

USPTA

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



USPTA Player Development Program

Reaching players at all levels

Typically, the words “player development” are associated with training programs that develop elite competitive players only. We would like you to think of the term in a broader sense, as we have done with the new USPTA Player Development Program.

USPTA is defining player development as a way to reach tennis-teaching professionals with information that can help all players reach their potential regardless of their level. The goal of reaching players at all levels sounds lofty, and it is. But that is exactly what the USPTA Player Development Program is designed to do. By helping tennis teachers acquire the knowledge and confidence to teach modern tennis techniques to students at every level, we can accomplish it.

Several years ago, players on the pro tours began showing off a new stroke, taking balls in the air near mid-court and blasting them as though they were hitting groundstrokes. When successful with the swing volley, their aggressiveness seemed beyond criticism. When they missed, their shot selection appeared ill-conceived and counter to all conventional teachings.

How long did it take for your students – the ones you’d been patiently training to shorten their backswings – to start mimicking the pros by taking long, wild whacks at volleys before they had even positioned themselves at the net? Probably one day. Like it or not, the swing volley is now part of tennis. And, as always, recreational players take some cues from the shots and styles of the pros, either out of flattery or necessity as they advance in competition.

There is an undeniable thread between professional tennis and recreational tennis, and the most important link between the two is you, the tennis-teaching professional. You bridge the gap between the shots and techniques of the competitive player and recreational players of all levels. That’s why tennis teachers must know how to teach shots like the swing volley and open-stance, loaded groundstrokes and several other shots that characterize modern tennis, and why we’ve spent the past 15 months creating the USPTA Player Development Program.

Don’t misunderstand. The USPTA board, Education Committee and staff aren’t going to be developing players. The Player Development Program is designed to bring the details of teaching the modern game to every USPTA Professional. The purpose is not to cater to those who train high performance players, but rather to be comprehensive so that teachers of all levels will know how to incorporate modern techniques and tactics into their lesson plans for every player, from beginner to competitive tournament players. We believe the same teaching methods and systems can be scaled to assist all players to reach their potential.

This three-part program will continue to evolve with the help of some of the sport’s best teachers. Several USPTA members who have worked with top world-ranked players – as well as recreational players – are program advisers. The advisory council is part one of the program.



When and how new players, including children, should be taught modern stroke technique is one subject that will be addressed in detail in USPTA’s new Player Development Program.

into this category are substantially different from the conventional versions of years ago.

We also are introducing a macro and micro view of periodization, or organizing a player’s development into a specific period of time and specific components of training and competition. This organizational method is the basis for developing recommendations regarding teaching methods and progressions that will be available through the Player Development Program, and a graphic depicting the six general performance components illustrates this concept.

To give you an opportunity to evaluate your knowledge of the modern game, we’ve included a short quiz that we think you’ll find interesting. We hope it will get you in the frame of mind to consider the terminology and technique used in modern shots, think about the nuances of teaching them and then look into the details of the Player Development Program.

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