

Tennis Play and Stay – Case studies from South America and West, Central and North Africa

Cesar Kist and Amine Ben Makhlouf

ABSTRACT

Tennis is a game; therefore, it's obvious that we need to, as coaches, develop a tactical and playful learning process if we want to retain players in the sport for many years. It's fundamental to have more players in the game, to build better players, to produce top players, to keep the beginners in the game (kids, teens and adults). Tennis Play and Stay is a reality.

Key words: Retain, development, Learning
Received: 28 Jan 2017
Accepted: 25 Jun 2017
Corresponding author: Cesar Kist,
Email: cesarkist1@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

It all started when I attended the Tennis Play and Stay Seminar that was organized in London in 2007. I had the opportunity to hear about the Campaign, I tried the red, orange and green balls and I got really convinced that Tennis Play and Stay will be a successful project for Brazilian tennis. In fact, with Tennis Play and Stay "Tennis is easy, fun and healthy".

Next step: Transmit the motivation/enthusiasm to the president of Confederação Brasileira de Tennis, national tutors, coaches and teachers.

In April 2007 during Davis Cup Brazil v Canada the Tennis Play and Stay Campaign was launched. Media, coaches and the Davis Cup teams attended the event.

After the launch, South America has trained around 3200 coaches in more than 200 courses (Modules ABC) and Tennis Play Stay courses.

In our courses, we gave special attention to: convince the coaches that Tennis Play and Stay works (brings more people to the game, better development of players, healthy, fun, financially accessible). Also, we worked on the mentality of the coaches. We worked hard in convincing them about the importance of searching for new and updated information. The consequence was a consistent participation in courses and conferences.

Challenges: Some problems faced:

1) Some older coaches that were not open to the "new" changes.

2) Coaches that had a very stable job in clubs (they were working for a long time in the club and had a waiting list of students and they didn't care about the quality of their coaching).



3) Access to Tennis Play and Stay equipment (many shops were

not selling the balls).

4) Expensive materials (imported).

5) Few public courts.

After some time, these problems were solved except the amount of public courts.



CONSOLIDATION OF THE PROGRAM: THE LAUNCH OF TENNIS 10'S

Another aspect that was very important for consolidating the campaign was the launch of Tennis10s and the new rules approved (2012). All the clubs and academies adopted these guidelines for 10&U competitions and consequently it became stronger.

SLOWER BALLS AREN'T ONLY FOR CHILDREN: THE LAUNCH OF TENNIS XPRESS

During the Brazil v Russia Davis Cup tie, a course was organised for coaches where Tennis Xpress was launched and promoted. After that many courses were organised throughout the country. Many clubs have implemented the use of slower balls for beginner adults.

LAST STAGE: DEVELOPMENT OF TOP PLAYERS THROUGH THE SLOWER BALLS AND SMALLER COURTS

In this final stage, it was important to establish a teaching methodology of training potential players using the slower balls and smaller courts and not rush to play in a full court with regular balls. The lengthy process to develop a top player is a reality and the idea is not to rush through any phase, but use as much as possible the benefit of each stage (e.g. Orange court).

I do believe that Tennis Play and Stay was the most important change in tennis that happened in the last years. It's all about the future of our game. It's fundamental to have more players in the game, to build better players, to produce top players, to keep the beginners in the game (kids, teens and adults). Tennis Play and Stay is a reality.

Since its official launch by the ITF in 2007, the Tennis Play and Stay concept has been adopted in all countries of West, Central and Northern Africa. For example, Senegal, Togo, Benin, Mali, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Ghana, Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt, all organized a Play Tennis training in their respective countries in 2008. This was followed by the Central African Republic, Mauritania, Algeria, Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Congo and Democratic Congo in 2009.

The Tennis Play and Stay concept has made the learning process to be more attractive in comparison to more traditional and outdated styles coaching and developing players. In addition, it has helped countries which face infrastructural constraints.

The best of the testimonies that I had during all of the clinics and workshops that I have been a part of, was from the National Technical Director of the Senegalese Tennis Federation who said: "At the end of the 4 days clinic, the coaches realized that with the old-style teaching methodology, they did more "Play & Go" and did not understand why our players do not adhere to tennis and end up abandoning it. On the other hand, with the new teaching methodology of the Tennis Play and Stay, they understood that by adapting the material and the zone of play to the level of the player, the players enjoyed learning to serve, and being able to rally quickly in addition to that they have enjoyed it, I thank the ITF for this initiative because it will radically change our working methods and allow us to attract more participants."

I have personally experienced a momentous change in teaching, elder coaches are not hiding their scepticism, the new ones seeking to demonstrate the validity of the operation and the learning process.

In spite of this climate of opposition between the followers of the older teaching methods and those saying, "the child and the game are at the heart of the learning process", I feel a real evolution in the world of teaching; more sharing, more pedagogical research and referenced situations, a real desire to share, to exchange knowledge, to debate. (While arguably twenty years ago everyone kept their own methods to themselves).



As a coach in and amongst the day to day goings on on the court in various cities and nations, I am convinced of the merit of this concept, the system of progression (Red, Orange and Green) allows each student to assess their level without needing to refer to a ranking.

Tennis is a game; therefore, it is obvious that we need to, as coaches, develop a tactical and playful learning process if we want to continue retaining players for years.

CONCLUSION

The positive reception and impact of the Tennis Play and Stay campaign outlined through first-hand experiences from experienced coaches and ITF Development Officers in their respective regions is a testament to how the philosophy of the initiative can transcend through all nations across the world regardless of size or resources available.

RECOMMENDED ITF TENNIS ACADEMY CONTENT (CLICK BELOW)



Copyright (c) 2017 Cesar Kist and Amine Ben Makhlof .



This text is under a [Creative Commons BY 4.0 license](#)

You are free to Share - copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format - and Adapt the content - remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially under the following terms:

Attribution: You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.

[CC BY 4.0 license terms summary](#) [CC BY 4.0 license terms](#)