



Multi and interdisciplinary intervention in tennis.

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ABSTRACT

When undertaking a project focused on high-performance, it is necessary to establish clear and constant communication among the entire multidisciplinary team, who in today's scene need to go through a process of decentralization, consisting of sharing tasks and knowledge among the professionals from the different areas of work that make up the interdisciplinary team.

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INTRODUCTION

When undertaking a project focused on high-performance and professionalism, a plan must be devised as a team with all the areas of work inherent in training sports (coach, physical trainer, physiotherapist, nutritionist, psychologist, doctor, etc.). This plan has the objective to maximize the probability of developing more tennis players with the tools to achieve excellence in the sport.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY INTERVENTION

Nowadays, it is common to come across statements such as "it's really tough to play tennis". However, in actual fact, this sport isn't hard to learn or practice, especially with the methodological advances made over the years such as the creation of "Play and Stay" and "Le Petit Tennis". Tennis is—yes—a complex sport, which in order to succeed in and perform at the highest level requires significant development in the four main areas inherent to it: technical, tactical, physical and psychological (Kovacs, 2007). In this sense, the formation of a high-performance athlete entails a qualitative and cautious job that results in such development in these areas. It is from this concept that the role of the multidisciplinary team stands out.

Due to its complex nature, to which various areas of human knowledge apply, tennis presents the need for the multidisciplinary team to be composed of specialized professionals capable of understanding and hence working on the development of each of these areas. For example, the court coach, who is responsible for the development of the technical and tactical areas, needs to be well informed in biomechanics and pedagogy in order to have the proper conditions to

correct the mechanics of all strokes and to create exercises that simulate the player solving problems during a match (tactical development). The physical area, on the other hand, is the responsibility of the physical trainer, physiotherapist, nutritionist and doctor, who should together guarantee the athlete the proper health and physical conditioning needed to perform in the best way possible. The psychological area is handled chiefly by the sport's psychologist, who should be able to understand the emotional and mental factors that interfere in the tennis player's performance with the purpose of helping the player to improve behaviourally in tournaments and training.

In the meantime, it must be clearly noted that a junior tennis player can suppress the need for improvement in one of these areas with advanced development in another. For example, a player who is not well prepared physically may still find a way to keep winning through technique, tactics and psychological strength. However, when thinking about high-performance and professionalism, excellence must always be sought—simply stated: high-level performance in all areas.

INTERDISCIPLINARY INTERVENTION

The evolution of the game of tennis during the past 20 years has resulted in the augmentation of the number of scientific researches and groups of studies/projects focused on understanding the demands of this sport from an interdisciplinary point of view (Fernandez-Fernandez, 2013).

Corroborating, this interdisciplinary view proposes that the tasks spread among the different areas of the sport should be executed in a joint manner, without losing the specificity of

each one, making the acquisition of more ample and deepened knowledge possible for athletes (Barbieri et al., 2008).



With this characterization, it is possible to conclude that, in order to induce maximum development in high-performance athletes, a joint job with all areas involved is necessary, allowing the maximization of the probability of developing more tennis players with means to achieve excellence in the sport.

Building on this conclusion, the majority of clubs and high-performance centres today possess a wide range of professionals such as psychologist, nutritionist, court coach, physical trainer and physiotherapist in their staff, forming a multidisciplinary team. Nonetheless, what is the communication among these professionals like? In other words, does the interdisciplinary work among these professionals actually exist?

When talking about high-performance, a plan is required. However, this plan must be devised as a whole with all the areas in a manner that permits the development of one area to positively influence the development of another and not vice-versa. Having said that, it is common to find in a day or training session the diverse areas working together on the player, in which the technical-tactical work, for example, may suffer interference from the physical conditioning area as well as from that of nutrition and so forth.

To illustrate the need for the interdisciplinary approach, consider a physical trainer who conducted an intense agility training session in the morning composed of sprints and changes of direction. Upon completing this session, the athlete heads off to the court, where his court coach has prepared an intense couple of hours of training comprised of lengthy ball exchanges and lots of movement. Unhappy with the session and assuming the athlete is not putting in maximum effort, the court coach decides to augment the intensity of the training even more, demanding more and more from the athlete. The next day, the athlete will rarely be able to move around the court efficiently due to physical exhaustion accompanied with

muscular pains, which in turn could progressively lead to injury as a result of ill-planned loads of training.

In this form, the problem occurred due to inefficient—or perhaps even lack of—communication between the court coach and the physical trainer and, on top of that, lack of an interdisciplinary plan.

Adding to that train of thought, Davids et al., (2008) state that significant variations in work philosophy within a team will be noted and recognized, however the support to an integral approach is fundamental. Having said that, it is worth noting that it is common to come across situations that limit interdisciplinary development in tennis centres, such as:

- All work executed is centralized in only one professional of the team usually known as “Head Coach”
- Professional insecurity when it comes to sharing specific knowledge of an area or delegating a certain activity to another member of the interdisciplinary team
- Vanity, ego.

This being so, figure 1 aims to illustrate the interdisciplinary intervention within the scope of tennis.

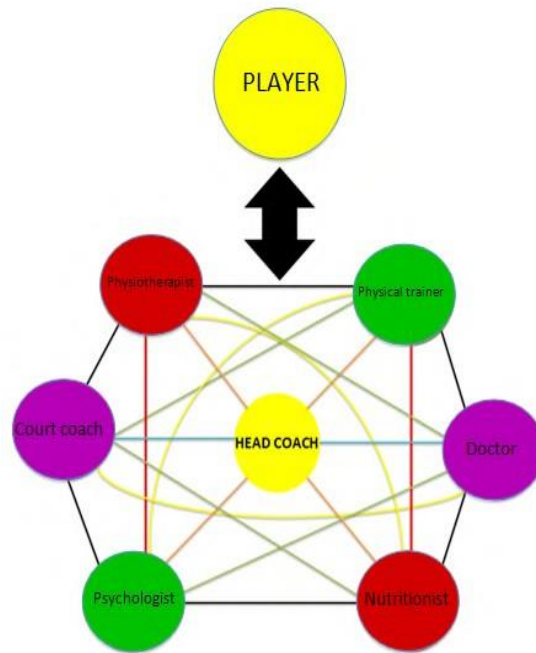


Figure 1. Interdisciplinary intervention in tennis.



CONCLUSION

Tennis is a complex sport that in order to succeed in and perform at the highest level demands maximum development in all aspects inherent to it. Technical, tactical, physical and psychological areas all require clear and constant communication throughout the entire multidisciplinary team, who in today's scene needs to go through a process of decentralization, consisting in sharing tasks and knowledge among the professionals from the different areas of work that make up the interdisciplinary team.

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