Developmental Plan

We know that as parents you may have many questions about the placement of your child and we have often heard the following: “We’d really like our child to be in Elite 1 group this session since he already plays on his High School team”, or “My daughter has been in Elite 3 for several sessions now and we would really like to move her up so she can hit with older and better kids”, or, “Betty has beaten Cooper in a practice match once and Cooper is in Elite 2 so don’t you think it’s time for Betty to move up?”

Although we completely understand these types of questions and the reasoning behind them, the developmental logic is misplaced and flawed. We parents have been programmed by our children’s academic “progressions” to assume and extend the logic of academics to motor skill development. Once a child completes Algebra and Geometry it’s time for Calculus! Once the basics of advanced physics is understood and the “A” is achieved it’s time to move to AP Calculus!! Well...not so much with skill development. It is not a linear pathway. Unlike academic progression sport development, certainly tennis, depends not only on the brain, but the brain and the physicality of the BODY and the determinative genetics therein. How tall is the young tennis player? How much does he/she weigh? How fast is the player? What is their reaction time to an oncoming ball at 85 mph? How quick are the hands? What kind of physical condition does a young player demonstrate on a day to day basis in practice? How fast is their serve? How fast is their forehand? What is the average racquet head speed on their groundstrokes?

Because Quince Orchard strives to instill a very specific and detailed technical foundation for EVERY stroke at a young age---even before a choice is made between “recreational ” or “competitive” developmental pathways---there should be NO technical difference between an Elite 2 player versus an Elite 3 Player. Quite simply, the primary difference is the ability to hit the ball with significantly greater speed and consistency.

All that being said, we strongly believe in the concept of a ‘learning community” as manifested in a training group. Young athletes who are progressing at a similar rate, with similar ball speed, similar size and technical expertise who, hopefully, become part of a multi-year tennis family. They learn together, improve together, lose together, win together, train together, lift each other up in tough wins and losses and inspire each other towards higher and higher goals and, at the end of the day, feel respected, challenged, and accepted for the gift of potential they bring to the group.

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