



Wet Weather Indoor Sessions Program

Fireball tennis will be re-introducing an indoor lesson program to give our kids the chance for consistent training despite the weather. The reality is that there is a lot more to Tennis than what happens on the tennis court. Professional players spend a lot of time off court with strength and conditioning coaches, sports psychologists, dieticians and physiotherapists to name a few. This doesn't include time off court with their coach looking at prepared footage or match statistics to analysing their game.

If it is raining we have a chance to increase our players knowledge of the game and improve on skills that will augment what we do on the court on a dry day. As coaches we see this as an opportunity to add to what we do on court, it is not a lesser substitute but a valuable addition that we otherwise wouldn't have time for. Without a wet weather program a child will go a week without training with their coach and in the next lesson time is taken to revisit what was learnt 2 weeks before. With a wet weather program we can add what was learnt off court into the next on court session enhancing the children's experience - not detracting from it.

Below is a framework of what will can be achieved and the theory behind it:

A combination of skill based activities, strength and conditioning, balance, and tennis theory and mental strength training.

Our wet weather sessions are planned to be run inside the clubhouse and under adjoining covered areas when the courts are too wet or it is raining. We will use our on court equipment like cones, drop down lines, buckets, hoops, agility or footwork ladders combined with foam balls or red balls, bean bags, balloons and mini nets. We will have 8 or 10 work stations set up through the club. A white board for Tennis theory - tactical, technical, mental skills, goal setting could be used. Each Coach will take their class through the work stations, the students will be supervised and coached through each activity the whole time of the lesson.

In preparation a text message will go out to all parents on the day a wet weather program is called. A sign will be put up outside the club or courts depending on the clubs facilities. Club furniture will be put to the side to set up the area. There will be no competitive rallying with rackets over mini nets or any activity that would lead to damage to the club facilities.

(1) Skill based Activities

These workstations will be about with grip familiarity, reaction speed, hand eye coordination and balance and agility. Using bean bags, red balls and foam balls we will have paired throwing and catching activities, balloon tapping for junior players to work on such things as forehand and backhand volleys or co-ordination in a serve technique.

(2) Strength and Conditioning

Work stations for strength and conditioning require no equipment but a medicine ball can be used in static exercises to add a load to the activity for older squad players only.

(3) Tennis Theory

Coaches will sit down at a table with their group and complete work sheets on topics such as: Technical fundamentals of each stroke - backswings, contact points, follow throughs and footwork.

- **Tactical fundamentals** - patterns of play, serving with purpose, approaching the net.
- **Mental skills** - emotional control, focus, pre point routines.
- **Goal setting** - long term goals, short term goals.

(4) Video Analysis

While on court on dry days we have the opportunity to take video footage of student technique. Using this footage combined with pre organised footage of WTA / ATP players we can compare our students' technique against professional players to show where our kids can improve. Perception Action Coupling Tennis is a sport of quick decisions based on subtle cues from the opponent. How is the opponent swinging at the ball? are they at their end range movement? are they set to meet the ball early or late? what's the sound of the contact on the ball? A lot of factors can impact a split second decision. Further to this we also need to make a decision based on feedback on our side of the net, how effective was my shot? where should I move to next? What is my game plan?

With this in mind part of what we can do off court is training what is called Perception Action coupling. Some of our work stations will be based on receiving information and making a correct decision very quickly. On the court we can work on which decision to make, off the court we can train how quickly this decision is made. This is one of the most valuable things we can help the kids improve on off the court.

Summary

There is a lot more to Tennis than hitting balls on the court and while weather is good we want the kids hitting but the more our kids learn about the sport holistically the better players they will become. Indoor sessions are a great chance to do this.

Having a deeper technical knowledge will help players gain insight into an opponent's technical flaws and how to exploit them. Training isolated skills in an off court environment is also a chance to teach the importance of these specific skills. We can show the importance of decisions made on court and how the outcome of a rally can change.