

Safe and Inclusive Tennis

Promoting Positive & Handling Poor Parental Behaviours

Sam Thrower

Dr Chris Harwood




Webinar Content

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- Impact of Poor Parental Behavior
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- Codes of Conduct
- Education & Support
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Section 1: Understanding Parental Behaviour

Parents Roles in Junior Tennis

Chauffeur

Laundry Service

Financial Supporter

Nutritionist

Schedule Planner

Fundraiser

Racket Stringer



Supporter

Coach

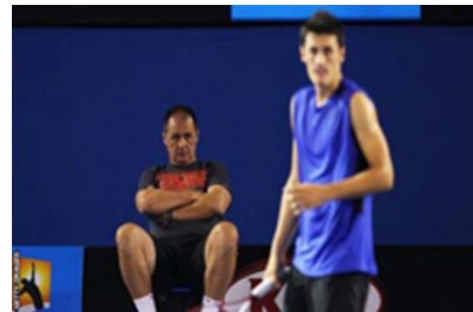
Friend

Counselor /
Psychologist

Mentor

Role Model

Introduction: Parent Behaviour



**Negative or
controlling
parenting**

**Well
intentioned but
uninformed
parenting**

**Supportive /
'expert'
parenting**

What is Poor Parent Behavior During Competition?

- Intimidating opponents
- Displaying overt interest in the game
- Drawing attention to self
- Singling out own child for support or encouragement
- Criticizing own child or team
- Displaying negative responses during a game
- Coaching in any form
- Arguing with officials
- Contradicting coach instructions
- Repeating instructions
- Engaging in derogatory behavior
- Disrupting children so they lose concentration



(Knight et al. 2010, 2011; Omli & Wiese-Bjornstal, 2011)

What is the Scale of the Problem?

In a research survey of over 100 American youth tennis players:

- 60% reported their parents had embarrassed them (i.e., walking away from a match)
- 30% reported their parents had yelled or screamed
- 13% reported that their parents had hit them after a match



What Impact is it having?

Children who perceive their parents communication and behavior as pressurising report:

- Higher Pre-competitive anxiety
- Lower self esteem
- Reduced self-confidence
- Higher fear-of-failure
- More Cheating
- Burnout
- Dropout



Task 1: Why Does it Happen?

Identify the reasons why you believe tennis parents may engage in negative or controlling behaviours during competition?



Reasons Why Parents Behave Poorly

Parents goals (adjusted based on early success/failure)

Lack of Knowledge & Expertise

Financial & Time Investment

LTA's Organizational system

Emotional reaction (e.g., anger) to their child's experience (i.e., being cheated)

Emotional intensity of the game (i.e., stage of game, score, importance on match)

**Personal
Factors**

**Organisational
Factors**

**Environmental
Factors**

When Poor Parental Behaviour Becomes Abuse?

- Abuse is defined as 'a pattern of physical, sexual, or emotional ill treatment by a person in a caregiver capacity (e.g., parent/coach) resulting in actual or potential harm to the athlete.
- Types of Relational Abuse: Sexual, Emotional, Physical, Neglect
- Two main reasons why athlete emotional abuse occurs:
 - Attempting to push an athlete to a higher level (Lack of understanding child/talent development?)
 - Anger & loss of emotional control


Table 19.1 Examples of abuse in sport

Form of abuse	Example
Physical abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Punching, beating, kicking, biting, shoving, striking, shaking, throwing, choking, slipping• Hitting an athlete with sporting equipment• Requiring an athlete to remain motionless in a seated or plank position for a period of time• Beyond reasonable training demands• Forcing an athlete to kneel on a harmful surface• Isolating an athlete in a confined space• Denying access to needed water, food, or sleep• Forcing physical exertion beyond the physical capabilities of the athlete (e.g., forcing an athlete to train until he/she vomits or loses consciousness)
Sexual abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sexual relations with an athlete• Inappropriate sexual contact (e.g., groping of an athlete's breasts or buttocks)• Exchange of reward in sport for sexual favours• Sexually oriented comments, jokes, or gestures• Sexual propositions• Exposing an athlete to pornographic material
Emotional abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decreasing confidence• Acts of humiliation• Intimidating or threatening acts of aggression with no athlete contact (e.g., shoving equipment against a wall)• Intentional denial of attention and/or support• Chronic criticism from training or competition
Neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not providing adequate recovery time or treatment for a sport injury• Not providing adequate coaching for an athlete exhibiting signs of psychological distress• Disregard for the nutritional well-being of the athlete• Inadequate supervision of an athlete• Failure to ensure the safety of athletic equipment• Disregarding the use of performance-enhancing drugs• Disregard for educational requirements and well-being• Not recognizing the social needs of the athlete• Failure to intervene when made aware of maladaptive behaviour

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Further Reading

A close-up photograph of a tennis player's foot wearing a white athletic shoe with dark accents, standing on a green grass tennis court. A white line is visible on the grass. In the upper left, a bright yellow-green tennis ball is suspended in the air. The background is a blurred green field.

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Section 2: Strategies for Preventing & Addressing Poor Parental Behaviours

1. Codes of Conduct & Signs

- One popular strategy which has been introduced in some sports are 'codes of conduct' which attempt to control parents behavior.
- Research suggests that parents and coaches believe these codes of conduct are good idea, but their effectiveness is limited if parents are not held accountable for their actions
- There is evidence in junior soccer to suggest that giving referees the ability to issue a 'yellow card' to the crowd (which means a player gets sin-binned) reduces the number of verbal comments made.



Task 2

What are the advantages and disadvantages of implementing 'codes of conduct' in junior tennis clubs/centres?



Task 2: Review

Advantages

- Evidence to suggest they are effective at limiting negative or controlling comments
- Clear consequences for any violation
- Easy for referees to enforce

Disadvantages

- Could negatively impact on relationships with parents
- Needs to be continually policed or enforced
- Not tackling the cause of the problem
- Players will be punished for the behavior of their parents

2. Educating & Supporting Parents

Research exploring parents experiences has highlighted the need too educate parents about:

- Ways parents can provide social support
- Developmental considerations and stages of development
- How to communicate and interact effectively
- Appropriate and inappropriate behaviors
- How to develop coping strategies to manage their emotions during competitions

Gould et al. 2008; Knight et al. 2012; Morgan & Giacobbi, 2006; Knight, 2012)



Further Reading

Guidelines of Delivering Parent Education Programmes

1. **Make interventions free & accessible (e.g., when parents attend the centre or online)**
2. **Keep workshops short (e.g., less than 60 mins)**
3. **Promote interventions via several routes of referral (e.g., email & coach recommendations, posters)**
4. **Demonstrate experience and knowledge of sport parenting/specific topic (e.g., child development, organisational system, competition coaching)**
5. **Ensure provisional content is linked to the needs of participants (*see further reading)**
6. **Try to give parents an input into the programme content**
7. **Create a safe, inclusive and supportive learning environment**
8. **Encourage sharing experiences, interaction and group discussions**
9. **Use role plays and practical take home tasks as a way to reinforce learning**

Creating a Supportive Environment for Parents

In addition to educational workshops, there are a number of ways in which clubs can help to support tennis parents:

- Regular Parent-Coach Meetings (i.e., reinforcing key messages)
- Parent Mentoring Programme
- Parent Peer-Support Discussion Groups
- Adding psychologists to the support team! (e.g., one-on-one or family based support)



3. Conflict Management

As a welfare office, think of an example when you have experienced a conflict with a tennis parent at your club either directly (between you & a parent) or indirectly (between a parent & coach/child/referee)

Share 1 or 2 examples of conflict at your club



Task 3: How Do You Manage Conflicts with Parents?

Instructions: Rate each of the statements below between 1 and 5 (1=not at all, 5=very much)

1. I give in to the wishes of the other party.
2. I concur with the other party.
3. I try to accommodate the other party.
4. I adapt to the other parties' goals and interests.
5. I try to realize a middle-of-the-road solution.
6. I emphasize that we have to find a compromise solution.
7. I insist we both give in a little.
8. I strive whenever possible towards a fifty-fifty compromise.
9. I push my own point of view.
10. I search for gains.
11. I fight for a good outcome for myself.
12. I do everything to win.
13. I examine issues until I find a solution that really satisfies me and the other party.
14. I stand for my own and other's goals and interests.
15. I examine ideas from both sides to find a mutually optimal solution.
16. I work out a solution that serves my own as well as other's interests as good as possible.
17. I avoid a confrontation about our differences.
18. I avoid differences of opinion as much as possible.
19. I try to make differences loom less severe.
20. I try to avoid a confrontation with the other.

Avoiding

Compromising

Competing

Problem Solving

Avoiding



Loughborough University



How Do You Manage Conflict with Parents?

Concern for relationship with parents



*I lose, you win.
(Accommodating)*



*You bend, I
bend. (Compromis
ing)*



*I win, you
win. (Collaborat
ing)*



*I zig, you
zag
(Avoiding)*



*I win, you
lose. (Competi
ng)*

Concern for personal goals, values,
beliefs (i.e., positive parental
behaviour & child welfare)

Conflict Management Skills

- **Collaboration is a successful approach in managing conflict because it promotes effective communication and problem-solving behaviours, allowing you to recognize and integrate each persons goals and beliefs to reach mutually beneficial solution**
- **Fundamental conflict management skills involved in collaborative conflict resolution include:**
 - **Emotion regulation**
 - **Interpersonal communication**
 - **Problem-solving skills**

Step-by-Step Conflict Management Plan

1. Recognize and Acknowledge the conflict

- Join parents & athletes, coach, support staff
- Get all parties to agree resolve the conflict together (i.e., win/win)

2. Isolate conflict

- Go to designated area for solving problems
- Explain & agree 4 basic rules
 - Agree to solve problem
 - Remain polite
 - Do not interrupt
 - Tell truth

3. Clarify communication

- Decide who will talk first
- Ask each person to explain what happened & discuss their feelings

4. Solutions

- Ask each for alternative solutions to the problem
- Work towards & agree on solution(s)

Summary

- **Poor parental behaviour is a reoccurring problem in junior tennis and is having a detrimental impact on young athletes participation and development**
- **Poor parental behaviour can be prevented through ‘codes of conduct’ and ‘education and support’**
- **Poor parental behaviour can cause conflicts which are most effectively resolved through a ‘collaborative conflict management style’**

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Questions?



s.thrower@lboro.ac.uk



[@thrower1989](https://twitter.com/thrower1989)