Number.

## **Phase 1:**

### **The Active Start Phase – NURTURE**

#### **Age: 0-5 years**

#### **Level of Coach**

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

#### **The Role of the Club & the Coach**

Club officials and coaches should plan workshops for parents and guardians and provide training on the skills they can help their child develop in a home environment.

It will pay dividends later if the Clubs organise physical development classes for children in this age group who are potential future members.

As stated in the Introduction to this document, the main objective of this phase is for children to be introduced to semi-structured active play that incorporates a variety of body movements. Consequently, how we introduce the ten components mentioned above in this phase will also be in a less structured and different way to the subsequent six phases. 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. And of course, a physically active lifestyle is crucial for life-long health and physical and emotional wellbeing.

This phase is very much dependant on parents and guardians taking on board the importance of introducing children to an Active Start, by learning and understanding about growth and development in young children and becoming involved in the activities they introduce to their children. Children in the Active Start stage should see physical activity as a fun and exciting part of everyday life.

## **Physical Activity**

### **What is meant by physical activity for children in this Phase?**

Physical activity means taking part in active play and games that use the large muscles of the body. Whole body play of almost any kind, especially outdoors play, provides the movement that children need. Play that uses the hands and fingers is important in developing fine-motor skills. Active play is vigorous enough if children breathe faster and deeper, start to sweat and get warm, and can feel their heartbeat faster or have redness in their cheeks. Active play is also important for children with a disability, though some activities may have to be modified to ensure children's safety and to help them have success.

### **At what age should physical activity start and how much physical activity is required?**

Start encouraging physical activity at the infancy stage. Unless they are sleeping, children under six shouldn't be inactive for more than 60 minutes at a time. As soon as possible, encourage children to roll over and crawl by putting a toy out of their reach. Don't put it too far away and let them play with it when they've reached it. Remember to provide a safe, stimulating, and interesting environment in which children can physically explore their world.

## Toddlers (1-3 years)

At least 30 minutes of adult organised activity daily, and from 60 minutes to several hours per day of unstructured physical activity is recommended – especially outdoors

## (3-5 Pre-schoolers years)

At least 60 minutes of structured physical activity every day, and from 60 minutes to several hours of daily unstructured physical activity is recommended – especially outdoors

Reducing screen time is also important. Children up to two years of age shouldn't spend any time watching television, and children from ages three to five should be limited to one to two hours of screen time each day.

## Types of activities

**Body control skills** - like balance, moving the arms and legs in rhythmic ways to music, and other exercises to help develop coordination

**Motor skills** - like crawling, walking, running, skipping, jumping, leaping, and rolling.

**Sending and receiving skills** - like rolling a ball at a column of wooden or plastic bricks, throwing, catching, kicking, and hitting objects with a bat or stick.

During the toddler and pre-school years and using the guide above on the length of time per day, have some fun with your child by trying some of the following activities.

Use your imagination and come down to the child's level.

- ▶ Crawling
- ▶ Climbing (with you behind them for safety).
- ▶ Catching and striking balloons with the hand.
- ▶ Rolling balls, starting with large light ones, and varying the sizes.
- ▶ Striking balloons with a table tennis bat.
- ▶ Rolling a ball along the ground with a bat.
- ▶ Striking a ball along the ground with a bat.
- ▶ Kicking a ball with both feet
- ▶ Catching a variety of balls.
- ▶ Throwing balls or rubber rings underarm into a container or at a target.
- ▶ You throw and they retrieve ball as fast as they can (over noticeably short distances)
- ▶ Hopping, skipping, and chasing games.
- ▶ Dancing to music.

- ▶ Overarm throwing with a table tennis ball advancing to a squash ball.

**Technique on the overarm throwing action is especially important for the later Phases. Use the following guide for the overarm throwing action. A good technical throwing action is very important to develop the tennis serve, and good work here will pay dividends later.**

- ▶ Hold the ball with the thumb and the two first fingers.
- ▶ Throwing arm bent and elbow starting at shoulder level.
- ▶ Turn sideways and point free hand at target.
- ▶ Make sure the throw looks like a baseball pitch and not a cricket bowl.
- ▶ Progress to a small rubber ball no bigger than a golf ball.
- ▶ If you live near a beach, bring the child down to the seashore and make a game out of throwing stones into the water.

### **Encourage the child to initiate the throw by using the legs!**

Children need plenty of praise and encouragement while performing the above activities. Children should learn to be active indoors and outside, and in water. They learn from positive role models.

Your children will be all grown up in the blink of an eye. So why not have fun with them while you can, and at the same time contribute to their athletic development and wellbeing? Bring them to the park in good weather, and the Leisureplex in the miserable Irish winter weather, and let them at it!

### **Competition**

It is recommended that Participants be introduced to the early part of Tennis Ireland Skill Awards and the Achievement Cards and progress at their own pace.

#### **NOTES:**

There are many excellent websites that will provide you with a variety of exercises and activities parents can do with their children at home or outdoors.

Please ask your Regional Development Officer for further information on the Tennis Ireland Website

## **Phase 2:**

# **The Fundamental Phase - EXPLORE**

## **Age: Males 6-9/Females 6-8 years**

### **Level of Coach**

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

The Tennis Ireland Level 1 Course is a graduate of the Play Tennis Course (PT Course). He or she is prepared on how to introduce tennis to beginner players of all ages and to organise and deliver tennis sessions in a fun and effective learning environment in Schools, Parks & Clubs.

Please note that although there is an age reference in all phases, it also applies to beginner youths and adults so that they can maximise their capabilities and develop a good base for Lifelong Participation in Sport.

### **Physical development**

#### **Motor Skills - refine basic motor skills such as jumping, hopping, skipping, sidestepping, and running.**

- ▶ Able to run efficiently, with eyes forward, head level and up, arms dictating speed of legs.
- ▶ Able to jump for distance and height, aided using a coordinated arm swing, and land safely.
- ▶ Capable of jumping and hopping over small distances in multiple directions (i.e. forward, backwards and to the side) with right and left legs. Player should be well balanced on landing and not require hands or 'swing leg' to touch the ground.
- ▶ Able to sidestep to the left and right, and transition into a run.
- ▶ Able to make crossover steps (which are important in tennis movement patterns).
- ▶ Able to skip rhythmically.
- ▶ Able to make the transition from one loco motor pattern (e.g. run) to another (e.g. jump).

#### **Fundamental motor skills: fine-tune single-handed throwing, catching, and striking.**

- ▶ Capable of throwing over arm, with preferred arm, to locations over distances up to 10 metres, and further. Technique should be driven by trunk rotation and not purely by elbow extension.
- ▶ Able to throw underarm to a location over distances up to 5 metres with low and high trajectories, using both right and left arms.
- ▶ Able to catch with two hands, and with preferred hand, over very short distances.
- ▶ Able to strike balls, rolling and bouncing and with no bounce, with implements (supported by both two-handed and one-handed grips), to the right and to the left
- ▶ Able to coordinate hand-eye and foot-eye relationships in the three planes of motion.

**Physical proficiency abilities - improve coordination, body awareness and balance. Enhance movement frequency.**

- ▶ Able to coordinate hand-eye and foot-eye relationships in the three planes of motion.
- ▶ Able to maintain balance on different bases of support (i.e., straight leg, bent leg, and when seated).
- ▶ Capable of adjusting posture to assume the most stable position.
- ▶ Able to control body in the air (e.g., during/after a jump or hop), ready to change direction after landing.
- ▶ Able to perform repetitive upper-body actions (e.g., bouncing balls) and lower-body actions (e.g. foot tapping) at high speed.
- ▶ Able to throw, catch or pick up balls while running.
- ▶ Able to adjust running speed to intercept, strike or catch

**Flexibility - players are introduced to basic principles of stretching.**

- ▶ Able to adjust running speed to intercept, strike or catch
- ▶ Able to control trunk and limbs in performing upper and lower-body dynamic stretches/mobility exercises
- ▶ Understand that mobility exercises help to prepare the body to play and have fun
- ▶ Able to perform light static stretching as part of a cool-down

**Speed/Agility - from 6 years of age, an opportunity presents to realize significant improvements. There will also be some performance transfer from improved physical proficiency.**

- ▶ Able to accelerate from a variety of start positions (e.g., standing still, staggered stance, lying down).
- ▶ Increasingly able to start and stop quickly and to change direction off either foot



## **Strength - bodyweight exercise and supports should develop strength endurance or maximum strength capabilities.**

- ▶ Able to support bodyweight in climbing and swinging vertically and horizontally
- ▶ Capable of performing sit-ups, cartwheels (supported), handstands and (modified) push-ups

## **Endurance**

Although not overtly trainable, challenge aerobic metabolism through other sports, characterised by a high level of physical activity.

## **Multi-sports/activity experience - participation in a variety of sports and physical activity should be encouraged.**

Involved in gymnastics, martial arts, and dance (increases coordination, strength, and balance), and/or any code of football, basketball, and hockey (increases hand/foot-eye coordination, speed, and endurance), and/or athletics (increase motor and fundamental movement skills).

## **Footwork**

Able to or visibly trying to position himself or herself up to and around the ball (i.e., cover the ball), particularly when moving forward.

## **Ancillary capacities**

Understand to take fluid regularly, before, during and after practice.

## **Physical Activity Time (PAT)**

6–7-year-olds: 30%- or 2-4-hours tennis, 70%- or 5-7-hours non-tennis per week.

8–9-year-olds: 40-50% or 4-5 hours tennis, 50-60% or 5-7 hours non-tennis per week.

## **Introduce Cardio Tennis for Teenagers & Adults**

### **What Is Cardio Tennis?**

Cardio Tennis is a high energy fitness activity that combines tennis with cardiovascular exercise, delivering the ultimate, full body, calorie burning aerobic workout.

It is a fun group activity for anyone at any playing level looking for a fun way to burn calories & interact with others outside of the gym.

## **Fun Engaging and Welcoming**

Cardio Tennis is a social and fun activity for participants of all ability levels taught by coaches trained in how to deliver a series of sessions. For participants who have never played the game before, cardio tennis a great way to be introduced to tennis and if you are an experienced high level tennis player it's an excellent alternative training method.

The sessions can be gender specific or mixed gender and regardless of the participants ability or fitness level the Cardio Tennis Coach is trained to provide the ultimate workout for each person.

## **What does a session entail?**

A typical cardio tennis session has 6-8 players per court, using the agility ladder, cardio balls (red and orange tennis balls), music and heart rate monitors.

## **The Objective**

Train in their proper heart rate and aerobic zones

Burn calories.

Train for tennis.

***Please note, it is very important that coaches offering cardio tennis training sessions have been trained on how to deliver sessions.***

## **Technical development**

### **Developing a coordinated link between perception and action**

- ▶ Able to judge quickly and respond to different ball trajectories (high, low, short, deep).
- ▶ Able to respond to differential ball speeds.

### **Assumes sound support/hitting positions.**

- ▶ Able to use square and semi-open stances as appropriate, transferring weight from back to front foot
- ▶ Maintains balanced, neutral shoulder-head alignment.

### **Uses acceptable grips.**

- ▶ Forehand: Eastern forehand to Semi-Western.
- ▶ One handed backhand: Eastern backhand

- ▶ Two handed backhands: small range of acceptability here. That is, bottom hand (right hand) Semi -Continental and top hand (left hand) Semi Western/Eastern. Or bottom hand in Eastern backhand, top hand in Eastern forehand
- ▶ Serve and volley: Continental (high forehand and backhand volleys may shift to Eastern forehand and Eastern backhand respectively).

### **Acquires basic tennis technique.**

- ▶ Ground strokes: Employs swings that are simple, compact, yet not restricted; with consistent contact points to the side and in front. Emphasise forward and upward movement. Follow through across the body and with the appropriate length. Open stance on forehand is acceptable so long as it's not too frontal.
- ▶ Forehand and backhand volleys characterised by short strokes, with racquet head above the wrist, and a forward punch/push/block contact.
- ▶ Serve: able to use a simple abbreviated over arm service action, and an under arm serve if necessary to facilitate Serve, Rally & Score.
- ▶ Smash: able to contact ball from a side-on position and in line with the front foot.
- ▶ Low ready position always on all strokes and with forehand grip.
- ▶ Balance: Head still, trunk straight, solid base and low position.

### **Tactical development**

Implements basic singles tactics in all five game situations (serve, return, baseline play, approaching the net, and passing the net player).

- ▶ Able to hit the ball over the net and into the court (consistency).
- ▶ Able to move the opponent (accuracy).
- ▶ Able to assume optimal court positions.
- ▶ Understands how to attack and defend, ideally knows how to counter-attack.

### **Mental development**

## **Motivation**

- ▶ Intrinsically motivated.
- ▶ Visibly working on doing things well.
- ▶ Willing to solve problems and seek answers.
- ▶ Enjoys activity, has fun (which is the primary reason for participation)

## **Concentration**

- ▶ Able to create images through game play

## **Control of thoughts**

- ▶ Displays positive thinking and self-esteem in supportive environments
- ▶ Experiences and enjoys technical, tactical and/or physical success.

## **Other psychological competencies**

- ▶ Able to follow basic game rules and scoring.
- ▶ Demonstrates positive attitude toward learning.

## **Personal Development**

- ▶ Able to interact with peers in a variety of different sports settings.
- ▶ Able to work with and help other players – capable of cooperation in pairs and in a team.
- ▶ Enjoys interacting with and learning from several coaches or instructors.
- ▶ Able to work, cooperate and play with both boys and girls.
- ▶ Displays respect for other players, parents, and coaches.
- ▶ Understands and is capable of fair play.
- ▶ Developing a positive attitude.

## **Lifestyle**

- ▶ Involvement in Multi Sports

- ▶ Learn the concepts and practices of safety.

## **Parental role and support tips**

- ▶ Initially gets their children interested in sport and allows them to sample a wide range of enjoyable activities, but without focusing on intense training.
- ▶ Provide opportunities and access to facilities where children can experience unstructured play (fun activities) and sport play.
- ▶ Emphasise the importance of school.
- ▶ Reinforce good behaviour and sports-person-like conduct.

## **Education**

### **Importance of education**

- ▶ Enjoy school.
- ▶ Participate in school extra-curricular activities and school trips where possible.
- ▶ Actively involved in unstructured and sport play opportunities at school.

## **Competition and tournaments**

### **Skill Awards**

Participants should be introduced to the Tennis Ireland Skill Awards/Primary School Achievement Certificates and progress through the skills at their own pace.

For more information see the Tennis Ireland Website.

Participants having had success at the skill awards are introduced to the Red Ball/Orange Ball Progressions

### **Competition/Tournaments plan**

- ▶ Actively participate and enjoy fun team challenges in the Red and Orange Courts
- ▶ Able to enjoy competition against themselves, and then others, in simple scored games and multi match formats.
- ▶ Not yet exposed to organised, structured tennis competition.
- ▶ Participation in a variety of ball sport skills competitions.

***Please note that all Teenagers and Adults should have a World Tennis Number and should be introduced to level-based competition and organised play from the off.***

## **Tennis Xpress**

Tennis Xpress comes in the form of 6 x 1.5-hour sessions.

It is an easy, active, and fun 'off-the-shelf' programme developed specifically for youths and adults using the slower balls and where necessary, modified courts.

The aim is to help beginner Youths and Adults to serve, rally and score (play the game) from the first session and to ensure that by the end of the programme:

Participants will know the basic techniques, tactics, and the Rules of Tennis

Participants will be able to play competitive points using the green ball on a full court

Please note, for the purpose of the programme, adult & youth beginner participants are defined as those who are complete beginners to tennis i.e., have never played tennis before.

Or those who have received basic coaching but have never played the game outside of a coaching environment.

Or beginners returning to tennis after a long absence.

To learn more about Tennis Xpress, please contact your Regional Development Officer or visit the ITF Tennis Play and Stay website

## **Phase 3:**

### **The Learning to Play and Practice Phase –**

### **ENCOURAGE**

### **Age: Males 9-12/Females 8-11 years**

It is important to point out that the skills that need to be developed within the ten components during this phase should be divided into three stages. This is to facilitate the transition through the orange, green and full courts with the orange, green and yellow balls. When I mention 'early to middle stage' or 'later stage', I refer to the transition through the balls and courts. Reference to the 'early stage' means the skills that need to be developed in the orange court with the orange ball. 'Middle stage' refers to the skills that must be developed in the green court with the green ball. When we refer to the 'later stage of the phase' these are the skills that need to be developed in the full court with the yellow ball.

***Please note that although there is an age reference in all phases, the guide also applies to beginner youths and adults so that they can maximize their capabilities and develop a good base for Lifelong Participation in Sport.***

***It is highly unlikely that players considered to be recreation players will be aspiring to achieve the capacities outlined beyond Phase 3. They may however want to sharpen up their capabilities in some of the capacities recommended in Phases 4, 5 & 6.***

***E.g., mental, or physical capacities, or some improvements in their tactical awareness or add a new technique in their armory.***

## **Level of Coach**

The minimum standard coach required to work in the first stage of this phase is a Tennis Ireland Level 2 Coach. A Level 2 coach has completed the Tennis Ireland Coaching beginner to intermediate players course and is qualified to work with and develop beginner to intermediate players of all ages and competitive players up to club level.

For players approaching the Training to Train and 4th Phase of the Pathway, however, a Level 3 Coach is required. A Level 3 Coach has completed the Tennis Ireland Coaching Advanced Players Course and is qualified to work with and develop intermediate to advanced players of all ages, and competitive players up to 14 years of age.

There may also be some quality players who are 12 and under who may require a higher level of training from a Level 3 Coach.

All players with a Tennis Ireland Pin and compete in organized play and competitive events delivered through the Tennis Ireland Tournament Software will be allocated a World Tennis Number for singles and doubles.

## **Physical Development**

### **Motor Skills - Continue refinement.**

#### **Early to middle stage**

- ▶ Able to move proficiently, and perform the basic motor skills such as jumping, hopping, skipping, side-stepping, and running.
- ▶ Able to coordinate upper-body and lower-body during Carioca steps and lunge variations.
- ▶ Displays 100% effort most of the time.

#### **Later stage**

- ▶ Able to move proficiently, and perform the basic motor skills such as jumping, hopping, skipping, side-stepping, and running at higher speeds as the early to middle stage.

- ▶ Display improved coordination and fine motor control in all movement patterns (e.g., during ladder work).
- ▶ Able to make a transition into and out of all motor patterns (e.g., side-step to run, to side-step).
- ▶ Displays 100% effort all the time.

## **Fundamental motor skills - marked improvements in precision**

### **Early to middle stage**

- ▶ Able to throw over arm, with the preferred arm, to locations over longer distances (15 metres and greater).
- ▶ Technique should be driven by trunk rotation, and internal rotation of the upper arm (see throwing progressions in the Active Start Phase).
- ▶ Able to throw underarm with right and left hands, accurately, with low and high trajectories.
- ▶ Able to perform a single-handed catch (right and left hands).
- ▶ Able to strike balls – rolling, bouncing, and projected - with implements (supported by both two-handed and one-handed grips) to the right and left.

### **Later stage**

- ▶ Able to throw over arm, with the preferred arm, to locations over longer distances (greater than the early to middle stage)
- ▶ Able to perform a single-handed catch (right and left hands) displaying signs of athleticism in single-handed catches using tennis balls and Frisbees.
- ▶ Able to land safely when required to jump or dive.

## **Physical proficiency abilities**

- ▶ Coordination including balance, differentiation and rhythm should improve marginally in the early to middle stage of the phase, and progress to excellence in the later stage of the phase.

## **Enhance movement frequency and movement time.**

### **Early to middle stage**

- ▶ Able to differentiate actions between upper and lower-body and right to left side.
- ▶ Displays improving rhythm (or timing) in all striking and movement tasks.



- ▶ Able to maintain balance on increasingly challenging bases of support (e.g., on toes, on unstable surfaces).
- ▶ Able to perform repetitive upper-body (e.g., bouncing balls) and lower-body (e.g., foot tapping) at higher speeds
- ▶ Able to move in response to a variety of sensory stimuli (i.e., predominantly vision and sound) as quickly as possible.

### **Later stage**

- ▶ Able to differentiate actions between upper and lower-body and right to left side at higher-speed actions than the early to middle stage.
- ▶ Displays excellent rhythm in all striking and movement tasks.
- ▶ Able to control the body in the air and in a controlled manner when performing at higher speeds (i.e., during/after a jump/hop) landing as if ready to change direction.
- ▶ Able to skip at high speed, with at least two footwork combinations.

### **Flexibility**

- ▶ Able to perform basic static and dynamic stretches in the early to middle stage of the phase.
- ▶ Progressing in the later stage to following more structured static and dynamic stretching and mobility routines, which address all important muscle groups.

### **Speed/Agility**

#### **Early to middle stage**

- ▶ Continue to develop reaction speed, linear speed, and multiple changes of direction.
- ▶ Improvements will be garnered through developments in running technique and physical proficiency.

#### **Later stage**

- ▶ Be able to pivot in any direction and accelerate similarly off right and left leg.
- ▶ Be visibly improving acceleration over 5 to 10 meters.
- ▶ Maintain stable balanced posture when changing direction.
- ▶ Realises improvements in agility-test and speed-test fitness test scores.

## **Strength**

### **Early to middle stage**

**Improvements in core control and strength are priorities.**

- ▶ Continue to develop strength, performing bodyweight exercises and supports to develop strength endurance capabilities

### **Later stage**

- ▶ Able to perform a variety of modified but preferably full bodyweight exercises with correct form.
- ▶ Able to perform and stabilise self in increasingly challenging (i.e., complex) exercises and postures.
- ▶ Demonstrates sound core control and strength (sensitive to development).

## **Power**

### **Early to middle stage**

- ▶ Able to perform sidearm and over arm throws of an appropriately weighted and appropriately sized medicine ball.
- ▶ Able to jump, hop and throw repetitively, with control

### **Later stage**

- ▶ Display increasingly short catch-release time in sidearm medicine ball throws and able to coordinate trunk and lower and upper-bodies when throwing for distance.
- ▶ Prioritises and visibly improves horizontal jumps (single and consecutive standing) for distance.

## **Endurance**

- ▶ In the early to middle stage of the phase, be able to compete in other sports characterized by a high level of physical activity for up to 30 minutes, without getting overtly fatigued.
- ▶ Progressing in the later stage to competing in sports of extended duration (e.g., 40 minutes) and three set tennis matches without fatigue visibly impairing performance.

## **Multi-sports/activity experience**

- ▶ In the early to middle stages of the phase, participation in a variety of sports and physical activities should be encouraged.
- ▶ In the later stage of the phase participate in sports that may transfer more directly to improve on-court performance.
- ▶ Participate in the various football codes, basketball, or hockey (increase hand/foot-eye coordination, speed, and endurance), athletics (increase motor and fundamental movement skills), and/or cycling (increase lower body power, endurance).

## **Footwork**

### **Early to middle stage**

- ▶ Better able to position up to and around the ball (i.e., cover the ball), particularly when moving forward.
- ▶ Increasingly able to synchronise footwork (e.g., split step) to incoming ball, both from the baseline and on return of serve.
- ▶ Able to maintain or regain own position on baseline after executing serves, returns and ground-strokes from different court positions.
- ▶ Able to move to use best shot on the second serve return and during rallies.

### **Later stage**

- ▶ Able to cover balls in all court locations

## **Fitness testing / Screening**

- ▶ Performs a battery of tennis-specific field tests at least twice annually.
- ▶ From twelve years of age, participates in physiotherapy screening annually.

## **Physical Activity Time (PAT)**

9-10 years old: 50-60% or 7-9 hours tennis, and 40-50% or 5-7 hours non-tennis per week.

10 to 12 years old: 60-65% or 10-12 hours tennis, and 30-35% or 6-8 hours non-tennis per week

## **Introduce Cardio Tennis for Teenagers & Adults**

See page 24 for information on Cardio Tennis

### **Technical development**

#### **Early to middle stage**

#### **Core Characteristics**

- ▶ Develop a coordinated link between perception and action advancing towards refining the link.
- ▶ Able to judge quickly and respond to different ball trajectories (high, low, short, deep) from all areas of the court. Use cue words.
- ▶ Able to adjust and respond to different ball speeds and spins.
- ▶ Grooving the strokes at a higher rhythm.
- ▶ Introduce the basis of special strokes.
- ▶ Sharpening control with an emphasis on placement and optimal zone of impact.
- ▶ Attempts to take balls on the rise as often as possible. (Especially for those deemed to have talent).
- ▶ Able to volley consistently in short volley exchanges.
- ▶ Athletic position.
- ▶ Feet always moving.
- ▶ Good split step.
- ▶ Back leg behind the ball and pushes forward.

#### **Assumes sound support/hitting positions.**

- ▶ Able to use open and semi-open stances and adjusts stance according to tactical intention and grip.
- ▶ Able to hit off different supports (i.e., particularly back leg and two legs) but still largely endeavour to transfer weight forward. Advancing to hitting off all supports (i.e., two feet, back foot, front foot, outside foot, inside foot) using foot interaction with the ground favourably
- ▶ Integrates greater horizontal leg drive (transfer of weight forward) in groundstroke production. Advancing to aggressive horizontal leg drive, with increasingly vertical component in ground stroke and serve production.
- ▶ Maintains balanced, neutral shoulder-head alignment.

#### **Swing and ball control**

- ▶ Able to coordinate racquet trajectories to apply observable slice and topspin to ground strokes, and slice to serves.
- ▶ Demonstrates 'feel' in ground strokes, volleys and overhead in mini-tennis settings.
- ▶ Improving racquet-ball handling through control of basic half volley and drop shot swing patterns.

#### **Uses acceptable grips.**

- ▶ Forehand: Eastern forehand to Semi-Western.
- ▶ One handed backhand: Eastern backhand.
- ▶ Two handed backhands: small range of acceptability here. That is, bottom hand (right hand) Semi -Continental and top hand (left hand) Semi Western/Eastern. Or bottom hand in Eastern backhand, top hand in Eastern forehand
- ▶ Serve and volley: Continental (high forehand and backhand volleys may shift to Eastern forehand and Eastern backhand respectively).

#### **Acquire stroke fundamentals such that foundation for quality stroke production is laid.**

##### **Serve**

- ▶ Well-placed toss.
- ▶ Emphasise good balance.
- ▶ Palm of hand faces down throughout preparation.
- ▶ Left arm goes first – should be releasing ball when right hand is still low.
- ▶ Most of the time starting and finishing on the left foot.
- ▶ Able to serve wide, to T, and to body on both sides (i.e., advantage and deuce), with an action that is rhythmical and coordinated. Possesses a high contact point, and a follow through across the body.
- ▶ Use of a small knee bend can be incorporated after the basic action has been learned and pushing up from the back leg.
- ▶ Able to impart some slice and lift with the second serve.

##### **Ready Position**

- ▶ Special attention should be given to the ready position.

## **Ground Strokes**

### **Forehand**

- ▶ Able to hit forehands characterized by a smooth action with shoulder turn, racquet positioned at a comfortable distance from the body, with correct footwork at all times.
- ▶ Use of a semi open stance is preferred.
- ▶ Forward and upward emphasis (as a source of power).
- ▶ Swings should be simple, from low to high, with a consistent contact point to the side and in front, and a longer follow through dependent on ball hit.
- ▶ Ball should be taken on the rise as much as possible.
- ▶ Extra ground reaction force and extra rotation required.

### **One handed backhand.**

- ▶ Able to hit one-handed backhand using a shoulder turn, to activate a long rhythmical stroke with a take-back where both arms work together
- ▶ A square stance should feature, and the player should rotate forward to contact in line with, but to the side of, the front foot.
- ▶ The follow through should be above shoulder height and toward the centre of the court.
- ▶ Good balance.

### **Two handed backhands**

- ▶ Executes two-handed backhands using a compact action, usually with a straight or looped take-back.
- ▶ Evident trunk rotation, arms close to the body, more prominent use of the top hand, and the front foot angled down the court

- ▶ Player loads on back foot, transferring weight to the front foot through contact.
- ▶ Better possibilities to play on the rise.
- ▶ Higher impact.
- ▶ Good balance

### **Return**

- ▶ When returning serve, able to direct the ball down the line and crosscourt, with forehand and backhand, on both sides.
- ▶ Assume good court position (i.e., near the baseline) and complete the necessary positioning skills.

### **Volley**

- ▶ Able to volley with a short stroke, racquet head above the wrist, sufficient trunk rotation and footwork, bodyweight moving towards the ball.
- ▶ A forward punch/block contact with the racquet head moving from high to low.
- ▶ Reliance on hitting backhand volleys with two hands should be reduced.
- ▶ Able to execute basic shape and consistent contact points in backhand slice and drive volley

### **Smash**

- ▶ Able to move to contact the ball in a side-on position, and in line with the front foot.
- ▶ Effective use of non-playing hand to track the ball.
- ▶ Consistently able to direct the ball into the court.

### **Passing**

- ▶ Able to pass with a drive or lob.

## **Later stage**

### **Core Characteristics**

- ▶ Refine and further develop the characteristics from the early to middle stage.
- ▶ Refine a coordinated link between perception and action.

### **Swing and ball control**

**Stroke technique should allow for future development of power, possess no major weakness and present two potential (stroke or movement) weapons.**

- ▶ Able to generate sufficient racquet head speed and trajectory to create crosscourt angle from on, behind, and in front of the baseline
- ▶ Able to adjust racquet trajectories to hit with varying amounts of topspin/slice and capable of flattening out a stroke.
- ▶ Able to hit through as well as around (i.e., angled groundstroke) and across the ball (e.g., high one-handed backhand).
- ▶ Displays improving control of half volley and drop shots.
- ▶ Able to direct them to variable court widths.

**Ensure the further acquisition of stroke fundamentals, such that foundation for quality stroke production is progressed.**

### **Serve**

- ▶ Able to serve with increasing spin, especially on the second serve.
- ▶ Displays increased rotation of hip and shoulders, amplified knee bend and leg drive to help rotation and coordination.
- ▶ Lands on the front foot.
- ▶ Able to place serve to T, body, and wide in both courts.



## **Returning Serve**

- ▶ Assumes a good court position for returning first and second serves and performs necessary footwork to optimise impact position.
- ▶ Able to return deep and short angled from either side.
- ▶ Able to efficiently adjust to body serves and employ a compact swing pattern for faster serves.

## **Ground Strokes**

- ▶ Able to hit forehands, maintaining a smooth but increasingly dynamic stroke.
- ▶ Able to employ a variety of stances and coordinate increased lower body drive and trunk rotation.
- ▶ Uses a compact looped backswing, transitioning to a low to high forward swing, with the contact point increasingly specific to the grip but still in front and to the side.
- ▶ Longer follow through, with actual finish point determined by the type of shot.
- ▶ Able to move around the backhand and effectively use topspin.
- ▶ One handed backhand: employs a take-back with both arms working together. Shoulder rotation should precede backward movement of the racquet, with an observable separation angle at the end of the backswing. Forward rotation should be characterised by trunk rotation and an unwinding of the arm (through abduction and extension). This provides a contact point in front and aligned to the side of the front foot. The follow through should be over shoulder height and out in front.
- ▶ Two handed backhands: able to use a take-back appropriate to the situation, and drive racquet speed with observable trunk/shoulder rotation. Front foot should be angled down the court.

## **Volley**

- ▶ Able to volley with a short stroke, the racquet head above the wrist and with observable trunk rotation.
- ▶ Coordinated footwork with bodyweight moving towards the ball, and a forward punch/block contact.
- ▶ Able to play one-handed backhand volleys.

## **Backhand Slice**

- ▶ Able to play a backhand slice, controlling the racquet head at impact and using the non-racquet arm to help maintain a consistent swing-path.

## **Smash**

- ▶ Able to coordinate footwork to move forward, backward and to the side to contact ball overhead and out in front. Able to perform basic jump from back leg to front leg (i.e., scissor action) when moving backwards.

## **Lob**

- ▶ Able to play both offensive and defensive lobs.

## **Other**

- ▶ Increasingly proficient at passing with a drive or lob.
- ▶ Demonstrates improved precision and consistency in drive volleys and drop shots.
- ▶ Able to execute the basic shape of a backhand smash.

## **Tactical Development**

### **Early to middle stage**

Core characteristics - maintain and develop the tactics already learned in the Red Court and further develop the tactics in the five game situations in the Orange Court and Green Court.

- ▶ Proficient at hitting the ball over and in the court (consistency).
- ▶ Able to move player (accuracy) using both width and length of the court.
- ▶ Tries to maintain and reassume a ready position just behind or in front of the baseline.
- ▶ Able to execute simple attack, defend and counterattack.
- ▶ Able to construct points by understanding cause and effect relationships.
- ▶ Understands what is likely to happen when balls are hit to certain parts of the court.
- ▶ Understands how to take the ball early, and the pressure this imposes on an opponent.

- ▶ Understands the need to play specific sequences of shots to achieve desired outcomes.
- ▶ In doubles, understands different players' roles, and the concept of team play.
- ▶ Ability to play in the five game situations.

## **Serve**

- ▶ Able to direct the ball to locations that trouble or makes opponent move.
- ▶ Use aggressive play after the serve.
- ▶ Start to use topspin on second serve.

## **Return of serve.**

- ▶ Able to return to challenge opponents' movement or court position
- ▶ Proficient in creating deep or short angles from wide serves.
- ▶ Begin to use forehand to take control of weak second serves

## **Baseline play**

- ▶ Capable of keeping ball in play but also deep in the opponents court during baseline exchanges.
- ▶ When rallying, can move the opponent along the baseline by hitting accurately.
- ▶ Identifies and successfully executes opportunities to hit higher and deeper balls to maintain good court position, and to put opponent under pressure.
- ▶ Grooving good diagonals and when to come out of them.
- ▶ Ability to vary the rhythm.
- ▶ Starting to analyse opponents play on different surfaces.

## **Approach the net.**

- ▶ Able to hit earlier balls and move forward.
- ▶ Use slice to approach off backhand.
- ▶ Use forehand drive approach.
- ▶ Good positioning around the net.

## **Passing**

- ▶ Chooses to pass with a drive or two-time pass, but more frequently using the lob (due to lack of power and spin).

## **Later stage**

Core Characteristics - maintain and develop the tactics already learned on the orange court and the green court. Make the transition to the full court and further develop singles tactics in the five game situations.

- ▶ Able to attack, defend, and counterattack in and from a variety of game situations.
- ▶ Able to construct points by understanding what he/she does well and use those strengths accordingly.
- ▶ Able to move in such a way as to maximise opportunities to use weapons.
- ▶ Able to construct points by understanding that opponent has weaknesses and be able to exploit them.
- ▶ Able to construct points by understanding the continued need to play specific sequences of shots, and potentially adapt these sequences to achieve desired outcomes.
- ▶ Able to construct points by understanding the benefits of playing the ball early, rather than just trying to hit hard.

## **Develops tennis intelligence.**

- ▶ Able to distinguish between strategy and tactics.
- ▶ Knows how to pressure by position.
- ▶ Adapts to play on different surfaces.
- ▶ Able to map out and execute a specific game plan.
- ▶ Able to perform basic match analysis.
- ▶ Can play in the five game situations.

## **Serve**

- ▶ Able to create an increasing number of problems for the opponent with the serve.
- ▶ Able to direct the serve to a position, with a view to playing a specific second shot.
- ▶ Able to perform a basic serve and volley movement pattern.

## **Return of serve.**

- ▶ Able to anticipate returns based on cues such as ball toss.
- ▶ Proficient in opening the court off wide and T serves.
- ▶ Chooses to vary the pace/spin of the return.
- ▶ Able to plan and implement different two-shot combinations
- ▶ Uses best groundstroke (i.e., weapon) to take control of the point on second serves

## **Baseline play**

- ▶ Able to open the court when hitting crosscourt and accelerate down the line.
- ▶ Able to make appropriate decision (based on perception and/or anticipation) regarding when to change direction in a crosscourt exchange
- ▶ Able to maintain attacking position on the baseline but can adjust court position based on opponents' displacement.
- ▶ Selects appropriate time to vary rally tempo.

## **Approach the net.**

- ▶ Understands when to vary approach shots with slice and/or drive (i.e., with respect to ball height/speed, opponents position etc
- ▶ Tries to play balls increasingly early, attacking mid and 3/4 court balls, including those at shoulder height.
- ▶ Understands that the first volley does not necessarily have to be a winner.

## **Passing**

- ▶ Makes better decisions regarding the use of drives or lobs based on own as well as opponent's court position.
- ▶ Uses two-time pass as an option.

## **Doubles**

- ▶ Able to move quickly to the net, and into the appropriate position after a weak serve
- ▶ Chooses to vary the return (e.g., short crosscourt, lob).
- ▶ Able to decide and implement poaching when both teams are playing one-up one-back.

## **Mental Development**

### **Motivation**

#### **Early to middle stage**

- ▶ Intrinsically motivated.
- ▶ Visibly working on doing things well
- ▶ Willing to solve problems and seek answers.
- ▶ Enjoys learning and playing, has fun (which drives participation).
- ▶ Displays 100% effort most of the time,
- ▶ Shows the desire to impose strengths on an opponent.
- ▶ Able to set simple goals.

#### **Later stage**

- ▶ Introduction to the logbook.
- ▶ Able to set measurable performance-related goals within a time frame (i.e., short-term, intermediate, and long-term).
- ▶ Displays 100% effort all the time. Encompasses the determination to fight and successfully execute each shot or intention.

### **Concentration**

#### **Early to middle stage**

- ▶ Adjusts attention to a variety of stimuli.
- ▶ Creates more specific images through game play.

## **Later stage**

- ▶ Able to focus when confronted with potential distractions.
- ▶ Starting to use rituals and routines between points and games

## **Control of thoughts**

### **Early to middle stage**

- ▶ Displays positive thinking and self-esteem in supportive environments.
- ▶ Experiences and enjoys technical, tactical and/or physical success.
- ▶ Tries to implement what has been practiced in gameplay.

## **Later stage**

- ▶ Uses self-talk to facilitate skill acquisition/refinement, and concentration.
- ▶ Maintains positive body language on-court.

## **Emotional Control**

### **Early to middle stage**

- ▶ Able to relax through games and activities.
- ▶ Able to enjoy activity, regardless of outcome.

## **Later stage**

- ▶ Learns to deal with tension and environmental influences on performance during match play.

- ▶ Beginning to use strategies such as breath control when on-court.
- ▶ Able to manage mistakes on-court through effective mistake management routines.

## **Other psychological qualities**

### **Early to middle stage**

- ▶ Shows discipline through further understanding of outcomes of different behaviours.
- ▶ Follows basic game rules and scoring.
- ▶ Demonstrates positive attitude toward learning.

### **Later stage**

- ▶ Possesses self-discipline.
- ▶ Well-behaved in match play and practice.
- ▶ Displays sizeable specific sports and tennis knowledge.
- ▶ Able to distinguish between effort and ability.
- ▶ Understand the relationship between effort and outcome.
- ▶ Displays greater understanding of what is required in committing to tennis.
- ▶ Developing independence through self-preparation for matches (e.g., own warm-up and stretching).
- ▶ Coachable.

## **Personal**

### **Early to middle stage**

- ▶ Accept discipline and structure.
- ▶ Understands the relationship between effort and outcome.
- ▶ Able to interact with peers in a variety of different sports settings.



- ▶ Able to cooperate in pairs and teams.
- ▶ Able to and enjoys interacting with/learning from several coaches or instructors.
- ▶ Able to work, cooperate and play with both boys and girls.
- ▶ Displays respect for officials, other players, parents, and coaches.
- ▶ Understands the concepts of and is capable of fair play.
- ▶ Able to identify role model sportspersons.

### **Later stage**

- ▶ Understands the changes puberty will bring.
- ▶ Able to interact with male and female peers and adults in a variety of different sports settings, including at tournaments.
- ▶ Proficient at working in pairs and as a team to achieve common goals.
- ▶ Able to participate in a variety of social events outside tennis.
- ▶ Able to display tenderness, admiration, and appreciation.
- ▶ Understands the influence of the peer group on values and attitudes.
- ▶ Respects family values.
- ▶ Able to identify role models who are tennis players.
- ▶ Progressively copes with the changes that accompany puberty.

### **Lifestyle**

- ▶ Involvement in Multi Sports.
- ▶ Inclusion of sport in lifestyle.

- ▶ Participate in complementary sports.
- ▶ Understands the importance of sleep, nutrition, and hydration.

## **Parental role and support tips**

### **Early to middle stage**

- ▶ Provide opportunities and access to facilities where children can experience unstructured play (fun activities) and sport play.
- ▶ Emphasise the importance of school.
- ▶ Place winning and losing in a healthy perspective.
- ▶ Continue to encourage children to participate in a variety of sports and other physical activities.
- ▶ Reinforce good behaviour and sportsperson-like conduct.

### **Later stage**

- ▶ Provide opportunities and access to facilities where children can participate in a variety of sports.
- ▶ Emphasise school and sport achievement.
- ▶ Keep winning and losing in a healthy perspective.
- ▶ Positive yet realistic in their belief in their child's talents.
- ▶ Support any decision to continue to be involved in selected sports, but do not pressurise children into specialising in tennis.
- ▶ Reinforce good behaviour and sportsperson-like conduct.

## **Education**

## **Early to middle stage**

- ▶ Understands that school is a priority throughout their childhood and adolescent lives.
- ▶ Participates in extracurricular school activities and trips where possible.
- ▶ Actively involved in sport play at school.
- ▶ Participates in inter-school sports.
- ▶ Displays sizeable specific sports knowledge.

## **Later stage**

- ▶ Able to identify role model sportspersons who have achieved academic and sporting success.
- ▶ May develop an interest in a second language.
- ▶ Receptive to teachers and coaches who create positive environments in which skills can be developed.

## **Competition/Tournaments**

When the players are playing in the full court, they should have a World Tennis Number.

The WTN is established through playing matches and recording the matches in the WTN System

### **Competition/Tournaments guidelines**

#### **Early to middle stage**

- ▶ Actively participates and enjoys team/fun challenges and round robin tournaments.
- ▶ Able to compete against boys and girls in most activities, and particularly in doubles
- ▶ Presented with the opportunity to participate in, on average, two hours of competition per week.

- ▶ Compete in 10-15 tournaments annually: playing three 'matches' per tournament such that players experience both positive and negative outcomes.
- ▶ Per year, children should play around 20 singles and 30 doubles matches.
- ▶ No age group ranking lists or national championships exist from 9-11 years.

***Please note that all Teenagers and Adults should have a World Tennis Number and should be introduced to level-based competition and organised play from the off.***

***Please be also aware that using modified balls for teenagers and adults can also be very effective in maintaining their interest in tennis. (Appropriate Competition)***

### **Later stage**

- ▶ Actively participate in 'feed-in' and some 'knock-out' tournaments.
- ▶ Age-group competitions will become increasingly gender-specific. Although WTN based events may cater for both genders and indeed various age groups competing against each other in the same events.
- ▶ Presented with the opportunity to participate in, on average, no less than three hours of competition per week.
- ▶ The top-rated players should compete in 12 to 18 tournaments (comprising 2-3 National; 5-7 Provincial; 2-3 International; 2-3 Team/Club) annually.
- ▶ Per year, children should play 40-50 singles and 20-30 doubles matches.
- ▶ Players should only play up when they have the very real prospect of experiencing victory.
- ▶ Understand Tennis Ireland's Passport System

***Please note that all Teenagers and Adults should have a World Tennis Number and should be introduced to level-based competition and organised play from the off***

## **A Good Base**

Just coming back once again to what we said in the introduction to the seven phases, in relation to the Lifelong Participation part of the pathway. The first three phases provide the foundation for lifelong and indeed performance involvement or participation in sport.

If the players have been guided well through the critical phases, that is, nurtured well in the first phase, provided lots of opportunity to explore in the second phase and received lots of encouragement during all three phases, participants should have a good grounding to play recreationally or in level based organised play, or indeed, show talent and the aspirations to strive for excellence.

*Please note that although there is an age reference in all phases, the guide also applies to beginner youths and adults so that they can maximize their capabilities and develop a good base for Lifelong Participation in Sport.*

*It is highly unlikely that players considered to be recreation players will be aspiring to achieve the capacities outlined beyond Phase 3. They may however want to sharpen up their capabilities in some of the capacities recommended in Phases 4, 5 & 6.*

*E.g., mental, or physical capacities, or some improvements in their tactical awareness or add a new technique to their armory.*

*Please be also aware that using modified balls for teenagers and adults can also be very effective in maintaining their interest in tennis. (Appropriate Competition)*

*Consider Tennis Xpress and Cardio Tennis as support Programmes for this Phase too.*

See pages 24 for Cardio and page 28 for Tennis Xpress

## **Phase 4:**

### **The Training to Train Phase –**

### **ENHANCE**

### **Age: Males 12-16/Females 11-15 years**

*Can I remind you once again that although there is an age reference in all phases, the guide also applies to beginner youths and adults so that they can maximize their capabilities and develop a good base for Lifelong Participation in Sport.*

*It is highly unlikely that players considered to be recreation players will be aspiring to achieve the capacities outlined beyond Phase 3. They may however want to sharpen up their capabilities in some of the capacities recommended in Phases 4, 5 & 6.*

*E.g., mental, or physical capacities, or some improvements in their tactical awareness or add a new technique to their armory.*

## **Level of Coach**

The minimum standard coach required to work in this phase can vary depending on whether the players involved are recreational, club or higher-level tournament players.

A level 1 coach would still suffice for the recreation adult and youth players in the clubs while the minimum standard Coach required to work with the best players in this Phase is a Level 3 up to u14 and a Level 4 Coach up to U18 Level.

A Level 4 Coach has completed the Coaching High Performance Players Course and is qualified to work with and develop players at all levels.

## **Physical development**

Prior to peak height velocity (PHV), trainability heightens. PHV refers to the maximum rate of growth in stature during the growth spurt. The age of maximum velocity of growth is called the age at PHV.1.

The period of rapid growth rate during adolescence is usually expressed as the age of peak height velocity (peak body mass velocity usually occurs some months later).

Most girls have their adolescent growth spurt between the age of 12 and 13 years; the growth spurt of most boys occurs between the age of 14 and 15 years.

During the growth spurt, young people are particularly prone to sports injuries, because of a discrepancy between bone matrix formation and bone mineralization which diminishes bone strength. In addition, the growth plates in bones are extremely vulnerable to external forces.

Repetitive, moderate to high-intensity activities (e.g., distance running and sports with throwing actions such as tennis) can easily overload the musculoskeletal system causing injuries. Examples include Osgood-Schlatter disease and 'little leaguer's elbow'.

### **Motor & fundamental movement skills**

You may need to revisit some of the earlier skills during potential periods of 'adolescent awkwardness'.

### **Physical proficiency abilities**

- ▶ Maintains balance on challenging bases of support (i.e., on unstable surfaces) and on all court surfaces
  
- ▶ Displays excellent rhythm.

- ▶ Able to control the body in the air and in a controlled manner at higher speeds (e.g., during/after a jump/hop), landing as if ready to change direction.

### **Flexibility**

- ▶ Follows increasingly individualised static and dynamic stretching routines that address all important muscle groups.
- ▶ Able to implement active and passive static stretching techniques and PNF stretching as growth begins to slow (i.e., post peak height velocity).
- ▶ Able to perform self-administered stretching sessions.

### **Speed/Agility**

- ▶ Regularly integrated as part of warm-ups.
- ▶ Able to move efficiently at high speeds in a linear, lateral, and multi-directional fashion (i.e., agility).
- ▶ Maintains stable balanced posture when changing direction at higher speeds, off right and left foot

### **Strength**

**Strength training should intensify at or slightly after PHV. Crucially, injury prevention addresses any imbalances or deficits in motor control.**

- ▶ Able to perform single-joint and a variety of multi-joint exercises with appropriate resistances and correct form.
- ▶ Capable of safely performing appropriate (closed/open chain) exercises using both machine and free weights. Able to perform exercises correctly with Thera-Band and Swiss ball.
- ▶ Able to follow an individualised resistance-training programme and work toward related goals.
- ▶ Demonstrates sound core (i.e., abdominal, and lower back muscle) strength and shoulder/scapula control.

- ▶ Possesses or working to develop acceptable bilateral and antagonist/agonist strength ratios.

### **Power**

**The integration of base muscle endurance and control as a precursor to periodized individualised strength training and injury prevention and improvements in core control and strength are a priority.**

- ▶ Visibly improving vertical jumps and hops.
- ▶ Proficient at horizontal jumping and hopping progressions.
- ▶ Generates higher velocities and covers larger distances in sidearm and over arm medicine ball throws.

### **Endurance**

**Coinciding with or after PHV, concerted endurance training is performed.**

- ▶ Able to complete both specific on-court and off-court endurance training sessions aimed at elevating VO2 max.

### **Multi-sports experience/cross training**

- ▶ Adds a variety to training while also having specific physical transfer to performance.
- ▶ May be prescribed to facilitate recovery.

### **Footwork**

- ▶ Able to cover all balls.
- ▶ Moves effectively to execute and recover from inside-out shots.
- ▶ Visibly improving movement and positioning through approach and to volley.

### **Fitness testing/screening**

Perform a battery of tennis-specific field and laboratory tests at least twice annually.



- ▶ Participates in a physiotherapy screening annually.

### **Ancillary capacities**

- ▶ Individually responsible for warm-ups and cool-downs.
- ▶ Able to follow individualised programming and periodisation for all physical abilities.
- ▶ Meets specific athlete dietary requirements, and follows individualised pre-, during and post-match nutrition and hydration strategies.
- ▶ With the help of the coach, able to develop strategies to recover mentally and physically from intense training and competition.
- ▶ Monitors and is aware of significance of Peak Height Velocity, and the opportunities or windows of trainability that present
- ▶ Keeps daily training and well-being diaries.

### **General movement training**

Three hours per week, specific conditioning 1 hour on-court, 2 hours off-court.

### **Physical Activity Time (PAT)**

12–13-year-olds: 60-70% or 12-14 hours tennis, and 30-40% or 6-8 hours non-tennis per week.

14–15-year-olds: 65-75% or 16-20 hours tennis, and 25-35% or 6-8 hours non-tennis per week.

### **Consider Cardio Tennis as part of the training programme**

See page 25 for more information on Cardio Tennis

## **Technical development**

### **Core Characteristics**

#### **Cement a coordinated link between perception and action.**

- ▶ Better able to perceive and use cues related to player's court position and racquet preparation/swing and beginning to process those related to body alignment.
- ▶ Responds earlier to different ball speeds and spins.
- ▶ Takes a larger number of balls on the rise, off both sides and on return of serve.
- ▶ Able to play behind moving opponent.

#### **Assumes sound support/hitting positions.**

- ▶ Adjusts stance according to tactical intention.
- ▶ Able to hit with increasing velocity off all supports (i.e., two feet, back foot, front foot, outside foot, inside foot)
- ▶ Visible increase in involvement of the lower body in stroke production, especially vertically.
- ▶ Maintains balanced, neutral shoulder-head alignment.

#### **Swing and ball control**

- ▶ Able to hit through as well as around the ball with increasing topspin and speed (e.g., angled groundstroke) and across the ball (e.g., high backhand, inside-out forehand).
- ▶ Displays improving control of half volley and drop shots and able to direct these shots to variable court locations.
- ▶ Able to hold court position and stance to experiment with swing paths to hit groundstroke half-volleys.

#### **Acceptable grips**

**Grips should be well ingrained but here is a reminder.**

**Forehand: Eastern - Semi-Western.**

**One handed backhand:** Eastern backhand.

**Two handed backhands:** Bottom hand in Continental to Eastern backhand, top hand in Eastern forehand to Semi-Western forehand.

**Serve and volleys:** Continental. (High forehand and backhand volleys may shift to Eastern forehand and Eastern backhand respectively).

**Stroke technique provides for enhanced power development, and sound defence.**

- ▶ Able to generate high racquet and ball speeds from balls with little pace.
- ▶ Possesses at least one weapon to dominate the point.

**Serve**

- ▶ Able to increase use of legs and trunk rotation. Displays fully developed coordination chain.
- ▶ Able to hit serves with increased slice and topspin.
- ▶ Capable of readying self quickly after the serve.

**Return of Serve**

- ▶ Displays visibly improving placement and preparation for the next shot.
- ▶ Able to use more open stance returns.

**Forehand**

- ▶ Able to generate or employ greater ground reaction forces and additional shoulder and hip rotation.
- ▶ Capable of loading on outside or back leg to drive forward/upward into the stroke.
- ▶ Exhibits balance and control in leaving the ground.

- ▶ Adjusts preparation to the situation with a variety of footwork options. Robust technique allows for consistent contact points when hitting balls on the rise.

### **Two-handed backhand**

- ▶ Able to use a shorter, higher preparation depending on the grip.
- ▶ Employs preparation and stance appropriate to the situation.
- ▶ Displays consistent stroke pattern and loads increasingly on the back or outside leg to drive forward and upward.

### **One-handed backhand**

- ▶ Better use of hip and shoulder rotation.
- ▶ Higher (amplified) backswing with improved leverage during the forward swing.
- ▶ Preparation appropriate to situation.
- ▶ Able to play backhand slices at different speeds.

### **Volley**

- ▶ Able to volley for depth and angle.
- ▶ Able to cope with balls of different height and thus execute different racquet trajectories
- ▶ Able to lower centre of gravity through active knee bend.
- ▶ Ensures contact point is out in front and to the side, with the weight transferring forward.
- ▶ Exhibits effective use of non-racquet arm to support a compact swing.
- ▶ Uses one-handed backhand volley.
- ▶ Able to play drive volleys precisely (i.e., to different court widths).

## **Smash**

- ▶ Able to smash to position.
- ▶ Able to coordinate footwork to move forward, backward and to the side, to contact ball overhead and out in front
- ▶ Able to perform a smash moving backward.
- ▶ Able to execute a backhand smash.

## **Approach shots**

- ▶ Able to drive and slice approach shots from varying court locations

## **Passing**

- ▶ Able to play topspin forehand and backhand lobs on the run.

## **Tactical development**

### **Core Characteristics**

- ▶ Implements advanced singles tactics in all five game situations.
- ▶ Able to anticipate opponent's shot tendencies based on court position (particularly during baseline play)

### **Develop own game-style.**

- ▶ Able to better use own strengths.
- ▶ Plays specific sequences of shots to achieve desired outcomes.
- ▶ Visibly tries to implement own game-style irrespective of court surface.
- ▶ Able to attack, counterattack and defend against various styles of play.

### **Displays improved decision-making.**

- ▶ Able to adapt during match play to formulate alternate methods, and exploit weaknesses of an opponent.
- ▶ Plays percentages chooses to use certain sequences of shots that provide the best chance to win the point.
- ▶ Chooses appropriate times to vary rhythm or lift tempo.
- ▶ Decides to play behind opponent at the correct time.

**Exhibits developing tennis intelligence.**

- ▶ Able to actively analyse opponent during match play.
- ▶ Able to map out and execute a specific game plan.
- ▶ While developing a game style, recognises the need to sometimes come up with a 'plan B
- ▶ Performs insightful match analysis.
- ▶ Able to adapt to different weather conditions.
- ▶ Able to discount opponent's shot options based on certain technical limitations.
- ▶ Able to interpret basic match statistics.
- ▶ Begins to use video-based simulation training to facilitate decision-making.
- ▶ Understands court geometry.
- ▶ Understands value and need for sustained and deliberate practice of all skills.

**Plays in the five game situations.**

**Serve**

- ▶ Able to use the serve to maximise chances of immediately using own weapon.
- ▶ Uses serve and volley as a viable tactical option.

- ▶ Able to implement specific serve and second shot combinations when serves are directed wide, to the T or at the body.
- ▶ Beginning to disguise serve placement.

### **Return of serve.**

- ▶ Able to anticipate returns based on ball toss and some body cues.
- ▶ Plans and implements different two-shot combinations. Uses best groundstroke (i.e., weapon) to take control of the point on second serves.
- ▶ Capitalises on opportunities to attack first and second serves.
- ▶ Varies the pace/spin of the return in an appropriate fashion.

### **Baseline play**

- ▶ Able to open the court when hitting crosscourt, and inside-out, and correctly decides when to change rally/shot direction.
- ▶ Able to disguise drop shots.

### **Approach the net.**

- ▶ Correctly decides when to vary approach shots with slice and/or drive.
- ▶ Able to hit mid-court and 3/4 court balls to different locations and move to the net to finish the point (i.e., uses specific two-shot combinations).
- ▶ Selectively and correctly decides to hit first volley to position rather than to win the point and able to set up and win points with two volleys.
- ▶ Better able to surprise opponent through the improved ability to synchronise and disguise 'sneak in' (e.g., after a good serve, groundstroke or drop shot that has opponent on the stretch).

### **Passing**

- ▶ Makes better decisions regarding the use of drives or lobs.

- ▶ Able to disguise intent on passing shots (particularly lob).
- ▶ Able to implement two-ball pass combinations.

### **Doubles**

- ▶ Able to serve and volley to a plan.
- ▶ Able to plan and adjust return and second shot combinations.
- ▶ Able to decide and implement poach when both teams are playing one up-one back.
- ▶ Able to make appropriate decisions when playing against different combinations of opponents at the net.
- ▶ Understands and exploits advantages of serving with a high first serve percentage, and playing down the middle.

### **Mental development**

#### **Motivation**

- ▶ Intrinsically motivated.
- ▶ Shows pride in performance.
- ▶ Willing to solve problems and seek answers.
- ▶ Enjoys learning and playing.
- ▶ Displays 100% effort, and desire to impose strengths on an opponent regardless of match score.
- ▶ Sets performance goals (short, medium, and long-term), centred on developing physical, technical, psychological, or tactical skills. Also, able to set and work to specific and measurable long-term outcome goals.

#### **Concentration**

- ▶ Uses specific concentration strategies in practice and in match play.



- ▶ Uses rituals and routines between points and games.
- ▶ Able to maintain or shift concentration when confronted with distractions (e.g., disputes with umpires, noisy crowd, or practice environment, poorly- behaved opponents)

### **Control of thoughts**

- ▶ Displays positive thinking and self-esteem in supportive environments.
- ▶ Experiences and enjoys technical, tactical, physical, or psychological success.
- ▶ Willing to try what has been practiced in gameplay, with a view to achieving performance goals.
- ▶ Uses visualisation to facilitate technical refinement, also 'mental toughness' and tactical skill.
- ▶ Maintains positive body language on-court. Uses power walk.
- ▶ Able to use cognitive reframing techniques (i.e., changing negative self-talk, to positive self-talk).
- ▶ Displays positive approach in sustaining a lead and works to overcome any fear of failure.

### **Emotional Control**

- ▶ Better able to deal with tension and environmental influences on performance during match play.
- ▶ Able to control breathing patterns.
- ▶ Accepts mistakes are part of learning, consequently able to manage mistakes on-court through effective mistake management routines.
- ▶ Understands how arousal is linked to performance, and able to use strategies to approximate optimal performance state.

- ▶ Follows on-court and off-court performance routines, using relaxation and visualization techniques before, during and after practice and matches.
- ▶ Able to deal with the pressures associated with national and international competition.
- ▶ Able to prepare for different environments (e.g., heat, cold, altitude, rain, etc).

### **Other psychological competencies**

- ▶ Self-disciplined and well-behaved in match play and practice.
- ▶ Able to review performance effectively.
- ▶ Demonstrates positive attitude towards learning and is generally optimistic.
- ▶ May show adaptive perfectionist tendencies, but able to accept results and move on.
- ▶ Possesses insightful analytic abilities, understands game-styles, match plans and able to independently detect and correct performance mistakes.
- ▶ Capable of maintaining intensity when training without supervision.
- ▶ Displays greater commitment to tennis.
- ▶ Developing independence through self-preparation for matches (e.g., own warm-up and stretching) and arrangement of own practices
- ▶ Coachable.
- ▶ Competitive
- ▶ Respects and does not underestimate opponent's ability.

### **Personal**

- ▶ Able to separate own self-worth from results in competition or ranking position.
- ▶ Male players should recognise that female athletes may face a problem of femininity versus sport development.

- ▶ Female players should recognise that male athletes may face problems relating performance to masculinity.
- ▶ Displays respect for officials, coaches, and other players and aware of posture and need to make eye-contact with tournament officials and assistants.
- ▶ Enjoys and participates in other sports, social and academic activities outside of tennis when time allows.
- ▶ Able to give a post-match speech, thanking people and speaking positively about opponent.
- ▶ Shows sportsperson-like conduct.
- ▶ Displays sound people skills and appreciative of the resources required to achieve optimal performance.
- ▶ Feels team spirit and a sense of responsibility and 'belonging' in team competitions and in doubles play.
- ▶ Beginning to display leadership skills.
- ▶ Respects cultural diversity.
- ▶ Progressively copes with the changes that accompany puberty.

### **Lifestyle**

- ▶ Is fully aware of the importance of sleep, nutrition, and hydration.
- ▶ Keeps a training and performance log to assist with setting performance goals (short, medium and long-term) and to keep a record of the training programme.
- ▶ Able to effectively manage time.
- ▶ Introduction to planning and periodisation.
- ▶ Well laid out training, competition, and recovery programme to optimise the various training effects.

### **Parental role and support tips**

- ▶ Support children's decision to specialise in tennis.
- ▶ Show great interest in child's sport.
- ▶ Keep winning and losing in a healthy perspective.
- ▶ Positive, yet realistic, in their belief of their child's talents
- ▶ Content to have their children focus solely on school and sport achievement, alleviating any pressure on players to find part-time work
- ▶ Assisting the child in fighting any setbacks that might hinder training progression.
- ▶ Make a financial and a time commitment to their child.
- ▶ Aware of different modes of scholastic fulfilment (e.g., distance education).
- ▶ Help guide child in their potential involvement with player agents.

- ▶ Evaluate what is best for child's tennis and education and reaches an agreement with coach/teachers as to merits of distance education versus continued schooling, versus relocation.
- ▶ Reinforces appreciation of different culture

## **Education**

- ▶ Understands that education is a priority.
- ▶ Participate in school trips where possible.
- ▶ Participate in school sports and inter-school sports where possible.
- ▶ Learns more about sportspersons who have achieved both academic and sporting success.
- ▶ May pursue an interest in a second language (this may help enhance international junior tournament experience).
  - ▶ From teachers - learn academic work ethic, ability to relax effectively, and separation of their sense of identity from tennis.

## **Competition**

### **WTN**

The participants entering this stage should have a well-established World Tennis Number (WTN) and progress accordingly.

### **Competition plan**

- ▶ Periodisation should be planned, featuring three peak performances per year.
- ▶ Presented with the opportunity to participate, on average, in four hours of competition per week.
- ▶ Compete in 20-25 tournaments annually (comprising 4-5 national; 2-3 provincial; 4-6 international; 2-3 team).
- ▶ Players should play 60-70 singles and 30-40 doubles matches annually.
- ▶ '33% rule' should apply - 33% of matches against weaker, comparable, and stronger opponents respectively

## **Phase 5:**

## **The Training to Compete Phase**

## **CULTIVATE**

## **Age: Males 16-18/Females 15-17 years**

*Can I remind you once again that although there is an age reference in all phases, the guide also applies to beginner youths and adults so that they can maximize their capabilities and develop a good base for Lifelong Participation in Sport.*

*It is highly unlikely that players considered to be recreation players will be aspiring to achieve the capacities outlined beyond Phase 3. They may however want to sharpen up their capabilities in some of the capacities recommended in Phases 4, 5 & 6.*

*E.g., mental, or physical capacities, or some improvements in their tactical awareness or add a new technique to their armory.*

## **Level of Coach**

As with the previous phases, the minimum standard coach required to work in this phase can vary depending on whether the players involved are recreational, club or higher-level tournament players.

A level 1 coach will still suffice for the recreation adult and youth players in the clubs depending on what they are looking to improve. While the minimum standard Coach required to work with the best players in this Phase is a Level 4 coach.

A Level 4 Coach has completed the Coaching High Performance Players Course and is qualified to work with and develop players at all levels.

## **Physical development**

### **Motor skills**

- ▶ Able to perform acquired motor skills at higher speeds, whilst maintaining correct form.

### **Fundamental movement skills**

- ▶ Visibly improving throw, jump and hop for distance and speed.
- ▶ Able to maintain correct throwing, catching, jumping, and hopping under/with additional load.
- ▶ Maintains balance on challenging bases of support (i.e. on unstable surfaces) and on all court surfaces

### **Physical proficiency abilities**

- ▶ Maintains balance on challenging bases of support (i.e. on unstable surfaces) and on all court surfaces
- ▶ Able to maintain balance on unstable surfaces with external load.

- ▶ Displays excellent rhythm (or timing) in all striking and movement tasks.
- ▶ Shows fully integrated and near optimal dynamic balance.
- ▶ Able to simultaneously coordinate most motor and fundamental movement skills.

### **Flexibility**

- ▶ Undertakes an individualised stretching programme daily.
- ▶ Able to implement - at appropriate times - dynamic mobility exercises, active and passive static stretching techniques, and PNF stretching. Understands neural desensitization exercises and able to perform as instructed.
- ▶ Able to perform self-administered stretching sessions or participate in yoga or Pilates sessions, where appropriate.

### **Speed/Agility**

Sensitive to improvements post PHV.

- ▶ Able to or visibly working to move efficiently at higher speeds in linear (particularly forward), lateral and multi-directional (i.e. agility) fashions.
- ▶ Able to run to set movement patterns on-court (in practice and in match play).
- ▶ Capable of maintaining movement form when using speed-resisted and speed-assisted training methods.

### **Strength (including injury prevention)**

- ▶ Able to perform all single and multi-joint lifts with appropriate resistances and correct form.
- ▶ Capable of safely performing closed/open-chain exercises using both machine and free weights, with increasing resistances.
- ▶ Able to perform exercises correctly with Thera - Bands, Swiss balls, balance boards and the Pilates reformer with increasing loads.
- ▶ Able to coordinate Olympic lifts with appropriate loads.
- ▶ Able to follow an individualised resistance training programme and beginning to have input into the related goals.
- ▶ Maintains sound core (i.e., abdominal, and lower back muscle) strength and shoulder/scapula control.
- ▶ Possesses or working to develop acceptable bilateral and antagonist: agonist strength ratios.
- ▶ Able to complete RM tests and work to RM ranges or %RM.

## **Power**

- ▶ Visibly improving jumps and hops for distance and height.
- ▶ Generates higher velocities and covers larger distances in sidearm and over arm medicine ball throws.
- ▶ Capable of safely performing contrast or complex training sessions (i.e., loaded repetition followed by unloaded repetition).
- ▶ Able to maintain correct form in performing loaded (through drop height or weight) plyometric exercise

## **Aerobic endurance**

- ▶ Able to complete both specific on-court and off-court endurance training sessions aimed at elevating lactate threshold and VO2 max.
- ▶ Able to use heart rate monitors and RPE scales to monitor workload

## **Anaerobic endurance**

- ▶ Able to tolerate lactate through repetitious high-intensity efforts (on-court and off-court)
- ▶ Able to use heart rate monitors and RPE scales to monitor workload (Rated Perceived Exertion Scale).

## **Multi-sports experience/Cross training**

- ▶ Can add a variety to training, while also having specific physical transfer to performance
- ▶ May be prescribed to facilitate recovery.

## **Footwork**

- ▶ Able to cover and recover from all balls, especially inside-out shots more quickly.
- ▶ Uses feet to allow weapon to be consistently used from 66-75% of the baseline.
- ▶ Visibly improving movement and positioning through approach and to volley.
- ▶ Able to move and jump backward efficiently and effectively to both forehand and backhand smash.

## **Fitness testing /screening**

- ▶ Performs a full battery of fitness tests, including all appropriate laboratory or diagnostic tests, at least twice annually.
- ▶ Participates in annual physiotherapy screenings and regular medical check-ups and receives frequent massage and physiotherapeutic treatment.

### **Ancillary capacities**

- ▶ Individually responsible for warm-ups and cool-downs.
- ▶ Able to follow individualised linear and undulating periodisation for all physical abilities.
- ▶ Better understands and endeavours to implement concept of peaking and tapering.
- ▶ Meets specific athlete dietary requirements, and follows individualised pre-, during and post-match nutrition and hydration strategies.
- ▶ Understands and implements specific carbohydrate loading strategies.
- ▶ Able to make educated food choices when travelling.
- ▶ Able to implement strategies (e.g., hot/cold treatments) to recover physically from intense training, competitions, and airplane travel.
- ▶ Performs more sophisticated self-monitoring, especially of training workloads (e.g. heart rate, RPE scales).
- ▶ Keeps daily training and well-being diaries.

### **Physical Activity Time (PAT)**

- ▶ 65-75% or 16-20 hours tennis and 25-35% or 6-8 hours non-tennis per week.

### **Technical development**

#### ***Core Characteristic - linked perception***

- ▶ Able to perceive cues related to player's court position, racquet preparation/swing and body alignment.
- ▶ Responds earlier to differential ball speeds and spins.
- ▶ Takes a larger number of balls on the rise, off both sides and on returns.
- ▶ Able to better play behind moving opponent (especially from inside-out/inside- in forehand set-up).
- ▶ Able to perceive and more quickly respond to high-speed serves.
- ▶ Able to adjust shot in response to surprise approach to the net (e.g., serve and volley or poaching).

#### **Assumes sound support/hitting positions.**

- ▶ Automated stance/tactical intention relationship.



- ▶ Able to hit with increasing velocity off all supports (i.e., two feet, back foot, front foot, outside foot, inside foot).
- ▶ Optimises use of lower body in stroke production.
- ▶ Maintains balanced, neutral shoulder-head alignment.

### **Swing and ball control**

- ▶ Able to generate appropriate racquet head speed and trajectory to create shorter crosscourt and inside-out angles from on, behind, and in front of the baseline.
- ▶ Able to hit heavy topspin and slice shots and serves, as well as flatten out strokes at high speed.
- ▶ Able to create more acute angles by hitting through the ball, as well as around the ball (e.g., angled groundstroke) and across the ball (e.g., high backhand, inside-out forehand) with increasing topspin and speed.
- ▶ Able to control half-volleys to all court widths and lengths and drop shots to all court widths.
- ▶ Able to hold court position and stance, hitting half-volley ground strokes.

### **Optimising stroke technique (i.e., adding velocity, adaptability to court surface and situation) to compete on the professional tour**

#### **Serve**

- ▶ Possesses a powerful serve.
- ▶ Developed ability for trunk rotations to contribute positively to stroke velocity.
- ▶ Optimal use of legs.
  - ▶ Able to hit serves with increased slice and 'kick'.

#### **Return of Serve**

- ▶ Generates increasing racquet head speeds, and improved differentiation/use of block and drive returns.
- ▶ Better able to adjust body position to deal with body serves.

#### **Forehand**

- ▶ Optimal use of lower body and trunk rotations.
- ▶ Capable of loading on outside or back leg to drive forward/upward into the stroke.

- ▶ Exhibits balance and control when leaving the ground.
- ▶ Adjusts preparation to the situation with a variety of footwork options.
- ▶ Robust technique allows for consistent contact points when hitting on the rise.

### **Two-handed backhand**

- ▶ Able to use a shorter, higher preparation depending on the grip.
- ▶ Employs preparation and stance appropriate to the situation.
  - ▶ Displays consistent stroke patterns and loads increasingly on the back or outside leg to drive forward and upward.

### **One-handed backhand**

- ▶ Fully integrated use of legs and optimal use of hip and shoulder rotation.
- ▶ Higher (amplified) backswing with improved leverage during the forward swing.
- ▶ Preparation is appropriate to the situation.
- ▶ Able to hit open stance backhand returns, passing shots, and higher balls.
- ▶ Able to play backhand slice to position at different speeds and with different trajectories.

### **Volley**

- ▶ Able to volley for depth and angle, inside out and crosscourt.
- ▶ Able to cope with balls of different heights and coordinate grip changes/ footwork accordingly.
- ▶ Manipulates centre of gravity and base of support to maximize net coverage.
- ▶ Ensures contact point is out in front and to the side with the weight transferring forward.
- ▶ Exhibits effective use of non-racquet arm to support a compact swing.
- ▶ Uses one-handed backhand volley.
- ▶ Able to play drive volleys at higher speeds whilst maintaining precision.

### **Smash**

- ▶ Wins points.
- ▶ Able to smash with higher velocities and to position.
- ▶ Able to smash from all court positions.
- ▶ Exhibits increasing control and generates higher racquet velocities with backhand smash.

## **Approach Shots**

- ▶ Able to drive and slice approach shots from varying court locations.

## **Tactical development**

### **Core Characteristics**

- ▶ Able to formulate and implement advanced singles tactics in all five game situations.
- ▶ Able to anticipate opponent's shot tendencies from tactical standpoints (based on court position, racquet preparation and body alignment) as well as technical standpoints (based on technical limitations) - particularly during baseline play and on return of serve.
  - ▶ Able to detect/anticipate preferred plays (i.e., tendencies) by opponents on big points.

### **Develop his/her game-style.**

- ▶ Able to implement preferred game plans on all surfaces.
- ▶ Improving use of individual strengths.
- ▶ Able to serve and immediately attack with preferred groundstroke or volley.
- ▶ Plays sequences of shots to achieve more specific desired outcomes.
- ▶ Better able to attack, counterattack and defend against all styles of play.
- ▶ Able to dictate play, winning or losing on their terms.

### **Displays improved decision-making.**

- ▶ Exploits weaknesses and seizes on hesitation of an opponent in match play.
- ▶ Plays percentages but selects appropriate times to take educated risks.
- ▶ Chooses appropriate times to vary rhythm or lift tempo.
- ▶ Correctly decides to play behind or at opponent.

### **Exhibits a developing tennis intelligence.**

- ▶ Actively analyses an opponent during match play.
- ▶ Able to execute and adapt specific game plans.
- ▶ Can effectively develop and implement a 'plan B'.
- ▶ Performs increasingly insightful match analysis.
- ▶ Able to play in all weather conditions.

- ▶ Completes a tactical logbook, 'scouts' opponents and develops tactics to counter all game styles.
- ▶ Exploits court geometry.
- ▶ Able to interpret the most important and player-specific match statistics (e.g., percentage of errors made when attempting to hit a forcing shot, winning percentage on second serves).
- ▶ Proficient at using video-based simulation training to facilitate decision-making.
- ▶ Understands value and need for deliberate practice of all skills.

### **Play in five game situations.**

#### **Serve.**

- ▶ Able to use serve to provide 'cheap' points.
- ▶ Able to adapt serve (and second shot) strategies - varying placement, spin and speed to enhance unpredictability.

#### **Return-of-serve.**

- ▶ Able to anticipate returns based on the server's body cues.
- ▶ Implements and adjusts different two-shot combinations.
- ▶ Proficient at attacking first and second serves.

#### **Baseline play.**

- ▶ Makes better decisions regarding when to change rally/shot direction.
- ▶ Proficient at disguising drop shots.

#### **Approach the net.**

- ▶ Able to vary approach shots with slice and/or drive.
- ▶ Able to optimise net coverage through understanding of court geometry and opponent's position.
- ▶ Able to win the point with the first volley or with a combination of volleys/ smashes.
- ▶ Increasingly proficient at surprising opponents with 'sneak in' after powerful serves and ground strokes.
- ▶ Correctly decides when and where to hit to, and when to chip and charge.

## **Passing.**

- ▶ Makes better decisions regarding when and where to pass with a drive, lob, or angled dink.
- ▶ Proficient at disguising intent on passing shots.
- ▶ Effectively implements a variety of two-ball pass combinations.

## **Doubles.**

- ▶ Makes appropriate decisions regarding first volley after serve and return.
- ▶ Able to use different serving and returning formations to good effect.
- ▶ Able to implement poach (per reaction, anticipation, and command) as part of any serving or returning formation.
- ▶ Able to use effectively send and receive signals from partner.
- ▶ Plays the percentages well.

## **Mental development**

### **Motivation**

- ▶ Intrinsically motivated.
- ▶ Shows pride in performance.
- ▶ Willing to seek answers and solve problems.
- ▶ Has a love of learning and playing.
- ▶ Displays 100% effort. Equipped with the philosophy of `making opponent earn the point`.
- ▶ Able to independently set and work towards SMARTER performance and outcome goals.
- ▶ Able to formulate tennis-specific and life goals.
- ▶ Motivated to use visualisation to solve tactical problems and enhance self-confidence.

### **Concentration**

- ▶ Individualises use of concentration strategies in practice and in match play.
- ▶ Able to sustain concentration in match play over the course of consecutive tournaments.
- ▶ Adjusts and individualises use of rituals and routines between points and games.

- ▶ Proficient at maintaining or shifting concentration when confronted with distractions (e.g., disputes with umpires, noisy crowd or practice environment, poorly behaved opponent).
- ▶ Able to work in the here and now.

### **Control of thoughts**

- ▶ Displays positive thinking and self-esteem.
- ▶ Experiences and enjoys improvement in technical, tactical, physical, psychological or competitive performance.
- ▶ Willing to try in game play what has been practiced, with a view to achieving performance and long-term outcome goals.
- ▶ Subconsciously maintains positive body language on-court. Uses power walk.
- ▶ Proficient at using cognitive reframing techniques (i.e., changing negative self-talk to positive self-talk).
  - ▶ Displays a positive approach and assertiveness in sustaining a lead.

### **Emotional Control**

- ▶ Proficient at dealing with pressures associated with international competition and regular travel.
- ▶ Able to control breathing patterns.
- ▶ Automates mistake management.
- ▶ Aware of and able to control optimal performance state.
- ▶ Individualised use of on-court and off-court performance routines before, during and/or after practice and matches.
- ▶ Able to prepare for different environments (e.g. heat, cold, altitude, rain) and adapt to unexpected weather changes during match play.
- ▶ Understands and able to use momentum, and able to neutralise opponents momentum.

### **Other psychological competencies**

- ▶ Self-disciplined.
- ▶ Formulates, follows, and reviews match plans and able to independently detect and correct performance mistakes.
- ▶ Demonstrates a positive attitude toward learning and general optimism.
- ▶ Capable of maintaining intensity of training without supervision.
- ▶ May show perfectionist tendencies, but able to accept results and move on.

- ▶ Increasingly independent and responsible.
- ▶ Able to effectively manage time.
- ▶ Maintains a success file.
- ▶ Coachable
- ▶ Optimistic
- ▶ Competitive

## **Personal**

- ▶ Continued personal development.
- ▶ Displays continued respect for volunteers, officials, coaches, and other players. Aware of posture and need to make eye contact with tournament officials and volunteers.
- ▶ Proficient at giving post-match speeches, thanking people, and speaking positively about opponents.
- ▶ Shows sportsperson-like conduct.
- ▶ Appreciative of the resources required to achieve optimal performance, as well as the benefits received from tennis. Willing to give back to the development of young players.
- ▶ Enjoys responsibility and spirit of team competition and doubles play.
- ▶ Displays leadership skills.
- ▶ Able to deal with social problems (e.g., peer pressure, illicit substances).
- ▶ Possesses a support network.
- ▶ Able to speak to and look at interviewers and capable of developing rapport with reporters and reveal personality during interviews.
- ▶ Achieves appropriate balance between school, sport and social activities.
- ▶ Respects cultural diversity.

## **Lifestyle**

- ▶ Individualisation of ancillary supports.
- ▶ Refined self- monitoring.
- ▶ Plan career and sport options.
- ▶ Increased knowledge on hydration and nutrition.
- ▶ Preparation for different environments e.g., heat, cold, rain, altitude.
- ▶ Injury prevention and recovery.
- ▶ Learn how to manage jet lag and cope with extended travel and different diets.
- ▶ Diagnostic tests to identify individual needs of player.
- ▶ Deals effectively with social problems e.g. alcohol, culture, peer pressure, school, jobs.

- ▶ Develop a support network.
- ▶ Awareness of relevant scholarships.
- ▶ Time management, academic/tennis balance.

## **Parental role and support tips**

- ▶ Responds to the various demands and expectations placed on their child by fostering an optimal learning environment, rather than creating new demands or pressures.
- ▶ Keeps winning and losing in a healthy perspective.
- ▶ Content to have their children focus solely on school and sport achievement, alleviating any pressure on players to find part-time work.
- ▶ Assists child to fight setbacks that might hinder training progression.
- ▶ Makes a continued financial and time commitment to their child.
- ▶ Prepared to make sacrifices in their personal and/or family lives to afford the child optimal training conditions, without creating additional pressures.
- ▶ Help guide child in their potential involvement with player agents.
- ▶ Evaluates what is best for child's tennis and education and agrees with child and coach/teachers as to merits of distance education versus continued schooling, versus relocation.
- ▶ Aware of the advantages and disadvantages of university scholarships.

## **Education**

### **Importance of education**

- ▶ Understands that education remains a priority but considers/pursues distance education options.
- ▶ Displays competent computer/internet use for leisure and education.
- ▶ Aware of the advantages and disadvantages of university scholarships.
- ▶ Familiar with the education/self-improvement options developed by the professional tours.
- ▶ May be presented with additional opportunities to refine a second language.

## **Competition**

**WTN**



The participants entering this stage should have a well-established World Tennis Number (WTN) and progress accordingly.

- ▶ Periodised tournament schedule (including surface considerations, prioritisation of events,) with 3-5 annual peak performances planned.
- ▶ Presented with the opportunity to participate in, on average, no less than 5 hours of competition per week.
- ▶ Compete in 20-30 tournaments (comprising 4-8 International juniors, 2-3 National juniors, 4-5 National prize money, 3-5 Futures, 1-4 Challengers WTA/ATP as appropriate, 1-2 Team) annually.
- ▶ Per year, players should play 65-80 singles and 30-45 doubles matches.
- ▶ Girls are more likely to make a more immediate transition to the pro tour. Boys should play 50% age group: 50% above age group or professional/open tennis.

## **Phase 6:**

### **The Training to Win Phase – PERFORM.**

#### **Age: Males 18+/Females 17+ years**

##### **Level of Coach**

Because this phase deals with quality players and those aspiring to be the best they possibly can, the minimum standard coach required to work in this phase is a Level 4 coach.

A Level 4 Coach has completed the Coaching High Performance Players Course and is qualified to work with and develop players at all levels.

##### **Physical development**

###### **Motor and Fundamental Movement Skills**

- ▶ Possesses excellent motor and fundamental movement skills.

###### **Physical proficiency abilities**

- ▶ Displays excellent balance and rhythm.
- ▶ Maintains coordinative proficiency through scheduling appropriate warm-up activities and cross-training initiatives.
- ▶ Able to reprogramme (or belatedly adjust) movement patterns having anticipated incorrectly.

## **Flexibility**

- ▶ Undertakes an individualised stretching program as necessary and on a daily basis.
- ▶ Able to implement at appropriate times - dynamic mobility exercises, active and passive static stretching techniques, and PNF stretching. Able to perform neural desensitisation exercises.
- ▶ Participates in yoga or Pilates sessions when appropriate and/or as desired.
- ▶ Exhibits appropriate levels of muscle and connective tissue flexibility, and joint laxity, such that power development in both stroke and movement production can be maximised.

## **Speed/Agility**

### **Sensitive to improvements post PHV.**

- ▶ Able to move efficiently at higher speeds in linear (particularly forward), lateral and multidirectional (i.e., agility) fashions.
- ▶ Displays optimal dynamic balance.
- ▶ Able to run to set movement patterns at higher speeds on-court (i.e., in practice and in match play).
- ▶ Capable of maintaining movement form and benefit from using speed-resisted and assisted training methods.
- ▶ Able to complete a variety of speed and agility exercises as part of a warm-up.

## **Strength (including injury prevention)**

- ▶ Able to perform all multi-joint, single-joint, closed-chain, and open-chain exercises with appropriate resistances and correct form.
- ▶ Performs Olympic lifts with appropriate loads.
- ▶ Able to safely perform all exercises when unsupervised.
- ▶ If necessary, possesses sufficient strength training knowledge to select mechanically similar exercises based on facilities.
- ▶ Maintains sound core strength (i.e., abdominal, and lower back muscle), and shoulder/scapula control.
- ▶ Continues to monitor and work to acceptable bilateral and antagonist/agonist strength ratios.
- ▶ Able to complete all RM tests and work to RM ranges or %RM.

## **Power**

- ▶ Visibly working toward maximising upper-body and lower-body rates of force development and peak and average power outputs.
- ▶ Capable of safely performing contrast or complex training sessions (i.e., loaded repetition followed by unloaded repetition) and integrating it as appropriate with on-court training sessions when on the road.
- ▶ Maintains correct form in performing loaded plyometric exercise (through drop height or weight).
- ▶ Familiar with analysis tools that provide for quantitative determination of power expression.
- ▶ Able to integrate improvements into stroke production.

## **Aerobic endurance**

- ▶ Completes both specific on-court and off-court endurance training sessions, aimed at elevating lactate threshold and VO<sub>2</sub> max.
- ▶ Uses heart rate monitors and RPE scales to monitor workload.
- ▶ Tolerates lactate through repetitious high-intensity efforts on-court and off-court.
- ▶ Uses heart rate monitors and RPE scales to monitor workload.

## **Multi-sports experience/cross-training**

- ▶ Adds variety to training while also having specific physical transfer to performance.
- ▶ May be prescribed to facilitate recovery.

## **Footwork**

- ▶ Proficient footwork to and from all court positions, and in the execution of all strokes.
- ▶ Uses appropriate footwork to optimise weapon use.

## **Fitness testing/Screening**

- ▶ Performs a full battery of fitness tests, including all appropriate laboratory or diagnostic tests, at least twice annually.
- ▶ Receives regular massage and physiotherapeutic treatment.
- ▶ Receives treatment from select physiotherapists when on the road, and the same physiotherapist when at home.

## **Ancillary capacities**

- ▶ Personally responsible for strength and conditioning programme when travelling.

- ▶ Able to follow individualised linear and undulating Periodisation to maximise (i.e., in preparatory phases) and maintain (i.e., during lengthy competition phases) improvements.
- ▶ Adept at peaking and tapering.
- ▶ Optimises nutrition and hydration.
- ▶ Accustomed to performing physical training on match days.
- ▶ Regularly implement strategies to facilitate physical recovery (e.g. hot/cold treatments).
- ▶ Maintains workload monitoring (i.e. heart rate, RPE scales) and keeps daily training and wellbeing diaries.

### **Physical Activity Time (PAT)**

Entirely individualised, influenced by tournament schedule.

## **Technical development**

### **Core Characteristics**

- ▶ Technical excellence achieved, all skills are robust, and no mechanical flaws exist to jeopardize their performance under stress.
- ▶ Able to develop high racquet velocities (horizontal and vertical) but also able to vary rhythm and manipulate tempo from all court positions and on all surfaces.
- ▶ Able to improvise, irrespective of situation or surface.
- ▶ Able to direct all strokes to all court locations.
- ▶ Able to adapt to all court surfaces.

## **Tactical development**

### **Core Characteristics**

- ▶ Generally, tries to implement the preferred game plan on all surfaces.
- ▶ Optimises use of own weapons.
- ▶ Able to independently formulate, implement, evaluate and, if necessary, adapt advanced singles tactics in all five game situations.
- ▶ Able to effectively adapt tactics to all court surfaces, weather conditions, opponents, and situations (e.g., in the presence of unexpected physical impairment/cramps).

- ▶ Better able to anticipate opponent's shot tendencies from tactical standpoints (based on court position, racquet preparation and body alignment) as well as from technical standpoints (based on technical limitations), particularly during baseline play and on return of serve.
- ▶ Proficient at detecting and anticipating preferred plays (i.e., tendencies) by the opponent on big points.
- ▶ Maintains a scouting diary.

## **Mental development**

### **Complete Mental Performer**

- ▶ Automated, individualised, and effective psychological performance enhancement routines (i.e., for concentration, emotional control, motivation, and control of thoughts) to bring about optimal performance state.
- ▶ Intrinsically motivated.
- ▶ Able to plan and prepare and sets and achieves SMARTER goals (goal dedication and drive).
- ▶ Individualised use of all post-match strategies to optimise practice, match, and tournament performance.
- ▶ Possesses general and sports confidence.
- ▶ Possesses good imagery ability.
- ▶ Able to cope with all the forms of pressure and adversity that are inherent to professional tennis.
- ▶ Able to review mental performance (e.g., monitor lapses in concentration and link to performance outcomes).
- ▶ Able to independently formulate, follow and review match plans, as well as detect and correct performance mistakes.
- ▶ Positive, optimistic, and realistic.
- ▶ Able to accept results and move on.
- ▶ Independent and responsible.
- ▶ Self-disciplined.
- ▶ Able to effectively manage time.
- ▶ Able to maximise resources.
- ▶ Methodical and routine oriented.
- ▶ Self-aware and continues to emphasise self-improvement.
- ▶ Productive training attitude and approach.
- ▶ Competitive.

- ▶ Respects and does not underestimate opponent's ability.

## **Personal development**

- ▶ Able to balance career, relationships, and continued education.
- ▶ Displays continued respect for and deals appropriately with volunteers, officials, coaches, and other players.
- ▶ Proficient in giving post-match speeches and interviews.
- ▶ Increasingly proficient at dealing with the media.
- ▶ Possesses good morals and sportsmanship.
- ▶ Appreciative of the resources required to achieve optimal performance and endeavours to 'give back'.
- ▶ Good teammate.
- ▶ Deals with agents and support network with honesty and integrity.
- ▶ Respects cultural diversity.
- ▶ Full integration of tennis, career, and life goals.

## **Lifestyle**

- ▶ Increased knowledge on all areas of lifestyle.
- ▶ Rest and relaxation – know when and how.
- ▶ Frequent breaks are factored in.
- ▶ Well-developed self-monitoring skills.
- ▶ Well-developed and integrated sport network/structure.
- ▶ Career/sport planning sustained.

## **Parental role and support tips**

- ▶ Supports son/daughter's decision to play full-time professional or varsity tennis.
- ▶ May need to provide extra support and strength of character if there is a slower than expected transition to the top of the professional game.
- ▶ Able to continue financial support of their child, if necessary.

- ▶ Continues to foster an optimal learning environment, rather than creating new demands or pressures.
- ▶ Keeps winning and losing in a healthy perspective.
- ▶ Continues to offer assistance/support during setbacks that might hinder training progression.
- ▶ Continues to help guide child in their involvement with player agents.
- ▶ Equipped to deal with child's decision to move out of the family home.

## **Education**

- ▶ Makes and reviews major decisions on career (tennis) and education.
- ▶ Familiar with mature/age distance education alternatives.
- ▶ Undergoes media training.
- ▶ Displays competent computer/Internet use for leisure and education, as well as to assist skill analysis.
- ▶ Maintains diaries and performs video-based tactical or anticipation training.
- ▶ Participates in education/self-improvement/mentoring options as developed by the professional tours.
- ▶ Refines second language and/or attempts to improve lingual skills.

## **Competition**

- ▶ Periodised tournament schedule (including surface considerations, prioritisation of events) with no less than five peak performances planned.
- ▶ Competes in 30-35 professional tournaments annually.
- ▶ Player should take part in 85-100 singles matches per year.
- ▶ Participation in doubles will be at the discretion of each player and their coach (occasional doubles play may positively transfer to certain aspects of singles performance).

## **Phase 7**

### **The Active for Life Phase – PROMOTE.**

Within this seventh and final stage, there are three types of participants.

The new participant entering at any age.

The recreational participant who is active for life.

And the competitive (or former High Performance) participant who is no longer training or competing professionally, but still enjoys a challenge and wants to compete regularly.

### **Level of Coach**

The minimum standard coach required to work in this phase varies depending on whether the players involved are newcomers, recreational, club or performance players.

### **Physical**

- ▶ Decrease loads.
- ▶ Maintain good healthy habits.
- ▶ Keep active through sports participation.

### **Technical**

- ▶ Retain skills and develop new ones.

### **Tactical**

- ▶ Maintain previously developed skills.
- ▶ Play more doubles.

### **Personal**

- ▶ Reset goals.

### **Lifestyle**

- ▶ Pursue personal and family goals more strongly.
- ▶ Pursue further education/career development.
- ▶ Engagement in administration, coaching, media/PR.
- ▶ Seek transition support, if required.

### **Conclusion**

**The Lifelong Participation part of this pathway** tells us that physical literacy is the foundation for lifelong involvement in physical activity.

According to the framework, if young participants develop physical literacy through the first 3 phases, they have more opportunities for continued involvement in physical activity.



Subsequently, they can choose to stay involved at either recreational level activities, or they may participate in an organised sport of their choice.

Or they may develop capabilities and aspirations to reach the highest level in their sport nationally and beyond.

Physical literacy is important because it increases the likelihood of lifelong involvement in physical activity which improves long-term health and wellbeing by improving the quality of life.

The consequence of under-developing physical literacy on the other hand is withdrawal from physical activity leading to an inactive and unhealthy lifestyle.

**The Long-Term Player Development part of the pathway** is an organised approach by all involved to maximize potential and increase the enjoyment of participants in tennis.

The Model is based on empirically and scientifically relevant information, which indicates when certain capacities may best be developed in participants.

The process looks to develop the individual by covering the tennis specific components of technical, tactical, physical, and psychological areas, whilst intertwining the components of personal, lifestyle, parental, educative, and competitive experiences.

So, using a stage-by-stage approach the document outlines an optimal development plan based on growth, development, and maturation for all individuals to participate in tennis.

## Sources

The Lifelong Participation and Long-term Player Development Pathway was compiled using a variety of resources which are listed below

***Tennis Ireland's Building Pathways***

***Tennis Ireland Long Term Player Development Pathway***

***Lifelong Involvement in Sport & Physical Activity (LISPA) – Sport Ireland***

***Long Term Athlete Development Plan - Tennis Canada***

***Active Start Programme - Sport New Zealand***

***Player Development Matrix - Tennis Australia***

***Active for Life – Raising children who love to move - Canada.***

***The Physical Literacy Handbook for Early Child Educators - Canada***

***The ITF 'Play & Stay Programme – International Tennis Federation***

***The World Tennis Number (WTN) - International Tennis Federation***

***The ITF Academy - International Tennis Federation***

***Youth Clubs in Tennis Clubs – Tennis Ireland***

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