



# Perception of Coaches and Players towards the role of Parents in Tennis Players Success

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**Abstract:** The present study deals with the perception of coaches and players towards the success of Tennis players and the role played by the parents. This study provides an insight about the existing status of parent's involvement in the development and success of male junior Tennis players in India. The study will unfold many issues and problems which the coaches and players face while interacting with the parents regarding the Tennis. The research will be also helpful for the coaches to understand the ways by which they can build effective relationship with the players and their parents. The study will be beneficial to the coaches, Tennis professionals, Tennis associations, aspirant players and parents to understand the process of building a Tennis player. The study will help the coaches, players and the parents to achieve the goal of training as well as competitions. The study will ultimately strengthen the process of making of a Tennis player. The study will be a reference for future investigation in the area of the role of parents in sports

**Keywords:** perception, coaches, players, parents, tennis, success, involvement, development, issues, problems

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## INTRODUCTION

The game of tennis has gradually become a sport that has become popular in Singapore. Tennis comprises a lot of different aspects. It is just more than two players who come on a court to hit a ball – it is much more difficult than what it seems. Besides the different players who are involved, players have started to understand the importance of a Tennis Coach. Over time, the tennis coach has gradually started to become an important stakeholder in the life of tennis enthusiasts wanting to learn the game.

All the top tennis players have attributed a lot of aspects of their personal development to the effect of their tennis coaches. The effect of a tennis coach in Singapore can be likened to the effect of a school teacher on a student. They are the people who are responsible for taking a lot of tennis players from the amateur phase and transform them into seasoned professionals. The role of the coach is not just about cheering the players on. The role of the coach can be summarized into five aspects.

**Persuasion** – A tennis coach is responsible for persuading the tennis player to undertake certain challenges or sign contracts. Every coach is to have the power of persuasion because they would be responsible for instigating these players to take the bold steps that would propel their career.

**Evaluation** – This can be said to be the most important and common role of tennis coaches. The coach is responsible for the evaluation of every aspect of the tennis player's life. They will evaluate their performance during matches, their training and even their diet. It is through this evaluation that they would be able to advise the player. Their evaluation can make or break their career.

**Provision of information** – Information is vital to the success of every player. The information given by a coach can be info of updates on upcoming matches, training evaluation report, advice on upcoming matches and so on. This information forms a huge part of the tennis player's life.

**Motivate and Inspire** – There comes a time in the life of every tennis player where they experience a huge loss or life changing event. The tennis coach is to get the player back on the right track. They do this by motivating and inspiring them using the best means possible to them. A lot of tennis players have attributed their success to the motivational role of their coaches.

**Solve problems** – Tennis is not a sport without its own bottle necks and challenges. The challenges may be in form of a tough opponent or long stretches of matches. The coach works with the tennis player to go around these problems. The coach is responsible for analyzing such problems and providing the advice that would eliminate that problem. A close look at players who easily overcome their challenges would reveal that their coaches have been instrumental to their success.

Every aspiring tennis player has the dream to grow from an amateur to a professional. A tennis coach is instrumental in growing the players through the different ups and downs in the sport. The tennis coach can be said to be the most important aspect of the professional life of every tennis player.

## **SPORTS AS A SOCIAL PHENOMENON**

Since time immemorial, sports and allied sporting activities have been associated with the society. In the beginning these were meant to communicate with the people and to bring coherence in the society. But as the time progressed, sports took new heights and today it has become an integral part of cultural and social life. In fact it has become a symbol of the culture of a place and of many societies around the world. Mega sporting events such as the Olympic Games, Commonwealth Games, Football World Cup, Tennis Grand Slams, etc. are not only capturing the attention of billions of people around the world but also have become an inseparable part of our social life. Global telecast of the sporting events across the world has influenced the outlook of the society towards the sports. There is a sudden increase in the sports participation among the youth and the public at large. People are connecting with sports irrespective of their age. People around the world discuss about sports at their workplace, at home, with friends and family members and sometimes even with the strangers. Therefore, there is no denying fact that today sport is a social phenomenon, but at the same time the societies across the world also define its characteristics and dimensions as per their cultural practices and values. The reason to define sport as a social phenomenon is that it is directly linked to the culture of a society. For example, if we look at the origin and the development of sports, it is connected to the cultural heritage of a country. Development of individual, team and indigenous games such as Boxing, Archery, Tennis, Soccer, Basketball, Cricket and Kabbadi is very much linked to the cultural heritage and social context (Cockey, 2008).

Different communities and groups of people develop their own point of view about the society and the sports. People make their own choices about what is important and what is not. As sports are created by the people, they develop their own idea about it; some find it interesting; some find it expressive and important; some want to participate in it, while some are happy as viewers only. Some people are so much involved in sports that it affects their mood swing, behavior and wellbeing. It has been noticed that, up to

some extent, sports even influence the relationship of the people.

Before we go into detail, we need to understand what sport is all about. Though it is very difficult to define sports in a one sentence because it is a very dynamic concept, but some authors and sports sociologist have defined the sports in the following manner:

*”Sports are institutionalized competitive activities that involve vigorous physical exertion or the use of relatively complex physical skills by individuals whose participation is motivated by a combination of personal enjoyment and external rewards “.*

Indeed, sport is different from a play where children express themselves. For example, a play would be like children running after each other or throwing a ball in any direction aimlessly and yelling loudly. When we look further into this definition, we also understand the need of an apex body to regulate different sports. Of course, sports is a physical activity where individual have to perform complex skills and there are competitions involved in it where individual or team compete against each other. The motive to play a sport could be personal enjoyment or the rewards in the form of trophies, medals or cash prizes.

Further, it is not a good idea to define sports in a single way. It is always advisable to adopt a multidimensional approach when we are defining something of such a complex nature. Therefore some authors have used the unconventional method to define sports. They say that sports should be defined in the cultural and social contexts. Sports can be defined keeping the time, place and culture into prospective. But we can conclude that sports have an important place in our social life and it has open up many avenues for the society. Sports have given the social life a meaning and given us the access to utilize many untapped resources.

## **TRENDS IN SPORTS PARTICIPATION**

One of the major concerns of the society is the children and the youth, who are the future of any society. Sociologists, psychologists and researchers have always focused on the issue related to the sports and especially how, why and up to what extent children should participate in sports. Sports organisations, associations, families and coaches have suggested that children should indulge in sports. There is lots of evidence, which confirms that sport is one of the mediums that can transform a child into a productive adult. It was not long ago that sports were included in the school curricula and children have started playing on the playgrounds. Since the end of the nineteenth century, sport got organised in a very professional way. National and international organizations and associations have been formed and that started regulating the sports around the world in the nineteenth century itself. This evolution of the sports organizations has made the sports a private entity where the sports competitions were sponsored by private bodies. Another impact of privatisation was that sports have become commercial and performance oriented.

But the concern is how children should take up the sports and why they participate in them. Some of the facts that could lead to answer of the question are:

*First*, the structure of the family has changed from joint to nuclear where both the parents are working;

*Second*, the parents are more concerned about the child and want to monitor their child for twenty four hours and there by demand of putting the child in after school or summer sports programme has increased; *Third*, the parents feel that the sports can help in channelizing the energy of the child in a constructive manner and it is also good for their wellbeing;

*Fourth*, the fame and wealth of the high performing athletes have become a source of motivation for many parents and children, which has driven them to take up the sports seriously.

Once there used to be an era of amateurism, but in the present scenario we see the emergence of professional athletes who are being highly paid by various organisations. For all these reasons the sports participation has become a fashion in the society. Children watch sports matches and competitions on the television. They talk about sports with their friends and family members. These things have certainly laid down the path for creating a broad base for sports. The sports stars like Floyd Mayweather, Cristiano Ronaldo, Roger Federer, Ronaldo, Sachin Tendulkar, etc. have captured the hearts of billions of people around the world and motivated a large number of children to make a career in sports.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The purpose of this study was to find out the **“Perception of the coaches and players towards the role of parents in Tennis player success.”**

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of the study were as follows:

1. To assess the perception of coaches and players in relation to the role of parents in sport socialization and to create conducive environment.
2. To access the perception of coaches and players in relation to the role of parents in organizational aspects like finance, time, training and coaching.
3. To access the perception of coaches and players in relation to ascertain the influence of parents on factors related to competitive performance namely behavior, performance, efficiency, morale etc.
4. To identify the perception of coaches and players in relation to problem areas in child-parent and coach-parent interaction.
5. To access the perception of coaches and players in relation to determine the strategies on effective relationship between parents, coaches and players to achieve success.
6. To access the perception of coaches and players to determine the role and importance of parents in making a junior Tennis player successful.
7. A case study to find out the role of parents in the success of Yuki Bhamri as a Tennis player.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study provides an insight about the existing status of parent's involvement in the development and

success of male junior Tennis players in India. The study will unfold many issues and problems which the coaches and players face while interacting with the parents regarding the Tennis. The present study will add value to the body of knowledge by providing information about what role and responsibility the parents of Tennis players have to fulfill for the development of a player. The research will be also helpful for the coaches to understand the ways by which they can build effective relationship with the players and their parents. The study will be beneficial to the coaches, Tennis professionals, Tennis associations, aspirant players and parents to understand the process of building a Tennis player. The study will help the coaches, players and the parents to achieve the goal of training as well as competitions. The study will ultimately strengthen the process of making of a Tennis player. The study will be a reference for future investigation in the area of the role of parents in sports.

## CONCLUSIONS

Within the delimitations of the present study, following conclusions are drawn:

### *Parent's role in sports socialization and to create conducive environment*

According to coaches' and players' perception, parents play a significant role in the sport participation and the socialization of the child. The encouraging environment in the home and outside is essential in shaping the sportsman qualities in the players.

1. The coaches felt that role of the parents is significant in providing sports socialization, but coaches have an opinion that occasionally parents provide sports opportunities to the child and engage them in the sports of their interest. It is also visible from the coach's perception that parents emphasize the commitment to the sports, but not on a regular basis.
2. The coaches believe that parents occasionally create an optimistic and positive environment at home and outside, which is very much required to motivate a child. Although, their involvement in motivating the children and using specific challenges and techniques are not consistent.
3. As far as work ethics and hard work is concerned, coaches felt that parents frequently lay emphasis on the child to work hard in the training and to learn the game.
4. Coaches believe that parents are aware of the fact that children learn or imitate them, that is why parents actively participate in sports and this behavior is displayed by them every now and then. This serves as a model behavior for the child. The coaches felt that parents know the values of conducive and stress free environment for the aspiring sports person that is why they sometime use good humor with the child.
5. A difference of opinion amongst the coaches and players was observed regarding the role of parents in providing sports socialization and creating a conducive environment. Players strongly felt that parents play a significant role in providing sports socialization and a conducive environment for the child. Not only they provide the sports opportunity to the child, according to their interests, but they also provide sports opportunities and emphasized commitment for it.
6. It was perceived by the players that parents constantly create an optimistic and a favorable

environment at home and outside.

7. As a matter of fact, players strongly perceived that parents always exhibit an active lifestyle themselves and use good humor to keep the child focused and relaxed.
8. As per players' perception, the parents constantly put emphasis on work ethics and values such as hard work and persistence and boost up the confidence of the child with the help of motivational techniques and challenges.

#### ***Role of parents in organizational aspects like finance, time, training and coaching***

Coaches and players have similar opinions about the role of parents in organizational aspects. Parent's role in the financial and logistical requirements of the game is significant. But in the planning and other aspects related to the training, there were variations found in the opinion of the players and the coaches.

9. The coaches felt that role of parents in the organizational aspects of the Tennis is significant. They felt that buying equipments, paying for coaching and training fee, match fee, logistics and transportation are the basic prerequisites for any sport, which parents need to cater and Tennis parents always have to fulfil these requirements.
10. It was perceived by the coaches that in the case of planning aspects such as a long term plan, tournament schedules and goal setting, parent's involvement is occasional.
11. As far as parent's involvement and assistant in the training related aspects like fitness and diet is concerned, the coaches felt that parents regularly provide help by arranging fitness classes and providing adequate nutrition to the child.
12. Coaches believe that the parents occasionally attend the coaching and practice sessions of the child and they travel with the child for tournaments very occasionally. But on the other hand, parents maintain good cooperation with the coach in the matters of training and travelling.
13. Players strongly perceived that the parents are always involved and provide support in the organizational aspects of Tennis. But, there is a difference of opinion amongst the coaches and players regarding the psycho-social environment and support. In contrary to the coaches' belief, players felt that parents always attend the coaching and practice sessions and travel with them to the tournaments as well.
14. In agreement with the coaches the players also felt that the parents always provide financial and logistic support such as buying equipment, training and traveling costs.
15. As per the player's perception, which differs from the coach's opinion, that parents got frequently involved in the scheduling of the tournaments, goal setting and long term plans.
16. Players felt that parents occasionally help in other training related aspects such as fitness classes and diet.
17. It was perceived by the players that parents frequently maintain good cooperation with the coaches



pertaining to the matters of training and traveling.

***Influence of parents on factors related to competitive performance namely behavior, performance, efficiency, morale etc.***

The aspects related to the competitive performance, such as behavior, efficiency and morale are very much influenced by the parents both in a positive and in a negative manner. Coaches and players both believe that parents significantly influence the performance of the players in a competition.

18. Coaches and players both have a strong perception that the parent's expectation of the child in the competitions has always influenced their performance and parents always have a high expectation from the child.
19. Variation was observed in the perception of the coaches and players regarding the parent involvement in competitive performance. The coaches felt that only on a few occasions, parents motivate the child to follow pre-match routines or match preparations such as warming up before the match and readiness of the equipments, dresses etc. On the other hand the players felt that parents regularly inspire the child to do match preparations in the form of warming up and prepare their equipments for the match.
20. It was perceived by the coaches that during the match, parents sometimes distract the player with their behavior or non-verbal gesture and that differs from the players' belief, which indicates that parents never distract the player during the match.
21. The coaches felt that the parents understating of the game is not consistent and only sometime they provide a positive feedback after a match. It was also observed by the coaches that parents occasionally provide appropriate discipline to the child for better sportsmanship.
22. Players have their perception that the parents regularly understand the game which is reflected in their post match positive feedback and behavior. Players also perceive that parents always preach the importance of sportsmanship and even they provide appropriate discipline for the same.
23. There is uniformity in the perception of coaches and players regarding the morale and the ethics of the game. Coaches and players, both strongly felt that parents never teach unprofessional or non-sportsmanship behavior to the child such as false call or arguing with the chair umpire.

**Problem areas in child-parent interaction**

Coaches and players have pointed out several significant observations regarding the issues and the problems, which the players face while interacting with the parents regarding Tennis.

24. Coaches perceived that the most common problem which players face is that parents frequently put pressure on the child by sitting by the side of the court and making comments during the coaching. It not only puts stress on the child but also creates hindrance in the training process.
25. Coaches and players both have reported that even if the child does achieve success in training or competitions, the parents hardly ever abuse the child or beat them physically.

26. Another common problem between the parents and the players, which the coaches felt is that parents always dominate the child's Tennis, feelings and career at large. Coaches also felt that parents regularly put pressure on the child by reminding him repeatedly about the cost that are incurring on the Tennis.
27. It was observed by the coaches that frequently promising players leave due to the parent's behavior and environment created by them. The coaches felt that only sometimes parents support the child positively.
28. Contrary to the coach's perception, the players reported no problems from the parents regarding their Tennis. Players felt that parents, neither put any kind pressure during the training nor they dominate their feelings, career and Tennis in general.
29. It was perceived by the players that the parents support them positively and they never pressurize them about the financial obligations of the game. Players strongly felt the burn out of the players never happened due to parental environment and behavior.

#### ***Problem areas in coach- parent interaction***

Coaches and players have pointed out several significant observations regarding the issues and the problems which coaches face while interacting with the parents regarding the Tennis of their child.

30. As far as the problem area of interaction is concerned, coaches perceived that the most common problem which they face is that sometime parents do not follow their decisions and occasionally complain and criticise them.
31. Another common problem which the coaches face from the parents is that their perspective of the success is different from the coach; their primary focus is on winning or losing in the competition instead on skill enhancement. Even parents frequently avoid open and honest communication with the coach.
32. It was observed by the coaches that frequently parents discontinue the coaching with them due to lack of result from the child in a short period of time. The coaches felt that this happens because the parents normally do not trust the coach until the child achieves good performance.
33. Players' perception is contrary to the coaches' perception, and they felt that there is no problem as such in the parents' and coaches' interaction. Players felt that parents never disobey the coaches' decision nor they complain about them.
34. As per the players' perception, parents' perspective of success is quite similar to the coach's perspective and they never have the lack of open and honest communication with the coach.
35. Players strongly felt that parents have trusted the coach in spite of the lack of short term results and they never discontinue training in a short period of time in the absence of results.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**



Based on the conclusion drawn, the following recommendations are considered:

1. As per the perceptions of coaches and players and the findings of the case study, the involvement and role of parents was found to be significantly important. The following points should be considered in the development process and the improvement of a junior Tennis player.
  - (i) Tennis is a very technical game and understanding of the game is an essential prerequisite for any novice player's parent. All India Tennis Association and the coaches should organize educational programs in the form of workshops, seminars, and conferences specifically for the budding parents and players.
  - (ii) Over involvement of the parents can hamper the progress of a Tennis player. The coaches, players and the parents should fix their roles and responsibilities and should work together as a team, having trust in each others.
  - (iii) Learning the basic skills of Tennis is a lengthy process and even the learning is a very individual matter. So the parents should keep patience. Irrespective of win or loss in the competitions, parents should support the child in a positive manner and motivate them to work hard and to learn from mistakes.
  - (iv) Coaches, players and parents should conduct regular meetings and provide feedback to each other regarding the Tennis training and progress of the player. Coach and parents should be honest with each other and if the child does not have the talent, they should convey it to the parents. Parents should also support the coach. Parents should take certain initiative for the success of the player like providing financial, logistical and emotional support. It requires a favorable environment at home and outside, hard work for a long period of time, ethics, dedication and discipline to achieve success.

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