

Smart Practice Principles for Juniors

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It is early in the week and you have just suffered a loss, the daunting question is now, what to do for the rest of the week. When this occurs and there is 5-7 days before the next event starts it can be very overwhelming for the coach and particularly the player. The player/coach can also experience frustration that their hard work and hours on court are not paying dividends.

So what is next... so many times the common answer on the junior tour is to get straight back on the practice court and spend even more hours training and hitting balls. However, there is one question that must be addressed:

Is this the best solution to turning around the athlete's success on court?

There are many variables that must be considered with regard to this issue. These need to be discussed between coach and athlete, and it must then be decided which is the best direction to follow.

This presentation will address a number of issues on 'Smart Practice Principles for Juniors'. It will examine the different options the coach has to help prepare their athlete for the rigours of a competitive tennis circuit, whether at a junior or professional level.

The presentation will look at the ability of the athlete to read themselves and how they are feeling physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. It will also:

- Consider variations of training and recovery for the athlete.
- Look at the development of motor patterns of behaviour of the athlete.
- Explain a balance of on court training.
- Discuss the issue of training directly after a match.
- Touch on the prospect of athletes having time off during a tour.

As we have all discussed, the length of the season is too long and injuries and player well being is a major concern. The smart player generally finishes on top, and how you manage yourself on the tour week in and week out will determine your success.

This presentation is not discouraging the athlete and coach to train and to stay off-court, but to oversee the whole programme and make educated choices on how they train and when they train. The ambition of every athlete is to reach his or her goals and to have longevity. The choices the coach and athlete make daily will determine this. Treat yourself and your body with respect, and continue to respect yourself as an individual.