

Safe and Inclusive Tennis

Promoting Positive & Handling Poor Parental Behaviours

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Webinar Content

Section 1: Understanding Poor Parental Behaviour

- **What is Poor Parental Behavior**
- **Impact of Poor Parental Behavior**
- **Why Does it Happen?**
- **When Does it Become Abuse?**

Section 2: Strategies for Preventing & Addressing Poor Parental Behaviours

- **Codes of Conduct**
- **Education & Support**
- **Conflict Management Strategies**



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Section 1: Understanding Parental Behaviour



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Parents Roles in Junior Tennis

Chauffeur

Laundry Service

Financial Supporter

Nutritionist

Schedule Planner

Fundraiser

Racket Stringer

Supporter

Coach

Friend

Counselor /
Psychologist

Mentor

Role Model



Source: Fredricks & Eccles, 2004

Introduction: Parent Behaviour



Negative or
controlling
parenting

Well
intentioned but
uninformed
parenting

Supportive /
'expert'
parenting

What is Poor Parent Behavior During Competition?

- Intimidating opponents
- Displaying overt interest in the game
- Drawing attention to self
- Singling out own child for support or encouragement
- Criticizing own child or team
- Displaying negative responses during a game
- Coaching in any form
- Arguing with officials
- Contradicting coach instructions
- Repeating instructions
- Engaging in derogatory behavior
- Disrupting children so they lose concentration



(Knight et al. 2010, 2011; Omli & Wiese-Bjornstal, 2011)

What is the Scale of the Problem?

In a research survey of over 100 American youth tennis players:

- 60% reported their parents had embarrassed them (i.e., walking away from a match)
- 30% reported their parents had yelled or screamed
- 13% reported that their parents had hit them after a match



(De Francesco & Johnson, 1997)

What Impact is it having?

Children who perceive their parents communication and behavior as pressurising report:

- Higher Pre-competitive anxiety
- Lower self esteem
- Reduced self-confidence
- Higher fear-of-failure
- More Cheating
- Burnout
- Dropout



Task 1: Why Does it Happen?

Identify the reasons why you believe tennis parents may engage in negative or controlling behaviours during competition?



Reasons Why Parents Behave Poorly

Parents goals (adjusted based on early success/failure)

Lack of Knowledge & Expertise

Financial & Time Investment

LTA's Organizational system

Emotional reaction (e.g., anger) to their child's experience (i.e., being cheated)

Emotional intensity of the game (i.e., stage of game, score, importance on match)

Personal Factors

Organisational Factors

Environmental Factors

(Holt et al. 2008; Dorsch et al. 2015)

When Poor Parental Behaviour Becomes Abuse?

- *Abuse is defined as ‘a pattern of physical, sexual, or emotional ill treatment by a person in a caregiver capacity (e.g., parent/coach) resulting in actual or potential harm to the athlete.*
- **Types of Relational Abuse: Sexual, Emotional, Physical, Neglect**
- **Two main reasons why athlete emotional abuse occurs:**
 - Attempting to push an athlete to a higher level (Lack of understanding child/talent development?)
 - Anger & loss of emotional control

Table 19.1 Examples of abuse in sport	
Type of abuse	Example
Physical abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pushing, beating, kicking, biting, shoving, striking, shaking, throwing, choking, slapping• Hitting an athlete with sporting equipment• Requiring an athlete to remain motionless in a seated or plank position for a period of time• Beyond reasonable training demands• Forcing an athlete to kneel on a harmful surface• Isolating an athlete in a confined space• Denying access to needed water, food, or sleep• Forced physical exertion beyond the physical capabilities of the athlete (e.g., forcing an athlete to train until he/she vomits or loses consciousness)
Sexual abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sexual relations with an athlete• Inappropriate sexual contact (e.g., groping of an athlete's breasts or buttocks)• Exchange of reward in sport for sexual favours• Sexually oriented comments, jokes, or gestures• Sexual propositions• Exposing an athlete to pornographic material
Emotional abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demeaning comment• Acts of humiliation• Intimidating or threatening acts of aggression with no athlete contact (e.g., throwing equipment against a wall)• Intentional denial of attention and/or support• Chronic expusion from training or competition• Not providing adequate recovery time or treatment for a sport injury• Not providing adequate counseling for an athlete exhibiting signs of psychological distress• Disregard for the nutritional well-being of the athlete• Inadequate supervision of an athlete• Failure to ensure the safety of athletic equipment• Disregarding the use of performance-enhancing drugs• Disregard for educational requirements and well-being• Not recognizing the social needs of the athlete• Failure to intervene when made aware of maladaptive behaviour
Neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disregard for the nutritional well-being of the athlete• Inadequate supervision of an athlete• Failure to ensure the safety of athletic equipment• Disregarding the use of performance-enhancing drugs• Disregard for educational requirements and well-being• Not recognizing the social needs of the athlete• Failure to intervene when made aware of maladaptive behaviour

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Further Reading





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Section 2: Strategies for Preventing & Addressing Poor Parental Behaviours



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1. Codes of Conduct & Signs

- One popular strategy which has been introduced in some sports are ‘codes of conduct’ which attempt to control parents behavior.
- Research suggests that parents and coaches believe these codes of conduct are good idea, but their effectiveness is limited if parents are not held accountable for their actions
- There is evidence in junior soccer to suggest that giving referees the ability to issue a ‘yellow card’ to the crowd (which means a player gets sin-binned) reduces the number of verbal comments made.



Task 2

What are the advantages and disadvantages of implementing ‘codes of conduct’ in junior tennis clubs/centres?



Task 2: Review

Advantages

- Evidence to suggest they are effective at limiting negative or controlling comments
- Clear consequences for any violation
- Easy for referees to enforce

Disadvantages

- Could negatively impact on relationships with parents
- Needs to be continually policed or enforced
- Not tackling the cause of the problem
- Players will be punished for the behavior of their parents

2. Educating & Supporting Parents

Research exploring parents experiences has highlighted the need too educate parents about:

- Ways parents can provide social support
- Developmental considerations and stages of development
- How to communicate and interact effectively
- Appropriate and inappropriate behaviors
- How to develop coping strategies to manage their emotions during competitions

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Type: Review; Peer-reviewed Article
DOI: 10.1177/1068352911432001
http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1068352911432001
Educating and Supporting Tennis Parents: A Grounded Theory of Parents' Needs During Childhood and Early Adolescence
Sam N. Thewar, Chris G. Harwood, and Christopher M. Spry
Loughborough University

The purpose of this study was to identify British tennis parents' education and support needs during their child's developmental years. Data were collected in 2 high-performance tennis centers and consisted of 6 months of fieldwork and interviews with parents, coaches, and ex-sport players ($n = 26$). Using a grounded-theory methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 2006), data were analyzed using a process of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. The resulting grounded theory highlights the need to provide tennis parents with education that covers their introductory needs, organizational needs, development needs, and competition needs during childhood/adolescence. The findings also highlight the need for tennis parents to be educated based on the notion that their needs can only be fulfilled if tennis parents are provided with formal education, the effectiveness of which will be determined by parents' motivation to learn and ongoing support from key stakeholders (e.g., coaches). The outcomes, limitations, and findings of parent education and support in high-performance tennis centers are discussed.

Keywords: parent, tennis, grounded theory, education and support needs

Within the context of youth sport, there has been increasing academic interest in the development of young athletes and those responsible for their development. Parents are widely considered to have the most influence during a child's early pre-technical development through their initiation into sport (S-15 years; Harwood, Cua, 1999; Wykes, Lavelle, & Lavelle, 2006). Although parents were as essential for athlete development, they are at the same time potentially a major detriment for some young athletes (Gould, Lasor, Rolek, & Peterson, 2006). Taking this into consideration, it is important to understand what is occurring within the family. There has been growing academic interest in parents' involvement in youth sport settings (see Holt & Knight, 2012 for a comprehensive review). This academic interest has provided an understanding of coaches' and players' perceptions of positive and negative parenting practices (e.g., Gould et al., 2006; Gould, Lavelle, & Lavelle, 2004; Harwood, 2006; Knight, Boden, & Holt, 2012; Knight, Nedy, & Holt, 2011; Lasor, Gould, Roush, & Petrone, 2010, 2010b); the stressors, emotions, and experiences associated with parenting (e.g., Gault & Gould, 2004; Gould & Dorsch, 2004; Gould & McDonald, 2006; Harwood & Knight, 2006a, 2006b; Ondra & LaVie, 2012; Wierwille & Filar, 2000); and the positive and negative styles and behavior patterns displayed (e.g., Gould, Lavelle, & Lavelle, 2004; Morgan & Giacobbi, 2006; Morgan, Giacobbi, & Holt, 2012). Knight & Holt (2012) This body of research has consistently highlighted the challenging and complex nature of parenting in youth sport and need to educate and support parents through this process. No study to date has examined parents' needs in a context that has received significant attention in the literature. Much of the research within junior tennis has advocated the need to educate tennis parents about appropriate and inappropriate behaviors (e.g., Holt & Knight, 2012; Knight, 2010; Knight & Holt, 2012) initiating this line of enquiry. Gould and colleagues (Gould et al., 2006, 2008; Lasor et al., 2010a, 2010b)



Further Reading

Gould et al. 2008; Knight et al. 2012; Morgan & Giacobbi, 2006; Knight, 2012)

Guidelines of Delivering Parent Education Programmes

1. Make interventions free & accessible (e.g., when parents attend the centre or online)
2. Keep workshops short (e.g., less than 60 mins)
3. Promote interventions via several routes of referral (e.g., email & coach recommendations, posters)
4. Demonstrate experience and knowledge of sport parenting/specific topic (e.g., child development, organisational system, competition coaching)
5. Ensure provisional content is linked to the needs of participants (*see further reading)
6. Try to give parents an input into the programme content
7. Create a safe, inclusive and supportive learning environment
8. Encourage sharing experiences, interaction and group discussions
9. Use role plays and practical take home tasks as a way to reinforce learning

Creating a Supportive Environment for Parents

In addition to educational workshops, there are a number of ways in which clubs can help to support tennis parents:

- Regular Parent-Coach Meetings (i.e., reinforcing key messages)
- Parent Mentoring Programme
- Parent Peer-Support Discussion Groups
- Adding psychologists to the support team! (e.g., one-on-one or family based support)



3. Conflict Management

As a welfare office, think of an example when you have experienced a conflict with a tennis parent at your club either directly (between you & a parent) or indirectly (between a parent & coach/child/referee)

Share 1 or 2 examples of conflict at your club



Task 3: How Do You Manage Conflicts with Parents?

Instructions: Rate each of the statements below between 1 and 5 (1=not at all, 5=very much)

1. I give in to the wishes of the other party.
2. I concur with the other party.
3. I try to accommodate the other party.
4. I adapt to the other parties' goals and interests.
5. I try to realize a middle-of-the-road solution.
6. I emphasize that we have to find a compromise solution.
7. I insist we both give in a little.
8. I strive whenever possible towards a fifty-fifty compromise.

Avoiding

9. I push my own point of view.
10. I search for gains.
11. I fight for a good outcome for myself.
12. I do everything to win.

Competing

13. I examine issues until I find a solution that really satisfies me and the other party.
14. I stand for my own and other's goals and interests.

Problem Solving

15. I examine ideas from both sides to find a mutually optimal solution.

16. I work out a solution that serves my own as well as other's interests as good as possible.

17. I avoid a confrontation about our differences.

18. I avoid differences of opinion as much as possible.

19. I try to make differences loom less severe.

Avoiding

20. I try to avoid a confrontation with the other.

How Do You Manage Conflict with Parents?

Concern for relationship with parents



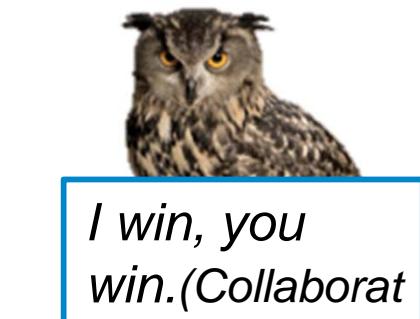
*I lose, you win.
(Accommodating)*



*I zig, you
zag
(Avoiding)*



*You bend, I
bend.(Compromis-
ing)*



*I win, you
win.(Collaborat-
ing)*



*I win, you
lose.(Competi-
ng)*

Concern for personal goals, values,
beliefs (i.e., positive parental
behaviour & child welfare)

Dual-concern model
(Pruitt & Rubin, 1986)

Conflict Management Skills

- **Collaboration is a successful approach in managing conflict because it promotes effective communication and problem-solving behaviours, allowing you to recognize and integrate each persons goals and beliefs to reach mutually beneficial solution**
- **Fundamental conflict management skills involved in collaborative conflict resolution include:**
 - Emotion regulation
 - Interpersonal communication
 - Problem-solving skills

Step-by-Step Conflict Management Plan

1. Recognize and Acknowledge the conflict

- Join parents & athletes, coach, support staff
- Get all parties to agree resolve the conflict together (i.e., win/win)

2. Isolate conflict

- Go to designated area for solving problems
- Explain & agree 4 basic rules
 - Agree to solve problem
 - Remain polite
 - Do not interrupt
 - Tell truth

3. Clarify communication

- Decide who will talk first
- Ask each person to explain what happened & discuss their feelings

4. Solutions

- Ask each for alternative solutions to the problem
- Work towards & agree on solution(s)

Summary

- Poor parental behaviour is a reoccurring problem in junior tennis and is having a detrimental impact on young athletes participation and development
- Poor parental behaviour can be prevented through ‘codes of conduct’ and ‘education and support’
- Poor parental behaviour can cause conflicts which are most effectively resolved through a ‘collaborative conflict management style’



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Questions?



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