Q: What about the non-dominant hand on the Forehand Volley?

A: On forehand volleys players want to keep the dominant and non-dominant hands together (about shoulder width apart).

Q: Any suggestions on keeping young players that advance to net on orange ball but are hesitant to continue this when they move to green as the get lobbed excessively, have difficulty winning points and don’t want to do it anymore? Then it’s difficult to get them moving forward again when they get taller, bigger and better and move to yellow.

A: Great question and often something you see in development. One area that helps is to keep highlighting video of players they like coming forwards to the net, taking swing volleys and volley. Often when they see someone they admire doing it, it gives them confidence to try it. Keep emphasizing tennis is a long journey and although children at this age are figuring out how to compete and win/lose, a growth mindset approach is a must by emphasizing the skill consistently and positively reinforcing/rewarding the effort of coming forward.

Q: Would you recommend any beginner to start playing with slice (grip close to continental) so they can learn all the skills you mentioned on volleys and especially get comfortable with the continental grip (or close to it)?

A: Yes, practicing slices is a great way to learn the continental grip. It is good to practice some slices, then hit some volleys to allow players to understand the correct grip for volleys and also to understand that they want to put a little underspin on volleys, especially low volleys.

Q: What make the serve more consistent for junior players?

A: Adding racquet head speed and spin will help with the overall consistency of the serve. Also, giving yourself big targets that aren’t close to the lines will give the player
more margin for error. Serves into your opponent's body is very effective and high percentage, but remember to keep working on accuracy and hitting different spots. The more accurate the player gets, the more consistent the player's serve will become.

Q: What role does the serve toss play?

A: A consistent toss is critical to keep the rhythm of the serve consistent, and to not give away clues to your opponent on where the serve is going. If a player can hit different locations off of the same toss, this is ideal. Also a consistent, proper toss will help with the shoulder tilt and aid in the weight being loaded on the back leg in the loading stage to then help the player explode up towards the ball through the acceleration phase.

Q: Hello, any suggestions on how to improve rhythm in serves?

A: A suggestion is to start with the weight on the front foot. Then rock back, toss and bring the racquet up at the same time to keep things synchronized.

Q: What’s your recommended number of practice serves per day, per week, or in advance of a tournament?

A: In preparing for tournaments, not less than 100 a day, but not more than 150-200. Also, as mentioned, I would recommend spreading them out over the course of the practices.

Q: What should be the main focus while teaching younger players the serve?

A: Learning the correct grip, learning to toss with the weight on the back leg to load well, learning to swing up through the ball are important keys to having a good serve.

Q: I have a student who consistently opens her shoulders up on her serve. What sort of drills should she be doing now and when we get back on court?

A: Watching video of Serena Williams, Madison Keys or Roger Federer’s serves will provide a good visual of turning and looking over the toss arm shoulder. Practicing shadow serves with the emphasis on looking over the toss arm shoulder for as long as possible may help to exaggerate keeping her shoulders turned longer like Serena, Madison or Roger. Also focus on tucking in the toss arm elbow rather than letting the toss arm go behind the body at contact.
Q: After being out for 4+ weeks so far (could be another few weeks before we get back on court), how long does it typically take for young juniors (14 year old) to get back to the level that they were at once they start playing? Assuming they are doing their assigned fitness routines and their mental routines, how long should they wait before playing competitively (nationals, super nationals, etc.)?

A: This will be influenced by the amount of and the intensity of physical activity that they have been doing throughout the past few months. If a player has been working at a high level of volume and intensity there return to "normal Levels" will occur much quicker than a player that has not. Either way the progression should be slow beginning with short practices at love volume and intensity and gradually increasing both. Players will need to ensure adherence to both prehab and post-match practice routines to ensure a healthy and safe return to competition.

Q: A player has breathing induced panic attacks related to asthma, what breathing/meditation skills can we give him/her that they can use in 15-30 seconds?

A: From your description it sounds like a physician may have diagnosed this athlete but without knowing more there could be many reasons for the condition which makes it difficult to offer specific advice. With that said, having the athlete evaluated by qualified medical professional would be my first recommendation. Additionally, mindfulness practice is a well know relaxation technique that may be helpful but should be used at the direction of the athletes medical team.

Q: How much emphasis should we put on balance when it comes to fitness? E.g. cardio, stretching, mobility, etc.

A: Balance is very important to develop the overall athlete. Tennis is both a long distance sport and a sprinting sport therefore we need to work on all fundamental athletic skills alongside tennis. Mobility in the early ages is important to improve range of motion and flexibility becomes increasingly important through the growth spurt and into adulthood. Balance is an extremely important physical quality for a tennis player to have. One of the goals of movement is trying to maintain balance and posture as much as possible to produce the best shot possible. Challenging balance both on
court in training sessions as well as off the court should be a big emphasis to help in shot production.

**Q: Fitness - How much long distance running do you generally incorporate with this age group? And how long of a distance on a 'distance running' training day?**

A: In childhood and pre-puberty, depending on how much tennis they are getting, there is usually a lower priority on their endurance because they are already filling that bucket by playing a lot of tennis. If this is the case then the priority should be on fundamental athletic skills such as Agility, Balance, Coordination, and Speed. It is important to monitor their growth and development as the adolescent growth spurt is a significant time period in a young person's life. If the load is too great for the body to manage which happens during this period, then the chances of injuries can occur.

**Q: I coached some in the nationals, and found a lot of girls let overheads drop to a swing volley, what’s your take on letting it drop? I had them continue practicing overheads each morning.**

A: Definitely continue to encourage the players to hit overheads when they are moving back for a lob and to hit swinging volleys when moving forward to a lob. The more they practice their overheads, the more confidence they will gain to use it in matches.

**Q: How many hours should a 10 year old girl great athlete practice tennis and fitness a week in normal times?**

A: We recommend for a 10 year old they can train anywhere between 2-5 times a week, 30 mins to 90 mins a day with 30 minutes of Athletic Development / multisport activity a day. This is dependent on many factors such as age, developmental stage, the child's interest and motivation to name a few. It is important to focus on fundamental movement and athletic skills alongside their tennis development.

**Q: How important is an American Twist 2nd serve for WTA players? I see a lot of half topspin/half slice 2nd serves but not a lot of kickers.**

A: Players with good serve techniques like Serena Williams or Madison Keys have the options to hit all types of serves, including the kick serve. It is beneficial to have the option to hit all types of serves. The main thing to keep in mind is tossing above the
head, staying sideways longer and brushing the racquet to the side to make the ball jump off the court. The danger for younger players as they learn the kick serve is that they may toss the ball too far behind them and hurt their backs. The kick comes from brushing the ball to the side vs tossing behind your body.

**Q:** What should be prioritized regarding athletic development can you have limited time and space for indoor programs?

**A:** Time is often our biggest constraint. Depending on the age of the athlete you are working with, I would focus on the ABCS in childhood, Agility, Balance, Coordination and Speed. Soon after the major growth spurt there should be a shift to working on strength and power to optimize their accelerated period of physical development.

**Q:** Do you recommend teaching baseline two handed backhand or teach both and at what age?

**A:** As long as the player is playing with the right sized racquet for their size and strength then they can learn either a one or two handed backhand. Allow the player to try both styles and see which one they like better. If they don't have a preference it would be good to have a two handed topspin and a one handed slice. They can begin to learn these skills at any age as long as the racquet, ball and court are sized correctly for their age and stage.

**Q:** The type of spin you put on a volley, slice/flat. I don't see that emphasized like groundstrokes are. Should it be?

**A:** If a player is using a continental grip on the traditional volley (which is a parameter for the volley) then underspin will be produced naturally. This is one of the great advantages of the continental grip when volleying (as well as the fact that you do not need to change grip between FH and backhand as the grip remains the same).

**Q:** Would you introduce mental skill lessons in high performance lessons?

**A:** Ideally I prefer to introduce new skills off court but recognize we sometimes need to work within our existing environment. In a HP setting the athlete may already be using mental skills (intentionally or unintentionally) and is likely aware of the idea of between point routines. I think it is a matter of helping the athlete to become aware of their practice habits and how they transfer to competition. Within the lesson and when
appropriate without interrupting the flow of the lesson reminding the athlete to take
time between drills/points would reinforce the use of routines during match play and
allow for skill development through the practical application of the skill.

Q: Do you think young athletes should play one sport only?

A: There are many physical, cognitive, emotional and social benefits to playing
multiple sports. Tennis is a unique sport in that you get to work on many fundamental
movement skills by playing the sport. Like with anything, moderating and modifying
the amount we do one thing especially from an early age is important to the overall
physical and mental health and well-being of the individual. If a player does not play
multiple sports, then the coach can take a multi-sport approach to their tennis
program in what they do in the warm-ups and the Athletic Development (fitness)
sessions that they may offer.

Q: How important are 2-on-1 drills for high performance players? They’re
unrealistic but physically demanding and good for keeping the rally going and
creating angles.

A: 2-on-1 drills are very important. Throughout this drill, not only players can work on
being physical, they can also engage themselves in different baseline patterns that
they will execute during matches, especially the player on the one side while the other
two players cooperate to execute the drill correctly. Additionally, players can work on
everything related to their net game while doing 2 players up and 1 player back or 1
up and 2 back.

Q: What % of drills should be hand fed vs. racket fed?

A: It is important to remember that hand and racket feeding are tools that can be used
to improve an area of the player’s game. Therefore, there is not a exact percentage
between the two. What I would suggest is to use hand feeding as needed to isolate a
stroke or movement pattern in which a player needs to work on. An example can be
two drills for 15 minutes doing hand feeding while working on something specific, and
then progressing to racket feeding to challenge the player more while performing the
same drill or a different drill that will allow the player to execute what was worked
while doing hand feeding.