Q: Why do women coaches have to have better credentials than their male counterparts?

A: Female coaches shouldn’t require better credentials, a great coach, female or male needs to have the skills such as passion for the sport, knowledge of the sport, compassion, work ethic, communication skills, confidence, growth mindset, problem solver, positive attitude, and so forth. I think a great coach exemplifies all the things that we ask of a player.

Q: Could encouraging problem solving improve resiliency and mental toughness?

A: That is a great question. Problem solving can improve resiliency, mental toughness and confidence as well. Through making mistakes and learning from them can build toughness and resiliency.

Q: What are the differences in communication when the coach is male or female?

A: It is really about listening to and getting to know each athlete individually whether the coach is male or female. In my opinion that is the best way to communicate or learn the best way to communicate with your athletes whether the coach or athlete is male or female. Like BJK said women just more inherently are better listeners so it might just mean a male coach needs to work more at it, but the same concepts apply.

Q: Are there any differences with throwing and serving based on strength and body type?

A: Strength will definitely affect throwing/serving as you need a certain amount (different per each individual) of strength to be able to perform a repeated pattern like that without an overuse injury. An important thing to note is you don’t want to just build up strength and forget about mobility and keeping full range of motion b/c that is just as important in shoulder health as well. And with throwing/serving motions it is important to note that energy transfers from the ground up going through the kinetic chain. Body type may affect the kinetic chain with different limb/body lengths but no matter what you need to have proper mechanics and strength to support the movement.

Q: Can you give advice about keeping fitness in a 15 year old girl junior player while court time is so limited (non-existent right now) when so much of the activity was on court with peers.

A: Determine what you do have accessible to you, in a safe manner, and be creative. I’ve been doing a lot of things in just a mat sized space in my apartment using body weight, creating circuits combining strength and cardio exercises in a shorter period of time to maximize what I do have available and trying to keep intensity as much as possible. Working within the athletes’ development and what is appropriate is of utmost importance, and yes it might be difficult to get the same out of it that you would with all the on court training, but this is a phase and there is still quite a bit that can be done, so just focusing on what you can do, using this time to focus on mobility or other things you might not necessarily have time to focus on would be good options as well. Another important note is that due to all of these differences everyone is going to have a different progression back into on court time
and it needs to be individualized based on what the athlete has been doing and slowly progressing in a safe manner to decrease risk of injury.

**Q: I have a question for Kathy and Billie as far as the best practices for building culture with women on teams?**

A: Great question! It’s important for the coach to know each individual player’s personality, background, what makes them tick so you can connect with each player and start with mutual respect. When you have the respect of the players, and they know you are in their corner and hold them accountable out of that care and respect, then you can create an incredible team atmosphere. You certainly cannot coach each player the same but they all trust you because you have earned that respect. I also believe in setting up expectations and staying true to them.

**Q: Is there a characteristic or personality trait that many female athletes lack that they should work to develop?**

A: Women are great competitors but we like to do it quietly. I recommend a book that is available on Amazon titled "How to Develop Relentless Competitors" by Jeff Janssen. Though it would apply to anyone it is particularly written towards a female perspective since it emphasizes lessons learned from Anson Dorrance who developed the North Carolina women’s soccer teams and other coaches such as Pat Summitt.

**Q: Technology and data analysis will be an important part of the future of tennis coaching. How is or can this be represented in the mentoring and development of future female coaches?**

A: Thanks for the question. I think technology and data analysis continue to be the direction sport in general is moving, especially tennis. It is important for coaches to continue to educate them themselves on the latest trends in the game, technology and data analysis included and mentorship can be the vehicle that aids in this education. This also potentially creates an opportunity for reverse mentoring as the less tenured coach (mentee) may have a greater knowledge or skill set in this area and can look to educate and help to develop a greater understanding for the more tenured coach (mentor) in this subject matter.

**Q: What’s the most important pattern to develop in women’s tennis in your opinion?**

A: It’s important to emphasize problem solving and good decisions first. I will also add that it’s important to think a shot ahead. As far as patterns, I believe change of direction is important, such as 2 CC & then DTL with big targets or when inside the baseline change direction, serve + 1 such as serve out wide and then hit to open court, return + 1 such as return CC and then play to open court.