Q: Can I have an example of how the kids should do journal and tennis sessions since they have no access to a court?

A: I would encourage players to use the blank pages in their Player Development journal at this time or start a new journal. There are several topics that players can be journaling about. For example, you could ask them to journal about their strengths as a tennis player. You could also use the Compete Like a Champion character qualities as a guide for developing journaling questions for athletes. For example, you could ask athletes to describe how they show each of the character qualities. Finally, you could ask athletes to journal about their goals for each day, something that they’re grateful for, and their plan (this is in line with daily mental practice).

Q: Regarding visualization, how often do you do and how detailed should you be? What is the length of each session?

A: With visualization, the more detailed you are, the more effective visualizing will be. I would suggest practicing visualizing 3-5 times per week. If athletes are new to visualizing, this practice can be rather short (2-5 minutes at a time). The focus should be on their ability to see as much detail in what they are doing as possible. For example, if they are visualizing hitting forehands, can they clearly see the ball traveling toward them, can they feel the court surface under their feet as they move toward the ball, can they feel the movement of their bodies as they hit the forehand, and can see the ball traveling where they want it to go after contact?

Q: What can I do as a coach to boost one of my player’s, who’s a middle school student with little confidence, low self-esteem? And her mother on the side lines making comments, like how weak her forehand is, this breaks my heart and want to do something better to help my student.
A: If you are unable to talk with the parent directly about how her comments affect the player, then you can help the player to cope with the stress she is experiencing (from her mother and competing). Help the player focus on the things she can control (her movement, game plan, energy) and help her recognize that she can’t always change things that are uncontrollable (her mother’s actions, her opponent, the weather). Even off court, she can write out controllable and uncontrollable related to her daily life and learn skills for controlling the controllable.

Q: Confidence: Which comes first, wins or confidence? Meaning it's tough to have confidence when losing that's why it's very important to not always play up.

A: One of the biggest confidence builders is past performance accomplishments. However, it is also important to define with athletes what those performance accomplishments mean. For example, if good performance is only defined by winning, then an athlete may not have much confidence, especially if they lose often. However, if you can reframe performance accomplishments to more controllable, process-based things (e.g., executing a game plan, moving well), then kids can draw confidence from a performance even if they don’t win.

Q: In regards to Jose's four non-negotiables, how would you suggest handling a 9-10 year old who is talented but is motivationally on the fence?

A: At this stage of growth and development, it is important that they have fun, while understanding what the 4 non-negotiables mean. At this age, Effort may simply translate to running for every ball. Engagement could be making sure you are looking your coaches in the eye when they are talking and are being challenged to think and answer questions. Respect for themselves, coaches and parents, can be looked at how well they do the first two. 9-10 year olds are in a stage of figuring out what they want to do, I try to make sure they are learning skills in a fun, challenging environment that may spark their motivation further.

Q: How do you convince parents that specializing too early is negative for long term development?

A: I’m not sure you have to convince them it’s negative rather than see the benefits of doing other activities that will help them become a more diverse tennis playing athlete. Specializing, although not encouraged, if done in a controlled environment
where the athlete is getting diverse experiences physically, cognitively, and socially can work, however, it is when intense training at too early of an age with high repetition of the same motions according to the research is where the likelihood of burn out and/or injury can occur.

Q: Jose how much hardcourt tennis did you and other Spanish greats like Bruguera, Moya Ferrero and Nadal play?

A: At earlier stages, the players you mentioned and myself played more on red clay because that is the predominant and most widely available court surface in Spain. However, as we continued progressing and wanting to continue getting better in different facets of the game, we did not shy away from playing the important hard court segments that the tennis tour would provide, including pre US Open tournaments.

Q: How did Coach Higueras plan his training improvement journey? Which of those values and specific drills translated to your coaching philosophy? What drills were staples in his coaching and career?

A: As I mentioned during the webinar, I would surround myself with the Lavers and Rosewalls of the time and identify new things that I could add to my training routines that would help me to continue getting better as a tennis player. We would do many 2 and 1 drills with three players on court, and we would engage ourselves in many different movement pattern drills that until today I continue to use. Also, trying to get better constantly and becoming as complete as possible is a concept that has been translated to my coaching philosophy.

Q: Will hitting on a wall or garage help out?

A: Absolutely, hitting against a wall will allow the player to get more repetitions in an unconstructive training environment, and allow the player to figure out things on his/her own.

Q: What are your teaching and coaching guidelines for the second serve? Have they changed/evolved recently?

A: I think that while equipment and stroke analysis continue to evolve, the main concepts of the serve remain the same. In regards to a brief guideline for the second
serve, I would say start with a good continental grip and then progressively work on all of the key positions of the serve to eventually connect them all together. I would also pay attention to having a good unit turn, leg drive, and finally, keeping your head up after making contact with the ball.

Q: What approach do you take when your non-negotiables are violated? (E.g. discipline them, talk to them, or sit them out)

A: The first thing I do is to clarify beforehand what the non-negotiables are, and if the players agree to follow them, then we start working together. If a particular player starts going away from the non-negotiables, I ask questions first to see if the player can figure out how to turn things around on his/her own, then I talk to them with the appropriate tone and timing, and lastly, we can pause the practice and resume it the next day.

Q: When with a beginner player, what’s more important to you the feet or hands?

A: Both aspects are important, but when starting with a beginner, I would first start with the hands, and then progressively start introducing the feet.

Q: What’s the best way to implement a strength and conditioning program at a new academy?

A: It depends on the size of your academy and what is available at your facility. Good dynamic warm up, athletic development drills, cool down and injury prevention programs are always easy to add to your program and good start.

Q: Are the exercises you recommended for Juniors also? I’m talking about 12u players.

A: Yes, those exercises are great for any ages. It may need to adjust volume of each exercise...maybe start with just 1 set of 8-10 reps of each exercise. What your athletes can tolerate, means maintain good techniques will be a good volume for them.

Q: I am having my students (ages 10-16yo) do three tennis specific TABATA's daily, is that a good thing? Do you like Professor Tabata's system?

A: High intensity intervals may work well with tennis players. You just need to be careful about exercise choices. Some exercises may put unnecessary stress on
sensitive joints for tennis athletes, such as wrists, elbows, and shoulders. Also, close attention and supervision are important for your age group. If any of your players are doing poor techniques of exercises, please stop and slow down and teach correct technique first.

**Q:** Should the kids stay with their sleeping schedule? Does sleep later and get up later affect their body?

**A:** Maintaining a normal sleep pattern is definitely beneficial for everyone, especially kids. This will help the body maintain a sleep cycle that coincides with the circadian rhythms, rather than forcing it to adjust to a new sleep-wake cycle. Kids should aim for 8-10 hours of uninterrupted sleep each night.

**Q:** As a vegetarian, what are good foods for me to get zinc?

**A:** Good sources of zinc for a vegetarian include legumes, whole grains, and nuts.

**Q:** Are Probiotic supplements (pills) an adequate source?

**A:** I am a firm believer in the food first method, which means trying to get all of your macro and micronutrients from whole foods. Food sources of probiotics include yogurt, kefir, miso, tempeh, sauerkraut, and kimchi. If there is a nutrient that you are unable to get an adequate amount of through the diet, supplements are an insurance policy. There are many probiotic supplements on the market, and not all are created equal. If you do need a supplement, try to choose one that is NSF Certified for Sport or Informed-Sport Certified to help ensure that it is as low-risk as possible. Klean Athlete offers one NSF Certified for Sport supplement option: [https://www.kleanathlete.com/klean-probiotic-trade.html](https://www.kleanathlete.com/klean-probiotic-trade.html).

**Q:** For athletes, what is your take on the ketogenic diet? If an athlete were to follow this protocol, would he or she be carb deficient?

**A:** As you’ve alluded to, the ketogenic diet is a high fat, low carb, low protein diet. In fact, it’s a 4:1 ratio of fat to carbs and protein. Carbohydrates are the body’s preferred source of energy because they are fast energy! And physical activity demands energy, with the average athlete needing 30-60 grams of carbohydrate per hour of activity. Drastically reducing carbohydrate intake can decrease reaction time, increase sluggishness, and increase irritability. I strongly believe that all foods fit in balance,
variety, and moderation, and that there is no need for an athlete to follow the ketogenic diet.

Q: How many calories of fat should you have a day?

A: I can't specify the amount of fat any individual should be getting without thoroughly examining all of the factors that influence an individual's dietary needs. These factors include height, weight, age, sex, activity level, and goals. To best answer your question, I would reference the Recommended Daily Allowance for fat which is 20-35% of daily calories.

Q: What is your take on protein shakes for teenage high performance players?

A: It is important to get adequate protein and carbohydrates within 30 minutes of stopping exercise. This can be achieved by eating either a meal or a snack. If a meal isn't right around the corner, protein shakes can be an easy and shelf-stable option to ensure your body is getting the nutrients it needs to build muscle and replenish energy. If you choose to use a supplement, try to choose one that is NSF Certified for Sport or Informed-Sport Certified to help ensure that it is as low-risk as possible.

Q: How do plant based athletes make sure they have good nutrition?

A: While nutritional deficiencies are possible with a plant-based diet, eating a wholesome diet rich in whole grains, beans, legumes, soy products, nuts, seeds, and if desired, dairy and eggs can help prevent nutritional deficiencies. Some of the nutrients to pay more attention to include calcium, iron, vitamin D, and B vitamins, so try to include rich sources of these nutrients daily. Vitamin B12 is only found in animal products, so a supplement is necessary is following a vegan diet. It's also important that you don't neglect protein. Adhering to a plant-based diet increases daily protein needs by approximately 10%.

Q: If your match starts at 8 am, what do you eat and what time do you eat?

A: What and how much to each is dependent on the amount of time the athlete has between waking and playing, as well as their digestive system. If there is less than an hour, focus on carbohydrates. Some options include fruit, juice, cereal, granola bars, and sports drinks. If there is more than an hour, focus on a more substantial breakfast that includes a balance of carbohydrates, proteins, and fats. Some options include a
breakfast sandwich (bread + eggs + cheese + veggies), a Greek yogurt parfait (Greek yogurt + fruit + granola + nuts), a peanut butter & jelly sandwich, and a smoothie with a protein bar.

Q: For college athletes, it is difficult to get 8 hours of sleep, as coaches, what are a few talking points we can give to encourage these athletes to get more sleep?

A: Sleep is proven to decrease fatigue, increase energy, enhance focus at match time, and accelerate post-match recovery time. Here are some tips to share with your athletes: (1) Make lists to keep you organized on match day so you don’t forget anything. (2) Before bed, breathe deeply, in through your nose and into your belly for 5 minutes to calm your mind and lower your heart rate. (3) While breathing, visualize great match day performance. (4) Avoid bright light in the evening (that includes the light from cellphones, laptops, etc.); it can inhibit melatonin production by sending alerting signals to the brain. (5) Keep your room cool, at about 65°F. Body temperature is tied to your sleep cycle, so if you’re too hot it can interfere with that cycle causing restlessness. (6) Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and high sugar, high fat, or spicy foods before bed.