The Powerful Influence of the Coach

00:00  
J: Welcome to the compete like a champion podcast where we explore the psychology of performance, advanced coaching and sports science through the lens of professional tennis. You're here with Dr. Larry Lauer, mental skill specialists, and coach Johnny Parkes with USTA player development. On today's episode, we thought we'd plug into the powerful influence of a coach and really start discussing how important the role of a coach is. Knowing that really, I mean, tennis players that have a coach that they've had for a while tend to be rated as like the second or third most important part of that child's life behind the parents. And so I think we're going to start off by, by kind of having this open question. I'll ask you Larry, right off the bat, how important is a coach?

00:51  
L: Well, as you said, I think that the coach can be one of the most important people in a child's life. I think it has to do with the fact that A, the child really enjoys sport and it's also an emotional, uh, environment where winning and losing count a lot of times and they're learning skills and they're failing and they probably fail in sport more than any other place in their life. So the coach becomes a powerful part of their life because they're teaching them skills or teaching them ways of thinking and doing things and helping them succeed in an environment where failure is, is often, uh, a big part of it as a little league baseball coach right now, I see it everyday where what we're trying to do is help these kids deal with the failure that they have, knowing that they're probably going to not get a hit at least 70 or 80% of the time and respond well.

01:44  
J: I'd love to see you in your Baseball gear, Larry. That'd be great.

01:47  
L: It's tight, man.

01:50  
J: Let's dive more into that. I thought what was really interesting and you actually sent me this, it was a, it was a great read and read multiple articles of it and listened to, to some of the interviews of it was the, what happened in the caves in Thailand with the soccer team. It was a pretty powerful story. And, uh, you know, God rest his soul. There was a Thai Navy diver that lost his life to part of the save. But what was very interesting was listening to some of the boys when they came out of the cave and also listening to the coach and some of the parents. And so it really seemed like the coach had a really strong influence on helping those kids survive. And so what was some of the takeaways you took from that story? I mean, it really empowered the world, well not empowered, but really, uh, intrigued the world for weeks, right when it first came out. I mean, what was some of the things that stuck out to you, the role of that coach?

02:39  
L: First of all, you cannot prepare for something like this. These things happen to you and you sort of have to respond well. And I think, you know, one of the biggest first takeaways is how the coach really made sure that he didn't panic and he didn't let the boys panic. I mean, you could imagine this environment, it being dark, uh, not being able to see where you're at. There's water, uh, you
can't get out and you're not sure if you're ever going to get out of this cave or if you're going to die and your coach is bringing you through this situation. And this is what this coach did for them. It's not like he could've prepared for it, but one of the interesting things was that this coach, Ake, uh, he had trained as a Buddhist monk for 10 years and he used his training to actually help the boys get through the situation. And by teaching them meditation, he was able to keep them present and not get too far ahead of themselves and worrying about, you know, this future where we're not going to live. You know, what's going to happen to us? Are we going to have food? And through meditation, through breathing, he was able to create a calm in a very much a, a dire situation. I mean when I heard about this situation it's typically that type of thing where unfortunately there is a tragedy and there was one tragedy as you mentioned. You know, it was pretty bleak for awhile. They were pretty um, unsure they were going to be able to get these boys out of this cave. Through the remarkable efforts from a number of professionals from multiple countries, they were able to save these boys. But the first thing that struck me, Johnny, was the fact that this coach could not have known he'd ever be in this situation. And yet because he had developed himself his skill, he was able to apply that in a way that he saved those boys. So I think it just goes to the value of, as a coach, you're more than a tactician. You are truly impacting young people. And for this coach, he was a difference between, also most people who are part of the mission to save them, he kept them alive. He got them back to their parents because he followed his training. Pretty interesting. Don't you think Johnny? What do you think about that?

J: I think that was actually fascinating that the really interesting thing is, is the guy was only 25. The coach was only 25, 26 years old. And uh, the fact that he could take some of his training as a Buddhist monk, kids have, so really focus on the meditation, the breathing, trying to help these kids stay calm in really a life and death situation. I mean, when we look at examples like this, I think we need to figure out how ways on how it can relate back to what we do in our lives, right? I mean, we're talking about sink or swim here, literally this fight or flight to the highest degree, it's life and death if you don't get through it, you know. I know tennis is not as severe as that. It's winning and losing or winning and learning as I like to call it. But the pressures that maintain on tennis players and the pressure sometimes players place on themselves is very high. So how is that role of that coach going to impact the player to be able to deal with those pressures? And you know what we've talked about, those really are strategies being able to remain calm and stay calm under pressure. Is the meditation, the breathing, the, you know, the, almost the distractions as well from the unhelpful thoughts. I mean, they didn't really talk about that, but you can only imagine, you know, I mean I, some of them talked about, didn't know if we're going to get out alive or not, but there must've been a lot of unhelpful thoughts that went through some of these kids' minds. And you know, maybe the coaches mind, we're never going to get out of here. They're not going to live. And if you, obviously the minute you go down that path, it can be hard to come back from.
L: Well, yes. I mean you're, you're talking about 12 adolescent boys and, and, and even some weren't teens yet and helping them stay calm because you can only imagine what would happen if people start panicking and chaos ruled in that cave then they would not have gotten out alive. And I don't want to belittle that situation because that's an unbelievable, amazing situation happened there. But we do want to learn from it and understand, how does a coach do something like that? And I think we first as coaches have to understand the influence that we have on young people. Now we've seen it in a negative light. I've seen Jerry Sandusky at Penn state. We've seen other situations where people have used a coaching role to do great harm because of the trust and the influence they have on young people and the trust they gain with their parents.

J: And abuse of power.

L: And abuse of power essentially. Yeah. But here is a great story where a coach put those kids first and he saved them and got them back to their families. What a what a cool story and you think, okay, well in a much less adverse, stressful situation, what does this mean for us? We have such a great influence on young people. Do we really understand it and do we appreciate it? Do we take advantage of it? Do we make sure that the lessons are being learned, that we're teaching them what we know. Now I know there's a lot of other factors involved and the coach only has usually these children or teens for if you're lucky, a few hours a day, maybe you only a few hours a week. But I think the first key, Johnny honestly used to be aware that you make such a huge influence on young people. You start to look at it differently that Hey, you know, I can change somebody's life. And then if you think about it, you're training their inner self talk because they begin to see the world through your eyes. Now you think about when we have children and they're babies, they essentially get all of their stimulus and information from the environment just around them, which is mainly their parents. And maybe if they have siblings and close relatives, those people essentially mostly the parents, they developed the lens through which the young person sees the world, right? So Isa, your child, will take on your wife's and your voice, in her head. And then as they get older you get impacted by other people, influenced by others, hopefully good other people. And they begin to help to change that voice and hopefully prosocial ways. And so when you take the role of a coach, you're essentially helping to train the inner voice in which, and the way that this young person sees the world, at least through sport and maybe their life. Cause we've heard many stories of how a coach has honestly become a second mother or father or maybe first in many situations and has saved or, or really made a young person's life better. And so I think we have to understand as a coach, you make all the difference in their lives. If you really develop our relationship, not a buddy buddy relationship, but I'm, I'm a teacher. You're a student and I care about you and I want you to do well in this world. So let me in part on you what I know, but also let me hear your voice. Let me work with you and help you become what you want to become. Let me help you see what you can be that you can't see right now. I think that's first. I think the power of what a coach can be.
J: Yeah, absolutely. And that really, really fascinating when you think that ultimately the parents tend to be the people that, that help the kids, their child through some of the key emotional stages of their lives, right? Helping them deal with, well, I can 10 and helping them deal with losing, helping them manage that failure, helping them manage winning, right? They don't get carried away. And being able to help them in school and social life, especially the social side that every kid goes through, right? And being able to build that confidence and build them up into young, you know, young adults, young human beings in a productive and a in a proactive manner so that you can nurture them along this pathway of being a just a good person and coaches depending on how you look at it as your role as a coach. Are you there to show up to teach the technique, teach the tactical side of the game and then that's really the extent of your role. When I read this story and think about sporting aspects, you'd go back to the guy that kind of changed everything, which was coach John Wooden. I'm reading a lot of his impact and his philosophy and the culture that he set with his kids. And really what it came down to is looking at him. He was a teacher first and a coach second. The ability to have such a deep and strong impact on a young humans life from a life skill perspective, a character and a life skill perspective really is what happened. The deeper impacts, not just training and coaching the technique and the, and the tactical skills and, and everything that comes in between. The coach that's able to impact via life lessons and life learning seems to be a coach that is able to really help that person forward. And then reading through this example, I mean that's really what he was spun into. He has this relationship with these, these players that are about teaching them how to play soccer, right, technique, the tactical, and then they're doing a team building event where they're going through the caves, and now he's in an environment where he has to teach these kids how to overcome this extreme danger. It really comes back to the fact that this coach is essentially a teacher first and he's a coach second. He's teaching these kids how to get through and manage their emotions and come through this.

L: And I think you can infer from some of the, the articles are out there that this wasn't the first time they went on an expedition or a trip together. So it seemed like the coach was already setting up these experiential situations with these boys. Um, so I mean you can infer that the, this coach was really trying to do more than just teach them how to kick a soccer ball and how to defend. He honestly was trying to teach them about life and give them experiences. And then unfortunately, uh, the water's rushed in. They were unable to get out. But, uh, you know, Johnny, can you think about the coaches that impacted you the most in your life? Were they the ones that really put a high value on, on these kinds of lessons? Not just a technique but on character and how you were as a person and as a teammate?

J: I mean, I'd honestly say my coaches, I think they were, they were life lesson coaches. You know, they, they helped you get through tough times. Especially for me. I mean I came from England to America and I went to college in New Mexico and being that far away from home, essentially the coaches took on a role of being kind of like that father figure that they're helping you through
tough times. They're willing to sit there and listen to you, sometimes rant about, you know, probably insignificant things and they're also there to help nurture you through your tennis game. So yeah, I mean they helped me with my game on court and all that, but I don't, I wouldn't think that that was the best impact that they had on me was my tennis game. It was being able to nurture me through coming in as really a kid, 18, and leaving as a young adult into the big wide world. You know, how do you guide someone through that, you know? And so we were very fortunate enough to have coaches that were willing to invest time into that side of it. And I really deeply feel that had I not had coaches that were like that, it might've just been four years just getting through school, playing tennis for four years and, and okay, getting to whatever level and then okay, off you go. You know, I have really good relationships with my coaches now and deep meaningful relationships. Really pay homage to them and massively respect the work that they put into, not just me, but the rest of our, you know, rest of the team that I was on, it really was massively impactful and all the, all the, the traits and the qualities that go into that from, you know, just having patience, understanding, empathetic, you know, being empathetic, being just overall being very positive.

L: Johnny, do you think that the way that those coaches treated you, that opened up you actually to be better in practice, to be a better performer in matches? So their interest in you as a person and listening to you and helping you get through this transition coming from England, coming to the US to New Mexico and because they put an emphasis on those things that actually helped you on court?

J: 100% I mean, they really invested time into building a relationship first, making you feel that they really did care about you first and not just you're there to help the tennis team out, right? They're there to actually help you as a person and because they invested time into that relationship. Yeah. That made me feel like I wanted to give more. It made me feel like I wanted to give more to the team, but I also wanted to give more to them. So when we'd sit down and say, Hey Johnny, you know out of this week, one of your five practices was not at a very high level, wasn't really focused. You weren't engaged that much. So I'm challenging next week to try and make it five in five and they go, I'm not asking you to play amazing tennis. I'm just asking you to have strong focus and engagement the whole week. Right. And then obviously that was up to me to figure out why. Why was I doing that? I didn't want to do that. I wanted to to to bring to the table. I wanted to, yeah, I wanted to please my coaches, but I wanted to work harder for them. Now, I don't think if you don't have that relationship and there isn't that somewhat an emotional tie there, I don't think you want to push yourself that far. You know? And again, I think that the deepest sense of, of your enthusiasm and, and everything you put into something is always greater when, when there's a bigger cause. And I know we've talked about this in the, in past episodes and having this greater cause, but having that relationship with the coach and essentially then the relationship with the other teammates made you want to fight harder and bust your butt harder every single day in practice and then have that translate onto the match
court. I mean, what about you? I mean, when you grown up playing different sports, you had hockey, right? And, and all these other sports. I mean, what about the role of the coach that had on you?

16:47  L: Well, I think I had some coaches that made a huge impact on me and some that I learned a lot from what not to do. Uh, but I, I was thinking about this, uh, as you were talking, I was listening, I promise.

17:01  J: Are you sure? I didn't bore you, did I? Larry's out, he's gone. I'm going to have to finish off by myself here with..

17:09  L: The mental coach has lost his focus. So it happens to us all by the way. Uh, no, I was listening to that. It's such a cool story about how, how your coaches, um, really helped you through that transition and allowed you to really thrive in a new environment. I was thinking back, you know, to the coaches that impacted me and I think of one coach in particular, my varsity basketball coach, Gray Heath. I would have ran through a wall for that man. But I think it, it started well before he had me in practice at the varsity level. He would invite us to come and play in the summer or on Sunday nights and play basketball with him and some of the other adults. And he was always friendly and he, he, he gave you tips but he wanted to know how you were doing and we'd chat and we joke around and you just liked the guy. I mean, he was just a, a cool guy, a great basketball player. So he had that credibility. I mean, his, his jump shot was ridiculous, but you wanted to, you wanted to learn from him and you wanted to be around him. And when I got to the varsity low and I wasn't a very good basketball player at all, that wasn't my best sport, but he, he kind of worked with me understanding that I wasn't going to be, uh, you know, playing every minute of the game and be one of those players. I would start some but was more defensive player to be honest. And then I was going to be a big scorer or play a huge role in the offense, but use me in a role in and help me understand what my role was on the team and how I could work and help my team and, uh, how I was valuable to the team. You know, it wasn't just that he was using me to get wins or, uh, or would forget about me if I couldn't help get him the wins. He still cared about my development. And, and how I could contribute. But at the same time also, he didn't let it be about me. The times where I'd start to get a little selfish and I wanted to get my shots. He, he was there to remind me that Larry, that this is about the team, right? So I think I learned a lot from coach Heath and really helped me, just in a very young form of stage, began to develop my own philosophy of the kind of coach I wanted to be. Uh, and like I said, there was many other coaches, but again, he was a coach that because of the way that he treated me and I knew he cared about me, but he cared about me in a way where he wasn't going to let me be a negative force on this team. The team was the most important thing, but he cared about me as well. And so that was a great lesson for me growing up and being someone who wanted to obviously do well and do well for my coaches and everything. But there again, if you don't have the fortune of finding that person or just I guess colliding with that person, the way I think about it in this chaotic world, how do you develop, right? I mean, I don't think I would be the person that I am if I didn't have him or many other
of the, I'm gonna, I'm going to broaden this now, mentors and coaches I had in my life, one of our fellows who is here this summer asked me this great question to how I got started in coaching and what kind of brought me along to this point. And I started reflecting on all the people that had they not stepped up and played a role in my life, I wouldn't be where I'm at today. And I talk to my wife about that and she's like, well, yes, but you, you did. You mean you brought yourself here too with all the great work you did and I said, yeah, yeah, but without them, I'm not here. And so I think part of this as a coach is understanding the huge impact. Again, I keep coming back to that, but the impact that you have, and it's, it's more than teaching them how to hit a forehand and backhand. It is about that connection that you develop because not only does that open up the opportunity to teach them the forehand or backhand and help them perform, but you may end up be saving someone's life or at least teaching them lessons, like in my case, that can help them have hopefully a life that they want to lead. And that's truly the power of the coach. And this situation with this coach Ake, hopefully I'm saying it correctly in the caves in Thailand, uh, it just got brought to its ultimate singularity. Like, okay, here's a situation where if this young adult who's a coach of boys, who's responsible for these boys on this trip, if he does not do everything he possibly can to keep them alive, they do not get out of this cave. That's what we're talking about he was a coach and because he is a coach, he's a teacher. He put those boys first and he saved them. He could have panicked and they all would have died. That's what we're talking about. Rolling it back to what we get in the second half of this podcast is that we all have those opportunities to help people based on our position, and we're all coaches, we're all mentors, but develop yourself in ways so that you don't know what's coming. You don't know what adverse situations you're going to be in, but if you're always learning, you're developing yourself and you understand the impact that you have as a coach is truly one of the beautiful things about coaching, that we can change people, we can help them become who they want to become. That's what coaching is about.

22:20

J: You know, again, I mean I wasn't drifting off this time either, but I, you got me thinking about, you know, I gave an example of my college coaches, but I actually, I can segment my whole childhood of coaches that had a strong impact and the first segment I would say of my, my life tennis career, it was 12, 13 and under and I had a coach that, yeah, he was a phenomenal technical tactical coach, played at a pretty high level and he used to call me occasionally the plant pot for, for making stupid choices.

22:49

L: What does that mean?

22:50

J: Plant pot. I think it just means that you know, you're head, you're being a bit of a plant pot, you're being a bit dense, but.

22:55

L: All right, so here's our part of the show where we talk about English phrases and what they mean.
J: Yeah, I think that was his signature is like, Oh, you plant pot. It was, it was nice. It was a term of endearment I guess. But um, but he really taught me, and I think back to it was how to be humble, showed humility, how to be professional, how to be disciplined when it came to not just being on court but approaching.

L: And you said you were 12?

J: And this would be about 13 and under. I had him until I was about 12 or 13 and then he just works in this realm of, of 12, 13 under. He's, he's very, very good coach. And, and, and I'll give an example. So I used to do this thing, I used to have this racket that had a massive throat, right. That you could fit your finger on the bottom of the throat as it meets the grip. And I used to, you know, you spin it on your finger, right? You know, you're kind of spinning it and he would say, don't do that. And I'd be like, why? What's the big deal? He's like that, that shows that you're cocky or could be arrogant. You may not be thinking that, but maybe subconsciously you are thinking that. Right. And we don't, we don't show arrogance. Spinning your racket in between points and waiting for thing. And so one thing I really took from him was never spend your racquet right on the finger. Because even if you may not be thinking that's the reason why, maybe it is a subconscious thing. But he was like, but it shows your opponent, you're pretty arrogant and if you show that you're showing a weakness. And so little things like that. And then there was, you know, he watched me in one match and we were in a tight match I was playing one of my buddies and we came off call and it was very close and we'd got into a bit of an argy bargy over some line calls and my coach came up to argy bargy. Is that another term? You know, a bit of a back and forth, back and forth. But anyway, argy bargy. He came off court and was like, okay, well, um, I need you to work on this and I need you to really take care of your line calls.

L: Did he yell at you?

J: No. No. He was very good. He was just very calm, very courteous. I need you to work on because what do you think that shows? And I honestly thought I didn't, you know, I'm sure most kids do. They think that they, they didn't, they didn't put a foot wrong, right? They didn't make a bad line call, whatever. But reality is everyone is, makes those mistakes and probably make some bad line calls. But he goes, I need you to be really aware of your line calls and I need you to make sure that you are fair. And even if you question if that ball was out or not, if you're questioning it, then it's in. And I think, you know, look, and we just, you know, we watched a lot of junior matches this, these past couple of weeks. And I think there's an automatic assumption out there that the person on the other side of the net is out to get you. But I think the reality is as humans have errors and what not. But coming back to what the coach taught me was these little examples I think helps shape my personality a little bit. I have my personality and I'm born with whatever I'm born with the way that I'm ticked. But he nurtured me along the way of having more respect, being more humble and being more professional and disciplined in my approach, not just to tennis.
but to everything. And I think I really, um, I really appreciate everything that happened because it was very consistent with what my parents taught me to anything because I had that consistency from coach to parent, which really with, uh, my parents and my coach at that time and probably the most impactful people in my life, cause that's who I spent the most time with because that message was consistent, it helped shape me into that arena. I then I then moved away cause I wanted to go have an education at a high level and, and compete at a high level still. So I found an environment that allowed me to do both and my, my parents sent me there and really my coach there was, became a father figure because I was away from my parents until the age of 13 to 18 I was in this realm where now I was like looking after myself and having to figure things out for myself. And really that stage of my life was all about nurturing me along this path of making good decisions. And I made a lot a lot of wrong decisions. So...

26:40 L: Still probably do.

26:41 J: I still probably do. Everyone does, you know, they make wrong decisions and, but what he was really instrumental in was making sure that, you know, those decisions didn't happen over and over and over and that we actually learned lessons from those wrong decisions, but then also praising the good decisions. And so I had a couple of coaches in particular that really helped me through that journey. I think from a personality standpoint and from an approach that was set really young in the consistent messages from family to coach, then the next part was is then, okay, I have that. Now it's what are the decision making? What are the choices that I'm going to make that are going to help me really crack on with my school and with my tennis and with everything else. And then when I got to college and obviously just talks about that, then at that moved into another arena. Um, which was, you know, being more in this team environment and, and playing, doing something more than just yourself. Right. So the really where these different stages, and I am very fortunate as you just mentioned there Larry, that you have these people that help nurture you and help shape you, they don't brainwash you. That that's the danger I guess, or the impact of the coach that abuses that power is, is there's almost like a brainwashing. And when you don't let that play or you don't let that child become creative and expand and explore and discover things right. And you have to nurture them along the path, help them positively reinforce the good, I helping them learn the lessons from the wrong decisions. And I think that ultimately that coach could have let these kids make a lot of wrong decisions. Could, you know, one kid might, could've ran off right and tried to think I'm going to get out of this cave and, and ultimately could could mean them dying. So he ultimately had to help them also along this path of probably positive reinforcing a lot of things with them and trying to keep them upbeat but then also, okay, how, and I come back to the helpful thoughts cause those are the things that might've led to wrong decisions. Right. And how do you manage that? And so just a really interesting story and just really get you thinking back. And so I, you know, I like the questions you're posing here is, you know, what role did a coach have on us? And I think everything you can find connections to and is just a very powerful, I
guess, and take the time to sit and think. I think it's a good exercise to also do for every, for every player out there, whether you're professional or whether you're a junior, you know, make sure and as well that's a message to the parents is when you’re looking for a coach, sometimes you see this a lot in the junior world, is there's a lot of bouncing around from one coach to the other and they're looking for that magic gold dust to sprinkle over their player, but ultimately you should be trying to find a coach that really acts in the best interest of your child and is able to send similar messages than what you do as parents.

L: Yeah, that's, that's, that's a great story, Johnny and I, and I think that we have to remember why we’re doing what we’re doing as coaches. And then I guess a word to, you know, the players that that might be listening and that is look for that in a coach. Look for a mentor. Don't just take the person who will run you through with everybody else and teach you a few technical things. And then on your way you don't have a connection with, especially if you’re going to be a high performing player I think you need a, you’re gonna put a lot of time in your sport maybe is a better way to say it. You want to find someone who really takes an interest in you and cares about how you're doing, but will also tell you when you're going down the wrong path and will help you to learn from that. But I wanted to throw this out. I wanted to hear what you thought Johnny. We’re talking about the coaches are extremely important and have this great influence. And then I thought, well, why? Why is this the case? Why? And I think it, it comes down to the fact, and I think I alluded this earlier, that sport and tennis is such an emotional environment. This is truly one of the few places in a kid's life where success and failure happen a lot. You can check the scorecard often, right? Each practice, each match it's done in front of others who are evaluating you and you’re failing more in this than maybe any other part of your life. Hopefully you’re not failing as much in school. So you’re failing as you should in tennis a lot and you’re learning how to deal with that failure, right? And you're going to need a coach who can support you or coaches who can support you through this process, can help you to stay motivated, to keep learning, to keep pushing because we lose so many kids to other interests around ages 12 and 13 and maybe even before, and we all speculate why. We're doing some research in this area, but it's my belief that if the kids have a connection with a coach or coaches who care about them, they will probably stay in the game. And that's one of the biggest issues that tennis has because it's very much parent driven and often you don't have that connection with a coach, you're not on a team. So you're missing out on, I think what we experienced in team sports is that we'd go and we play it and he had his coach and does coach is going to be with you for three months or six months. And in some cases like for you maybe for years and you are together a lot and there was an opportunity for these learning moments that really don't happen, I don't think enough in group lessons or when player doesn't have that connection with the coach. The only thing I would say about this is if you look at the mentoring literature, so for one moment talking about research here, there's a sense that to really truly help someone to look like big brother, big sister types of
programs, you need at least 18 months. Now, I think coaches get it done quicker because of the emotional environment in which we are...

J: So many ups and downs.

L: The failure and the successes. And it's right in front of you and you're dealing with it, but that speaks to the idea. So also parents that are listening, find yourself a good coach who cares about your child and stay with them. That's the most important thing. And then if you, hopefully they're competent in teaching the game, but if they care about them then you got a shot, right? Then you got a shot and then you know that you can trust them. But too often, like you said, we're, we're looking for the immediate fix or let's just find a coach who is awesome with the serve. Okay, but this kid might not listen to the coach because they got no relationship.

J: Well, ultimately again, I mean this directs it all to the parents that are seeking out coaches, I mean you're seeking out a coach because you want a coach that has the skill to help your child better their skills, but you stay with that coach because of the, the other, the intangible or the character development, the life skill, the person that actually deeply cares about developing your child as a person as well. You don't leave that person because they haven't pushed your child from 300 in the country to top 100 in two months. When you make a change and as you say this path is a, it is a long term development, right? It's long term development. 18 months to have a deep impact. If you trust that coach's ability to teach the technique and tactical level of the game, which if you do your homework and research, you'll find lots of coaches out there that are very good in those areas. Lots of coaches, but ultimately you stay with them. You stick out the course, you give that coach the time to really help spread the same messages that maybe you do as parents to your kids and you have to be able to give that ability to be able to nurture the person and the player, not just one or the other. I think that's really, really important messages is this the actual bouncing around every two months from one coach to the next because their ranking hasn't shot through the roof or you haven't got the results you thought you're going to get right away is not a reason to leave the coach and it actually only hurts the child and the player more because every time you make a change there's another at least six months of adjusting to a new person. And in your case you said the literature says 18 months to really get to that point of deep meaningful impact. If you're going in 18 months and you're seeing eight different coaches or six different coach or four different coaches, you're never going to be able to see what the impact is at that player. It's like with any policies that get put out there, right, or change in philosophies, you really don't see the impact of things until 10 years down the road. Let's look back to when Player Development was started 10, 12 years ago with Patrick McEnroe and Jose Higueras coming in and then look at some of the successes the women are having now and a lot of the top emerging boys coming through. I mean that is a process of working with the private sector, trying to establish a philosophy, a culture, improving relationships, having impacts on players. This has taken 10 years to get to a process and it's still not there yet. It's always going to continue
to evolve and you get a little bit better. But things take time and when you're looking for that coach, you seek them out because you know, they've got the skill level to help your child, but then give them the ability to stick it out to see how they can really have deep impact on the player and the person. Yeah.

35:38

L: Well I think, you know, if we were to summarize some of the messages here for coaches, you know, understand the influence you have on your athletes and your players. Uh, secondly, develop yourself in many ways because you never know what skill sets you're going to have to rely on to help another human being. So keep learning, keep getting better, don't get stagnant in what you're doing. And I think for players, you should have a coach that cares about you. You should make that a priority, who has an interest, who asks you questions, who will listen to you, who challenge you emotionally, uh, and wants the best for you. For parents, I think it's some, a similar message that let's not bounce around so much. If you look at what this Thai coach did, he had a relationship with these kids. If this was a coach who was new to these kids, I think this ends in tragedy. Unfortunately. I'm so happy that this coach was there to save those kids. And not that we should be planning for worst case scenarios when it comes to coaches. But if you really want a coach to make a difference, you need, like you said, to play the long term and let them make that impact over time. Uh, and, and then the bouncing around only serves to stunt growth, to limit their development. And honestly, what are you teaching your child that people are pawns to be used in your game? Or is this about developing true professional relationships where, yes, you're helping me get what I want to be the best tennis player I can be, but I'm committed and I trust your coaching. And these are the kind of, I think the, the kind of adult relationships we would want to see in a corporate setting. You're going to have to develop these relationships with other adults where you're following, sometimes you're leading sometimes, but you have to be able to trust other people and you have to commit to the long term relationship. You just can't use people as pawns to get what you want. Now some people still try, but typically those people end up moving along and getting frustrated and they're very difficult to work with. So all these things, you know, I really challenge the parents to, to think about the longterm consequences of the short term decisions and what are you teaching your child when you're doing these things? Not that anybody's going to be perfect. I'm, I'm sure I make mistakes as a parent, but, uh, at least try to be aware of these things as you're going through.

38:09

J: So, yeah, no, that's been great. We're going to wrap up today's episode of compete like a champion. Larry, I mean it's, it really was a fantastic story and yeah, there was a little bit of tragedy with, unfortunately, the Thai Navy diver and um, you know, we know there was a reading upon, there was a quite emotional service for that guy, but all the people that help them and get them through and ready to the soccer coach, coach Ake, what a phenomenal job he did. I mean, what a phenomenal job. So hopefully we've, we've taken you through the powerful influence of a coach. Really. How important is the coach in your child's development? And we're in a player's development and we'll be back next time for another episode of compete, like a champion. For more
information. You can go to www.playerdevelopment.usta.com and on there, you'll be able to find multiple resources from mental skills to athletic development to everything that player development does. And, uh, if you want to reach out, there is plenty of contact information on the website. Feel free to, uh, to get online and, and go to that site. Larry, it's been a pleasure.

39:12
L: As always, Johnny. Thank you. You do such a good job of leading these conversations. Just letting me riff here.

39:17
J: Hopefully I, uh, yeah, hopefully I don't lead us astray too much, but we'll, uh, we'll be back next time for another episode of compete like a champion. See you next time. And that's it for today's episode of compete like a champion. For more information, visit our website playerdevelopment.usda.com and you can email as a teamusa@usta.com this is Dr. Larry Lauer, coach Johnny Parkes signing off until next.