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NATIONAL PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS UNIVERSITY**

ARSENESCU FLORIAN

PhD THESIS

**COORDINATOR:
TÜDÖS ŞTEFAN (University Professor, PhD)**

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2014**

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PhD THESIS

**CONDITIONS, PSYCHO-SOCIAL AND FINANCIAL
CHARACTERISTICS IN PROMOTING
PROFESSIONAL TENNIS IN ROMANIA**

**COORDINATOR:
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INTRODUCTION

In the sports environment, greater and greater importance is granted to funding and developing structures for obtaining performance, which, once achieved, lead to fulfilment of tasks such as: sporting results develop and promote national identity nourishing the national pride feeling of the citizens. Sports successes are one of the most important instruments for consolidating and promoting country brands, as international prestige helps valorising country image and places its mark directly and indirectly on the sale of products and services. Sports performance creates professional and moral models which can be used to stimulate and influence the young generation.

All human actions pursue reaching socially recognized performance. Improving human activity represents a priority for the economic, political environment as well as for the individual. Consequently, the management of resources to support sporting activity must be performing and must lead to rationalization, discovery, transformation and capitalizing these resources.

The current research has as purpose supporting players on their way to great performance, a way which is full of road blocks.

The main reasons for choosing this research topic were the following:

- The fact that this topic is very hot considering the fact that funding tennis has been moved from state budget to private funds.
- This area is insufficiently researched thus, the topic is novel.
- The answers we shall provide during this research are important for further support and development of tennis.
- Funding tennis is exclusively left as a task for the family, the family becoming a critical factor for this activity and this leads to many question marks with respect to performance achievement.

The purpose of this research is to emphasize the fact that tennis funding has been moved from state budget to private funds, mainly seen as a parents' task.

An important factor involved in sports performance is represented by the social status of parents, their profession and to what extent this status positively or negatively influences the education and the results of the player.

The critical analysis is provided by the PhD student considering his own 9-10 years of experience regarding parents supporting players and their involvement in players' preparation, as well as their influence upon the player's attitude and behaviour.

Private initiative has had in recent years much better results in the female circuit as compared to the male one, which is explainable by earlier maturity of

girls versus boys which is reflected in game quality, which is lower in girls and better in case of boys.

The purpose of the research is represented on the one hand by studying the developed countries funding models and systems compared to the situation in post-communist countries whose GDP is comparable to ours, as the Budget of the Romanian Tennis Federation which is comparable with other budgets of European developed and developing countries.

The environment comprised in the research is composed of players aged between 10-14, as well as their parents, who will be given questionnaires with respect to their social status and the means of understating the performance phenomenon.

In our activity, we managed to determine most parents whom we cooperated with to understand the fact that performance comes foremost from education and moral support of the parents.

Finding, presenting and promoting alternative funding sources may represent a new beginning in tennis development and in the players' development, a new way of regarding tennis for the children, their parents and Romanian Tennis Federation which is responsible for its promotion.

PART II

PRELIMINARY RESEARCH

Organizing the preliminary research

Research assumptions

The performance capacity of the player is emerging from his/ her somatic and psychical system developed in ontogenesis under the influence of hereditary factors, environment and educational factors.

The theories existent in specialized literature (such as the Conceptual Context Model, or the Ecological Theory of Bronfenbrenner) claim that human development depends on several contexts such as: the cultural system where the individual is born, his/her subculture and community, family, persons, objects and the relationships in his/ her immediate environment these context interacting systemically.

The child brings to the ontogenesis his/ her biological construction. He has the capacity of internalizing the education influences of the environment:

in his/ her immediate vicinity is the **microsystem, immediate environment** (representing the people and physical objects the child has direct contact with: house, family, toys and playground, peers, school, church, teachers, sports group).

Within the microsystem where the child is developing, the **family** is very important, being the first to support the child and to ensure his/ her survival and development in early ontogenesis - the first social environment where individual behave as human beings. From professional abilities, culture acquisition and specialized culture to self -image, self-respect and confidence, capacity to overcome obstacles as an adult, the entire personality of the subject is decisively influenced by the quality of interactions that he / she had during childhood with his/ her parents.

The family is the one which ensures integration of the child in human life means, facilitating primary learning of rational and affective behaviours, living norms, cooperation and problem solving which come up in relation to nature, to other people or to himself/ herself.

The family performs internal integration – internal development of the child in agreement with the exterior environment, as well as external integration, by means of which the child coordinates his/ her actions to those of his parents, grandparents or with those whom his family interacts with, thus regulating his/ her activity .

The first years in the child's life - where the family role is vital, as it represents "the educational instance"- are decisive for the subsequent development of the child, for acquiring self-conscience and his transformation into a social being. By means of the family, the society "impresses" its structures upon the child's personality and as a consequence upon the future teenager and adult. Due to the socializing process developed at the level of the family, youths develop their attachment and their relationship capacity, acquire their first notions with respect to cooperation, duty, responsibility, disciplining their own needs and impulses, lack of permission.

In case of professional players, in case of whom plying sports needs to start during childhood, the family role is decisive for providing guidance and supporting the sports activity of the child.

According to Bronfenbrenner's theory, the immediate environment is integrated to the middle system(which represent the systemic organization of the micro –system in localities which include the child). **The exterior system** – integrates the localities which include the child with the ones that don't include him/ her and with the ones which affect the child but do not include the child: for example, the household which includes the child and the workplace of the mother which affects the child together with the father's workplace. The exterior system is integrated **macrosystem** (which includes social classes, ethnic groups or religious

groups as well as particular regions or communities which share similar belief systems, social values and economic hazards or life-styles).

The development of the player is decisively influenced by the quality of family relationships, educational style of the parents, family climate, parental support and parental control etc.

The family climate is influenced by a series of factors amongst which E. Macavei (2001) lists: material conditions (income, budget residence), the marriage type, quality of behaviour of the marital partnership, education, spiritual affinity, attitude towards bringing up and educating children, intra –generations and inter-generation relations.

The dynamics of social circumstances, parents' personalities and their relationship are very important for the development path of the child.

Purpose of the research

The purpose of the exploratory research is establishing some aspects regarding social support that the teenager benefits from within the family for practicing professional sports.

Research hypothesis

Being aware of some aspects regarding the environment, climate and family support represent a decisive factor for developing performance in case of teenagers which play professional sports.

Stages, objectives and tasks of the preliminary research:

STAGE 1- Defining the topic and the purpose of the preliminary research

STAGE 2- Documentation for scientific and methodological substantiation of the research

STAGE 3- Organizing the findings research regarding some family support aspects as well as relationship of the child to his/ her family

STAGE 4- Data collection, data processing, analysis and interpretation of the preliminary research data

STAGE 5 – Drafting the preliminary research report regarding parental support and the teenager's family relationships – a decisive factor in developing tennis performance

Respondents of the preliminary research

The preliminary research was performed involving a group of 30 respondents. Each respondent is the parent of a teenager, professional tennis player. The preliminary research involved 13 male respondents and 17 female respondents, aged between 35 and 63 years old.

Research methods

Data collection methods

Observation

Talk and interview

Questionnaire

PART III

THE FORMATIVE EXPERIMENT REGARDING INTERVENTION AT THE LEVEL OF PSYCHOSOCIAL CONDITIONS AND PARTICULARITIES WHICH ARE SPECIFIC TO THE DEVELOPING THE PERFORMANCE CAPACITY OF TENNIS PLAYERS

CASE STUDIES

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

Our relief – formative experiment envisaged awareness with respect to some aspects regarding personality factors as well as regarding characteristics of the psychological overview of professional players anxiety with a view to elaborating psychological and social acting systems, focused on cases, with the purpose of psychological and somatic optimisation, as well as developing performance.

Our experiment started from the following hypotheses:

- Regular practice of sporting activity – professional tennis in our case – influences the development and personality organization (with respect to Extraversion, Emotional stability, Conscientiousness, Kindness and Autonomy).
- Regular practice of sporting activity – professional tennis in our case – influences the psychological image of anxiety (as regards anxiety as a trait), helping a balanced development at the level of the affective system and emotional balance.

The tests used are part of the tests batch CAS++ endorsed by the Romanian Psychologists College for an unlimited period of time.

Following using the Personality test CP5F, we mention the fact that no player obtained “high” or “low” scores on the social Desirability scale. Thus, top tennis performance tennis players, male or female did not negatively alter the responses – in order to leave the impression that they are different from others and did not positively alter them– with the purpose of creating a positive image of themselves.

The values of the Mann-Whitney test for extraversion, kindness conscientiousness, emotional stability and autonomy are: 10,5, 7,5, 12, 7, and 9. The critical table value for the Alpha level 0,05 and $N = 5$ (male), $N = 5$ (female) respectively is 2. As the calculated U values are higher than the critical table value and $p = 0,690$ (extraversion), $p = 0,310$ (kindness), $p = 1,000$ (conscientiousness), $p = 0,310$ (emotional stability), and $p = 0,548$ (autonomy), we may conclude that, with respect to the personality traits mentioned there are no statistically significant differences between male and female top performance tennis players.

The values of the Mann-Whitney test for anxiety in social evaluation cases, for anxiety in physical danger and novel, unusual situations, are: 9,5, 8, and 11. The critical table value for the Alpha level is 0,05 and $N = 5$ (male) and $N = 5$ (women) is 2. As the U calculated values are higher than the critical table value and $p = 0,548$ (anxiety in social evaluations cases), $p = 0,421$ (anxiety in physical danger cases) and $p = 0,841$ (anxiety in daily routine situations), we may conclude that, as regards the afore-mentioned facets of anxiety as a trait, there are no statistically significant differences between male and female top performance tennis players.

The values of the Mann-Whitney test for anxiety in daily routine situations is 3. As $p = 0,056$, we may conclude that with respect to anxiety as a trait in daily routine cases between male top tennis players with an average age of 31 (Median = 38) and top female tennis players aged 25 on average (Median = 35) there are marginally statistical significant differences. However, we need to mention that the two scores (38 and 35), place both males aged 31 as well as women aged 25 versus the average of the population (more exactly, is value a little higher than average).

We could notice also that the male top tennis players aged 31 have obtained higher scores (statistically insignificant), as compared to female top tennis players aged 25 as regards anxiety as trait in case of the three situations: social evaluation, physical danger, and new, unfamiliar situations (see table 2). Thus, in case of anxiety in social evaluation cases, but also in case of new unfamiliar situations anxiety the male tennis players have recorded a slightly higher than average score, whereas female tennis players had a medium score. Then, in case of anxiety in case of physical danger the male tennis players had a medium score, whereas female

tennis players obtained below average score. Considering the fact that female tennis players occupy a better WTA position as compared to male tennis players (ATP), we may recommend in case of investigated male tennis players, through adequate psychological training that they should become aware of the importance of maintaining their anxiety in cases of social evaluation and new unusual situation at a medium level. When we approach anxiety in cases of physical danger, it seems that an under medium level facilitates obtaining higher sporting performance. In case of emotional stability, autonomy, conscientiousness and kindness (table 1), the results place both samples (top males and female players), within the average population.

Psychical and somatic training with its specific breathing exercises, emphasizing abdominal exhaling, active exhaling and passively controlled inhaling, alternating control of muscular groups at the level of the lower body by controlling finger muscles, analytic development on each finger, flexing and extending each finger, tensing the Achilles tendon by extending the sole, controlling twin muscles with support on front sole region, isometrics with support throughout the foot sole, control of femur cva-triceps by alternating activation and relaxation between 5 and 20 slow contractions alternating them with fast impulses, similarly for the other leg, neuromuscular control at the level of the upper body, of the arm, forearm, chest muscles, activating the solar plexus are solutions for obtaining vessels dilating, developing superior coordination and rendering the preparation effort more effective. Also, desk position control respiratory control during each school class, working on each segment render performance improvement.

Our players have a daily program for fitness improvement, in order to stimulate growth and development, for stimulating haematopoiesis by refreshment, upon waking up and before going to bed. Upon refreshment we highlight stretching, easy jumps, exercises for developing the abdominal and back muscles, elongations, exercises for relaxation of the upper body. The conclusion contains the same types of exercises, however in reverse order, reverse position, standing on the head, standing on hands with or without support, stretching. We also introduce role-model visualisation techniques, mental execution transfer and execution simulation. Visualization is performed under resting position, under clinostatism with minimal resting tonus in order to prepare night rest and night neurologic programming. The proposed modifications, both somatic ones as well as behavioural ones are performed during night sleep.

RESULTS DISSEMINATIONS

The research paper, entitled “**Cognitive abilities in elite Romanian junior tennis players**”, author: **Radu Predoiu, Florian Arsenescu, Paula Dinuță**, submitted to INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION, SPORTS AND PHYSICAL THERAPY (ICPEK), EDUCATION and SCIENCE OF SPORTS in the 21st CENTURY, during 10-13.06.2015, BUCHAREST.



Official Provisional Acceptance for Publication of Academic Research/Review Paper

The research paper, titled "***INFLUENCES OF TOP PERFORMANCE TENNIS ON THE ORGANIZATION OF PERSONALITY***", author: Florian ARSENEȘCU, submitted to ***Discobolul - Physical Education, Sport and Kinetotherapy Journal*** for publication, has been accepted by the Peer Reviewers.

This letter is an official provisional confirmation of acceptance. As per ethics, the paper is now under the Copyright privilege of Discobolul Journal, and therefore cannot be further published or reproduced as whole/in part elsewhere without prior permission.

The research paper is expected to be published in Discobolul, Vol XI, No.1(39), 2015.

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Editor in chief,

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