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Gain Confidence by Paying Attention and Understanding Your Options

Each month, I read over Dennis' tips and articles to gain inspiration for the newsletter stories. With such a large number of choices, I think about our current academy students' performances, and adapt pearls of wisdom from our legendary founder to suit their needs best.

By and large, our players have good stroke arsenals. Our Academy Coaches are experienced and talented professionals. They understand the relationship of strokes to movement and general fitness, as well as mental toughness and tenacity. Our students have a great understanding of what it takes to succeed. However, like many young players, each must continue to strengthen and solidify their confidence base.



Confidence cannot be underrated. It's a double-edged sword in that you gain confidence by winning, and yet you need confidence to get you through rough patches in all matches. All players, even top touring pros, suffer at times from self-doubt, nerves, and lack of confidence. All it takes is a series of 1st round losses to erode even normally confident people. In the ebb and flow of a match, there's a constant power struggle going on. The person who emerges victorious wins the battle to conquer these negative thoughts. Dennis Van der Meer always helped our players find ways to focus on the task at hand by giving them ways to turn their thoughts positive. The following are a few of his tips:

Pay attention to what spin is coming off your opponent's racket; if it's slice, move forward and get under to lift the ball. A slice after a lot of topspin rallies can cause an error in the net.

Pay attention to your court position, and your opponent's. Look for opportunities to move in and take time from your opponent. Any time you move him/her into the alley or back towards the fence, you have a possibility to attack. Any time he/she has you on the run, you probably should be defending.

Focus on footwork and breathing techniques when you're tight. Both tend to suffer when nerves take over. Take more little quick adjustment steps, and exhale as you strike the ball. (That means you have to time your inhalation correctly!)

Stick to your rituals on serve, return, and after each point concludes- win or lose. Be aware of how your body language is letting your opponent know how you're feeling. Turn into an actor for the duration of the match- emanating positive energy. No droopy shoulders or heads!

Try to collect series of 3 points. This keeps you in the moment, not too far ahead of yourself, and not swelling on past mistakes. Overwhelmingly, the person with the most sets of 3 wins the match. This practice also forces you to think about blocking your opponent from gathering sets of 3, as in tic tac toe.



Tournament Results

Kiawah

- **Barbora Vasilkova** - girls 18 singles finalist , doubles finalist
- **Juliana Goehner** - girls 18 singles winner BD, finalist doubles
- **Saera Kanda** - girls 18 singles SF back draw, champion doubles
- **Sara Putnam** - girls 16 winner
- **Madison Dillon** - girls 14 finalist
- **Alexis Voulgaropoulos** - girls 14 winner back draw
- **Nicole Sister** - girls 14 semifinals back draw
- **Marium Raza** - girls 14 singles semifinals back draw
- **Jared Woodson** - boys 18 winner back draw
- **JT Page** - boys 18 extra red winner

Dennis Van der Meer Southern Jr Championships

- **Jared Woodson** - semifinalist boys 18
- **Tim Becker** - quarterfinalist boys 18 back draw
- **Trevor White**- boys 18 semifinalist extra white
- **Will Danzell** - boys 14 semifinalist
- **Trey Maust** - boys 14 semifinalist
- **Valerie Droop** – girls 18winner back draw
- **Sara Putman** – girls 16 3rd place
- **Alexis Voulgaropoulos** - winner girls 16 back draw
- **Marium Raza** - finalist girls 14
- **Mary Grace Armistead** - winner girls 14 back draw
- **Nicole Sister** - girls 14 semifinalist back draw
- **Kylie Collins** - winner girls 12



Jade and Caolina Lewis (left) show off their hardware from a recent Southern Designated Tournament. The sisters made the doubles final, which was cancelled due to weather, and 14 year old Jade reached the girls 18 singles final. Jade also reached the round of 16 in both singles and doubles at the Boca ITF junior tournament.

Laura Bryan (near right) made a big jump forward, winning her very First tournament, and reaching the finals of the second.

Jawad Thiemsser (far right) (Morocco) has signed to play for Johnson County Community College in January 2014.



Fitness Corner – Don't Be Slack When it Comes to Fitness

By Kerri Dunn, Certified Fitness Coach for VDM

Not everyone is as committed to fitness work as they are to practicing strokes. Players who work hard on footwork, strength, agility, and flexibility have the best shot at long term success in their careers. While injury can happen to anyone, those who maintain a high level of fitness have the edge.

To reach a high level of performance in today's tennis, your fitness training must be just as important to your overall training as well- developed strokes, technique, and mental skills. The game of tennis is extremely demanding athletically, physically, and mentally, requiring great amounts of versatile and proper training. Muscular and cardio vascular strength and endurance is vital, as tennis is a high intensity sport. Factors imperative to the success in tennis require athletic skills such as explosive power, flexibility, quickness, speed, and stamina. Types of training to help grow your fitness ability include weight training, endurance training, and speed training, along with a productive stretching routine for flexibility. It's key to regulate your fitness, as improper/ over training can be problematic and lead to injury.



David Botti shows the focus that earned him Fitness Star of the Month for October

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