

9U/10U PATHWAY PROGRESSION

REGIONAL PERFORMANCE ► NATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Putting together an optimal weekly training and termly competition schedule that balances the right amount of quality with the volume required to develop for the future is important.

However, we acknowledge it can be challenging due to many reasons including schooling and logistical constraints. In this document we have tried to provide some guidance on hours and context, but it is important to note this may be different for each player and thus should be bespoke to the individual (individualised). Also recognising that during school holiday periods, court time and access can increase and there are more competition opportunities which should be factored in.

More important than these recommendations is having a credible and accredited coach who is driven to lead on accelerating the player's development, that rest and recovery is factored in* and the player is accessing a thriving developmental training environment where player well-being is at the forefront.

TOTAL TENNIS HOURS (WEEKLY)

Term time when there is no official competition	9U	10U
Individual Lessons	2+	2+
Squad Training	4+	5+
Free Play/Practice Matches**	2+	2+
Total	8+	9+

ATHLETIC DEVELOPMENT (WEEKLY)

In addition to pre-tennis warm-ups	9U	10U
Tennis Specific (S&C)	3 sessions	3 sessions
Other Sports	3+ sessions	3+ sessions
Total	6+	6+

MATCHES (YEARLY)

	9U	10U
Number of official singles and doubles matches	120+	100+
Win:Loss Ratio	2:1-3:1	2:1-3:1

*rest and recovery is paramount at this age and stage (more information on this is explained within this guidance).

**if no matches/tournament at the weekend, then scheduling in practice matches would be appropriate.

CONTEXT

Athletic Development in young tennis players – enhancing strength, power, agility, balance, co-ordination and speed – is essential for long term success. This is best achieved through a combination of multi-sport participation, free play and structured, age-appropriate athletic development sessions with a qualified practitioner.

Individual Lessons in the early stages are important with technical development of key fundamentals remaining a priority. Although the cost of these can be high, it allows for focused and specific development work with progress being seen quickly.

Loading: We recommend that players increase any volumes in training steadily and try to avoid spikes in training load. Signs of a player potentially over-playing could include lack of enjoyment, irritability, constant fatigue, picking up injuries and lack of performance improvements. Consideration should also be given at these early stages to the player's skeletal system not being fully formed.

Free Play/Practice Matches with or without coach presence are vital for players to transition their newly learnt skills to the match court.

Official Matches (singles and doubles): This is the minimum number of matches recommended for players to develop match experience and build their competitive qualities. Match counts may be higher for some players and again will depend on factors listed above and the ball colour being played, but also the player's love for competition at this age.

Other Sports at this age are crucial to help all round athlete development and help reduce any pressures associated with specialising in one sport from a very young age.

Recovery/Rest: Making sure that players are resting, eating and sleeping sufficiently is key to recovery. We recommend that players ideally have one rest day per week and another 24-hour rest period within the week. We recommend players try to factor in four weeks of complete rest per year.

Squad Training: Done well, squad training enables coaches to stretch players physically and mentally whilst achieving the volumes of practice required to embed skills. It also encourages players to take more ownership of their game in fun, energetic environments with drilling and points play. At times, smaller group training sessions (2-3 players on one court with a coach) are highly encouraged as they provide opportunities for full court work, allowing coaches to stretch players and replicate the true demands of the game with an individual coaching approach.

Tennis Specific Athletic Development (also referred to as S&C) is vital to prepare players for the future demands of the game and supports injury prevention.

Total Tennis Hours: This is a guide for a typical term time week, ideally being spread out as evenly as possible. There will be many aspects to consider here including travel time, academic priority, stage of development, parental commitments, playing other sports to high levels and, most importantly, balancing quality over quantity. It is also important to try and incorporate appropriate practice with players of a higher, similar and lower level.

Win:Loss Ratio: We recommend that players try to adapt a tournament schedule that keeps their win:loss ratio ideally between 2:1 and 3:1. This maintains enjoyment in the game with enough losses to drive improvement.