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Learning to Generate and Handle Pace

Everyone enjoys hitting balls hard. It's very satisfying to smack a ball for a screaming winner. Learning how to hit with controlled pace requires timing, strength, control, and a solid understanding of when it's appropriate. All of this comes with experience, and a certain amount of trial and error.

Most kids develop consistency and retrieving skills and side to side footwork as their base, spending more time on baseline exchanges than attacking skills, although with the wide acceptance of the graduated length approach to rackets and courts, and the sponge and orange balls, more all court junior players are emerging more quickly. Kids learn to generate racket head speed with spin easily with these balls.



Between ages 10- 13, most kids playing yellow balls on full court experiment with how hard they can hit the ball. To transition from a safe, consistent grinding game to taking calculated risks takes courage, patience, and lots of practice. Some kids find it easier than others. Size can be a factor; taller kids often feel more at ease taking balls earlier, going to net, and taking overheads. Smaller kids can feel more vulnerable, however, they can be equally successful playing all-court, aggressive tennis if they learn to read the opponent's ball quickly. They also must learn how to elicit short balls they can attack/put away. Their opponents' court position will give them clues as to when there's an opportunity to step in. With experience, and drilling, they will understand that they should step in to look for a short ball whenever their opponent steps into the alley.

Excellent anticipation skills also help kids respond quickly to deep, hard balls. Recognizing that they've hit an attackable ball and watching the opponent's contact will help them read the flight, and judge the bounce. Learned skills such as getting low, shortening backswings, and blocking balls back strategically come to good use on hard deep balls. All of this will give them a better chance to position themselves to defend against a hard hit ball.





Tournament Results

VDM Shipyard hosted the 2nd annual Southern L1 Winter Championships for 18 and under. 16 year old Nate Perrone won the singles, and was a doubles finalist. Chloe Oullet- Pizer was runner up in singles, and Allie Burak was a quarterfinalist. Other stellar performances came from Jacqueline Pelletier, Beau Pelletier, Tate Steinour, and Madison Dillon. Other age group solid results included g 12's, Kyle Collins, singles and doubles champion, and g 14's Mary Grace Armistead, who went deep in the back draw. Go VDM!

The team traveled to Mt Pleasant with more good results from Masako Makiba (finalist g 18) Molly Sanderson (finalist g 16) Adam Kush (winner 16 back draw and SF doubles w Soh Kuyama) Michal Rapsik (SF 18 doubles) Alexis Voulgorapoulos reached the back draw final of 16's, and doubles finals with Molly Sanderson.

Juliana Goehner won 18's singles and doubles at St Andrews Point Quest Tournament.

UNCG grad Dilara Yurtkuran traveled back to her native Turkey to play professional tournaments and gained her first 2 WTA points in doubles. She will be continuing her pro circuit campaign this spring.



Nate Perrone, winner and doubles finalist, Southern L1 Championship at VDM



Chloe Oullet-Pizer, finalist Southern L1 Championship at VDM



VDM Team at Mt. Pleasant



Dilara Yurtkuran



Juliana Goehner

Fitness Corner

Competing in the Winter

This time of year is tricky in the South- some days get quite warm, and the next can be cold and windy. Even within one day, the temperature can swing wildly from early AM to PM. You really need to be prepared for all kinds of weather for your tournaments. When packing your bag, you need to be thinking layers, so you can take off clothes as you warm up. In addition to the usual warm up suit, you have lots of good-looking options these days- leggings, and long sleeved thin yet warm shirts can be found on most courts. Dynamic warm up is critical, to get your muscles and tendons ready for battle. And cooling down afterwards with a short light jog can help prevent stiffness and quicker recovery for your next match. At the same time, you must be thinking of good fuel for your body. What kind of food and drink you put in can determine what kind of energy you put out. Choose wisely if you want the edge.



Spring/Summer Junior Clinics & Academy Weeks

Join us on court for great weeks of tennis this Spring between March 9-April 17 as well as this Summer between May 31-August 29. Please visit our website at www.vdmtennis.com or ask our pro shop for the full schedule.

