

Why Tennis?

Research has shown that tennis is one of the healthiest, least injurious sports people can play. It builds self-confidence and self-esteem. It teaches self-discipline, self-reliance and respect for others. But, above all, it provides a good way of performing physical exercise whilst having fun. It is a sporting activity that can be played for life. It has many benefits from a physical and mental standpoint. On the physical side, it helps to build aerobic fitness, speed, co-ordination/agility and upper and lower body strength. From a psychological point of view it teaches many vital lessons for life:-

- Ability to deal with adversity/stress
- Importance of discipline/work ethic
- Ability to win with grace/lose with honour
- How to problem solve
- Importance of sportsmanship/fair play
- How to develop independence/accept responsibility for actions.
- Importance of team work (doubles)
- The social/interaction skills necessary for life

Affiliation Motive

The affiliation motive is the strongest and most common reason for continued participation in sport. Working as a unit, setting goals together, having fun with others, feeling appreciated by a group, and sharing with others can all help satisfy the desire for meaningful interaction. Sport gives people a rare opportunity to make decisions about what they are going to do and to deal with the consequences in a non-threatening situation.

Children in Sport

The way in which children perceive and evaluate themselves is one of the most important factors that determine their choice of activity, and their level of motivation to participate in that activity. A child's level of self-confidence in sport will determine the amount of effort and persistence exerted in adverse conditions. High levels of tennis confidence will contribute to a child's overall self-esteem (sense of personal worth).

Role of a Tennis Coach

The role of a coach is to teach, train, instruct and help people to learn new skills thus enabling them to improve performance and reach their potential. It is also about recognising, understanding and providing for the social, emotional and personal needs of others. Adopting a positive management style is another important step in being a proactive coach and helping players form a positive self image. It is important to remember that some people are quicker learners than others. We need to give them time to try things, to practice skills, to show what they can do well. Showing players that you have confidence in their ability to take on and master tasks will infuse in them a positive mental attitude.

Change is never easy

Our different perceptions of the world make it difficult to bring about change. We have beliefs that are deeply embedded in us from a very early age. We learn to protect what we consider to be the best option rather than look at the alternatives. Most of our actions are based on assumptions that are proven to be incorrect. It is important to understand both on and off court that mistakes and errors are a natural part of the learning process, and not signs of failure.

I hope that this article that I have put together is of some use to you. From a personal perspective the most important thing in tennis is to enjoy it. Try to focus in the present and not to be too worried about the outcome. When playing a game believe in yourself or you will let fear control your game. Practice your serve as much as possible as it is such an important aspect of the game. Enjoy your experience each time you step onto a court.

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