

# I WANT TO PLAY



STEPHAN MEDEM & GERRY BLUM

The ultimate breakchance for tennis parents, coaches and  
players!

How to support your child's tennis career in the best  
possible way and  
help them make the most of themselves!

Preface by:  
Jose Antonio Fernandez Ibarra  
Founder of SPORTMIND,  
Ex-Coach of Steffi Graf,  
Scout for the Rafael Nadal Tennis Academy

# Contents

Foreword by Co-Author Dr. Gerry Blum

Preface

INTRODUCTION

THE WARM-UP: BREAK-IN TIME

Tennis Pro?

Why Tennis?

What Is Tennis? Do You Know the Differences?

No Team:

No Time Limit:

Face to Face:

No Ties:

Emotions:

Until the Last Point

Counting Method and “Big Point”

Short “Ball in Play” Time:

The “Triumvirate of Success”

FIRST SET: YOUR CHILD!

How Important Is Talent?

So, What Is More Important to Your Child than Talent?

Love and Passion

Drive, Commitment and Determination

Endurance and Persistence

Morale, Discipline and Work Ethic

First Set: Summary:

## SECOND SET: THE TRAINER / COACH

Introduction

The Four Pillars: Does Your Coach Really Understand Tennis?

Diagnostics

Experience

- Experience as a Player

- Experience as a Coach

- Experience as a Person

Individuality: Will the Coach Raise Your Child Up?

The Plan

Goal-Oriented Work

Commitment

- On the Training Court: Does Your Coach Show Interest?

- Outside the Tennis Court

- Matches and Tournaments

- Operating Hours

Motivation

Further Training

Additional Trainers: Fitness, Mental, Nutrition, etc.

Academies / Bases

Second Set: Summary

## THIRD SET: YOU, THE PARENTS

Introduction

The First Idol

The Parents' ABC

- A

Anger  
Application  
B  
Belief / Basic Attitude  
Burnout  
C  
Challenge  
Chart  
Choking  
Communication  
Convenience  
Courage  
Criticism  
D  
Defeat  
Discipline  
Drive  
E  
Endurance  
Enthusiasm  
Excuses  
F  
Fair Play  
Fear  
Frustration  
Fun  
G  
Goals  
H  
Hardiness  
I

Initiative  
Injury / Illness  
Interest  
Inspiration  
L  
Love  
M  
Mistakes  
Morale  
Motivation  
O  
Optimism  
Organization  
Organization / General  
Organization / Tennis  
P  
Perfectionism  
Planning  
Praise  
Preparation  
Pressure  
Puberty  
Q  
Quality / Quantity  
R  
Reliability  
Respect  
Risk Appetite  
S  
Self-worth / Self-confidence  
Setbacks

Success

T

Taboo Zones

Temperament

Tournament / General

Tournament / Parents

Trust

V

Vacation

W

Weaknesses / Strengths

Workbook

Work Ethic

Third Set: Summary

#### FOURTH SET: WORK MATERIAL

Match Analysis

Match Evaluation

MATCH RATING

Parental Evaluation

Scouting

The ATP Interview

playGIRL

About Me

Contact

Closing Words



## **FOREWORD BY CO-AUTHOR DR. GERRY BLUM**

I first met Stephan in person almost ten years ago, but I can still remember this initial meeting very well. Quite early on that Saturday, I had taken the trouble to get into my car with a young WTA player I was coaching at the time and to drive four-hundred kilometers to attend one of Stephan's "Head-Man" mental seminars. And, what can I say; the seminar was superb, the atmosphere was great, and the chemistry was just perfect. The chemistry between Stephan and me has not changed since that seminar. Over the years, there have been regular opportunities for a mutual exchange between Stephan and me. Whether we have worked together on players and tried to optimize their game, be it technically, strategically or mentally; discussed the future of tennis at training courses or seminars; or simply philosophized about current developments in this wonderful sport, this "chemistry" mentioned at the beginning has intensified over time. Stephan's first book "playGIRL" was, or still is, a wonderful book for young tennis players. (Too bad that nowadays youths don't read that much anymore. They don't know what an immense treasure they are missing out on.) His second book, "I WANT to Play Wimbledon!", has caused quite a stir here in the German-speaking world. Finally, a tennis coach who stands up and provides parents and coaches with a real guide to truly help tennis kids. It gives coaches the opportunity, through further development and reflection, to offer parents a little more "insight" to support their children in all areas.

"We should make 'I WANT to Play Wimbledon' available to the rest of the world." Somehow the thought came to me spontaneously during one of my phone calls with Stephan.



“Sure! Then do that! Spit on your hands and get on with the translation and the revision; what are you waiting for?” Typical Stephan; straight to the point.

So, here we are. I am incredibly proud to present “I WANT to Play Wimbledon!”

May my life’s motto “Keep moving and improving” also be an inspiration to you, dear colleagues, and especially to you, dear tennis parents. Because, let’s be honest, it’s about our future: the children!

## PREFACE

**S**tephan and I played tennis at the same time on the ATP Tour in the eighties.

Stephan was an aggressive, “old school serve and volley” player, equipped with a grenade serve and an athletic, stormy style of play that was designed to win points quickly.

My strategy was the exact opposite! I felt really comfortable in the long rallies behind the baseline, which wore down my opponent. From this position, I let my opponents cover long distances and therefore led them to make mistakes or even to rash attacks, which I then countered with calculated, well-placed passing shots. The longer a tennis match lasted, the better my chance for victory.

While Stephan was more like the powerful one-hundred-meter sprinter, I was the wiry marathon runner. If Stephan was more of a stormy go-getter, I was the calculating counter-attacker. While his home was the crisp, fast hard court, mine was the slow, dusty clay court loaded with red ashes.

(So, people who think that we South Americans always have a hotheaded, hot-blooded temperament, but all Swiss have a cool, calm, analytical mind, should reconsider this preconception by comparing Stephan and me! At least as far as tennis is concerned :-))

But here the differences between Stephan and me end; nowadays we have a lot in common!

Well, he is still half a head taller than me and still weighs a few pounds more than me :-)

We both had great successes on the tennis tour, but we didn't make it to the absolute top of the world rankings.

After our time on the ATP Tour, we both dedicated ourselves to training young players. We focussed in depth on the area of mental abilities in high-performance sports and learned more and more. The difference between number 2, number 20 and number 200 in the world rankings is not discernible to the untrained eye and always lies in just a few tiny details. The decisive factors for victory or defeat can almost always be found in the mental capacity, not in luck, as is often casually stated.

Stephan and I have had the privilege of helping many tennis players, from regional youth players to absolute ATP top-ranked players and WTA top-ranked players, with our great wealth of personal experience together with the knowledge we have acquired.

Even today, we both still have the irrepressible drive to turn good sportsmen into very good sportsmen! Stephan does this very successfully through "HEAD-MAN", while I have created SPORT-mind for this purpose, or I utilise my experience as a scout for the Rafael Nadal Tennis Academy.

We both have a passionate relationship with sports, with life and with how everyone can make the most of their potential.

And precisely because children are still very much dependent on the help of their parents, or rather on their actions and emotions, when it comes to developing their potential, I think it is great that Stephan has written "I WANT to Play Wimbledon!".

With his relaxed, easy-to-read, entertaining and by no means school-masterly manner, he provides you with a handbook with which you, as parents, can get completely involved in the tennis team and provide your child with optimal support.

This book is an absolute MUST for every mother, every father and every coach who is genuinely interested in their tennis-playing child and their best possible development.

Another thing my friend and I have in common is unfortunately a sad one:

In our long careers on the tennis courts, we have both seen many truly gifted players. Unfortunately, however, there are also too many who have given up tennis because of mistakes made by their parents! This is such a shame and a pity for every single one of them!

Therefore, I can only recommend the following: Read “I WANT to Play Wimbledon!”, assess yourself, put Stephan’s valuable tips into practice, work on yourself, and you’ll see how great it is to be able to support an athletic career as a father or mother.

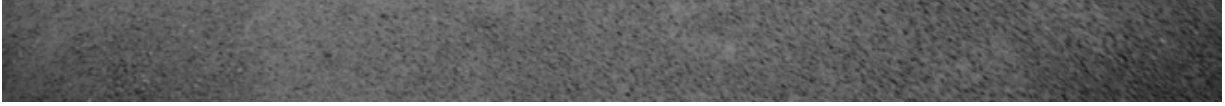
And all this with the certainty of having paved the right path, not only on the tennis court!

Jose Antonio Fernandez Ibarra  
Delray Beach, Florida

Founder of [SPORT-mind.com](http://SPORT-mind.com), Former ATP-Tour Professional and Davis-Cup player, Ex-Coach of Steffi Graf, Scout for the Rafael Nadal Tennis Academy









## INTRODUCTION

**A**lmost 30 years ago, I hung up my racket on the so-called nail. My time as a tennis pro on the ATP Tour was history.

History is always a great thing, provided you learn something from it.

In my case, I needed to find the answer to the question, “Why didn’t I become a tennis millionaire?”

I don’t want to give the impression that I’m driven by all that money. But tennis millionaires are people who play very successfully over a long period of time, are ranked somewhere in the top 50 or better in the world ranking list, win big tournaments and land well-paid advertising contracts.

Okay, I used to be number 214 in the ATP singles rankings; in doubles I was even a little better at number 130.

I got to play at Roland Garros, Flushing Meadows and Wimbledon in the main draws, but on the whole, I was more into the smaller ATP events. Hey ... I had a really wonderful time ... but I was always happy when, at the end of the year, I had about the same amount of money that I had invested into my tennis during the same period.

Funny: In practice, I beat all the really good people. Pete Sampras, Boris Becker, André Agassi, Jim Courier and many, many more. But in the tournaments, somehow it didn’t really flow.

What was the reason for that?

That there is a “why?” at the end of the “tennis pro” phase of my life, well ... that’s kind of logical.

The search for the answer to this simple question and the associated learning process motivated me to do two things:

1. I had to study sports psychology and the topic of “mental strength” in depth, because somehow the reasons for my modest success had to be found in my head.

2. I wanted to share my findings with other people and use them to help others.

It took a little longer than expected ... but I found the most important answers!

And this is exactly what makes me successful in my current phase of life as a coach. Making mistakes is part of life!

Learning from mistakes requires reflection, often hard work and ... from time to time, some help from elsewhere.

Tennis, or sport in general, has become incredibly professional since my ATP years.

Technique, method, the conditional aspects specific to a sport, nutrition, physiotherapy and injury prevention, training and competition planning, mental strength; only when all the systemically relevant factors are correctly “timed” and applied are the prerequisites for a possible career as a tennis professional then created.

With this manual, I would like to support you in finding the right path for your child or your tennis student. It will also help you to analyse their current level and to make adjustments if necessary.