



The role of the ITF Development programme in coach education.

Dave Miley.

International Tennis Federation.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to outline the work the ITF is doing worldwide to help improve the quality of coaching worldwide. This article reviews three of the key areas of the ITF's coach education programme: 1) The ITF and its global involvement in coaching courses, 2) The importance of ITF Coaches Conferences- both Regional and Worldwide and 3) The Coach Education resources produced by the ITF.

Key words: Coach education, ITF development programme.

Received: 1 Juli 2011

Accepted: 1 August 2011

Corresponding author: Dave Miley, International Tennis Federation.

Email: coaching@itftennis.com

INTRODUCTION

Since its inception in the late 70's, the ITF Development Programme has continued to invest in the important area of Coaches Education globally. Recognising that many National Associations in developing tennis regions do not have a coach education programme in place, the ITF provides a range of support to help these federations to become self sufficient in coach education at national level and to put in place a quality certification system in their own language and ideally with its own qualified experts in charge.

This article will outline three of the main areas of the ITF's coach education programme.

1. Coaching Courses
2. Coaches Conferences
3. Coach Education Resources

1. COACHING COURSES:

National Certification Courses

The ITF assists member nations in organising National Certification Courses for coaches utilising four different levels of ITF approved coaching syllabi:

- Play Tennis covering the coaching of starter players using the key elements of the Play & Stay Programme including the use of slower balls
- Coaching Beginner and Intermediate Players (Level 1)

- Coaching Advanced Players (Level 2)
- Coaching High Performance Players (Level 3)

Three of these coaching syllabi are now available in over 30 languages worldwide including English, French Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, Russian, Chinese, and Farsi with the aim of encouraging and assisting ITF member nations to implement a National Coaches Certification System.

The Coaching High Performance Players (Level III) is currently only available in English and Spanish. Ensuring that the materials for the courses are available in as many local languages as possible is an important part of the ITF's strategy and the syllabi and other educational material are now being used by over 100 nations worldwide to certify coaches.

It is important to emphasise that the ITF does not certify coaches. The ITF provides the recommended syllabus and when necessary international tutors to run the courses and to train the local tutors- but the certification obtained at the end of the course is a National Association certification.

The ITF began a project in 2009 to approve coach education systems under the control of National Federations. This project was established with the help and with the approval of a task force made up of experts/ coaching directors of some of the major tennis nations which helped the ITF to establish criteria and minimum standards for coach education systems. By the end of 2011, 10 countries will have ITF approval and by 2012 it is expected that 30+ of the most developed nations will be approved. It is intended to open the approval process to all nations by 2013 and that nations can then apply to be ITF approval based on the agreed criteria at Bronze: (self sufficient

at Play Tennis and Level 1) Silver: (Self sufficient at Level 2); Gold: (Self Sufficient at level 3).

In 2010, 74 courses were organised by the ITF including: fifteen Level 1 courses, ten Level 2 courses and nine Play Tennis courses, with 22 of the 74 courses being funded by Olympic Solidarity.



Specific Theme/Short Courses

Specific Theme Courses (Short Courses) are usually completed over three days (20 hours) and include on-court and lecture room presentations. The goal of these courses is to provide coaches with the latest information on specific sport science and coaching topics. The courses currently in place cover play tennis, physical conditioning, psychological preparation, advanced biomechanics and working with female players.

Tutors Courses

The ITF over the past years has begun to focus more on tutor training and with 5 regional tutor courses taking place in 2010. The ITF runs Tutors Courses to train potential national Play Tennis, Level 1 and Level 2 course tutors with the objective that National Associations can with their help become self sufficient and run courses independently of the ITF in the future. These courses cover not only coaching and sport science subjects from the syllabus, but also other important elements such as: presentation methods, assessment criteria and evaluation of competencies. The ITF is planning to hold more Tutor Courses and to establish a new course for the Directors of Coach Education to help train those experts who can then be overall in charge of the national programme.

2. COACHES CONFERENCES

ITF Worldwide Coaches Conference

The ITF Worldwide Coaches Conference is held every two years and has become a unique international forum for high level

coaches focusing on the development of high performance players. This five-day event features presentations on the most up-to-date tennis specific sport science and medical information and practical on-court technical and tactical coaching. The Conference usually attracts more than 500 coaches from 100 different nations. Previous editions have been hosted in Valencia (Spain), Asunción (Paraguay), Antalya (Turkey), Vilamoura (Portugal), Bangkok (Thailand), Miami (USA) and Casablanca (Morocco).

ITF Regional Coaches Conferences

Regional Coaches Conferences are held biennially in Central America and the Caribbean, South America, Asia, Europe and Africa and provide an important and cost effective educational opportunity for the best coaches from these regions to be updated on the most recent coaching information and also to come together to discuss issues specific to their respective regions. 2010 saw an increase in the overall Regional Coaches Conference participation from 900 in 2008 to 1,050 in 2010.



3. COACHES EDUCATION RESOURCES:

Books and written resources

The production and translation of ITF educational material is vital for the development of Coaches Education and books and manuals have been produced in many key languages. These resources are then used for the courses and are available for National association's to purchase at special discounts.

Other publications produced include monthly newsletter updates as well as the ITF CSSR- the world's only tennis specific sport science and coaching journal to be published in three languages.

Web resources/Distance Learning

Since its launch in July 2004, the ITF Coaching website (www.itftennis.com/coaching) has become an invaluable tool

for thousands of coaches across the globe. Following the popularity of this website and the interest in it shown by coaches, the ITF started to invest in e-learning including on-line presentations, available for download, covering a wide range of tennis specific sports science topics. They also developed PowerPoint materials linked to the approved ITF syllabi which are now available to support the coaches' courses at all levels to view online.

Another web resource that has been part of the ITF development programme since 2007, is the world's premier digital coaching resource platform – the ITF Tennis iCoach. This web resource supports the continual education of the coaches in member nations by allowing for easy access at a small annual fee to the latest coaching information online. To date over 15,000 coaches from 185 countries have accessed the iCoach and make regular use of this resource. In addition to the latest drills, research articles and online presentations, a selection of the keynote presentations from the Regional and Worldwide Coaches Conferences are made available to view on www.tennisicoach.com. Through Tennis iCoach, coaches who are unable to attend a conference can benefit on line from the expertise and knowledge of many of the world's leading tennis coaching experts in player development, sport science and medicine, psychology, biomechanics and coaches education. We believe that distance learning will increasingly become more important in the future and we will continue to invest and improve the e-learning resources accordingly.

Much of the success of the ITF's coach education programme is a direct result of the co-operation we have with the top coaching experts from our member nations around the world who continue to support the ITF programme. The ITF coaches commission is made up of top coaching experts in Player Development and Coaches education and the commission meets twice per year and advises the ITF on matters related to coaching. It is important to recognise the great contribution the coaches commission members have and continue to make.

CONCLUSION

Over the past 20 years, one of the most important objectives of the ITF has been to assist its member nations to improve the

level of coaching and a number of successful initiatives and resources have been outlined in this article. The ITF recognise that whilst much progress has been made, there is still a lot of work to do and improvements to make. The ITF will therefore continue over the coming years to invest in coach education which we see as fundamental to the future growth of the game of tennis globally.

REFERENCES

- ITF Coaches Courses (2011). Retrieved 18 July 2011 from <http://www.itftennis.com/coaching/education/coachescourses/>
- ITF Short Courses (2011). Retrieved 20 July 2011 from <http://www.itftennis.com/coaching/education/coachescourses/english/specificthemecourse.asp>
- ITF RCCs (2010). Retrieved July 19 2011 from <http://www.itftennis.com/coaching/education/workshops/regiona1/index.asp>

RECOMMENDED ITF TENNIS ACADEMY CONTENT (CLICK BELOW)



Copyright (c) 2011 Dave Miley.



This text is under a [Creative Commons BY 4.0 license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

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](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) [CC BY 4.0 license terms](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)