Communication skills for the tennis coach
By the end of this session you should be able to:

• Explain the importance of communication skills in coaching
• Identify strengths and weaknesses in your communication skills
• Understand and use ways to improve your communication skills in different situations
• Identify and use different types of communication in different situations
Communication: Definition and importance

• Is a process of sending and receiving messages between two or more persons
• A good coach should be a good communicator
• The very essence of coaching is communication
Coach-Player communication: Why is it important?

- Conveys information
- Influences motivation
- Provides feedback in learning
- Is a necessary part of “team” cohesion
Communication and understanding

• Discrepancy between what the coach intends to communicate and what the player understands and vice versa

• Actual purpose of communication is the mutual understanding for common benefit
Situations of communication

- With players during practice or matches
- With parents
- With officials
- With media, fans, sponsors, etc.
Ineffective communication

• Wrong content
• Verbal or non-verbal skills are lacking or don’t match up
• Lack of attention by the listener
• Resistance to listen
• Misinterpretation of the content or intent
• Frustration because not talking
Information, ideas and interaction

• Communication is not only transmission of information
• It includes interchange of ideas
• It is the interaction between people, thus it is influenced by many factors
Content and emotion

• Communication is made up of:
  • Content (what the message says), generally expressed verbally (words)
  • Emotions (how the message is transmitted), generally expressed non verbally (gestures, etc.)
Types of communication

VERBAL
- Talking
- Asking
- Giving feedback
- Giving rewards
- Listening
- Receiving feedback

NON-VERBAL
- Facial expression
- Gestures
- Body movements
- Body posture
- Body contact
- Spatial awareness
- Spatial awareness
- Clothes & appearance

COMMUNICATION
Learning to communicate

• Communication can be improved if practised daily
• The coach needs to know how to use all the resources and techniques at hand in order to improve communication with others
Verbal communication

**TALKING**
- Learning to talk
- Learning to ask
- Giving feedback
- Giving rewards

**LISTENING**
- How to listen
- Receiving feedback
Non-verbal communication

- Paralinguistic: 38%
- Body: 55%
- Verbal: 7%
Questions & answers

• How good do you think you are at:
  – Verbal communication skills
  – Non-verbal communication skills

• Rate yourself using the following lists:
Communication skills needed to be an effective tennis coach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERBAL SKILLS</th>
<th>IMPORTANCE TO TENNIS / SELF RATING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talking</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving feedback</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving rewards</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to listen</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving feedback</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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(5 = very important, 1 = unimportant)
Communication skills needed to be an effective tennis coach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Facial expression</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gestures and bodily movement</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body posture</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touching</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothes &amp; general appearance</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatial awareness &amp; relationship</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paralinguistic</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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Discussion / task

• In a group:
  – Explain to others something related to tennis using only verbal communication
  – Explain to others something related to tennis using only non-verbal communication
  – Speak to others while they are speaking to you at the same time for one minute. Try to guess at the end what you have understood
Conclusion

• Be aware of the importance of communication in coaching

• Know your communication skills

• Practice them to improve them