

# **THE LTA LONG TERM PLAYER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

## **Detailed Training Content from Mini Tennis to Academies 6 – 16 years**

*Updated July 2003 – copyright LTA Coach Education*

### **FUNDamentals Stage**

#### **Boys and Girls 6-7-8 years**

#### **Mini Tennis Red/Orange**

Structured and flexible programme (not periodised).

A total of 6 hours per week of tennis training, team and fun matches, co-ordination etc and other Sports with amounts as follows:

3.5 hours other sports

1.5 hours tennis

1.5 hours co-ordination and ABC's

30 minutes speed

### **PHYSICAL SKILLS**

#### **▪ GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- Structure the session - know what you are going to do next
- Cater for individual differences - some children may not be able to do everything so work with the players you have in front of you, not what you think they should be able to do
- BUT you need to develop their basic skills
- 9 year olds will do things better than 6 year olds
- The lack of one skill will detract from the rest so try to develop all of them
- Take a holistic approach - they are children first who happen to be learning tennis
- Physical work and skills underpin technical and tactical work so it is vital
- If time is short in a lesson, do the right % of physical work in relation to the total time - DON'T leave it out to save time
- Sometimes an exercise will tackle several physical issues at once but you should know what each can achieve
- Concentration is helped by a good warm up and by doing activities in a line
- The warm up 'settles' the session and sets the work ethic
- Development of speed has the highest rate of injury so the children MUST be physically prepared to do it
- Work on the idea of the children learning an 'easy 8' exercises in each section
- Mini Tennis coaches are setting the baseline for future performance - so keep reminding the children how certain abilities and exercises relate to tennis.
- It should be FUN to learn these skills which are FUNDamental so enjoy it and join in yourself
- QUALITY IS VITAL

#### **▪ WARM UP (3 to 10 MINUTES)**

##### **General warm up**

Children in a line facing the net, doing all activities moving across the court.

- Side skips, pushing off the outside leg
- Forwards jog, backwards return
- Sideskip, swinging arms to side and over head, turn every 3 steps, clap over head

- Crossovers
- Skipping without ropes forwards with and without arms, low knees, high knees
- Swimming using arms, then backstroke back
- Jog, wiggling elbows
- Walk, twisting hips over forward leg

Repeat each activity minimum x 2 and maximum 6 court widths

### **Dynamic Flexibility (not Static Stretching)**

Children in semi circle. Do exercises in a logical order - e.g. from head down.

- Feet apart, circle each arm forwards, then backwards - minimum 5 turns
- Bring in trunk with arm swings - forwards and backwards
- Hands together, push arms up straight above head, then push forwards, then back, arching back
- Swing arms in opposite directions (teach using clock and do slowly at first) - use trunk
- With feet apart, twist and turn transferring weight
- Hula hoop
- Loosen hips - swing legs alternately around hips - helps balance and stretches muscles down outside of leg. Swing legs inwards and outwards. Use arms as well
- Feet wide apart, hands behind back, lunge sideways, lunge forwards, use both legs
- Hamstring stretch and Quad pulls

## ▪ **ABC's – to teach players the basic skills with quality movement**

### **Running - develops body awareness**

- Teach children to run properly - eyes forward, head level and up, without arms and then with arms (arms dictate speed of legs)
- Hands behind back, slow run
- Running with high knees
- Running with arms straight
- Arms bent - hands to go no higher than shoulder

### **Throwing - develops co-ordination chain**

- Throw large ball in pairs, overhead with 2 hands thrown from chest, over head backwards,
- Throw ball single handed - alternate hand
- Turn and throw

### **Jumping (beginning of developing power - basis of simple plyometrics for later)**

- Hopping with 1:5 recovery time - one leg and then other leg
- Jumping over very low bars in lines and squares - forwards, sideways, one foot, both feet, splits in variety of combinations
- Single jumps, jumps with turns,
- In and out of hoops with single feet and double feet
- Frog jump
- Hop, skip and jump
- Clock jumps

### **Skipping - for rhythm, balance and footwork**

Ensure length of rope is correct - tops of handles to chest. 5 progressions:

- Simple running action

- Hopping action
- Sideways
- Backwards
- High knees

### **Balance**

- Walk with bean bags - on head with hands behind back, then with bag on head and one on each arm, slowly at first and then faster
- Balance bean bag on each foot, flick up onto head and then over head onto neck
- Stand on one leg and move arms around
- Stand on one leg with eyes closed, moving arms around

### **Agility**

- Move quickly around cone, forwards and backwards, sideways
- Figure 8 around cones running and then with football or tennis ball
- Moving around 2 cones and a hoop
- Moving around hoops with partner opposite
- Zig zag between poles

### **Body awareness**

- Sliding
- Gliding

- **SPEED** - for Girls age 6 and Boys 7 develop the PC system (not lactate); develop reaction speed, speed of co-ordination and linear speed. Quality of movement is vital. Recovery time vital in work/rest ratio of 1:5.

### **Preparation for Speed work** (this also develops balance, co-ordination and rhythm)

- Walk tall on toes, then on heels - forwards and backwards
- Bouncing from heel to toe and toe to heel whilst moving forwards
- Push off up onto toes walking
- Skipping, bouncing higher forwards and backwards, then using arms to get higher
- Sideways walking, bend leg, then stretch
- Hands behind back, bum flicks, forwards, backwards and sideways
- 2 Steps then flick, 2 steps then flick (other leg) - get rhythm, do slowly then speed up

**Race (is Speed))** to get 100% effort. Children in teams, race for 5 seconds and rest for 25 seconds. Move children in straight lines. At AGE 6 baseline to service line and back to team on full size court will take 5 seconds.

### **Reaction Speed**

- In pairs, variety of exercises, hands together, touching other hands, dropping balls etc
- Throwing ball against wall for reactive speed, agility and balance
- Drop balls or bean bags for partner to catch before they hit the ground
- Spaz ball
- Balls on elastic

- **STRENGTH**

- Wiggly worms on arms
- With large ball, swing to side, then from low to high

- Big steps – forwards, backwards and sideways
- Walk with hip twists, forwards and backwards
- Hop scotch
- Split jumps sideways and forwards

▪ **CO-ORDINATION**

Many exercises will incorporate co-ordination, but additionally:

- In pairs, throw balls to each other, changing ball to other hand before throwing. Start with 1 ball and then move up to 4.
- In pairs, side skipping, clapping hands together high and then low as move across court
- Juggling bean bags
- Bounce football on spot, alternate hands, on move, along straight line, forwards and backwards
- Catching 2 hands, 1 hand, on spot and move off the wall
- Swedish hand ball with small ball or with large ball
- Dodge ball
- Balloon ball
- Throw ball with Swiss ball

▪ **COOL DOWN**

**Static Stretching**

- Arm stretches
- Trunk rotation
- Holding side step
- Quad stretch

**Calm Down**

- Roll ball to stop on opposite side line

- **OTHER BALL SPORTS** - hockey, basketball, netball, soccer and rugby to help develop ABC'S, speed and endurance
- **OTHER ACTIVITIES** - swimming, dancing, cycling, gymnastics - to help develop ABC's
- **ANCILLARY SKILLS**
  - Hydration - teach children to take fluid regularly, before, during and after practice
  - Nutrition - to begin ideas of food and mealtimes which will help them play better

**TACTICAL AND TECHNICAL SKILLS (through game based coaching and simple decision making)**

▪ **TACTICAL**

- Singles - 3 games situations of:
  - Serve
  - Return
  - Both on baseline
- Basic singles tactics of:
  - Ball over and in (consistency)
  - Moving player (accuracy)

- Basic ready position and court positions to contact ball

## ▪ TECHNICAL

### **General Requirements**

- Learning ball characteristics:
  - Reaction
  - Perception
  - Simple anticipation of incoming ball
- Concept of ball hit in 3 ways:
  - After bounce
  - Before bounce
  - From hand
- Control of ball speed in all three ways
- Basic actions and shapes of strokes
- Basis of footwork up to and around the ball, especially forwards which is more difficult
- Good posture with weight moving forwards to ensure contact and balance - head still

### **Forehand**

Simple action of a long stroke, which has:

- Preparation, to simple loop
- Smooth transition from take back to forehand swing
- Consistent contact point to side and in front
- Simple follow through

### **Backhand**

Simple action of a long stroke, which has:

- Preparation, to simple loop
- Smooth transition from take back to forehand swing
- Consistent contact point to side and in front
- Simple follow through

### **Forehand and Backhand Volley**

- Short stroke
- Racket head above wrist
- Forward punch/block contact

### **Underarm Serve**

Sideways, swing action, to get rally started

### **Overarm Serve**

Simple action for those able beginning with overarm throw especially for girls

### **Grips**

- FOREHAND - semi-western
- BACKHAND - (encourage single and double)
  - Single - eastern backhand
  - Double - bottom hand in eastern backhand, top hand eastern forehand

## **MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL**

- Principle of FUN
  - Learning new skills

- Learning to work with and help other players - co-operation in pairs and in a team
- Responding to new challenges - willingness to learn
- Learning to do things well
- Willingness to learn and solve problems
- Understanding of tennis environment
- Learning about the game
  - Rules
  - Simple scoring
  - Respect for other players and coaches
  - Saying thank you and offering congratulations to others
  - Learning to practise

### **MATCHPLAY**

- Through team and FUN challenges
- Simple, scored games (relate to age group scoring)

## **FUNDamentals Stage**

### **Boys and Girls 7-8-9 years**

### **Mini Tennis Orange/Green**

Structured and flexible programme (not periodised)

A total of 9 hours per week of tennis training, team and fun matches, co-ordination etc and other sports with amounts as follows:

3.5 hours other sports

2.5 hours tennis

2 hours co-ordination including ABC's

1 hour speed

## **PHYSICAL SKILLS**

### **▪ GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- Structure the session - know what you are going to do next
- Cater for individual differences - some children may not be able to do everything so work with the players you have in front of you, not what you think they should be able to do
- BUT you need to develop their basic skills
- 9 year olds will do things better than 6 year olds
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- Concentration is helped by a good warm up and by doing activities in a line
- The warm up 'settles' the session and sets the work ethic
- Development of speed has the highest rate of injury so the children MUST be physically prepared to do it
- Work on the idea of the children learning an 'easy 8' exercises in each section
- Mini Tennis coaches are setting the baseline for future performance - so keep reminding the children how certain abilities and exercises relate to tennis.
- It should be FUN to learn these skills which are FUNDamental so enjoy it and join in yourself
- QUALITY IS VITAL

### **▪ WARM UP (3 to 10 MINUTES)**

#### **General warm up**

Children in a line facing the net, doing all activities moving across the court.

- Side skips, pushing off the outside leg
- Forwards jog, backwards return
- Side Skip, swinging arms to side and over head, turn every 3 steps, clap over head
- Crossovers
- Skipping without ropes forwards with and without arms, low knees, high knees
- Swimming using arms, then backstroke back
- Jog, wiggling elbows
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Repeat each activity minimum x 2 and maximum 6 court widths

### **Dynamic Flexibility (not Static Stretching)**

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- Feet wide apart, hands behind back, lunge sideways, lunge forwards, use both legs
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### ▪ **ABC's - to teach players the basic Skills with quality movement**

#### **Running - develops body awareness**

- Teach children to run properly - eyes forward, head level and up, without arms and then with arms (arms dictate speed of legs)
- Hands behind back, slow run
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- Arms bent - hands to go no higher than shoulder

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- Throw ball single handed - alternate hands
- Turn and throw

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- Hopping with 1:5 recovery time - one leg and then other leg
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Ensure length of rope is correct - tops of handles to chest. 5 progressions:

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### **Balance**

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- Moving around 2 cones and a hoop
- Moving around hoops with partner opposite
- Zig zag between poles

### **Body awareness**

- Sliding
- Gliding

- **SPEED** - for Girls age 8 and Boys 9 develop the PC system (not lactate); develop reaction speed, speed of co-ordination, linear and changing direction speed. Quality of movement is vital. Recovery time vital in work/rest ratio of 1:5.

#### **Preparation for Speed work** (this also develops balance, co-ordination and rhythm)

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- **COOL DOWN**

- Static Stretching**

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    - Trunk rotation
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- Calm down**

- Roll ball to stop on opposite side line

- **OTHER BALL SPORTS** - hockey, basketball, netball, soccer and rugby to help develop ABC'S, Speed and endurance

- **OTHER ACTIVITIES** - swimming, dancing, cycling, gymnastics - to help develop ABC's

- **ANCILLARY SKILLS**

- Hydration - teach children to take fluid regularly, before, during and after practice
  - Nutrition - to begin ideas of food and mealtimes which will help them play better

**TACTICAL AND TECHNICAL SKILLS (through game based coaching and simple decision making)**

- **TACTICAL**

- Singles - 4 Games Situations of:
    - Serve
    - Return
    - Both on baseline
    - Movement to the net
  - Combination of serve and return
  - Basic singles tactics of:
    - Consistency
    - Accuracy
    - Basic ready position
    - Court positions to contact ball
    - Develop ability to move opponent about using width and length of court

Doubles - understanding of different player roles, team play

## ▪ TECHNICAL

### **General Requirements**

- Understanding of ball characteristics
  - Reaction
  - Perception
  - Simple anticipation of incoming ball
- Preparation for shot especially (after serve) - split step
  - Control of ball speed in all three ways of hitting
  - Control of ball placement to move player about
  - Ability to regain own position on baseline through good recovery
  - Learning difference between attack and defence
  - Basic actions and shapes of strokes
  - Developing basis of footwork up to and around ball, especially forwards which is more difficult
  - Using open and closed stance on ground strokes linked to grip
  - Have good posture with weight moving forwards to ensure good contact and balance - head still

### **Forehand**

Simple action of a long stroke that has:

- Preparation with shoulder turn
- Racket at a comfortable distance for the player
- Possibly a semi open stance
- Simple loop with forward swing from low to high
- Consistent contact point to side and in front
- Longer follow through with actual final point dependent on ball hit
- Beginning to move round backhand

### **Backhand - 2 handed**

Simple action of a long stroke that has:

- Usually straight or loop take back
- Trunk rotation
- Hands work together as one
- Front foot angled down court

### **Backhand - 1 handed**

Simple action of a long stroke that has:

- Loop take back
- Both arms working
- Shoulder turn on take back
- Forward rotation on contact,
- Contact in front
- Follow through over shoulder

### **Forehand and Backhand Volley**

- Short stroke
- Racket head above wrist
- Trunk rotation
- Footwork
- Body weight towards ball
- Forward punch/block contact with racket head moving from high to low

### **Serve**

- Basic starting position sideways, feet shoulder width apart,
- Continental grip,
- Rhythmic
- Co-ordinated a basic action with correct shape
- Small knee bend after basic action has been learnt
- High contact point,
- Follow through across body

### **Return of Serve**

- Good court position
- Basic footwork

### **Grips**

- FOREHAND - semi-western
- BACKHAND - (encourage single OR double)
  - Single - eastern backhand
  - Double - bottom hand in eastern backhand, top hand eastern forehand
- FOREHAND AND BACKHAND VOLLEY - basic with little grip change
- SERVE - continental with finger spread

### **MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL**

- Principle of FUN when learning
  - 100% effort
  - Enjoying learning, training, playing
  - Simple goal setting
  - Learning to work with and help other players - co-operation/teamwork in pairs and in a team
  - Responding to new challenges
  - Learning to do things well
  - Learning to concentrate
  - Problem solving
  - Learning to be independent
  - Working with less able players
- Learning about the game
  - Importance of Rules and fairness
  - Simple scoring
  - Respect for other players and coaches
  - Saying thank you and offering congratulations to others
  - Learning to try what has been practised
  - Learning to win and lose
  - Learning about world class players and events

### **MATCHPLAY**

- Through team and FUN challenges
- Simple, scored games in team tournaments

### **MATCHES PER YEAR**

20 in relation to age group scoring

## Learning to Train Stage

**Boys 10/11 years Girls 9/10 years**

**Years 1 and 2**

### Year 1

Training (tennis, practice matches, physical work, other sports) time 12 hours per week

Maximum length of training sessions 2 hours

3.5 hours other sports per week

4.5 hours tennis

2 hours co-ordination

1.5 hours speed

0.5 hours flexibility

### Year 2

Training (tennis, practice matches, physical work, other sports) time 15 hours per week

Maximum length of training sessions 2 hours

3 hours other sports

5 hours tennis

2 hours co-ordination

2.5 hours speed

1 hour strength

1.5 hours flexibility

## **PHYSICAL SKILLS**

- **CO-ORDINATION, footwork, agility and movement**
  - Athletic skills - running, jumping, skipping, throwing, catching
  - Co-ordination drills complex
  - Balance (static and dynamic - head still, control of C of G, movement and footwork (to move sideways, forward, backwards and diagonally)
  - Footwork drills - specific movement patterns to the ball and for recovery
  - Taught on the Tennis court, often with racket and ball. Children to become used to longer distance of court
  
- **SPEED**
  - PC system (not lactate) (recovery 1:5); reaction speed, speed of co-ordination, linear / multi directional speed, specific tennis drills
  
- **STRENGTH**
  - Own body weight, core stability
  
- **ENDURANCE**
  - Developed through playing other sports - soccer, netball etc
  
- **FLEXIBILITY**
  - Stretching at beginning of warm up to be dynamic
  - Work as regular routine in tennis context

*Resources    Fit Minis video  
                  Fit Kids video*

- **OTHER SPORTS** - hockey, basketball, netball, soccer and rugby to help develop co-ordination, speed and endurance

- **OTHER ACTIVITIES** - swimming, dancing, cycling, gymnastics - to help develop balance and co-ordination
- **ANCILLARY SKILLS**
  - Warm up
  - Cool down
  - Hydration
  - Nutrition

**TACTICAL AND TECHNICAL SKILLS (through game based coaching and simple decision making)**

- **TACTICAL**
  - Singles - 5 games situations of:
    - Serve
    - Return
    - Approaching the net
    - Opponent at the net
    - Both on baseline
  - Hitting to depth, opening the court, using width with crosscourt
  - Playing to own strength
  - Attacking opponent's weakness
  - Recovery shots - lob
  - Playing early ball - moving into court
  - Using short ball and angles
  - Different serve and return situations
  - Sequences of shots - e.g. approach, volley, smash; lob, approach
  - Doubles
    - Moving quickly to the net when possible after weak serve
    - Defining individual roles
    - Developing spin serve

- **TECHNICAL**

**General Considerations**

- Reaction speed, perception and anticipation of incoming ball,
- Preparation for shot especially (after serve) - split step
- Sound and appropriate footwork - emphasis on quality
- Control of ball speed in all three ways of hitting
- Control of ball placement to move player about
- Ability to regain own position on baseline through good recovery
- Learning difference between attack and defence
- Basic strokes sound and at higher tempo and power base

**Forehand**

- Long stroke,
- Increased rotation and shoulders open
- Racket at comfortable distance for the player
- Open or closed stance possible
- Simple high loop with forward swing from low to high to increase racket head speed
- Contact point to side and in front
- Longer follow through with actual final point dependent on ball hit
- Beginning to move round backhand

- Learning spin

### **Backhand - 2 handed**

- Straight or loop take back
- Trunk/shoulder rotation
- Hands work together as one
- Front foot angled down court

### **Backhand - 1 handed**

- Loop take back
- Both arms working
- Shoulder rotation on take back
- Forward rotation on contact
- Contact in front
- Follow through over shoulder
- Ensure good co-ordination

### **Forehand and Backhand Volley**

- Short stroke
- Racket head above wrist
- Trunk rotation
- Footwork and body weight towards ball
- Forward punch/block contact with racket head moving from high to low

### **Serve**

- Develop use of spin on second serve
- Increased rotation of hip and shoulders
- Increased knee bend to help rotation and co-ordination
- Landing on front foot
- Ability to place at centre, body and side in both courts

### **Return of Serve**

- Good court position for first and second serves
- Basic footwork
- Return deep to either side
- Compact action for faster serves

### **Additional Strokes**

As basic shapes:

- Drive volley
- High volley
- Drop shot
- Smash

**Grips** - to allow development of racket head speed as player develops

- FOREHAND - semi-western
- BACKHAND - (encourage single OR double)
  - Single - eastern backhand
  - double - bottom hand in eastern backhand or continental, top hand eastern forehand (consider some changes Boys/Girls - Girls to semi on top hand and to deal with high balls)
- FOREHAND AND BACKHAND VOLLEY - basic (continental or eastern) with some grip change possible
- SERVE - continental with finger Spread

## **MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL**

- Principle of FUN when learning
  - Personal (intrinsic) motivation to play
  - Enjoying learning, training, playing
  - Simple goal Setting
  - Developing independence - own warm up and stretching
  - Learning to work with and help other players - co-operation/ teamwork in pairs and in a team
  - Responding to new challenges
  - Learning to do things well
  - Learning to concentrate
  - Beginning to use rituals and routines between points and games
  - Developing self confidence (not arrogance)
  - Working with less able players
- Learning about the game
  - Importance of Rules and fairness
  - Respect for other players, coaches and officials
  - Good behaviour on court and in practice
  - Saying thank you and offering congratulations to others
  - Learning to try what has been practised
  - Learning to react constructively when loses point
  - Learning to win and lose
  - Pleasure at winning

## **MATCHPLAY**

- Inter and intra club singles
- Abbreviated and full scoring
- League matches
- County and regional tournaments

**COMPETITION WEEKS PER YEAR**  
**MATCHES PER YEAR**

**Year 1** 2x4 weeks  
**Year 1** 40

**Year 2** 2x6 weeks  
**Year 2** 40

## Learning to Train Stage

### Boys 12 years Girls 11 years

### Year 3

Training (tennis, practice matches, physical work, other sports) time 18 hours per week

Maximum length of training sessions 2 hours

2.5 hours other sports

7.5 hours tennis

2 hours co-ordination

2.5 hours speed

1 hour strength

1.5 hours flexibility

1 hour endurance

### **PHYSICAL SKILLS (all to be related to player's bio-logical age)**

- **CO-ORDINATION, footwork, agility and movement**
  - Athletic skills - running, jumping, skipping, throwing for serve, catching to learn soft hands
  - Co-ordination drills complex
  - Balance (static and dynamic) with movement 4-6 times per week
  - Footwork drills - specific movement patterns to the ball and for recovery
- **SPEED**
  - PC System (not lactate) (recovery 1:5)
  - Reaction speed
  - Speed of co-ordination
  - Linear / multi directional speed
  - Specific tennis drills
  - Acceleration
  - Short sprints
- **STRENGTH**
  - Own body weight
  - Learning movement patterns with light bars
  - Develop large muscle groups
  - Core stability
  - Shoulder stability
- **ENDURANCE**
  - Work rest ratio of 1:1
  - On court and off court
  - In other sports
  - Able to work sub maximally 20-30 MINUTES twice a week
- **FLEXIBILITY**
  - Stretching in warm up to be dynamic
  - Flexibility/stretching work as regular routine in tennis context

*Resources    Fit Kids video  
                  Fit Teens video  
                  LTA Player Development Guidelines for 11 years of age*

- **OTHER SPORTS** - hockey, basketball, netball, soccer and rugby to help develop co-ordination, speed and endurance

- **OTHER ACTIVITIES** - swimming, dancing, cycling, gymnastics - to help develop balance and co-ordination
- **ANCILLARY SKILLS**
  - Warm up
  - Cool down
  - Hydration
  - Nutrition

**TACTICAL AND TECHNICAL SKILLS (through game based coaching and simple decision making)**

▪ **TACTICAL**

- Singles - 5 games situations of:
  - Serve
  - Return
  - Approaching the net
  - Opponent at the net
  - Both on baseline
- Development of own game style
- Learning to analyse opponent
- Playing percentages
- Varying the rhythm of returns
- Hitting to depth, opening the court, using width with crosscourt
- Playing to own strength - usually forehand
- Attacking opponent's weakness
- Attack short balls
- Playing early ball - moving into court
- Using short ball and angles with increased racket head speed
- Different serve and return situations
- Return becoming aggressive
- Sequences of shots for different tactics
- Doubles
  - Moving quickly to the net when possible and after weak serve
  - Defining individual roles,
  - Developing communication skills as a pair
  - Using spin serve

▪ **TECHNICAL**

**General Considerations**

- Reaction speed, perception and anticipation of incoming ball,
- Able to play early ball on both sides
- Preparation for shot especially (after serve) - split step
- Sound and appropriate footwork - emphasis on quality
- Control of ball speed in all three ways of hitting
- Control of ball placement to move player about
- Taking control of the point
- Improved/appropriate use of spin
- Developing sense of shot selection
- Basic strokes sound and at higher tempo and power base

**Forehand**

- Long stroke

- Increased rotation and shoulders open
- Racket at comfortable distance for the player
- Open or closed stance possible
- Simple high loop with forward swing from low to high to increase racket head speed
- Contact point to side and in front
- Longer follow through with final point dependent on ball hit
- Beginning to move round backhand
- Learning spin

### **Backhand - 2 handed**

- Usually straight or loop take back
- Trunk/shoulder rotation
- Hands work together as one
- Front foot angled down court

### **Backhand - 1 handed**

- Loop take back
- Both arms working
- Shoulder rotation on take back
- Forward rotation on contact
- Contact in front
- Follow through over shoulder
- Ensure good co-ordination

### **Forehand and Backhand Volley**

- Short stroke
- Racket head above wrist
- Trunk rotation
- Footwork and body weight towards ball
- Forward punch/block contact with racket head moving from high to low

### **Serve**

- Improve use of spin on second serve
- Increased rotation of hip and shoulders
- Increased knee bend to help rotation and co-ordination
- Developed use of co-ordination chain
- May or may not bring back foot up early
- Landing on front foot so work on next step
- Ability to place at centre, body and side in both courts

### **Return of Serve**

- Good court position on or just behind baseline
- Closer for second serve
- Timing of split step
- More open stance returns
- Compact action for fast serve

### **Additional Strokes** - developed as sound:

- Drive volley
- High volley
- Drop shot
- Smash

**Grips** - to allow development of racket head speed as player develops

- FOREHAND - semi-western
- BACKHAND - (encourage single OR double)
  - Single - eastern backhand
  - Double - bottom hand in eastern backhand or continental, top hand eastern forehand (consider some changes Boys/Girls - Girls to semi on top hand and to deal with high balls)
- FOREHAND AND BACKHAND VOLLEY- basic (continental or eastern) with some grip change possible
- SERVE - continental with finger spread

### **MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL**

- Principle of FUN when learning
  - Able to relate to effort and ability
  - Personal (intrinsic) motivation to play
  - Enjoying learning, training, playing
  - Quality goal setting
  - Becoming independent and responsible
  - Self disciplined
  - Positive attitude, thinking and body language
  - Self preparation for matches
  - Responding to new challenges
  - Learning to do things well
  - Good concentration
  - Use of rituals and visualisation
  - Confident on court
- Learning about the game
  - Fair
  - Respect for other players, coaches and officials
  - Good behaviour on court and in practice
  - Pride in performance
  - Saying thank you and offering congratulations to others
  - Willing to try new things
  - Able to work to a game plan
  - Able to review performance
  - Able to accept results and move on

### **MATCHPLAY**

- Inter and intra club singles and doubles
- Some play with older players
- Full scoring
- League matches
- County, regional and national tournaments

**COMPETITION WEEKS PER YEAR**  
**MATCHES PER YEAR**

**Year 3** 2x7 weeks  
**Year 3** 60

## Learning to Compete Stage

Boys 13/14 years Girls 12/13 years

Year 4 and 5

It is very important that **BIOLOGICAL AGE** and **DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BOYS AND GIRLS** are now taken into account in determining the physical work. Attention must be paid to growth spurt (Peak Height Velocity) in order to plan work on endurance, and then speed and strength. The physical training loads given for Years 4 – 5 therefore assume the player is average (i.e. not an early or late maturer). Biological and chronological age can be 4 years apart (2 years higher or 2 years lower).

### Year 4 Boys 13 years Girls 12 years

Training (tennis, practice matches, physical work, other sports) time 21 hours per week

Maximum length of training sessions 2.5 hours

8.5 hours tennis

3.5 hours co-ordination

1.5 hours speed

1.5 hours strength

1.5 hours endurance

1.5 hours flexibility

3 hours other sports

### Year 5 Boys 14 years Girls 13 years

Training (tennis, practice matches, physical work, other sports) time 24 hours per week

Maximum length of training sessions 2.5 hours

12 hours tennis, which includes training matches

1 hour co-ordination

3 hours speed (P<sub>SpV</sub>)

2 hours strength (P<sub>SrV</sub>)

3 hours endurance (P<sub>HV</sub>)

3 hours flexibility

1 hour other sports

## **PHYSICAL SKILLS**

It is very important that **BIOLOGICAL AGE** and **DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BOYS AND GIRLS** are now taken into account in determining the physical work. Attention must be paid to growth spurt (Peak Height Velocity) in order to plan work on endurance, and then speed and strength. The physical training loads given for Years 4 – 5 therefore assume the player is average (i.e. not an early or late maturer). Biological and chronological age can be 4 years apart (2 years higher or 2 years lower).

- **CO-ORDINATION, footwork, agility and movement**
  - Athletic skills - running, jumping, skipping, and throwing. Complex, tennis specific drills 4 - 6 times per week
  - Co-ordination - complex drills 4-6 times per week
  - Balance - dynamic 4-6 times per week
  - Footwork drills - specific movement patterns to the ball and for recovery
  
- **SPEED**
  - PC and lactate system (recovery 1:4) especially after growth spurt
  - Reaction speed
  - Speed of co-ordination
  - Linear / multi directional speed
  - Specific tennis drills

- Acceleration speed
- Short sprints repeated

▪ **STRENGTH**

- Own body weight
- Intro to Olympic lifting techniques
- Light bar bells
- Throwing drills
- Develop large muscle groups
- Core Stability, Shoulder Stability building on previous work and linked to injury prevention
- Power - when base of speed and strength are in place

▪ **ENDURANCE**

- On court and off court
- Able to work sub maximally 20-30 MINUTES
- Including other sports such as football, swimming, but depending on growth
- Increase sessions with PHV
- Decrease following completion of growth spurt
- More intensive during general preparation phase to build base

▪ **FLEXIBILITY**

- Stretching in warm up to be dynamic,
- Flexibility/stretching work as regular routine in tennis context

*Resources     Fit Teens video  
                         LTA Player Development Guidelines for 13 years of age*

- **OTHER SPORTS** - hockey, basketball, netball, soccer and rugby to develop co-ordination, Speed and endurance

- **OTHER ACTIVITIES** swimming, dancing, cycling - for endurance, balance and co-ordination

▪ **ANCILLARY SKILLS**

- Warm up – personal / individual responsibility and programmes
- Cool down
- Hydration
- Nutrition

**TACTICAL AND TECHNICAL SKILLS (through game based coaching and simple decision making)**

▪ **TACTICAL**

- Singles
  - Developing own game style and developing weapons to suit
  - Develop offensive play - increased power
  - Taking control of the point
  - Approach to the net on short balls
  - Serve and volley as tactical option
  - Develop variations in play - height over net, types of spin, different pace
  - Full use of court - angles, length, crosscourt
  - Sequences of shots for different tactics
  - Learning tactics to use against different games styles

- Learning to play on different surfaces
- Learning to play in different weather conditions
- Learning difference between strategy and tactics
- Doubles
  - Playing against different combinations of opponents - 1 or 2 at net
  - Using serve as a weapon - % of 1<sup>st</sup> serves
  - Understanding playing down the middle, placing the return, volley deep options

## ▪ TECHNICAL

### **General Considerations**

- All shots developing with more power - related to maturity and puberty
- Improved/appropriate use of spin
- Developing sense of shot selection
- Basic strokes sound and at higher tempo and power base

### **Forehand**

- More use of grf and additional rotation
- Balance and control as leave ground
- Longer stroke with preparation appropriate to the situation
- Footwork options
- Early ball
- Moving around backhand

### **Backhand - 2 handed**

- Shorter, higher preparation depending on grips
- Preparation appropriate to situation
- High contact point

### **Backhand - 1 handed**

- More use of grf and additional rotation
- Preparation appropriate to situation

### **Forehand Volley/Backhand Volley**

#### **Lob /Smash /Approach Shot/Passing Shots**

- Able to use all shots appropriately
- Volley more aggressive
- Volley appropriate to situation
- Lob able to be both offensive and defensive

### **Serve**

- Increased power base and use of legs
- Fully developed co-ordination chain
- Additional rotation possible with maturity
- Improved 2<sup>nd</sup> serve with more spin
- Good footwork after serve to be ready for return

### **Return of Serve**

- Better footwork
- Improved anticipation
- Improved placement of return to prepare for third shot from server
- Attacking 2<sup>nd</sup> serve

## **Grips**

- All secure

## **MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL**

- Able to understand difference between effort and ability and may lose confidence in planning for future as result
- Personal (intrinsic) motivation to play
- Able to achieve appropriate emotional control before, during and after practice and matches
- Quality goal setting and working to them
- Independent and responsible
- Self disciplined
- Positive self talk, confidence, thinking and body language
- Self preparation for matches
- Excellent attentional control
- Ability to use fighting spirit, but fair
- Use of rituals, relaxation and visualisation techniques
- Respect for other players, coaches and officials
- Pride in performance
- Pleasant to opponents and officials
- Able to accept results and move on

## **MATCHPLAY**

- International and national tournaments
- County, regional matches
- League matches
- Club matches

**COMPETITION WEEKS PER YEAR**  
**MATCHES PER YEAR**

**Year 4** 2x6 weeks    **Year 5** 2x5 + 1x7 weeks  
**Year 4** 60            **Year 5** 70

## Learning to Compete Stage

Boys 15/16 years Girls 14/15 years

Year 6 and 7

It is very important that **BIOLOGICAL AGE** and **DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BOYS AND GIRLS** are now taken into account in determining the physical work. By this age the growth spurt (Peak Height Velocity) should have been reached and the training load is given in order to plan work on speed and strength. The physical training loads given for Years 6 and 7 therefore assume the player is average (i.e. not an early or late maturer). Biological and chronological age can be 4 years apart (2 years higher or 2 years lower).

Year 6 Boys 15 years Girls 14 years

Training (tennis, practice matches, physical work, other sports) time 24 hours per week

Maximum length of training sessions 2.5 hours

11.5 hours tennis

1 hour co-ordination

3 hours speed PSpV

3 hours strength PSrV

2 hours endurance

1.5 hours flexibility

1.5 hours other sports

Year 7 Boys 16 years Girls 15 years

Training (tennis, practice matches, physical work, other sports) time 27 hours per week

Maximum length of training sessions 2.5 hours

14 hours tennis, which includes training matches

1 hour co-ordination

2.5 hours speed (PSpV)

4 hours strength (PSrV)

2 hours endurance

2 hours flexibility

1.5 hour other sports

### **PHYSICAL SKILLS**

It is very important that **BIOLOGICAL AGE** and **DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BOYS AND GIRLS** are now taken into account in determining the physical work. Attention must be paid to growth spurt (Peak Height Velocity) in order to plan work on endurance, and then speed and strength. The physical training loads given for Years 4 – 5 therefore assume the player is average (i.e. not an early or late maturer). Biological and chronological age can be 4 years apart (2 years higher or 2 years lower).

#### ▪ **CO-ORDINATION, footwork, agility and movement**

- Athletic Skills - running, jumping, skipping, and throwing. Complex, tennis specific drills 4-6 times per week but can be part of warm up
- Co-ordination - complex drills 4-6 times per week
- Balance - dynamic 4-6 times per week
- Footwork drills - specific movement patterns to the ball and for recovery

#### ▪ **SPEED**

- Optimal time to develop PC and lactate system (recovery 1:4) after growth spurt
- Reaction speed

- Speed of co-ordination
- Linear / multi directional speed
- Specific tennis speed drills
- Acceleration speed
- Short sprints repeated

▪ **STRENGTH**

- Olympic lifting
- Light bar bells
- Throwing drills
- Develop large muscle groups
- **Core Stability, Shoulder Stability** building on previous work and linked to injury prevention
- **Power** - when base of speed and strength are in place, speed work can be power based with Specific tennis plyometric type work

▪ **ENDURANCE**

- Reduced after growth spurt but basic level still important on court and off court
- Able to work sub maximally 30-40 MINUTES
- Including other sports such as football, swimming, cross country, but depending on growth
- Increase sessions with PHV

▪ **FLEXIBILITY**

- Stretching in warm up to be dynamic
- Flexibility/stretching work as regular routine in tennis context

*Resources Fit Teens video*

*LTA Player Development Guidelines for 15 years of age*

- **OTHER BALL SPORTS** - hockey, basketball, netball, soccer and rugby to develop co-ordination, speed and endurance

- **OTHER ACTIVITIES** - swimming, dancing, cycling, cross country - to help endurance, balance and co-ordination

▪ **ANCILLARY SKILLS**

- Warm up - personal / individual responsibility and programmes
- Cool down
- Hydration
- Nutrition

**TACTICAL AND TECHNICAL SKILLS (through game based coaching and simple decision making)**

▪ **TACTICAL**

- Singles
  - Development of own game style and developing weapons to Suit
  - Improved decision making
  - Utilise increased power
  - Taking control of the point with pace, accuracy and quality passing shots
  - Develop ability to get opponent off balance

- Use strengths and 'hide' weaknesses
- Approach to the net on short balls
- Serve and volley as tactical option
- Develop variations in play – height over net, types of spin, different pace
- Full use of court - angles, length, crosscourt
- Sequences of shots for different tactics
- Learning tactics to use against different games styles
- Adapt play to different surfaces, different weather conditions
- Learning difference between strategy and tactics
- Learn to 'scout' opponents
- Doubles
  - Playing against different combinations of opponents - 1 or 2 at net, all 4 at net
  - Using serve as a weapon - % of 1<sup>st</sup> serves
  - Different serving formations - and using signals
  - Develop ability to play down the middle, place the return, volley deep

## ▪ TECHNICAL

### **General Considerations**

- All shots developed with appropriate power and racket head Speed – related to maturity and puberty
- Adapting technique for different surfaces
- Baseline play uses more power and variation
- Footwork sound and full ability to recover on all strokes

### **Forehand Volley, Backhand Volley Lob, Smash, Approach and Passing Shots**

- Volley and smash win point

### **Serve**

- Increased power base and use of legs
- Fully developed co-ordination chain
- Additional rotation possible with maturity
- Improved 2<sup>nd</sup> serve with more spin
- Good footwork after serve to be ready for return

### **Return of Serve**

- Better footwork
- Improved anticipation
- Improved placement of return to prepare for third shot from server
- Attacking 2<sup>nd</sup> serve

### **Grips**

- All secure but also adaptable

## **MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL**

- Personal (intrinsic) motivation to play
- Able to critically objective
- Able to achieve appropriate emotional control before, during and after practice and matches
- Arranges own practice
- Quality goal setting, working to them and evaluating them
- Independent and responsible

- Self disciplined
- Positive self talk, confidence, thinking and body language
- Self preparation for matches
- Excellent attentional control
- Ability to use fighting spirit
- Courageous
- Desire to win well
- Use of rituals, relaxation and visualisation techniques
- Fair
- Respect for other players, coaches and officials
- Good behaviour on court and in practice
- Pride in performance
- Pleasant to opponents and officials
- Able to accept results and move on

### **MATCHPLAY**

- International and national tournaments
- County, regional matches
- League matches
- Club matches

**COMPETITION WEEKS IN YEAR**    **Year 6** 2x5 + 1x8 weeks    **Year 7** 2x6 + 1x7 weeks  
**MATCHES IN YEAR**                    **Year 6** 70                                    **Year 7** 80

## Training to Win Stage

Boys 17 years Girls 16 years

Year 8

It is very important that **BIOLOGICAL AGE** and **DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BOYS AND GIRLS** are now taken into account in determining the physical work. By this age the growth Spurt (Peak Height Velocity) has been reached and the training load is now Suited to the player having come through puberty. However, the training loads given for Years 8 assume the player is average (i.e. not an early or late maturer). Biological and chronological age can be 4 years apart (2 years higher or 2 years lower).

Training (tennis, practice matches, physical work, other sports) time 30 hours per week

Maximum length of training sessions 2.5 hours

16 hours tennis

1 hour co-ordination

2 hours speed

3.5 hours strength

2.5 hours endurance

2 hours flexibility

2 hours other sports

### **PHYSICAL SKILLS**

It is very important that **BIOLOGICAL AGE** and **DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BOYS AND GIRLS** are now taken into account in determining the physical work. Attention must be paid to growth spurt (Peak Height Velocity) in order to plan work on endurance, and then speed and strength. The physical training loads given for Years 4 – 5 therefore assume the player is average (i.e. not an early or late maturer). Biological and chronological age can be 4 years apart (2 years higher or 2 years lower).

- **CO-ORDINATION, footwork, agility and movement**
  - Co-ordination - complex drills 4-6 times per week
  - Balance - dynamic 4-6 times per week
  - Footwork drills - specific movement patterns to the ball and for recovery
  
- **SPEED**
  - Train PC and lactate system (recovery 1:4) after growth spurt
  - Reaction speed
  - Speed of co-ordination
  - Specific tennis speed drills
  - Acceleration speed
  - Short sprints repeated
  
- **STRENGTH**
  - Bar bells
  - Throwing drills
  - Develop large and small muscle groups
  - **Core Stability, Shoulder stability** building on previous work and linked to injury prevention
  - **Power** - when base of speed and strength are in place, speed work is be power based with specific tennis plyometric type work
  
- **ENDURANCE**
  - Reduced after growth spurt but basic level still important on court and off court,
  - Able to work sub maximally 30-40 MINUTES,

- Including other sports such as football, swimming, cross country

- **FLEXIBILITY**

- Stretching in warm up to be dynamic,
- Flexibility/stretching work as regular routine in tennis context

*Resources Fit Players video*

- **OTHER BALL SPORTS** - hockey, basketball, netball, soccer and rugby to maintain co-ordination, speed and endurance

- **OTHER ACTIVITIES** - swimming, dancing, cycling, cross country - to help endurance, balance and co-ordination

- **ANCILLARY SKILLS**

- Warm up - personal / individual responsibility and programmes
- Cool down
- Hydration - for all climates and times of day
- Nutrition - fully able to choose and time

**TACTICAL AND TECHNICAL SKILLS (through game based coaching and simple decision making)**

- **TACTICAL**

- Singles
  - Solid game style and weapons to suit
  - Quality decision making to suit strategy
  - Utilises increased power
  - Takes control of the point with pace, accuracy and quality passing shots
  - Able to get opponent off balance
  - Use strengths and 'hides' weaknesses
  - Approach to the net appropriate
  - Serve and volley when needed
  - Uses variations in play - height over net, types of spin, different pace
  - Full use of court - angles, length, crosscourt
  - Chooses sound shots for different tactics
  - Knows tactics to use against different games styles
  - Adapts play to different surfaces, different weather conditions
  - Able to adjust strategy and tactics
  - Able to 'scout' opponents competently
- Doubles
  - Playing against different combinations of opponents - 1 or 2 at net, all 4 at net
  - Using serve as a weapon - high % of 1<sup>st</sup> serves
  - Different serving formations - and using signals
  - Develop ability to play down the middle, place the return, volley deep

- **TECHNICAL**

**General Considerations**

- All shots maximal as required with appropriate power and racket head speed
- Adapts technique for different surfaces
- Baseline play uses power and variation even when under pressure
- Footwork sound and full ability to recover on all strokes

### **Serve**

- Full power base and use of legs
- Fully developed co-ordination chain
- Full hip and shoulder rotation to maximise energy base
- Weapon of 2nd serve with more spin and variation
- Good footwork after serve to be ready for return

### **Return of Serve**

- Quality footwork
- Excellent placement of return to anticipate third shot from server
- Able to defend well but still return with quality and variation
- Attacking both serves

### **Grips**

- All secure but also adaptable

### **MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL**

- Personal (intrinsic) motivation to play
- Able to be critically objective
- Able to achieve appropriate emotional control before, during and after practice and matches
- Arranges own practice and contributes to competitive schedule
- Quality goal setting, working to them and evaluating them
- Independent and responsible
- Self disciplined
- Positive self talk, confidence, thinking and body language
- Self preparation for matches
- Excellent attentional control
- Ability to use fighting spirit
- Courageous
- Desire to win well
- Use of rituals, relaxation and visualisation techniques
- Fair
- Respect for other players, coaches and officials
- Good behaviour on court and in practice
- Pride in performance
- Pleasant to opponents and officials
- Able to accept results and move on

### **MATCHPLAY**

- International and national tournaments
- County, regional matches
- League matches

### **COMPETITION WEEKS PER YEAR**

**Year 8** 3 x 7 weeks

### **MATCHES PER YEAR**

**Year 8** 90+