



## The tactical component

**A**s we've noted in previous player development inserts, each of the six general performance components (physical, technical, tactical, strategic, mental and environmental) are all interconnected and related in some way. In this insert, we will explore the tactical component, which integrates some aspects of all components and all of the physical, technical, strategic and mental components.

*continued next page*

Tactics are most often confused with strategy, but though they are very closely related, they are two very different components in tennis. In fact, USPTA Master Professional Jim Parker best defines tactics as “the means by which you carry out a strategy.” In other words, tactics are the little things a player implements with each shot (speed, spin, placement, etc.) to achieve the goals of the bigger picture (an overall match strategy).

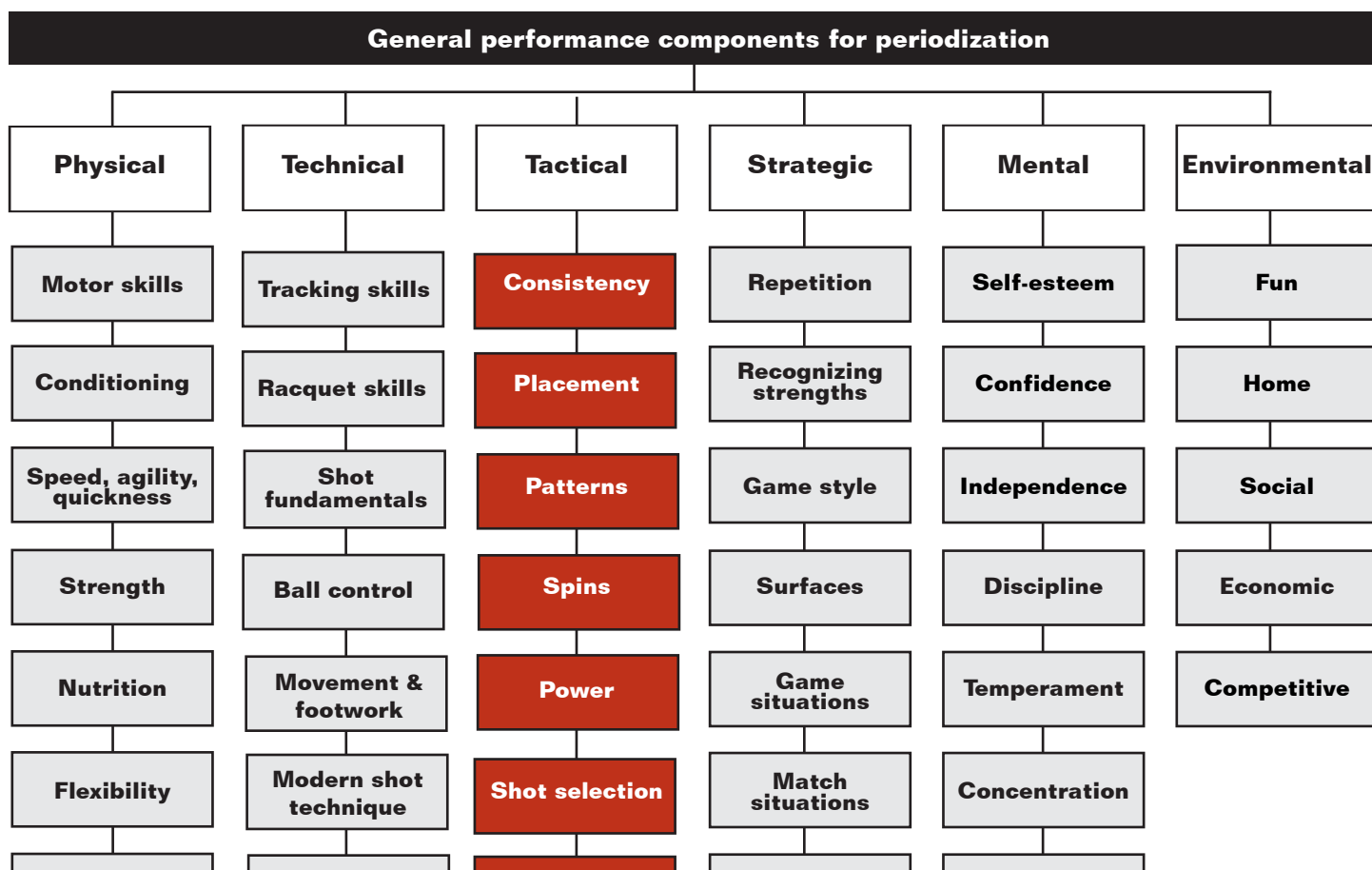
“Tactics are a step-by-step, shot-by-shot choice you make as to how you’re going to carry out a larger plan,” Parker said. “Let’s say your overall strategy is to win by out-steadying your opponent. Then your tactics are going to reflect that. Your tactics might include not taking a lot of risks with your shots, trying to be steady, trying to cut down errors, or trying to hit shots that put your opponent in a fairly difficult position without taking a lot of risk yourself. So that would be a way that you might carry out a particular strategy, by choosing individual shot selections as the match unfolds that always reflect that overall idea.”

The tactical component has: consistency, placement, patterns, spins, power, shot selection and competitive situations. Some

of these are developed physically and technically, such as spin, power, consistency and placement, while others are best learned by experience. Through a successful implementation of the tactical component, a player should be able to exploit his opponent’s weaknesses and limit what his opponent can do to him. USPTA Master Professional David T. Porter, Ed.D., believes, “Tactics can and should be taught from the first stages of learning to play tennis. For example, how spin and speed (power) change basic predicting skills should begin on almost the first series of lessons. Tactics are not just for advanced players, tactics are for all players.” First, let’s discuss one of the most basic elements of success – consistency.

### Consistency

Without a doubt, consistency is the foundation of tennis because it allows the other aspects of the game to be applied. Generally, it is defined as using optimum pace and control to get the ball back more times during a point than an opponent while hitting shots to a specific target or area without error. One of the prerequisites to being consistent is that a player has to be in good physical condition in order to stay in longer points and have the strength and energy to repetitively and correctly produce shot after shot without tiring. However,



**This is an excerpt/sample of a document available to USPTA members and subscribers. You must log in to access the full document.**