



COACH FORUMS

2026



**A WARM
WELCOME!**

ORDER OF PLAY

Times	Session	Length
9.00 - 11.30	Future proofing British juniors: Non-limiting technique Group photo	2hrs 30mins
11.30 – 12.00	Networking break Refreshments	30mins
12.00 – 13.00	Building a sustainable programme by creating a robust workforce pipeline	1hr

All slides can be found in [LTA Coach Hub](#)



OUR LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- Large amount of experience in the room
- You get out what you put in
- Engage constructively and with curiosity
- Thank you for investing in yourself



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand what non-limiting technique is and its importance to future proof British juniors
2. Be aware of what the National Pathway team are looking for in U10 players at a regional level
3. Gain exercises to help work towards non-limiting technique for forehand, backhand and serve
4. (Off court) Understand how to create a robust workforce pipeline to support a sustainable programme

FUTURE PROOFING BRITISH JUNIORS: NON-LIMITING TECHNIQUE

**CURRENT LANDSCAPE & EXERCISES FOR
YOUR PROGRAMME**

On-court unit (2HR 30MINS)



CONTRIBUTORS



Steven Fathers

- LTA Accredited + Level 5 Master Performance Coach
- LTA National Pathway Coach
- Former Director of Tennis Bolton Arena and Head coach of Bolton RPDC
- Coach to Naomi Broady
- Part of Heather Watson coaching team
- Travelling coach on ITF Juniors



Nick Weal

- LTA Head of Performance Coach Education & Development
- Former GB Davis Cup Coach
- Former Pro Tennis Player
- EMCC Qualified Executive Coach



Stuart Twigg

- Keynote speaker at the 2023 ITF World Coach Conference
- Programme lead for the LTA Senior Coach Level 4 Qualification
- Owner of LTA WDC - The Coach Lab
- LTA National Assessor
- LTA National Quality Assurer
- LTA Coach Education Content Developer



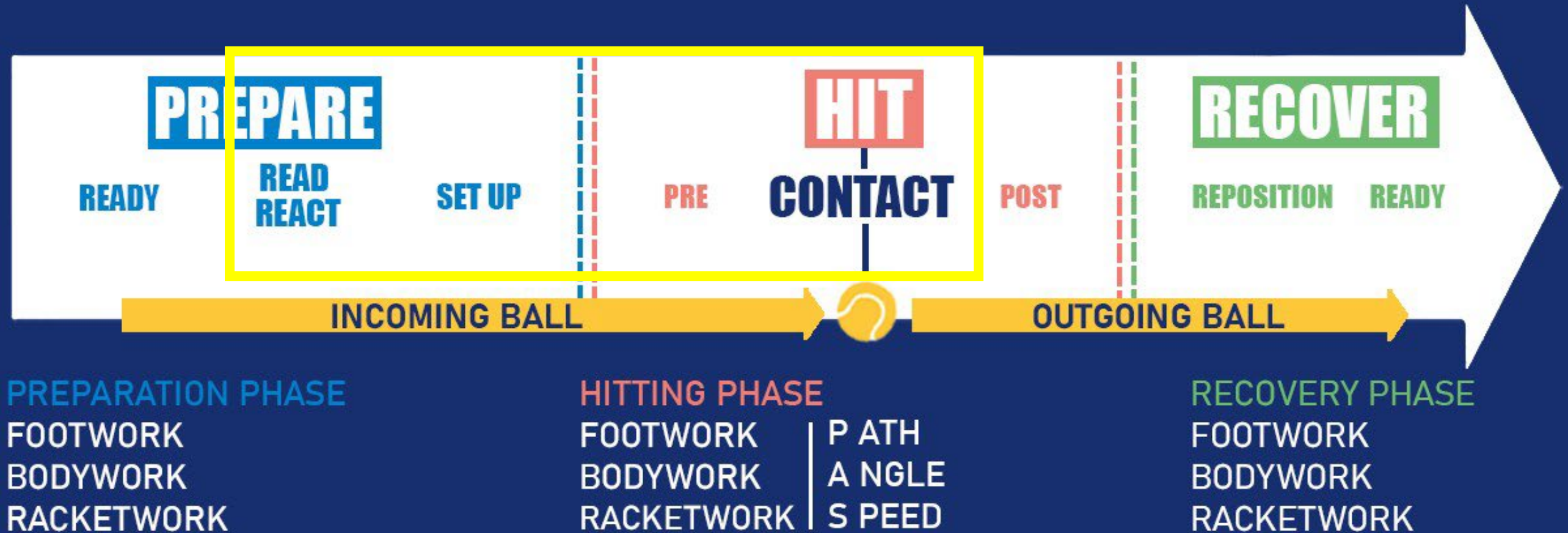
Matt Smith: Editor

- LTA Accredited + Level 5 Master Club Coach
- Former LTA Coach of the Year
- Former Head Coach at Bath University, an International High-Performance Centre
- LTA Coach & Official Development & Learning Manager

TACTICAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



PERFORMANCE COACHING PRINCIPLES

PERSON
SKILLS ←
HEAD
HEART
ATHLETE
JOURNEY

[LINK: Performance tennis coaching principles | LTA](#)



A NOTE FROM NICK

“WE ARE STILL FOLLOWING A GAME-BASED AND PERFORMER-FIRST APPROACH BUT HAVING AN EYE ON TECHNIQUE TO ALLOW PLAYERS TO AVOID INJURY AND REACH THEIR POTENTIAL IS ESSENTIAL.”



Nick Weal
LTA Head of Performance
Coach Education & Development

*“Performer first + non-limiting technique
= Future proofing British junior players”*

TALENT CHARACTERISTICS

EARLY SIGNS OF POTENTIAL

CHASES EVERY
BALL

CREATIVE IN
PLAY

ATHLETIC
QUALITIES

READS
THE BALL

COMFORTABLE IN
THE RALLY

LOVES
THE GAME

CONFIDENT TO
ATTACK

LOVES TO
COMPETE

PERFORMER-FIRST



[LINK: County Tennis for young tennis players | LTA](#)

THE U10 PATHWAY

County Fun Days

Local level events with players put forward by the clubs and coaches

County Training

Selected by County lead

Regional Performance Camps

Nominated by county lead

Where the videos & data comes from today via the National Pathway team 2026

WARM-UP GET READY GAME



**WHAT IS NON LIMITING
TECHNIQUE (NLT)?
AND WHY IT IS IMPORTANT?**

WHAT IS NON LIMITING TECHNIQUE?

- Relevant age and stage technical input to avoid technical obstacles in the future
- A way to start the kid's tennis journey, and get the foundations right, that allows them the best chance to reach their potential
- Supports players to progress through the player pathway and “keep the door open”
- Implemented to prevent injury and improve tactical outcome
- Works hand-in-hand with the ‘performer-first’ approach



WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?



1

Optimising stroke production. Power, spin, variation, speed, accuracy for a better tactical outcome

2

Injury prevention

3

Establish a sound base for the movement required to deal with modern demands of the game

4

The range of acceptability in strokes is narrowing – so we need to keep up with the future demands of the game

QUESTION:

**THE FOCUS OF TODAY IS GOING TO BE FOREHAND,
BACKHAND AND SERVE.**

**WHAT TYPES OF LIMITING TECHNIQUE DO YOU SEE
WITH YOUR U10 PLAYERS THAT COULD HINDER
THEIR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT?**

DISCUSSION IN GROUPS (3-4)

EXAMPLES OF POTENTIALLY LIMITING TECHNIQUE IN U10 SPACE:

- Lack of readiness and reading skills
- Full western grip on forehand
- Extreme opposite grips on backhand
- Extreme oversize swings
- Incorrect foot alignment on serve
- Forehand grip on serve
- Low/high elbow on the serve



THE U10 RANGE OF ACCEPTABILITY

WHAT WE'RE WORKING TOWARDS AND WHY

FOREHAND GRIP – SEMI WESTERN

Why? Working towards this through the ball colours at U10 allows the player the best opportunity to hit with spin, speed, accuracy. If the players grip evolves over time to be more extreme and they are physically capable, this is ok.

BACKHAND GRIP – BOTTOM HAND CONTINENTAL & TOP HAND EASTERN

Why? This combination is the least problematic moving through the ball colours at U10. There is room for movement away from these 2 options, but we don't want to see 2 extremes.

SERVE GRIP – CONTINENTAL

Why? This is the grip they will all need to gravitate to in time. Work towards this during the U8 pathway is important so by the time they are U9 they have it in place for variation of spin.



WHERE ARE OUR BRITISH JUNIOR PLAYERS NOW?

THE LTA NATIONAL PATHWAY TEAM HAVE COLLATED EXTENSIVE DATA THROUGHOUT 2026 FROM THE 9U NATIONAL TOUR EVENTS ALONG WITH VIDEO ANALYSIS FROM THE REGIONAL PERFORMANCE CAMPS WITH OUR 2018'S (CURRENT 6 & 7 YEAR-OLDS) TO SEE WHERE THE PLAYERS ARE WITH NON-LIMITING TECHNIQUE

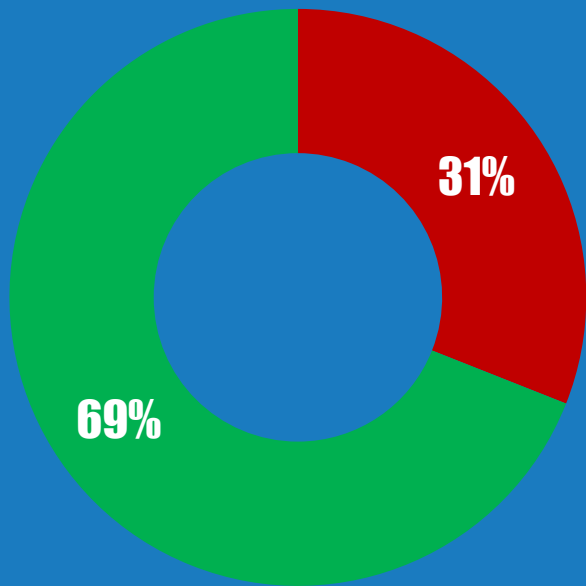
REPORTING CHECKLIST USED



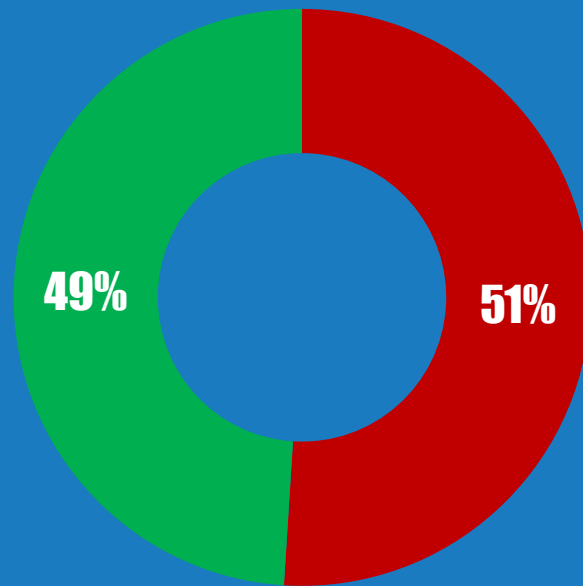
GRIP	UNIT TURN	CONTACT POINT
EXCELLING CONSISTENT PROGRESSING NEXT STEP FOCUS	EXCELLING CONSISTENT PROGRESSING NEXT STEP FOCUS	EXCELLING CONSISTENT PROGRESSING NEXT STEP FOCUS

PREVALENCE OF LIMITING TECHNIQUE: U9 RESEARCH

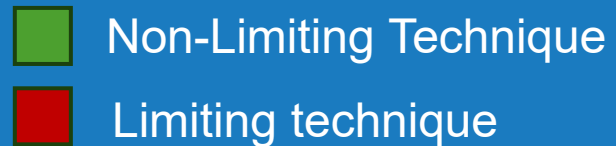
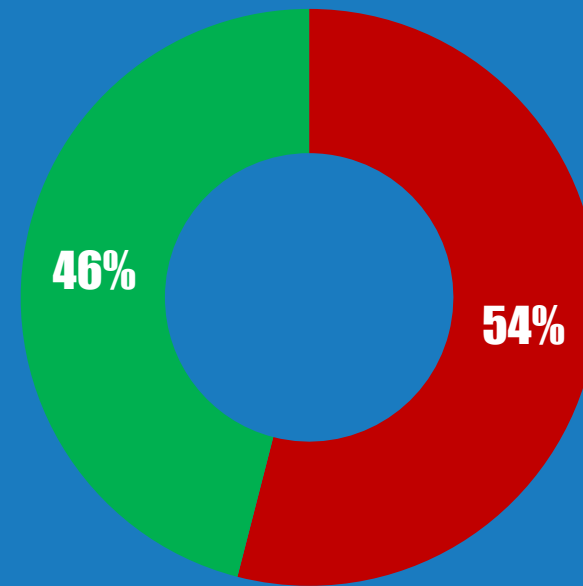
Forehand Grip



Backhand Grip



Serve Grip



These graphs show the percentage of players using a grip that was deemed outside the “range of acceptability”. This slide shows grip observations, however similar data was found with unit turn and contact point

Sample: U9 Grade 2 events, 2026. Boys and Girls combined.





**Q: SO, HOW CAN WE WORK TOGETHER TO HELP
FUTURE-PROOF BRITISH JUNIOR TENNIS?**

**A: WE NEED TO SUPPORT OUR U10S WITH NON-
LIMITING TECHNIQUE**



FOREHAND
WHAT DOES GOOD LOOK LIKE
AT U8S, NOT PERFECTION!

FOREHAND NLT IDEAS

GRIP



Golf tee

UNIT
TURN



High 5

CONTACT
POINT



Move with the ball

- Full western
- Holding grip high up the handle
- Grip tension



FOREHAND LIMITING TECHNIQUE SCENARIOS:

What is observed	A - Grip	B – Unit turn	C – Contact point	D – Coach choice
Tactical/ Injury potential	The ball is hitting the net or landing short, missing or allowing the opponent to attack	The player's forehand is inconsistent, missing wide	The player cannot hit with accuracy into open space	What you see most often
Technical	The player has an extreme western grip	They are turning after the bounce and hitting late	The contact point is too close, or in-line, to their body	Why does this happen

Consider the technical framework (in particular; Grip, Unit turn, Contact)



BACKHAND
WHAT DOES GOOD LOOK LIKE
AT U8S, NOT PERFECTION!

BACKHAND NLT IDEAS

GRIP



Hit and release

UNIT
TURN



Turn, bounce, freeze

CONTACT
POINT



Yes: 1, 2, 3, 4

- Dominant bottom hand
- Split hands on the grip
- Grip tension
- Extreme bottom/top hand grip combo's



BACKHAND LIMITING TECHNIQUE SCENARIOS:

What is observed	A - Grip	B - Unit turn	C - Contact point	D – Coach choice
Tactical/ Injury potential	The ball is high and short giving the opponent time	The ball is slow and not hitting through the court allowing the opponent to take control of the rally	The player struggles to change direction when given the opportunity to go down the line	What you see most often
Technical	They're controlling the ball with a scoop motion still with a forehand grip	They are not turning enough to use their body through the shot	The contact point is too close or in-line with their body	Why does this happen

Consider the technical framework (in particular; Grip, Unit turn, Contact)



SERVE
WHAT DOES GOOD LOOK LIKE
AT U8S, NOT PERFECTION!

SERVE NLT IDEAS



GRIP



Chopper bounce, weave

ALIGNMENT/BALL TOSS



Lines and channel toss

CONTACT
POINT



Strike zone

- Forehand grip
- Grip tension
- Fist grip
- Waiters tray
- Front on stance
- Moving feet



LIMITING TECHNIQUE SCENARIO:

THERE IS A LOSS OF POWER AND TRAJECTORY IN THE PLAYERS SERVE, LEADING TO A LACK OF ABILITY TO VARY SERVE PLACEMENT.

LET'S SOLVE THE MOST COMMON SITUATION BASED AROUND THE 'WAITERS' TRAY'

Consider:

- Grip**
- Alignment & ball toss**
- Contact point**

On your courts of 4 come-up with a solution to help resolve this issue to support injury prevention and a better tactical outcome.

CONCLUSION & SUMMARY

TOP TIPS

FROM STEVEN AND NICK

1. Don't just go changing technique for the sake of it. It's in the context of the individual player and their journey
2. Keep the technique non-limiting to give your players the best chance to reach their potential
3. Work towards the ranges of acceptability to help prevent injury and promote a better tactical outcome
4. Educate your coaches, assistants, and parents. Giving them the 'why' behind any intervention

ENJOYING TODAY'S CONTENT?

Visit the Performance Coaching area of the LTA website

Level 4 & 5 coaches have access to the Performance Coaching Principles online courses

OTHER WORKSHOPS TO ATTEND:

- Serve at Red - launching in January
- Rally at Red
- Principles of Doubles #1: Fundamentals
- Performance Coaching: Standards,



BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE PROGRAMME BY CREATING A ROBUST WORKFORCE PIPELINE

OFF-COURT UNIT (1HR)





OUR LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

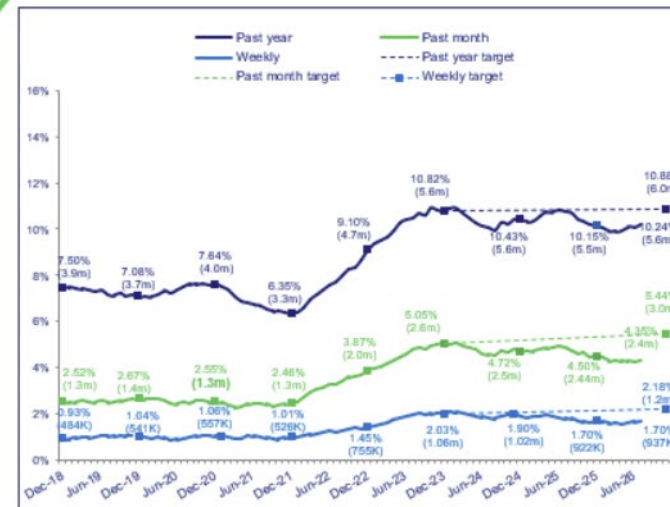
- Large amount of experience in the room
- Please share your knowledge and experience
- Engage constructively

PARTICIPATION CONTINUES TO GROW

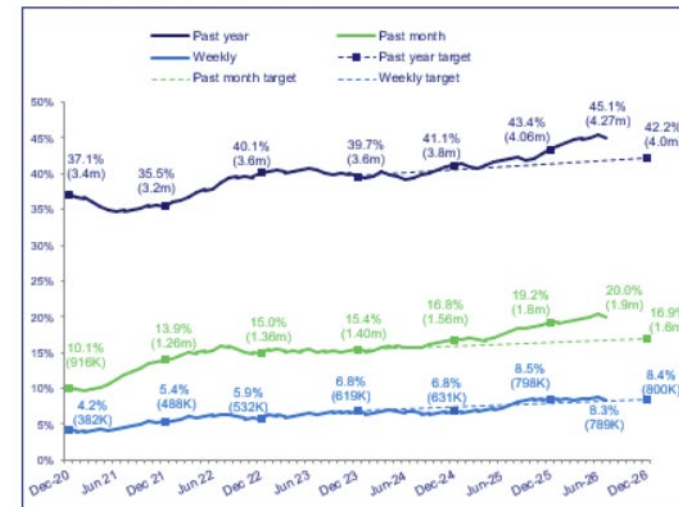
1. Tennis: In 2018, 1.3m people played monthly. In 2026 this figure was 2.4m - almost double
2. Tennis: Junior weekly participation has grown from 382,000 to 798,000 – over doubling
3. Padel: Participation broke 1 million this year for the first time
4. There is **increasing demand**. Are our programmes ready to grow with the game?

OVERVIEW: ADULT AND CHILD PARTICIPATION TRENDS

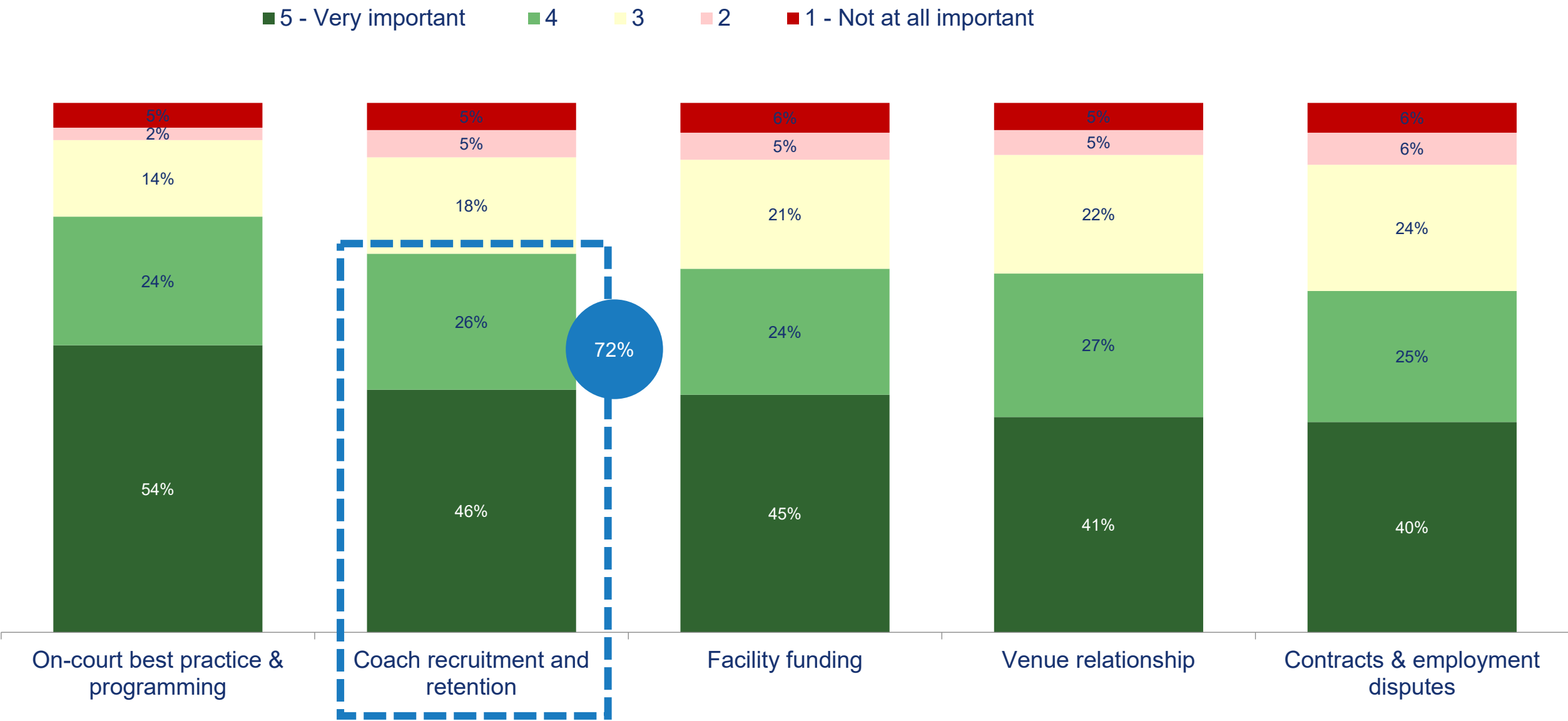
Adult Participation (12MR, Ages 16+)



Child Participation (12MR, Ages 4-15)



72% OF COACHES SAID THAT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION IS IMPORTANT OR VERY IMPORTANT TO THEM – WHICH IS WHY WE ARE COVERING THIS TODAY



Graph 1: Coach responses to the question: “How important is it to you that the LTA offers you support in the following areas? N=214

GROUP DISCUSSION

- a) Why might you need your own workforce pipeline?
- b) Have you been affected by not having enough people for your coaching, competition or casual play offers – as part of your broader programme?
- c) What do you currently do to create a workforce pipeline to support coaching, competition and play sessions?

LTA ON-COURT QUALIFICATION PATHWAYS

- = WDC Delivered
- = 1hr online, 3hr face-to-face
- = Accredited Level 3 Coach or above can deliver

Director of Tennis

International Junior

Pro Course

Senior Coach

Senior Performance Coach

● Coach

● Instructor

● Assistant

● Activators

● Leaders

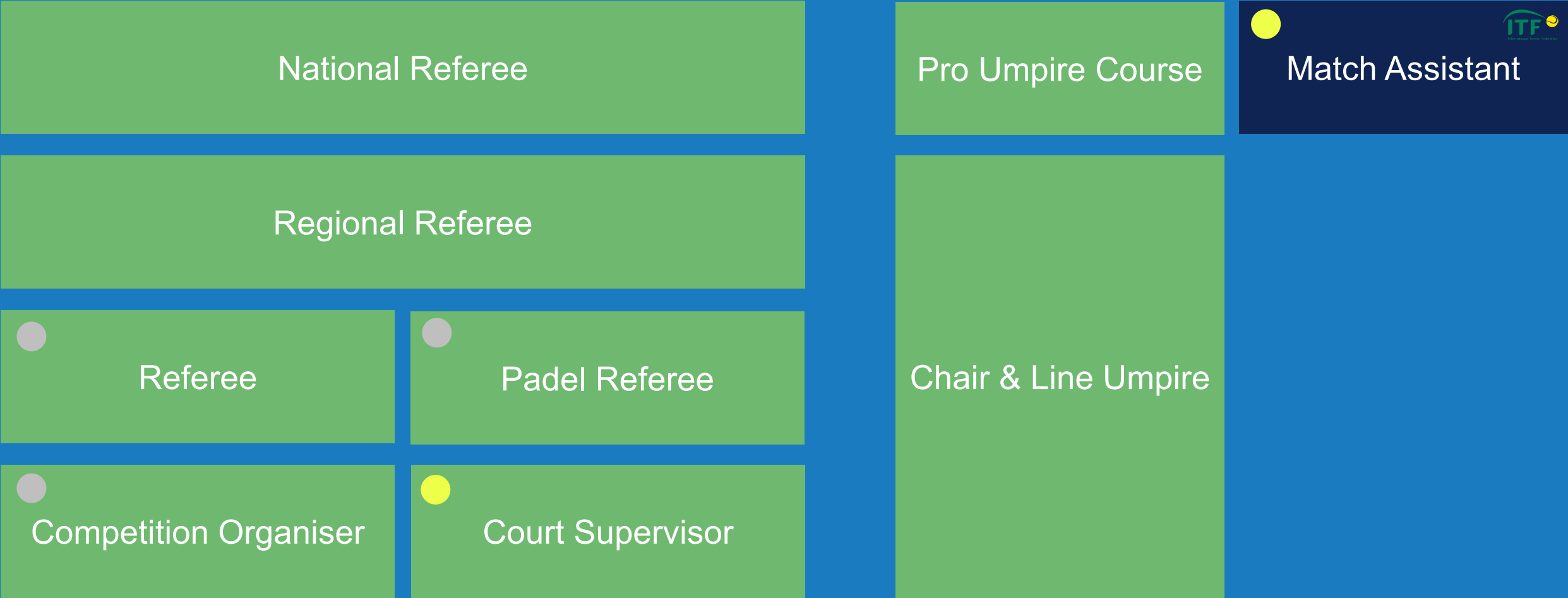
● Padel Coach

● Padel Instructor

● Intro to Padel (CPD)

LTA OFFICIATING QUALIFICATION PATHWAYS

● = WDC Delivered
● = Online self-paced module



3 KEY INGREDIENTS

ALONGSIDE YOUR CORE COACHING TEAM

*“A diverse team
helps free me up
to work **on** my
business, not just
in my business”
– Head Coach*

**Youth
Leaders**
(11-16yrs)

Activators
(16yrs+)

**Competition
Organisers**
(16yrs+)

Image 1. Three key ingredients / roles that you can use to have a well-rounded team and reduce the on-court weekly burden you experience as a programme head. By having these roles in your team, you can free up your time to work ‘on your business’ rather than always working ‘in your business’.

11+

FAGE LTA YOUTH LEADERS

Role

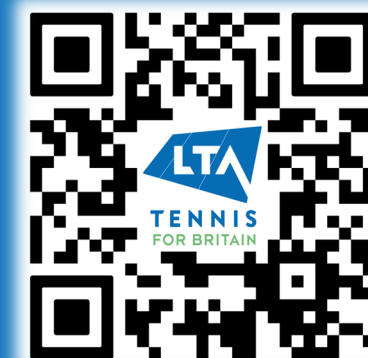
- Supporting coaching, competition and facilitating of play
- First step into a role in tennis or padel

Benefits to the tennis/padel programme

- Increase numbers within sessions and better ratios – more £ for you
- Creating a sustainable pipeline of coaches, assistants and volunteers
- Supporting the development of young people
- Develop your tutoring skills

How to get involved

- You can deliver the training if an Accredited L3 Coach or above
- Scan the QR code to order your free resources



FAGE LTA YOUTH LEADERS CASE STUDY

Tennis Squad, Wales

1. 40 active Leaders
2. Annual Leaders training 2x per year
3. Coaches that are 'champions' for each leader – for training and support
4. Regular volunteer opportunities for venue and programme
5. Reward and recognition – leaders track their own hours through [Track It Forward](#) and are rewarded with clothing, events and bursaries
6. Small investment – big impact



16+

COMPETITION ORGANISERS

Role

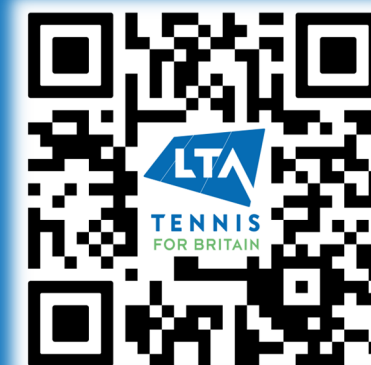
- Deliver competition at a local / venue level – ungraded, G7, G6.
- Training covers the Competition Framework, World Tennis Number, match and draw formats, and how to create a fun, positive experience for players

Benefits to the tennis/padel programme

- Someone to deliver competition for you and free up your time
- More fun competition in your programme = more player retention
- Provides valuable development opportunities for your players and parents, keeping them engaged

How to get involved

- £35 3hr webinar. 3 Coach & Official CPD Credits
- Course also part of the LTA Level 2 Instructor



CASE STUDY: COMPETITION ORGANISERS

Infinity Tennis, Kent

- Utilised multiple Competition Organisers to deliver LTA Youth competition offer at their venue
- 30+ children that have never previously competed taking part in competition – increasing their retention
- Increased engagement from committee and utilisation of the venue in previously quiet time
- Increased confidence amongst young players becoming Competition Organisers, delivering and understanding competition
- Also provided an opportunity to use Tennis Leaders as scorers



16+

but most
suitable 18+ as
it's a role that
leads a play
session

ACTIVATORS

Role

- Activators are facilitators of play, who create a sense of belonging and community, making an introduction to the sport enjoyable and less daunting. Generally volunteer*, low/no tech-tac instruction

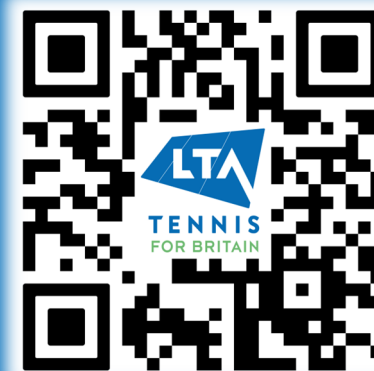
Benefits to the tennis/padel programme

- Free up your coaching time with an on-court volunteer
- Example activities they can run: social mix ins, new member tasters, walking tennis, 'padel & pastries' coffee mornings, sessions for dementia
- Very accessible training offer designed for part-time support e.g. parents

How to get involved/promote

- Free online and face to face training available
- Training develops communication and organisation skills
- LTA Activator Hub (login like Coach Hub)

*Activators can earn up to 5K per annum in payment or value in kind e.g. free membership or kit. If above this, they must become Qualified and Accredited to remain insured via the LTA



CASE STUDY: CHARLTON ATHLETIC COMMUNITY TRUST (CATC)

- The existing staff at CATC undertook Activator Training
- They then offered tennis at the community centre, free of charge
- This enabled people to try tennis that had never played before and would not be able to afford / consider coaching



Existing staff at Charlton Athletic Community Trust were trained up as Tennis Activators so that they can provide introductory tennis to youths at high risk of experiencing violence.

QUESTION 2

- a) Thinking about these three roles, what could you do (that you are not currently doing) to grow or broaden your team?
- b) Share one thing that you would like to try after today, and by when.

IDEAS

1. Assess where the programme is now, and what coaching/leading/activating/competition organising support you may need moving forward
2. Ask current player/parent base if they'd like to do any of the training to support
3. Reward and recognize those that help and help and get involved
4. Have a workforce pipeline for the future





LEARNING SUMMARY: WHAT HAVE WE COVERED?

1. What non-limiting technique is and it's importance to future proof British juniors
2. Awareness of what the National Pathway team are looking for in U10 players at a regional level
3. Exercises to help work towards non-limiting technique for forehand, backhand and serve
4. (Off court) Building a sustainable programme by creating a robust workforce pipeline

**FILL IN YOUR
FEEDBACK FORM**

**FOR A CHANCE TO WIN
A £200 AMAZON VOUCHER**

**PLEASE SCAN THIS QR CODE
YOU WILL ALSO GET A FOLLOW-UP
COMPLETION EMAIL WITH A LINK AND T&CS**



THANK YOU FOR INVESTING IN YOUR CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Safe trip home!

