

# ITF Coaches Education Programme Level 1 Coaches Course



## Coaching children and young people in tennis



# General considerations



- Children are not adults in miniature
- We coach children not to make them into young stars but for them to reach their peak as mature athletes and to give them lifelong interest in the sport
- Children follow the example of the coach
- The younger children are, the less worth telling them what to do
- Keep the children active during the lesson

# Children's growth



- Fastest growth is during the 1st and 2nd years of puberty
- During periods of growth, the centre of gravity changes:
  - Affects coordination and performance
  - Short term regression
- Differences between biological age and age in years

# Children's growth boys and girls



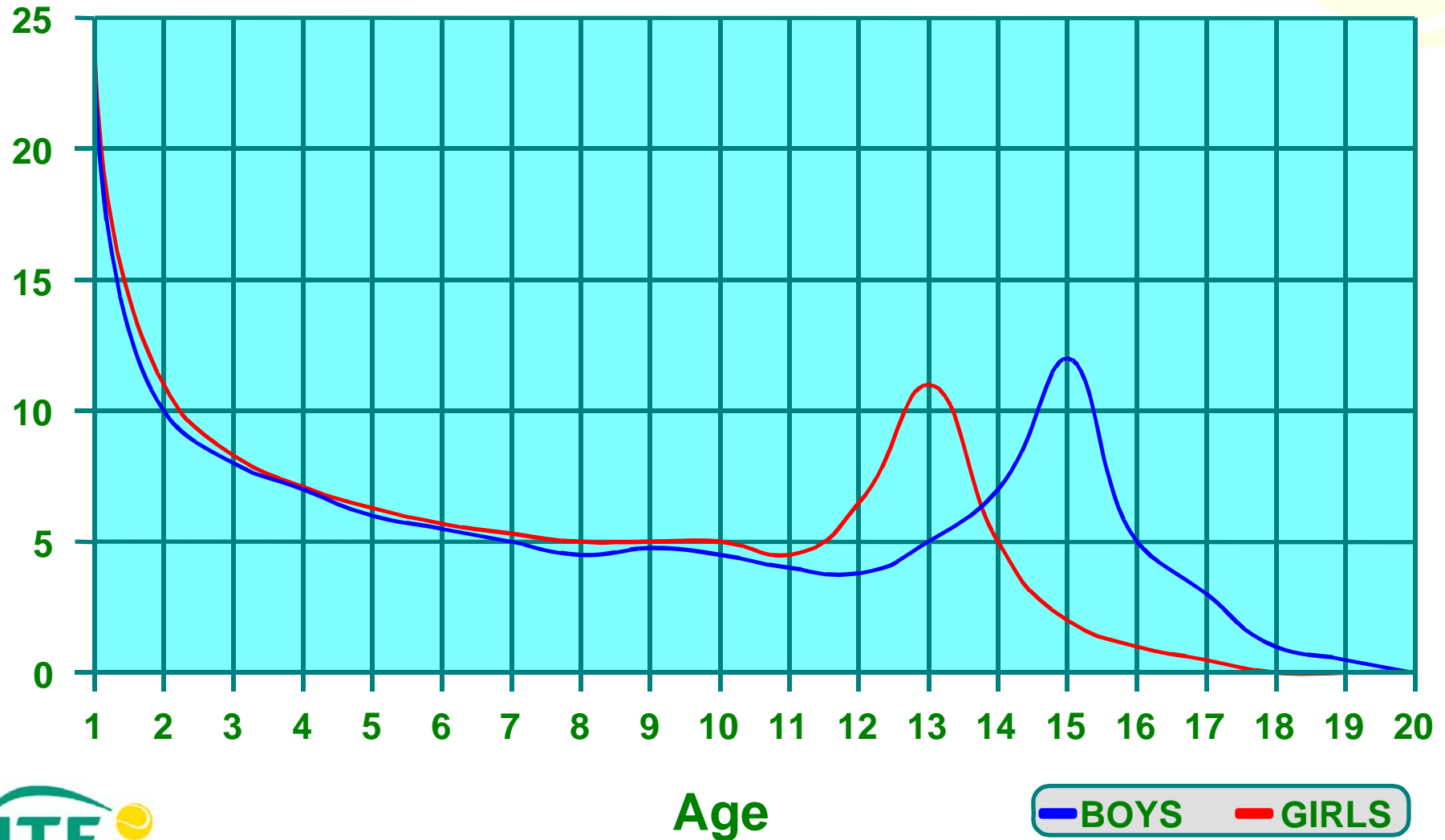
Up to ten they are the same height

- Girls grow most between 10-13
- Average girls reach full adult height at 16
- Boys grow most between 12-16
- Average boys reach full adult height at 19

- Girls of 15/16 have more difficulty than boys of 16 in improving because they are usually fully grown
- Once growth has stopped, better results depend on

# Growth curve for boys and girls

cm/year



# Skeletal development



- Younger years: skeleton more elastic but weaker than in adulthood
- Injury to the growth layers of the bones is serious
- Avoid excessive loads (e.g. weight lifting)
- Use own body weight: sit ups, push ups

# Skeletal development flexibility



- Young people's joints are relatively elastic
- Developing good flexibility through stretching will:
  - Prevent injuries
  - Enhance performance
- Too much flexibility training will:
  - Weaken the joints
  - Make them more easily dislocated or sprained

# Chronological vs. Developmental age



- Big difference between:
  - Chronological age: Age in years
  - Developmental age: Body age
- Assessments must take account of:
  - Children's ages
  - Biological differences between children of same age
- Don't judge potential entirely on match results between the ages 8-13



# General points sexual issues



- Sexual maturity:
  - Boys (13-14),
  - Girls (13)
- Menstruation:
  - 4 week intervals
  - Different responses
  - It may affect performance
  - Coaches should try to be open and understanding about this

# General points heat and cold



- 37 degrees is ideal body temperature
- Children have small capacity to produce heat
- On sunny days bodies heat up faster, this:
  - Makes them slow moving and uninterested
  - Consume more energy relative to their body weight
- Children lose heat more quickly than adults:
  - On cold days, intersperse the lesson with exercises to warm them up

# Motor development



- Training should be all-round, incorporating different sports
- Children must be wary of specialising in a sport too early

<b>Age, or stage of development</b>	<b>Main activities</b>
Four to six	Training of basic movements such as running, jumping, crawling, rolling, throwing, catching, etc. Some sports that are not complicated in their movements can be introduced
Seven to nine	Training of combinations of the above (i.e. running and jumping, running and catching) can be introduced

# Motor development



<b>Age, or stage of development</b>	<b>Main activities</b>
Before puberty	All round motor training Most sports can now be introduced in a suitably adapted form and be trained with great success
Puberty	Reinforcing what has been learned
After puberty	All-round training and specialising

# Mental development 5 - 7 years



- Show or do rather than tell or instruct
- Give concrete instructions that do not need abstract thought
- Let exercises of something new follow its demonstration at once; children hate waiting
- Small children (4 to 6) like playing simple games with few rules

# Mental development

## 7/8 - 11/12 years



- Instruction should take the form of demonstrations
- A wide variety of games is the best way to train
- They can follow a few simple rules and will gradually be able to learn more complicated rules

# Mental development 12/13 years - Puberty



- Young people in puberty exhibit great individual differences
- To continue maturing young people need to take responsibility (resolving problems themselves)
- More complicated exercises should be interspersed with games and play



# Conclusion

- Coaches need to increase their knowledge on how they can coach young people better
- Coaches should respect the developmental aspects to ensure better coaching