

Understanding the use of Topspin: The Revolution in Player Development from Juniors to Professionals

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INTRODUCTION

The end of the 70's sees the rising of two players that dominate the professional circuit establishing a new format in the technical application of their strokes, their tactical use and the development of the mental and physical aspects in their matches; **Bjorn Borg and Guillermo Vilas**. These players were very successful using **topspin** as the central axis of the technical mastery of their strokes and the tactical basis against their opponent's game. However, previously some players such as Laver or Santana, to name a few, showed its application in specific shots but nobody played with topspin as the central axis of their games. The rest is history, the domination of these players at the end of the 70's and beginnings of 80's resulted in records, which still have not been achieved in pro tennis. Furthermore, these players have had a great influence in the style of the stroke patterns and the game style that has dominated the circuit from then on.

Is the study and understanding of topspin a priority? The answer is yes. Hundreds of players show that countries such as Sweden, Spain and Argentina have more players in the total percentage of participation in the last two decades than many other countries. The key factors to this is related to how the ball is hit, how the game is planned starting with the mastery and control of the ball trajectory and the key use of topspin.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In Argentina we have conducted several studies that show how the learning of the mastery and control of the ball trajectory by generating combinations in: *angle, depth, direction, height, intensity, power, and effect combination*; together with the application of principles and tactical factors that produce: *more consistency, higher error margin, more mistakes from the opponent, more alternatives for winning points, mental and physical tiredness*; will lead to tangible and continuous results.

This topspin mastery is created from the knowledge of: *application of lineal and angular force, variation in the resting points of the stroke, use of the different hitting axis, combination of intensities, use of different body loads*; all according to a tactical decision and to its practice.

It is clear and evident when observing the game, that topspin with all its potential combinations has been transformed in to the basis of player development from early ages, and its use to increase the potential to become a pro player is a point to be discussed.



CONCLUSIONS

We need to consider the factors that should be incorporated in to the training programme of young players in order to help them incorporate the maximum number of variables that generate the mastery of multiple trajectories to increase their game.

The example of today's players shows that the players of tomorrow will have a higher number of shots under their control. But then, what to work on and how to do it? These are the questions that we will try to answer in this presentation.