

## **TPA COACHING PROFILE – WAYNE ELDERTON**

*Throughout the summer, we will be highlighting some of the top coaches and tennis professionals from around the country, all of whom have been members of the Tennis Professionals Association (TPA) for 10 years. Here they will share their experiences and provide tips and advice for fellow coaches and players.*

Wayne Elderton is the current Tennis Director at the North Vancouver Tennis Centre. He began his career in 1978 when his coach at the time guaranteed him a summer job once he became certified. Now a National Level 4 coach, Elderton has never looked back.

As one of the most respected tennis coaches in Canada, Elderton has taught athletes who would turn out to be ranking professionals, world Top 10 wheelchair players and countless national level junior champions. He is multi-talented when it comes to teaching tennis and has been a key contributor to the Tennis Canada Coaching Certification program. He was also selected to be a part of an ITF task force on adult participation.

A big advocate of the game-based approach, the Burnaby, BC resident was kind enough to speak with Tennis Canada and answer some of our questions involving everything on his love of coaching to what it means to be effective and more.

### **What he likes about teaching tennis...**

“It was the impact on people that was really appealing. That I was actually able to help people to achieve the goals they wanted. It was really good to have that instantaneous feedback that you are actually doing something that is impacting them.”

### **How to improve the future of coaching...**

“Our courses are being continually upgraded so I think that is always a great process so they don’t stay set in stone and the same for years and years. I think that needs to continue. I think to empower more apprenticeship opportunities would probably be something we need to look at, too.”

### **What the game-based approach is and how it’s used during training sessions...**

“The game-based approach is new and because of that there is still a lot of baggage that comes along with it because change is often difficult. However, done properly I think it is by far the most effective way of doing things. In its essence, the role of the coach moves from just teaching them how to stroke to teaching them how to perform in play, in their match play situations. So you basically get them to play and help them learn to play better as opposed to teaching them strokes and then throwing them out into play hoping all the other elements fall into place.”

### **How to attract and retain adult members...**

“What a lot of the different facilities around here are starting to do, and what we have done for a long time, is transfer the red, orange, green system to adults. That creates an environment where adults can see success and feel like they are developing. And one of the keys to retention is the early success that hooks them in. And because it is in a game-based approach, they learn how to play and start playing right away so that is another key for retention. In the past, with full courts, regular balls and just learning strokes, adults were not very good at playing. The third way is to have a path, as opposed to just disconnected programs. If you have a pathway for people to move to the next level it excites them to continue.”

**What makes an effective coach...**

“Take certification courses and don’t just go out there on your own. There are five principles of effective coaching and in our courses one of our main concerns that we talk about is how to be more effective as a coach. The five are setting goals, quality repetition, managing the court well, quality feedback and making sure you measure things. Just like a personal trainer, right away they measure and then it is very easy to see improvement. In tennis, we are not very good at measuring, so people see their improvement less and it’s harder for the coach to figure out what to do. Those five principles are the keys to effective coaching. All the good coaches worldwide have those principles in force and then the ones that are not as effective will have one or more of those principles slipping.”

**How a young tennis pro can be successful in the business...**

“It is about your passion for coaching and interacting and helping people. If it is just a job, then you are probably not going to go as far as you could. Just like any profession, if it is something that impassions you, energizes you, and becomes a vocation that you really enjoy as opposed to just a job, then that is the key. If you don’t really enjoy it, find something you do enjoy.”

*The TPA, which is currently celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, is dedicated to growing the profession of coaching across Canada and assisting the nation’s certified instructors, coaches, and club professionals. A Tennis Canada organization founded in 2004, the TPA has over 2,800 members, all of whom receive exclusive TPA member benefits. For more information, visit [www.tpacanada.com](http://www.tpacanada.com).*