



LONG TERM ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT PLAN



BERMUDA LAWN TENNIS ASSOCIATION
WWW.BLTA.BM

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1. THE BERMUDA LAWN TENNIS ASSOCIATION

The Bermuda Lawn Tennis Association (BLTA) is the recognized governing body of tennis in Bermuda. Founded in 1973 the association was formed to unify numerous tennis clubs in Bermuda and develop a structure for competition and the growth of tennis. The BLTA is a full member of the International Tennis Federation (ITF), which is the World Governing Body of Tennis, having joined in 1994. As such we follow their rules of play and wherever possible adhere to their development structure.

Our Mission is:

To promote and develop the sport of tennis to all segments of Bermuda's community at all levels.

Our Vision is:

To implement a responsible tennis methodology that supports programmes and development from the grassroots through to the professional level.

Who are the BLTA

The BLTA consists of:

- An elected executive team of a President, 2 Vice Presidents, and a non-elected treasurer.
- The board of directors is made up of member club representatives
- Pro Registry of Coaches

2. LONG-TERM ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT (LTAD)

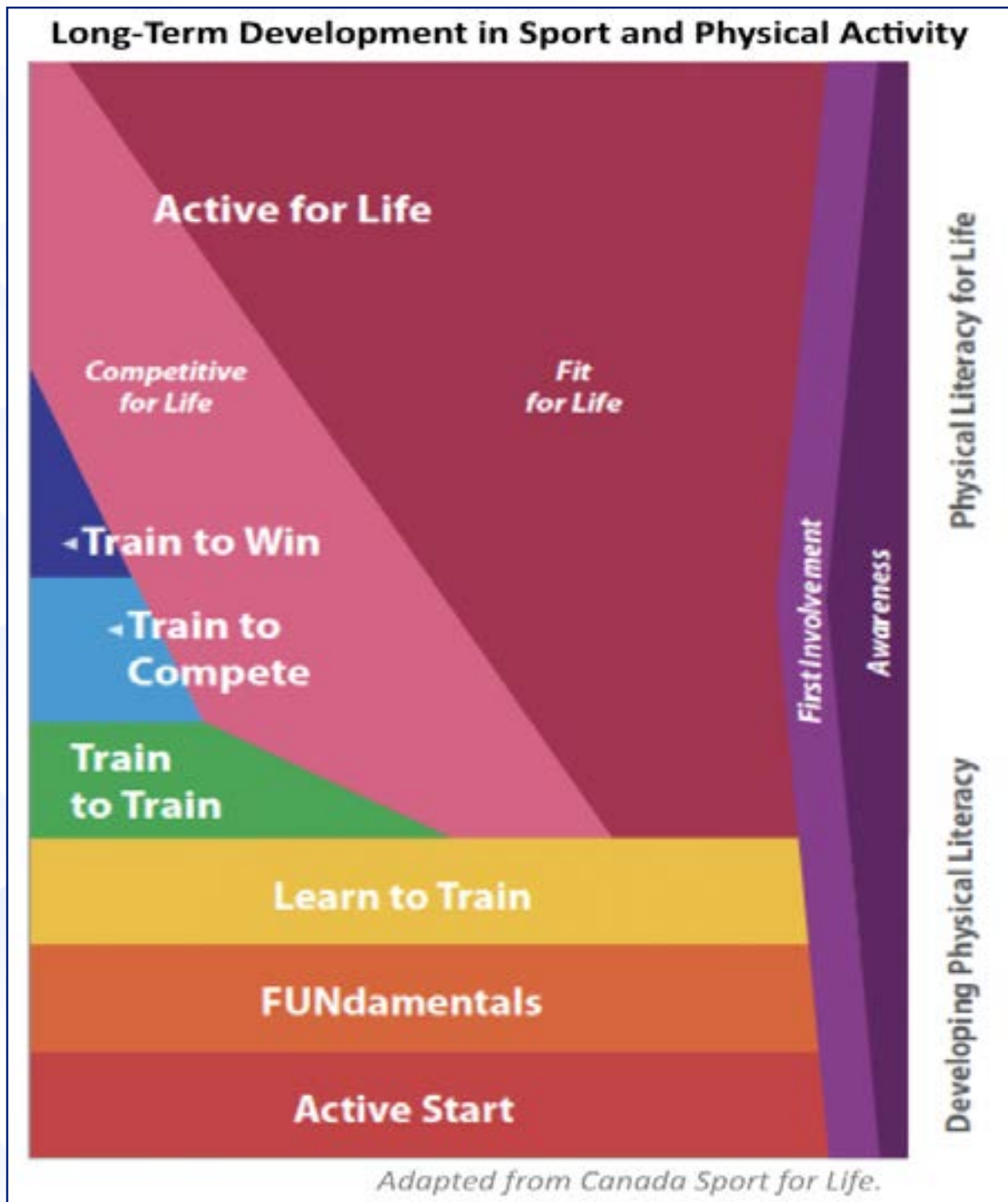
The LTAD is a multi-stage training, competition, and recovery pathway guiding an individual's experience in sports and physical activity. It takes into account growth, maturation and development, trainability, and sports system alignment to enable optimal participation for every child, youth, or adult.

The LTAD framework recognizes that both high performance and lifelong engagement are built on the same foundation as physical literacy, and understands that an effective sports system builds a solid foundation before moving toward sport Long-term athlete development understands that optimum development and success in sport is a long-term process that is achieved over the course of time through specific and well-planned programming.

LTAD forms the foundation for national sports development by providing a framework and pathway for the progression of athletes, programs, and related activities, and is closely linked to the successful implementation of five goals of the National Sports Policy.

- 1.** Increase participation
- 2.** Achieve sporting excellence regionally
- 3.** Improve access to sports facilities
- 4.** Increase the value of sport
- 5.** Establish a framework for talent development

3. THE RECTANGLE OF LONG-TERM ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT:





4. TEN KEY FACTORS OF LTAD

- 1. Physical Literacy** – Children will not stay active with recreational activity or develop into high performance athletes if they don't have physical literacy, and they will not have physical literacy if they do not get the FUNdamentals. The FUNdamentals include a wide variety of fundamental movement skills and fundamental sports skills that should be learned at young ages (before the onset of the adolescent growth spurt) in four different environments: ground, water, air, and snow and ice. With these basic skills, children gain the ability, competence, and confidence to practice any sport or physical activity they choose.
- 2. Specialization** – There are right times and wrong times to specialize in any one sport or physical activity. Specialize too early, and the athlete may limit their development and success at older ages. Specialize too late, and the athlete may miss key developmental opportunities. In most sports, athletes should not specialize until they are between the ages of 12 to 15. Before that age, they should participate in a wide range of sports to ensure they become competent, well-rounded athletes who have acquired physical literacy.
- 3. Age** – Children grow and develop at different rates. Sports and physical activity need to take each child's stage of growth and development into account when designing training, competition, and recovery programs.
- 4. Sensitive Periods** – As children grow and develop, there are times when practice and training will have the greatest effect. These "sensitive periods" provide a special opportunity to train and develop important skills and physical abilities that will impact athletic performance throughout the lifespan.
- 5. Intellectual, Emotional, and Moral Development** – LTAD addresses the complete physical, mental, cognitive, and emotional development of athletes – not just physical characteristics and performance qualities. Training, competition, and recovery programs need to consider the mental, cognitive, and emotional development of each athlete.
- 6. Excellence Takes Time** – Research has shown that it takes 10,000 hours of quality training for athletes to achieve their full potential and perform at an elite level. In most examples of top-ranked athletes and other star performers, their 10,000 hours are usually accumulated over at least 10 years of training and competing.
- 7. Periodization** – Simply put, periodization is time management. It outlines all annual and seasonal training within a logical schedule to bring about optimal improvements in athlete performance at the right times while minimizing injury and burnout. Periodization plans connect the LTAD stage of the athlete with the training and development requirements of that stage.
- 8. Competition** – Athletes need to train and compete according to training-to-competition ratios that develop skills and fitness while preventing injury and burnout. Also, the quality of competition and the timing of competitive events need to serve the needs of the athlete – not the needs of coaches, parents, and administrators.
- 9. Sport System Alignment and Integration** – Based on Sport for Life's principles, LTAD promotes system alignment and integration between sport clubs and national sports organizations. Sport for Life addresses the overarching system and structure of sport and physical activity in Canada, including the relationship between school sports, physical education, and high-performance sports at all levels from policy to program delivery.
- 10. Continuous Improvement** – The concept of continuous improvement, which permeates LTAD, is drawn from the respected Japanese industrial philosophy known as Kaizen. By applying a willingness to always seek improvements in our understanding and practice, LTAD will continuously evolve to accommodate breakthroughs in sports science research, new innovations in technology and evolving best practices in coaching.

5. ROLES IN TENNIS

Active Start	Iron Kids (3-15)
<p>The role of the BLTA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a structure and framework for local and international Tennis. • Represent the sport of tennis to the local government and the National Olympic Association • Sanction local tournaments and events. • Provide a national ranking system. • Provide opportunities for international representation for qualified local players. • Provide opportunities to develop all areas of tennis locally, including coaches' education, officiating, and administration. • As a member nation of the ITF, we adhere to the rules and regulations for tennis as set out by the ITF.
<p>The role of the Player</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop some skills demonstrating the ability to manage and be responsible for certain aspects of "tennis life." • Warm up, stretch, and cool down independently. • Make appropriate hydration and nutrition selections for training and competition. • Be well-prepared for training and competition including being well-organized, rested, and hydrated. • Become increasingly more responsible for own preparation. • Discuss goals and aspirations with your coach and parents. • Love training, playing, and competing. • Participate in a complementary sport that is enjoyable. • Be an ambassador of your provincial/national associations and the sport of tennis while in Bermuda and abroad.



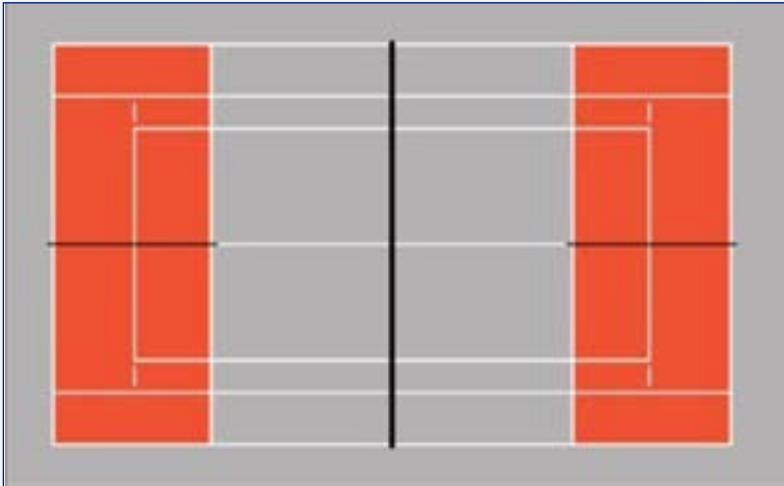
Active Start	Iron Kids (3-15)
<p>The role of the Coach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach the basic sport-specific skills and elementary tactics essential to participate in tennis. • Introduce physical conditioning and fundamental mental skills. • Encourage participation in other sports. • Meet regularly with fitness coaches to ensure a well-balanced training program. • Measure peak height velocity and the growth spurt three times per year to take advantage of optimal windows of trainability. • Select the appropriate number and level of competition based on the individual athlete and long-term objectives. • Develop a strong relationship and commitment with other players beyond the tennis court. • Relentlessly pursue technical expertise that positively influences the player’s tennis skills. • Select appropriate matches for athletes. • Raise the performance capacity of the players. • Prepare players to perform at identified competitions, reaching a peak performance at the priority competition • of the year. • Pursue professional development that includes new learning about technical and tactical information and • appropriate training for the train to win stage where strength and stamina should be emphasized. • Encourage decision-making and self-responsibility for aspects of tennis training and competition.
<p>The role of the Parent</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be supportive of the child player by ensuring that he/she loves tennis as the pressure to perform increases. • Provide guidance but listen to the child to ensure that training and competing are enjoyable. • Discuss the child’s goals and aspirations with your child but recognize that increased pressure from parents may • result in decreasing motivation to play. • Understand the long-term player development model and pathway. • Encourage the child to become responsible for their preparation for tennis. • Reinforce values such as hard work, personal excellence, and sacrifice as they are necessary to be successful. • Support your child’s decision if he/she wants to switch to recreational tennis. • Ensure that schoolwork is attended to and that the child is given other normal childhood responsibilities.

6. PLAY AND STAY TENNIS, THE INTERNATIONAL TENNIS FEDERATION (ITF) WAY.

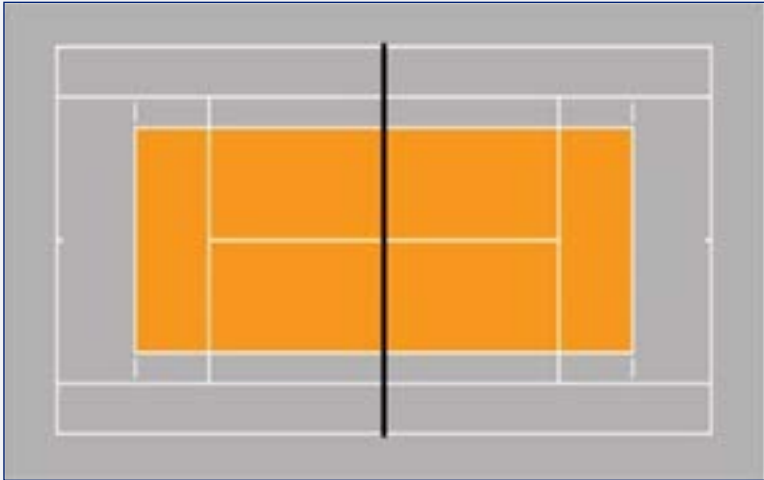
Play and Stay is tennis for players aged 10 and under, played on smaller courts with slower Red, Orange, and Green balls. It is a fun way to start tennis and makes it easy for children to play the game, and develop good technique and tactics and a love for the sport. Since 2012 the ITF Rules of Tennis (**Appendix VII**) state that competition for players aged 10 and under must be played with slower Red, Orange, and Green balls on appropriately sized courts. The traditional Yellow ball is no longer permitted.

The BLTA adheres to this method of development and has trained coaches to implement this method.

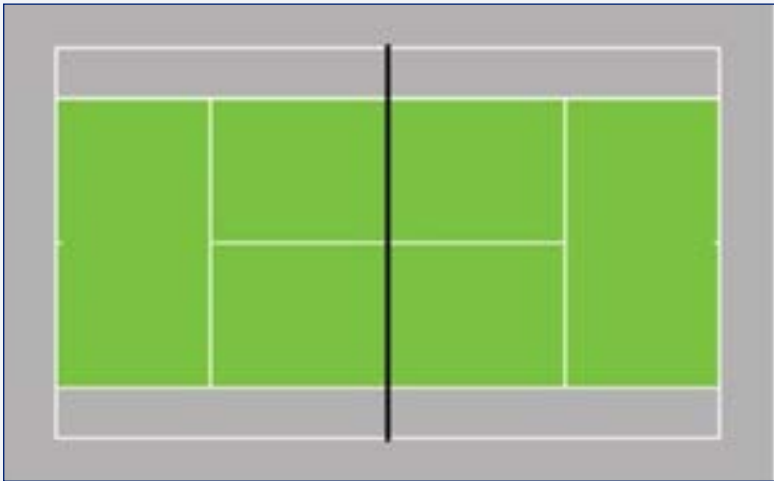
Red Ball

RED BALL	THE COURT
<p>The Ball</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75% slower than a Yellow ball* • Foam ball: 8-9cm • Felt ball: 7-8cm <p>*estimated ball speed</p>	
<p>Recommended Scoring Formats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1x Tiebreak to 7 or 10 • Best of 3 Tiebreaks to 7 • 1x Short Set to 4 • Timed matches 	
<p>The Court</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10.97-12.8m x 4.88-6.1m • Net Height (at the centre): 31.5-33" (0.8-0.838m) 	

Orange Ball

ORANGE BALL	THE COURT
<p>The Ball</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% slower than a Yellow ball* • Felt ball: 6-6.86cm <p>*estimated ball speed</p>	
<p>Recommended Scoring Formats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best of 3 Tiebreaks to 7 • 1x Short Set to 4 	
<p>The Court</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17.98-18.29 x 6.4-8.3m • Net Height (at the centre): 31.5-36" (0.8-0.914m) 	

Green Ball

GREEN BALL	THE COURT
<p>The Ball</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25% slower than a Yellow ball* • Felt ball: 6.3-6.86cm <p>*estimated ball speed</p>	
<p>Recommended Scoring Formats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best of 3 Tiebreaks to 7 • 1x Short Set to 4 (3rd Set as match Tiebreak to 10) • A combination of the formats used at Red and Orange stages. 	
<p>The Court</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23.77 x 8.23m • Net Height (at the centre): 36" (0.914m) 	

7. STAGE BY STAGE DEVELOPMENT.

The following is a general framework for a long-term Tennis player development pathway that can be tailored to fit the needs and goals of Bermuda Tennis. The pathway will be broken down into several stages, each focusing on different aspects of development, from foundational skills to elite-level performance. The pathway will include components such as technical skills, physical conditioning, mental preparation, and competition preparation.

Stage 1: Active Start

(0-6 years old) This stage is all about developing a love for tennis through fun activities that promote physical literacy. It is important to make tennis fun and enjoyable for children at this stage. This can be done through mini-games, drills, and exercises that develop basic movement skills such as balance, coordination, and agility. At this stage, children should not be playing matches, but instead, they should be introduced to basic tennis techniques such as hitting a ball over a net and controlling the ball.

Stage 2: Fundamentals

(6-9 years old) At this stage, children should continue to focus on developing basic movement skills while also learning the basic technical skills of tennis. The emphasis should be on proper technique and basic tactical skills. Children should continue to play mini-games and participate in fun activities to keep them engaged and motivated. They should also start playing modified matches such as mini-tennis and short-court tennis.

Stage 3: Learn to Train

(9-12 years old) At this stage, children should start to focus on developing their tennis skills more seriously. They should be learning more advanced technical skills such as topspin, slice, and serve. They should also start to develop basic tactical skills such as shot selection and court positioning. The emphasis should be on proper technique, but also on developing a love for competition. Children should be encouraged to play matches and participate in tournaments.

Stage 4: Train to Train

(12-16 years old) At this stage, children should continue to develop their tennis skills but also start to focus on their physical conditioning. They should be learning more advanced tactical skills such as patterns of play and point construction. They should also be working on their mental skills such as focus and concentration. Children should be participating in more competitive matches and tournaments and should be working towards achieving a national ranking.

Stage 5: Train to Compete

(16-18 years old) At this stage, players should be focusing on preparing for high-level competition. They should be working on advanced tactical skills such as strategy and game analysis. They should also be working on their physical conditioning to prepare for the physical demands of high-level competition. Players should be competing in national and international tournaments and working towards achieving a world ranking. Stage 6: Train to Win (18+ years old) At this stage, players should be focusing on achieving their full potential and reaching the highest level of competition. They should be working on their mental skills such as mental toughness and resilience. They should also be refining their technical and tactical skills to the highest level. Players should be competing in professional tournaments and working towards achieving a top 100 world ranking.

Stage 6: Train to Win

The stage is to culmination of all factors listed in previous stages. The players who seek to be competitive on the world stage will still be developing high-performance skills, however, they will have a game style and the technical know-how to compete in high-performance competitions. This will include all aspects of the game from physical attributes to technical and tactical knowledge, mental strength, and nutritional management.

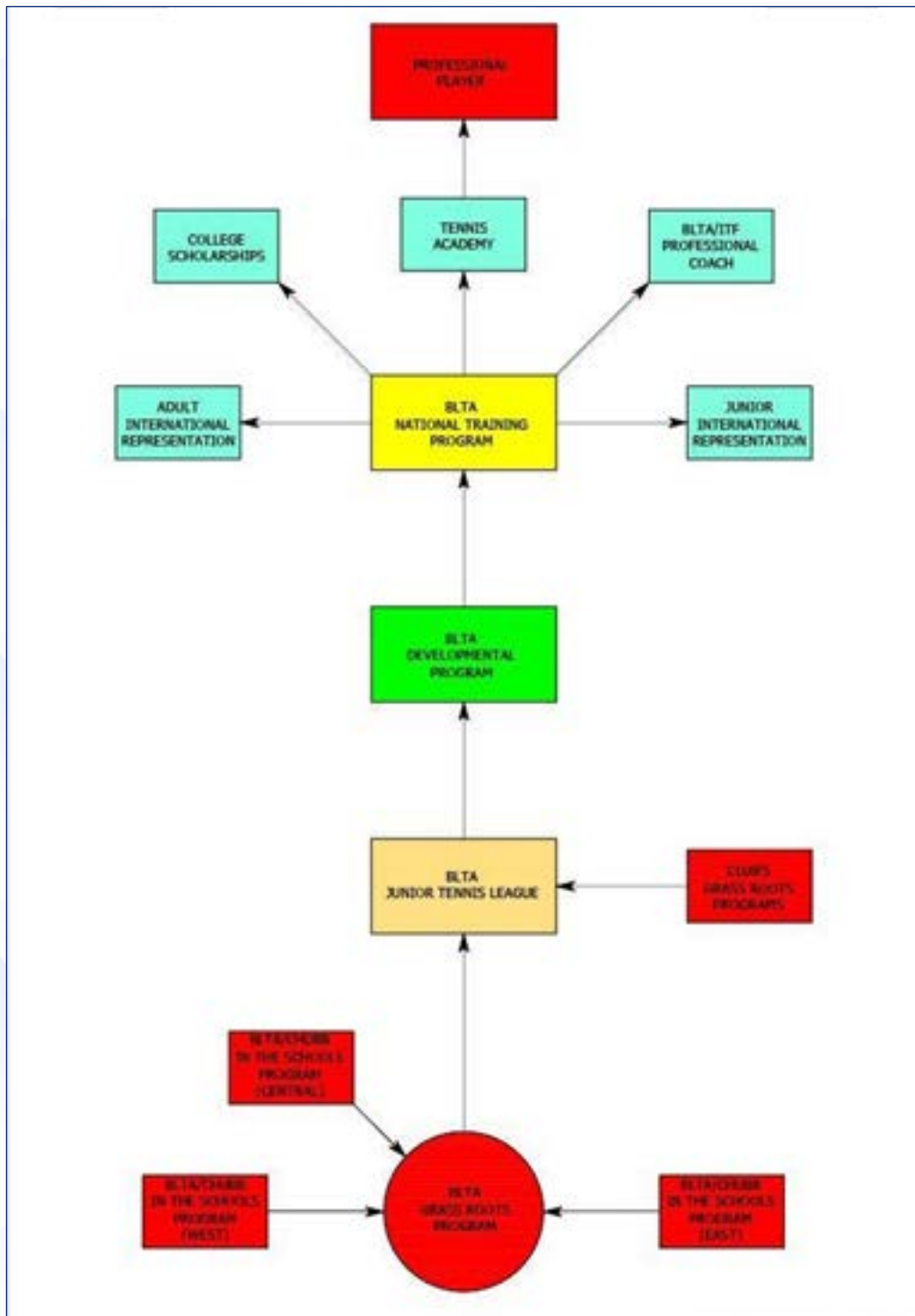
Stage 7: Tennis for Life

(12 years and above) While not all players will seek to reach the highest levels in the sport of tennis there are so many levels one can obtain just for the sheer physical and mental enjoyment of the sport. Friendly and, or social matches to league play or tournaments of various levels. Tennis is a sport for life that promotes physical and mental stimulation.



8. BLTA DEVELOPMENT OF TENNIS METHODOLOGY

The following diagram visually outlines the stages and inputs of a tennis player's development path. The various stages can all be related to the key factors of the LTAD plan.

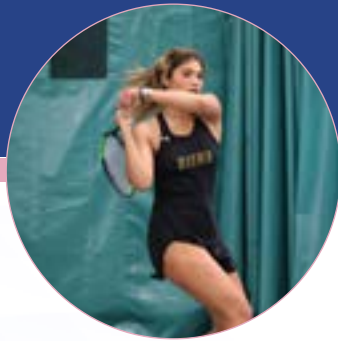


9. BLTA TARGETED PLAYERS AT VARIOUS STAGES

This table clearly outlines the targeted players for each stage of the plan.

Stages	Players
Active Start	Preschool
Fundamental	Primary School
Learn to Train	Grassroots
Train to Train	Individual
Train to Compete	Developmental and National Program
Train to Win	NCAA, ITF/PRO Events, Davis and Billie Jean Cups, International Representation
Active For Life	All players 12 and over.





10. COMPETITION RECOMMENDATIONS

Under the ITF guidelines the BLTA aims to create a structure of a player-friendly environment for children to be introduced to competition at a level suitable for their age and skill level, Therefore, competition under the age of 10 years is not supported. Players are introduced to competition officially in the u12 age. It is important for parents especially to understand that at the younger ages, there is a greater focus on development rather than winning competitions. It is also extremely important to provide support and encouragement at all levels.

Stages of Development	Local Regional	National Competitions	International Competitions	Enjoyment
Stage 1: Active Start	Not Recommend	Not Recommend	Not Recommend	Stage 7 Tennis for Life
Stage 2: Fundamental	Red/Orange/ Green ball events	Not Recommend	Not Recommend	
Stage 3: Learn to Train	Local Club Tournaments. The transition from red/orange/green ball along with mini to a full court	National Training U12 / U14	U 12 and U14 COTECC EVENTS	
Stage 4: Train to Train	Local Club Tournaments	National Training U12 / U14 /U16	U12 / U14/ U16 COTECC EVENTS, ITF JR Events	
Stage 5: Train to Compete	Local Club Tournaments	National Training	U12 / U14/ U16 COTECC EVENTS, ITF JR Events, Davis Cup, Billie Jean Cup, NCAA	
Stage 6: Active For Life	Local Club Tournaments	National Training	ITF Futures, Davis Cup, Billie Jean Cup, ITF Pro Events, WTA, ATP	

11. WORLD TENNIS NUMBER RANKING SYSTEM

Ranking a player.

As a player's development starts to progress obtaining a ranking brings an understanding of what level they are playing at not only locally but also globally. The World Tennis Number is such a system.

What is the World Tennis Number (WTN)

The BLTA is recommending the adoption of the World Tennis Number Ranking system for its members.

The WTN is a global initiative led by the ITF to bring the tennis community together. The WTN will allow tennis players across the globe to find the right person to play with and the right program to join. This enables level-based play to ensure everyone is enjoying the sport. The WTN initiative is a massive opportunity for tennis federations across the world to grow and unify tennis together

The ITF World Tennis Number (WTN) provides a global standard for players. It is a 40-1 scale, with 40 being a beginner player and 1 being an elite professional. This scale is for all players, regardless of age, gender, or ability.

This system is supported by all major Grand Slam Nations, an increasing number of ITF member nations, and organizations such as the NCAA for collegiate players as the standard system for the ranking of players.

Who should use the WTN?

- PLAYERS can use WTN to find the right person to play with or the right program to join
- COACHES can use WTN to help organize programs and lessons based on skill level
- TOURNAMENT DIRECTORS can use WTN for entry and seeding criteria, and it can help them define tournament categories
- CLUBS/LEAGUE ORGANIZERS can use WTN to support the delivery of adult recreational leagues and match play events

A player can join the WTN via the following link: <https://worldtennisnumber.com/>



12. COACHING CERTIFICATIONS

The BLTA also supports the development of tennis coaches as a key factor in the development of players. The BLTA adheres to the ITF Coaching Certification Curriculum as a member nation. The various coaching certifications mirror the various stages of our development plan.



Course Level	Core Competencies	Minimum Tutor Contact Hours
ITF Play Tennis Course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with beginner players (ITN10) and 10 & under children • Knowledge of basic tactics and technique • Organise simple competitions • Use correct equipment and court sizes for starter players 	32 Hours
ITF coaching Beginner & Intermediate Players Course (formerly Level 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with players rated up to ITN 6 • Understand and be able to apply the basic training principles needed to coach players from beginner to intermediate levels 	80 Hours
Coaching Advanced Players Course (formerly Level 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with players up to ITN 3 • Understand and be able to apply the necessary training principles for coaching beginner, intermediate and advanced players • Plan the training and competition programme for advanced players 	80 Hours
Coaching High-Performance Players Course (formerly Level 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with high-performance players up to ITN 1 • Understand and be able to apply the training practices necessary to help high-performance players technically, tactically, physically and mentally • Plan and organise the competition schedules for high performance players 	88 Hours

The BLTA has in the past and will continue in the future to assist in the certification and continuing education of local coaching candidates and tennis enthusiasts. This can be achieved by workshops, online training through the ITF Academy or in-person training courses.



ITF Course	Conferences/ Workshops	Olympic Solidarity (OS) Programmes	Resources/ Publications
ITF Play Tennis Course	Regional Coaches Conferences by BNP Paribas	OS Technical Courses at National Level	ITF Academy & Coaching Website
ITF Coaching Beginner & Intermediate Players Course	Worldwide Coaches Conferences by BNP Paribas	OS Technical Courses at Regional Level	Coaching & Sport Science Review
ITF Coaching Advance Players Course		OS Coaches Conferences	ITF Research Grants
ITF Coaching High-Performance Players Course		Development of a National Sport Structure	Email Newsletter
ITF Tutor Certification Course(s)		Valencia, Spain Coaching Scholarships: CAP & CHP Courses	ITF eBooks App
ITF Specialisation Courses		ITF Regional Training Centre Support	Published Manuals & Books

13. TENNIS PRO REGISTRY

The BLTA created a Tennis Pro Registry which is an organization for the Certified local tennis pros. The Organization was established in 1992 and its purpose is to provide the local pros a voice and also structure within the tennis community. They meet once a month and some of the aims are to host tennis events, support the BLTA raise funds for educational purposes, and represent the needs of the local pro.

The organization has been acknowledged by the ITF and recommendations to our regional neighbors have been made to create similar organizations.

The BLTA requires all member coaches to be certified to at least an ITF level 1 standard or an equally recognized certification. The BLTA uses member coaches for the administration of our programs and as coaches for our traveling teams

The BLTA will also recommend any of the member coaches to parents seeking to provide private or group lessons for developing players.

- Of the 24 registered coaches, there are:
- 2 ITF Level 2 Coaches
- 20 ITF Level 1 Coaches
- 2 Professional Tennis Registry Coaches
- 1 Professional Panam high performance coaching certification

Challenges and Opportunities for Development

In reviewing the challenges and opportunities to progress the development plan the BLTA believes that we are well positioned to overcome the challenges due to the strength of resources available.

Stages	Challenges	Opportunities
Active Start	Program Organization	Many Schools to reach- have coaches
Fundamentals	Getting access to kids	Can increase program to all year levels
Learn to train	Transitioning kids from the school environment to a structured coaching environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A large pool of players • Sponsored Program • Increased visibility
Learn to win	Conflicts with individual training-Coaches	Sponsor programs increase visibility. Large pool to draw from.
Train to win	Conflicts with individual training-Coaches	Large pool - Potential international representation / Scholarships
Competitive for life	Funding for Davis Cup, Billie Jean King Cup, CAC games Pam Games, ITF Futures Events, ATP/WTA Pro Events	Sponsorship and grants are available.



14. CONCLUSION

This long-term tennis player development pathway for Bermuda Tennis is designed to develop players from a young age through to the highest level of competition. The pathway focuses on developing a love for tennis, while also emphasizing proper technique, tactical skills, physical conditioning, and mental toughness. It provides a clear roadmap for players to follow and helps to ensure that they have the necessary skills and experience to compete at the highest level.

The plan also recognizes that not everyone is inspired to become a professional player, so it allows for the various stages between a beginner and a pro.

It should also be noted that while this plan adheres to the methodology used by the world governing body of tennis other avenues can assist in the development of the player while striving to develop the best player possible at any level.

The ultimate goal is to grow tennis in any way possible.

15. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- **ITF Rules of Tennis**

The International Tennis Federation (ITF) is the governing body of the game of tennis and its duties and responsibilities include protecting the integrity of the game through determination of the Rules of Tennis. <https://www.itftennis.com/media/7221/2024-rules-of-tennis-english.pdf>

- **CHUBB in the Schools Program**

The BLTA highly successful program for introducing tennis to primary school aged kids throughout the island. The program has been in existence for over 20 plus years and is generously sponsored by the CHUBB organization.

- **ITF Coaches Certification**

The ITF is focused on coaching the coaches and providing support to National Associations (and individual tennis coaches) through courses, conferences, online learning, and various publications.

16. CONTACT US

The Bermuda Lawn Tennis Association can be contacted at:

- Via email at info@blta.bm
- Via phone at **+1 (441)-296-0834**
- Website: www.blta.bm



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