



DEVELOPING TENNIS PLAYERS

Ages 4-11



PLAYER AGE	4-6 YEARS	6-8 YEARS	7-10 YEARS	9-11 YEARS
Court and ball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RED court (36'x18') or smaller • Tape as net • Red foam and red felt ball • Larger ball can be used as a teaching aid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RED court (36' x 18') • 2'9" net or tape as net • Red ball 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ORANGE court (60' x 21') (60'x27' doubles) • 3' net • Orange ball 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GREEN court (78' x 27') (78' x 27' doubles) • 3' net • Green ball
Player-centered environment	Fun, active, relaxed, inclusive, positive with frequent changes of activity	Fun, active, relaxed, inclusive, positive and encouraging with emphasis on learning new skills	Enjoyable, active, inclusive, positive with progressive development of existing and new skill base	Enjoyable, active, inclusive, positive learning and reinforcing of new and existing skills
Coach/ player ratio	1:4	1:6	1:4	1:4-6
Goals to fit stage of development	To develop basic skills of movement, catching, throwing and hitting	To develop athletic skills, technical and game skills for the tennis environment	To develop tennis-appropriate athletic, technical, game and competitive skills	To combine tennis-appropriate technical, tactical, physical and psychological skills for competition

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT				
Athletic development	Running, jumping, hopping, twisting, turning, stopping, starting, static balance, catching with two hands	Agility, dynamic balance, bilateral coordination, skipping, hopping, throwing/tossing and catching away from body with either hand, flexibility, strength.	Agility, dynamic balance, complex coordination, linear speed, speed of coordination, strength, flexibility, footwork.	Agility, dynamic balance, complex coordination, multi-directional speed, strength, core strength flexibility.
Technical development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handling racquet • Increasing understanding of ball flight (height, depth and width) • Hitting on forehand and backhand side • Underhand or overhand serve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handling the racquet • Tracking the ball with increased anticipation of bounce position • Increasing understanding of height, depth and width of ball flight • Basic forehand and backhand (GPS: Grip, Preparation, Swing Path) • Overhand serve (grip, stance, arm action, rhythm, contact) • Service return • Basic volley 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing understanding of pace and spin on ball flight • Forehand and backhand (stance grip, shape of shot, types of spin) • Serve (grip, stance, arm action, rhythm, contact, rotation, types of spin) • Service return: with change of direction • Approach shot to volley • Overhead 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forehand and backhand (racquet speed and change of spin, hit ball at top of bounce or falling) • Serve (stance, speed, spin on second serve, placement to move opponent, hit ball to rise off court) • Service return: hit rising or falling ball • Approach shot to hit high or low volley
Movement	Developing balance in different movement patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forwards, sideways and diagonally forward • Basic recovery movement 	Multi-directional movement including diagonally backwards with loading and recovery	Movement, loading and recovery in all directions
Psychological development	Trying new challenges, effort, following instructions	Concentration, willingness to learn, learning to make choices, respectful, understanding rules, coping with winning and losing, learning to solve problems	Love of the sport, teachability, concentration, problem solving, becoming confident, making choices, learning fairness, taking responsibility	Competitiveness, focus, simple goal-setting, self- motivation, confidence, learning to make decisions, developing self-reliance, understanding winning and losing

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

Tactical development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groundstrokes consistent to different zones of court • Serve consistent into service court • Basic positioning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency of depth • Accuracy to move opponent • Positioning to take ball on fall or on rise. • Developing groundstroke strength 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency of depth with change of pace • Ability to change pace and spin • Serve with accuracy to move opponent • Able to change direction of ball • Positioning and recovery • Developing strengths • Introduce transitioning to net 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency and accuracy of depth with variety of pace and spin • Improved anticipation skills of opponent to increase shot options • Developing understanding of outcome of opponent's actions on ball • Developing strengths: use pace and direction to move opponent • Recognition of opponent's weakness on short ball • Developing ability to control the point
Game development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reactive • Learning to rally, serve and return serve • Able to score with help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reactive to opponent's shots • Able to rally, serve and return serve • Able to score by self 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reactive to opponents shots with improved shot selection • Singles: able to hold the baseline • Doubles: communication, basic positions, use of angles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Singles: increasingly proactive with decision-making • Doubles: changing positions, role of the net player, both players to the net
Social / behavioral development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning to share • Learning to say thank you • Like to be with friends • Are center of their world • Need variety of short, new and familiar activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning to cooperate with and help other children • Learning to consider other people • Learning through familiar activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning to compete against other players • Learning about tennis • Helping other players in the group and sharing • Happy to be with their own gender. Able to help and listen to the coach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respecting partners and opponents, coaches and officials. Can acknowledge others' success. Happy to work with their own gender • Can accept adult opinions as important • Can verbalize opinions /thoughts and can explain well

PRACTICE

Practice format	Small groups	Small groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small groups • Perhaps individual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small groups • Perhaps individual
Length of sessions	30 minutes	45 to 60 minutes	60 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75 minutes group • 30-60 minutes individual
Frequency of sessions	Up to two times per week	Up to 2 sessions with optional additional competition day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group: Up to three times per week • Individual: Once per week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group: Up to three times per week • Individual: Once per week
Other sports and activities	Individual sports and activities that develops agility, balance, coordination, running and sending and receiving skills	Individual and team sports and activities that develops agility, balance, coordination, running and sending and receiving skills	Individual and team sports and activities, with emphasis on enjoyment and skill learning	Individual and team sports and activities, with emphasis on enjoyment and skill learning

COMPETITION

Frequency of competition	Structured, but flexible program	Structured, but flexible program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum 40 competition days per year • Unlimited practice matches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum of 60 competition days per year • Unlimited practice matches
Type of Competition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent and child sessions • Cooperative games 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play Days • Team Tennis • Local competition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Tennis • Local/state competition • Short sets, timed matches and round robins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Tennis • Individual state/sectional competition • 2 out of 3 "short" sets/round robins and compass draws

