

TENNIS IRELAND COACHES 'EDUCATION SYSTEM/STRUCTURE

Our coaching courses have been put together with the assistance of the ITF Coaches Commission and the Coaching Departments of some of the world's most successful tennis nations. As a result, the information provided is of the highest quality and more than 120 member nations of the ITF are currently using the World Governing Bodies resources.

Tennis Ireland works closely with the International Tennis Federation, Tennis Coach Ireland and Sport Ireland Coaching, to implement the highest possible standards of coaching in Irish tennis. We offer a variety of coaching levels aligned with the Long Term Player Development Programme Pathway. Below is a description of the levels, and what the participants are qualified to do when they successfully complete the courses. In addition, at each Phase of the Pathway, we have listed the minimum level of coach that should be deployed with the players associated with the phase.

General Information on Courses

Play and Stay Assistant - Non Award

The `Play and Stay Assistant` course is a non award programme aimed at 15 year olds and over who are interested in getting on the Tennis Ireland Coaching Pathway.

There are two main parts to the course:

The first part is the Theory, which involves viewing and studying a series of presentations prior to taking the online quizzes which are related to the videos and the course manual. Participants need to score a minimum mark of 90% in the quiz in order to pass the online component.

The second part of the course is the practical task where participants need to satisfactorily complete 20 logged hours with a Tennis Ireland Qualified and Licensed Coach. The completed logbook needs to be signed by the coach and submitted to the National Assessor with Tennis Ireland who will decide on the outcome of the task.

Sixteen and seventeen year olds must complete the vetting process and their parents need to complete the parent/guardian consent form they also must sign the relevant Code of Behaviour in relation to safeguarding children and young people they work with under supervision. Fifteen year olds cannot be vetted. They must, however, sign the relevant Code of Behaviour

On completion of the Programme, participants are prepared to assist a Tennis Ireland qualified and licensed coach with the implementation of the Red, Orange and Green Programme in a club, school or parks environment. Participants having completed the programme are not permitted to work alone.

Play Tennis Course - (Level 1)

Pathway Phase - Active Start/Fundamental/Learning to Play & Practice Phases

The aim of the Tennis Ireland Level 1 course is to help participants understand how to introduce tennis to beginner players of all ages and how to organise and deliver tennis sessions in a fun and effective learning environment in Schools, Parks & Clubs.

The course is suitable for:

Individuals 16 years of age and older, who are new to tennis coaching or looking to begin their coaching career pathway, school teachers, coaching assistants, volunteers and for parents who have little or no experience in tennis coaching, but who would like to know how to effectively introduce tennis to young and adult beginner players.

Please note, in order to work alone as a coach, graduates must have reached their 18th Birthday. Sixteen and seventeen year olds who complete the programme can only work as assistants under the direction of a Tennis Ireland qualified and Licensed Coach until they turn 18 years of age.

Before taking part in the course face time, all participants must complete the 3 hours online learning programme for the Level 1 Course.

Upon the successful completion of the full course, the participants will be able to work with young beginner players. That is, 10 years of age and under children, enjoy tennis pupils, adult and teenage beginner players from the lower end of the WTN in a schools, parks, community and club environment.

The participants will be made familiar with the first three phases of the Long Term Player Development Pathway and have knowledge of the basic game situations, strategy, tactics and relevant technical instruction to provide to beginner players.

Importantly, the participants will be able to organise simple competitions, using a variety of scoring formats, the use of the correct equipment and court sizes, and ensure that all the beginner players are able to play the game from their first experience. Participants will also learn about the ABC's in the Active Start & Fundamental phase of the Pathway and the Skill Awards to support the red court programme.

The Play Tennis course concludes with all the participants being assessed by means of a 'multiple-choice' written test, a tennis ability test and a group lesson test.

The written test will cover the key information from the course and the ITF Play Tennis Manual. Participants may retake any assessments where they are not yet deemed to be competent at a later stage to complete the course. As part of the programme participants need to have fully completed the Tennis Ireland recruitment process, taken Safeguarding Training and the Sports First Aid Course which covers defibrillator training and complete a logbook involving 10 hours work experience with a **qualified/licensed** Tennis Ireland Coach.

Coaching Beginner and Intermediate Players Course - (CBI) - (Level 2)

Pathway Phase - Learning to Play and Practice and part of the Training to Train Phase

The Tennis Ireland Level 2 course is suitable for participants 19 years of age and over who have successfully completed the Play Tennis course (Level 1).

To be accepted onto the programme participants must be a Tennis Ireland Licensed Coach, must have their vetting disclosure, their Safeguarding 1 Certificate and their Sports First Aid Course which covers defibrillator training all up to date.

The Course is a qualification involving 80 coach developer contact hours over 12-days and 6 hours online learning. Before taking part in the course contact time, all participants must complete the 6 hours online learning programme for the Level 2 Course.

The goal of the Coaching Beginner & Intermediate Players Course is to give candidates the skills required to promote tennis at a grass-roots level, introduce participants to tennis through the modified courts and coaching players up to junior and senior club competition level.

Participants must be able to demonstrate a minimum level of play (e.g. ability to rally / demonstrate basic strokes / feed balls to students) and undertake several tests including an individual lesson test, a group lesson test, a tennis playing / demonstration test and a written theory test.

Participants also need to fill in and submit a series of workbooks associated with the course content and 20 logged hours in a schools, parks or club environment.

Coaching Advanced Players - CAP - (Level 3)

Pathway Phase - Training to Train & part of the Training to Compete Phase

The Tennis Ireland Level 3 Course is a 12-day course. The goal of the course is to give participants the competences to teach tennis to intermediate and advanced players involved in competition.

Topics covered in the course include: advanced biomechanics and technique, tactics, teaching methodology, physical training and applied psychology for tennis.

To be accepted onto the programme participants should be of a sufficient playing standard and must have passed the Coaching Beginner & Intermediate Players Course (Level 2).

They must be a Tennis Ireland Licensed Coach and have their vetting disclosure, their Safeguarding 1 Certificate and the Sports First Aid Cert which covers defibrillator training all up to date.

Throughout the ten-day course, candidates are continually observed by the Coach Developers and then candidates must undertake several tests including an individual lesson test, a group lesson test, a tennis playing / demonstration test and a written theory test. They also need to fill in and submit a series of workbooks associated with the course content and design an annual plan for an U14 - U16 quality player and implement the first cycle of the plan and complete an assigned Development Project.

This course is structured in units of competence, with each unit consisting of learning outcomes that have a set of performance criteria on which coaches are assessed (i.e. required to provide evidence to demonstrate competence) using an integrated system. Current competence of the coach is recognised if valid, sufficient, consistent, current, and authentic evidence is provided.

Coaching Performance Players - (Level 4)

Pathway Phase - Training to Compete & Training to Win Phase

The Tennis Ireland Level 4 Course is a 14-day course and includes the following six modules:

1. Advanced tactics
2. Teaching methodology and training
3. Advanced biomechanics and technique
4. Body conditioning
5. Psychology
6. Tennis development and planning

To be accepted onto the programme participants should be of a sufficient playing standard and must have completed the Coaching Advanced Players Course (Level 3).

They must be a Tennis Ireland Licensed Coach and have their vetting disclosure, their Safeguarding 1 Certificate and the Sports First Aid Cert which covers defibrillator training all up to date.

Participants who undertake the course should be interested in coaching advanced and those striving to become professional players involved in competition.

Coaches complete one written test for each module as well as an on-court test. They also need to fill in and submit a series of workbooks associated with the course content and design an annual plan for an U16/U18 quality player and implement the first cycle of the plan.

TENNIS IRELAND LONG TERM PLAYER DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY

The purpose of the LTPDP is to provide a framework for all those involved in delivering the game of tennis at all levels in Ireland. It has been produced based on empirically and scientifically relevant information, which indicates when certain capacities may best be developed. The model looks to develop the individual by covering the tennis specific components of technical, tactical, physical and psychological areas, whilst intertwining the components of personal, lifestyle, parental, educative and competitive experiences.

The components of development have been chosen to holistically guide the development of the child/player. While the programme is very extensive, it has been designed to guide you in understanding the key skills to be developed at the different phases and to assist in developing a pathway of development for children, teenage and adult players.

In particular, the LTPDP will help:

- Make tennis enjoyable for the participant.
- Develop a pathway of development for coaches and volunteers to follow.
- Foster the development of great people who play our game.
- Recruit and retain players of all standards within organised programmes.
- Implement appropriate activities for the relevant skill and age levels.
- Understand a player's development in relation to their skills.

Irish tennis strives to attract more participants to our sport. At the same time we want to provide an environment where we can retain current players, and aim to raise standards to the highest possible level. 98% of the Irish population don't play tennis and we need to work together with all our stakeholders to attract more participants through Schools, Parks, Clubs, Coaches, Competition Organisers and Volunteers. Without all these stakeholders, it will not be possible to retain current members and attract new members to the game. Collectively, we must continue to deliver tennis in a way that will encourage participants to develop a love for this great sport.

Important Aims for those leading children's Tennis

When working with children we've always got to keep in mind the 4 broad aims

Fun and Healthy - Tennis and indeed all Sport must be a fun and healthy experience for all.

Inclusion - Tennis must be welcoming and inclusive, offering appropriate opportunities for participation and development for all children.

Fair Play - We must promote fair play, respect, ethics, integrity and safety throughout all our associated bodies in tennis when it comes to dealing with children in tennis.

Safe - With the best interests of children in mind, we must foster best practice in safeguarding procedures and policies throughout the tennis sector.

The following outlines the seven different phases of the Player Development Model:

Phase 1: The Active Start Phase – NURTURE - Age 0-5 years

The main objective of this phase is for children to be introduced to mainly unstructured, and some structured, active play that incorporates a variety of body movements. Children at this age need to develop the ABCs of movement – Agility, Balance, Coordination and Speed. The ABCs are essential for developing fundamental movement skills and fundamental movement skills will later provide the foundation for fundamental sport skills. Together, fundamental movement skills and fundamental sport skills form the basis of ‘physical literacy’.

An early active start enhances development of brain function, physical coordination, gross motor skills, posture and balance. An active start also helps children to build confidence, social skills, emotional control and imagination, whilst reducing stress and improving sleep. Children in the Active Start Phase should see physical activity as a fun and exciting part of everyday life.

Parents, guardians and minders have a big responsibility to provide daily opportunities for the children in their care. Daily active movement experiences dispersed throughout the child's day will provide optimum growing and learning development. Time is needed to learn Active Movement skills.

Avoid Inactivity. We know that many hours of TV/DVD watching and playing on computer and game consoles, limits the development of the brain/body system as well as providing opportunities for extra food snacking. Set time limits and be selective. Participants should be introduced to the early part of Tennis Ireland Skill Awards and progress at their own pace.

Level of Coach

Parents and Guardians should take the lead in developing physical literacy skills during this Phase. Coaches should consider training Parents and Carers on the types of activities they can do with the children in this phase.

Phase 2: The Fundamental Phase - EXPLORE - Age - Males 6-9/Females 6-8 years

The main objective of this phase is to consolidate previous taught skills from the semi structured Active Start Phase implemented by parents and guardians. Children should also learn all the fundamental *movement skills* using a well-structured, positive and fun approach.

Tennis skills should be introduced, with an emphasis on fun, skill development and modified games through the red and the early stage of the orange programme. Appropriate and correct running, jumping and throwing techniques are taught using the ABC's of athletics. Speed, power, strength and endurance are also developed. Participation in as many sports as possible is encouraged. The development of fundamental movement skills will contribute significantly to future player achievements. Participants should be introduced to the Tennis Ireland Skill Awards and progress through the Skills at their own pace. When they can complete the Skills in all five awards, participants should be capable of playing organised play in the red court.

Level of Coach

The minimum standard of coach required to work in this phase is a Tennis Ireland Level 1 Coach. A Level 1 Coach has completed the Tennis Ireland Play Tennis Course and is trained to introduce tennis to beginner players of all ages, organising and delivering tennis sessions in a fun and effective learning environment in Schools, Parks & Clubs.

For players deemed to be discretely showing exceptional talent, however, a Level 2 Coach is required.

Phase 3: The Learning to Play & Practice – ENCOURAGE. Age: Males 9-12/Females 8-11 years

The objective of this phase is to consolidate and further develop previous taught skills. Children should also learn the specific tennis skills in conjunction with the fundamental sports skills, from a range of other sports. These skills form the cornerstones of all player development. Players make the transition from orange to the green court to the yellow ball which is why the Phase is divided into two Stages, with the skills that need to be developed in the components becoming progressively more challenging.

Fundamental movement skills should also continue to be developed during this phase. If fundamental motor skill training is not developed between the ages of eight to eleven and nine to twelve for females and males respectively, a significant window of opportunity will be lost, compromising the ability of the young player to reach his/her full potential. Technically, strokes are grooved at a higher rhythm. Children should continue to participate in multi-sports & sports that complement tennis. Participants in the early stages should be encouraged to progress from the Red Court to the Orange Court and then in the later stages participants should progress accordingly to the Green Court and eventually be allocated a relevant WTN when they are ready for the yellow ball in the full court.

Level of Coach

The minimum standard coach required to work in the first stage of this phase is a Tennis Ireland Level 1 Coach. A Level 1 Coach has completed the Tennis Ireland Play Tennis Course and is trained to introduce tennis to beginner players of all ages, organising and delivering tennis sessions in a fun and effective learning environment in Schools, Parks & Clubs. For players approaching the Training to Train and 4th Phase of the Pathway, however, a Level 2 Coach is required.

A Level 2 coach has completed the Tennis Ireland Coaching beginner to intermediate players course and is qualified to work with and develop beginner to intermediate players of all ages. There may be some quality players who are 12 and under who may require a higher level of training from a Level 3 Coach. A Level 3 Coach has completed the Tennis Ireland Coaching Advanced Players Course and is qualified to work with and develop intermediate to advanced players of all ages..

Phase 4: The Training to Train Phase - ENHANCE. Age: Males 12-16/Females 11-15 years

The objective of this phase is to consolidate and further develop previous taught skills, and to address the two critical periods of physical development, namely the aerobic base and strength of the players. It should be noted that both aerobic and strength trainability is dependent on maturation levels, not chronological age. Players who miss this phase of training will not reach their full potential. The participants entering this stage will be allocated a relevant WTN and progress accordingly. The top eight ranked under 14 & 16 players will be allocated a relevant WTN.

Level of Coach

The minimum standard Coach required to work with the best players in this Phase is a Level 3 up to u14 and a Level 4 Coach up to u15/u16 years of age. A Level 4 Coach has completed the Coaching Performance Players Course and is qualified to work with and develop players at all levels.

A Level 3 Coach has completed The Tennis Ireland Coaching Advanced Players Course and is qualified to work with and develop intermediate to advanced players of all ages, and representative players up to 14 years of age.

A Level 2 Coach has completed the Tennis Ireland Coaching Beginner and Intermediate Players Course and is qualified to work with and develop beginner to intermediate players of all ages.

A Level 1 Coach has completed the Tennis Ireland Play Tennis Course and is qualified to work with beginner players of all ages.

Phase 5: The Training to Compete Phase – CULTIVATE. Age: Males 16-18/Females 15-17 years

The objective of this phase is to consolidate and further develop previous taught skills and to optimise fitness preparation, individual skills and performance. During this phase, high intensity individual and event-specific training is provided to players. Tennis skills are performed under a variety of competitive conditions during training. Special emphasis is placed on *optimum preparation* by modeling training and competition. The participants entering this stage will be allocated the relevant World Tennis Number of and progress accordingly.

The top eight ranked under 18 players will be allocated a relevant WTN

Level of Coach

The minimum standard Coach required to work with the best players in this Phase is a Level 4 Coach. A Level 4 Coach has completed the Coaching Performance Players Course and is qualified to work with and develop players at all levels.

Phase 6: The Training to Win Phase – PERFORM. Age: Males 18+/Females 17+ years

This phase of player preparation aims to maximise fitness preparation and individual skills, as well as performance. All of the player's components are now fully established and players are trained to peak for major competitions. Training is characterised by high intensity and relatively high volume with frequent periods of rest. The participants entering this stage will be allocated a relevant WTN and progress accordingly.

Level of Coach

The minimum standard Coach required to work with the best players in this Phase is a Level 4 Coach. A Level 4 Coach has completed the Coaching Performance Players Course and is qualified to work with and develop players at all levels.

Phase 7: The Active for Life Phase – PROMOTE

This final phase refers to the activities performed after a player has permanently retired from a high level of competition. The aim of this phase is to retain players for the ever growing multi-graded veteran's game, coaching, sport administration, officiating, TV or radio presenting, or any other sport-related career. The participants entering this stage will be allocated a relevant WTN appropriate to their current standard of play.

Level of Coach

Mentors and Life-skill Coaches are best suited to quality players entering this phase

Ten Components

The ten components of the model have been chosen to guide the development of the player holistically. Each one of these areas is critical to development, and although each one may be more critical at a certain point of development, each contributes to the overall development of players.

Please Note

The Level of Coach listed against each Phase of the Pathway is the ideal Level required for the job. We are aware, however, in certain parts of Ireland there are shortages of Coaches and the appropriate Level of Coach required is not always available. In this case, a suitably experienced coach as close as possible to the required level should be utilised.

The following is an outline of the ten different components that accompanies the seven stages of Player Development.

Player Development Components

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT
TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT
TACTICAL DEVELOPMENT
MENTAL DEVELOPMENT
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT
LIFESTYLE DEVELOPMENT
PARENTAL ROLE & SUPPORT
EDUCATION
COMPETITION
LEVEL OF COACH

The World Tennis Number

The World Tennis Number is a number assigned to tennis players of all levels which reflects their playing ability. The aim of the rating programme is to encourage more players of all ages, genders and abilities to enjoy more meaningful tennis experiences more often.

There is a clear focus on recreational players and providing lots of level-based matches and a more enjoyable experience for all.

The system will deliver a user-friendly and inclusive system that will determine a player's ability level and can be applied to recreational and competitive tournament matches worldwide and it's an online community that will connect tennis players all over the world.

What's the difference between Rating & Ranking?

Rating is a number assigned to a player that reflects their current level of playing ability across all competitions they play in including but not limited to internal club competitions, schools, parks, leagues, provincial, regional, national and international events.

A ranking reflects the relative positions of players on a ranking list within a well-defined circuit/tour (i.e. Juniors, Seniors, Professional, etc.) based on how far they have progressed in those tournaments.

The World Tennis Number is one scale, aimed at all players of any age, ability and gender.

One of the best things about tennis is that players of any age and gender can enjoy playing together if they are of similar standard.

Players from any country will be able to obtain a World Tennis Number either via their own National Association's website or directly via the World Tennis Number website / mobile application.

The World Tennis Number will be powered by a well-tested and objective mathematical calculation. It is based on the player's performance in matches relative to the strength of their opponent and the principles behind its calculation will be published for all players to see.

There will be a separate World Tennis Number for doubles play alongside the singles number.

The Rating System will update on a regular basis and will be calculated by assessing ones match performances. If new results for ones opponents are added or an opponent's World Tennis Number changes significantly then ones World Tennis Number may also change.

How does one get their initial number?

Adults can take a short self-assessment to determine an appropriate starting level. As they play their rating will become more accurate based on verified match results. Children will need to play matches to receive a World Tennis Number.

Remember

Simplicity and championing the concept of level-based play are the key objectives of the World Tennis Number.

Roger Geraghty - Director of Development