

Coach Margie Zesinger

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SPEAKERS

Margie Zesinger, Larry Lauer, Johnny Parks

J Johnny Parks 00:05
Welcome to Compete like a Champion. You're here with Dr. Larry Lauer, mental skill specialist with USTA player development and coach Johnny Parks with IMG Academy. Today we bring you another episode and we've got a guest on we haven't had a guest on for a while we got an absolute cracker for you with Margie Zesinger, who is head of Girls and Women's Tennis at IMG Academy. Margie, thanks for joining us. Really appreciate your time.

M Margie Zesinger 00:29
Thank you. That was an awesome intro, Johnny. And Larry, I'm glad to be here.

J Johnny Parks 00:34
Yeah, well, we've been wanting to get you on for a little while because I just think what I've I've been at IMG now I think nine months. And we've we've known each other a long time we've known each other and we used to do camps together at USTA, I used to come and help us out and and help coach some camps with with the top girls in the country. And you know, a couple funny stories of meeting up at Wimbledon kind of randomly, but we won't go too far into that. But I guess before we really get going is I'm going to hand it over to you, Margie and maybe give us the listeners a little insight into your background and how you've come to be where you are now.

M

Margie Zesinger 01:12

Great. Thank you, Johnny. I'm originally from Pennsylvania. And how I ended up in Florida was and Larry's giving a thumbs up because of fellow Pennsylvania. I started tennis when I was in fifth grade and the story is absolutely crazy. I was at a dance. And the prize of the evening was a year membership to a local tennis club. And so I actually won the contest or the drawing. And I started taking tennis lessons at the local tennis club. And from there on, I just developed really a true passion and love for the sport to be the best. I was the student that would stay after and serve on my own. You know on Sundays, I would ask the local manager to turn on the light so I could run sprints on my own. So I was very self driven from day one and just had that love for the sport. I grew up watching you know, Steffi Graf, Mary Pierce, Monica Seles, those were my inspirations when I was younger. And then from there, I played pool out Junior tennis. And then I went to a division one in Virginia and James Madison, and I played number one on the team. And we are in a very strong conference at the time, we had a lot of top 10 teams in Division One we had William and Mary, which was coached by Brian Calvus at the time who now coaches UNC, we had Old Dominion and VCU. So it was a very competitive conference in D1, from there, I had this internal drive to be a tennis coach. And so my first opportunity was to always be at the best place and always be number one and be at the top. And so when I was 20 years old, I had come down to voluntary at the time, I had also gone When I was younger, 13 years old, 14 years old to the camps, and train there. But I was always drawn to voluntary at the time, because it was the best of the best. And then not only did I want to go there, Coach there, I wanted to be the best female coach that you could possibly be because at that time, there were absolutely zero coaches in the academy scene or in player development seem very limited. Mostly there were college coaches that were females. So that was my drive was to be the best female coach that I could be over time that that mission has changed. Now I see a little bit of a bigger picture. And my mission is to influence thousands of girls lives. And so when I first started coaching, it was really about me and my dreams and wanting to be at Wimbledon, Johnny or, or be at the French Open, or the US Open but as time has gone by, it's become less about me and more about influencing girls and tons of players their lives. And and that has been really my big change. And there was a moment in my career where that changed. I was out in Las Vegas, and we were fortunate enough to spend some time with Andre Agassi. And he was mentored and Gil Race as well which you guys know very well who's just an amazing person and just a heart of gold. So we were spending some time with Andre and he had mentioned to the player that I was coaching and he was mentoring her at the time and he said, You know my career changed at 27 years old when I stopped focusing on tennis and I realized that I'm playing for kids. And he said that from that day on, he played, you know, he played his best tennis. And for me, I had that moment when Andre said that I was on the road traveling, and I thought about it. And I said, I'm doing this job for kids. It's not about me anymore. So, you know, that's kind of a summary of my evolution of where I'm

at right now. And so, yeah.



Johnny Parks 05:23

That's awesome Margie, and you definitely, you know, you touched on it there, but it definitely strike me as somebody that has relationships ingrained in your philosophy, you know, that it's all about building strong relationships, and all that, and everything that goes with it, it's not so much the relationships trying to build on the core is just as much as what you're doing off the court, maybe you can dive a little bit deeper into, you know, like you said, your, maybe your philosophy has changed over the years, but maybe give us a bit more of an in depth insight into your philosophy and, and how you go about it.



Margie Zesinger 05:56

One philosophy that I have had the whole time, which actually Nick has influenced on me, is I look at normal kids, and I treat them like superstars. And then when I have the superstar, tennis players, I treat them as normal as possible. So that has always been one of my main philosophies, I've noticed that in Nick, or in any of the great coaches, they just, they don't care what level of player they're working with, you know, and I think that's really important. Another philosophy of mine is I look at each player, like with a blank slate, I don't judge them, when they come to me, I don't think in my mind how they should play or how they should be, I observe them over a long period of time, and little by little influence them. I think, a lot of times as coaches, we think a player should play a certain way, or their technique should be a certain way, or just how they even act on the court, their body language should be it. So I kind of look at each player and see what works best for them under pressure. And, you know, also from, you know, the tennis perspective, I think, giving the opportunity to teach all the different tactics and in tennis and making sure that they have every part of their game so that as they go as they age that they don't reach any limits, and that you expose them to coming into the net, you've exposed them to playing at the baseline, you've worked on every skill set, so that they have all of the tools. So that's one thing that, you know, I've held myself accountable into our program, Johnny is, you know, not just spending time at the baseline, but also making sure that the girls are coming into the net and working on those volley skills, so that they have them that they need them. That's more on the tennis line. But I think treating each each player as an individual, and creating an environment that that individual wants to come to every day. And having we talked a lot about we use the word team a lot, yet we're in a very individual sport. And I think even just the past few weeks, if you watched some of the tennis channel with the NCAA women's college championships, it was just so awesome to see such camaraderie and energy in our sport. And I think that is needed at all levels. And the bottom line is a junior tennis player or college tennis player, or the top professionals

that have to be happy each day. So creating that environment, where the girls are happy is really important.



Larry Lauer 08:44

That's great, Margie and you know, really appreciate you sharing your philosophy and the emphasis on relationships and individualizing and getting to know the person and making the situation best for them. I'm interested in on on the maybe the life skills or the character side a little bit more, could you tell us more about things that you emphasize with girls, young women, in terms of can be life skills could be character qualities that you think are important. And then maybe how you go about that.



Margie Zesinger 09:17

That takes time. I think creating an environment with the girls I know I can talk specifically with, with the girls program that we have that Johnny is a huge part of each day. The girls are competing, and they're, you know, on the court, they're going against each other they're playing practice UTR matches, it's very competitive, but off the court, we just emphasize the importance of, of treating one another with respect. Just a great example of this was last week was when some of the girls are leaving to go home for the summer. They're hugging and crying. You know, and I think that's really big. You know, that's it. You don't see that very often in in a girls tennis environment. You don't see it on the WTA. And I don't think it's a bad thing. I think it's an amazing thing to have these emotional connections with teammates, because it's such an individual sport. And I would love to see more girls have that even at the top training together and supporting one another and emotionally connected with one another. outside the court think it only makes the sport stronger. You see on the men's side, how a lot of them trained together. And I think we've shied away with it over the years over the past decade where, you know, the female just practices on her one on one court with you know, male hitting partner, and she's very isolated. And I think a team environment can be very beneficial. Again, I'll go back to the college tennis, what you saw on TV, and those girls have gotten better. I've seen some of those girls that were in the finals, as Junior tennis players come through the Academy, and to see how they're playing now they've evolved their game, they're looking more and more like professional tennis players. And so they must be doing something right, in college tennis and having that camaraderie. I think also, it's also unique to cheer one another on I even look at their social medias from some of the girls at the Academy, and they're reposting when one of their fellow Academy students wins a tournament. And that's just the beautiful thing in girls tennis, because I think that's so rare. And we have to keep embracing that. And keep leading on on that aspect in our industry.



Larry Lauer 11:38

Yeah, appreciate that. And so the importance placed on respect, while you're competing with one another which can be conflicting values or qualities, right, a lot of times we compete, it's it's rivalry, it's it becomes negative, it becomes adversarial. But what you're emphasizing is that we can compete and be friends, we can compete and respect one another, we can actually cheer for one another even even though maybe at some point, we're gonna have to play one another.



Margie Zesinger 12:10

Exactly. And behaviors, everything. I mean, I think when you when I walk around the girls playing matches, I look at their behavior. And it's been remarkable over the years, for the circumstances that we put them in, we create, we create really tough conditions for them day in and day out at the Academy, playing some of their friends or, you know, putting pressure after a full day of school, they're playing a really tight UTR match. I mean, the levels of stress that they go in, day in and day out are very high. And on a daily basis, their behavior, their body language has been remarkable over the years. And I think it's just keep leading that as coaches at the academy or anywhere, wherever we are, we have to keep emphasizing and and praising them. And that's a really important part is praising when they're Wow, you guys were behaving so well in your matches and, and make sure that they get that message. And they feel that that positive reinforcement on that last night I was even I had run into somebody that randomly had watched a tournament this past weekend with one of our IMG girls. And I know Johnny knows her little Abby, and she was playing and this guy was watching her. And he said, Wow, she was from IMG. And she was winning the match. And the score was wrong. And she actually took a point away from herself and admitted what the score was and the sportsmanship that she showed. And I think that's really, really remarkable. And we have to just keep praising behaviors like that over and over.



Larry Lauer 13:45

That's tremendous. And Margie, how would you deal with someone then that you're praising most most of the time, which I think is the way they see the behavior that you want? But also, how do you deal with players maybe who aren't demonstrating what you're looking for at the moment? How would you handle that?



Margie Zesinger 14:04

Handle each case differently, each girl differently. Usually not in the moment, when

someone is behaving badly in a match or in a practice? That's not when it's addressed. I usually not overlook it, but just kind of continue speaking tennis language with them, and then the behavior is addressed at another time. I think that has been the most effective over time. I've changed my style. I don't yell. You know, I don't think that's really well received in many ways anymore. I think in general this, the new generations are more you want to have the respect of them, but you want to treat them and speak to them like adults, and I think that's really important. I did have a girl this year. After one of her matches. She put her rackets in the in the trash can. And she put five rackets in the trash can after her match and out of frustration, and I didn't do anything at that moment. And the next day, I said, I'd like, I'd like to talk with you. And she comes, you know, very nervous into my office. And she thought that I was going to, you know, yell at her or punish her have some kind of consequences at that time, and most coaches would want a consequence, but I sat and I spoke to her like an adult. From that day on this happened at the beginning of the year, not once, did she ever do it again. And I think the message was very, very clear. But that was the style that worked for her. And I know, we have so many different cultures here at the Academy. So you have to really understand the culture and the individual to really trigger how they will learn from their mistakes. And so in this case, I didn't want to embarrass her, I didn't want to call her out and others or punish her, I wanted to speak to her and, and it was really effective. And I think that you have to keep the culture in mind on what really will break through on improving their behavior. I also have, Larry sorry, one more thing is, think, not negative behavior. But when you want to stimulate someone to bring more energy or have a certain body language, or maybe look like they're working harder, and in the practice, I have many girls that are not casual looking, but they're very relaxed and, and slower moving. And I've learned that actually over the years, that's a certain style, it's a certain personality that works for them. And actually, I've seen some of those players succeed really well, under big pressure moments, or they're a little bit more, you know, some of those girls that there's girls that walk like they're, you know, playing match point, every point and then there's girls that are walking like they're in a park or they're, they're in line at Starbucks, you know, and I think I've learned not to actually judge that because I've, like I said, I've seen success. So again, it goes back to the coaching philosophy that we talked about at the beginning of the show, which is clean slate, let's see what works for that individual. If we can influence a little bit to make better than, then we will. But so that's another aspect.



Johnny Parks 17:24

I mean, you brought up so many, so many important points, especially in an environment like this and dealing with different cultures. But one thing I see do remarkably well, and talking about the stresses of creating the competitive environment in practice, I think that most coaches around the country would agree that that is the toughest part of creating a

practice environment is creating the stresses and demands of a tournament. And that's something you do really well. But what goes along with that is also creating an environment like a safety net. And a buzzword in the high performance world seems to be at the minute is this psychological safety, meaning if the more that people feel a safety towards what they're doing, they're willing to feel more comfortable in what they're doing, they're willing to explore more, they're willing to get a little bit more creative. And that's something that works really well, if you created the high stress environment, but didn't also create the environment of that safety net and the tools for them to handle that stress. I think you can almost be creating, you know, this anywhere, not IMG, but anywhere, you can some economy inadvertently creating environment that's that's built around, sort of negative stress. So what you'd be able to do is create the stress, normalize that and then create the positive strategies around dealing with it. And again, part of that is this you mentioned team is creating a team atmosphere where yes, these girls are going to battle with each other on the court. But because they're all friends, there's so much, there's so much time that they spend together, which is cooperative, and helping each other and pushing each other. So they go to battle with each other, yes, but they also go to war with each other on the practice court and others in order to make each other better. And that is, I think, a really important dynamic that has to be created when you are creating those elevated stress levels. So I just wanted to sort of highlight that because that's something I'm incredibly impressed with with coming here. The other thing you bring up is the different cultures. Now, I grew up in a environment in England that was like a boarding type sports arts artsy school. And there we had, I think something like 120 different cultures. And so it's interesting when you go into that environment because you don't you're not you're not, you know, you don't have you don't have this understanding and awareness of other cultures and how they operate and their, you know, the psychology behind how the culture is maybe formulated their personalities or who they are as people. How do you address maybe some of those cultural sensitivities and those differences. Obviously IMG in the Tennis Academy, we have many, many different cultures as well, people from all over the world, how do you go about addressing those? Maybe sensitivities and differences?

M

Margie Zesinger 20:09

That's a great question. I think over time, I mean, I've been at the academy for almost 18 years. And I think it takes a lot of experience to understand that it's a process as a coach that I've grown. And I also think, with the cultures, understanding them, but also not limiting them that, you know, this person is from this country, this is how they are, you know, I think that's a really important mindset to, to not have, you know, again, it goes back to the main coaching philosophy, it's a blank slate, but in the back of my mind, there is always, you know, an awareness of each culture and not to push, you know, I think we

have a team around, you know, there's some countries where Larry, they don't really believe in sports psychology. And if I'm in a situation where a girl is from a certain country, and she doesn't believe in sports psychology, I can educate the parents and educate the player as much as possible and share my passion on how much I believe in mental conditioning. But there comes a point where you understand how to back off and say, Look, you educated each culture on what we you know, the resources we have at the academy or wherever you are training your player, but not to push that them over the edge where they don't feel comfortable, they don't feel comfortable with sports psychology, I'll back off a little bit and, and emphasize another area. So I think understanding when to push and when to back off is important. I think communication style is really key. With different cultures. Again, believe it or not, most cultures have similar to how they want to be communicated if they don't want to be called out in a large group and embarrassed. I think that applies for every, every girl, no matter where she's from, they want to be treated as an individual. You know, I think these are commonalities, the commonalities between the cultures are more, there's more commonalities than differences, I would say. But style, humor, I think is really important in coaching. And you have to be very careful with how you use humor, you know, and understand the message, you're trying to connect with each student on a daily basis. And whatever you can do to connect into that culture, that individual, you keep getting better as a coach, and you keep learning about them as a person, a commonality between all the cultures is showing that you care about them as a person first, and then you see them as a tennis player Next, you know, when I initially walk up to the girls, they can see on my face that I'm looking at them more as as a girl than a tennis player. And then we start the tennis chat, that's pretty much every day I walk up to Johnny, you see me walking to every single group or, you know, every single girl and I, my first initial reaction is not really to talk about tennis in that minute, and then we dive into the tennis. Again, I think it's a finesse that you develop over time, if you're a young coach watching or listening to this podcast, it takes time, you know, it takes time to understand that certain finesse and of communicating to players from all around the world.



Larry Lauer 23:30

Yeah, truly, it comes from a lot of experience and probably some trial and error, right and making some mistakes like we all have, and then you learn from it. And you talked about team Margie. And I think it's it's truly you know, important to the players feel that they have a team around them even in a sport like tennis and individual sport. But how would you as a coach, you're talking about the coach now, and how the coach communicates to the players. But how do you use team for the coaches? Because it sounds like through your experience, you probably had people who were helping you along the way and helping you learn some of these lessons. How do you how do you try to use team as as part of

your culture, with your coaches?

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Margie Zesinger 24:17

Going back and I love how you said you learn from your mistakes. And I think for me, one evolution that I experienced as a coach was when I coached one on one with a player for three years. We had an up and coming rising junior and taking her to the pro ranks and I was with her privately and at that time I realized how important it is to have a team because she was hearing my voice but at the same time to keep that relationship fresh. I wanted a team around her I would bring in you know some days I would bring Nick to the court or other coaches. I think it's really important to keep a relationship fresh when you're coaching and having that player understand that there's a team around them, they feel a support all around them, I think communicating with our fitness coaches or mental coaches or the physios and the player feels that they have all those people around them caring, again, it creates that happy environment for them. So tennis is in very, very can be a lonely sport, it's an individual sport. So having that team feeling where Hey, I have more than one person caring about me and talking about me makes them feel important. So I think that's been really a huge philosophy. Again, it's not about me as how good I am as a coach, it's about an environment, that we're all working together to help the player as a team.

L

Larry Lauer 25:52

I appreciate that such a great insight, because it is a lonely sport. And, you know, mental health has become a very hot topic very recently with the French Open and Osaka and I don't know, so much get into Osaka. But, you know, obviously, IMG has players there full time and players who are there a lot, then you have sports psychology there as well. And you've you've talked about how you make it about relationships, but putting that team around them, right, it gives them that that support that, that buffer, that sense that Yeah, they're cared about. And it's more than just being a good player, it's about who they are as a person. And as such a such a tremendous philosophy where, you know, young people can flourish because they feel supported. And I also like it because if you look at like the resilience literature, it's not just about total just support from the sense of encouraging people but also pushing them. So it seems like you've been able to marry this idea of being supportive, being positive, being encouraging, and treating them as a person individually. And yet pushing them, which is the key to developing these resilient, confident champions who you can throw in a different environments and they can perform, right. And so it sounds like you've been able to marry those two in your philosophy. And it's such a good example of, you know, how you can push people, but in a positive way.

M

Margie Zesinger 27:29

Exactly. And one of our biggest things that has been very beneficial to the kids is, for example, let's say Johnny, his stat, his team, our strength and conditioning coaches, they come to the courts every day, they come to tournaments, and watch the kids, you know, our mental coaches come to the tournaments, or that camaraderie with the team around them is so important to have in our sport. And we need to continue to do that not only just with our top pros, but even at the beginning stages is creating that team around, you know, even if they're just starting out in tennis, just feeling that there's a team behind them that is pushing them and supporting and communicating with one another that that team is communicating about that player on a daily basis.

L

Larry Lauer 28:17

You're going back to the question, and as a coach, do you have other coaches over the years that you would reflect with on your experiences, you know, I know as a young sports psychology coach, mental performance coach, having someone to talk to or a couple people to talk to about your mistakes about your frustrations? Is that the kind of environment that you've also built? Where you know, coaches are talking with one another reflecting with one another? And how has that affected your your development?

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Margie Zesinger 28:50

Yeah, I think the the camaraderie of the staff is really important. I think being a team and supporting one another and being open minded with one another and, and being able to communicate positives and negatives with one another. I think that's really important. I know that I can pick up the phone and talk to Johnny any second and hear what his perspective is on a player and, or I'll call another coach. And I think being open minded as a coach is really, really important that hearing other people's perspectives, even if they you don't necessarily agree with them, sometimes I process things and realize, wow, that coaches right, you know, and I think that's a really important thing is not to put up a wall right away with somebody who has a different opinion on you on on a player or a philosophy. You know, I think it's really important to understand why do they feel that way? And take that into consideration. I think that's really important. Our sports psychologists or our, you know, strength and conditioning coaches, or our physio therapists You may have a different perspective on, let's say, the amount of training we're doing or, you know, what we should be doing as a tennis program. And I think staying open minded and communicating and having debriefings, and I know Johnny, we have a weekly meeting, we call it a pod meeting. And it's kind of just an open forum for us to communicate. And it's amazing to see the pulse that everybody has on, on the delivery of our program for our kids, and how aware they are of where kids are at. And I think the

more communication wherever you work, if you work in a federation, or an academy, or you know, even just a smaller tennis club, the more you communicate with your, your staff and your team as coaches, the better you become as a whole. So it's really, really important to do that.



Johnny Parks 30:52

Yeah, that's so important, and you bring up those pod meetings ends, that is also a place where creating the environment of respect, I mean, that's the impressive environment that you've created. I think we've got coaches that have played at the highest levels of the tour, we've got coaches with tremendous amounts of experience with maybe if they haven't played at the high level, they've got tremendous amounts of coaching experience with the players that they've coached and where they've taken them. We've also you also hire good Pete, good, younger people. And when I say good, I define that as coaches with a growth mindset that want to learn that want to improve that want to absorb as much as they can from everyone around them. And I'll give him a little shout out. But Nathan has just come in recently, you know, coach, Nathan comes in, and he's always in our office here. And he's, he's got an involved listening to the podcast, and then, you know, asks a tremendous amount of questions. And I know, he's out there on the court. And I see him asking lots of questions, too. And so it's having that mix of people that is built around mutual mutual respect, getting the people with the right personalities, meaning open minds, growth, mindset, learning, improving, being able to bring things to the table, with the more experienced coaches, I think is important dynamic. So that's really important. But I hope you don't mind if we switch gears, I'm going back to my my, my player identification data.



Margie Zesinger 32:13

One more thing on that, I'm going to go back to my story at the beginning, where it was all about me on my evolution, I wanted to be the best female coach, it was about what I wanted to do, and I'm with you on that it's more, I feel more of a responsibility of making the coaches around us succeed. I want the relationships with our coaches to be successful. It's not about me succeeding, it's about the whole team, I think that's a really important, you know, change. When you start as a coach, you kind of just focus on yourself. And then as you evolve over the years, it becomes wanting everyone around you to succeed.



Johnny Parks 32:50

I resonate deeply with that. And that's something that's probably one of the reasons why we get on so well in our professional relationship. Because respecting that it's we have

that responsibility, and that duty to not just help the players, but I think help coaches and other people around us or anyone around us really is, is serving, I think, opening up to serving a higher purpose than than looking out for our own backs, I guess. And I know that's something that I can resonate with that I've gone through that change. When I came out of playing and got into coaching, it was about trying to be the best I can be it still is about being the best you can be. But it's the the route that you get there is taking on the responsibility of helping others I think, and sometimes helping the others at the expense of you, maybe yourself and what you could be doing instead. But that's something that use you lead from the front with a new lead by example. Absolutely with that. So appreciate everything that you're doing on that front, but want to switch and I'm going to go back to my player ID days here. You said you were there. You've been there. 18 you've been here IMG 18 years. So you've seen players come and go, you've seen players start very young and make it through to the pro tour. I want to ask you in terms of the development of players, what do you think separates those that that reach their goals and those that don't meaning? There's a lot of players that come here at a young age and you know, they want to be number one in the world. They want to be professional players, they want to win slams, you know, when you see younger players come in what kind of indicates to you or tells you that they have a chance to be very successful in achieving their goals.

M

Margie Zesinger 34:27

Let's say two main things stand out to me over the years on both the boy side and girl side. And I think Johnny you and I see this on a daily basis. But you can show up on a Sunday at IMG and see Shintaro throwing a medicine ball on the on a wall by himself and nobody's watching him. There's just such an internal quiet mission that he has or that many players that have gone through the academy or the USTA player development and you can see this internal drive that's coming from them. And it's very quiet, it's not a loud show, they do the little extra, they pay attention to the details. And if nobody is watching, they're still paying attention to the details. I think that really stands out to me. Another moment for me that stands up that really separates a player. Even when I did, for example, the camps that the USTA Coco was Gauff was the player that was under my wing on one of the the national camp weeks. And I think it might have, she might have been 12 or 13 at the time. And what was so remarkable about her was her coach ability and tennis IQ combined. Meaning you could walk up to her and I actually had to speak to her like she was a high level coach, you know, she was on that level that you had, you could talk to her like she was a coach. And then there was a an IQ, which is for me the ability to immediately change or or improve the skill at that moment that I'm asking her to do. I mean, it's just an immediate adjustment. You know, if you tell her to put more spin on the serve, at that moment, she's gonna do it, you know. So I think just that openness,

that tennis IQ, is really, really high, to separate to really become successful, I'm going to add one more element, it's not the tennis, it's the foundation around the player. You know, I think the parents are always involved in high level athletes, when they're part of the team, I think, but having a really stable life outside of the court is important to create that foundation and character values for the long term that's really creating the champion, look at the men at the top of the game, their character, and you know, how Nadal and Federer and how they treat the men mentor, the young juniors, you see Federer walking around the junior slams, and he's hitting with the kids and you know, you know, communicating with the young and up and coming I think that's a sign of a really, really strong character. And I think that's internal and a champion. And so yeah, I think those are some qualities that, that stand out to me.



Larry Lauer 37:28

A nice, little, boom, boom, boom, boom, for our audience, things to think about, right? When you're looking at players and that these things you're talking about, for the most part, a lot of it's under their control. So it's not that foundation that that requires, yeah, well, but and that's an area where IMG or player development can, can be really supportive and helping an environment like you've been talking about. And then the rest of it's kind of under your control, right. Like, even to some extent your tennis IQ or athletic IQ. I was thinking of, if you're watching the game, or you're spending time talking with coaches about the game, and then like you said, being open. So for players listening, there's a lot to this, that that you can take direct control over.



Margie Zesinger 38:18

Larry, you know that tennis IQ can be developed. But you know, I know, you do a lot of journaling at the USTA and the camps I've seen you guys have the kids sit down and reflect. And I've seen girls evolve or players evolve from when they first let's say they do a mat we do match debriefings. Now we do it on video after their matches, but they start out with one word answers. And over a year's time, they are as good as a coach in in analyzing their matches. So I think it's a skill that you can definitely acquire, like you said.



Johnny Parks 38:55

So I want to just jump in and then and comment on that about the video analysis after their matches. And Larry, we've talked about this in previous podcasts about letting the player reflect on what they've just gone through first, and not having the coach or the parent be quick to jump in and give them their opinion, ie like, Oh, you lost that because they hooked you on that point. And then that infiltrates the players mind to think that the

only reason they lost was because a player hooked them at 30 all or 4 all in the first set. And that is a really impressive thing, allowing the player to kind of think on their thoughts allowing the player when they've won, to be able to recognize why it was when the players lost, to help them through that moments by being able to kind of get them back to a rational thought process where they can then reflect about what it is that they need to do better next time. Or if they were to go back in that situation again, what they might do differently. And I think that's really important because if you don't capture that moment, win or lose, a lot of the learning can be lost. They've gone through that whole match and They've just learned nothing from it. So I think that the element you've created there is creating that safe space for them to be a, as you said, they create start with one word answers. And by the end, they're now like an open book. And that's because they feel more comfortable and confident doing it. And that's ultimately what our goal is, in any skill development and being comfortable to reflect is a skill that we're developing. So, yeah, I've got to really give you massive kudos on that. Because it's just again, it's another important life skill, we come back to that life and character building, that is definitely an element that you've provided the hits on that life skill development, and that character development, and you learn a lot. I mean, I was coaches, I mean, we get to go on the app and look at these interviews after the matches, I learned a lot from what the players say and how they say it, you know, and that gives you some information on then how to coach them or teach them next time you see them. So that's a great element, you've provided the But anyway, so we are we are running short of time here, Margie, and I wanted to leave you with it before I wrap up on, on maybe we have this drop the mic moment. And I know we've talked about a lot of different range of things here, or maybe three key points of information or key tips or, or helpful hints, tips, whatever you want to call it, that you can give to the players, parents or coaches in in creating a really positive environment, especially for the young female, what would you say would be your top three tips?

M

Margie Zesinger 41:33

I know it sounds so cliché, but really focus on the process versus the result. I saw a quote, you know, last week, you are not your ranking. And I think we have to start to really continue that culture about it's about what you're doing on a daily basis that you can control and not focusing so much on the UTR number or your WTA ranking or your ITF ranking or your points. And that success sneaks up when you least expect it. Your greatest wins happen, your greatest tournament wins happen when you least expect it. And that I've always loved it when Billie Jean King said that, you know, failure is feedback and interpreting feedback every time and we just you know ended this podcast with the journaling and the communicating and growing from your failure, both as a player as a parent and a coach. Look at look at those moments to to get better.



Johnny Parks 42:32

That's awesome, Margie Well, I know we've run out of time here, but really, really appreciate you taking the time to join us. And it's awesome. Yeah, absolutely.



Margie Zesinger 42:43

I don't know if I enjoyed it, because Larry's from Pennsylvania as well. So that that really probably brought the element out for enjoyment.



Larry Lauer 42:51

There's a lot of good things that happened in Pennsylvania.



Margie Zesinger 42:53

Exactly. And Johnny, it's amazing working with you on a daily basis. We couldn't have you know, better, better team with you.



Johnny Parks 43:02

I appreciate that. And it's absolutely fantastic working with you and learning from you every day. And I'm still happy to be connected to Larry and sort of my USTA buddies, I guess from the previous role. And you know, it's just fantastic being able to listen to you both and share and share information and just keep growing and learning. So appreciate everything that you're doing Margie and again, Larry and I both appreciate your time jumping on on the podcast this week. So thank you.



Margie Zesinger 43:29

Thank you so much.



Johnny Parks 43:30

Well, that's a wrap for this week's episode of Compete like a Champion, absolutely brilliant information from Margie Zesinger there and if you want to reach out to Margie, you can find her on social media channels on Instagram on LinkedIn. If you want if you can contact her directly if you can find her on the social channels. If not, you can reach out to myself or Larry on twitter at Larry Lauer at Johnny Parks One anytime and we can put you in touch with Margie directly for any more resources or information regarding

anything to do with player development. You can go on their website player development.usta.com but until next week, well we'll come back with you with another episode. We are checking out.