

Searching For Our Future Champions

For many young children, having a chance to chase their sporting dreams is a powerful motivator. Fostering a sense of hope and desire are key ingredients for tennis development programs and can harness the potential of an aspiring athlete.

Launched by Tennis Australia in 2006, Talent Search gives thousands of children across Australia a chance to let their talent shine. With over 40 days held nationally each year,

Talent Search is a program that welcomes children aged 6 to 11 years from both tennis and non-tennis sporting backgrounds.

Your typical Talent Search day involves between 40 and 80 athletes participating in a range of different activities spread out across several courts, with each child coming under the watchful eyes of some of Australia's leading coaches.

The testing procedures are based on the key skill development areas outlined in the newly-created Athlete Development Matrix. Talent Search tests are designed to establish a child's competency across a number of areas including technique, tactics, physical and psychological ability. Many of the activities are conducted in a live rally environment to reflect what happens in match conditions.

The assessment activities include:

- Rallying
- Targeting
- Technical rating – forehand, backhand, serving
- Throwing
- Sprinting – agility and speed
- Game play and catching games
- Balance and locomotor movement skills.

The Talent Search program is the footstep of Australia's development pathway: the next progression for many children is to look for more regular coaching in a program that provides quality skill development training conducted by experienced coaches. A small number of children who perform very well on the Talent Search day will be given an opportunity to attend three national academy training sessions with other identified children and receive an exclusive athlete pack.

Athlete Reports

A new feature of the program is an athlete reporting system that has been designed to give each participant some individual feedback based on their performance at the TALENT SEARCH day. The athlete report allows specific feedback to be passed on to the children, parents and coaches, enabling players to work on the key areas of skill development at this critical stage.

Educating Parents

While Tennis Search sessions focus heavily on the children participating, parents also play a key role on the day. A parent education session provides information and advice on the tennis development pathway. The program is a starting point and encourages parents and coaches to learn more about the opportunities that exist along the tennis pathway. Armed with better information that is more specific to their child, parents will be able to make better choices when it comes to guiding their children through this critical time in their life.

Positive Steps

With some children already making the transition from Talent Search to the National Academy structure as a scholarship holder, Talent Search is fast proving to be a positive program that gives many children a chance to chase their tennis dreams. With many more Talent Search days planned around the country over the coming year, Tennis Australia is committed to providing these opportunities for the next generation of Australian tennis talent. For those children who want to test themselves, meet new people and have lots of fun, then Talent Search is for you.

To learn more about the program or to sign up, go to tennis.com.au/talentsearch.

More Information

- Tennis Australia Coach Members can go to the exclusive download section on the tennis.com.au website for further information on the Talent Search, The Athlete Development Matrix or other coaching material.
- Check out the new Club & Coach Relationship Fact Sheets, such as how to create a letter of application, update your resume and prepare for an interview. There's also advice on how to approach your local school.
- There's also Club & Coach Relationship Templates for: Website coaching advertisement, services description, appointment process for a professional tennis coach at a tennis club, Communication & Review, Training & Competition pathway, Weekly program, Letter of application and resume.
- Service Provider - Contract for Services templates will be available from Tennis Australia Coach Membership in March, 2008.
- For further information, please contact the Coach Membership Team on (03) 9914 4191 or contact your State/Territory Coach Development Coordinator or email coachmembership@tennis.com.au.

