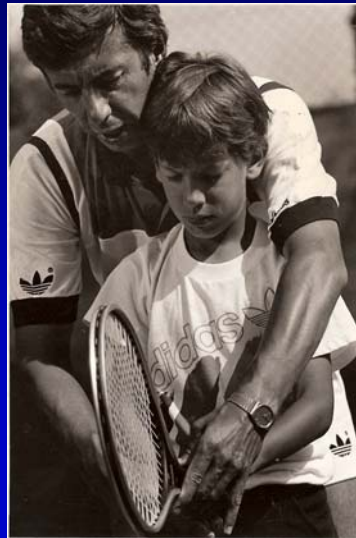


Talent Identification

by Frank Zlesak



Talent Identification

What is TALENT?

Qualities which are:

- quite inevitable, i.e. necessary to succeed in tennis
- more or less in-born
- very difficult to build-up (create) and improve by training

Talent Identification

MOTORIC QUALITIES
(neuro – motoric)

Vital importance for acquiring tennis skills

Talent Identification

1/ HIGH LEVEL OF CO-ORDINATION

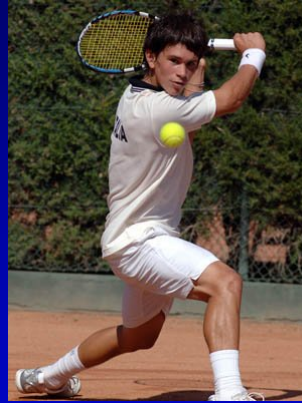
- Important for:
- rapid and easy motoric learning
 - better solving of difficult (extreme) situations (emergency situations)
 - good court coverage
 - economy of stroke production and movement
- Level of co-ordination can be partly improved only on long term basis through variety of sports (general co-ordination) and by very variable tennis practice (specific co-ordination)
 - Difficult to test (watch them how they perform in other sports)

Talent Identification

Signs of co-ordination:

Well co-ordinated players:

- play economically
- their strokes are fluent
- get power effortlessly
- learn serving without problems
(1st test of co-ordination)



Talent Identification

2/ HIGH LEVEL OF GENERAL SPEED

- one of pre-conditions for specific speed, i.e. good court coverage

(together with co-ordination, quick reaction, sufficient explosive power, anticipation, good perception skills, proper footwork, knowledge of court geometry)



Talent Identification

3/ LOW GENERAL MUSCLE TENSION

- Important for effective and economic hitting skills (biomechanically power is summation of joints' forces)
- Better lower than higher general muscle tension
- Difficult to influence
- Pressure makes things even worse

Signs of low general muscle tension:

loose, elegant, effortless strokes, well used co-ordination chain, "shot makers"

Talent Identification

4/ PERCEPTION SKILLS

- perception
- anticipation
- quick reaction



Signs of good perception skills:

- players with good perception skills seem to have more time than others
- good contact with the ball – almost no mishits

Talent Identification

5/ SUITABLE FIGURE (SOMATOTYPE)

- A tall, slim figure is a great advantage – it helps to:
 - cover the court (and the net) more easily
 - hit harder
 - such players play more economically
- Not only tall enough, also “sporty” legs (not “X” legs)
- Good body posture (vertical axis)

Signs:

- good vertical axis when moving
- how their parents look like

Talent Identification

OTHER MOTORIC (NEURO-MOTORIC) QUALITIES:

- **BALANCE**
- **AGILITY**
- **FLEXIBILITY**



Talent Identification

MENTAL QUALITIES

Decisive for implementing tennis skills

Talent Identification

1/ ABILITY TO PERFORM WELL UNDER PRESSURE

- ability to play better in matches than in practice
- pressure stimulates the players to play up to their limits
- natural born performers (x chokers)

2/ FIGHTING SPIRIT

- never giving up

3/ ATTITUDE

- self-motivation, self-drive

Talent Identification

5/ LOVE FOR TENNIS

- for all aspects of the game (travelling etc.)

6/ COMPETITIVNESS

7/ WILL TO IMPROVE



Talent Identification

8/ ABILITY TO WORK HARD

9/ ABILITY TO CONCENTRATE FOR A LONG PERIOD OF TIME

10/ PERSONALITY

11/ SELF CONFIDENCE

Talent Identification

11/ AWARENESS OF TACTICAL SITUATION

- sense of the game, intuition

Watch out! Most of these qualities may change in puberty!

Talent Identification

SIGNS OF TOP 10 PLAYERS u.16

- power (speed) higher than others but still consistent
- better use of the whole court (they play closer to the lines)
- shot makers (winning points themselves)
- good court coverage (thanks to excellent perception skills and anticipation)
- decision making (correct+fast)
- self-confidence

CONCLUSION:

- continuous process
- watch players under pressure (in important matches)
- all “qualities” must have level high enough (average is not enough) and some qualities must be excellent

Talented players need “proper” coaches:

- empathy, psychological skills
- specific knowledge of tactics, fitness, effectiveness of the game
- co-operative
- personality
- integrity
- positive

Thank You

Any questions...?