Investing in Yourself as a Coach with Coach Harry Jadun and Jessica Battaglia

(00:00):
J: Welcome to compete like a champion. You're here with Dr. Larry Lauer, mental skills specialist, and coach Johnny Parkes with USTA Player Development. Today, we've got a couple special guests here in the podcast to talk about investing in yourself. We have Jessica Battaglia, who's the senior manager of PD events and programming and Harry Jadun, who was one of our fellows of the program that we're about to get into. Thanks for joining us.

(00:26):
JB: Thanks for having me.

(00:27):
H: Thanks a bunch for having us.

(00:28):
J: Yeah, this is awesome. So Jessica, I want to start with you. You're really the leading force in helping to develop this fellowship program that Player Development puts on. Would you maybe give us some insight into what the program is, what it's designed for, and why people really should think about signing up?

(00:44):
JB: Sure, absolutely. The program started back in 2014. It was a one person fellowship and over the years it's grown and expanded and now we have up to six fellows. Ideally the opportunity is structured to provide tennis coaches, experiential learning experiences here with PD, focusing specifically in the field of professional tennis coaching. During their time the fellows are immersed within the culture of Player Development and get paired with a national coach that really serves as a mentor during their fellowship experience.

(01:13):
L: And Jess, these coaches, it's not, it doesn't just happen at the campus. They actually travel with the national coaches and have a full experience, right, and with players.

(01:21):
JB: Absolutely. So we invite them in for the first three weeks on campus. We really want them to be immersed in the culture. Like I said, get an opportunity to interact with a couple of coaches and then with that, really hone in on where their interests lie and with that, then get paired with that coach and then spend the summer basically shadowing and traveling with those coaches and the players that they're working with. So could be at another training center, could be tournaments across the country. Uh, Harry has had an opportunity to travel international. He went to Canada and Mexico, if I recall correctly. So the sky's the limit really for the summer.

(01:56):
L: So Jess, how many coaches would you say or fellows have gone through this program? We're just shy of about 20. Again, started in 2014. We started with one, developed into three, and then we've had two.
I'm really looking for an ideal candidate, so the numbers have bounced around a bit. Excitingly, the success that we've had with the fellowship program has also allowed us to expand into strength and conditioning as well as performance analytics. So not now just strictly within coaching.

(02:21):

J: So could you give an example of like prerequisites or the type of candidate that you're looking for?

(02:27):

JB: Sure. So an ideal candidate is a former varsity tennis player, somebody that's really knowledgeable within the sport of tennis, understands the game of tennis, recently removed from undergraduate or graduate studies. We want them to be about five years removed or less. And then also really, really interested in pursuing full time profession in coaching.

(02:47):

L: So Harry, you know, you went through this program and you said you thought it was 2017. Time passes, right? And how did you, how'd you learn about this fellowship program and what interested you in getting involved in the program?

(03:01):

H: So I learned about the program, I was honestly, I was a volunteer assistant coach at Michigan State at the time and I was kind of looking for something to do. I think I was on either the ITA classifieds or the USTA job website and I was seeing a lot of different things, a lot of different positions and then I saw fellowship in professional coaching and I just, I looked at the qualifications. It didn't say too much, it just said, Hey, we're looking for candidates who recently graduated looking to get into the profession of coaching. And really I thought it would just kind of be some type of internship where you're not doing too much, and it was actually crazy how everything worked out because I was volunteering with Michigan state and we had a trip and we were going down to Orlando for spring break and coach Orlando, our head coach. Yeah, coach Orlando in Orlando. That's kinda confusing. Our head coach, coach Orlando, he knew some people, he obviously knew you, Dr. Larry from your time at Michigan State. He knew some other people in the organization and he said, hey Harry, we're going to be practicing at the national campus. Why don't you go like kind of poke around and meet with some people and see I guess what this job is and if it's kind of what's advertised on the website, I think it'd be a great opportunity for you. And that's kind of what happened. I went down to Orlando and the staff of Orlando was a little bit different at the time. I met with Stephen Amritraj, who was kinda directing the program and it was an in person interview, which I was super blessed to get and kind of met with him and he ran down what it was going to be. And it was, it was a great experience. And at the same time I was getting a tour of the national campus and it was brand new at the time and unlike anything I had ever seen, especially in the United States. So that's kinda how I found out about it. And then kind of went through the whole interview process, application process and was lucky enough to get the job I guess.

(04:40):

L: Yeah. And that's great. And I guess what I want to get at Harry, cause you were at Michigan state and I was there before so I knew you as a player and then you became a volunteer coach. But why, why come to this fellowship program? What was it that you were looking for?
H: So, so I essentially, my backstory in tennis is that I was, as a junior, I wasn’t the most spectacular player. I essentially got a walk on spot at Michigan State and I hadn’t done much high level training. I was very local, I just hit with people in my area. I had a coach I worked with and my big thing as I went through college, cause I really wanted to see what the next level was about. And I had a pretty good career, ended up being an all American in doubles but didn't pursue anything on the pro tour. And I just kept on hearing from people, Hey, this is what the pros are doing, this is what the pros are doing. You know? And for me there was kind of, I guess I just wanted to see, Hey, what are the pros doing, you know. In this fellowship, when I first saw it I was like, no way are they going to let a guy like me who just graduated super young guy interact with professional tennis players. You know guys who are, I mean their job and their living is to make money. They don't want a guy like me messing that all up. But no, I think that was the biggest intrigue to it was, Hey, I get to be at the home of American tennis. I get to be around some of the brightest tennis minds, both on the court and off the court and just try and take as much in as possible because opportunities like this, especially when you get into college coaching, which is what I wanted to do, once you’re a college coach, you kind of get on that Island cause everybody is, everybody’s very sheltered with their information cause it's a competitive environment and people don't share as much. And this was a real good opportunity for me to, I guess I would approach coaches on campus and I was just a fellow. I wasn’t competition to them. So their walls were immediately, their guard was down and I’d say, Hey, why are we doing this drill? And they would be super awesome and just say, Hey, we're trying to work on this and this is the reason we're doing the drill. And so really just you talk about investing in yourself. And I felt like, for me, just the three months I was involved in the fellowship, or two and a half, it was an unbelievable opportunity for me to invest in myself. And I took as many notes as possible and I still have them on my computer and I can go back to them for inspiration or if I'm having trouble with something to this day. So it was a very valuable experience for me. Probably one of the best experiences and most defining experiences in my coaching career.

J: And that's, I think there's a lot of people around the country that now know about the fellowship program. They're probably very envious that maybe they didn't have the opportunity to go through it, but I want to, I want to kick it back to Jessica here. What stood out about Harry in his application process for you and the team to decide on bringing him in for the fellowship.

JB: I think Harry had a really special place in our hearts after watching a video that came along with his application. And that video really helped shed a light on who he is as a person, not even as a coach, but everything we saw in that video is exactly who he was when he was with us on campus or on the road during that fellowship experience. I mean, he puts his heart and soul into everything. He's constantly smiling. He's such a gregarious person. Um, it's just contagious. Like you, you're just a happier person when you're around him. And so we really, we really wanted to see that embodied through our fellowship program and give him a chance to explore more through the world of Player Development.

L: The fellows themselves, they make the program, right? I mean, we support and we provide information and the opportunity, but the quality of the person coming in is the biggest difference, I think.
(08:01):

JB: Absolutely. And, and the experience themselves is what they make of it. And I think Harry capitalized and optimized every experience or opportunity he could have had during those 12 weeks. Um, you know, spending time after the nine to five day maybe it was over and chatting with Brad Stein over dinner and just, you know, picking the brains of whomever it may have been, you know, wherever his interests really were lying at that time or what he wanted to gain from the program, so I mean the fellowship program's for sure what the fellows make of it themselves.

(08:31):

H: Can I add on to that? And one of the things that I definitely learned from the fellowship is, yes, it was phenomenal. The USTA puts you on the campus and like Jessica said, it's exactly what you're going to make of it. And the way I looked at it is, Hey, the onus is on me to take as much as I can from this experience because you got, I mean Brad who was obviously awesome with me, but his full time job and he's evaluated on how he produces and develops his players and Dr. Larry, you're, you're evaluated on how you promote good outcomes mentally for the players. So it's just, everybody on campus has a full time job. And you have to find ways to make it, make their job easier, and then also find ways to kind of insert yourself, and just kind of pick their brains with a couple of questions while also not being overbearing. And that's, I think, a really valuable lesson for any young coach. And I think the same thing when, when I'm on a recruiting trip and I'm standing next to an established head coach, the onus of it on me is to take as much as I can from that experience because he's a guy that's already, he's had these conversations, that's why he's still established, cause he's learned as much as he could in his young age and taken it and made it his own. So I think that was really valuable and I completely agree. It's really what you're going to make of it and what you're going to take away each day.

(09:48):

L: No, that's great, Harry. And I think about like when I first met you, but I remember coach Orlando, coach O saying to me like, Hey, there's this young guy, you know, he's walking on and he's got passion. He's got a character about him that I think you're going to like, and then we got to know each other, you as a player and me as a mental coach and volunteer assistant coach at Michigan State men's tennis. And you know, I think about relating this to the audience that when you're a coach and you have some years under your belt, isn't it great to be able to reach out and to help others and to give them an opportunity? And then you look for someone like you that has a passion, has a desire, wants to do something, you know, in their, in their coaching career. And so I think it was just an awesome match. But I do think about the things that you brought to the table. The passion, the desire to learn, the openness. You know, sometimes on the court, you are, you could be difficult, but most of the time was pretty good. You challenged me, you challenged me good, but you made me better on the court for sure. So we had a lot of fun, right?

(10:48):

JB: Larry, if I could just add too, I think the other piece of the fellowship program is that we're really trying to establish an alumni base as well, so that the networking that's happening once they've been removed from the program and they're back to, you know, whatever their full time job may be, that there's still that network that they can lean on within their own class or the class before or the class that follows them. Allowing them to come back, and sort of share a little bit of the insight with the most recent class about their experiences, what their best takeaways were, how they can challenge them to make the best of the experience that's in front of them. So I think that's something that we're trying
really hard to make sure that we continue through so that they feel like they're a family outside of just
the player development family, but they're, they're part of a special family within Player Development.

(11:32):
L: That's tremendous. I do remember, Harry, that you and your cohort group were pretty close.

(11:37):
H: Yeah, no, there were, I think the number that we had in our cohort was six and I'm still very close
with just about all of them. It's funny, I actually met up with one of my, I guess classmates at women
nationals in Orlando and it just happened that we were staying in the same hotel and we kind of met up
after the matches and we literally stayed up till 2:00 AM kind of talking, and talking about how our
careers are going, but also just reminiscing on some good times cause we were all living together and it
was, it was a lot of fun. We were all just trying to figure it out. So guys like Aaron Paul, Jeremy Aberdeen,
Greg [inaudible], Katelyn Stokes, who's now with USTA and it was a lot of fun. And again, it was also
really cool to pick their brains cause I mean we had so many people from different backgrounds. I mean
guy like Aaron who had a background in basketball analytics and he was more on the analytic side of the
fellowship. And then we had a guy named Jeremy Aberdeen, who I believe was multiple All American in
college and another guy in Greg Lebanowski that was part of the USC teams that won the national
championship. And then on the woman's side we had Katelyn Stokes, who I believe went to Howard
college and played tennis there and Nellie played at Clemson. So, and it was just such a cool melting pot
and we would grab dinners and things like that and kind of have a little bit of fun. And we would also,
the highlights of our day was probably after the, after 5:00 PM we would all go play Foursquare on the
tennis court, a little mini tennis game. And we would literally just play for hours and talk trash. And we
definitely were a close group and it was a blast.

(13:06):
J: That's good. It sounds like you worked hard and played hard. So that's, I mean that's what it's about as
well. I mean those connections that Jessica is talking about, I mean building a big network. I mean, it
sounds like it carries multiple layers when you leave the place. And so, and that's really my next
question to you then Harry is, is there maybe a story that you could provide on your experience here
that almost defines how maybe your perception of coaching or maybe how the experience changed
your perception of coaching when you went back to Michigan State cause you went back to Michigan
State then, now it's not the volunteer assistant, but the assistant coach in your role now. So how did
your experience maybe change your perception on the coaching side?

(13:44):
H: I think the biggest thing, and I thought this was all throughout the USTA, but probably the biggest, I
guess there were probably two things that I really took away. And number one was relationships. I
remember it was, to me, it was crazy how I could go up to a Jose Caballero, a Martin Blackman, Larry
Lauer, Johnny Parkes when he's in a good mood, not when he's in a bad mood.

(14:06):
L: Pick your times.
H: You could approach them and say, Hey, what are you working on right now? And they would literally drop what they were doing and they would say, Hey, this is what I'm working on. One quote that stuck with me, Martin said it, you can never invest too much in a relationship. There's never been a person on this earth who said, man, I put too much into that relationship and that's where, the moment I got the fellowship, I was so geared up, I was so like excited. Man, I'm going to go there, I'm going to do this and that. And I get on the phone with Brad Stein and this was kind of our introductory, hey, I'm Harry, this is what I'm looking forward to and all that. The first question that Brad asked me, and he's never one to mince words or take a, beat around the bush I guess is what I'm trying to say, but he just goes, Hey, how are you going to, why are.. And the players that I was traveling with were Bjorn and Mackie, his question was, why are they going to listen to you? Why are they going to give a dang about what you have to say? You know? And my, my answer to that was I guess I gotta invest time in them, show them that I care about their development, be prepared for every single practice so that if they throw a question at me, I at least have an answer that they can tell that I've put some thought into it and that I care about what's going on. And I feel like it worked out really well for me. Obviously continuing to work on that at collegiate level as well, but relationships was number one. And then also it was really cool to see how each coach was different. I mean you have Jorge Tordero, Nico Tordero. Those types of guys were a little bit more talkative on the court. And then we had a guy, Dustin Taylor, who was also on the court and his goal was that his players problem solve out there and he says nothing. You know, and every single coach had their different recipe and it's, they kind of finetune it for each player. And that was another thing that really stuck with me cause I was around so many good, great coaches at one time that was like, hey, Stephen Huss reacts to this differently than somebody else reacts to this, you know, but they're both very good coaches and they maximize what they can get out of their players. Cause at the time I was really looking, I think for, hey, this is how you should do things with this coach and that is not the way you should be thinking because every situation has its nuances. It's black, it's white, it's gray. And I think that just seeing all those different coaches operate was really, really cool. A once in a lifetime opportunity. Truly.

(16:16):
L: That's, that's really interesting, Harry, as you talk about that. And I think about the coaching philosophy that we have here at Player Development and how does your time in that fellowship help you develop your philosophy? You talked about some of the art of coaching or the individual kind of differences that coaches have in the way that they're on court and interacting with players, but what about your overall arching philosophy, how you coach, how was that impacted by your experience?

(16:42):
H: That's a great question. So my like capstone presentation for the fellowship was, it was titled, my life as a coach is just plagiarism. And essentially it was just quotes that I heard from other coaches that I kinda took away from the fellowship and, to be honest, the fellowship really did, I mean, it was a defining experience for me as a coach. But really, I mean, when I'm coaching today, I'm really just plagiarizing, you know, I might tweak some things here and there, but I'm taking stuff that I saw Mat Cloer or Eric Nunez do on the court and I'm just applying it with my guys. You know, and, hey, it works, I'm going to do it again. And if it doesn't, I'll kind of tweak it until it fits what I, what I need. But it definitely, just seeing how those coaches operate, you kind of imitate that and it play around with it. And obviously you're, I mean the growth mindset is always improving, always find ways to get better, but it definitely helped me a ton and it was also the times where I'm talking with Brad Stein at dinner or I'm interacting with other coaches or I'm just hitting with the other fellows, you know, just those interactions, kind of pick up insights here and there and then you kind of take them and they stay with
you long enough until they're your thoughts and your ideas, and they kind of mesh and meld into one, I
guess. Hopefully the recipe is good, but it's definitely trying to, I guess Harry's recipe of coaching, if that
makes sense.

(17:57):
J: Just hearing it, that's such a great experience there, Harry. So we have, you know, the fellowship
coming up this summer and the people out there that are thinking of applying or considering it, you
know, you probably might have different people out there thinking, wow, I mean can I really take three
months out of my, you know, my work or you know, or you may have, you know, recently graduated
college students that want to jump at the opportunity but, but what would your message be for
someone considering applying for the opportunity?

(18:21):
H: I think the only, the only great reason not to do the fellowship would be a financial r

(18:52):
L: You know, as I think a little maybe broader about this, and this is really for everybody here on the
episode, but you know, it seems to be that coaches are learning the most from mentorship. I mean they
go through coaching programs, they go to different conferences. But at least in my experience with
coaches, they'll say, well, it was attending a practice with this coach or spending time with this coach.
And I wonder, you know, we've talked about the mentee part of it, but what about the mentor and what
should a young coach who maybe can't do the fellowship, but want to get better, what should they be
looking for in a mentor?

(19:27):
H: I think first and foremost, just with any coaching mentee, mentor relationship, I think number one is
caring. You gotta have somebody that cares about you and that caring has to go well beyond the tennis
court. They got to care about you as a human. They got to understand that, Hey, if you're going through
something, you're going to need somebody to support them. And I think that's by far the most
important thing. And then I think the second thing is you've got to have somebody that's going to
challenge you and you gotta have somebody that's gonna push you and not say what you want to hear,
but, but challenge you to think about what you're doing. Think about what you're saying as a coach and I
was super blessed to have a guy like Brad Stein, who he's done a great job of challenging, not only me,
but players that he works with. You know, he made some, I guess, be the best versions of themselves
and think about why they're doing things. And I definitely appreciate that. And I worked for a boss now
coach Orlando, who does a great job of empowering me and putting me in the right spots to succeed,
but also, if I have a bad practice, or if I'm not doing something right, he's saying, Hey, you got to do this
better and we gotta make sure that we're doing right by the players and putting them in the best
position to succeed. So I think number one is definitely caring. And then number two is probably just
challenging you to be better and challenging you to grow every single day.
JB: I totally agree with you Harry. The only other thing that I might add would be just a willingness. I think there needs to be a willingness on both sides. A willingness from the mentor to challenge that person, to give them the commitment, you know, day in and day out or month to month, whatever the arrangement may be. And then as the mentee, the willingness to be challenged and to want to get better and really commit to the relationship.

H: No doubt, no doubt.

J: Finding a lot of Cs are happening here again, Larry. Care, challenge and commitment and it's absolutely so valuable that any of us, I mean, Jess, I want you to maybe talk a little bit more about it cause you're doing so many great things and putting together programs for facilitating relationships between mentees and mentors. You know, maybe you could take a little bit of a deeper dive into into the relationships and you know also when you leave, maybe that relationship is not done on an official capacity. How do we facilitate still the ability to still want to seek out and connect with that mentor or maybe seek out a different mentor or how could you speak to that?

JB: Well, my experience with the mentorship programs that we've offered, I think we've seen a lot of great success. I think the ability for people to connect sometimes outside of the world of tennis is really important. I think whatever that connection may be, I've seen it happen with some people. It's faith, it's maybe they grew up in a similar area of the country and so they can connect on sort of their upbringing in that way. Seeking out a different mentor or just a new mentor, not because the previous relationship was unsuccessful, but just maybe needing something at a different point in your life. I think you, you really have to identify what you want to be challenged in and seek that person out that is going to challenge you, so whatever that might be. You want to learn how to open up your own Academy like and so you want like the business side of it all and really understanding that then that's the person you're going to seek out or you want to learn how to be a better junior coach or a 10 and under tennis coach, so you seek somebody else that's like an expert in that space. But I think again, it goes back to really wanting to be challenged and developing the relationships. I think that's where we saw the best success with our mentoring pairings was where there was a really strong relationship.

L: So it can be intimidating for a young person to come into an environment like this with highly experienced people who are open and want to help. I think, I really truly believe that our staff is so excited when the fellows come in. it's fun to get to know them and to spend time and see them learn and grow and go off and work somewhere, but can be intimidating for a young person to come in and with experienced coaches. What advice might you both have for young coaches coming, maybe they're coming out of undergrad, right, and they're pretty young and they played some tennis, but what advice would you have for them to be proactive? Cause that's we're talking about right, being proactive and really reaching out and making it happen. How do you, how do you get beyond beyond that wall of sort of your own concern about bothering people or getting in the way, being a distraction? Any thoughts on that?
JB: I think the easiest way to do that is to send an email or just ask the person if you're in a more face to face sort of relationship with them when they might have some time to chat with them and be really specific as to what you're trying to gain from the conversation, you know, be specific but don't undervalue what you could bring to that conversation as well.

H: And I can, I can definitely speak on this, Dr. Larry, because I remember one of my first days there I was going on court, we just got done with some stuff in the office and jumped out on court. And I remember Dustin Taylor was working with Marcus Giron was one of the players and some of the other ones and it was like, I'm a guy that, I just got done playing college tennis and I want to be a good college coach. And Dustin Taylor obviously won so many national championships at Virginia. Marcos Giron was a national champion and I was just sitting there like, man, anything I say right now it's, I was so tight. I thought I was going to say the wrong thing. No matter what comes out of my mouth, it's going to be the wrong thing. But no, I think just like with any situation, having anxiety, I just remember I had normalized it and I just said, Hey, it's, it's completely normal to feel anxious. You're the, you're the fellow and these guys that are working right now. But I just, I would always try to put myself in the coaches' shoes and I just remember when I was back home and east Lansing, if somebody walked down to my court and say, Hey, what are you guys working on right now? I would gladly share what I was working on with the player, you know? So that was kinda my go to line, Hey, what are you working on right now? And from there that would kind of ease things up and kind of from there we could start a conversation and a lot of it's just hanging out and just seeing how the coaches interact and eventually the players will get comfortable enough and they'll start talking trash to you or something like that. And that kind of eases it up. So I think just being present as well, just being there and not being afraid to ask a stupid question is huge. And then also the last thing is, I remember obviously you're on campus, you want to work with the big pros, but some of my best experiences were, I talked to Jon Glover, I talked to Mat Cloer, I talked to Eric Nunez and they were working with the juniors at the time. And I found that, Hey, I was a pretty good hitting partner for the juniors because I was a college tennis player and that's where I felt like not only was I learning from Mat and Eric, but they had another body that they could throw on the court and say, Hey Eric, take them through this drill or you can be hitting partner right now. And so then I kind of found, Hey, I can add value to their equation and they're going to be super happy that it helped out. And obviously I feel like I could approach them more and we definitely have that relationship and Hey, I'm doing something, I'm not just standing around. So I think just being smart about how you use your time as well.

J: That's a really good point you bring up there because it's almost like you're getting a two for one by doing that because you're hitting with the junior players, you're building your relationship with them. I think most, most junior players would appreciate being able to hit with a former college, top college player, but at the same time, whilst you're hitting, you're able to feel and go through the drills, the exercises, activities, the games, the flow of a practice, a high quality practice. And you're obviously also able to tap into what the coaches are actually doing, what they're saying. Like you said, some coaches like don't, you know, when do they step in and say something? When do they sit back and let the problem solving happen? You know, so it's already valuable. Almost like a two for one right there.
H: And then also, I think and just with the players, I think your youth as a fellow can be a good thing or a bad thing depending on how you use it. You know, I feel like you can definitely establish some rapport and build that relationship by just talking about a sporting event or, I mean bringing up a meme on Twitter when they hit a good shot. You know, like I, I’m definitely in tune with the younger side in terms of social media and stuff like that. And that's something that I use to this day when I'm recruiting and talking to players on my team. I feel like I can reach them more if they feel like it's not a strictly like suit and tie coach. It's a guy who's obviously been through what they've been through. That being said, you've got to balance it because you also want them to have respect for you and you want them to view you as a coach and somebody that they can listen to. So there is a balance, but I definitely feel like, as a young coach, that's something that you have to use to your advantage for sure.

(27:36):
JB: That reminds me of the concept of reverse mentoring and there's a lot of real great value in reverse mentoring just as Harry spoke about, but the youth are, are so up on all the various different technologies and you know, the way they communicate via Snapchat or Instagram or whatever it might be, and helping someone maybe understand that that's the way that people connect better or you know, whatever it is, it happens. But I think your point, Harry, is a really great one in that, again, you think you're the mentee and that you don't have much to offer somebody, but you really never know what you could bring to the mentor. Plus the mentor really can gain in value so much by sharing what they know and what they have from their experience, right? And sharing it with a different generation of individuals.

(28:22):
L: I remember reading a story about Bill Belichick and when he'd have his meetings, he'd have all the coaches in there and there could even be like interns in there and everybody had a chance to talk and they would be listened to. And if that's bill Belichick doing that, then I think we all can respect that we can learn something from everyone. You know Harry, as you go through this, has it brought you more awareness to your role as a coach and thinking about mentoring the young guys that you have on your team? Has it had you look at it in a different way now having gone through the experience as a mentee or do you look at yourself more as a mentor, those young guys now? It sort of sounds like that you do.

(28:58):
H: Yeah, for sure. I think number one, and this kind of came from the fellowship is, remember it's a fellowship in professional coaching and I think professional is a huge word there, right? And, and I just see a lot of young coaches that are very good friends with their players and, and I just don't know how much they have that healthy mentor relationship just because it's tough to challenge people when you're their friend, you know. You want them to feel good, you want them to be in their comfort zone and not have any rough patches. But as we all know, with development, the biggest, I mean, the biggest steps in development probably come when players are out of their comfort zone and they're not feeling great and they're struggling a little bit, you know? So I definitely, that's, that's my job. Essentially, my job with my players is, Hey, we're going to build, and I know this is the word that dr Larry uses a lot, but we're going to build resilient confidence cause we're gonna throw him in funky situations. We're gonna challenge them, we're gonna do all we can to get them out of their comfort zone so that, hey, when it's a match and it's for college tennis 3-all and you're the last match on, you can say, man, my coach has put me in this situation. And whether it was physical adversity, mental adversity, things like that. I've, I've handled diversity, I have 100% confidence in my, in my problem solving skills. And I can, I can go out there and do it. And I think that's my job and obviously you have to balance it, because in my profession
right now, these are college students and they’re going through a lot. I mean they're not, their brains aren't fully cooked, as my girlfriend likes to say. So they're figuring things out, they're trying to figure things out socially. They got a full course load and then they have to go out there and they're expected to compete like professionals on the tennis court when, I mean all this psychology says that Hey, they're not ready to do that emotionally, mentally, and even physically. Their bodies aren't 100% developed at this point in time. So kind of balancing that. But yeah, I definitely view myself as a mentor and that's both on and off the court. Try to spend as much time with our guys as we can off the court and develop those relationships.

(30:49):

L: Now listen to what's embedded in that too. It's that it's going to be a process that guys are going to make mistakes. They're going to fail, they're going to succeed. It's a journey. Right? And your supporting them through that. I'll go back to what you talked about earlier, you're supporting them and you care about them and because you do, you're also challenging them because they want to be better and you want them to be better, not only for themselves but for the team. And so that kind of environment, I'd really encourage, you know, coaches listening to this, that you're trying to create an environment where if you want resilience, you have to support people and you have to challenge them. If you're supportive but you don't challenge them, you don't get to where you need to be. And if you challenge them all the time but you don't support well then they're really going to struggle and that's going to cause problems. You need to optimally support them and challenge them through this journey. And that can be whether you're coaching a player or that can be a mentor, you know, providing that mentorship relationship to a mentee.

(31:39):

JB: The other one that comes to mind is trust, right? He's doing all of that and building trust along the way.

(31:45):

L: That allows you to do that support and challenge if you have trust, right? A lot of great ideas here, JP. I mean, I think things that are our listeners, especially, you know, I would really, I guess reach out to the young listeners who want to be coaches and think about, now I think there is a path, if you have a dream of coaching in college or professional or coaching juniors, there is a path where you can, you can find a way, it might not be easy where you're at. We might have to really be creative and find ways, but there's a way.

(32:15):

J: Well as well, I mean, for maybe some of the parents on here, if your child is working with a young coach who's, is it within five years of graduating, you know, and why not put this opportunity in front of your child's coach for the longterm benefit for any other coaches on here that are listening to this, I mean, send this forward. I mean full with this message on about these types of opportunities because I truly believe the environments and the quality of teaching and coaching is how we're not only gonna improve the amount of people playing the sport, but then how many people play the sport at a high level and we have to keep that merry-go-round going around. It's people like you, Harry, who are willing to invest in themselves, are willing to put themselves out there despite some of the anxieties that may come with that. But at the end of the day, you never know what it could lead to unless you put yourself out there and so I think really with that, I know we're kind of winding down on here, but I'd like to
maybe you know, let Jess kind of close up here. Maybe that final little plug for the fellowship this summer and when maybe that deadline for applying is and sell it.

(jb: 33:19):  
JB: Sure. Thanks. Again, so 10 to 12 week experiential learning experience really embedded in the culture here in Player Development. You'll get to experience a day in the life of a national coach every day for those 10 to 12 weeks. Really learn our philosophy in and out, spend time with national staff, get an experience at all the various levels, juniors, 10 and under, collegiate, transitional, pro tennis. If you're not very sure what direction you want to go, then there's something for everybody. The program starts in the middle of June and runs through the US open, concludes at the US open, which is really a great culmination. The fellows always give a lesson learned presentation in front of the staff, which is always the most inspiring part, I think for the staff that runs the fellowship program. And if someone's interested, they can go to the USTA website. Applications are being accepted now and we'll look to sort of name the fellows sometime in early March.

(j: 34:17):  
J: That's awesome. And we'll also put the link to the application on the show notes on the podcast, but what a way to finish that fellowship, at the US open and I sat through one of the presentations that the fellows give and I think you just have smiles on your faces the whole way through the presentations. Even though you're probably pretty nervous doing that, Harry, or maybe not so at that time you may have felt a lot more comfortable than when you first thought about it at the beginning of the summer. But what a way to finish right there at the US open at this sort of culmination of our sport, right, at a grand slam. And you know, Harry, I think, you know, just to, to recap here, what I'm hearing from you is relationships are huge as a mentee and a mentor. Make sure that you're sort of challenging or being challenged and uh, and Jess, like you said, have that commitment. I mean that commitment is huge, but it's a commitment to yourself to, again, I mean go back to the title here, it's a commitment to invest in yourself, but it's an investment to, you know, it's a commitment to invest in others. And I think we should all have that responsibility on our shoulders in one form or another, so, Harry, any kind of closing thoughts from you as we wrap up here, mate?

(h: 35:21):  
H: No, not really. I think number one, I think I completely agree with everything everyone's said and again, I can't say enough about anybody who's thinking about applying for this fellowship. Go ahead. Go, do it. The culture at the USTA is awesome. They're going to help you out and they're going to help you out for years to come as you have questions. Always feel free to, I feel completely free to call whoever at the USTA and kind of pick their brain. So it's definitely a great networking opportunity and it gives you connections to some of the best minds in tennis, so would definitely highly recommend it for anyone.

(j: 35:52):  
J: Awesome. Dr Lauer.

(l: 35:54):  
L: Coach Parkes.
J: It's been great. I'm so jealous. I'm sitting there just going, Ugh, Jess, why didn't you have this when I was coming out of college?

(36:01):
L: Imagine how much better he would be as a coach, Jess.

(36:04):
J: I'd be so much better. I'm bluffing my way through life at the minute. Can I apply?

(36:08):
JB: The strength and conditioning one, sure.

(36:11):
L: Well, maybe we will start a mental coach one and then we can turn you down.

(36:14):
J: Thanks, Larry.

(36:15):
L: I'm just joking.

(36:15):
J: You turn me away at your door every day.

(36:18):
L: I do not.

(36:19):
J: [inaudible] rejection with you by now.

(36:21):
L: The door is always open to you. It just sometimes shuts on the way in boom right in your face.

(36:26):
J: Awesome. Well Harry, thanks so much for taking the time out your schedule. I know you're over there in the midst of battle at the minute with your guys, so I appreciate you taking the time. And Jessica, thank you for coming on and giving us an insight into the fellowship. So that's it for this week's episode of compete like a champion. Investing in yourself, it's a valuable tool. Start now, don't wait. Until next time, Dr. Larry Lauer and I, checking out.