ITF Coaches
Education Programme
Level 2 Coaching Course

Introduction to
tactics for
tournament
tennis players
By the end of this session you should be able to:

- understand and explain the factors that influence matchplay
- understand and explain the principles for strategy and tactics in tournament singles play
- understand and explain the game styles characteristics and how to counter
Factors that influence matchplay

The player
The environment
The opponent
The player

- Playing standard
- Tactical understanding
- Technical competence
- Physiological development
- Mental characteristics
- Experience, game-style and training level
- Competition
The opponent

• Same as for the player but also
• Ball trajectory: direction, height, depth, speed and spin
• Shot selection: position of the ball, position of the player and tactical intentions
• Opponent’s tactical strengths and weaknesses
The environment

- Court surfaces: slow, medium and fast courts
- Weather conditions: wind, rain, sun and altitude
- Other environmental factors: spectators, umpires, time, psychological considerations, etc.
Principles for strategy and tactics (I)

• Keep the ball in play
• Have a game plan (basic and alternative)
• Use your best weapon (s) whenever possible
• Use your weaker shots to prevent your opponent attacking by hitting deep, taking the pace off, etc.
• Use intelligent shot selection
Principles for strategy and tactics (II)

- Analyse the situation
- Play within your capabilities and possibilities
- Be positive (i.e. controlled aggression)
- Once you decide, commit yourself to the shot. No second thoughts!
- Play the ball, not your opponent!
Principles for strategy and tactics (III)

• Try to adapt a game style that first of all suits your strengths and then that exploits the opponent’s weakness
• Learn to combine power and control during the match
• Use combinations of shots to create openings
• Try to move your opponents and make them run by varying direction, depth, etc.
Principles for strategy and tactics (IV)

• Try to gain and maintain the momentum in the match, in order to dominate the match flow and tempo
• Try to analyse the match during changeovers to decide when to change your tactics
• Try to dominate the point at every opportunity
Game styles

- Net rusher / serve and volleyer
- Aggressive baseliner
- Counter puncher
- All-round player
Candidate’s task (I)

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<th>STYLE</th>
<th>CHARACTERISTICS</th>
<th>HOW TO COUNTER</th>
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## Candidate’s task (II)

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<tr>
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<th>Aggressive baseliner</th>
<th>All-court player</th>
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Questions & answers

- Which is your game style? Why?
- Which game style do you like most? Why?
- Which game style do you like least? Why?
- Which game style do you think should be taught to a player? Why?
- When do you think the game styles should be introduced to players? Why?