

UNIT 2: FEMALE TECHNIQUE

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will:

- Understand the norms and stats around female technical stroke production
- Apply practical drills and skills training to develop female serves and forehands
- Understand how you might adapt this information for your own programme



PHYSICAL RECAP

Relative to men, UNTRAINED women:

- have half the upper body strength.
- shorter arms and legs.
- Are 10-12cm shorter and 15kg lighter.
- have more elastic muscles and joints.
- struggle to activate core and posterior chain.





THE FEMALE SERVE: FACTS, STATS, & INTERVENTIONS

What do we commonly see?

- Instability in set up
- Knees go 'in valgus'

What is the physical reason?

- Posterior chain inactivation
- Posterior chain strength deficit
- Weak and inactive core

SERVING MECHANICS

Push vs. Pull – what does this mean?



PUSH



PULL

Dr Ben Kibler - Medical
Consultant to WTA



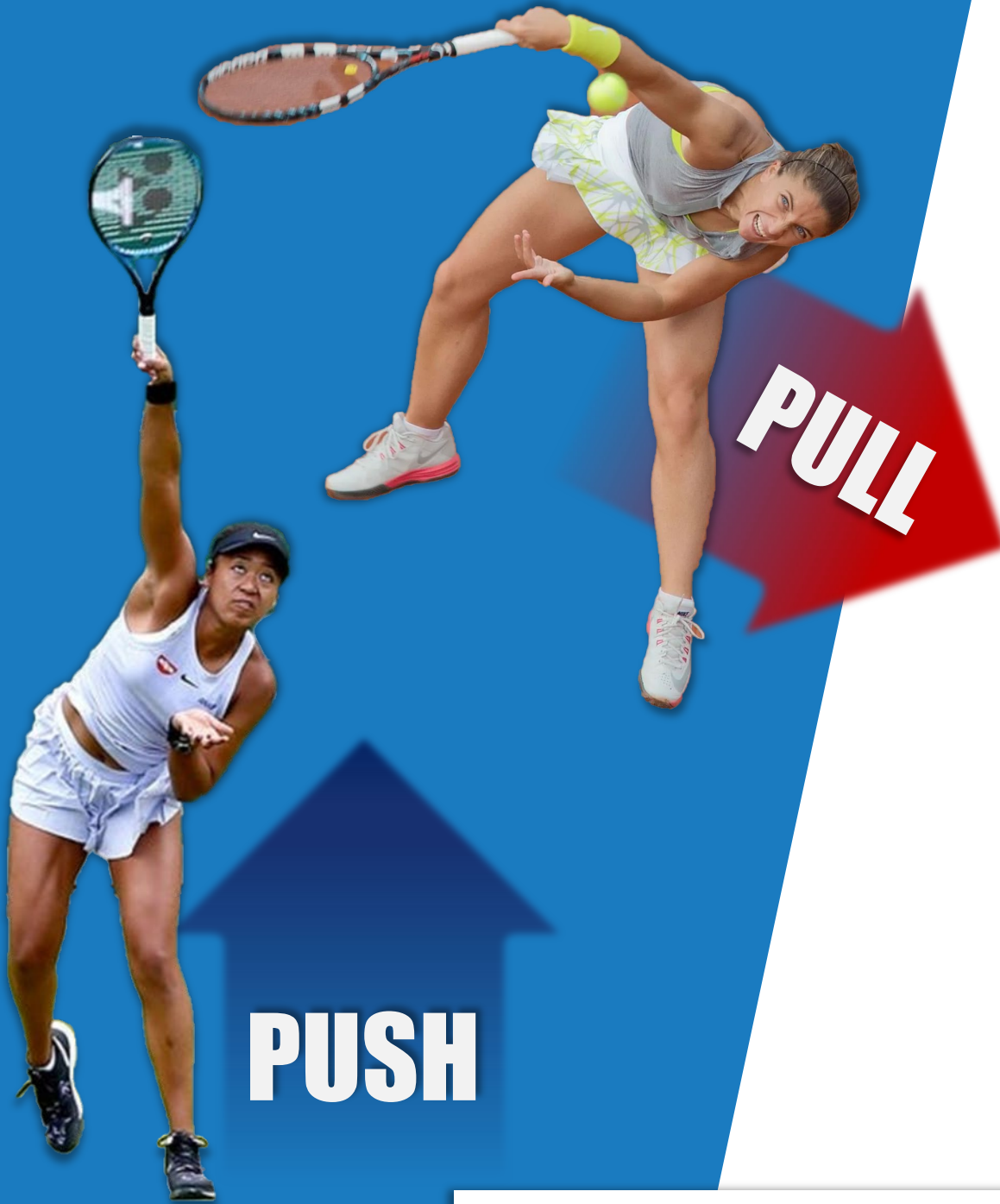
SERVING MECHANICS

Push vs. Pull – what does this mean?

- **77% female & 21% male Tour players use oblique pull serves**

Why is this important?

- Biggest difference = back leg drive 75% men & 28% women did effectively
- Knee flexion & back leg drive = 51-55% of kinetic energy & force delivered to the hand at impact
- Pull through = compensations from other, smaller muscles
- 20% decrease in trunk kinetic energy requires 33% increase in shoulder velocity or mass



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SERVE DEVELOPMENT

PHYSIQUE:

- Posterior chain activation
- Core activation

TECHNIQUE:

- Stable & consistent set up
- Utilising back leg drive





LET'S GET PRACTICAL...

FLOOR THROWS

GET DOWN ONTO THE FLOOR, AND OBSERVE YOURSELF AND THE OTHER COACHES THROWING.

1. Do you notice anything different to how the female coaches are throwing vs. the male coaches?
2. How might the difference in distance be linked to what we learnt and discussed in Unit 1 of the course?



4 STEPS TO A PUSH SERVE

STEP 1: OBSERVE AND ANALYSE.

Is the player activating the back leg and the posterior chain?

STEP 2: THROWING INTERVENTIONS

Throwing exercise allow us to highlight the specific muscle groups and show players what a push serve is supposed to feel like.

STEP 3: RACKET AND BALL INTERVENTIONS

These exercises help us bridge the gap between the physical exercises and the practical application of them in the serve.

STEP 4: PUT IT ALL TOGETHER

We need to put into all together in practise. Get players serving and focusing on the back leg drive and the posterior chain.

TASK:

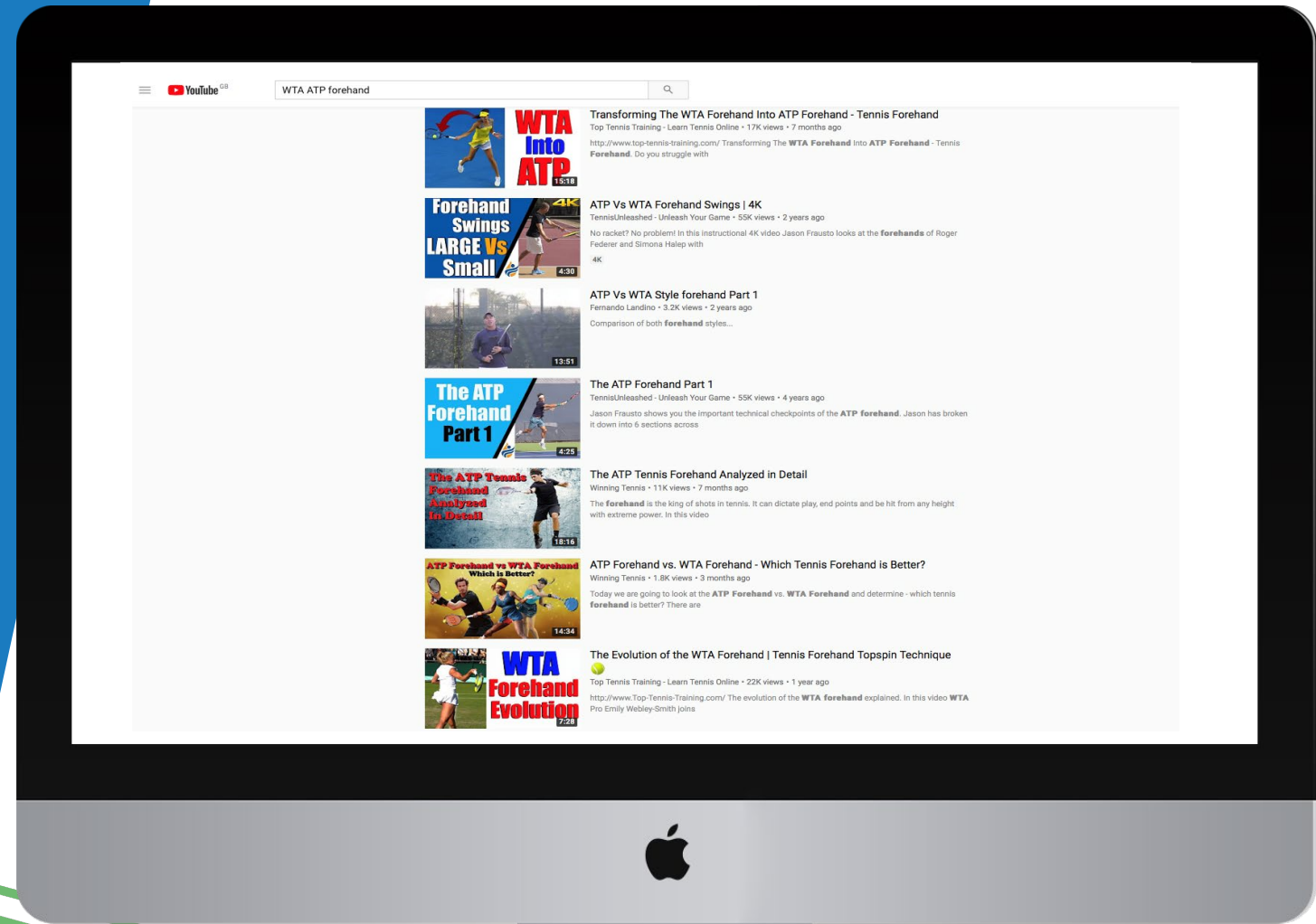
(a) Explore the interventions you've just seen

Go through the four steps to a push serve and try out the interventions jo has suggested. Why do they work?

(b) Get creative and come up with your own interventions

As a group you need to find creative interventions for both throwing exercise and racket and ball exercises.

THE FEMALE FOREHAND: FACTS, STATS, & INTERVENTIONS





THE FEMALE FOREHAND: FACTS, STATS, & INTERVENTIONS

Myths

“men had to have this evolution [in technique] to handle the power”

“if players didn’t do it they’d get blown off the court”

[the female] “swing is too big - so much can go wrong”

“WTA swing can’t take the ball on the rise”

[players with a WTA swing have an] “inability to topspin the ball properly”

Busted

Women are hitting speeds as fast as the men – the biggest forehands on both Tours are between 75&85mph

Data shows rally length is the same for women and men – so the women aren't being blown off the court

Error count is not greater than men – so there's not loads going wrong in the swing

Women take the ball on the rise! - whoever said this clearly isn't watching women's tennis

The highest RPMs in Wimbledon 2016/17: 2977 Cilic vs 2508 Kuznetsova.

TERMINOLOGY MATTERS

- ATP v WTA – loaded with hierarchy
- Implicit **Mental** component

COACHING CONSEQUENCES

- No accounting for **physical** differences
- **Tactically** insecure
- Unnecessary **technical** intervention



CONTACT EXTENSION

The other area of difference between female and male forehands is the degree of extension at contact



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HOW DOES CONTACT EXTENSION AFFECT BALL SPEED?

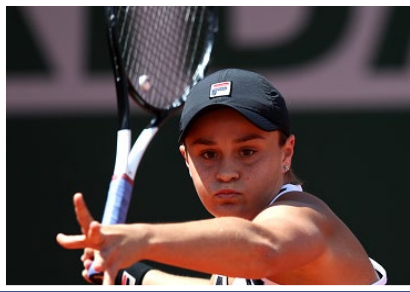


WTA TOUR TOP 50: WHAT ARE THE NORMS?



78%

CAN IT REALLY BE WRONG?



1 outside forehand Grand Slam winner since 2014

How many Grand Slam trophies are represented on this slide?

FOREHAND DEVELOPMENT

PHYSIQUE:

- Half the upper body strength of men
- Narrower shoulders



TECHNIQUE:

- Work within the norms
- Solve problems with skill not technique



THE GRASSROOTS GAME

AT THE DEVELOPMENT LEVEL, WE NEED TO MAKE SURE THAT:

- We set the foundations for girls to develop techniques that cohere with these concepts – *we never know how far they'll go*
- We understand the ideal profile for female players is different to the ideal profile for male players – *this is true at all levels of the game*
- We're not strong-arming girls to play like boys – *players respond to relevant content*



DRILLS & SKILLS FOR FOREHAND DEVELOPMENT

THE CONSTRAINTS-BASED MODEL



Need relief for a forehand problem?
Does that forehand stick in your throat?
Have a **STREPSIL**....!

S — space

T — time

R — rules

E — equipment

P — people

S — scoring

I — implicit

L — learning

“The inside swing, which is prevalent in female players, takes longer to execute. Therefore, it has to be more adaptable.”

Constraints allow us to train adaptability. The STREPSIL system is designed to remind us of how we can disrupt our female player's strokes.”

Jo Ward:
Master Coach
Coach Tutor
Head of Coach Education and Qualifications



S — space

We need to train female players to be comfortable playing inside and outside the baseline

T — time

Female players need longer swings to get the same rotational distance. We have to train their skills to keep up.

R — rules

We can use rules to simulate game-based situations and environments, and target the specific skills female players need most

E — equipment

Mixing up equipment is a way to constrain and teach an adaptable forehand

P — people

We can engage players off-court and disrupt female players at the same time

S — scoring

We can teach girls and women to value the skills they'll benefit from the most

I — inspires great...

L — learning

THE CONSTRAINTS-BASED MODEL



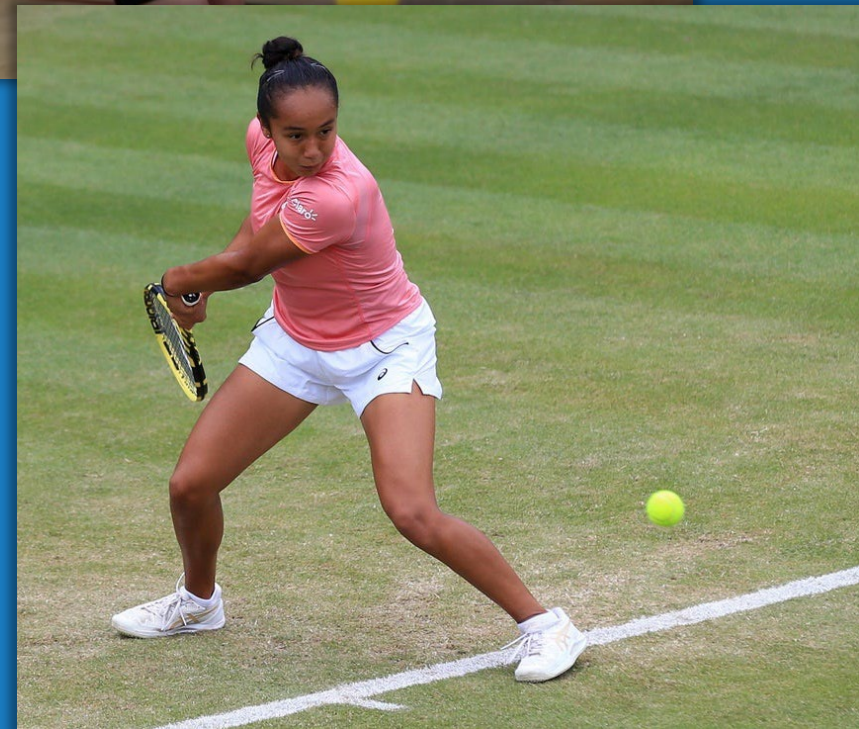
CONSTRAINTS = DISRUPTION

BACKHAND

What are the differences between female and male backhands?

What could account for these differences?

Guess what? The differences in Backhands are the same as the differences in Forehands.



CONTACT EXTENSION

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Backhand development

PHYSIQUE:

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- Work within the norms
- Solve problems with skill not technique



THE GRASSROOTS GAME

AT THE DEVELOPMENT LEVEL, WE CAN ADAPT THESE DRILLS BY:

- Going “down” a ball, i.e.. Orange ball players can do these drills using a Red ball
- Hand-feeds, we can feed with throws instead of from the racket
- Getting players to work cooperatively rather than competitively
- Shortening or narrowing the court, either to fit more players on the court or to make the rallies more controlled
- Getting players to feed themselves, it won't be perfect - but that's ok.



SUMMARY & CLOSE

- Understand your female players' physical attributes and use this knowledge in your coaching
- Understand what training can and can't physically change – this guides sound coaching decisions
- Activate and strengthen posterior chain and core to maximise physical performance
- Understand the norms and stats around female technical stroke production
- Take a skills-based approach to forehand development
- What we've learnt today can and *needs* to be adapted to the grassroots game

