

## JMTA Training Philosophy: A Word from our Directors

### OUR FOUNDER'S VISION FOR DEVELOPING PLAYERS TO REACH THEIR MAXIMUM POTENTIAL

John McEnroe believes that young players can succeed without leaving home or training full-time at a residential academy. Family and familiar surroundings are important to the overall well-being of young athletes pursuing excellence. And developing other interests, including participation in sports that may complement skills related to tennis, better prepares the athletes of today. Mac also believes that the quality of time spent on-court practicing is more important than the quantity of time and that in today's game, where players are stronger, faster and more explosive, off-court training, including strength, agility, and functional training, injury prevention, nutrition and mental toughness training are critical to long term success. In the end, focus, dedication and hard work will pay off - in tennis and in life.

### OVERALL JMTA PROGRAM DESIGN

#### Disciplined Positivity

JMTA's coaching is positive, encouraging, motivating and challenging. We believe that when kids are motivated and encouraged, good things happen. Our students work hard and are held to a high standard of attitude and effort on and off-court. We know that self-confidence is absolutely essential in building a successful competitive player in an individual sport. Self-confidence grows from hard work on the part of the player, encouragement from his or her coaches and the love and support of his or her family.

Our students and coaches live by a written JMTA Code of Conduct to which standard of behavior every JMTA student is held - on the court, in the gym, and in competition, both at and away from the club. We take advantage of every minute! When it is time to pick up balls or switch courts, we do so quickly.

When it's time to come together as a group, JMTA students run in. Our students are always moving their feet, ready to go. Because we value the quality of time spent in our practice sessions, and we seek to maximize the productivity of our time spent on court, we are efficient and we work hard.

#### The Balance between Tactical and Technical Coaching

JMTA's goal is to teach our kids how to play the game (the tactical side) and to give them the tools to execute those tactics (the technical side). Virtually all modern coaching methods recognize the essential value of having students play tennis points and games as soon as possible. Tennis is an "open skill sport", which means that players are constantly confronted with changing situations to which they must adjust and adapt. As a result, developing players must learn to understand and analyze what occurs prior to their striking the ball, and the tactical consequences of their shot selections, in contrast to focusing solely or primarily on stroking technique. Working on skills including movement, balance, court awareness, anticipation, situational perception and decision-making, is critical during the formative stages of player development.

Our tactical games are designed so that students practice a particular tactic in a "live ball" point situation. The JMTA Directors who oversee each bank of courts, and our JMTA coaches who supervise those courts, are trained to see where players need work: tactically, technically or both. Technical issues are addressed as needed, but we always go back to the tactical games. By putting JMTA students in

tactical situations again and again, they learn point construction and they expand their games to include new and additional ways to build and win points, which become tools and options to be utilized in match situations. Our goal is to make our students "players" who are constantly improving in every aspect of their development and who know how to construct points, to compete and to win. At JMTA we make players!

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## JMTA Training Philosophy (cont'd)

### On-Court Coaching and Feedback

During JMTA group training, our coaches are trained not to provide technical or tactical feedback after every shot or point during drills and games. Repetition is clearly a key component in reinforcing proper technique, but feedback and/or correction after every shot quickly becomes "noise" to students, which they tend not to hear or process. At JMTA, in addition to positive and negative feedback, and correction, in balance, there is also, at times, no tactical or technical feedback. Our coaches still engage students after most shots or points, but that engagement is often as simple as, "great effort", "keep trying" or, "how would you play that shot differently next time?" We believe in the benefits of discovery-based learning, which requires our students to hit multiple shots in game situations without corrections. We want our JMTA players to be independent problem solvers - not dependent on continuous coaching. Our goal is to give JMTA students tools that allow them to compete well, to respond to new situations with multiple and adaptable tactics and choices, and to win matches independently.

### Inter and Intra-Group Interaction

A balanced approach to player practice and competition, which incorporates interacting with stronger and weaker players, and winning and losing, is an important aspect of player growth. The truth is that if a player is only "playing up", he or she will likely lose often and, in turn, lose confidence. At JMTA, we make sure that our students "play up" some of the time, to challenge them, play at their levels some of the time, to see how they compete on an even playing-field, and "play down" some of the time, which allows them to work on elements of their games that they might not when competing with players at their levels or above. "Playing down" also allows students to win, which is critical to building and maintaining confidence. To facilitate this balance, we need to make sure that JMTA students toward the bottom and top of their groups get to play with weaker and stronger players. This means moving such students down or up a level at certain times and for certain drills and games.

### Developing Complete Players

JMTA's tennis, athletic training and mental toughness directors and coaches know and understand where each JMTA student is developmentally, where he or she is going, and how he or she is going to get there. Our coaches, many of whom are former world-class players and athletes themselves, are experts in tactical, technical, athletic and emotional development, at all levels of the game. Many JMTA professionals have achieved accreditations from top tennis and athletic professional organizations across the globe and all receive ongoing training and supervision from JMTA's Directors. Our integrated tennis, athletic and mental toughness curriculums are carefully designed for every stage of development, and we tailor and update them to ensure that our students receive the best possible experience. JMTA strives to develop complete tennis players: technically and tactically exceptional - smarter, stronger, fitter and faster.

If you have any questions or comments about JMTA's philosophy, about our approach to player development, or about our beliefs on how junior players and their families can maximize the quality of their tennis experience and their overall enjoyment of our great sport, please contact your JMTA Director below:

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