



TENNIS
FOR BRITAIN

COACHING FEMALE PLAYERS

FROM PHYSIQUE TO
TECHNIQUE





“ Strategic physical training for tennis can be a complete game changer – knowing what to train and how to train it takes a coach to the next level.”

Suzanne Williams:
Master Coach
Coach Tutor
Head of Strength & Conditioning at The Parklangley Club



“ Knowing the norms and relevant coaching interventions for female players can result in more success and therefore help grow participation.”

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

THE GRASSROOTS GAME

Many of the concepts in this course were founded in a performance context, we need to understand how we can scale them down to the entry level of the sport, because...

The concepts are relevant at any level –understanding how the performance world combats them will help us to combat them at development level

Players respond to relevant content – female players, adults and juniors, enjoy relevant content. *Success breeds confidence, confidence breeds motivation, motivation keeps girls in the game.*

We don't know where youth players will end up - we need to build players a foundation that can be scaled up in later years



LET'S MOVE



DISCUSSION:

**DO WE COACH FEMALE & MALE
PLAYERS THE SAME OR
DIFFERENTLY FROM A PHYSICAL &
TECHNICAL PERSPECTIVE?**

*Please have reasons ready to share for your
answer*





LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Develop knowledge of the physical similarities and differences between females and males
- Understand the effects of training on the female body
- Practically apply female-specific coaching interventions
- Understand the norms and stats around female technical stroke production
- Apply practical drills and skills training to develop female serves and forehands
- Understand how to apply these concepts at grassroots level



THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- Thank you for investing in yourself
- Invite to engage with curiosity
- Large amount of experience in the room
- Peer-to-peer learning - share and collaborate
- You get out what you put in

UNIT 1: FEMALE PHYSIQUE

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Develop knowledge of the physical similarities and differences between females and males.
- Understand the impact of training on the female body
- Practically apply female-specific training to aid physical *and* technical development.
- Understand which physical elements can and can't be changed through training.
- Understand how to apply our understanding of the female physique to the grassroots level



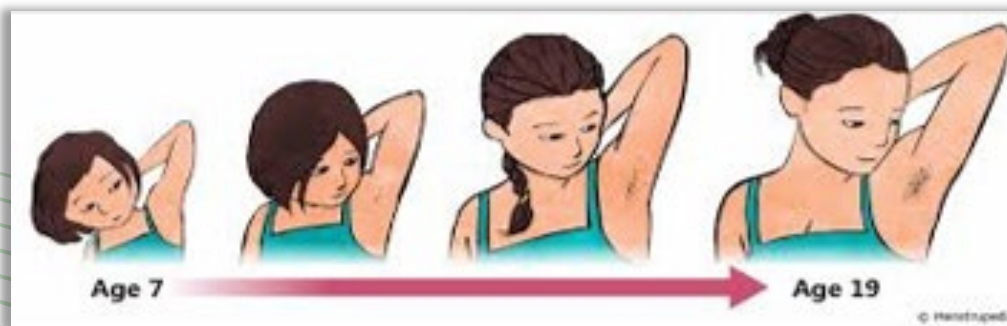
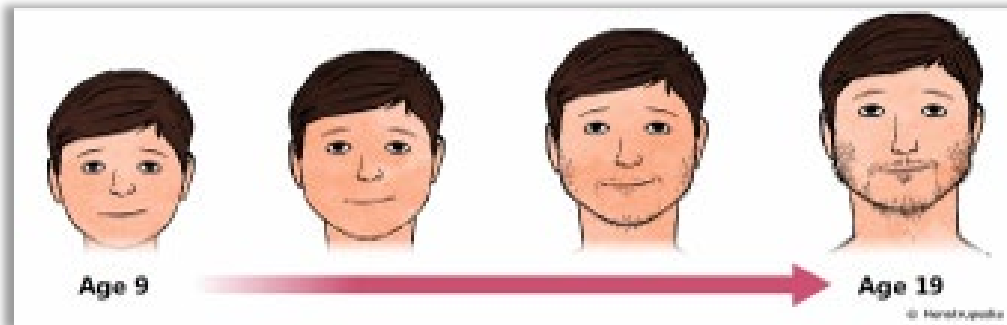
PUBERTY

MEN

- Usually starts between ages 11-14yrs
- Testosterone makes boys gain muscle mass
- Boys' athletic potential improves

WOMEN

- Starts between ages 9-13yrs
- Oestrogen makes girls gain body fat
- Girls often lack iron



Otis, 1999, 2001; Coyle, 2013; Mendle et al., 2010



HEART

- Smaller heart and chest cavity / Less lung tissue
- Lower stroke volume / cardiac output / lung volume / pulmonary ventilation
- Lower max aerobic tolerance
- Higher oxygen consumption during exercise
- Lower VO₂ max

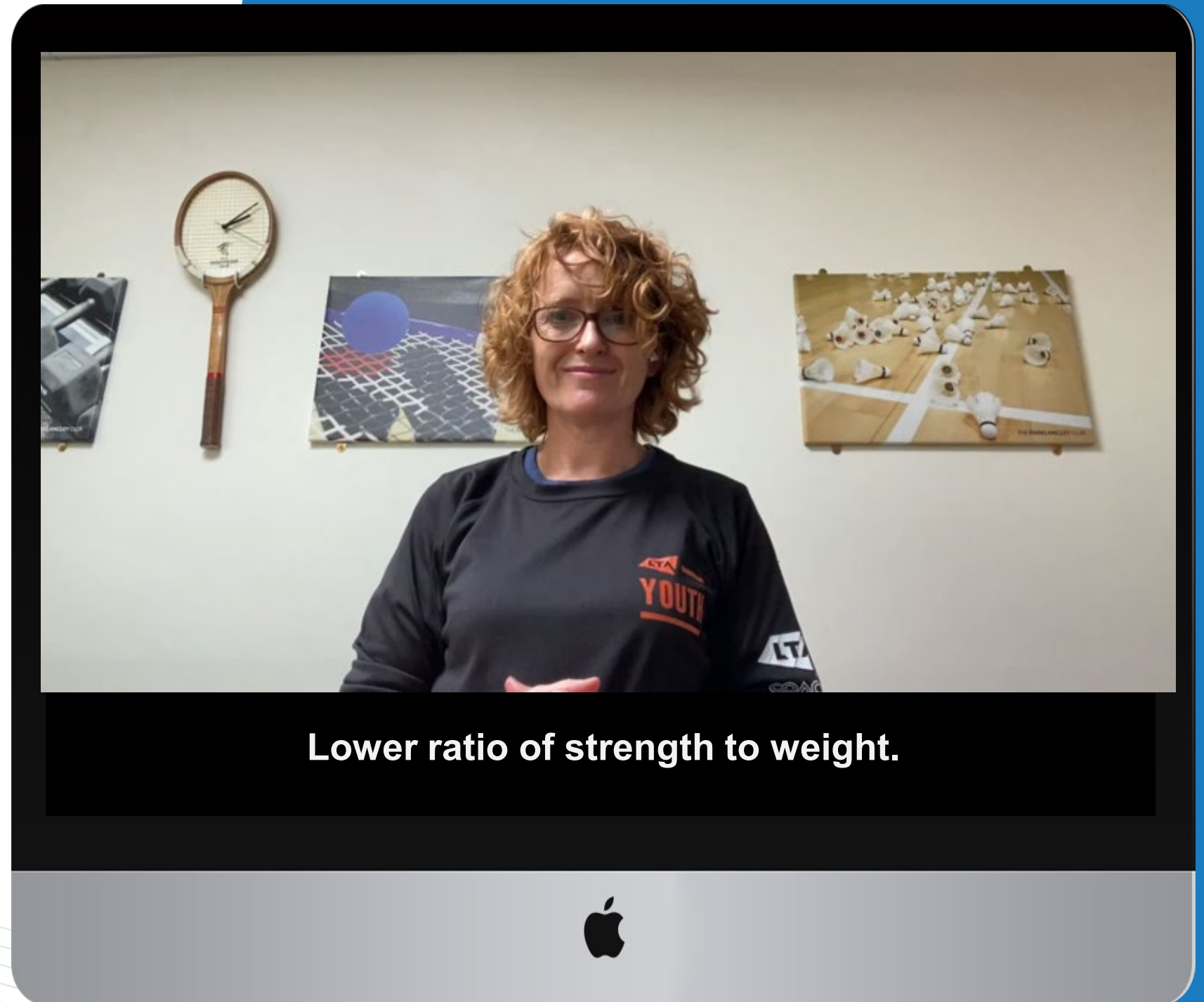


Females demonstrated greater cardiac work needed to meet the same external work demand.

BODY COMPOSITION

- Greater percentage body fat
- Less metabolically active tissue
- Less lean body mass – include bone tissue

Age	Women	Men
Athlete	14-20%	6-13%
Fitness	21-24%	14-17%
Average	25-31%	18-24%
Obese	32%	+25%



Lower ratio of strength to weight.

MUSCULAR SYSTEM

- Less muscle mass overall (less cross-sectional area, fewer fibres)
- More of total mass is distributed in the lower body
- More slow twitch fibres than fast twitch fibres



Muscle tissue is equally trainable.



NEUROMUSCULAR SYSTEM

ABSOLUTE STRENGTH (untrained):

Upper Body: 40-60% ☐

Lower body: 25-30% ☐

RELATIVE STRENGTH:

Tennis is a relative strength sport

Females show better neuromuscular recovery than males.

Functional movements are highly transferable with females.



SKELETAL

NARROWER SHOULDERS

- Implications for carrying angle
- Smaller amplitude for rotational distance

PELVIS

- Wider pelvis – Q Angle implications
- Greater anterior tilt



Some aspects of the skeletal system can be influenced by muscle strength/tension



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

- *Training is vital for female players – especially to counteract the impact of puberty*
- **Areas that CAN be changed –**
physical work will aid technique
- **Areas that CAN'T be changed –**
understand the technique that is optimal to your player (their physique)





HEIGHT

According to ONS:

- Female: 5ft 3in (161.6cm)
- Male: 5ft 9in (175.3cm)



HIP WIDTH

- Q Angle of thigh

**WHAT
TRAINING
CAN'T
CHANGE**



SHOULDER WIDTH

Narrower shoulders



STRENGTH

- Ball speed
- Bracing – stopping/holding shapes
- Optimal shoulder and hip separation
- Winning the contact



CARDIO VASCULAR CAPACITY

- Improved VO2 Max



EXPLOSIVENESS

- Racket head speed
- Body speed



SPEED

- Deceleration
- Acceleration



ACTIVATION & FACILITATION

- Posterior chain strengthening for lower and upper body



FLEXIBILITY & MOBILITY

- Postural

**WHAT
TRAINING
CAN
CHANGE**

THE GRASSROOTS GAME

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

- We help female players and their bodies to deal with the effects of puberty - *a stronger body is a supportive body*
- We learn technique, even if elementary, that's appropriate to the physique and size of the player – *we can't change the dimensions of the skeleton so we need to allow for it*
- Our warm ups and ball skills train the athletic skills that female players will benefit from the most – *jumping/landing & whole movement training is vital*



UNIT 1: SUMMARY

- Recognise the key differences between male and female bodies.
- Remember the what happens post puberty.
- Remember what can be changed and incorporate female-specific training to aid physical *and* technical development in your lessons/programmes.
- Remember what cannot be changed.
- One size does NOT fit all.
- This information is true at all levels, not just for performance players

