



# **Best Practices in European Tennis Coaching**

## **Proposal for Level 2 (RQF) / Level 3 (EQF) Award**

**Summary of the Award and Course Guidance**



**Erasmus+**



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## **Best Practices in European Tennis Coaching Level 2 Award**

### **Introduction to the award and course**

The Level 2 Award in Best Practices in European Tennis Coaching is aimed at educating and tutoring apprentice coaches with course material specifically chosen based on our reports on excellence in each country. We have designed the award to be delivered in four days, covering four learning outcomes and their assessment criteria. This means a day each to explore doubles tactics, footwork, tactics, and physical element which will be practical, on court, workshop style teaching, where we break down a lesson, explaining what is needed, why we teach this, how you teach it and encourage as much participation and involvement from our trainee coaches as we can. Each day will consist of learning but also an assessment, where participants are expected to deliver their own lesson using our framework and methodologies. This will be assessed by a tutor with feedback given.

### **Achieving this qualification**

To be awarded the Level 2 Award in Best Practices in European Tennis Coaching, learners are required to successfully complete the one mandatory unit.

### **Mandatory unit**

The learning outcomes and assessment criteria are provided below in the unit summary. Please visit the EuroCoach website for further information:  
[www.eurocoach.online](http://www.eurocoach.online)

To achieve the Level 2 Award in Best Practices in European Tennis Coaching, learners must successfully demonstrate their achievement of all learning outcomes and assessment criteria of the unit as detailed in this qualification specification. Grades are not awarded.

### **Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria**

Learning Outcome 1: The learner will be able to develop and deliver an adaptable doubles tennis lesson for various ages and abilities.

Assessment Criteria:

1. Create a comprehensive doubles lesson plan, including adaptations for different ages, sizes, and abilities, and submit it to the tutor for review.

2. Deliver the planned doubles lesson to the group, demonstrating appropriate coaching techniques and communication skills.
3. Receive feedback from the tutor on lesson delivery and incorporate it into future coaching practices.

Learning Outcome 2: The learner will gain a deeper understanding of various footwork patterns in tennis and their application in coaching.

Assessment Criteria:

1. Identify and describe different footwork patterns used in tennis, explaining their purposes and benefits.
2. Demonstrate the ability to teach footwork patterns to players, using clear instructions and demonstrations.
3. Evaluate and provide feedback to players on their footwork patterns and suggest improvements as needed.

Learning Outcome 3: The learner will be able to integrate strength and conditioning components into coaching sessions, with a focus on realistic match scenarios.

Assessment Criteria:

1. Design and implement coaching scenarios that simulate match situations, incorporating strength and conditioning elements.
2. Engage the group in discussions about the purpose and strategy behind the designed coaching scenario, fostering integration and collaboration from the group.
3. Ensure high intensity and physicality during the coaching session, while maintaining a safe and supportive environment.
4. Apply the concept of representativeness to create open and flexible coaching scenarios that allow players to develop their skills.

Learning Outcome 4: The learner will be able to create and deliver detailed tennis lessons with a focus on tactical elements, while addressing other key areas of player development.

Assessment Criteria:

1. Design drills and exercises that prioritize tactical focus and also incorporate technique, footwork, and conditioning elements.
2. Adapt the complexity of drills to match the skill level of the participating players, ensuring an appropriate level of challenge.
3. Implement high tempo, high volume drills to simulate match conditions and encourage player improvement.

4. Demonstrate the ability to deliver high-quality demonstrations in coaching sessions, with a focus on clarity and precision.

## **Day 1: Teaching doubles**

The UK is currently excelling in doubles with so much drive and push in lessons, from grassroots to elite. You see every county in the UK completing in more doubles, with the county cup finishing with doubles competition. Day 1 we look to educate our students on creating a lesson built around improving doubles using UK methods.

### **Introduction:**

The main learning aspect of the day will be focused around gaining knowledge and experience in teaching a doubles lesson which can be adapted to cater for different ages, sizes and abilities. The course tutor will go through every aspect of a lesson from the warm up to end game, providing a demonstration with participants joining in. After each section of the lesson is completed, the tutor will explain why this used and ask participants to work together in pairs and present their own idea. Tutor will provide feedback.

### **Warm Up phase:**

Each lesson begins with a warm up, this be will specific to the main theme of the lesson, doubles. Are main learning objective is for our participants to understand what to warm up, how to do it, and why we're doing it, i.e. the relevance. Doubles is all about teamwork so we want our lesson to involve cooperative exercises involving communication.

- Tutor to teach/demo heavily focused around teamwork, communication, speed, interval based, coordination of the hands and the feet i.e. everything needed in doubles.
- Participants perform the warm ups
- Everyone discusses tutor warm ups
- Tutor breaks participants off into pairs and work together to come up with their own warm up
- Participants deliver/coach idea to the group, explaining why they have chosen it and what their are looking to teach
- Group discussion
- Tutor feedback

### **Key areas**

Does this warm up connect with teaching doubles?

Are we warming up the correct parts of the body used in doubles play?  
Which elements are being challenged, for example, is this technical enough?  
How is the communication? It needs to be clear, engaging, positive tone, concise, loud

### **Coach sample Warm Ups:**

- Shuttle run
- Reaction ball
- Sprint-Jog-sprint-Jog
- Catching based ball skill

### **Skill based phase**

In this phase we are continuing to warm up, but adding a technical element with the racket our skill, relevant to the theme. So when we focus on doubles, much of the game will be occupied and decided in the net play. So we explore skills using a continental grip, so shots like serves, slices, drop shots, volleys and smashes are great in this phase. We control this by having players work closer to the net, e.g. service boxes. We don't encourage making mistakes and making the challenge too much at this phase, so working on the half court is good.

- Tutor to demonstrate the skill to the group, using one of the players to perform the demo.
- Skill challenge heavily based around skills used in doubles play
- Tutor explains teaching aspects of the exercise/s
- Players practice the skill with tutor observing and coaching
- Group discussion on the skill exercise/s
- Participants paired up and come up with their own skill warm up
- Participants teach group, and discuss

### **Key areas**

- Well delivered demonstration verbally and visually
- Pick only one skill but ensure its challenging enough with variation options for the players
- Add a points element for extra mental engagement
- Lots of technical instructions from the coach
- Connects with doubles

### **Coach sample Skill exercises:**

- Slice, volley, smash cooperatively with partner and switch

- Two touch volleys
- Volley ladder challenge
- Brush serve to drop volley (stopping ball to halt)

## **Tempo Phase**

In this phase we were looking to fully warm up players, with a more general exercise but looking to have them 'completely ready' to do anything on court once completed. Energy, intensity is key here, so we need to apply urgency and targets. We still want to have a connection to doubles so we were looking for something done in a live ball in doubles and simulate it.

- Tutor demonstrates a high tempo exercise to the rest of the group, with key elements connected to doubles.
- Tutor to explain the importance of this phase and how it can dictate the quality to the rest of the session.
- At this phase players are expected to put in maximum effort, generate rhythm, confidence, engage in the task fully to create increased performance in a pressured target driven way.
- Tutor will set goals, time limits, provide guidance from a technical and mental side e.g. hitting balls with shapes and spin with height to stay consistent, quick decision making to get into correct positions to create angles.

## **Key Areas**

- Set up an exercise that contains lots of explosive movements, repetition and is continuous
- They need to understand the level of their players in order to set realistic targets and goals
- Technical suggestions during the demonstration phase is a must
- Inspire and use positive buzz words when motivating players to work hard and put in maximum effort.

## **Coaching sample exercises:**

- 50 ball challenge cross court only. Players will rally from the baseline and aim to get to a total of 50 shots in quickest possible time.
- 50 volley to volley challenge.

## **Condition Points**

Players change from cooperative play to competitive play, as they look to play points with a 'condition' to complement the theme. As we focus on doubles, points will be

doubles based, with players paired up and competing against each other. Players will be forced to make specific plays through the condition in place which can be one thing, more than one thing or something changing.

- Tutor will explain the condition, explain why it's used, the relevance and demonstrate using the players.
- Players will take part in this exercise, once played for 10 minutes players will come and have group discussion.
- The group must now come up with their own condition connected to a doubles scenario

### **Key Areas**

- Conditions relevant to doubles
- Understanding the concept that keeping things simple can allow more engagement and fluidity which allows the opportunity to provide more time to coaching and technical feedback.
- Creating a condition that promotes success and quality in the play, for example, return has to be lobbed over the net player, which is a fundamental to the success of current number doubles player Jamie Murray who is coached by Louis Cayer (also an LTA performance tutor)
- Good delivery of the live demonstration that clearly shows that adding this condition will make players practice what they need to develop.

### **Tutor sample exercises:**

- Normal doubles set up, players playing at the back must hit cross court until the net person touches the ball with a volley
- Players only get on serve, return must be volley or end of point
- Serving team get only 3 first serves but must win the point in 3 shots

### **Drill Phase**

This will be more controlled, isolated and specific which covers technique. This will be setup in connection with a shot or action performed in doubles play. This could be a serve, volley, overhead, groundstroke or more as there is a lot of possibilities. For this course we decided to create a drill focused around slice, transition volley and overhead (which are three of most common and effective shots in doubles).

- Tutor sets up drill which incorporates popular modern doubles play which is frequently used in elite tennis players. The drill contains technical challenges as the ball must be land in the correct areas to enable the tactics.



- Players will get the opportunity to repeatability work on a specific tactic with tutor providing coaching where necessary.
- Group to discuss the quality of the drill and what variations could be added.
- The participants must then come up with own idea for a drill and share to the group. Players must think about tactics and what they think can work.

### **Key Areas**

- Ideas coming from a tactical angle, detail about where to put the ball and why.
- Carefully chose the correct technique to have continuity with the tactic
- Deliver a drill that flows and does not have long waiting time
- Be able to control the speed of the drill through feeding skills
- Strong communication with tactical tennis terminology
- If it's not working be prepared to change it on the fly

### **Tutor examples:**

- Cross court chip on the rise, moving volley, smash from awkward/random feed
- Cross court rally vs net poacher closing with two step forward volley
- Cheating the backhand return drill

### **Matchplay**

Tutor will setup doubles matches, rotate pairs and let players perform.

### **Day 1 Assessment Criteria**

1. Create a comprehensive doubles lesson plan, including adaptations for different ages, sizes, and abilities, and submit it to the tutor for review.
2. Deliver the planned doubles lesson to the group, demonstrating appropriate coaching techniques and communication skills.
3. Receive feedback from the tutor on lesson delivery and incorporate it into future coaching practices.

### **Feedback:**

A scale of 1-5 (5 being best).

Space below each question for tutor feedback.

- Presentation of coach?
- Was the coach confident, clear, concise and projected with communication?
- How well did the coach demonstrations go?



- Was there technical coaching/feedback taking place throughout the lesson?
- Did the warm up contain anything cooperative and have explosive movements?
- Was the skill based exercise linked to doubles from a technical point of view and challenging enough?
- Did the tempo challenge have players engaged and working hard?
- Were the correct conditions setup to force players to perform the desired learning outcome?
- Was the main direction of the lesson tactical based?
- Did the matchplay showcase what was being done in the learning phase?

## Day 2 - Footwork themed

### Introduction

From our report on tennis in Spain, understanding of the importance and significance of this area in the player development, we have put together a course unit on footwork which aims to educate our coaches gain a deeper understanding into different footwork patterns, when to apply the correct footwork to the exercise, how to setup an exercise that puts footwork at the core and how we apply it real scenarios in tennis. Coaches will have the chance to learn from the tutor by doing the exercises and discussing them but also to create their own and coach the to the group. An assessment will again by set and assessed by the tutor at the end of the day with a pass or fail.

### Warm up phase

As we continue with the same format as day 1 the tutor will educate participants from start to finish and ask them to practice. It begins with the warm up phase, but not just getting the players moving to prevent injury but make this specific to footwork.

Tutor sets up strength and conditioning stations, all addressing different types of movement and footwork.

- Station 1 - working on speed, acceleration, balance across the court, forwards and backwards
- Station 2 - Working Carioca steps to different cone colours called out
- Station 3 - Shuffle/Mogul steps with shadow swings side to side, to work on lateral movement, footwork technique

Tutor will ask participants to practice these warm ups and rotate every couple of minutes.

The group will work together as one team and come up with a different way to teach all 3 stations whilst staying on the same theme. This will be presented and demonstrated by a volunteer from the group.

### Key aspects

Is the idea demonstrated clearly visually and with correct terminology

Does the footwork correlate to the correct movement and direction in a match based scenario.

Are the players still getting warmed up sufficiently, as this should not be compromised by technical aspects. This will be identified through engagement of players and guidance/control of coach delivery

### **Skill Based Challenge**

The key here is for our trainee coaches to understand they need to develop skill challenges that are not stationary. So often we see tennis coaches ask players to do taps ups/downs which builds coordination but has no footwork/movement connected. Again the tutor will deliver skills based examples to the group to educate them on areas that need ticking to make a success of this phase.

- There is a broad open canvas for this, as the main theme is not confined to one shot, but instead focus on footwork.
- The main idea to get across is practicing the skill using specific footwork which is essentially proven to be the best one to achieve the best results from our findings.
- In Spain coaching is on clay which requires a strong balanced base so this is encouraged when starting the skill challenge set by the tutor.
- Tutor to emphasis ready steps, split steps and recovery steps at all times.
- Tutor to demonstrate box skill challenge using forehand spin with correct footwork pattern.
- Players to practice in pairs and discuss after.
- The group split in 2 groups and asked to come up with two types of skill based warm up, one using forehands and backhands, the other volleys
- 2 volunteers from each group to demonstrate to the other group the two and switch over. Tutor to give feedback accordingly.

### **Key Aspects**

- Skill tasks setup to be consistent with the footwork, we don't want to see more than one footwork pattern happen. So there must be a control element to this task, and understanding the level and capability of our players is important, for example asking a performance level under 8 group to hit backhand volleys in boxes with forward and backward movement will be overly challenging compared to over 10 years as they are more physically developed, however if you adjust the type of shots than both can be done, and importantly you get the footwork action still occurring.
- An understanding of rhythm needs to be present, coaches need to understand the good footwork rhythm adds quality. The demonstration can set the tone to this as the lead coach can perform the rhythmic footwork pattern and visually show this to the players, so smooth, consistent speed of steps and actions repeated.

### **Tutor exercises:**

- Players must hit past the marker, drop off and use two crossover steps backwards and recover back to serve line
- Two step volley in the box and step back out the box

### **Tempo phase**

The important thing here is for our trainee coaches to understand how to add value to the tempo exercise using footwork. With the tempo phase it is important to keep the players engaged through a simplistic task but focus on intensity, but we have found from our studies in Spain that footwork coaching can be applied and elevate the phase. A link can be made with footwork and ball striking if the concept of rhythm is applied.

We begin with the tutor setting up a tempo challenge, explaining the importance of getting intensity up, explaining the target, how to get there and adding the footwork element needed.

The tutor uses a simple 3 lives in 3 minutes situation, which means players must keep mistakes to a minimum

Players are asked to let the ball drop, so dropping off is important, hitting with an open stance works here as the ball sits up high, and using backward hop step and help drive the ball up.

The group are asked to come up with their own tempo challenge, which features lots of energy, footwork and an end goal. The tutor will decide which are the top 3, and ask them to deliver the phase to the group.

### **Key Aspects**

We want participants to come up with ideas which create pressure, intensity and high volume with technical footwork to complement not devalue.

Using the court space to maximise movement can open up footwork opportunities, however when dealing with large groups and only having one or two courts can provide a challenge.

When delivering the demonstration and educating this phase needs to be very concise, short and punchy.

In this phase we encourage our coaches to have a clear projected voice with an encouraging positive tone to keep the energy going.

### **Conditioned points**

Understanding how to expose the footwork pattern is vital in this phase, as we apply one or more conditions to the competitive phase. Players go against each other and

the condition can be simple or elaborate but the main outcome here should be focused around the player performing the specific footwork regularly and gain positive results.

- At this point players should be very focused from a good tempo challenge, so this should again be concise and quick.
- The tutor demonstrates using one of the participants how the exercise works through a quick explanation of what footwork pattern condition must be used.
- The key here is the coach teaching the group the importance of the feed (how the point starts), which is done visually but must be on point.
- So as one example from Tutor, he feeds fast into space, player must move laterally, hit open-stance with vertical loading and use mogul footwork strike the ball and play the point out. If the feed is not fast the footwork is null and void. So conditions apply to the feed, the footwork and also for the opposition to keep hitting to the space during the point to maximise learning outputs.
- Once players have done the exercise they must come up in pairs with one conditioned point, each pair will get a different shot to teach. This will be discussed as group, identifying the positives and what could be improved.

### **Drill phase**

This is again a very blank canvas and what we are trying to achieve is an isolated approach to improve footwork but also combine technique and conditioning. The conditioning can be less or more but the main emphasis is quality of footwork rather than the volume and shot execution.

Explaining footwork can be tricky, very technical and often players do not see the value of the footwork, many have excellent footwork full of fluidity and rhythm naturally, whilst some the opposite.

- The tutor begins by setting up the drill ready to teach the group, explaining the importance of focusing on the footwork rather than the shot.
- Group discussions and ideas sharing on new footwork drills in teams of three. A strong observation and feedback phase from the coach will be present from the tutor.
- Each group to select one person to deliver their idea, demonstrate to the whole group and activity ask everyone to practice.

### **Key Points**

- The concept and value of 'selling something' as a coach is vital, for this phase having good vocabulary, tone and seeking interaction from players can maintain learning/engagement levels.

- The ability to visually show specific footwork in slow motion.
- Not be afraid to correct over and over.
- Understanding footwork can be in any area of the court and combine more than one shot.
- Maintain high intensity and target specific footwork through the correct drill.
- Focused quality feeding skills.
- Understand that the player may feel uncomfortable but this is ok and part of the learning/development process.

## **Matchplay**

Depending on the type the secondary theme alongside footwork will dictate the type of matchplay setup and what is encouraged to the players. Tactics will be explored and we look for a brief to the players based around this. For example if we're working on footwork from the baseline in difficult defensive areas, singles with an emphasis on playing from the baseline and being aggressive into spaces can be favourable. If we are looking at speed and explosive two step movements forward, we can play doubles. We aim to educate this and provide this information in preparation for the assessment.

## **Day 2 Assessment Criteria**

1. Identify and describe different footwork patterns used in tennis, explaining their purposes and benefits.
2. Demonstrate the ability to teach footwork patterns to players, using clear instructions and demonstrations.
3. Evaluate and provide feedback to players on their footwork patterns and suggest improvements as needed.

## Day 3: Coaching with Strength & Conditioning at the core

### Introduction

As we approach the half way mark of the course we turn our attention to coaching with strength and conditioning as the main theme, exploring in the depth how we can setup lessons to complement this through demonstrations, discussion, working in pairs to come up with ideas, practical learning and individual assessment. Course attendees at this point will have a deeper understanding of the course format and should be more confident to come up with ideas, share ideas and deliver to the group.

This day was chosen based on our extensive research and interviews on tennis in Portugal, which we found is still in its infancy compared to other nations but clearly has started building its identity of industrial physical training, with influence across the border from Spain, who also set a culture of playing fluent baseline tennis with patience on the famous iconic clay courts. Portugal does however add much more emphasis in volume in training, intensity and strength conditioning, which is why we have put together a day dedicated to teaching our participants how to create comprehensive lessons through their stronger understanding of this principle.

### Warm up phase:

Hugely important and will set the tone of the session, warm ups are normally associated with increasing heart rate, moving all the parts of the body so tennis players are ready to start the exercises in the lesson and avoid injury. What we found from our research in Portugal is the magnitude of this concept with less emphasis on technical and mental aspects.

- Once again we begin the lesson with warm up, where the tutor explains the importance of making places 'sweat' and warm up every part of the body. This approach will be much more simplistic and non-racket based.
- Course participants should understand the concept of setting up simple actions which enable the body to fully push itself, reach anabolic respiration, have heart rates to 70% maximum capacity or above and be continuous.
- Tutor to deliver to physical warm up examples and participants to practice
- Participants put in pairs to come up with their own three warm ups which explore warming up; upper body, core, lower body staying with theme
- Each pair to deliver to the group and end with discussion with feedback from tutor.



**Key points:**

- Warm ups must be intense, movement based, have no limits
- Again we look for a quick, concise demonstration as the concept should be kept simple with the ownership on the player to perform
- Encouragement, motivation and positive language is a must from coaches when giving feedback during the warm ups.
- Understanding the agility, balance and coordination (ABC's) of the group/person you are coaching is very important when preparing the warm ups.

**Tutor warm ups examples:**

- Press-up ladder (increasing repetitions) with interval sprint
- Side to side – lateral sprints with throwing medicine ball and leg weights
- Core circuits – dynamic planks (forearms and each side), moving animal shapes, cooperative core exercise with basket ball

**Skill based Phase:**

Slightly contradictory as our aim and learning is focused around intensity and building strength and skills are generally isolated, technical and carried out in a smaller space. However, we must still allow time in the lesson to educate a skill, preferably something that complements the session, so the main theme will be physical but a secondary theme the volley, for example. The idea here is to deliver something quick and effective which does not lower the players heart rates which have worked to hard to increase in the warm up.

- Main idea is understanding this is quick, well prepared and still involves movement.
- Participants will be expected to create their own skill warm up from the tutor, tutor will give each participant something different.
- Tutor delivers a sample skill challenge to the group
- Participants share their ideas, and tutor selects three random participants to deliver
- Group discuss each one

**Key Criteria:**

- Skill based task must keep energy levels high, maintain engagement and apply a skill that does not compromise the ability to develop the skill
- Skills that are simple work well e.g. focus on the grip
- Add a game based approach to maintain engagement if it's very simple

- Coach must pay attention to time keeping

### **Tutor Skill Examples:**

- Cross court slice rally in the boxes, with short ball and deep ball combo
- Basketball tennis – players tap down in forehand grip through cones and strike balls over with topspin/shaping ‘skill’
- Brush serve to drop volley and play in pairs

### **Tempo**

Probably the most the important phase of the lesson when focusing on this theme, as players must combine all aspects in our live situation whilst controlling themselves and maintaining quality/tempo. The expectation is players reaching full intensity hitting balls from the baseline, building their motor skills through repetition. We aim to maximise effort levels.

- Tutor to emphasis huge importance of keeping players engaged from demonstration to practical
- Tutor to deliver tempo variations to the group and explain why they are used
- Players paired up and create their own tempo challenge

### **Key Points:**

- Challenge must be continuous with no end concept
- Intensity and full body brain reaching maximum capacity
- Aim to encourage players to utilise full body when hitting to maximise kinetic chain
- Adding sending and receiving variety can aid the output
- Demonstration should set the standard in terms of intensity and effort level

### **Tutor examples:**

- Cross court tram line hitting, total number in 3 minutes
- Taking early vs dropping off – how many in a row after 2 minutes and swap roles
- Inside out forehands cross court (backhand corner, right handers only) – race to 50

### **Conditioned Points**

This is again very important to the theme, when applying conditions it really allows us to test the players and essentially create awkward or difficult situations, and this is

case focus on putting the body to the test. We allow players to receive balls to focus on working the legs, the core or back. Course participants must be shown how to do this, come up with their own ideas and practice teaching it in preparation of their assessment.

- Group will be shown how this can be setup to follow theme
- At the end of this task the group will gain a deeper understanding of conditioned points which connects to strengthening the body, through theoretical and practical tasks
- Tutor will demonstrate examples and ask players to participate
- Group split into 4 groups and come up with an idea focused around different match scenario whilst sticking to the theme

### **Key Points**

- Create scenarios that are realistic to a match
- Be able to explain in the demonstration why this is setup and create integration or contribution from the group – as we consider tactics and strategy at this phase
- Maintain high intensity, physicality from the task
- Understanding the concept of representativeness will help the coach create something that's open enough to allow players to flourish.

### **Tutor Examples**

- Fast topspin feed into the backhand corner to start off the point
- Lob, scramble return and play
- X4 running drives (cross line pattern) and play

### **Drills**

Once again a great opportunity to force heavy load to the player in a controlled or semi controlled (dead ball) scenario. This is very much level dependant so the challenge for our coaches to understand and grasp is what the players levels and what they are capable of achieving at a high level in order to expand their endurance threshold.

- The drills should be planned according to the theme of the lesson and secondary shot.
- As our main aim is increasing strength and physical attributes the need is to not over compensate with technical and tactical elements so we can really have the player give full commitment to building strength and endurance in

the drill through mentally preparing to hit lots of balls and perform movement at high level.

- In this phase the tutor will carefully explain this concept, demonstrate his example and have the players practice this.
- In pairs the group must create their own two drills, one live and one dead ball, demonstrate it to the group and finish with a discussion on why it was chosen.

### **Key Points**

- The drill must be related to real scenario in tennis and contain elements to improve conditioning.
- Drill must be high tempo regardless, this can be achieved through the coach feeding balls faster or the difficulty of the drill setup
- Drills are often to unrealistic and nice – we want coaches to understand feeding balls randomly which adds authenticity.
- Drills can have evolution – if players find it easy as they get into it, we encourage variation and added layers.
- The demonstration should be clear, communication concise and purposeful.

### **Tutor Examples**

- Random scramble drill
- 50 balls side to side
- Dead ball running drives (alternating line and cross)

### **Matchplay**

Ending with competition is universal, this will be singles rather than doubles to encourage more movement.

### **Day 3 Assessment Criteria:**

1. Design and implement coaching scenarios that simulate match situations, incorporating strength and conditioning elements.
2. Engage the group in discussions about the purpose and strategy behind the designed coaching scenario, fostering integration and collaboration from the group.
3. Ensure high intensity and physicality during the coaching session, while maintaining a safe and supportive environment.
4. Apply the concept of representativeness to create open and flexible coaching scenarios that allow players to develop their skills.

## Day 4: Applying Tactics into a lesson

### Introduction

The final day of our course ties everything together from our findings as we aim to deliver a unit based themed around tactics in tennis. Often neglected as it requires skills, philosophies and strategies from a range of styles. Styles in tennis can be seen as an all rounder (Roger Federer, Justin Henin), defensive baseliner (Novak Djokovic, Steffi Graff), variation (Fabrice Santoro, Ons Jabuer), Serve and Volley (Pete Sampras, Amelie Mauresmo), Aggressive Baseliner (Andre Agassi, Maria Sharapova) or counter puncher (Layton Hewitt, Carolina Wozniaki).

When we looked at the French system the system and spent time talking with international level 5 master coach Francois Laffront (see interview) we identified that level of tactical detail in lessons and the variation. So we have put together course material aimed at helping coaches create detailed lesson that has exercises which incorporate tactical elements which will enhance the session and has clearly been a proven 'Pedagogy' as they use in France to explain their teaching method.

### Warm Up Phase

Historically connecting with tactics on warm ups have proven to be challenging for tennis coaches, as it can be seen as something easier to learn in classroom yet it has been known to be achieved. Tactics can be identified simplistically as an idea or strategy involved in gaining advantage in competition in tennis terms, so what is stopping us from creating a warm up which involves a points system. As time passes with help from innovation in sport and sharing of ideas through technology we see cross overs in sport. Through our work on previous KA2 projects we have networked and created partners in sports. Relevant to this area is our partner in Korfbal in the Netherlands whom excel in movement based warm ups. We learned the capabilities in tactics from the very start of a lesson.

- As we begin the final day of the course our tutor begins with a number of warm ups connected with tactics for our course participants.
- This will be practiced in a group environment, with a big emphasis on teamwork either in pairs or two groups.
- On this final day we spend even more time discussing why we set each phase as tactics are theoretical by nature.
- The group will need to work as one team and write down as many tactical warm ups as they can think of.

- Each idea will be discussed and the tutor will choose 3 ideas to be demonstrated from 3 different course participants.

## Key Points

- When coming from a tactical direction it's important to consider decision making all the time, everything has to have a reason. For example an understanding of why you move there or throw the ball there needs to be established from the coach when setting it up and making sure the players run with it properly.
- Simple ideas and concepts related to tactics like space, time, difficulty, movement, analysing the situation and opponent/partner are important.
- Connecting a points/competition situation creates tactical platform.

## Tutor examples

- Swedish Handball in groups
- Hand tennis
- Attack and defend movement

## Skill based phase

Having fundamental skills and being tactical go in unison, if you consider being tactical is being able to execute what you plan to do, which requires precision and also a strong skill base. We want to challenge our course participants to find ways to setup exercises that require specific skills such as a slice to produce the tactical intention.

- Firstly we can explain how manipulation of the ball creates tactical situations, which could be generating more direction, spin, power, height, depth.
- Decision making on court positioning also affects tactics and skills used which will be explored.
- Tutor will provide usual demonstration outlining what skill is being used and how it aids the tactic, why it is done, when it is done and how it is done. This will be visual through a practical demonstration using the participants.
- The group must come up with an idea in pairs, which will be demonstrated to the group and discussed.

## Key notes:

- If coaches understand the range of skills and when they are used in match scenario this will be the platform to create the skill exercise.
- It should be done in a controlled way, so the play can gain a high volume of the skill repeatedly.

- The tactic should be decided before the skill
- Feedback during the exercise should be technical

### **Tutor examples:**

- Points in boxes, only hit space
- Never play the same shot in the box
- Tactic vs Tactic

### **Tempo Phase**

This will be not so vital in terms of a tactical themed lesson, however there will still be a need to have the player reach maximum readiness in a physical, technical and mental state in order to carry out potential tactical demands set further in the lesson, i.e. conditioned points and matchplay. Therefore coaches need to continue methods will tactical touches.

- Tempo phase is built around players working towards targets and hitting continuous, and this should be the main theme.
- If we can create a situation where players must hit more than one type of shot that will help open up more tactical options.
- Tutor will demonstrate a classic tempo with some tactical elements for the group to observe and try.
- The group will come up with their own in two groups, picking the best one to demonstrate to the group.

### **Tutor Examples:**

- 50 shot challenge from baseline hitting one with spin and height and one flat and deep
- Groundstroke to volley both sides
- Hitting in a different zone each time

### **Conditioned Points**

This is highly important as the condition applied will allow the tactic to be present, so we look to provide a strong understanding in how to create and implement this phase successfully on the course. First thing is making sure there is a sound understanding of tactics but then how can we create something realistic to a live tennis situation, whilst not lowering representativeness. We really want our coaches to shine in this phase by challenging themselves in every aspect of the condition. Just to recap, we must create the condition to enable the tactic for the players, tactics can be applied at all levels.

- Identifying the tactic before creating the condition is needed.
- You can have more than one tactic in place
- Understanding your players ability is important before creating the condition as we need volume and quality at all times, this can mean something a simplistic as the first feed in the correct space.
- We look to educate attendees on the course with our demonstration and practical learning from our tutor
- A group discussion to follow
- A group exercise, with group split in two to share ideas and create their own condition.

### **Key Points**

- We want the participants to focus on the delivery, so it must be clear information on what tactic is present.
- The condition created should always challenge the level of the player to maintain engagement.
- This is a good opportunity for coaches to capture data which can be used to review whether the tactic is working.
- Interaction with the players on how they feel on the phase is productive.

### **Tutor Examples**

- Tactic – Rushing the opponent. Receiver condition, taking the ball early and hitting deep
- Tactic - Super Aggressor. Receiver receives short ball and must in in three shots
- Tactic - Ultimate defender. Receiver must defend tough feed, and wins the point by staying in it for 3 shots.

### **Drill Phase**

This is an opportunity to really focus and on what your players want to do on the court, or in competition, when carrying out a dead ball drill, we often allow our players to practice what they've been learning or trying to improve. An example is if my player is playing against a strong forehand player tomorrow, I will build my drill around ways to hit to the backhand corner and expose the weakness. A big part of tactics is understanding and analysing your opponent's strengths and weaknesses. We don't always know what they are, so we need to prepared for anything and be able to execute the game plan or tactic. So we can give our players a drill to do this. We are aiming to provide this knowledge to prepare lessons correctly.



- We are looking for players to understand how to effectively apply tactics in a drill scenario.
- Tutor will demonstrate a drill which a tactical nature, which connects with a matchplay scenario.
- With a drill with tactical inclusion, the explanation in the demo is very important, we are looking to provide our course attendees with this technical terminology and explain how you can deliver to group setting.
- We want to again show this drill so players will practice and then we will discuss
- Working in pairs to discuss and brainstorm ideas of different drills

### **Tutor Examples**

- Approach shot, volley
- Counter Punching Defending strikes
- V Drill

### **Matchplay**

Very applicable and can be viewed as allowing a players to be expressive, with high representativeness and simply let them play, the dial is high as they can chose their tactics. As coaches we can observe, take data and give feedback during and after in the debrief. Or we can talk to players beforehand about tactics, discuss strengths and weaknesses of themselves and the opponent.

We will run both scenarios to show how we can benefit from both approaches. There is not one answer here, at the end of the day in competition you are on your own, so we value the concept of allowing players to fend for themselves, make their decisions and ultimately the results will dictate if this correct. As we have seen most elite players have their own team, but there are some that represent themselves solely to great effect.

### **Day 4 Assessment Criteria:**

1. Design drills and exercises that prioritize tactical focus and also incorporate technique, footwork, and conditioning elements.
2. Adapt the complexity of drills to match the skill level of the participating players, ensuring an appropriate level of challenge.
3. Implement high tempo, high volume drills to simulate match conditions and encourage player improvement.
4. Demonstrate the ability to deliver high-quality demonstrations in coaching sessions, with a focus on clarity and precision.