

Adapting Your Training Programme In-line With Continuous Development

Introduction

These are difficult times for squash players in Wales with the latest lockdown. I feel it is imperative that players continue to progress and focus on the areas of the game we can develop within the current restrictions. There are numerous opportunities for the players to utilise the new resources that Squash Wales have made available, in order to aid player development. Squash Wales have given players feedback from National Squads and Training Nights in the form of reports which give details of players current levels and suggested areas to work on. I felt it was vital that players receive this information and squads adapt to the needs of the players as they progress. Squash Wales have also just begun profiling players and have currently profiled all National Squad players. Again, this is to identify areas for improvement, current levels and, most importantly, to inform training / player requirements. Put simply, both the players and the sport must continually adapt and if we fail to keep ahead, then we will ultimately fail. This article will hopefully set the theme for the upcoming webinars which will go into the actual detail of the training requirements. This time afforded by the current lockdown is the perfect opportunity for players to assess their current levels, reflect on the player reports and adjust their programmes to the needs identified. For some players it might be just the start of working with a programme or organising their training needs efficiently. I hope this article will get you thinking about your training needs and focusing on the areas you need to develop. A lot of the time this can be uncomfortable as it requires players to identify their weaknesses and work on them accordingly. To effect genuine change in your game you need to constantly adapt and work on weaknesses otherwise you will fail to progress. My favourite quote

“the definition of insanity is **doing the same thing** over and over again but **expecting different results.**”

This to me is the essence of what I'm trying to get players to realise. Unless you adapt your training constantly inline with your development, then how do you expect to progress?

Maximising Returns

All players have time constraints and it is vital that players use training time to maximum effect. There is no getting away from the fact that you need to train hard, but also train smart. Below are some suggestions to help with your planning considerations when compiling your training programme

- Plan – set out the number of sessions / hours you can fit into a week. This way you can allocate your time for maximum benefit
- Foundations – Your programme will need to cover the foundations which are always relevant. During the webinars we will go into details about this.
- Stage of Development / Seasonal – As you progress through the age groups your needs will change and so should your training programme. Competition and off season will have different requirements. Again, the player webinar will afford us time to go through this

- Target – Work on the areas you need to develop. Its easy to become a creature of habit but you need to focus on the areas of your game which will maximise your development. It is no good doing 6 hours ball work a week if your movement is lacking.
- Enjoyment / Play – Players love to play and compete, and I feel it's vital that players have quality matches on a regular basis. This will enable players to enjoy their sport, compete, learn and assess their game often. If you don't play consistently how do you expect to learn the game?
- Resources – Help yourself by using resources available to you. Reports from squads are only useful if acted upon. Coaching sessions are only relevant if you use the information and work on the areas identified. Film your matches and review accordingly - it's easy in the heat of battle to get a very narrow view of your game. Taking the time to watch your matches over will give you a much better perspective of your game. With Squash TV/ YouTube, you have World Class squash at your fingertips. You can learn so much from watching quality players, plus it should inspire any player with aspirations to play for Wales. I personally watch as much Squash as I can to help with my coaching and as a source of inspiration.
- Personalise – Your programme should reflect your needs, aspirations and fulfilment. Use what works for you and don't be afraid to personalise your programme. I have seen fancy training programmes, all singing and dancing templates etc when what matters is the content and players owning the programme. Also, be honest with yourself and have a programme which you can achieve in practical terms, not just something which looks good on paper.
- Top Up Sessions – Mark Harris Squash Wales Physical Coach is big advocate of these sessions. If you have had an easy game top up the session with court sprints / ghosting etc. It is a great way to add value to your programme.
- Reflect & Review – Take the time to reflect on your training / game. Don't be afraid to adjust your programme if you feel its not working for you, or you're simply not enjoying it. You will only engage in the programme if it's relevant, attainable and enjoyable.

Example

Below we can see a very good example of a Welsh Junior player owning her own training programme. She shows a clear vision of where she wants to go and is focused on the areas which will enable her to fulfil her potential. This is clearly tailored to the individual player and it also highlights the players ability to adapt when self-isolating was required, as demonstrated by engaging with virtual sessions.

Date	Session	Activity	Effort /10
1/12/2020	Karate	Indoor Kata and basics session	8
2/12/2020	Squash	Academy Squads x 2 - Cardiff 5 pm- 6pm 6pm – 7pm Individual coaching session- Working on drop shots and drop kills	10 10 9
3/12/2020	Karate	Indoor Kata and basics	8
4 /12/2020	Squash	Squash West Wales Regional Squad-	8
5/12/2020	REST	REST DAY	
6/12/2020	Squash	Solo Practice and pairs practise Total time 1 hour 20 minutes - Boast and drive - Alley game - Match play Fitness –Box lunges - Ghosting -Cross Court sprint to T- Diagonal change to corner- cross court sprint back to T	9
	Karate	Outdoor Karate- Basics and Kata	9
Monday 7/11/2020	CrossFit	10 min <i>Warm-up</i> - relay sprints 10 m 10 min <i>Skill</i> - Split lunges (into split position) 10 min – ACTIVITY- - Split lunges - 10 press ups - 1min skipping - Air squats (5kg weight) Continuous repeat for 10 min 10 min - Rope swings - Dodgeball	9
8/12/2020	PE ONLINE	SELF – ISOLATING CIRCUIT- Working Power and Speed	8

		<p>Warm up (3 minutes)- Jogging on the spot, climbing ladder, Jogging rotating arms forwards and backwards, star jumps, climbing ladders, squat jumps, lunges, jogging on the spot, high knees, heel flicks, squat jumps, sprint on the spot, side lunges, twisting hips, star jumps, running on the spot.</p> <p>Workout (3 Sets) Each exercise 30 seconds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hop around a target on 1 leg • Repeat on different leg • 4 Side lunges run backwards 4 steps • High tuck jumps • Plank • Squat with half turn jump • 4 Side lunges forward and 4 side lunges back • Squat with side jump, land in squat position • Squat hold <p>2-minute Rest in between each set.</p> <p>Warm down – Jog on the spot, twist jumps, star jumps, heel flicks forward, rotating arms, jog on spot, knees to elbows, climbing ladder, rotating shoulders, lunges, lunges stretch, calf stretch, hip stretch</p>	
--	--	---	--

Up Coming Webinars

The webinars will build on this initial article and go into details about the content of your training programmes and how to utilise the resources given by Squash Wales. Also, the Q&A with Joel Makin is a unique opportunity to get an insight into a top 10 player’s training programme and what that looks like on a day to day basis. The player webinar will also afford us the opportunity to explain the Player Profile scores and how this can help form your training programmes.

Conclusion

I hope this article gets players thinking. The follow up webinars will build on this and provide further resources for players to develop. All players have had significant disruption in the last year. The players that adapt and are in the best shape for return to play will have a significant advantage. Use this time to reset and plan your return to play! I firmly believe that a planned, targeted training programme is essential for a player to realise their potential.