



## **Section 3.01 JUNIOR DEVELOPMENT**

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### **Junior Development Goal**

To provide a structure of programs and services which will introduce and expose the maximum number of junior players to the game of tennis and to assist junior players to reach their chosen level of competence regionally, provincially, and nationally.

### **How To Start a Junior Program**

The importance of Juniors - Clubs are continually striving to increase their present membership base; their membership base for the future; and to satisfy the needs necessary to retain current members.

In this light, juniors are a vital part of all clubs. Juniors are the future adult membership of a club and a break in this cycle of junior to adult status can severely reduce club size and potential growth. These juniors can also be a link to increasing the adult membership of your club through introducing their parents to tennis. Thus, existing junior members' needs must be serviced through effective programming.

Juniors add vitality, excitement, and youthfulness to any club atmosphere, and represent the future of the game of tennis.

### **Planning a Junior Development Program**

- A) Club Support/Junior Development Committee
- B) Recruitment
- C) Advertising
- D) Programming
- E) Junior Perspectives

#### **A. Club Support / Junior Development Committee**

In order to facilitate the development and growth of the junior membership, the full support of the Club Executive and membership must be encouraged. This support must be consistent from the grass roots upwards.

To initiate and maintain junior support, a **Junior Development Committee** should be created. It is beneficial to have at least one junior club member included as part of this Committee.



The Committee should consist of individuals interested in promoting junior tennis at all levels, and should have functions in the following areas:

- junior tennis promotion
- setting objectives/priorities/junior programming
- scheduling
- financing
- advertising
- recruitment
- monitoring/evaluating
- participating in the implementation of events when possible
- recruiting club volunteers
- contacts for junior players
- **having fun**

Prior to programming, the Committee should establish and set objectives.

### **Objectives**

- 1) Instruction - instructional and coaching program
- 2) Events - social activities, events, round robins
- 3) Competition - types of competition and tournaments
- 4) Fitness - fitness program
- 5) Supportive - establish a financial and human resource base

**Activity Planning** - several questions must be addressed when initiating an activity.

Why is this activity being offered?

Who is going to organize, operate it and take part in the activity?

When is the activity going to take place?

How much money are you going to spend and collect?

What does the activity need to be a success?

Where is the activity going to take place?

### **B. Recruitment**

In order to attract the greatest number of juniors for the program, several avenues must be explored and targeted:

- 1) parents/siblings
- 2) friends
- 3) schools
- 4) recreation departments/community centres



## C. Advertising

In order to receive the full benefits of advertising your junior program, remember to:

- 1) advertise well in advance
- 2) make advertising simple and specific
- 3) advertise frequently
- 4) target your advertisements

There are many advertising avenues available within a club setting including:

- a) Club newsletter/bulletin/club e-mail
- b) Bulletin boards
- c) Posters
- d) Flyers
- e) Phone calls by staff and volunteers
- f) Word of mouth by staff and volunteers
- g) Announcements at other club activities

Although phone calls can be time consuming, they are one of the **most effective** advertising tools.

## D. Programming Considerations

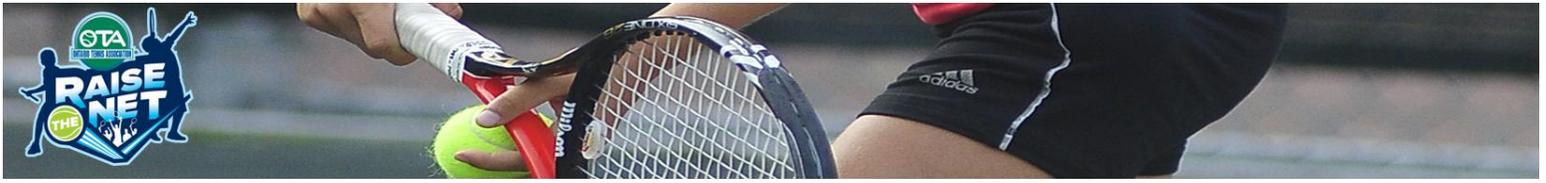
### Instruction

1. Obtain a quality instructor
2. Instructional Emphasis
  - Beginners - Fun, immediate success, fitness, non-competitive, social, lots of games(8 per court).
  - Intermediate - same as beginner plus consistency and control (6 - 8 per court).
  - Advanced - same as intermediate plus competition and aggressive all-court play (4 per court).

Group players by ability rather than age.

### Activities

- Junior leagues (intraclub, interclub)
- Round Robins / Events / Socials
- Tournaments (Junior, Father-Son, Mother-Daughter, . . .)
- Kids' Tennis Awards
- Challenge Ladders
- Clinics/Camps



## **Budgeting**

If you are organizing an activity, it is important to work out the costs so you know what you have to charge each participant. Depending on the program or event you are offering, you should account for the following items in your budget.

**Balls:** all activities unless participants use their own or used balls.

**Prizes:** not all activities require prizes.

**Court time:** when court fees apply - prime and/or non-prime time.

**Food:** socials and tournaments mainly.

**Officiating:** sanctioned tournaments.

**Court maintenance:** tournaments and other events when court up-keep and litter may be a concern.

**Ball boys:** sanctioned tournaments (not a necessity).

**Seating:** sanctioned tournaments and special occasions (not a necessity).

**Scaffolding:** if T.V. coverage is a factor.

**Advertising:** this can often be obtained free of charge by contacting the sports department of the local newspaper, radio, or T.V.

**Instructors:** instructional programs.

**Sanction fees:** sanctioned tournaments.

**Volunteer Recognition:** where volunteers are used, it is important to recognize their contributions so that in future they will be willing to help out again; this does not always need to involve a cost.

## **E. Junior Perspectives**

### **OTA JUNIOR PHILOSOPHY**

Players in the Under 10/12 age categories should be encouraged in the following areas:

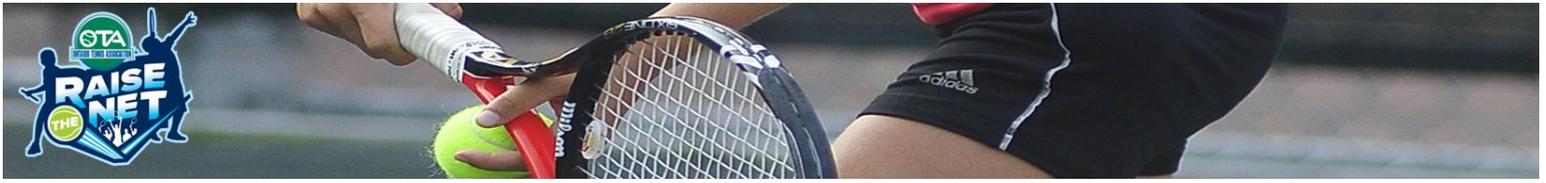
- a) to have **FUN**
- b) to compete fairly with respect for the opponent, tournament officials and the game
- c) to play lots of tennis
- d) to have little pressure to succeed
- e) to experience immediate success

Everyone has their own individual goals regardless of age, thus these concepts should **always** be taken into consideration.

## **Evaluation**

Is your Club: **Receptive** to junior members?

**Encouraging** juniors to join the club and to participate in programs?



**Accepting** youngsters and making them feel like they **belong** to the club?  
**Catering** some of the programming to juniors?

Remember: **Positive Programming = Positive Attitude**

Achieving and maintaining excellence is determined by your willingness to continually evaluate your attitude and actions.

Every program is designed to meet the needs of the club members. It is advisable that the Junior Development Committee monitor and assess, in conjunction with the coach, the validity of each program component and how each segment contributes to the overall success of the junior program.

The activity level of the junior membership in all programs should be monitored. Do certain programs trigger greater interest than others? Is it due to the nature of the program, recreational versus competitive, or the time of the program, weekday versus weekend?

Here are some tips to keep in mind:

- Start **small**
- **Develop** programs
- Strive for **quality**
- Build an element of **variety**
- **Monitor** and **assess**
- **Modify** where and when necessary
- Maintain **continuity** from year to year

### Answers to Commonly Asked Questions

#### **How can we attract junior girls?**

Girls are often more attracted to social and non-competitive experiences. Immediate success is essential and the separation of beginner boys and girls in an instructional setting may be beneficial. Specific girls teams and leagues, and the use of a female coach as a role model are essential.

#### **What are the best times to schedule junior programs for our club?**

The best scheduling time varies from club to club. During the school year, after school and weekend time is most effective. Ideally, prime-time may be utilized for junior programs, but at many facilities, a program is often proven successful in non-prime hours before achieving prime-time status.



## **At what age level should juniors begin?**

Juniors can begin to learn tennis skills as early as 5 years of age. Height, weight, strength and co-ordination factors all affect the age to initiate instruction. Using Progressive Tennis techniques (mini tennis with soft balls) allow for young players to develop skills and play games with success at a lot younger ages than with full size equipment and court usage. Also more players can be accommodated on a single court (or they can even play outside the court and not compete for court time.

## **Putting Things Into Perspective**

Junior tennis is a time to **learn**.

It is a time to **experience** and **grow**.

It is a time to begin to understand the principles for physical and social development.

It is a time to apply these principles.

It is a time to **set goals, reach goals, and re-establish** new goals for the future.

It is a time that can be **shared** with parents, coaches and friends.

Whether striving to meet new challenges or playing just for fun, tennis has a great deal to offer everyone.

It is a game for people of **all ages** and **all levels** to share.

It is a sport through which you can express yourself as an individual.

## **TENNIS IS A SPORT FOR LIFE**