Coaching Corner

6 Matchplay and unforced errors.

1. Unforced errors come from a lack of -
   * **Physical** preparation and tiredness during rallies. Bearing in mind your age; how fit are you?
   * **Mental** preparation and focus during play, nervousness and fear of losing.
   * **Tactical** preparation and planning.
   * **Technical** preparation. How often do you practice? Do you just turn up and hope to play well?
2. Before the match starts prepare -
   * **Physically** –Warm up properly, stay calm and relaxed, and breath slowly but deeply.
   * **Mentally** - Recall a memory (however distant!), of a time when you were playing well. Remember how it felt and try to recapture that feeling. Be positive and focus on your game plan, imagine playing your strokes.
   * **Tactically** - Know your opponent’s strengths and weaknesses, Have a game plan identifying which serves to use. Try to have a plan B so as not to become predictable.
   * **Aid Memoir** - If it helps, write a few key words down on a card to use as a reminder during the game and get you re-focused.
3. During the match –
   * Take your time, don’t rush. Stay focused Keep your concentration. Be positive, don’t become passive and simply wait to react to whatever your opponent does.
   * Breath deeply and keep moving, don’t become static. Breath out before serving. Watch your opponent not just the ball.
   * Don’t be put off by your opponent’s antics or talking.
   * Remember you can’t change history, forget the previous point and concentrate only on the next one.
   * Focus only on the next point not about winning the game.
   * Don’t become passive. Towel down to regain focus (every 6 points if required).
   * Plan to win each point starting with the serve or receive of serve.
   * Hold one serve back to use at tight moments in the game.
   * Think about winning each point not necessarily every ball.
   * Play through to say 15, don’t switch off at 10 and lose the initiative for winning the game.
   * Recall to yourself key words to remind you of how to play well.
   * If you are having a problem with a particular stroke, have a picture in your mind of how you should be executing it and make any necessary corrections.
   * Draw strength from a close game. If you can reach deuce you can win the game.
   * Between each game drink water or suitable preparations (not fizzy) to avoid dehydration.
4. After the match –
   * **Relax**, you may have to play another.
   * **Make notes**. At the first opportunity analyse what worked and what didn’t. what would you do better next time. What do you need to work on. What was your opponents strengths and weaknesses. (You can use these notes before a rematch rather than remembering them next time when you are already 1 down!)
   * Don’t be too harsh on yourself, as long as you played well and did your best. **There’s always next time!**

*For help or further information please contact Mike Prior at Ryde TT Centre.*