

Volume 1

Index

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Introduction

Welcome to a revolutionary new tennis psychology system compiled into a simple easy to follow manual enabling anyone to achieve an ability to think like the professionals, control your emotions and stay task orientated in the present.

As a tennis athlete you know for a fact you will spend more time between points than hitting the actual ball. That equates to a lot of thinking time whilst playing and your job is to help yourself control that time. With this system help is at hand and I will give you everything you require to advance your tennis career onwards and upwards.

I have laid this manual out in easily understood progressions to be mastered at your own pace and have designed the whole manual for anyone taking the sport of tennis more seriously in the area of tennis psychology. Parents can use it to enhance the mental abilities of their youngsters, coaches can use it to coach squads and groups of students of all abilities and levels and finally players can use the system themselves in order to enhance their own on and off court thinking enhancing confidence to new levels.

The whole programme can be run as is or personalised to suit your own particular ways and needs, after all no one player plays, thinks or acts the same. I believe the higher the level you go the more important it becomes to enhance the finer percentages of your game. A one percent increase for instance in your mentality may help you break into the top 200 in the world or perhaps on a lower scale your first team in the club you play in. Of course I want you to understand that if you need to improve something mentally in your game then you would do well to also improve your fitness and tactical prowess in the same area via purposeful goal setting with all your coaches and trainers.

This manual will introduce you to a psychology system via fourteen exercises and eleven drills to enhance your on-court confidence prior to, during and after matchplay.

It takes 10,000-12,000 hours of training to become a top class athlete

It may seem like a lot of hours but if you commit to this and remain committed with a meticulous programme no matter what then I am sure you will go onto to reach your end goal. You will then go onto realise there truly is no end goal!

To become a well rounded player I want you to go out and lose big, lose those close matches, be near the finishing line and lose but at the same time I also want you to win big, come from behind to win and also win those close matches.

I want whatever is going to go wrong in a match to go wrong, every environmental condition should be experienced. When you have gone through this you have gained a little more understanding in these fields. Win or lose I want you to never stop learning until you reach the top. Win or lose I want you to write down five things you did well and just as important five things you need to work on to progress forward. After all when you get there I want you to learn how to stay there.

I hope you enjoy all the aspects of this course, like all learning it may be hard going at first but before long the whole system will become integrated into your game without a second thought.

Welcome to the beginning of your World Class Journey

Andy Dowsett

Setting up the Psychology System

Here you have a choice to either set up the markers or cones now or you can do so as you progress through each exercise.

Each marker will require the correct wording throughout and most can be purchased cheaply from the football type marker cones to the more expensive throw down lines.

To purchase a set that has already been pre-made visit www.psycheuk.com for details.

To continue you will require...

Red Cones/spots

Yellow Cones/spots

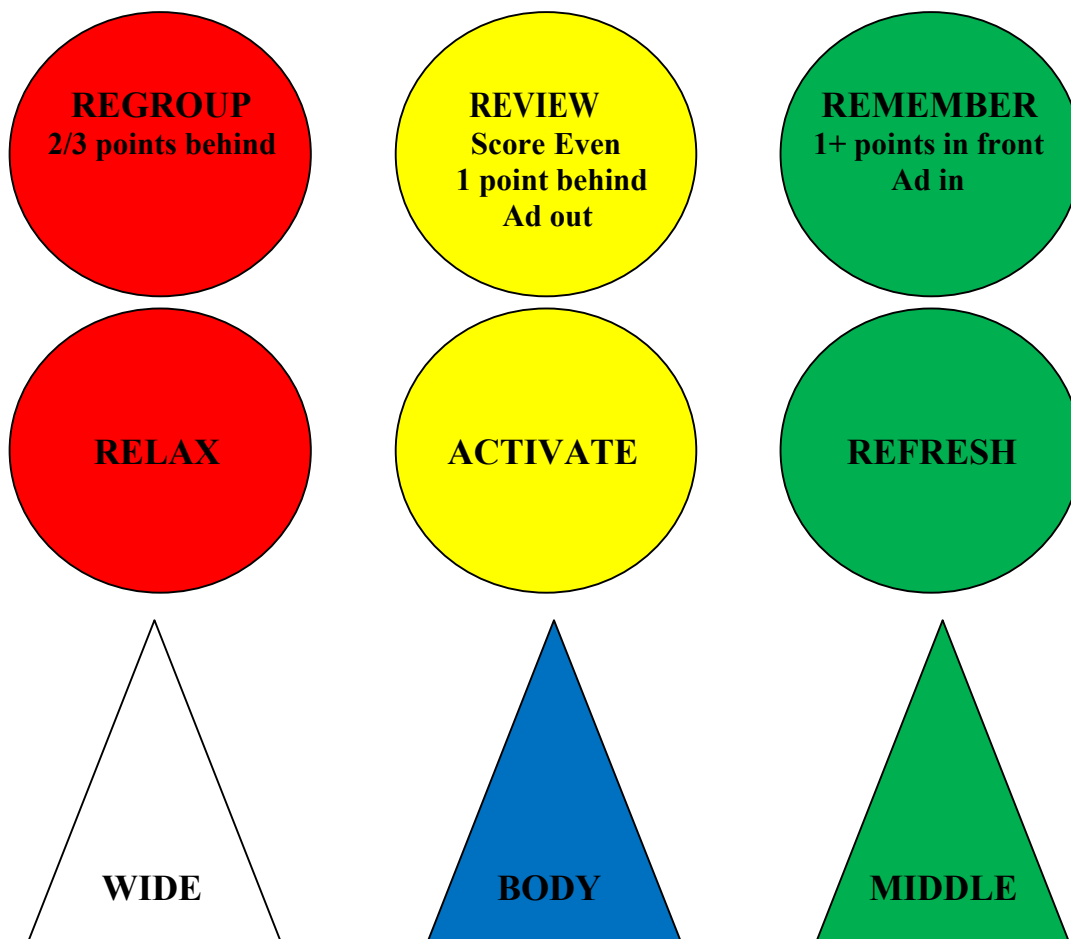
Green Cones/spots

Red throw down lines, tape or rope

Various coloured cones for service placement personally I use White (wide serve), Blue (body serve) and Green ((go down the middle) never could find the right colour cone for M !).

Alternately coloured chalk to chalk on court if working on hard courts outside.

Set the markers up as per the following diagrams...



Task 1 - Pre play confidence exercise

Aim - To set up a programme of events in order to obtain maximal pre-match/practice confidence.

Mentality – I will walk onto the court giving my absolute best fearing nothing and no one.

Obtaining and maintaining confidence is important in all athletic endeavours and is one of the most highly sort after areas in sport to be worked on in order to climb the ladder of success.

This exercise takes top priority and should be implemented as soon as humanly possible into your daily or weekly tennis workouts and matches.

In order to give yourself the maximum amount of confidence personally you need to work out which activities or ventures you could utilise for yourself. By having this simple but effective knowledge would set you on your way to playing and competing more confidently and efficiently all around.

I have completed a few in the table below and I am sure you can add more for yourself if required. However your aim is to work out 5 confidence building events that will ultimately give you a head start in your performance.

Exercise 1... Sources of confidence

Gaze through the table below and tick any that you feel you definitely require to enhance your pre play confidence in yourself. Add any that you feel have not been added (and there will be a few!!) then proceed on with the final table.

Sources of Confidence	Tick	Sources of Confidence	Tick
Past success in your sport		Mental Preparation	
An effective training programme		Support from those around	
Quality training or practice		Quality coaching	
Belief in yourself		Quality of your equipment	
Knowing your competition		Good warm up routine	
Comfortable with the environment		Prior game plan	
Suitable weather conditions		Good fitness level	

Before moving on cross off anything you cannot control leaving you a definitive list. Now pick out any five that you can utilise and place into a pre play performance routine that will bring you confidence.

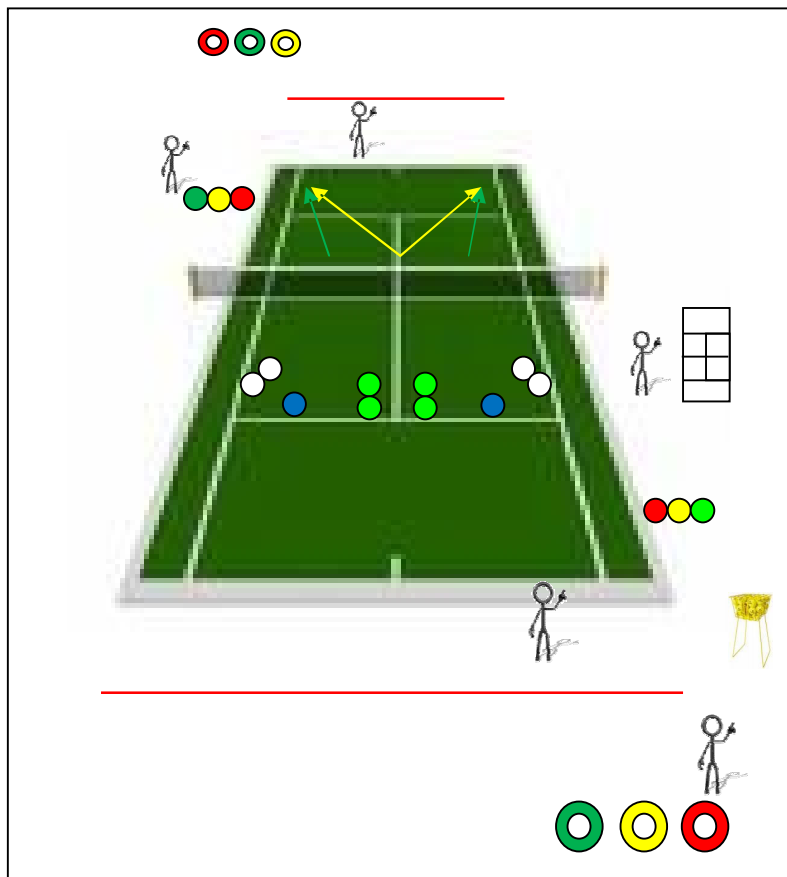
My top 5 events I will use and integrate into my training prior to playing and performing
Strings to be played in prior to match – any time prior to match day
Service box rally as warm up – as part of warm up routine
Contact point visualisation routine with music – journey to match and prior to stepping on court
Re-establish potential game plan – as part of pre match routine
Get heart rate into optimal zone prior to play

Your final task and that to end your first stage in your performance mentality is to integrate this into your training and match play without fail.

The System in Action – A brief outlook

Below is a view to setting up the system incorporating the whole oncourt scenario. There are 6 oncourt and 3 offcourt tasks to complete.





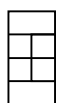

The system set up for drills



SERVE

RETURN OF SERVE

Key

-  - **Activation Zone (green = activate, yellow = refresh, red = relax)**
Aids – Breathing and playing in optimum personal heart rate zone
-  - **End of Point Scenarios (red = regroup, yellow = review, green = remember)**
Aids – Learning from previous points and moving on
-  - **Crossing the line**
Aids – Decisiveness prior to playing points
-  - **Serve Placements (white = wide, blue = body, green = go for middle)**
Aids – Visualisation and tactical planning
-  - **Court board for reviewing last play**
Aids – Visualisation and tactical reviewing/planning
-  - **Return Zones**
Aids – Instinctive response on return of serve

THIS SYSTEM HAS BEEN DESIGNED TO TRAIN AN INSTINCTIVE RESPONSE

The System in Action

Prior to committing to all tasks I want to give you a brief overview of the system.

You will start by visualising your next point by working out your service direction and next shot or your return of serve direction on either wing preferably by picking out clues in the opponents serve.

Having a clear, confident and concrete idea of what you are going to accomplish you will cross the line ready to commit to the rest of your serve or return of serve routine without a second thought.

The point is contended leaving you to respond to the battle just played through a progression of easily understood scenarios and tasks. This is followed closely by reviewing your previously played point on the visualisation board helping you to work out what the hell is going on and who is doing what to whom.

The end of point scenario aids in working out where you are right now and how to plan for the point ahead.

This leads you onto the body-mind walk to the back of the court leaving the previous point behind you so all focus can be placed onto the forthcoming important event at this time, the following point.

As you use your acting abilities ensuring a confident looking walk back past the baseline and having automatically checked your body for any tense muscles, your attention turns to your breathing and pulse rate in the activation zone. Here the body needs to pump up, refresh or calm down according to your personal optimum heart rate zone.

This will then bring you back to the start of the routine cycle by visualising or working out how you will win the following point.

IMPORTANT... IMPORTANT...IMPORTANT...IMPORTANT...IMPORTANT...IMPORTANT...

How to prevent the *great in practice and mediocre in matchplay* scenario...

When you play a match in real time the pressure is slightly higher than just hitting and practicing with partners or coaches. There is more meaning on the outcome so your heart rate will be beating at a different rate. The events will be different with seeded players and unknown environments, hostile crowds perhaps even reporters and cameras in your face too!!

To put this into perspective...during my time in the forces we had to jump a four foot gap at the top of a high climbing frame twelve foot above the ground. You can imagine how your heart rate raises to an extreme level. Imagine if this was the same jump however over a swamp of alligators!! Now to take it down a peg or two imagine jumping a four foot gap in practice when your feet are firmly on the floor. Now you can see how in practice your heart rate is low, in a more pressure situation a little higher and pushed to the extreme races ahead.

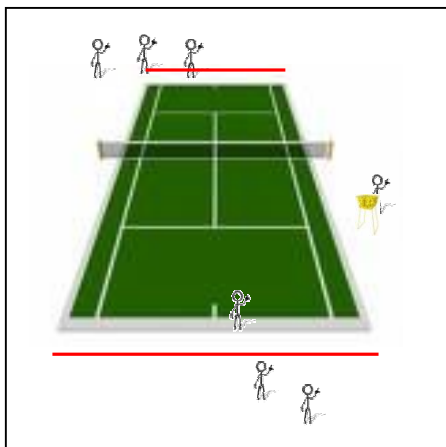
Your job is to enhance your practice by ensuring your heart rate is up to speed in practice as that in a match (see activation zone task) and to ensure that you visualise a more pressurised environment. Visualise playing a top pro in practice in one of the major events and you will be well on your way to creating a better matchplay environment for you in the future.

Task 2 - The Importance of crossing the line

Aim – To develop a more decisive and concrete mentality prior to serving or returning.

Mentality – I will be ready to step up to the baseline physically, emotionally and mentally ready for the next point.

Equipment needed – Red lines, red rope or red cones. (NB Ensure safety if using raised cones).



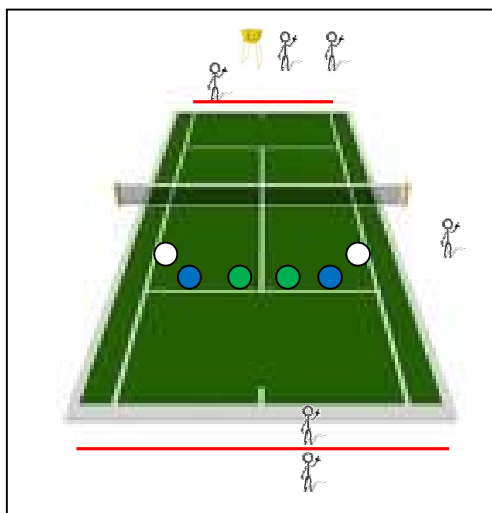
It's the simple things that help towards a better performance and overall winning mentality.

The first two that come to mind is the ability to run down every ball no matter if in training or matchplay. The second is having the correct mentality ready to work on court in the same situations as in the above sentence.

The idea of crossing the red line is for you the player to only step forward when you are mentally ready to compete. There should be no doubts or negative thoughts that will distract you from your first two shots you are about to embark on.

The above scene can be adhered to in any practice drill from full point playing to simple cross court rallying. You as a player or your students as a coach should only be prepared to cross this line if they are mentally ready in body and mind

Practice Exercises & drills...



Drill 1 – Serving for accuracy and placement

Place out the serve markers (you should have these prepared)

Wide (White cones)

Body (Blue cones)

Middle (Green cones)

This can be accomplished with cones, markers or throw down lines. The flatter the marker the better as continuous play can then be used with safety in mind.

Aim - The server must pick the direction of serve whilst stating the desired direction to those standing behind. To keep the drill purposeful play the first four shots of the point with students returning 4 on 4 off, servers 2 on 2 off.

Rotate one place around the court after 18 serves to begin the process again.

Make it competitive – Each player gains one point for completing their first 2 shots whilst trying to outplay the other. This will enhance the serve and next shot and also hitting the return with good placement. If an ace or unreturned serve is hit then the server automatically accumulates two points.

Drill 2 - Serve and Fed ball drill

To help understand the thought process here at the lower levels state your desired serve and next ball direction, then serve and have a partner or coach feed you a ball to hit the next shot in the required direction.

Final Word...

Do not move on to the next stage unless students have the idea of stepping up to the baseline with a total confident and purposeful plan. As an added bonus ensure all players understand that placing one step on the tennis court surface means a commitment to their personal goals and purposeful all out training whilst maintaining enjoyment throughout.

Task 3 - Serve Routines

Aim – To have a confident well defined service routine.

Mentality – I understand the power of stating what I want to achieve not what I must avoid achieving.

Equipment needed – Service cones marked wide, middle, body or throw down lines as per diagram in following drills and exercises.

The importance of routines

No matter which event or situation in life if you are familiar with its surroundings and workings then you will find a great deal of all round comfort and confidence. The same goes for routines in sport! To return to familiarity each point will help to cling on to a degree of confidence and help control your arousal levels.

Review...

In the previous tasks you have learnt to set into motion your own set of confidence building exercises to enhance your performance. You have also put into action the all important mentality of ‘crossing the line’ to build on a higher level of thinking prior to the start of playing points.

In this task you will learn to take your mentality a stage further by adding your own personalised serve routine.

To have a better understanding of serve routines I have taken an excerpt from my best selling book World Class Tennis Mentality...

Serve Routines in 5 easy steps

1. Go to the B.A.R. (Breathe and Release)

This is a centering breath to prepare the body for battle

2. Question what’s my best plan of action now?

This helps with understanding your last play, your game plan and visualisation of the next step

3. Cross the line - (Look opponent in eye)

This is to happen only when (and only when) you have a clear, concise idea of your next play

4. Visualise to Realise

Understand what your mind sees your body will adhere to; alternately use a feeling that brings confidence to your serve

5. Let it rip

Don’t wait a moment longer, go for it

To continue on from the previous task you already understand that step 3 in red has already been covered. What we shall not cover here is actual physical routines although if you wish to write these in then you are perfectly capable of doing so I am sure.

A view of my personal routine...

Prior to crossing the line and a stage that you will now begin to work on in some of the following drills is to work out your next plan of action in regards to where to serve. I then visualise the racket impacting on the strings and the ball landing where I wish to serve to. When I have a clear picture of this I take one last power breath in as I place up the ball and let it rip whilst breathing out!

All routines are different and individualised...

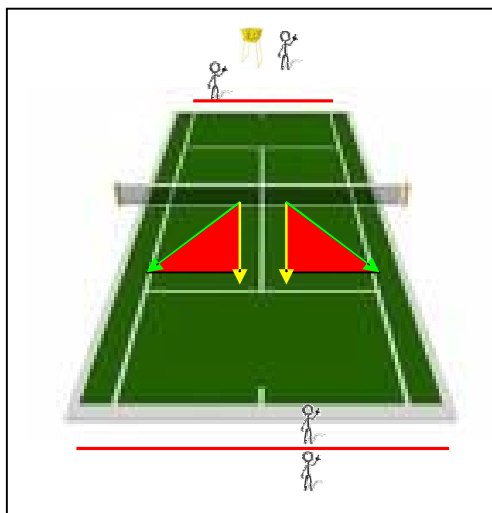
Now it's your turn. Use anything that gives you confidence in what you do and it's best to spend some time on this section trying different scenarios out before settling on a specific set pattern. As time goes on you will fine tune this until your thinking prior to serving is minimal, efficient and effective.

Exercise 2... Personalised serve routine

In the table below write down simple steps that will give you a more effective serve routine. Again I have placed mine in shade to show you my actions.

	Stage of serve routine	Steps/Actions taken
1	Plan of Action	State in pictures, words or feelings where you wish your serve to go
2	Cross the line	Stare out opponent enhancing the fact you mean business or alternately ignore opponent knowing this will aid your focus
3	Visualise	Contact point and landing visualisation of ball
4	Let it rip	Final breath and hit it

Practice Exercises & Drills...



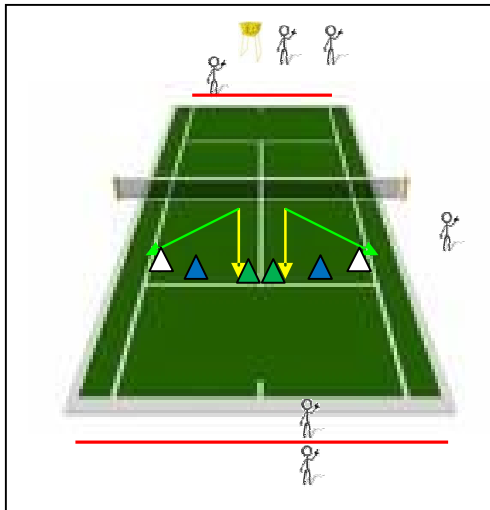
Drill 3 - Serve with conviction

Set up the court as per the serving diagram. Zones can be changed according to level of players.

Aim – To be able to serve for placement with total purpose and conviction.

Students play out points to completion with a 21 scoring system. Servers serve two on two off and returners 4 on 4 off until one team reaches 21. Servers gain two points one for getting the ball in the zoned green areas and one for winning the point. Returners gain a point if the serve lands in the red area and a further for winning the point.

Ensure service direction is defined prior to crossing the line.



Drill 4 - Two shot visualisation practice

Set up the court as previous

Aim – To enable students to visualise the first two points of the play prior to serving.

Students play out points. Servers gain 3 points per play

- 1 for service placement
- 1 for next ball direction
- 1 for winning the point

Returners gain two points per play

1 for returning successfully

1 point for winning the point

(Double faults counts as 2 points)

Students play two points each and rotate around clockwise first to 21.

IMPORTANT NOTE.....

Even though you may have planned the serve and following point it may be possible that an opportunity arises on the second ball that allows the player to follow a trained instinctive response. This could be a mid court ball or high arcing return to drive or approach volley on without a second thought!

Final Word...

Before moving on, ensure you have a serve routine that you are confident enough to use in performance.

When playing matches your real aim is to break the confidence of your opponent this doesn't necessarily mean keep serving to a weakness, sometimes a pressing serve to a strong forehand may give you a great opportunity to give you a second ball to work with, whereas a sliced backhand return may make your job a little harder to play off and get into the point. When you win you gain momentum and your opponent loses a little confidence. When you have the slight advantage instead of winning the point outright have you ever tried to force your opponent into an error by keeping the rally go a little longer a? By chipping away like this you gain more confidence and your opponent loses confidence. Now go practice, practice, practice!

Task 4 – Return of Serve Routines

Aim – To have a confident well defined return of serve routine.

Mentality – Every return will be hit back with conviction regardless of who is serving or what type of serve is coming towards me.

Equipment needed – Throw down lines and service cones set up as per following exercises.

Serves and service routines are important but so equally is the return of serve routine. The majority of high level players have excellent or world class serves so the job now is to combat these serves with world class returns that can neutralise the point or change the point in your favour.

With this in mind the return of serve routine is just as important, if not more than, the serve. After all, the server is in total command and has an idea how to and where to serve to! The returner has to respond using the all important trained instinctive response.

In this task you will learn to take your mentality a stage further by adding your own personalised return of serve routine to your repertoire and to keep everything familiar and compact we are going to also add into the equation a physical routine alongside it.

To have a better understanding of the return of serve routine I have taken another excerpt from my book World Class Tennis Mentality...

Return of Serve in 5 easy steps

1. Go to the B.A.R. (Breathe and Release)

Centering Breath

2. Visualise returns of both sides

The server is in control so maintain the correct mindset 'this ball is going back'

3. Cross the line - (look opponent in the eye)

Mentally re-emphasize this ball is going back

4. Look for clues on serve early on

Scouting will help this but if not try to pick up cues early in the first set

5. Trained Instinctive Response

This is from hours of practice, self-doubt is of no use now, go for it

A view of my personal routine...

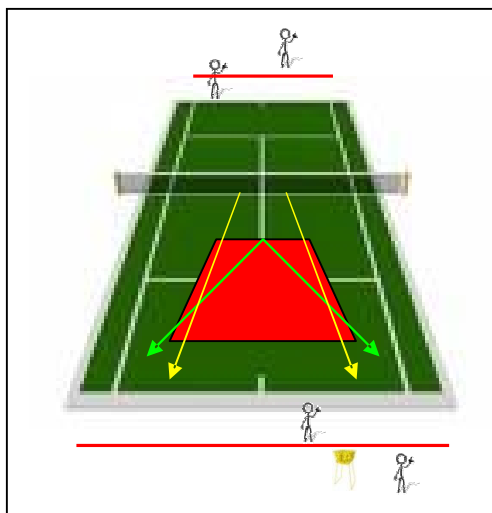
Prior to crossing the line I visualise where the returns will go from the forehand and backhand side (any body serves I know will be placed down the middle!). Then looking to the opponent to physically suggest this serve is going back my next step is to check out for clues on to where the serve is going (something that I try to do if I manage to scout my opponent prior to the match). I step forward on my opponent's ball toss and continue to time my split step with the remainder of my opponents serve. From then on it's all down to a trained instinctive response from here on in. Although I manage to throw in a contact point visualisation as to where I will return to once picking out where the serve is going.

Exercise 3... Personalised Return of Serve Routine

In the table below write down simple steps that will give you a more effective return of serve routine. Again I have placed mine in shade to show you my actions.

	Stage of serve routine	Steps/Actions taken
1	Visualisation	Contact point visualisation with direction
2	Cross the line	Stare out opponent and personally re-affirm the ball is going back
3	Look for clues	Via body or ball actions
4	Physical	Step forward on ball toss Time split step just prior to contact point
5	Trained instinctive response	Contact point visualisation

Practice Exercises & Drills...



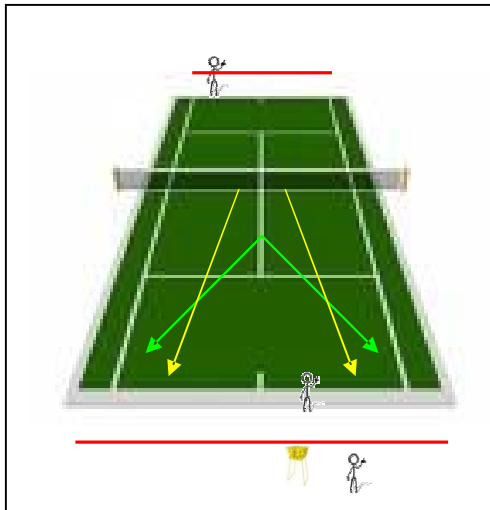
Drill 5 - Step up and hit it

Set up the court as per diagram.

Aim – To gain confidence hitting second serves with direction

Servers hit second serves to the returners who must keep the ball away from the middle section marked in red (this can be adjusted in size to suit player’s level). Returners gain one point for every return hit outside and one point if they win the point overall. Servers gain a point if the return is played into the marked centre and one point for winning overall. Again play the 21 point format rotating clockwise on the whole court.

Ensure that all players maintain serve and return of serve routines throughout.



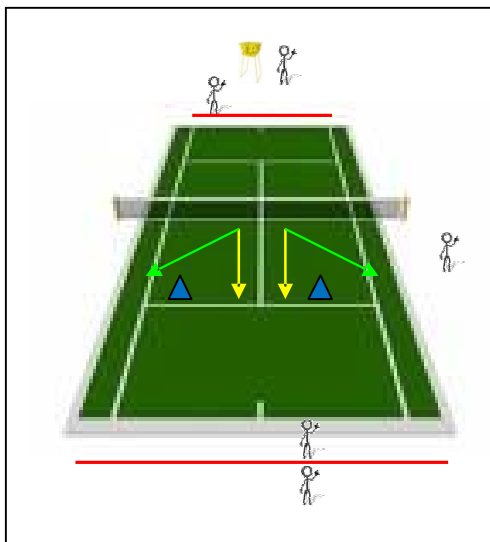
Drill 6 - Pressure the returner

Set up the court as per diagram.

Aim – To pressure returning students

Serving team serve one point from service line deuce court ensuring they serve and volley. The second point is played from the $\frac{3}{4}$ court again ensuring the serve and volley and the final point from the baseline. Then the same routine applies to the advantage side. Play 21's.

Ensure all players adhere to serve and return of serve routines.



Drill 7 – Returning the known serve

Aim – To help returners work on routines whilst knowing service direction. To help pick up familiarity in opponents differing serve directions.

Using the 21 scoring system servers must serve out wide for the whole practice. This helps servers develop great direction and returners develop a great return of serve routine physically and mentally.

Variations – Serve down the middle for a 21 or towards the body to jam the returns.

Drill 8 - Play with conviction

Students play 21's with a service rotation every 5 points. In a game of total honesty students gain points only if the point is won overall and a bonus point if the serve and following point is placed according to that visualised and the returns are hit with total conviction and no doubting or self-defeating thoughts enter into the players mind.

Final Word...

When working with the return of serve your job is to use your 'trained instinctive response' here due to the fact that your opponent has the upper hand. Your job is to give yourself a head start by working out any familiarities on the opponents serve.

It may be possible with known opponents to also plan the next shot on certain directed serves!!

Task 5 - End of point actions, reviews and scenarios

Aim – To understand what just happened and learn how to respond emotionally and tactically at the end of points in a manner that enhances your following tactical decisions.

Mentality – I will not let past or future points interfere with my present moment

Equipment needed – Markers written with regroup, review, remember.

If you are going to keep on track with the correct mindset of pre-point play then we will have to ensure that the after point approach is also kept in check in the correct manner.

Review...

So far you have learnt to tactically visualise your pre point plan on the laminated court plan board, before crossing the line you then recap in your mind the first two shots you are to play. Any negative or self defeating doubts at this stage need to be eradicated and if required you will need to re-plan your first two shots. When you then know you will commit to this play you cross the line and are ready to enter into your serve or return of serve routine. The point comes to an end and now the important part, how to respond to certain point ending scenarios.

Exercise 4...Responding or Reacting to the end of a point

In the table below write a list all of the possible ways a point can end. Think back into past matches and state how you reacted to each ending and whether you were in total charge over that possible ending.

How the point ends	Your reaction/response	Tick box if in control of ending

As a coach or player mentor this is a very valuable off court exercise as it brings great awareness of how a point ends. It's this stage that tempers flare not just with opponents but with the players themselves. The ability to keep a grip on this stage of points is of total importance as your reaction or better still response here can keep you in check for the next point or have you stuck in the past for future points bringing your focus to an untimely end for the foreseeable future until you decide to jump back on track.

End of Point Response

Anything you wrote into the above table will be valuable to you however they will fall into the following categories:-

- You win the point
- Opponent wins the point
- You lose the point
- Opponent loses the point
- You make an error
- Opponent makes an error

In all of the above scenarios the point can be closely contested and the reason for the possible outcomes can be varied from disturbances within the environment or inner thoughts from within yourself. Regardless of how the point ended your task is to mentally begin to congratulate yourself or learn from what just occurred.

Another excerpt from the book *World Class Tennis Mentality* will help you to gain more of an understanding of end of point plays. You would do well to adhere to this excerpt as an end of point actions routine.

The end of point scenario in action

PLAY ENDS.....you need to **RESPOND** to one of 3 scenarios

1. Your Winner - by congratulating yourself for a job well done or understanding what set up the winner from your point of view. Replay parts of a winning point again mentally to reimburse a good play.
2. Your opponents Winner - by understanding what produced this from your point of view or accepting a great play. Then replay this mentally the way you would have liked this point to have gone. (This is where most club players lose their temper at the lower ends of the scale and need to understand and learn from opponents good shots)
3. Your unforced error - 'Go to the movies' by replaying a perfect point kinesthetically or visually. (Remember to 'ANCHOR' the best and let go of the rest).

You start the system by turning your back to your opponent and follow this with a 'Military Image' back to the baseline.

As part of The System the main key is to accept what has just happened in the point you have just played, learn from it and leave it behind. What is in the past is gone and it cannot be changed at this stage. A mind that is 'clutter free' will mean for the player that he or she seemingly has all the time in the world and at the same time the tennis ball probably looks and feels as big as a football! A mind that is full of thoughts whether irrelevant or not will give the player a time scale that seemingly seems to flow by and the ball at this stage may feel like a golf ball.

Exercise 5 – Responding to end of points

Play out points and ensure that you commit to the scenario above. Photocopy or write the box above on a piece of card to help and carry it with you.

Note...Note...Note...Note... Note...Note...Note...Note... Note...Note...Note...Note...Note...

Every player is different in the way they respond to situations on court. Some are quiet, others quite loud and even volatile. The important point is not to change your own individual manner or on court uniqueness that makes you the player you currently are, however your job is to let off steam and go to the end of point response scenarios once you are ready remembering to leave the last point behind nothing you do now can change what has happened no matter how quiet or loud on court you are!!

End of Point Review - Who is doing what to whom?

This basic question will help you decide the next stage of your routine, a tactical plan for the next point. By asking this question to yourself you will figure out how you are winning the majority of your points.

It's incredible the amount of lower level players who have no idea what is happening on the court. The majority of these players are pleading insanity by using the same tactical play over and over again and expecting a different outcome. This may work against some players but against over's it's a losing battle for supremacy.

Have responded to the last point in the correct manner now's the chance to review just what happened.

Exercise 6 – Visualisation Tennis

At the end of each point after completing the above exercise jot down on the visualisation board the point that was just played. This will help to understand what has just happened on each and every point and help you gain valuable information from point to point.

Start with writing down how the point ended with the last two shots (bearing in mind how you returned the ball or where you served and hit the next point you will have a good idea of the full point).

From there try and remember as much as possible about the point, four players remember in fine detail how they played certain points ball for ball especially on the points that turned or won the match for them.

Exercise 7 – T.V. Practice

The most simplest of areas to practice remembering point sequences is to watch tennis on the TV or at tournaments or even at your club and pick a player from their point of view try and remember what just happened and who seems to be in control of the match.

End of Point Scenarios – The Tactical Bit

Here you need to work out either how to stay ahead or how to get ahead from behind or from an even keel.

Before we begin take a look at the list below...

The Art of Tactics is to take your opponent out of this comfort zone (or get them to lose) generally by one of four ways:-

1. Play your game well and hopefully this will do the job
2. Change what you are doing by using changes of pace or more subtlety like varying spins
3. Playing utilizing tactical patterns or strategies using certain targets and placements on the court based on what you have learnt in scouting or learnt in the match so far
4. Mentally by breaking your opponent down via their strengths and weaknesses

The aim of this manual is to keep everything as simple as possible. However before we move on lets discuss the art of winning matches.

The better player will win on the day

We all have levels that we can achieve. Sometimes we play out of our skin, reaching new levels that you have never achieved before. But I guarantee that the better player won on the day, even Roger Federer or Justine Henin can succumb to a loss. There may be numerous reasons for a poor performance or loss but make no doubt your task is to become that better player! Go out to and achieve another level rather than to beat your opponent. That new level may just do the job!

Here is a list of situations that players find themselves that enhances a losing game...

- Trying to protect a lead
- Taking your foot of the throttle when ahead in the game
- Going full out and trying or pushing for a win
- Playing without a game plan
- Changing a winning strategy or tactic to finish off your opponent
- Thinking of the next set or match before passing the finishing post
- Go into the match against a better ranked or lower ranked player with the wrong amount of respect

Bearing in mind everything I have just discussed your job as a player is firstly to put yourself in the most confident state possible in your training and your preparation prior to the match to stand a chance of winning.

Secondly you need to have a belief that you can beat absolutely anyone regardless of who is standing on the opposite side of the net. Take the view that you are playing a ball not a player, too many players get worked up that they are playing a ranked player taking focus away from where it should be.

End of Point Scenarios - The On court Bit

Red Marker – REGROUP

This area is to be visited when the opponent has won two or three points in a row. Your job is to stop them from running away with the match too many points like this will create confidence on the side of your opponent and may edge the momentum of the match in their direction. Prior to putting this point behind you a **regroup** is in order. You now have an understanding of how the last play panned out and hopefully beginning to get a look at your opponent's strengths and favourite plays! Are you losing points or being forced into making errors? Now is the time to have a rethink of how you will halt this run of points by your opponent whilst you turn your back symbolically on what just happened and begin your walk to the baseline.

Yellow Marker – REVIEW

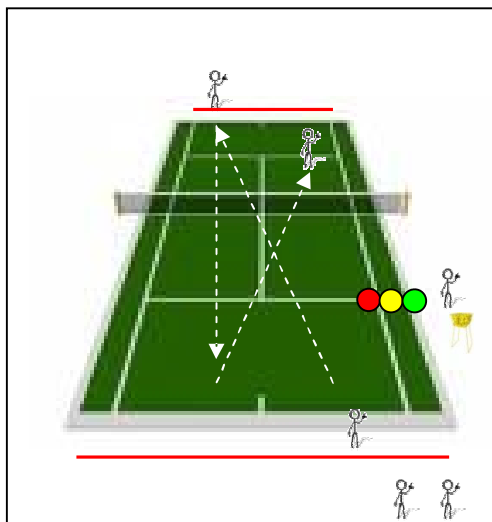
At this stage the score is very close and you are still in the game without it running away, you are either one point behind or it's even. This point was either closely contested and either play could have won, or perhaps you or your opponent committed an error but only due to a great play by either side, you could have hit a great shot to end the point but overcooked it slightly and hit it out. **Review** what happened and decide how you would have played the point differently again all whilst you are turning your back not only on your opponent but on the point you played, it's now in the past. But not without a valuable lesson having been learnt and perhaps a bit of fine tuning.

Green Marker – REMEMBER

Right now things are going your way you are one, two or three points ahead. You are in total control of this game and possibly even the set. **Remember** how these points were played. Chances are you utilised your strengths or played on the opponents weakness. Here you have the option of trying to keep the momentum going the way you have been to finish the game although be aware of trying to over press or try to hard. How about forcing your opponent into another unforced error enhancing your confidence and knocking a few more dents into theirs?

For now congratulate yourself however you wish, a clenched fist or a few words. Everyone likes to be told they are doing well and that includes you!

Practice Exercises & Drills...



Drill 9 – The 3-way pressure drill

Aim – To pressure players into a winner or error and practice the end of point play.

On one side of the court are the defenders. One student is a volleyer and the other baseliner. All points are played on the deuce side for 3 minutes and then the Advantage side for 3 minutes before rotating roles. Players hit a second serve from the deuce side and then must alternate shots between volleyer and baseliner.

Progression 1...

At the completion of the point players will receive a coloured card from the coach who will let the player know which end of point action to take by reading the wording on the coloured disc on the floor.

Progression 2...

Players then decide which disc they should step towards under the watchful guise of the coach by the side and must discuss with the coach why he chose that particular colour.

Progression 3...

Players are left to their own devices and choices.

Final Word...

Here is the crux of the system. Many players throughout the world let past points interfere with their next point and ultimately the game. I am not saying it is as easy as that when something really begins to bug you and you can't shake it out of your head but it is those who in the true face of adversity can handle these situations and carry out their set pre-match game plan that will conquer those who stand in front of them. Can you become one of these players?

Task 6 – The Body-Mind Walk

Aim – To show your opponent that you are confident inside and out regardless of what happened previously

Mentality – I will always walk tall and with confidence at the end of every point

Equipment needed – All markers and lines available.

This task will be split into a few sections as the in-between point actions here can determinedly make a difference on the outcome of the next point!

Having an understanding of how the point ends in regards to **regrouping**, **remembering** and **reviewing** is great news for you, however we have to also understand that all players are individuals and will respond emotionally to different events or situations. It aids the player in detaching themselves from the previous point enabling them to move on.

Over the years I have come to an understanding that if you make a noise because you lost the point shows you and every person around you that you care about what you are doing. I also understand that by turning your back on the point and saying nothing also shows you care.

If you want to rant and rave at everyone around you good for you, if you want to go play the next point quietly with no reaction outwardly then great but regardless of how you respond or in some unfortunate cases react to the previous point remember that which was stated in Task 2 – crossing the line...

“Mentality – I will be ready to step up to the baseline physically, emotionally and mentally ready for the next point”

When you are ready and preferably not before as stated in the previous task you will turn your back to your opponent which is a sign and a signal that you are mentally ready to move on.

The Important Art of Acting and Understanding your Role

Let's review the whole scenario once again.

You have gained confidence in setting up events prior to practicing and match play. Once on court and in the midst of playing points both serve and return of serve you have learnt to cross the line with renewed clarity and direction of thought through your tactical visualisation process.

You worked into the point via your own personalised serve or return of serve routine and have an understanding of the thought processes at the end of the point which left you turning your back to your opponent ready to walk to the back of the court.

The body-mind link has an important role in all sports, your body can literally tell opponents what your mind is thinking and vice versa! You may not realise but your mind can cause your body to react in different ways. If this doesn't give it away then the change in your court position to more defensive (or backing behind the baseline more) and not going for certain shots when you previously were will!

Exercise 8...Role Models

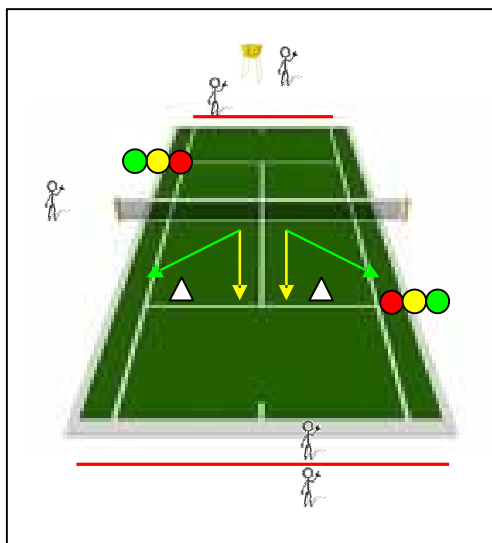
Regardless of what sport you choose think of a few role models you admire and write down in the box below any characteristics that they possess to make them the world class athletes they are.

This exercise will hopefully provide you with key characteristics in how an athlete behaves or holds themselves to provide a supreme amount of confidence. Take note because your job now is to work out how you can walk to back of the court in the most confident manner possible regardless if you won or lost the previous point. You need to let your opponent know you have taken no knocks and are still very confident or growing in stature as the match progresses.

Practice Exercises & Drills...

Exercise 9 - Walking with Giants

I want you to catch your mind-body thoughts and feelings daily from now on in. No matter what situation or where you are I want you to practice walking with confidence. Feel yourself walk taller, prouder exhuming self pride. You will find when you catch yourself feeling down then your body is in a down mood also. When you are feeling up beat and confident then your body will reflect this also.



Drill 10 – Win in four

Aim – To practice the first four shots in a match

Having at this stage been well versed in all the tasks set I want you to carry this through whilst adding on the ability to walk and act with confidence.

Serving students must try to finish the point within four shots. Those returning have to try and make the point last longer. If they complete this successfully then they gain one point for their team side as well as one point for winning the actual point. Serving players serve two points on and off, returners four points on and off.

At the end of each point each player must commit to the tasks and walk to the back of the court in a confident manner.

Team partners will at the end of the two points comment on how confident their partner looked or how to improve their personal body language.

Checking the body for stress!!!

As part of the 'Body-Mind Walk' players need to do a once over check of any bodily stress or tightness. The art of playing great tennis is to be physically relaxed but mentally focused and prepared for battle; any tightness can be stretched out or loosened accordingly. The saying to stay as 'loose as a goose' is very apt here.

Exercise 10 – Your Intensity Number

On your walk to the back of the court imagine how relaxed or tense your body feels on a scale of 1-10 (1=Too relaxed, 10=Too tense). I call this the intensity number. When you are playing well, feeling good and thinking right you will have the perfect intensity number. Work out what yours is and regularly check you are hitting this number throughout the match and how you will get back to this number if gaining tension or getting too relaxed.

Over time this will become second nature and will ensure any strokes will continue to be relaxed and fluid.

Final word...

There will be days when you feel taller in every way, these are your confident moments that you are aware of and only last for a while before you mentally forget about the event. Your job from now on in is to catch yourself more often and then try to recreate this first outside of the court and then prior to walking onto the court and prior playing points.

Task 8 - Activation Zone

Aim – To prepare the body for the following battle in the forthcoming point and ensure that practice and matchplay heart rates match

Mentality – I will always ensure I am mentally and physically ready to play prior to crossing the line

Equipment needed – Markers written with relax, refresh, activate.

Review...

The tasks for the on court system are now coming to an end and before turning full circle from where we first started we need to learn how to work with our heart rate via breathing which in turn helps our physical and mental body to perform to its optimum ability.

When you train or play well for certain periods at your best levels it has been scientifically proven that your heart rate was beating within a certain zone. I believe that you can go a stage further and maximize this even more. I need you as an athlete to work out when you are playing your best tennis what your heart beat per minute is. This then has to be carried through into your training.

For you this is invaluable information at the start of matches and changeovers anything below this or too high and then you will come out of your optimum capacity to play good tennis.

This is especially important if you are one of those players who always start slow in a match before finding your feet and beginning to play.

Exercise 11...Personal Heart Rate Playing

In the table below I want you to catch your heart rate at the end of points whilst on your body-mind walk to the back of the court in both matchplay and practice. For an instant reading it's easier if you wear a heart rate monitor and take a quick glance. However a simple ten second pulse rate check and multiplication by six will suffice.

Over time you will become aware of how your body feels when you are playing between your lower and upper heart rates for great performance.

Jot down on a percentage scale how well you are playing and what your heart rate is generally as many times as possible. Over time you will see a pattern occur that will help zone in on your upper and lower performance beats per minute.

Date	Playing ability in %	Heart rate in BPM

Exercise 12 – Raising your heart rate

This exercise is simple but often missed out on, especially at the club level of the scale in tournaments. Now you have an understanding of your optimum heart rate zone your job now is to work out what exercises you will do and when prior to matchplay but more importantly prior to practice. Remember your actual purposeful practice will be more enhanced if your heart rate mirrors the same as your matchplay beat per minutes.

The Activation Zone...

You have completed the mind-body walk and are heading towards the activation zone. This area is to ensure that your heart rate is in your optimum personal heart rate zone.

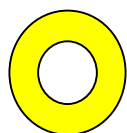
Having walked now past the baseline and having checked your heart rate you now need to go to the relevant coloured disc...



When your heart rate is too high from a highly charged or pressed point and you feel you need a quick break before continuing go to the **red disc** written with the words **RELAX**.

What to do...

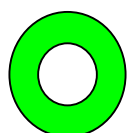
Here you will need to take at least one long deep centring breath in order to get your heart rate down within the allotted time you have left of your in between point time. Perhaps you have an image or few words to add to this or you may have your own method to use either way now is the time to implement them.



If your heart rate is lower than it should be and you feel you need to pump yourself up then continue to the **yellow disc** written with the words **ACTIVATE**.

What to do...

Your heart rate is far to low for your personal performance heart beat. You need to get some blood pumping around your body. Running on the spot, breathing shallow and fast or visualising an image that will pump you up will help right now. But before you move on you have to energize yourself!



Realising you are within your personal zone and you feel you can move straight on then you need to advance to the **green disc** written with the words **REFRESH**.

What to do...

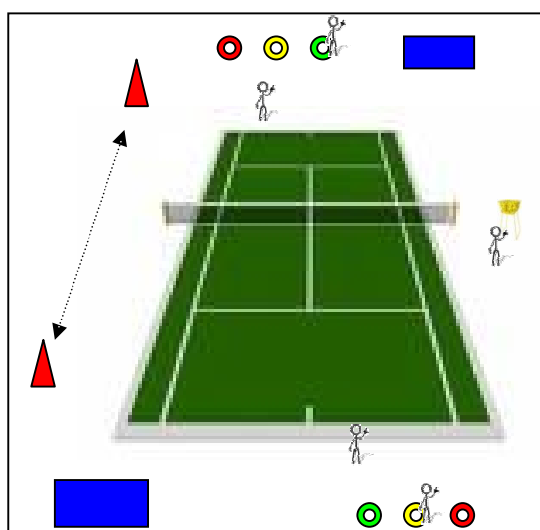
At the moment you are working within the realms of your heart zone. Take a refreshing breath and move straight on. Chances are you are winning points; playing and thinking well try not to spend too much time here accumulate points whilst they are available.

A little more explanation...

When you watch the pros play have you ever noticed how some players command the tempo of a match dependant on the score. They will reach for their towel after each point whether or not they need to towel down; or perhaps take a much needed toilet break well into the match if things are not going according to plan.

If you are losing perhaps you need to spend a little more time in the zones bearing in mind you don't want to stray outside of your optimum heart rate zone. On the other side of the coin if you are winning and you can control the tempo as stated previously rake in the points whilst your opponents defences may be down, however remember not to stray outside of the upper limits of your optimum zone.

Practice Exercises and Drills...



Drill 11 – Playing to the extremes

Aim – To understand how it feels to play when your heart rate is too high, too low and just right. Again it helps to have a heart rate monitor on for this to work well.

Students start point with underarm feed whilst using low compression balls to provide maximum work rate.

Too high... ▲
Your job is to run from cone to cone prior to playing the point out. Do not continue until you feel you have a heart rate higher than you would normally play points with.

Too low... ■
The job here is to lay down on a mat, close your eyes and relax as much as possible with slow deep breathing prior to playing the point out. Do this for a maximum of 30 seconds before continuing to play a point.

Just right...
I want you to play points but do not start the point until you feel ready to do so mentally, physically and emotionally. Ideally you will be within your optimum personal heart zone.

Final Word...

Congratulations!!! This brings you to the end task of the colour code psychology system. All the tasks are completed however we are not going to end our journey there.

End and final review...

Having completed the tasks it is time to put them in order of importance and your next job is to visualise or run through these steps until you have them worked into your tennis repertoire.

I will pick the point at where most drills or points start from and that's...

- **Cross the line**
- **Serve or return of serve routine**
- **End of point responses**
- **Tactical visualisation and Question 'Who is doing what to who!'**
- **End of point scenarios**
- **Body-mind walk**
- **Activation zone**

As a final gift and ultimately the final task in this manual, as an addition I am going to set you on a course of constant and continual learning.

Task 9 – Pre match game plan

Aim – To set yourself up with a simple but workable pre-match game plan

Mentality – I will always go into battle with a game plan

Understanding basic tactics...

To go into battle with no plan is a worthless task. Any plan is better than none! However the majority of players in tennis at most levels first just hit the ball back, when they get better they then begin to at least direct the ball. At this level it is the players who are the most consistent tend to win the most matches and walk home with the club trophies year in year out.

Then a player comes to the club who breaks the mould. This particular player understands about his own strengths and has an understanding of the opponent's weaknesses! Now the trophies are handed over to the new player of the club be it male or female who have a seemingly great tennis brain.

And the story will surely move onwards until you meet pro players. Here you will learn a rule never to attack a sole weakness until you need it. Remember rule 101 – never make the same mistake twice and definitely not three times.

Here pro's will also know how to beat their counterparts regularly as Andre Agassi once stated when playing Michael Chang... "Michael loves to run, so I will let him".

Obviously Andre knew that although Chang could move well and was fit, Andre would eventually wear him down and win the match all the same as his strengths and fitness would see through in the end.

At all levels of matchplay, players must have a game plan of some sorts.

At best you will have a Brad Gilbert to tell you how to beat your opponent; however the majority of us will have to work this out ourselves.

Exercise 13 – Pre-match Game Plan

On the following page is a simple pre-match game plan. It always helps if you have some knowledge or information on your opponent prior to play; this is why it is invaluable to keep a record of matches you have previously encountered.

Pre-Match Game Plan

Date	
Tournament	
Opponent – Scouting points or facts	
Performance Goals to complete...	
1.	
2.	
Reiterate your personal tennis strengths	
Match Game Plans	
‘A’ Game	‘B’ Game
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
Pre-Match thoughts that will interfere with your performance (to be written here as part of your pre-match routine) Use this part to place any pre match thoughts or doubts that may dissemble your confidence.	

Task 10 – After Match Evaluation and a World of Continual Learning and Improvement

Aim – To prepare an after match evaluation report to understand where to improve and to have a record of your opponent for future use

Mentality – This will help my tennis career and I will evaluate myself always

The final task that you will cover in this manual is how to evaluate, re-evaluate and when you have done that evaluate yourself some more regardless if you are playing a match or practicing for matchplay.

If you are going to raise the bar every time you play a match regardless of what the standard you have to evaluate yourself. I feel every player when trying to climb the tennis ladder to success should be playing three different types of opponent:-

1. **Someone you can beat easily** – this will work twofold. You can try out things new in your game without the stress of high competition and on the other side of the coin you get used to playing someone you really should be beating.
2. **Someone of the same level and ability** – the great thing with this type of opponent is that great ability to help each other grow as athletes. Over the years there have been some great rivalries in tennis at the highest levels, but there have been a fair share world wide at your own personal level too.
3. **Someone you struggle to beat** – Here you get to go for it and play some instinctive tennis. Once you break through that barrier of beating this player once you will realise you can do it again. Soon you will need a new player to play against in this category and everyone moves down one place as you move up. (i.e. 3 becomes 2 and 2 becomes 1).

What about practice??

Every time you hit the court you should be practicing in a purposeful way.

When was the last time you set yourself some practice goals that related to the evaluation of one of your matches or even practice sessions?

Recently I had a practice session and match and having just come back from injury and set myself some performance goals in the 21 game I played at the end...

1. To begin to gain confidence in my serve once again after 3 months out
2. To win 2 return points on each set of my opponents serve points

As an added bonus I managed to work out that I needed to work on my serve and next ball by adding more height and driven spin to the ball and I was able to read the ball direction on the my opponents new service action that was recently changed to accommodate more power in his serve.

That's a lot of information from one practice session!

The other thing I noticed that during our practiced portion of the exercise my partner was totally berating himself for anything he missed and ended up in a few rackets in the back fence. My language was a little more purposeful – to stick to the system throughout resulting in a more productive and enjoyable experience all round.

Exercise 14...

After each and every match I want you to fill in the After Match Evaluation. This can be completed anytime you wish however preferably within the first 24 hours after completing the match.

This will provide you with valuable information not only about yourself but about your opponent that you have just played. You never know when your paths will cross once again.

After Match Evaluation		
Event	Opponent	Conditions
Match Time		
Start time...	Length of Match...	
Describe your match in as much detail in regards to how you felt, what you thought etc...		
Opponent facts for future reference...		
List up to 5 things from the match you did well tactically, mentally or physically		
List up to upto 5 things from the match you would have done differently		
Note any other points here...		
Matches played to date...		
Win/Loss Ratio...		
Remember it's not the winning or losing that counts it's the total improvement of ones game!!		

Final Note...

I hope you enjoy or have enjoyed the journey this system has taken you through. Every coach should have this on their bookshelf and every student in their racket bag. Keep coming back to it when your game becomes derailed chances are you have forgotten or missed out on the simple stuff!

Many older top class tournament players that now coach for a living or run tennis centers wish they had this when they had started out. Truth is so do I!!

By adding this to your tennis repertoire your game can only go from strength to strength. If you enjoyed this system then you may want to read World Class Tennis Mentality to complement your knowledge so far. This can be ordered by visiting the www.Psycheuk.com

Work has already begun on the advanced manual to take your on court psychology to another level; if the basics have helped you out then the advanced manual will send your game soaring to new heights.

This new advanced manual will include...

- How to think like a pro and let just let go
- Pre match routines for a top class performance
- Change over routines to keep your performance on track
- How to stay on track when situations derail your performance
- Power goal setting
- Steps to world class visualization
- Scouting your opponents to gain a mental edge
- Pressure drills and games

Email performance@psycheuk.com it is always great to hear stories of success or questions you may have regarding your sport.

Good luck and

Welcome to the beginning of your world class journey!

Andy Dowsett
Psycheuk.com
Tennismentality.com

Other works by the Author...

World Class Tennis Mentality

Pictures and bio

Goalset Masterplan

Picture and bio

Psycheuk can visit your club or centre to lecture to squads or groups of coaches or students

To book please email performance@psycheuk.com



Copy and Laminate the Court below for Tactical Visualisation Work

