

ontario tennis

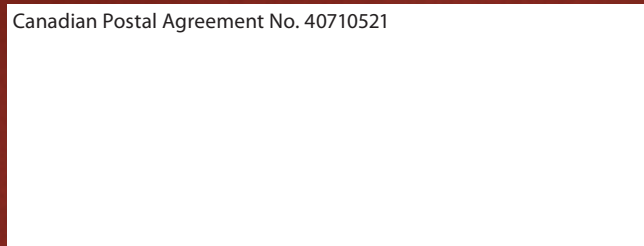


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Teams



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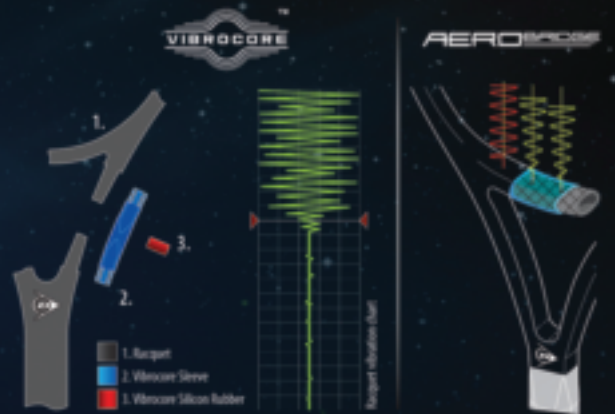


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6 MIELE LEAGUE CHALLENGE



16 SCENE AT "THE BEACH"



20 SENIORS AT PLAY



26 TEAM TALK SHARON MARTINEAU



28 THE CHECKET CUP

4 EDITORIAL

8 OTA HISTORY "Did you know?"

10 VIC BRADEN Federer vs. Nadal Wimbledon Earthquake

12 COACHING EDUCATION David Phillips

12 WORTH REPEATING There is no "I" in team.

14 MEMORABILIA Classic Racquets # 5 Miguel Cysneiros

18 OTA HISTORY "A Forgotten Fortieth Anniversary" Lawrie Strong

24 INSTRUCTION Doubles Up the Middle

25 THE PRESIDENT'S VIEW Michel Lecavalier

30 OTA NEWS



2008 U12 Indoor National Team Champions

Top row from left: Gloria Liang, Charlotte Petrick, Maria Petrascu, Gracia Mboko, (coach) Marie France Mercier
Front row from left: Alejandro Tabilo, Andrew Richards, David Volfson, Philippe Courteau

Photo credit: Tennis Canada

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Teams

I don't think there is any greater "high" than that which comes from being part of a high performing team, whether in sports or in other endeavours. Much has been written about how to create high performing teams in management texts but the bottom line is that a high performing team depends on the members of the team being good team players. Here is a definition of a good team player:-

A team player is committed to the team's purpose and has the skills and motivation necessary to make a meaningful contribution to the team. Team players respect what each person brings to the team and are committed to working with others, recognizing that they are dependent on each other's efforts.

Looking at this definition, it struck me that it is perfectly possible for a person to be a good team player in one situation and not in another. So if we want to be perceived as good team players, we need to be careful about which teams we choose to be a part of.

"Hard work spotlights the character of people: some turn up their sleeves, some turn up their noses, and some don't turn up at all." Sam Ewing

On a tennis team, the most skilled player is of no use to a team if they don't turn up, and they do little for a team if they turn up their noses at playing with other members of the team or if they pout when they are asked to play on a lower ranked court than they think they are worthy of playing.

If we are on a committee, board, project team or other group, we do not want to be associated with people who put their own selfish interest above the purpose of the group, instead we want to be with people with open minds, who contribute, who respect diversity in the group and who welcome the discussion of issues and possibilities.

A group becomes a team when each member is sure enough of himself and his contribution to praise the skill of the others. Norman S. Hidle

Of course it helps if the team leader, captain or coach creates an environment in which every team member feels they can contribute. They must demonstrate that they value all of their team members. They should build trust through open communication and establish clear expectations so that team members are empowered to give their best effort.

A leader is not an administrator who loves to run others, but someone who carries water for his people so that they can get on with their jobs. Robert Townsend.

So the next time you are asked to be on a committee, or want to join a team, take a few moments to consider whether the situation allows you to be a good team player. Are you committed to the team purpose? Do you have the skills to make a contribution? Is the chair or captain an empowering leader? Do you respect the other members? Are they good team players? If the answer to all these questions is "yes", you may just find yourself on a high performing team.



Who's Coaching Who?

BECOMING A REFLEXIVE PRACTITIONER

By DAVID PHILLIPS

Is a great coach or club professional born or made? And if we believe they can be formed, then how has this process changed, if at all, in the past 50 years. More importantly, how has our understanding of the nature of great coaching expertise influenced our model of coaching development?

Not even 75 years ago, the art/science of such a skill as coaching was more likely developed through a long period of apprenticeship with a Master. Today, professional programs abound the educational landscape. Credentialing now marks the entry point to any career.

Tennis Canada's certification system

is one such example of credentialing consisting of intensive courses led by Master professionals. These courses help shape the playing background and previous teaching experience of candidates, laying a solid foundation for future professional growth. However, nothing can replace experience and the learning that occurs by reflecting on that experience to transform future practice. Herein lies the power of Tennis Canada's model – certification courses represent an exceptional starting point to a career of reflexive practice.

Once a coach is certified, the majority of apprenticeship/mentoring relationships are informal and transitory. A few lucky coaches find a team environment that supports further growth. For most, however, the challenge is how to positively harness day to day experiences in order to build on the

foundations learned in certification. One readily available interaction is with parents whose presence may influence the coaching environment in many intentional and unintentional ways. One such example is the establishment of "parenting" standards around appropriate communication and behaviour with their children. Coaches who ingest these interactions have the opportunity to transform not only their on-court behaviours but also their overall professional development. Just as in the old adage that it takes a village to raise a child, it also takes a community of interactions - with students, parents and volunteers - to develop an excellent coach or club professional.

So the next time you walk off the court after a great lesson with your pro – don't forget to ask yourself "just who is coaching whom?"

There is no "I" in team

By PAM OLLEY

This editorial was first printed in the Fall 2001 issue of Ontario Tennis

When cake mixes were first introduced, all they required you to do was add water, stir and bake. The product flopped. When mixes were introduced that required you to add an egg, the product was a success. It seems to be human nature for us to want to put something good into the things we do, something that makes us feel we have made a positive contribution.

The theme for this issue is cooperation, community and team. You may not find prescriptions for establishing teams or building communities in the articles, but we hope you find something that will inspire you, when something of yourself is added to the mix, to build

and strengthen some aspect of the tennis community.

For a group of people to consider themselves a true team, several conditions must exist. First there must be a common goal or vision, clearly understood and supported by everyone in the group. Second there must be mutual respect. Honesty and openness (the capacity to say what you mean, do what you say and admit to your mistakes) are essential to building mutual respect. Team members must be able to share issues and problems and support each other, showing a willingness to pitch in and help each other out. There also must be a sense of accomplishment, of milestones reached, progress made, results produced and credit shared.

Taking the cake analogy one step further, it is the quality of leadership that establishes the vision of the end product, that brings the right ingredients together in the right proportions, that establishes the environment in which all the ingredients can combine together successfully and rise to the occasion. Leadership has little to do with title or

position, it is not about control or telling people what to do. It is about creating the conditions to successfully bring about the common goal. Increasingly, as organizations become more complex, leadership is often provided by different members of the team at different times, and the nominal leader has to adapt to be a follower.

A high performing team can produce more than the sum of its parts, just like the ingredients in a recipe combine to make a delicious dish that often bears little resemblance to their original form. Working on a high performing team is an exhilarating experience and the greater the challenges faced, the higher the levels of euphoria and kinship felt. On the other hand, working with people who have no sense of team, can engender frustration, anger and exhaustion. Dwight Morrow said, "*The world is divided into people who do things and people who get the credit. Try, if you can, to be in the first class. There's far less competition.*" So remember when you are choosing or joining a team, seek out the first class and avoid the second.