

PTPA

Baseline

Balance



HEALTH, MINDSET & PERFORMANCE NEWSLETTER

BASELINE BALANCE 2025



WELCOME!

The PTPA is thrilled to introduce **Baseline Balance**, a go-to resource exclusively designed for professional tennis players and coaches.

Each month, we bring **cutting-edge insights** on **health, mindset, and performance**, delivering science-backed strategies, expert perspectives, and practical tools you can apply immediately.

Our mission?

To support your **sustained peak performance and mental health** so you can thrive in the high-stakes world of professional tennis.

Because greatness isn't just about how you play—it's about how you live.

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[REGISTER: FEB. 27 WEBINAR](#)

[SURVEY: TELL US WHAT YOU WANT](#)



BASELINE BALANCE 2025

The Power of Mental Activation



“Where attention goes, energy flows”

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WHY THIS MATTERS

Mental Activation is the deliberate process of **engaging your mind at the optimal intensity to sharpen focus, regulate emotions, and channel energy effectively.** It is the ignition switch for peak performance, **ensuring that your mind and body operate in sync to meet the demands of competition.**

For a professional tennis player, **mental activation is the difference between stepping onto the court fully prepared—locked into the present moment, adapting fluidly, and executing with confidence—**or falling short of your potential due to distraction, hesitation, or emotional turbulence. It **primes the brain for resilience under pressure, enhances decision-making speed, and fuels the competitive mindset necessary to sustain excellence over time.** Without it, talent and hard work alone are not enough; with it, a player can transform their game and fully realize their best self.

Off the court, mental activation is just as critical for overall **well-being, managing stress, maintaining emotional balance, and cultivating a mindset that supports long-term growth, purpose, and fulfillment in all areas of life.**

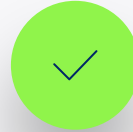
**GET YOUR NOTEBOOK OR JOURNAL READY TO
CREATE YOUR MENTAL ACTIVATION MENU**

Powerful quotes



Cultivating Positive Emotions

“The more frequently you experience positive emotions, the more expansive your mind becomes, and the more resourceful you are” - Dr. Barbara Fredrickson.



Visualize Your *Best Self*

“Your future self is the driver of your present actions. The more vivid and compelling your future self is, the more powerfully you will act in the present.” - Dr. Benjamin Hardy



Embrace Grit

“Grit is about working on something you care about so much that you’re willing to stay loyal to it. Grit grows when you stick with things over years, not just weeks or months” - Dr. Angela Duckworth



Master MVP Mindsets

“If we can shift our mindset, we can shift our experience of reality and open the door to greater performance and well-being.” - Dr. Alia Crum



Positive Self Talk

“Your self-talk shapes your reality. If you wouldn’t say it to a friend, don’t say it to yourself.” – Dr. Kristin Neff



Relationships / Community

“Our relationships, more than money or fame, are what keep us happy and healthy.” – *Harvard Study on Happiness*

Mental Activation Questions



Cultivating Positive Emotions

What (person/pet, place/experience) can you think of that instantly lifts your mood?



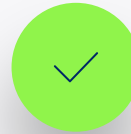
Embrace Grit

How can you learn to stay curious about your challenges and obstacles? How can you begin to embrace your obstacles as a sign you are on the right track?



Positive Self Talk

What are the words and sentences that you can say to yourself that activate your mind and body in a positive way?



Visualize Your *Best Self*

Who you want to become in one year? In five years? How are you thinking? How are you acting and behaving? What have you accomplished? Who's around you?



Master MVP Mindsets

Can you describe your goals as MISSIONS you wish to accomplish? What VALUES do you want to be known for using each day? What is your main PURPOSE for showing up each day?



Relationships / Community

Who are the people that support and inspire you to be your best self? Why are they so special to you? Why are you special to them? What are the communities or causes that you support?



Directions

1. Begin by reading each category and jotting down some notes about **what feels activating to you.**
2. Go through the next few slides and fill in the notes about each prompt. Start with the prompts that feel most exciting for you.
3. Go back and look at the questions you didn't answer. See if you have any thoughts about them the second time through.
4. Notice if any questions trigger you. Positive or negative.
5. Leave whatever questions you don't want to answer blank.
6. Create your **ACTIVATION MENU** with the answers you provided and share with who will benefit from knowing more about you.

My Activation Menu

Get a
notebook or
journal to fill
in your
thoughts

Cultivating Positive Emotions

What (person/pet, place/experience) can you think of that instantly lifts your mood?

Visualize Your *Best Self*

Who do you want to become in one year? In five years? How are you thinking? How are you acting and behaving? What have you accomplished? Who's around you?

Embrace Grit

How can you learn to stay curious about your challenges and obstacles? How can you begin to embrace your obstacles as a sign you are on the right track?

Mastering MVP {Mission/Values/Purpose} Mindsets

Can you describe your goals as MISSIONS you wish to accomplish? What VALUES do you want to be known for using each day? What is your main PURPOSE for showing up each day?

My Activation Menu

Get a
notebook or
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in your
thoughts

Positive Self Talk

What are the words and sentences that you can say to yourself that activate your mind and body in a positive way?

Relationships / Community

Who are the people that support and inspire you to be your best self? Why are they so special to you? Why are you special to them? What are the communities or causes that you support?

What else activates me?

Notes:

What else activates me?

Notes:

My Activation Plan

#1 Activation Skills	#2 Activation Skills	#3 Activation Skills
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MY GO-TO SKILLS

I'M GETTING BETTER

I'M CURIOUS TO TRY

Top 3 things:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Top 3 things:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Top 3 things:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Finished?

READ YOUR RESPONSES



DOES IT FEEL LIKE YOU?
IF SO, SHARE IT WITH YOUR TEAM

WANT SOME COACHING WITH THIS?
CONTACT:
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PTPA DIRECTOR OF MENTAL FITNESS
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+1-415-515-9630 (WhatsApp)

MENTAL FITNESS TIP OF THE MONTH

Master Daily Transitions

On-court, you have 90 seconds between play. **What you do on the changeover has an impact on the next few games.** Similarly, **life off-court** also gives you these opportunities. **These gaps between one event and another could be thought of as *life's changeovers*.**

These gaps are great opportunities to

RECLAIM THE PRESENT MOMENT

RESET YOUR MIND

RECHARGE YOUR BODY

And this supports your

MENTAL & PHYSICAL WELLBEING

↓ **LISTEN TO A GUIDED VISUALIZATION** ↓

MASTERING DAILY TRANSITIONS (7 MIN)

Driving to the Courts

Can you bring your full attention to the present moment?

In the Airport

Can you see new details and bring to life this old habit?

At the Hotel

How can you use your 'home on the road' to feel fully alive?

AM / PM

What small habits can you build into your morning and evening routines?

Mastering Daily Transitions

Get a
notebook or
journal to fill
in your
thoughts

Driving to the Courts

What can I do to be more present?

In the Airport

What can I do to be more present?

At the Hotel

What can I do to be more present?

AM / PM

What can I do to be more present?

MENTAL HEALTH SUMMIT OPTIMIZING WOMEN'S HEALTH & PERFORMANCE

[WATCH VIDEO HERE](#)



Women's Health &
Performance Webinar





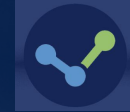
Health Report by Dr. Robby Sikka



TOPIC: WHAT FACTORS ARE IMPACTING PLAYER HEALTH

METHOD: SPORTS MEDICINE ANALYTICS RESEARCH TEAM

(SMART)



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SPORTS MEDICINE
ANALYTICS
RESEARCH TEAM

What Factors Are Impacting Player Health

- 4 Primary Factors
 - Age
 - Workload
 - Schedule
 - The Game
- Unique personalized factors impact all players
- Our goal is to use data to help offer solutions



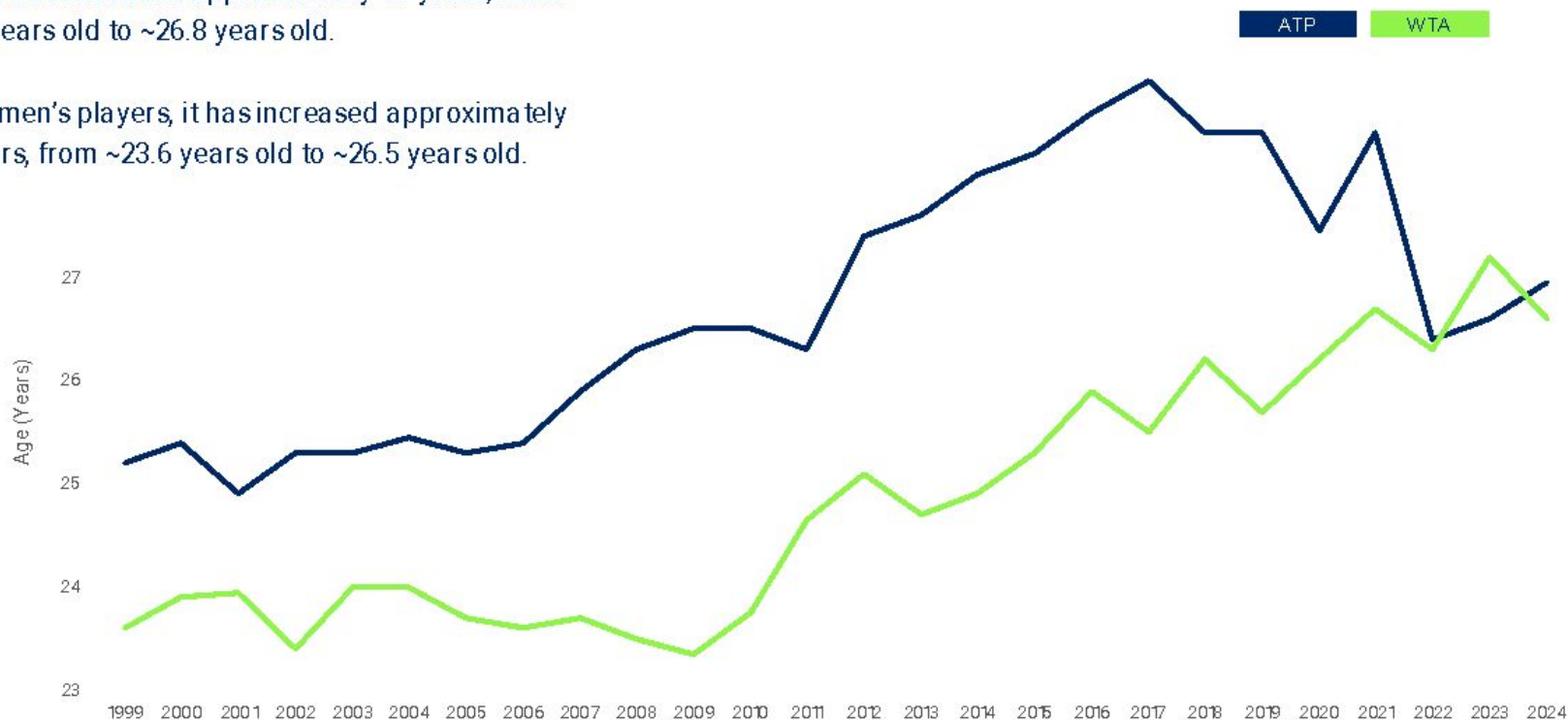
TENNIS PLAYER
Health Report

FACTOR 1: **Player Age**

From 1999-2024, the median age of top 100 men's players has increased approximately 16 years, from ~25.2 years old to ~26.8 years old.

For women's players, it has increased approximately 2.9 years, from ~23.6 years old to ~26.5 years old.

MEDIAN AGE FOR TOP 100 PLAYER
2018 - 2024



FACTOR 2: **Volume of Work**

The average number of minutes per match has increased more than 21% since 1999, increasing from ~98 minutes to ~119 minutes per match.

When comparing average match lengths in 2024 to 1999:

- Playing 3 sets in 2024 is like playing 4 sets in 1999
- Playing 4 sets in 2024 is like playing 5 sets in 1999
- Playing 5 sets in 2024 is like playing 6 sets in 1999!

Longer matches and more total minutes played per month equate to higher injury risk for players. This is especially important to consider with players who need to participate in more tournaments to qualify for Grand Slams or to maintain their tour status.

Average Length Of Match
With No Injuries Reported:

109 Minutes

Average Length Of Match
With Injuries Reported:

122 Minutes

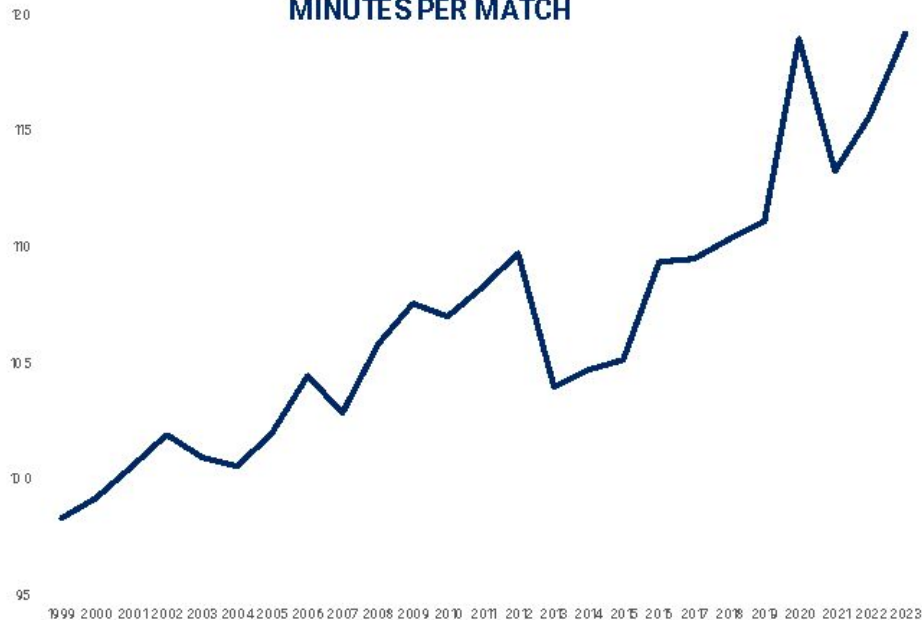
Average Number Of Minutes
Played In Month Prior To No Injury:

343 Minutes

Average Number Of Minutes
Played In Month Prior To Injury:

461 Minutes

**AVERAGE NUMBER OF
MINUTES PER MATCH**



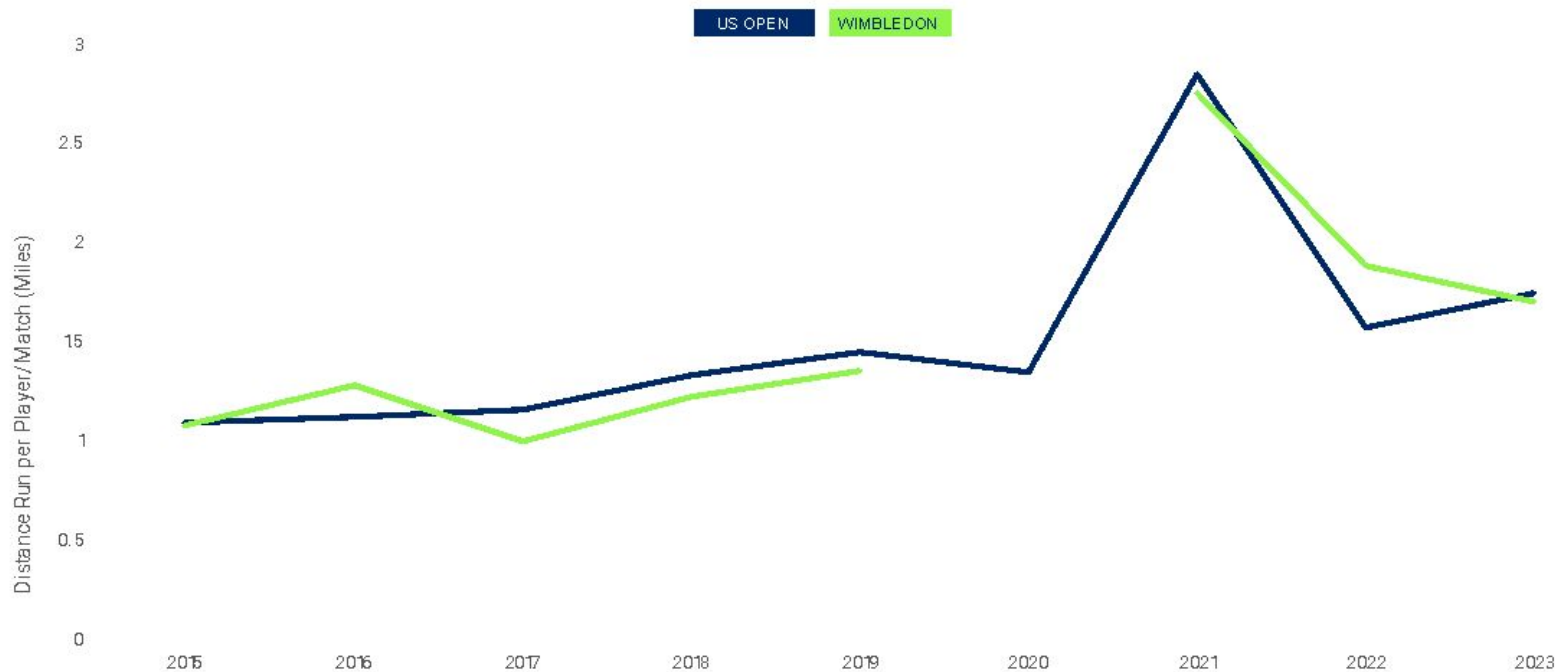
	1999	2023	2024	Percent Change
All Matches	98	119	-	21.3%
All Majors	139	166	-	19.4%
Australian Open	139	-	179	28.9%
French Open	143	175	-	21.7%
Wimbledon	136	160	-	17.3%
US Open	138	159	-	15.0%



FACTOR 3: Distance Covered

The average distance covered by players per match has increased by more than 50% since 2015.

AVERAGE DISTANCE RUN BY A PLAYER PER MATCH (MILES)



FACTOR 4: Fatigue & Scheduling

Night matches are becoming more common, increasing from 10.9% of total Grand Slam matches in 2018 to 12.9% of total Grand Slam matches in 2023.

Night matches also have a stronger correlation with player injuries.

Percentage of Day Matches
Associated With Player Injury:

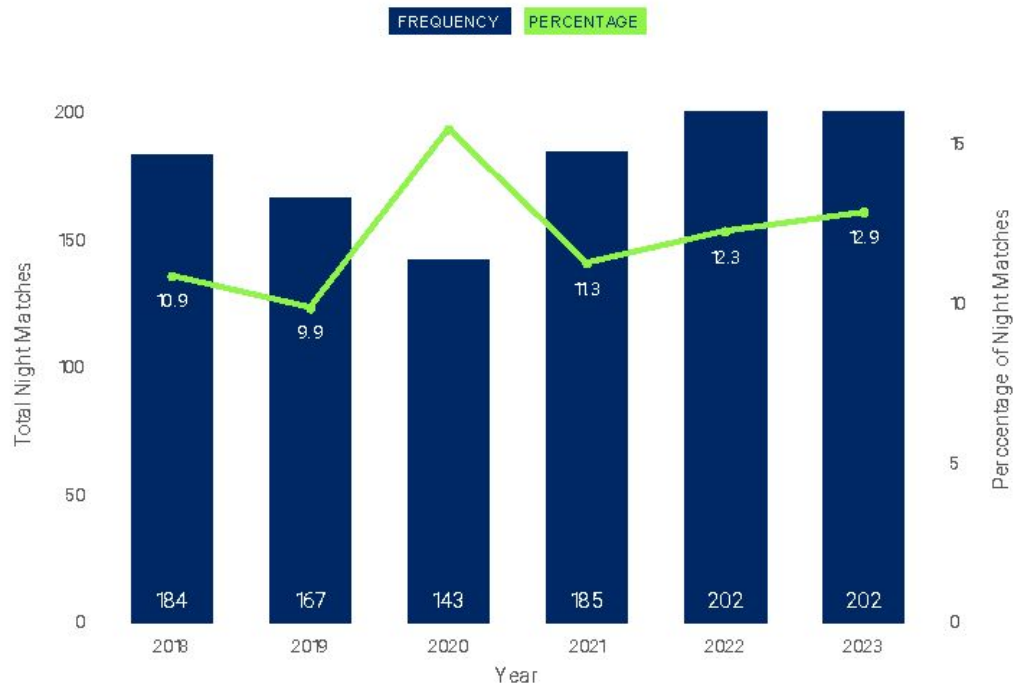
4.6%

Percentage of Night Matches
Associated With Player Injury:

5.2%

INJURY RATES FOR DAY MATCHES VS. NIGHT MATCHES

APRIL 2018 - MAY 2024



The Ball, Racket, and The Game

- Velocity, power, spin, and movement are all changing
- All games evolve with a natural consequence of changing injuries
 - Soft tissue vs ligament
 - Strains vs sprains
 - Overuse and stress
- Developmental factors play a role
 - The biggest risk factor is prior injury
- 8 of the 10 fastest serves in WTA in last 10 years
- Highest spin rates in top 10 on ATP over last 5 years
 - Top 3 ATP players averaged a spin rate of 3,075 RPM in 2023, which was considerably greater than the tour average of 2,775 RPM. Further, 7 of the current top 10 ATP players had a spin rate above the tour average in 2023.

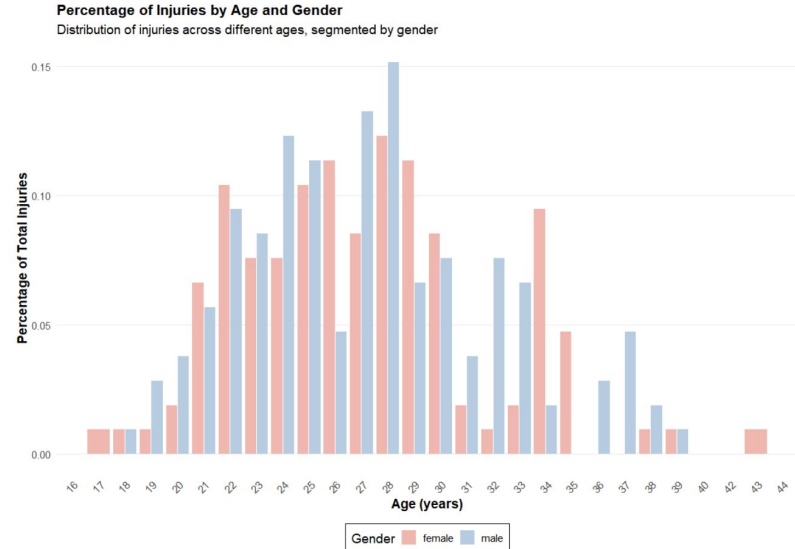
PLAYER	NET CLEARANCE	SPIN RATE	BOUNCE HEIGHT
NADAL	90 INCHES	4348 RPM	56 INCHES
FEDERER	70 INCHES	3981 RPM	53 INCHES
DJOKOVIC	63 INCHES	3643 RPM	47 INCHES
MURRAY	59 INCHES	2170 RPM	39 INCHES

2013 SEASON

FOREHAND TRAJECTORY COMPARISON

Impact of the Schedule

- Longer recovery periods correlate with lower injury rates, underscoring the need for scheduling that prioritizes adequate rest, particularly for aging players who are at a peak injury risk.
- There is a strong pattern in injury rates related to player age, with a peak in injuries occurring in the late twenties.
- More flexible tournament schedules and introduce mandatory minimum rest periods between matches and tournaments.

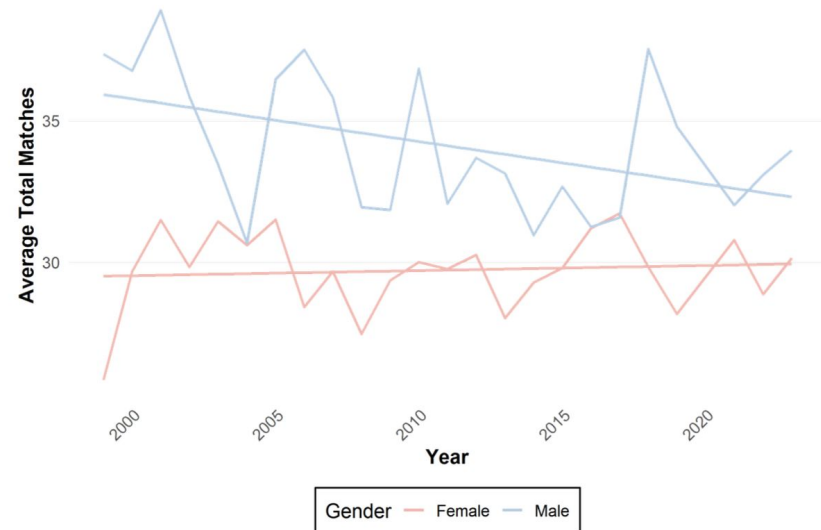


Impact of the Schedule

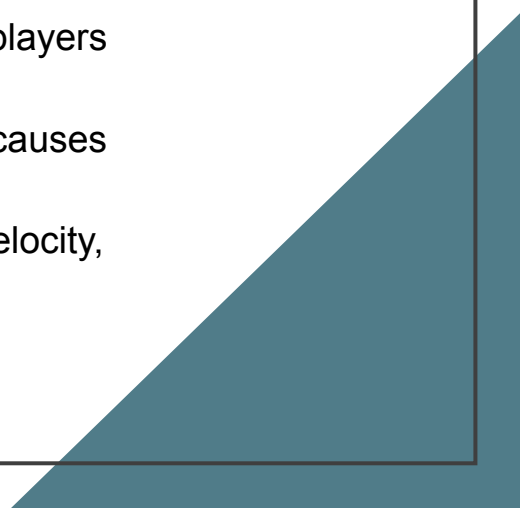
- Longer recovery periods correlate with lower injury rates, underscoring the need for scheduling that prioritizes adequate rest, particularly for aging players who are at a peak injury risk.
- There is a strong pattern in injury rates related to player age, with a peak in injuries occurring in the late twenties.
- More flexible tournament schedules and introduce mandatory minimum rest periods between matches and tournaments.

Average Total Matches by Year and Gender (Top 200)

Distribution of matches by season, segmented by gender



Call to Action

- The game is changing, as are our players
 - It is imperative that we modernize the schedule and demands on players to improve the health of players
 - Back pain, illness, and core muscle injuries are three of the top 5 causes for match withdrawals and are more common in female players
 - We must understand the needs of the modern athlete as power, velocity, recovery, and more demands on players create unique challenges
- 

Coaching Towards Transformation



A COACHING MENU FOR COACH GROWTH

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WHY THIS MATTERS

When coaching professional tennis players, coaches may make assumptions about their player—guessing what motivates their player, how they process information, what frustrates them, and what helps them thrive.

But the best coaches don't assume. They **learn**. They understand that transformation isn't about "fixing" a player but about **unlocking their unique potential**—helping them become the best version of themselves both on and off the court.

By shifting from a **correction-based model** to a **transformation-driven approach**, coaches can build **stronger relationships, foster trust**, and create an environment where their **players can reach peak performance and fulfillment**.

When you commit to learning how to coach for **transformation**, you give your players—and yourself—the greatest advantage: **a pathway to sustained success**.

THE FOLLOWING SLIDES PROVIDES SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Did you know?

Awareness & Attention Training

Did you know? Research in sports psychology shows that **elite athletes have superior attentional control, allowing them to filter distractions and stay locked in during high-pressure moments** (Vickers, 2007). **Training players to direct their attention intentionally—rather than letting it drift—can significantly improve performance.**

Coaching Clutch

Did you know? Research shows that athletes who **regularly train under simulated pressure conditions develop greater resilience and perform better in high-stakes moments.** Stress inoculation training (SIT), a method used in elite sports and military training, helps athletes adapt to pressure by gradually exposing them to stressors in a controlled environment. **By incorporating pressure-based drills, pre-competition routines, and cognitive reframing techniques, coaches can help players reinterpret stress as a performance enhancer rather than a threat** (Meichenbaum, 2007).

Identifying Blind Spots

Did you know? **Cognitive bias research** suggests that **once a coach forms an impression of an athlete—positive or negative—they unconsciously seek out evidence to confirm that belief** (Nickerson, 1998). Staying open-minded and reevaluating players regularly helps unlock hidden potential.

Hunting the Good Stuff

Did you know? Research in positive psychology shows that **actively focusing on and reinforcing an athlete's strengths—what Dr. Martin Seligman calls “hunting the good stuff”—can enhance motivation, resilience, and overall performance.** By **shifting attention to what's working well, coaches help athletes build confidence, adopt a growth-oriented mindset, and sustain peak performance under pressure** (Seligman, 2011).

Working with Personality

Did you know? **Research on personality in sports suggests that traits like conscientiousness and emotional stability are linked to greater consistency in training and competition** (Allen et al., 2013). **Knowing your player's personality can help you tailor coaching strategies to maximize their potential.**

Coaching Yourself

Did you know? Studies on emotional intelligence show that **self-aware coaches are more effective communicators, build stronger relationships with players, and create an environment where athletes feel psychologically safe to take risks and grow** (Goleman, 1995).

Questions to Consider



Awareness & Attention Training

How can your coaching build in awareness and attention practices that improve the quality of your technical and tactical instruction?



Coaching Clutch

How can you turn ordinary drills into extraordinary moments? HINT: Clutch is trained by prioritizing present moment pressure.



Identifying Blind Spots

How has your assumptions and judgements about your player limited their ability to develop?



Hunting the Good Stuff

How can you wire in the positive habits for your player - while still prioritizing improvement? HINT: Use a 3:1 ratio.



Working with Personality

How can you deepen your understanding of your players' personality to get the most out of the training?



Coaching Yourself

How can you model transformation for your player through a deeper understanding about yourself?

THE HUMAN ELEMENT OF MY COACHING

These answers give a bit more detail into **what I value** and **how I show up** day in and day out **as a coach**.

My Words

What words or phrases will you hear me saying all the time on the court?

My Favorite Sayings

If I could print out poster size sayings for my wall, they would include:

On Court Presence

How do I show up and express myself on the court.

Coaching Style & Strengths

My distinct coaching style that makes me authentic



Directions

1. Begin by thinking about how you want your players to experience you.
2. Go through the next few slides and answer the questions that you know 100% to be true.
3. Go back and look at the questions you didn't answer. See if you have any thoughts about them the second time through.
4. Notice if any questions trigger you. Positive or negative.
5. Leave whatever questions you don't want to answer blank.
6. Create your COACHING MENU with the answers you provided and keep it close by so you can refer back to it often.

Transformational Coaching Menu

Get a notebook or journal to fill in your thoughts

Awareness & Attention Training

How can your coaching build in awareness and attention practices that improve your technical and tactical instruction?

Hunting the Good Stuff

How can you wire in the positive habits for your player - while still coaching them hard?

Coaching Clutch

How can you turn ordinary drills into extraordinary moments? Clutch is trained by prioritizing present moment pressure.

Working with Personality

How can you deepen your understanding of your players' personality to get the most out of the training? [TAKE THE BIG 5 PERSONALITY TEST \(FREE\)](#)

Transformational Coaching Menu

Get a
notebook or
journal to fill
in your
thoughts

Identifying Blind Spots

How has your assumptions and judgements about your player limited their ability to develop?

Coaching Myself

How can you model transformation for your player through a deeper understanding about yourself?

What else is coming up for me?

Answer:

What else is coming up for me?

Answer:

Transformational Coaching Menu

Get a
notebook or
journal to fill
in your
thoughts

My favorite words

What words or phrases will you hear me saying all the time on the court?

My favorite sayings/quotes

If I could print out poster size sayings for my wall, they would include:

On court presence

How do I show up and express myself on the court.

Coaching style & strengths

My distinct coaching style that makes me authentic

How can I transform my coaching?

What do I want to do now?	What do I want to practice?	What am I interested in learning more about?
---------------------------	-----------------------------	--

This week

The next three months

This year

Top 3 things:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Top 3 things:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Top 3 things:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Conversations with Coaches

David Sammel, born in Johannesburg, South Africa, is a world prominent tennis coach and accredited Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) Tour Coach, earning their highest coaching award in 2016. He has coached dozens of athletes to represent their countries internationally, including four Olympians.



Coach Convos

Damon chats with ATP coach, David Sammel about his method for developing players. They discuss:

1. Coaching clutch
2. Building a growth mindset
3. Developing as a coach

[WATCH HERE](#)



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DAVID SAMMEL, ATP COACH
AUTHOR, LOCKER ROOM POWER



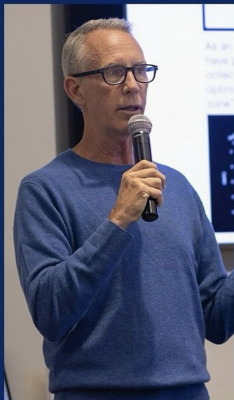
Ask Damon

This is your chance to ask me anything—whether it's about mental health, peak performance, managing stress, or optimizing your well-being.

Q & A from a player

Q: How can I create my future best self? Isn't it enough for me to have specific goals?

A: Great question! Having goals is a must, but we tend to forget that to achieve our goals, we need to continue to develop as a player and person. The clearer you can get about your future self, the more likely you are to act that way now! We know that change is inevitable, but how we change is up to us. Get clear on how you want to be thinking and behaving, and also who you are surrounded by. Bottom line: getting clear on your future self makes today's decisions clearer, too.



Just as elite athletes in other major professional sports have access to world-class mental performance training, pro tennis players should be empowered with easy access to mental performance resources that are available anywhere in the world at any time.

DAMON VALENTINO
PTPA MENTAL FITNESS DIRECTOR



SUBMIT YOUR QUESTION

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DR. NIKOLE BENDERS-HADI
CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER
TALKSPACE

Burnout Prevention

Burnout is caused by chronic, unmanaged stress related to school, work, and/or relationships. It is characterized by emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion that can negatively impact your health, relationships, and daily life.

Common symptoms of burnout

- ✓ Physical exhaustion
- ✓ Frequent illness
- ✓ Head or stomach aches
- ✓ Appetite or sleep pattern changes
- ✓ Alcohol or substance use
- ✓ Difficulty concentrating
- ✓ Irritability
- ✓ Cynicism or negativity
- ✓ Depressed or anxious mood
- ✓ Self-doubt or sense of failure
- ✓ Feeling incompetent
- ✓ Procrastination
- ✓ Missing classes/work
- ✓ School dissatisfaction
- ✓ Decreased motivation

Common causes of burnout

Stress is at the root of burnout, but stress can have a variety of causes. Learning to recognize factors that contribute to stress and burnout helps you know how to seek support and solutions.

1. **Lack of control:** being micromanaged, little control over schedule or tasks, feeling stuck in a particular role, lack of ownership or autonomy
2. **Unclear or overly demanding expectations:** undefined role, feeling unsure about what's expected of you, accountability issues, unrealistic expectations of you
3. **Inadequate support:** lack of resources to accomplish your tasks, negative or complaining peers, unhealthy relationships, unsupportive professors or supervisors
4. **School-life imbalance:** low social support, long hours of studying, not being able to mentally disconnect from school assignments, taking on too much responsibility
5. **High-pressure school environment:** unrealistic school expectations, perfectionistic culture, demanding or strict professors, heavy class load, financial burdens





Managing and preventing burnout

As you begin to recognize the sources of your stress, you can learn to bring your life into balance by managing your stress and attending to your own wellness needs.

1. **Supportive relationships:** Increase your contact with trusted, caring friends and family. Seek support from good listeners by sharing your concerns. It's also important to decrease the frequency of interactions with negative influences, especially cynical or complaining peers and family members.
2. **School or work support:** Seek support at school or work by talking with a professor, discussing your concerns with your supervisor, or utilizing resources at school like tutoring, mental health resources, and social groups.
3. **Attend to your self-care needs:** Assess your current self-care practices and needs. Where do you need to re-prioritize or establish healthy habits? Make sure you are getting enough sleep, staying hydrated, and attending to your physical health.
4. **Give yourself a break:** Increase balance in your life by taking regular breaks from studying, working, etc. Establish vacation routines (even if it's a staycation) in which you do things to re-energize your body and mind during school breaks and holidays.
5. **Care for your mental health:** Seek professional support if you are experiencing unmanageable school stress or burnout.

Sign up and talk to your therapist to discuss how to handle burnout

"To make the distinction between good stress and bad stress can really help in terms of how we manage it and make it part of our habits day to day"

Dr. Nikole Benders-Hadi

DR. NIKOLE BENDERS-HADI
CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER
TALKSPACE



BASELINE BALANCE 2025

Webinar Registration

FEBRUARY 27TH @ 7:00PM EST

[SIGN UP HERE](#)



ATTENTION PLAYERS AND COACHES:

Are you interested in learning more about this month's Baseline Balance content? Join (anonymously) and hear Damon go through each section of the newsletter - and teach simple ways to add these practices to your day to day routines.

Do You Have Content Ideas?

TELL US WHAT YOU WANT
(CONFIDENTIAL SURVEY)



WANT SOME SUPPORT?

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