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## **TENNIS TIPS - Issue No. 2 - December 2011**

### **Footwork**

- *Getting yourself in the right position to hit each ball on its merits is critical to producing a good shot. It is just as important as the ball toss being in the right position to hit the serve. If it's not, the serve will generally miss the mark or not be as effective as it should be. It's the same with footwork.*
- *Small steps should always be used to ensure you are in the best position to hit the ball, regardless of whether you have had to run hard to get to the ball in the first instance. These crucial small steps allow you to be well balanced and positioned when making contact. Even the best players in the world cannot execute a quality shot if they are over reaching or too cramped to hit the ball.*
- *When practicing, you should always make sure you get to the ball in time to be in the best possible position to hit the shot, whether it involves running forward, backward, diagonally or sideways. If the ball is landing within approx 3 large steps either side from your position you should try to use side/skip steps rather than outright running as the former allows you to be facing the incoming ball and also allows you to prepare for your shot more quickly than when running side on to the ball.*

### **Court Coverage and defense = passion and effort**

- *The best players in the world (Nadal, Federer, Djokovic, the Williams sisters, to name just a few) are the best at turning defence into attack in one or two shots. This is because they have excellent speed, strength and anticipation. But this takes passion and effort, involving long and hard, quality practice.*
- *Nick Bollettieri's published creed, to be signed by all residents of his tennis academy, states that "Every endeavour pursued with passion produces a successful outcome regardless of the result. For it is not about winning or losing – rather, the effort put forth in producing the outcome. The best way to predict the future is to create it..."<sup>1</sup>*
- *What this suggests is that virtually any healthy child can become an expert player with the right quantity and quality of purposeful practice and coaching along with player motivation and commitment, and appropriate parental and organizational support. This has now been proved with sound evidence beyond any doubt.<sup>2</sup>*
- *But what does it take to make it to the very top? A succinct quote from Rafael Nadal seems to answer the question: "I play each point like my life depends on it".*

<sup>1</sup> Bounce, How Champions are Made, Matthew Syed, Harper Collins Great Britain, 2010, p.125.

<sup>2</sup> Bounce, How Champions are Made, Matthew Syed, Harper Collins Great Britain, 2010.