



Name: Matt Bull
Qualifications: Tennis Australia Club Professional coach
Business/Club: Tennis Factory, Onslow Park Tennis Club, Perth, WA
Awards: Coaching Excellence – MLC Tennis Hot Shots 2010, WA Department of Sport and Recreation Tennis Coach of the Year 2011
Other: Tennis Australia MLC Tennis Hot Shots Ambassador

Modified tennis the way to go

Matt Bull is a strong believer of a modified tennis environment for teaching children the way to play the sport and his efforts in the area have been rewarded with a national accolade.

Choosing a career wasn't a hard decision for Matt Bull. After taking his personal playing career as far as he could, he turned his attention to coaching.

"You spend a large part of your life working so I knew I just had to do something I love. I wake up every day and don't see what I do as work. I'm very fortunate," he says.

Originally from the United Kingdom, Bull started playing tennis at the age of eight and now passes on his experiences and knowledge to his participants.

"My most memorable moments as a player were the times I spent playing in Florida, in the US. I trained and played tournaments there a number of times including training at the Nick Bollettieri Tennis Academy," he says.

Bull had five years of coaching experience before he made the move Down Under and has resided in Perth for the past 10 years.

These days, Bull runs his business The Tennis Factory at The Onslow Park Tennis

Club at Shenton Park where he specialises in the development of five to 12 year olds.

"It's developing their games through modified tennis," he says. "My aim with the better ones is to get them to national level and then hopefully beyond.

"It is fantastic thinking back to when these players were playing red and orange tournaments and then to be able to watch them win their first Australian Ranking tournaments, represent the state or go on to make their nationals debut. It's very satisfying."

Bull made his mark back in October 2006 when Australia's first modified tennis tournament was organised, which allowed the children to go one step further in the program and participate competitively.

"We ran the first official modified tournament in partnership with Tennis West and I think the best thing about it is that it gives the kids something to work towards," Bull says.

"We have a tournament every term and it just means the kids during the term are working on their games knowing that they're going to play in the tournament at the end of the term and because of that they just work a little bit harder in the lessons and obviously most of them do alright in the tournament on the day."

In 2009 Bull was appointed as one of Tennis Australia's MLC Tennis Hot Shots Ambassadors and was honoured to win the inaugural Australian Tennis Award for Coaching Excellence – MLC Tennis Hot Shots in 2010.

"It was nice even to be recognised as a finalist, but to actually win the award was really humbling and it was great because I put a lot of hours and hard work into the program," he says.

"I'm hopeful through the program that we have a lot more children involved, get a lot more kids playing and hopefully turn a couple into future Aussie champions."

With more than 300 children participating in his MLC Tennis Hot Shots program Bull has witnessed a 75 percent retention rate and also experienced a 25 percent increase in his Term 1 participants this year.

"We should be getting all kids playing modified tennis. So long gone are the yellow ball and teaching the kids with a yellow ball, we should just be using modified tennis and the main reasons are it's just a lot easier for the kids to play with it," he says.

Bull is on a mission and is confident that a modified tennis environment will translate to participation numbers.

"I want to keep spreading the message amongst the Australian tennis community that modified tennis is so important in helping to get more kids playing the game."

