

6th WORLD SQUASH DEVELOPMENT AND COACHING CONFERENCE

**CAIRO EGYPT
19TH – 22ND AUGUST 2003**

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Tuesday 19th August

WELCOME

Mrs Joyce Buckley welcomed all the delegates to the conference, the first to be held in Africa. There was much development going on in Eastern Europe including countries such as Russia and Lithuania. Oceania Squash had recently held a coaching conference in Auckland.

There were coaches present from: Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan, India, Malaysia, China, Egypt, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Germany, England, USA, Canada, Sweden, Spain, Belgium, Netherlands, Czechoslovakia, South Africa

NATIONAL COACHING PLANNING OVERVIEW

PETER HIRST - ENGLAND SQUASH PERFORMANCE DIRECTOR

DAVID CAMPION – ENGLAND SQUASH HIGH PERFORMANCE COACH

In 1971 Hirst was appointed as National Coach for Table Tennis – the youngest ever. He thereafter served on the National Sports Development Council in New Zealand while Campion, an international squash player, has managed the National boys' and girls' teams when the boys won the team title in 2000 in Milan and the girls won in 2001 in Malaysia.

“Theory into Practice”

One needs to look at the needs of the player – whether club/social or elite athlete.

Players Progress/ Players Needs

Introductory: **One must examine a player's needs and they must understand what we are asking them to do. Hit the ball – keep it simple**

Participation: Once they participate the phase now becomes technical i.e. how to hold the racket, but one must still keep it simple

Performance: **They now need the skills – one improves /develops their skills/style and shows them how to perform consistently under pressure**

High Performance: **Tactics are now concentrated on – one gets to know the players and helps them develop tactics.**

Elite: **The top player is the sum of all the above.**

Coaching Style

Introductory: At novice level, one must teach the basics and establish basic patterns of play.

Participation: The coach demonstrates and gives the player choices.

Performance: The coach must direct them: put them under pressure to apply pressure to their opponents. Show them how to take the ball early and reduce their opponent's time.

High performance: **The coach must empower the player – he/she must trust that they can “decide” for themselves: that the coach has taught them well enough so as to empower them.**

Elite: At this level the player/s need support. In England there are: 3 High Performance coaches: 1 National coach: 1 Assistant National Coach and 1 National High Performance Director.

Coach Education

What the coach is taught, is what the coach teaches the player.

In England the Introductory level: Coach Education is Level 1

Participation: Level 2

Performance: Level 3

High Performance: Level 4

Elite: Level 5 (They are working on this)

Technique vs Style

If one watches various people walk the principles are the same but the styles are different. Technique is based on biomechanical principles while style is unique. One creates an environment in which the player can learn.

David Campion illustrated the point that the basic principles are the same but the players develop an individual style that reflects their personality. eg. Lee Beachill and James Willstrop are both coached by Malcolm Willstrop: Beachill is a traditional straight forward person and this is reflected in his style of play which is hitting the ball consistently with precision while James is flamboyant which is clearly demonstrated in his flair.

The Coaching Process

The information, which the coach passes on to the player must be very clear as to **WHAT** you want him to do with the **BALL**. You correct his swing but he/she **must hit a good drive to length**. (first bounce $\frac{3}{4}$ court, second bounce dead and it must be tight – a penetrating length not a friendly length)

One must explain **WHY** they must hit it to a good length ie **to Gain control and take their opponent's time away**.

The next step is to explain **WHEN** they must hit to a good length, almost always the best shot, but must judge the situation and the opponent.

3 Stages of Tactical Development

Perception – read the opponent and rally the ball

What are we trying to teach – watch the ball.

What do we want them to see/read – the body language – we want them to camouflage – this comes from the period immediately before the ball is struck.

The reading/the understanding/awareness of self and opponent – “the squash brain.”

2 **Decision**

The player must produce extreme accuracy – use physical targets to aim for eg plastic cups.

They must have the armoury for a choice of shot selection - height/width/power/attack/defence.

They must reduce the opponent's time – putting them under pressure – they must play to the merits of the opponent's shot.

Action

The player acts upon perception and decision to deliver the outcome. The shot must be executed with precision.

Speed makes Peter Nicol number 1- ie. His speed of working out where his opponent is putting the ball, his taking the ball early which reduces the time his opponent has to get to the next ball.

The swing isolated is not technique - the whole process of perception, decision and action is technique – this is an ongoing process throughout every rally.

A player must use periphery vision: must pick up signs from his/her opponent/ wait - based on understanding/perception- make the decision before they hit the ball.

Peter Nicol moves on the b of bang – on returning a boast he has already moved forward as/before it hits the side wall, has time to stop/wait and then return.

The player must be disciplined/extremely accurate and have good ball control and then apply pressure to the opponent. The player must never play a friendly length he/she wants to gain control. The player must put a lot of thought into the shots.

Story to illustrate that anticipation can be taught !!

A talented young boxer needed to earn money so he used to go into pubs and bet that a person could have 3 attempts at hitting him. If this person hit him, the boxer would pay him X pounds but if the person missed, then he paid the boxer. The boxer put his hands behind his back, looked at the person's feet and fists - could then work out the pace and height and based on that he would move his head correctly – out of the way.

What learning situations is one faced with?

Three Opportunities

1 Straight Coaching a) one on one

b) groups

Malcolm Willstrop creates a learning environment but does not go on actively

Practice eg. in Australia

Players are taught the ability to read the action before the ball is struck – done by routines on court.

There is specific emphasis on what it is that they need to achieve.

Competition – teach them the “business” of competitive squash.

The question was asked whether the coach had to have been a good player. Answer: Not necessarily but it does help in gaining the respect of the pupil but you can gain respect from what you achieve.

The coach must only move forward with what he/she has.

As a coach one knows what squash is – everyone is a scholar of squash – all coaches should share knowledge – the coach must exercise good judgement and share – biomechanics and physiology can assist but the importance of the coach is paramount.

The question was asked as to how much time is spent putting data on the computer.

Stafford Murray works individually with each player going through all technical aspects, which are then inputted.

The men's and women's squads both senior and junior are held together.

It is a long term project to achieve a world number 1. Science can prove one right or wrong.

PLAYER LIFESTYLE INCLUDING MENTAL AND NUTRITIONAL OVERVIEW

NATALIE POHRER (ex South African ranked 2 in the world)

(More a general overview)

A good length is vital for success.

The Player is the only person who can achieve: who can decide whether the professional circuit is for them. The player must try the circuit and then make the decision whether it is for them or not. One needs a strong personality to learn to live away from the comforts of home: to survive: one needs a support system, a mentor and a coach.

The player must play as many tournaments, league matches as possible.

The player must be taught to win.

One must analyse one's wins and losses. One must analyse the other players' style of play: why they are doing better: find out what their attributes and weaknesses are.

For Natalie squash must be FUN – must give her stimulation- one can challenge oneself on court: routines must be a challenge not boring.

If one is struggling with form then go back to what one enjoys.

There are so many aspects to squash eg angles

A player needs to turn disappointments into positives. She was left out of South African team but this motivated her to be better – found her selection for the Commonwealth Games was a turning point – loved the doubles particularly the mixed where she pitted herself against some of the top men players in the world and won points.

She moved into the top 10 in the world – then the other players gun for you – have to be prepared to rally more – to get out of tricky situations.

One plays the “safe areas” in a game eg 5all, 6 all but then one must find that **extra** to win the game. The weaker player will hit the tin or miss the volley.

One must learn to “cope”- she spoke to other players eg Sarah FitzGerald, Michelle Martin and watched how they dominate the room they walk into – in the same way they dominate the court.

Travelling

One has to learn to handle jetlag – perhaps have a lighter training session: must watch hydration: eating: sleeping. One must learn to be adaptable – learn

what one can cope with. When traveling a lot focus on hydration and taking extra vitamins.

Each person's mental/physical and emotional levels are different.

New Training programme – new coach in the USA

Now training a lot in pliometrics with no long distance running. Concentrating on small steps: quick dancing movements: lunging and agility.

One creates endurance from doing the training.

One can practise visualisation and relaxation while stretching.

Being emotional is not practical so must try and keep an equilibrium while playing matches.

When coaching women, the coach must be aware of the person you are coaching – emotionally and physically. Women are more emotional and at certain times of the month very difficult – the coach must communicate.

They must hit the ball correctly / with pace and use the whole court properly.

The front of the court is not as easy to get to for women as it is for men.

Tactical/Technical Approach

A player needs basic skills: video one's matches and then watch them and analyse them. Look carefully at how the opponent reacted. Let other players tell you what they think.

Use the conditions of the court and change the way of playing.

The player must make the decisions themselves.

One needs good technique, which does not break down under pressure. Need a strong wrist – hold the racket firmly.

Must learn to hit the ball into the SPACE – exploit the opponent's weaknesses – use an element of surprise – move the opponent around the court.

As a woman use the front of the court – use pace as a surprise tactic – keep the opponent under pressure as you do not want them to cope- get the opponent off beat particularly with variations of service – use the warm up astutely to see what they like and dislike – play oneself into the game.

Dominate the T and the opponent – volley as much as possible- take the ball early.

On glass courts get depth and length – lob into the lights –

Play your own game and “tweak” it for each individual.

Adapt to the court conditions

Tricky situations – 2 love down 90 secs – now what ??

8 all – what ? – Know what you can do well and then do it.

Be strong mentally – you can work through pain barriers – the successful players push themselves to the limit

Push your pupils to the limit so they know what they can cope with.

Be intimidating on court – look and strike the ball forcefully.
There are other things apart from technique which win matches.
You cannot let your opponent know that things are not going well. If they aren't - smile – endear yourself to the ref !!

Always bounce back – work on the positives – learn as much as you can from defeat – go back to the drawing board – accept criticism – get over the disappointments.

Maintain a strong selfbelief - find someone who helps you be you – a mentor/coach.

Prepare well – be super fit – do your mental homework – HUNGER to win.

One must “refuel” after training – find a nourishing “post workout shake”.
Must workout a “window” to refuel otherwise after 3 days of a heavy tournament schedule one will battle.
Must also find the right “fuel” to have before playing a match otherwise it affects one mentally and physically and then one cannot play properly. The longer one can last and stay more alert allows you the edge.

When coaching – listen – understand – have fun – bring the best out of them – treat them as individuals – teach them correctly.

Make it **FUN !!!**

SQUASH OVERVIEW OF COACHING, TECHNIQUES AND IMPROVING PLAYERS SKILLS

**ASHRAF HANAFY
EGYPT'S NATIONAL JUNIOR COACH**

Squash is a major sport in Egypt. The junior women's world semi-finals and finals were being televised on 2 main and 1 sport channel and they enjoyed frequent coverage – this had all been brought about by the achievements of Ahmed Barada.

There was good interfacing and co-operation between seniors and juniors. They hold 12-15 junior tournaments per year – they have 128 players under 11.

Rachel Grinham now ranked 3 in the world has based herself in Cairo.

In the Junior women's world quarterfinals they had 6 players. (Had the 4 semifinalists and waltzed away with the team title.)

Most Important Squash Tools

Technique

Tactics

Footwork

Mental

Talent

Ball control is vital – Egyptians are not power players

The player must have targets to aim for – demarcate the court.

Improving Techniques

One must teach them ball control without pressure and under pressure

One must make it fun – play fun games – do different crazy ball skills – create a squash circus eg juggling, hitting balls with all parts of the racket

Tactics

Teach them to win as fast as possible

Some players know instinctively what to do.

Have a “live show” play a game – stop the game - discuss where the players are – put them into new positions – put them into old positions – have a group discussion about what shot should have been played – open their minds – get them to see what “spaces” there are when playing matches

Videos are vital – the player needs to watch him/herself.

To Improve

The player must know his/her weaknesses and strengths

Footwork

Walk the court – move backwards – put shoulders to the walls when doing warm-ups.

Use the most suitable foot when striking the ball.

Mental

The player must win but they must also remember it is only a sport

They must do their best

They Must ENJOY the game

The team must practice/eat/play/relax together before any major tournament.

Fitness

Some players are naturally fit-one must use the natural talent and improve on it

Examples :

Super Attack – Power – Shabana but no mental

Super Fitness/No attack – Faizy

Super Footwork - Jansher Khan and Peter Nicol

How to use tools to win a game**Technique****Attack /Defence****Tactics****Attack**

Player must think twice – read the game eg boast volley

Be there – anticipation – if you think twice

Racket and Mirror – the only sport where you can watch your opponent from close quarters – where you know where he is

Place the ball as far away from him as possible – find the big hole

Play different shots from the same position Nicol uses the same stance for drive/drop

Defence

Wait for the right time – use the basic game – test the other corners – push him to the front – boast – if good in front, push him to the back and vice-versa

Fitness

Be there for attack

for good defence

Power game

conditioned game

Difficult to coach a talented player

- in a good mood they go for broke – bad mood !!!!!

Choose tools

Do a player analysis – is he/she attack or defence – a player is made up of a percentage of each.

Work in attack and defence

Different Strategies

Power game	is an	Attack Game
Conditional game	is a	Defence Game
Tactic/Mental game		is both

Know the character of your player

Mental training is used for all Egyptian players and certain players with problems

Give a talented player the basics but you cannot teach talent to a player.

You can teach tactics by stopping the game

Talented players are crazy – it is difficult to discipline them

If a player is uptight or nervous be a friend and get their respect

You must identify players at an early age – use movement eg jumping/ agility/ ball skills.

MODERN DRILLS/ROUTINES/PATTERNS

MAJOR MANIAM, JONAS GORNERUP, CHRIS ROBERTSON

With today's lighter rackets, the wrist is being used more and it is assisting in deception.

Basic/Closed Drill

a) boast/drive – one knows where the ball is going – don't have to move . Use it in the warm-up and it is often used in a game.

b) add straight drive or cross court – opens things up as the player at the back does not know which way it is going

one is working on movement/accuracy/technique/body position

When a player can do all the above then make the drill open.

Closed/Open/Tactical

Deception: is about options with one swing

Easier if it is inborn to teach it - but it can be taught

Two areas – use the body or racket to deceive/hide the ball

face one way and hit the other

racket - the face can be in a different direction – change the grip eg top spin/lob/drive/drop

a) Simple boast/drive and deception – can get various levels of quality

According to Robertson the game is now more physical. The players are better prepared and the rackets are assisting thus the modern elements of delay/deception/pressure eg. Jonathan Power are evident.

The player needs to develop discipline/tactical awareness/ working control of the middle court and needs to send the opponent scurrying to the back

- 3 players – 2 in front and 1 at back – change who boasts/drives/deceives.
The one front player can do any shot or respond to what the coach calls.
Can concentrate on one stroke or options

Return of serve – roll the wrist to change the line of the ball

Player must build up dominance then use deception – it becomes part of the armoury.

Deception can be taught regularly through drills and then it becomes part of the armoury.

The basic game is not sufficient – fitness is crucial

Start in front of the court with boasts/drops/cross court add deception – create a swing which allows options

Deception from the back of the court demands a higher level of play

According to Chris Robertson the player must work hard on all aspects of the game - getting the ball to the back: volleying: controlling the T.

1 **Length.** Use the lines on the court. Length will change when it is hot or cold

a) work on the short line

b) move the parameters – now use the fault line

The player must have the ability to change the length.

The player must do a lot of drills in order to perfect the length

If the players are not getting forward then do a drill with straight drives and a cross court.

The player who is accurate must hit the crosscourts then as a reward allow them to hit the straight drive.

After they have mastered the length then move to o the volley

2 **Volley.** Use the straight volley drop

They must learn to wait for the opportunity and then create the space.

One must limit the range of shots. A deep crosscourt to be volleyed again deep down the line.

Volley boast

At any time change the straight volley to a volley boast

Volley boast or drop

The player must respond at the front and at the back

The volleyer must only volley to length and then boast below the fault line trying to work off the dominance at the middle.

In a game with long rallies it will be the player who dominates from the middle who will be successful.

THE APPLICATION OF PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS TO ELITE LEVEL SQUASH

STAFFORD MURRAY –ENGLAND

Stafford had worked with the SRA from 1999 until 2002. He is now working with the Institute of Sport and has been working with Performance Analysis for nearly 4 years.

Performance Analysis is an objective way of viewing performance and recording it so that it can be quantified in a valid and consistent manner.

Objective feedback will have a greater effect on performance.

Research has shown that some of the best coaches in the world only remember 30% of performance. A soccer player only remembered 20% while an international soccer coach remembered only 40%.

There are various reasons for this:

Memory Overload – there is just too much to remember.

Subjective bias – personal feelings hide the truth

Halo effect – coach has favourite players. Should a player start off a match well then the impression may be that he/she had a good match

Leniency Error - coaches tend to remember either the best or the worst shots – can be too soft on a player

Highlighting – can't put errors into perspective. The most extraordinary shots tend to be remembered not the bread and butter squash.

If 70% of the performance is not remembered then the practice has 70% missing. The role of the Performance Analyst is to provide WITH the coach objective and quantified performance.

Notational Analysis

This is an objective way of recording performance so that key elements of that performance can be quantified in a valid and consistent manner. It is likely to be used for 2 main reasons: technical and tactical analysis.

Technical Analysis:

This is vital for many reasons. Success depends to a large extent upon the efficiency of movement. Inefficient movement wastes energy.

We also need to know what "ideal performance" looks like so that we can compare our performer with that – we need to know any major discrepancies and weaknesses.

Tactical Analysis

There are many areas that a coach needs to look at when analyzing tactics: winner and error ratios: analysis of short and long shots: volley distributions: shot selection from specific corners etc.

These can be analysed by using pen and paper and devising your own analysis system (consult Notational Analysis of Sport by Mike Hughes and Ian Franks)

England has split the court into 16 zones while Scotland has divided it into 7.

Real-Time Analysis Data Collection System

This analyses the distribution, frequency and type of the rally ending shot. It is a simple system with immediate feedback.

Lapse –Time Analysis System

This system collects much more complex data eg the position on the court, the time and the type of the shot is entered for every shot in the match.

The data is analysed and processed and gives;

- 1 simple winner and error ratios and average rally length data.
- 2 The next set analyses the shot options taken by both players
- 3 It then processes the shot type into straight, cross court, short and long

These sets of data together with feedback from coaches and the players were further analysed and summarised into a briefer format giving the player's weaknesses and strengths and then condensed into bullet point form.

The quality of feedback is vital in developing a player's skills.

Athlete performs – the coach observes – provides feedback – plans the practice – develops the skills.

As a result of more feedback the data from 5 matches was combined into one figure and then put into percentage form. Areas of the court that had unusual data were further examined with respect to shot types. The court was split into forehand/backhand/front/back and the 4 quarters. These more simple sets of data can more easily be put into tactical plans.

Further analysis was done to analyse the shot selection of the top British players from the four corners of the court. This assisted them in building a constructive rally and anticipating the opposition's next shot.

A further analysis produced by the real-time analysis is the rally length analysis, which provided information on varying winner/error ratios over varying rally lengths. This provided a focus for the mental approach to tactics eg a major highly ranked player showed a 1/3 W(inner)/E(rror) ratio in rallies over 15 shots. The next English player to play him counted 16 shots in his

head before playing the ball to the front of the court and won for the first time in his career.

Momentum graphs have only been developed recently but they seem to be a strong indicator of the mental strength of a player at different stages in a match. The video can be used to analyse the body language and used to understand the reasons for the swings on the graphs.

The physiologist asked for the rally lengths to be incorporated in the graphs to see if he could relate the swings to fitness.

A very productive session can be had by using the video and the analyses, but the information is only of value if the coach has the skills and knowledge to interpret and feed back the information in a constructive way.

In England the Performance Analyst can have influence in 8 areas in order to maximize performance:

Performance Analyst

Coaching: Tactical Awareness: Psychology: Modeling and databasis: Physiology: Technical Acquisition: Applied Biomechanics: Strengthening and Conditioning.

SWEAT ANALYSIS –Simple Winner and Error Analysis Technology

The systems are reliable and valid and it is not just collective data. The data input is done by well trained people. It applies sports science based on an academic model

Various data can be obtained eg overall winner/error ratio: game winner/error ratio: rally length winner/error ratio: distribution of winners/errors: shot type ratio. If one combines 6/7 matches one gets a real picture

The coach needs to be educated and then the combination of the scientific data together with the coach's ability to correct the technique will produce the results.

PLAYER PHYSIOLOGY AND PHYSICAL FITNESS PREPARATION FOR LONG TERM PLANS

DR TALHA HUSSEIN

The whole nature of squash has changed – the courts /rackets etc.

More pace, more speed, high level of physical fitness, frequency of matches all add pressure.

Fitness, technique and tactics are needed.

Specialisation at a high level is starting earlier. Parents rush the children and they become bored and depressed and then quit the game. Some suffer a training overload.

Players should be at least 15 years – even then important physical changes are still in progress.

The basic elements which are necessary are:

Cardiovascular endurance

Muscular endurance

Muscular power and speed and dynamic balance

The 4 aspects can be developed:

in the gym using weights

on the track

on the court

with the repetition of basic shots in a conditioned way.

Juniors should not go to the gym before they are 12.

- 1 The objectives of the drills must be determined. One must decide on the level of the practice or the exercise. The coaches do not necessarily know the frequency of the drills etc – they must consult with the experts.
- 2 On the track should only do 12-15km. Track work is more of a psychological benefit than physical – it builds up self confidence. It really is not of that much benefit for squash players.
200m/400m/800m are of benefit particularly 200m/400m for pace exercise.
- 3 On the court one needs to adjust the steps the player takes. For the forehand should move on the right foot first. If one improves their steps inside the court, one will see an improvement in their play.
The player needs anaerobic and aerobic energy and improve both at the same time. The player needs to perfect “violent” exercise without needing extra oxygen
- 4 There must be a repetition of basic shots. A physical fitness person could coach this to perfect the use of the necessary muscles

There needs to be 5/6 times the load of the exercise to lead to an improvement. The coach must be careful not to repeat the same drills with errors.

Weight exercises and drills can lead to a decrease in testosterone so one must be careful to find those, which do not.

Each learning unit should only be of one hour's duration to be effective. One needs to use the best drills or exercises using different groups of muscles.

Warm-up: should accelerate the blood circulation in the body prior to the match. It will increase the temperature of the ligaments.

The coaches should finish training at least 72 hours before a tournament. If it is too long before eg. 1 week it will affect performance, which will then not be efficient.

Some players can work in the gym and play eg. Darwish – it also works with others – depends on the individual.

One must work out a detailed plan for physical fitness for each individual player. Ideally one needs a month for physical fitness preparation – perhaps 26 units out of 52.

The skills of a squash player are limited – the difference in achievement is related to the level of physical fitness.

With 4 weeks with ratio 3:1 in first week: Second week 2:1: Third week 1:1 : Last week relaxation : Second to last squad 1:1 (physical preparation : squash)

Use (1) track: (2) jogging in the court. Change after 4 units otherwise it is not successful.

Distribute the units eg 4 hours per day – 3 for fitness: 1 for squash. If you need to concentrate on fitness then do 4 hrs of fitness. The player has the skills already.

4 units: 1 in the gym: 1 on the track: 1 on the court – depends on the work plan.

The PE expert may not understand the player therefore the footwork should be taught by the coach and then the P E expert takes over.

Each player has a different workload. Each coach must specify the needs of a player.

Darwish has a high level of performance – he is fast/speedy.

It is physically impossible to ask players to be fit for 15-20 events – likely to be 100% fit only 3 times a year. One must prioritise the tournaments- everything relates to the physiological form/capability of each individual. At some events the player will be 100% - others 80%.

A parent wants his child to be fit every day – can't be fit when he/she is overloading. For a junior they may be 100% fit once or twice a year but for the rest 70/80%.

Gym overload and squash: squash needs a high degree of persistence thus a player could adapt to this type of training.

A change in footwork entails neuromuscular adjustment. This type of adjustment takes place in the early stages of a child. There are 35 different rhythms/paces in squash.

Talent and footwork added to strength, speed, endurance and power are elements of a champion. Footwork is an added technique.

Gamal Awad/Geoff Hunt moved differently – was the older times
Watch Jansher and Jahangir move – Jahangir was exceptional – did not lose for 4 years. – Analyse his movements but one can't teach his way to others.

The Coach and the Phys Ed coach should attend the training together. The player should do fitness in the morning and play squash in the evening eg 9.00-12.00 fitness 7.00pm -10.00pm squash and then rest in between

One needs 4 loads to develop muscles- but must not exceed the maximum. Should be 60% and repeat distances eg 2kms x 5 times before championship.

A programme will always depend on the player. If training is 7 units per week then do fitness inside the court and not in the gym or track.

One can see from the appearance and particularly the eyes if a player is tired. Darwish is 100% fit – hardly sweats.

Physical fitness training/physical skills/ cognitive training/ emotional training/ social support network all interlink.

Purposes of Mental Training

- to increase the quality of ideal performance state by developing and enhancing ideal performance related mental skills
- to increase the ability to reproduce, induce and control ideal performance state
- to remove obstacles for a general performance improvement
- to remove causes for situation related performance declines
- to increase the uptake of physical training by :
 - improving the quality of training
 - improving the ability for rest/recovery

Principles of Mental Training

Using the mind as an alternative to physical work

Mental skills training must be parallel with physical aspects in the same priority

Mental Training Conditions

Player must have a positive attitude

Past experience must be positive

Must be positive training attitude

When tired a person cannot think

One can do the mental training in the same clothes the player was playing in.

When a match is in progress only 1 person must give instructions between games

First 15 seconds instruction

Second 15 seconds recovery period

Third 15 seconds visualization

Fourth 15 seconds get ready to go back on court

Phases of Mental Training

Basic Mental Skills

Sport-Specific Mental Skills

Individual Competition Strategies

One can do mental training with children of 6 years and older by giving them the basics

Nutrition can affect mental skills training. A coach must be aware of a player's condition – their eyes/vitality/shoulders/palms.

Nutrition affects all aspects. One must monitor before and after training to assess and then adapt the player's diet

EGYPTIAN SQUASH ASSOCIATION EXPERIENCE OF IMPROVING ON BOTH THE PROFESSIONAL AND THE JUNIOR CIRCUITS

SAMEH HUSSEIN

20 years ago the Egyptian glory years came to an end and it was only in the 90's that time, effort and expenditure was invested in their youth. Barada and El Borolossy led Egypt to victory in the 1994 World Junior and contested the final. In 1999 they won the men's world in Cairo. The championships at the Pyramids and Hurgada brought much publicity and acclaim. There was an increase in courts in Cairo and Alexandria.

The girls Omneya Abdel Kawy, Engy Kheirallah, Eman El Amir beat England in the final of the Junior Women in 1999. All the 6 players in the quarters in 2003 were from Alexandria.

Barada brought lots of players to the court – there was much publicity.

The Board members of the ESA are elected for 4 years and they work with the head coaches in:

Improving, maintaining the existing performance of their senior and junior players on the professional and junior international circuits.

Motivating and directing the youth thinking in participating in sports which directly affect their behaviour and life style in the future.

They are supported financially by the Ministry of Youth and Sport which monitors their performance on a yearly basis.

There is a President : Vice president: 5 members: secretary and treasurer

The Technical coach team consists of 1 head coach for Junior men

1 head coach for Junior women

1 head coach for each of senior men and women

Working with these head coaches are 4 senior coaches plus physical fitness and mental fitness trainers.

Each player in the National squad receives separate coaching, physical and mental training.

One of the most important committees is the Championship Committee, which plans and manages the local squash activity, which consists of local championships, national leagues, and plan new events

There are 20 SA players and 13 WISPA players. They are sponsored by the ESA internal award system - they get assistance depending on their achievements.

They receive financial support for participating in World Championships. The season runs from June to June covering about 12 championships. The ranking is done on an average system. They have recently re-introduced an under 23 event.

The players receive technical support: daily training and funding to go to events. There is a bonus system for performance: they are seeded and if they achieve their seeding then bonus. For each round there is a financial bonus. The players are also divided into gradings eg 1-20 21-30

Senior men and women: daily training in the stadium together. Play matches under supervision of head coaches.

The juniors train with the seniors and get information and advice from them. The players are encouraged to continue with their education and this is keeping them playing, hence the introduction of the under 23 event.

The juniors number approximately 500 – boys under 11-19: girls under 13-19 There must not be too much stress for the under 11's - the emphasis is on **enjoyment**.

A large contingent of juniors is sent to the British Junior Open where they experience stress and pressure. The Under 11's only go to the Scottish.

League is organized for boys and girls in the 12 clubs in Cairo on a round robin basis then in the second half of the year the best 4 players in each age group play a second round robin. For under 11's there are 4 boys and 1 girl in the team. They try to attract as many players as possible.

Events and leagues generate new players.

8/9 of the junior championships are held in Cairo with 3 in Alexandria. The clubs pay for the players to travel. The coaches watch and select the talented player and then the association pays and gives support. Training camps are held to develop and improve the player.

The Master Plan was to develop a new generation and to encourage more women. They worked with the clubs to find talent: to encourage the strong healthy, strong character to compete: to promote enjoyment.

Medical check ups and scientific performance measurements followed – fitness was assessed- potential was seen and developed. Clubs, parents and the ESA were working together. There needs to be good communication. Encourage sponsors to sponsor the players and the parents to play a role.

The coaches encourage the players and coach at events. It is very important to identify the talented player. Omnaya was 14 when she reached the 1/4s of the

World Juniors for the first time in 1999. This year Egypt had both finalists. With the outstanding results in the Junior Women they believe that more girls will be encouraged to play. The live coverage has also helped

In their tournaments there are not many under 11 girls so they are allowed to play 2 events. The top 4 play in the under 13.

The under 11's and under 13's receive systemized training. 2 months are spent watching the under 11 players. Under 13 players receive preparation for events – 55 are trained to choose 16 from.

Egypt also has a problem finding girls as parents are inclined to focus on the boys. The Egyptian Association is now co-ordinating with schools to train players. At present the Association is conducting training at the 15 clubs and therefore are unable to work in the schools. The juniors have to be a member of a club. There are also 2 courts in each of 3 public parks

In 2004 there will be a league with 4 boys and 2 girls per team.

There is no prizemoney for junior tournaments.

If the players are in the National team they receive training twice a week. Each club has training 3 to 4 times per year. For the under 11's there is no weight or gym training. They can do sit-ups or press-ups but the emphasis is on technique: lots of fun: competition by aiming at targets.

The Association tries to take the financial load away from the parents and the children. Most of the parents are members of clubs and as the government supports the clubs the clubs can lower the costs for juniors.

If squash was an Olympic sport it would help even more.

There are about 128 in the under 11 section but 50/60 are not playing for various reasons. The best players play in the leagues and then 10/12 are chosen for the national team.

The Egyptian Association arranges with the clubs for coaches.

The talented player is often fiery and difficult but one must let them be "crazy" otherwise one loses them.

Discipline is very important. With the under 11's they have initiated a system where there are 2 rows between the players and the coach/parent so the player is by him/herself. If the player argues with the ref a conduct game is awarded against the player. Recently a talented player had cried between games so he was banned for 15 days !!

One must also be careful not to spoil a player eg Barada one had to control his behaviour.

The Association selects the national trainers. From 50/60 trainers 7 are selected. The national coaches do the last “touches”

In 2002 The ESA received 3 millions Egyptian pounds. 40 senior players were sent to the British Open and a large contingent to the Junior. The 15 clubs are also given some support.

One also needs to keep the players “hungry” otherwise they get too spoiled.

All the top players are finishing an education eg El Borolossy is studying engineering through a US university while Shabana is also studying. They leave school early to train but everyone is studying so that they have something to fall back on.

There has been criticism that they specialize too early but if they had not they would no have had 6 in ¼'s. Juniors love squash and they all want to be champions.

The Egyptians and the Malaysians have demonstrated that much can be achieved when one is close to the players. In Malaysia one of he Board members celebrated a player's 10th birthday with the player and his/her family. The close bond facilitates the learning process.

Ashraf Hanafy added the players must play with LOVE and then much is achieved.

MARKETING FOR A SPORTS EVENT

DR TAHER KHALIL

Why do we need it?

Money
to grow the sport
reward the players
make events profitable
extra flow of cash – more viewers
more players
more media coverage
more investors
better squash world

T V Coverage has improved in Egypt in last 10 years but world wide still minimal. This is an opportunity.

Sports marketing totaled US\$147 billion in 1997.

Products and sport can go hand-in hand eg Snickers (choc) theme of fair play complements soccer

The challenge : needs creative approaches to attract international and local businesses to invest in squash

Needs to appeal to new fans and attract them to the game as players or viewers .

World Squash Federation needs to enhance courts to accommodate larger number of viewers and advertisers:

Need cheaper squash for the new generation – court availability/rackets/balls and coaching.

Squash is played by the elite – need o go to the kids and see what they want.

A	L	E	R	T
Aware	Look Around		(W)rite to media	Try
	Learn			Try
	Adapt			Try again

Only 4 nations dominate in squash – Australia, England, Egypt, Pakistan

All nations must develop/promote/challenge theses four.

Need to CREATE SQUASH STARS : Mohammed Ali – had talent and attitude
Michael Schumaker – attitude

Players/referees/coaches/ commentators need to develop attitude

Need to challenge old concepts and bring in new.
Need to use innovative marketing strategies

6 P's: Price Product Promotion Place Planning People
position – stands alone
pricing -costs profit
promote it differently
prepare with people and plan

Need to treat squash tournaments as brands and then manage them as Brand managers market their brands
Bind squash to reputable, profitable international and local brands and companies

Need professionals – not just those people in the squash fraternity

Need new attitude :

NB If you always do what you always did, you will always get what you always got

COACHING EXPERIENCE

RAHMAT KHAN

His great grandfather started squash in India in early 1900's.

Squash is a tough game – many attributes necessary – Geoff Hunt led 7-2 in the fifth against Jonah Barrington – got cramp in his hand and lost 7-9

One needs :

- 1 **Fitness** is very important – Hashim Kahn was the best stroke player but it did not help. One needs fitness to reach the ball at any time, from anywhere
- 2 **Ball control** – must practise alone – Mosrillah Khan used to spend 3 hours just hitting down the wall.
Must combine 1 and 2 – need the ball control to finish the point.
- 3 **Will Power** in matches and in training. Rosham Khan was hit in the face and 7 teeth were knocked out – challenged his pride and he went on to win in the fifth.

Talent is not enough.

Jahangir was 16 when he turned professional. Have to be strong physically and mentally – Get professional jealousy – have to play 5 tough games

In 1981 in Toronto he beat Geoff Hunt - won the World Open at 17. For 5 and a half years Jahangir never lost a match but then lost to Ross Norman.

In the USA Hardball Championships he beat Mark Talbot for the title and this proved to be a turning point for the game in the USA as they started to use the soft ball.

Squash needs characters – one thinks of Gamal Awad, Geoff Hunt, Hiddy Jahan, Dean Williams, Ross Norman, Chris Dittmar, Rodney Martin. They were true professionals – spent hours talking to people, giving autographs etc.

Jahangir gave a100% in discipline/training/commitment. When the going is tough the true professional is there. He sacrificed many things – as he is doing now as President of WSF – he is sacrificing his family life.

Rahmat was a mentor for Jahangir – he was a father, a friend, an uncle and an advisor.

In the beginning Rahmat was 90% coach and 10% player but this grew to 50/50 and these were exciting times.

It is game of signs - nervous/confused and the coach must pick up the signs – the player **MUST** do what he/she is told: **MUST** play/work/practise with discipline. What he/she does in practice he/she must use in a match – they must be tested- they must not change their tactics in a match.

Talent is many different things. Psychology plays a big role.
Jonah's talent was to keep his opponent in the back of the court. Gamal Awad had amazing speed.

One must analyse one's opponent – see their weaknesses and work on them – put the ball back to where the player has just played it from.

“How did you keep Jahangir motivated?” Torsim's (Jahangir's father) ambition was that Jahangir would be world champion – after his death this was always the challenge for Rahmat.

In coaching one must always find the “spot/button” – know the player's problems: know what motivates him/her. Share with them: work together. One must also know the limits of the player - how far and how much they can be pushed. The coach must be aware of the player's health

Discovering a talented player is one thing - discovering a champion is another. Not all talented players become champions.

The player must trust the coach – do exactly what the coach wants. The coach must say enough at the end of the session not the player.

“Did high altitude training help?” Geoff Hunt had been training in the Himalayas. Jahangir had lost 0-7 in matches to Geoff so trained at altitude for a month and won the World Open and then the British Open to break Geoff's record.

Rahmat became the National coach for Pakistan – coached the juniors for 18 months and they won the World Juniors – the first time in 20 years. They trained through Ramadan – played all night and then rested in the day.

If one really wants to do something one will find a way.

Rahmat has written 3 books: Winning with Jahangir Khan: Advanced Jahangir Khan: Khan Dynasty.

Videos obtainable from www.squashplayer.co.uk/videos

One needs to add different coaches at different stages. One must work from the heart with a pupil.

THE ATHLETIC TRIAD

DR GERALDINE BARNIVILLE

Body fat

18-24% is ideal

Relationship between height/weight

Body mass index $\frac{\text{kgs}}{\text{height in metres squared}}$

% body fat

Under 20 Underweight

20-25 Average

25-30 Overweight

Over 30 Obese

If the body fat is more than 30 the player must watch the weight – either eating too much or not burning off enough.

One needs to intervene as soon as possible.

The player must not take supplements unless there is a deficiency. One needs regular medical examinations.

One must be careful about taking supplements as one is not sure of components or purity.

Cramps: often in racket hand at the end of the match. May be caused by dehydration or a chemical disturbance in the muscles.

The colour of the urine should be pale during the day.

If birth pills are used to regulate the period the cycle can be distorted as the player is taking oestrogen.

If one gets dizzy while playing it could be due to:

- 1 dieting – the blood sugar low
- 2 iron level/haemoglobin

Ensure an intake of carbohydrate and get the player medically tested.

Foods before a match and when?

It must be well planned

It is bad to eat carbohydrate too close to the start of the match. The blood sugar rises as the pancreas puts out insulin, which then lowers the blood sugar.

Should eat at the latest half an hour before.

Adequate intake of carbohydrate should be several hours before.

One must replace fluids as soon as possible after playing.

Serious injuries are becoming more prevalent in young players. One must structure the training programme.

Warm – up is vital – to prepare mentally and to ensure that the muscles are warm.

The player must get fit to play squash.

Eyeguards : Coaches should set the example by wearing them.

OPTIMAL COACHING OF FEMALE ATHLETES

SHONA KERR/TIM BACON

There are motivational and communication differences between men and women.

Need to understand the female athlete.

Their physical ability is less than a male's: they can be very moody: women should coach women: one must listen to she wants to improve: they have will power .

Students at a Women's College vs Students at a Co-ed College

They are more satisfied

They will graduate

They will get better jobs and earn more money

They participate more fully in class

They have greater self esteem.

There is very little research on the female athlete and very little squash specific.

There are cultural differences in various countries

In an individual sport the athletes prefer coaches of the same gender

In Norway it was found that the female coach was a better psychologist.

In Australia no differences were found

Attitudes are changing – there is still a preference for male coaches for male sports

The actual behaviour of the coach – the way the coach leads

The coach's characteristics are influenced by the situational characteristics and the athlete's characteristics while the actual behaviour is influenced by required behaviour and preferred behaviour.

One needs to form a good relationships then one can push the right buttons

The athlete needs to be liked by the coach and the peers.

One needs to find the athlete's preferred behaviour – what she likes then the athlete's performance and satisfaction will improve.

VIRTUAL SQUASH

NATALIE GRAINGER/AIDAN HARRISON

This is a mind game which can be played anywhere at any time. It stimulates the thought processes- is fun – can be used for visualization. Makes the player think about the construction of a rally : about his /her choice of shot.

Need 2 people/players: can be coach and player: can be a group and an individual: 2 players with a coach “interfering/advising”: 2 players with the rest of the group advising. Proved effective for the Americans traveling between the hotel and the courts

The players must be realistic about the shots, which can be played off certain shots. They must visualize where the opponent is: they must also think about attack and defence.

Player A

Serve from the right hand box high on
To front wall, floats to high on left hand
Wall to backhand.

Move across - backhand low cross court
boast

Scrambled to drop – desperate lob straight
down the wall lands in back right hand corner
- dead

Can be lots of fun
Need to be realistic
Think about returns/ placings /movement
Working the opponent and the ball

Likely to be more effective with higher standard of player.

Player B

Difficult serve to return – soft
Backhand drive down wall

Anticipated boast – moved in
quickly – drop but not in
nick

SQUASH COURT EXERCISES

JAHANGIR KHAN/

RAHMAT KHAN

Start with deep cross court drives.
Move forward to short cross court drives
Then short cross court volleys
Move backwards with crosscourt volleys

Make a barrier line down the length of the court and then hit backhands in that channel
Move forwards getting shorter and shorter
Start volleys and then move backwards volleying

Then do cross court boast
Now add 1 drive down the wall
Followed by a backhand boast
Then a backhand volley
Then move the player further and further forward
Until a boast at the front

Volley the figure of 8

Backhand boast then forehand short boast
Then short forehand and backhand
Then up to volley backhand
Higher forehand volley
Then back to short backhand boast

Continue and include forehand down the line
Let the coach feed

Staight down the line
Moving forward short and cross court
Moving backward with volley

Short front with backhand volley boast

Them move to sideways across the court – hitting backhands and forehands against the side walls

Player must learn discipline – learn to play long rallies with NO mistakes for 1 hour, 1 and ½ hours or whatever time.
Count how many times the player makes mistakes.

Must have variety of all strokes

Must work on the mistakes.

Play 100 of all kinds of strokes but no lobs/drops
Then learn to drop from everywhere on the court

Have 2 players on court – play a game for ½ hr, ¾ hour or 1 hour till they can play 1 rally with no mistakes

3 areas where balls land ; back: middle: front
Play routines from these areas
NO mistakes
Will have more ball control

When the player can do all this well then he/she is heading for success
Drill 1 shot at a time

2 players again – play 1 long rally with all strokes – rally should not be stopped

What are the new players in Pakistan/Egypt and England doing ?
They look attractive but is it good for squash. As with food one must have basic game.

When coaching there might not be sufficient courts but one can still do drills.
Pick out the person who is going to be good and then work with them.

Drills :

- 1 Coach hits cross court to length The player hits down the line
- 2 2 lengths : 2 straight lengths and 1 other stroke eg boast
- 3 length, length, boast
- 4 length , length, cross court
- 5 length, length, drop

Foundation is length

- 1 short, short, cross court drop
- 2 short, short, cross court lob
- 3 short, crosscourt and 1 other stroke
- 4 short, boast, volley drop

Play from 3 areas of court – deep , middle, short

Player must be fit

Boast , deep, drop, boast deep, drop
Player can choose: straight drive, drop, drive, boast, drop, drive.

Now move to backhand – do the same sequence.

The coach can use deception.

Put the player on the T and the coach drops to either side

The player must hit length either on the serve box line or deeper

Now do the same on the backhand with the player hitting backhand cross courts

The player must always work out where the opponent is.

Player must get under the ball to lob effectively

Then drop the head to play a boast /deep drive

Play a forehand short boast - coach then drops or lobs

Then backhand short boast or drive

Can make it 3 boasts and a serve

Continue without stopping

The player may only stop when the coach says so

Now move further back in the court