



# Why do some elite players accomplish their Grand Slam goals while others fail?

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## ABSTRACT

When coaches talk about talent as the most important predictor of success, often we find through practical case studies that this hypothesis could not be confirmed. The question is: What is talent and are we missing something? The intention of the article is to accelerate the player's development and ultimately maximise their potential while directing coaches to core problems.

**Key words:** Grand Slam, Player development, Psychology, System of criteria.

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## INTRODUCTION

What is hiding behind every successful Grand Slam player? Good genes, coach, talent, or something else? How can the process be accelerated to maximise the potential of a player? What techniques and procedures are needed in order to make a player actually start believing in each shot and every tactical solution? How easy is it to train the brain to let go of bad habits while simultaneously increase the level of adaptation to stress and pain and increase the level of optimism? Why do some extremely talented players not achieve their potential? In order to answer the question 'why do some elite players accomplish their Grand Slam goals while others fail?' we must first understand what talents is and how is can be channeled into success.

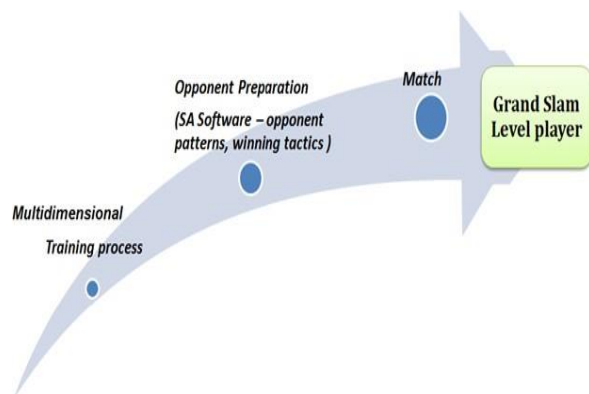


Figure 1. The three-step multidisciplinary approach.

## SCIENCE BEHIND GRAND SLAM PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

Training processes (Figure 1.) which connect physiology, psychology and biomechanics allow new neural programs to

develop. Trninc et al. (2010) have proposed a hypothetical model of the specific characteristics of elite athletes in team sports which served as the basis for the designing this model. The authors have shaped a hypothetical structure with 17 criteria within the six categories, while this model (Figure 2.) is designed through 15 criteria within two categories.

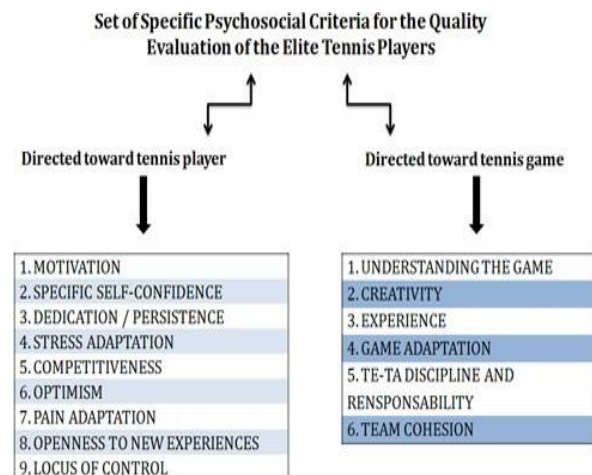


Figure 2. Specific psychosocial profile set for elite tennis players (modified according Trninc).

The system has been modified by the fact that tennis is an individual sport and some of the criteria that the authors have proposed apply exclusively for team sports. In order to explain how we should approach the player (off the court, on the court, and before/after the match), it's necessary to unmask a player specific psychosocial profile. The mentioned authors have explicitly explained the each of the above criteria as well as their scientific background.

An Example

If we observe the obtained results (Figure 3.), it is evident that a player cannot achieve high progress nor maximise their potential regardless of their talent, technique, tactics knowledge or level of movement.

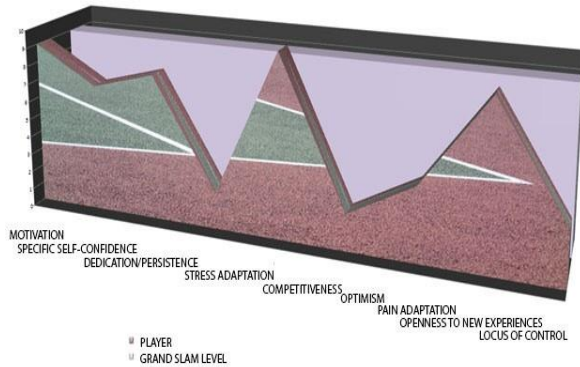


Figure 3. Player psychosocial assessment example.

Numerous scientific studies and practical experience show that inadequate coping with stress has a negative impact on psychological processes that are important for successful sports performance, such as the focus of attention and level of excitement (Nideffer, 1983; Lavallee & Flint, 1996). Furthermore, ineffective coping may decrease sports performance and increase muscle tension, while effectively dealing generally has a positive effect on performance in sports activities (Filaire et al., 2009). This is one of the most important reasons why some players accomplish their Grand Slam goals while others fail. Their team is focused on the core of the problem (psychosocial skill set) instead of outcomes, technique changes and numerous drills. Only when the psychosocial part is deciphered, expert teams can start with development on the court. Under the influence of specific technical-tactical and psychosocial preparation, we can develop psychological characteristics required to achieve the highest Grand Slam results. Using scientific analysis tools, expert teams can decipher game styles and use this to explain what to do on the court and why. By using AHP multi-criteria decision-making method, it's necessary to find out for each individual player what psychosocial criteria is most relative and important and what is least important.

The entire training process is set in such a way that the first and second chapter are merged into one unit for example, merging second serve return, with stress adaptation through anaerobic threshold level training or merging transition attack, pain adaptation through lactate tolerance training (specific drills). In accordance with the aforementioned, players are simultaneously developing necessary tennis, physiological and specific psychological criteria. This type of training will provide the three most important aspects of the training process.

1. Measure the progress
2. New neural pathways development

3. Maximising player potential.



Figure 4. Development on the court / specific technical-tactical and psychosocial preparation.

Science behind Grand Slam Player Development

The second step is statistical software that allows functions to be adapted for the use of a personal coach on the professional tour. Statistical analysis software can be used to chart numerous tennis matches on a point by point basis. Results can include quantitative research while others are more qualitative analysing several players against a specific factor (O'Donoghue & Ingram, 2001). Concrete examples and accurate explanations about opponents (patterns of play, strengths and a weaknesses), expert teams must build a strong tactical plan for every opponent (Piles & Crespo, 2012).

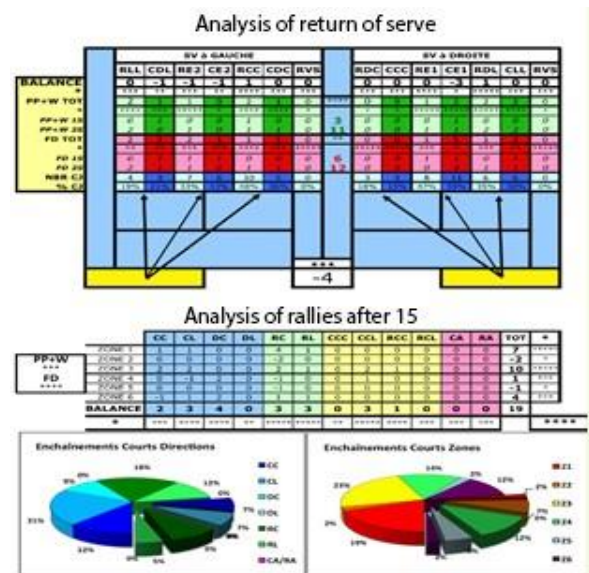


Figure 5. an example of pro-tour software.

Software must include and produce analysis for all surfaces for all opponents. Software should include profile types, factors that explain and determine victories and factors that explain defeat, key points including directional patterns, speed and pace of the ball for all shots including return, serve and grounstrokes. The analysis should include the performance of tactical patterns such as serve and volley, chip and charge, net

charging on the first shot after the serve, net charging during a baseline rally.

### Science behind Grand Slam Player Development

The third step represents multi-dimensional preparation for the match. Tennis is a mental game for all top players, and how do Grand Slam champions control their minds and thoughts between points and during changeovers is crucial for match outcome (Samulski, 2006). Expert coach needs to apply mental toughness techniques before matches in order to make players more focused and confident than their opponents in pressure situations (Jones et al. 2002). The results of the PTP (psychology, tactics, physiology) preparation provides feedback, subjective and objective information, after the match (Samulski, 2006).

### CONCLUSION

The intention of the article is to accelerate the player's development and ultimately maximise their potential while directing coaches to the core of the majority of problems for players. Numerous studies in psychology, biomechanics and physiology as well as practical tests experience have enabled us to create a model that provides progress measurement, neural pathways development and potential maximisation. At the highest level there are no skipping steps, because all mentioned psychosocial variables are trainable. The first level (multidimensional training process) is the starting point where vision, strong work ethic, trust and appreciation are born, while second and third step are designed to provide the most appropriate learning environment to maximise potential of a player.

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