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NEWS

COMMENT

LEARNING

FROM THE SIDELINES



“Desire creates power”



WIMBLEDON JUNIOR EVENT

On page three of this issue, there is an article on the development of Junior athletes and although this piece of news is from last months Wimbledon championship it is worthy of mention. The Wimbledon junior events gained more than their usual share of publicity, largely thanks to 14-year old Laura Robson, who gave her new home crowd something to cheer as she blitzed her way through the girls singles field to become the first home winner in 24 years. Laura was born in Melbourne, Australia and moved to England aged six via Singapore. Her mother is a former professional basketball player and is currently involved in coaching. Laura received her dual British nationality in early 2008 and so her victory qualifies as a home win as far as the English public is concerned.

"ALL YOU CAN EAT"

For any sports fan the Olympic games is rather like an "all you can eat buffet" with the choice of sports from which to select sometimes proving to be overwhelming. What is clear is that the viewer / spectator will be watching the best performers from the various sports on show. Athletes will often have prepared for four or more years with the sole objective of participating in the 2008 Beijing Olympics, but in reality the preparation started much earlier with their first tentative steps into sport. One question for coaches to consider is the relative robustness of skills acquired explicitly against those learned implicitly. There is a body of evidence suggesting that explicitly acquired skills are more likely to fail under pressure however new research challenges this view and the September slant will look at this issue.

BACK TO BACK WINNERS

Padraig Harrington's successful defence of the Open Championship has put him into a select group of back to back winners since World War II. The others are:

Tiger Woods 2005 St Andrews & 2006 Royal Liverpool

Tom Watson 1982 Royal Troon & 1983 Royal Birkdale

Lee Trevino 1971 Royal Birkdale & 1972 Muirfield

Arnold Palmer 1961 Royal Birkdale & 1962 Royal Troon

Peter Thomson 1954 Royal Birkdale, 1955 St Andrews & 1956 Royal Liverpool

Bobby Locke 1949 Royal Troon & 1950 Royal St Georges



**Wimbledon Junior Champion:
Laura Robson**

PLAYER DETAILS

DOB: 21.01.94

LOCATION: Australia

HEIGHT: 1.70m

PLAYS: Left Handed

JNR RANKING: 5

TITLES: 5

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Tony will be available for coaching sessions in Lisbon on Friday 12th of September. To book an appointment or session call (+351) 93 2524253.

**DOPING vs ANTI DOPING**

The subject of doping raises its ugly head once again. As the Olympic countdown reaches its last week the anti dopers have never been busier and more in the news. The fight against doping is undertaken daily but only gets into the public domain when major international events take place or a positive test is revealed.

This week, the International Olympic Committee have stripped more medals from the 2000 U.S. Olympic team when they disqualified the men's 4x400 track relay team following the admission of Antonio Pettigrew that he was doping at the time. Jerome Young who ran in the preliminaries for the US team also tested positive for drugs and was banned for life.

I am sure that the team that finished in second place (Great Britain) will receive their just rewards perhaps in a public ceremony? But what of Pettigrew's team mates? Four of Pettigrew's and Young's team-mates also lose their medals: Michael Johnson and Angelo Taylor who have unblemished records along with twins Alvin and Calvin Harrison who had previously been punished for doping. For Johnson and Taylor it is unfortunate that they will be denied their hard earned medals and perhaps the same could be said for the twins as their offences were long in the past. Michael Johnson immediately returned his gold medal, but at least he has another four golds to compensate but for Taylor the return will be a sober moment when he returns his only Olympic gold medal.

Of course the US are not on their own with doping issues, earlier this week seven Russian athletes have been provisionally suspended, Romania has withdrawn two athletes and unfortunately it is likely that there will be further announcements during the coming days. The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) is the international independent organization created in 1999 to promote, coordinate, and monitor the fight against doping in sport in all its forms and they have a great responsibility. There is no doubt that the war on doping is an ongoing battle and unfortunately sport has to be prepared for more discoveries. Detection levels are improving at a tremendous rate, but so are the cheats who are determined to keep the anti-dopers in the dark.

Perhaps if the dopers and athletes spent as much time, energy and money on finding legal ways to improve performance then we could all be proud of the Olympic Champions that in the main are clean and superb examples of competitors that have sacrificed in order to have their moment of glory.

For more information visit www.wada-ama.org/en/



Anti drug campaigner:

Michael Johnson

W.A.D.A OBJECTIVES

- Create an international co-ordinating body
- Reduce the trafficking of doping substances and the use of banned doping agents
- Reinforce doping controls and improve detection techniques
- Support education and awareness-raising programmes
- Guarantee the efficiency of sanctions taken against offenders.

**TALENT DEVELOPMENT**

Talent development in junior sport is often a case of team work which includes roles for the athlete, coach and parents. Parents are tasked with providing a stable home environment that is emotionally supportive while taking care of home organisation. Parents must schedule family activities around their child's training and competition plan, adjust mealtimes to maintain the family unit and be in a position to support offspring financially. Logistically it is no small task, added to which parents act as "Taxi" drivers, transporting young athletes to & from events. Parents are often the catalyst for stimulating the initial interest of children and making the chosen sport fun and interesting. The coaches role is more focussed on developing skills that will be required in order to reach the higher levels.

The level of coaching depends upon the current stage of the child's development. In the early years much of the time involved in sport should be "playful and fun" with coaching limited to engaging the child in activities that help develop the basic competencies. During this first period there is little pressure to perform but rather to enjoy the sport, this period has been called the "Sampling"¹ years (6-12 years old).

The next stage (12-15) is called the "Specialisation"¹ period when athlete interest increases and they become more "serious" in their pursuit of excellence. This is often characterised when the athlete wishes to improve their performance in competition, practice time increases and commitment to training and associated activities becomes much greater than other social activities. Other sports are often ditched in this phase and parental involvement increases with greater demands on their time. Coaching at this level is often focussed on the technical development of skills necessary to create a strong platform from which to build future success. The athlete – coach relationship is built on trust with the athlete taking on the role of willing student prepared to follow the guidelines set out. The coach is tasked with developing a programme of activities that when carried out fully will move the athlete to a higher performance level, the work will be demanding and the coach must ensure that quality feedback increases motivation.

In later years, (16+) the "Investment"¹ period, the athlete takes on responsibility for their own training and development, coaches become supporting members of the team, a sounding board from whom advice may be sought and a source of confirmation and knowledge. At this stage the involvement of parents becomes lesser as the athlete is now better able to make their own decisions.

Recommended Reading: Côté, J., & Hay, J. (2002) Children's involvement in sport: A developmental perspective. In J. M. Silva & D. Stevens (Eds.), *Psychological foundations of sport* (2nd ed., pp. 503–519). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

**THREE PERIODS**

Title: The "sampling" years
Age: 6-12 years of age
Typically: Involved in games which are fun

Title: The "specialising" years
Age: 12-15 years of age
Typically: Ditch other sports in favour of the main sport.
Dedicate more time to the main sport

Title: The "investment" years
Age: 16+ years of age
Typically: Focus on sport as a competitive activity



THE OLYMPIC FLAME

On the 8th August millions of people around the World will watch the Olympic Torch enter the stadium before lighting the flame that will burn over the 2008 version of the game in Beijing. Even though this year's torch relay (129 days) has had its difficulties it remains one of sports iconic images. The flame commemorates the theft of fire from the Greek god Zeus by Prometheus and its origins lie in the ancient games.

SPAIN'S SUMMER

Think of the summer's champions and Spain is the consistent name that comes to mind. Euro 2008 football champions; Wimbledon men's singles champion and soon to be the World's new number one player Rafael Nadal; Spain's third consecutive Tour de France winner Carlos Sastre and what are the odds on Sergio Garcia or Miguel Angel Jimenez winning golf's last major of 2008? Is such success accidental or planned? Take a look at the internet and it is easy to see that there is lots of work going on in Junior Summer Camps all over Spain in a multitude of sports. Accidental – I don't think so.

DIVING

Traditionally diving is one of the most popular spectator sports at the Olympics and is also one of the least popular sports in terms of participation. This is a short guide to the scoring system used. There are five basic elements which need to be considered with equal importance before awarding a score: Starting position - Approach - Take off - Flight – Entry. Judges score the dives using a pre-determined scale. The judges all score the dive and the highest and lowest score is dropped to give a "Raw Score". Each dive has a rating of degree of difficulty (DD) which is an indication of how difficult / complex the dive is to perform. The raw score is then multiplied by the DD to give a score for the dive.

RYDER CUP

The respective Ryder Cup teams for the 2008 version will be selected during August. The Captains will add two selections each to the top ten qualifiers. With only a couple of weeks to go the current ten leading players for both teams are;

Europe: Harrington - Westwood - Stenson - Karlsson - Jimenez-
McDowell - Hansen - Wilson - Kaymer - Rose

United States: Cink - Mickelson - Perry - Furyk - Kim - Leonard - Weekley -
Stricker - Austin - Mediate



Pele & the Olympic torch

SPORTING DATES

07th - 10th August
P.G.A Championship, Oakland Hills

08th – 24th August
Olympic Games, Beijing

16th August
Start of premier league, England

25th August - 7th September
US Open Tennis, Flushing Meadows



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