



TENNIS JAMAICA NEWSLETTER

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SPORTS INDUSTRY AS ECONOMIC RECOVERY VEHICLE

While the country has lost over 40,000 jobs since 2008 to the current economic crisis, Sports has proven to be one of the few recession proof industries across the globe. The global sporting industry spent US\$52 billion in 2009 on sporting activities, an increase of US\$2 billion over 2008.

Christine Gore, Tennis Jamaica's Hon. Secretary believes this gives Jamaica a golden opportunity and an important economic lifeline with its undisputed athlete ability.

Mrs. Gore, in a recent press briefing held at Tennis Jamaica's Headquarters, noted that the United States is the largest sports market in the world and that based on Jamaica's proximity we should be accessing that market much more effectively.

Tennis, the fastest growing traditional sport in the United States, offers competitions throughout the year with prizes as rich as US\$4 million for players.

Additionally, Jamaica is the recipient of millions of US dollars in scholarship money that goes begging each year as not enough students take up the sport of tennis. The University Scholarships offer full tuition, books and housing for Jamaican students who qualify to study overseas while playing tennis.

During the press briefing, held on February 12th, the audience was then guided through a description of each tour and the prize money that each type of tournament offered. The ITF Junior Tour, which is available to juniors between the ages 11 and 18, comprises 358 events in 118 countries. Mrs. Gore pointed out that Jamaica only hosts one ITF Junior event in July each year and she again encouraged Jamaica to take a serious look at tennis in developing its sports tourism product.

SCALED DOWN EQUIPMENT FOR BEGINNER TENNIS PLAYER

Stage 1 – Green Ball & Green Court



Green balls are low compression balls, around 25% slower than a normal ball



Green courts are the same size as a full court



Recommended for children aged 9 years and above and starter adults

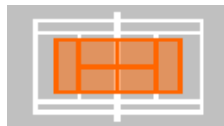


Racket sizes range from 63-68cm (25-27in) depending on size and strength of the player

Stage 2 – Orange Ball & Orange Court



Orange balls are low compression balls, around 50% slower than a normal ball.



Orange courts are 18m long and between 6.5m-8.23m (21-27ft) wide

Net height: 80-91cm (31.5-36in) [Setting up Orange size court.](#)



Recommended for children aged 7 years and above and starter adults

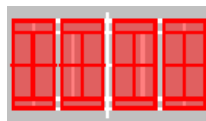


Racket sizes range from 58-63cm (23-25in) depending on size and strength of the player

Stage 3 – Red Ball & Red Court



Red Balls are either sponge or felt. They are larger and slower than a normal ball.



Red courts are 11m (36ft) long and 5-6m (16-19ft) wide. Net height should be approx 80cm (31.5 inches). Portable nets or tape can be used. [Setting up a Red size Court.](#)



Recommended for children aged 4-8 years and starter adults.



Racket sizes range from 41-58cm (16-23in) depending on size and strength of the player.

After players progress through these stages they are ready to play with a normal ITF approved tennis ball on a full size tennis court.

THE EFFECT OF EQUIPMENT SCALING ON BEGINNER TENNIS PLAYER LEARNING AND PERFORMANCE

Research summary

Background:

A common recommendation within junior sports is for the equipment to be scaled (modified) to the needs of children. The reasons for modification are usually twofold: first to enhance the acquisition of skills; and second to increase fun/motivation, in turn maximising the prospects of continued participation in the sport. Tennis Australia launched the Hot Shots tennis program with a view to achieving those objectives, and recently commissioned research to evaluate the efficacy of scaled equipment among children new to the sport.

Aim:

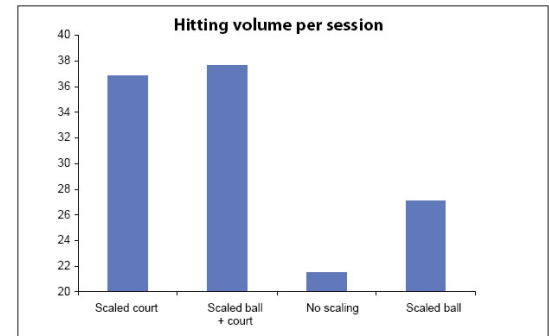
To examine the effectiveness of equipment scaling (tennis ball compression and court size), as used in the Hot Shots tennis program, on the learning and enjoyment of young beginner tennis players.

Participants:

Primary school-aged boys and girls from Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School with limited to no previous tennis playing experience participated voluntarily and with parental consent. The children were involved in seven sessions that utilised Hot Shots equipment/activities and that were organised by Tennis Australia qualified coaches.

Findings:

- Children who practised under scaled or modified conditions – as in Hot Shots – were provided with more opportunities to play (i.e. hit more balls) than those children who participated under adult conditions (see Figure below).



- With more opportunities to play, these children experienced more success (i.e. hit more balls in) and also rated their tennis experience as more enjoyable.

- In other words, the research illustrated that MODIFIED COURTS / BALLS (as in Hot Shots) = MORE OPPORTUNITIES + MORE SUCCESS + MORE FUN.

(Taken from www.tennisplayandstay.com website)



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**MEET SICQUENA SINCLAIR
Jamaica's 2009 #1 Ranked 18 &
Under Junior Player (Girls)**

I am Sicquena Sinclair; I am from Rockfort, Kingston Jamaica. I began playing tennis at the age of 8, and I am now 16 years old. When I was first introduced to tennis I immediately developed a love for the sport. The very first time I played on a tennis court with Mr. Norman Wattkis and Mr. Phil Palmer at the Pegasus Hotel I knew that I wanted to pursue it further. After awhile I started playing tennis with Mr. Douglas Burke (Jamaica's National Tennis Coach) which then gave me the opportunity to be on scholarship with The Scholarship Fund.

Being on the Scholarship Fund has been a fabulous opportunity. It allows me the privilege of being an online student at Kaplan high school right here at the tennis centre through KBC Learning Centre. My schedule is very similar to that of players at international tennis academies. Since my school is located at Tennis Jamaica I am able to practice before and after school. One may say that this is quite tiring and taxing physically. However it has taught me to better manage my time and always maintain an attitude for work.

I am Jamaica's under 18 number 1 player for girls and I am a former number 2 player for the Junior Fed Cup Team. My short term goal is to play ITF tournaments in the Caribbean region and make it to the top 500 in the world by the end of this year. My long term goal is to get a full scholarship so that I can make it to a top college in the States, where I hope to continue playing tennis professionally, while perusing a degree in languages.

I was recently invited to the national honor society at Kaplan High School because of my GPA (grade point average) that is above 3.0. This requires me to do community service. So I have decided to start a tennis program in my old school, Calabar Primary and Junior High to introduce the sport to children who have never played and hopefully help in discovering and developing a future tennis star. This is just my way of helping with the spread and awareness of the sport I love and play, Tennis.



IS YOUR KID A PRODIGY?

Everyone wants to be the parent of the next Roger Federer. Almost no one is. Here's how to take an honest look at your child's potential.

- By Rick Macci

All parents think their children are gifted. It's easy to see greatness in the child you love. I can't count how many e-mails and videos I've received over the years from parents who think their child is the next great player because he can hit a ball over the net 10 times in a row. For a 5-year-old, this is no small accomplishment. But does it indicate a future as a pro? To be blunt, no. Whether your child can rally for 10, 20 even 30 strokes, he or she is almost certainly not a tennis prodigy – the odds are slim.

Now for the good news: Your child doesn't need to be a prodigy. Kids mature, both mentally and physically, at different ages. Some are genetically predisposed to athletics; some aren't. Some are precocious and achieve early success; others bloom later in life. History shows that a child who is best in his or her age group isn't guaranteed a career on tour. Look at Tommy Ho, a student of mine and possibly the best junior boy the game ever had. Unfortunately, Tommy couldn't stay healthy or adapt to pro game. James Blake, who wasn't picked to be a top pro when he went to Harvard University, has become a Top 10 player. The best advice I can give parents is to look at the big picture. Rather than tally up your daughter's win and losses, encourage her to develop great techniques that can evolve into world-class weapons. Junior development is about tomorrow, not today.

It's difficult for parents to honestly assess the abilities of their children. But know one thing: It's not much easier for professionals. No one has a crystal ball, and I've been surprised in the past, too. Here are some guidelines for evaluating your child's abilities so you can make choices that will aid his or her development and, most important, make tennis fun.

HEIGHT

A child should learn to do everything and have a complete game, but you can help matters by telling you child's instructor about your family genes. Is your family full of 6-footers, or more modestly built folks? You and your child's coach need to think about how your kid will play at age 18, not now. You want your children to grow into a style of play that suits them.

EYES

The easiest trait to spot is hand-eye coordination. You can see it when a child hits an object, like a balloon, or when he tracks a tennis ball and hits it over the net. But a parent shouldn't book tickets to Wimbledon just because little Jimmy can hit a dozen balls in a row. This simply means he has good hand-eye coordination, enthusiasm, and a passion to achieve a task.

BALANCE AND COORDINATION

If you look at the top players, their upper bodies almost always remain still and erect. Don't pay attention to how hard they hit the ball; watch how balanced they remain shot after shot. The more control a child has over his or her body, the more control he or she will have over a tennis

ball. If your child floats around the court with a straight upper body, it's a gift.

FEET

Tennis is a movement sport. If a kid can start and stop on a dime and position himself to take a cut at the ball – well, that's sport. Can your child move his or her feet in response to a ball that spins or changes direction or bounces high? While you often see hand-eye coordination at an early age, foot-eye coordination takes longer to develop and is more difficult to spot with any degree of accuracy. As children get older and the game becomes faster, however, their facility for footwork will become apparent.

HEAD

A lot of kids succeed in 12-and-under events for one reason: They're more mature than their opponents. They concentrate better, control their tempers, and ignore disturbances. That's going to have an impact on winning and losing. But don't worry if your child isn't as mature as some others. Neither scenario is necessarily better than the other in the long term.

HEART

Having a burning desire to compete, run, and work hard is essential. In today's global game, it takes an incredible fighting spirit to be a world-class player. The child has to have 100 percent commitment to discovering how good he or she can be. This determination can be learned, too: The best thing you can teach your kid off the court is not to make excuses. Just don't mistake your desire for your child's desire.

HANDS

Some children have more touch than others. You can tell if your kid has soft hands if you can barely hear the ball on the strings, or if a child tries a drop shot and it lands in the net because her hands are like cotton. Lindsay Davenport had great feel; Jennifer Capriati was an excellent ball-striker, but she had hard hands. Both types can succeed. It's good to have a sense of where your child stands early on so a professional can take the proper approach to development.

(Rick Macci has coached Andy Roddick, Jennifer Capriati and Venus & Serena Williams) – (Taken from Tennis.Com Magazine)

WHAT'S HAPPENING!!!!!!

**February / March 2010
Saturday Classes at Tennis Jamaica
12:00noon – 1:00pm & 1:00pm – 2:00pm
\$600 per session.**

Tennis Jamaica Annual General Meeting Thursday, February 25, 2010 at 5:00pm at the Overseas Examination Commission – 2A Piccadilly Road, Kingston 5

**February 27 & 28
Guardian Life Tournament – Liguanea Club**

**World Junior Tennis (14 & Under Team Competition)
March 29, 2010 - Trinidad**

**Junior Fed Cup & Junior Davis Cup
(16 & Under Team Competition)
April 12 – 18, 2010 – El Salvador**

Keep checking www.tennisjamaica.com for updated Calendar of Events!