

Final preparations to the girls' tennis Europe Junior Masters

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Annotation:

Purpose: One of the important problems in sports training of top class tennis players is the optimal planning of direct preparations for the main competitions of the season. In this respect, the aim of the study is a retrospective analysis of the direct preparation to compete in the Girls' Tennis Europe Junior Masters. **Material:** Research material was composed of training plans of the best Polish player in the Juniors category, M.L. The analysis concerned the time structure, the total training volume and the proportion of the applied training means. **Results:** It was found that, regardless of the methodological and organisational determinants of specific training solutions, the direct preparation to the competition should meet the generally accepted principles in the theory of training, among others, connected with periodization of training and the phasic system of shaping the form. Direct competitive preparation may significantly vary in specific cases. **Conclusions:** An efficient, proven in certain circumstances model of preparation may be inefficient in others.

Ягелло М., Ягелло В. Непосредственная подготовка к теннисному турниру Мастерс Европы Юниорок. Цель: Одной из важнейших проблем подготовки теннисисток высокого класса является планирование непосредственной подготовки к главным соревнованиям сезона. В связи с тем целью исследований является ретроспективный анализ непосредственной подготовки к соревнованиям Юниорский Мастерс Европы. **Материал:** В исследованиях анализировались тренировочные планы подготовки к этому турниру лучшей Польской теннисистки в категории юниорок М.Л. Анализ касался временной структуры подготовки, а также общего объема нагрузок и соотношения тренировочных средств разной направленности. **Результаты:** Было установлено, что независимо от методологических и организационных обусловленностей конкретных решений, непосредственная подготовка к главным соревнованиям должна отвечать общепринятым в теории спорта принципам – в частности, связанным с периодизацией спортивной тренировки, а также фазовым характером формирования спортивной формы. Непосредственная подготовка к главным соревнованиям в конкретных случаях может значительно изменяться. **Выводы:** Эффективная, проверенная модель подготовки в определенных условиях, может быть неэффективной в других.

Ягелло М., Ягелло В. Безпосередня підготовка до тенісного турніру Мастерс Європи Юніорок. Мета: Однією з найважливіших проблем підготовки тенісисток високого класу є планування безпосередньої підготовки до головних змагань сезону. У зв'язку з цим метою досліджень є ретроспективний аналіз безпосередньої підготовки до змагань Юніорський Мастерс Європи. **Матеріал:** У дослідженнях аналізувалися тренувальні плани підготовки до цього турніру кращою Польської тенісистки в категорії юніорок М.Л. Аналіз стосувався тимчасової структури підготовки, а також загального обсягу навантажень і співвідношення тренувальних засобів різної спрямованості. **Результати:** Було встановлено, що незалежно від методологічних та організаційних обумовленостей конкретних рішень, безпосередня підготовка до головних змагань повинна відповідати загальноприйнятим в теорії спорту принципам – зокрема, пов'язаних з періодизацією спортивного тренування, а також фазовим характером формування спортивної форми. Безпосередня підготовка до головних змагань у конкретних випадках може значно змінюватися. **Висновок:** Ефективна, перевірена модель підготовки в певних умовах, може бути неефективною в інших.

Keywords:

tennis, training, girls, planning, competition.

тенніс, підготовка, дівчата, планування, змагання.

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Introduction

One of the important problems in sports training of top class tennis players is the optimal planning of direct preparations for the main competitions of the season [8, 11]. Tennis tournaments are played practically throughout the year, and the leading players (WTA rank 1-20) usually compete in 18-24 tournaments a year. For these reasons, proper planning of competitions is the key issue in a tennis coach's job, when he/she has to make choices of major, basic and control tournaments [4, 5, 7, 10].

A female tennis player's optimal preparation to the main event is difficult and requires high coaching skills, among others, appropriate planning of the starting calendar, taking into account the athlete's individual adaptive capabilities and her sports level, variability of training means, basic parameters of the training work and competition practice [2, 3, 6].

These problems are not too frequently covered in the available literature. Even in the most successful papers devoted to tennis it is difficult to find practical, concrete information on how to prepare for a tournament. Most of the publications concern technique or methodology, and less the cognitive value.

Therefore, the objective of this paper is an analysis of an extremely successful direct preparation to compete in the Girls' Tennis Europe Junior Masters (Italy, 2002).

Material and methods

The research material was composed of training plans of the best Polish player in the Juniors category, M.L.'s year-long training plan and resulting from it the 31-day period of preparation to the Girls' Tennis Europe Junior Masters in 2002 in Italy were analysed. Only eight best players from the Tennis Europe (TE) ranking list participated in the tournament. Player M.L. began the season in the 56th place in the TE ranking and completed it in position No. 6, which allowed her to start the Girls' Tennis Europe Junior Masters (Italy, 2002).

The conducted analysis mainly concerned the time structure of training (the composition and the duration of mesocycles and microcycles), the total volume and the proportions of the applied training measures.

Results

Direct preparation to the Girls' Tennis Europe Junior Masters in 2002 (Italy) took place from 16 September to 17 October 2002 (31 days).

The time structure of training was composed of 5 microcycles and consisted of 3 phases (Fig. 1): recovery, intensification and supercompensation.

The *recovery phase* consisted of three microcycles: passive recovery (1st microcycle) and a training camp in Zakopane – 10 days (2nd-3rd microcycle). This phase focused on recovery and shaping the basis of physical fitness. The purpose of the training camp in Zakopane was to create a functional basis (aerobic). Training was

characterized by large volume (up to 5 hours, with 2-3 training units) at a small load intensity. General training means accounted for 92% and special ones for only 8% of the load. Training took place in all areas of energy provision, with particular regard to aerobic effort. This type of effort amounted to $\approx 75\%$ of the total volume of performed work and was made by run/walks in the mountains, team games, and swimming – a continuous method (constant and variable). Training of anaerobic and anaerobic-aerobic effort constituted $\approx 25\%$ of the total volume of the performed exercises. In this respect an intermittent method was applied at a stadium, in a judo hall and in a gym.

The *intensification phase* mainly consists in work on perfecting the technique and tactics (63%) and special physical preparation (16%), with a much lower number of comprehensive training (Fig. 2).

The volume of work is reduced to 3-4 hours a day and the intensity gradually increases. The content of classes in the intensification phase is presented in Table 1.

In the *supercompensation phase*, the volume of work decreases again and amounts up to 2.5 hours a day in two training units. A lot of training time is devoted to the improvement in techniques and tactics (50%), control games (25%) and special preparation (19%) (Fig. 3).

The detailed content of classes in the supercompensation

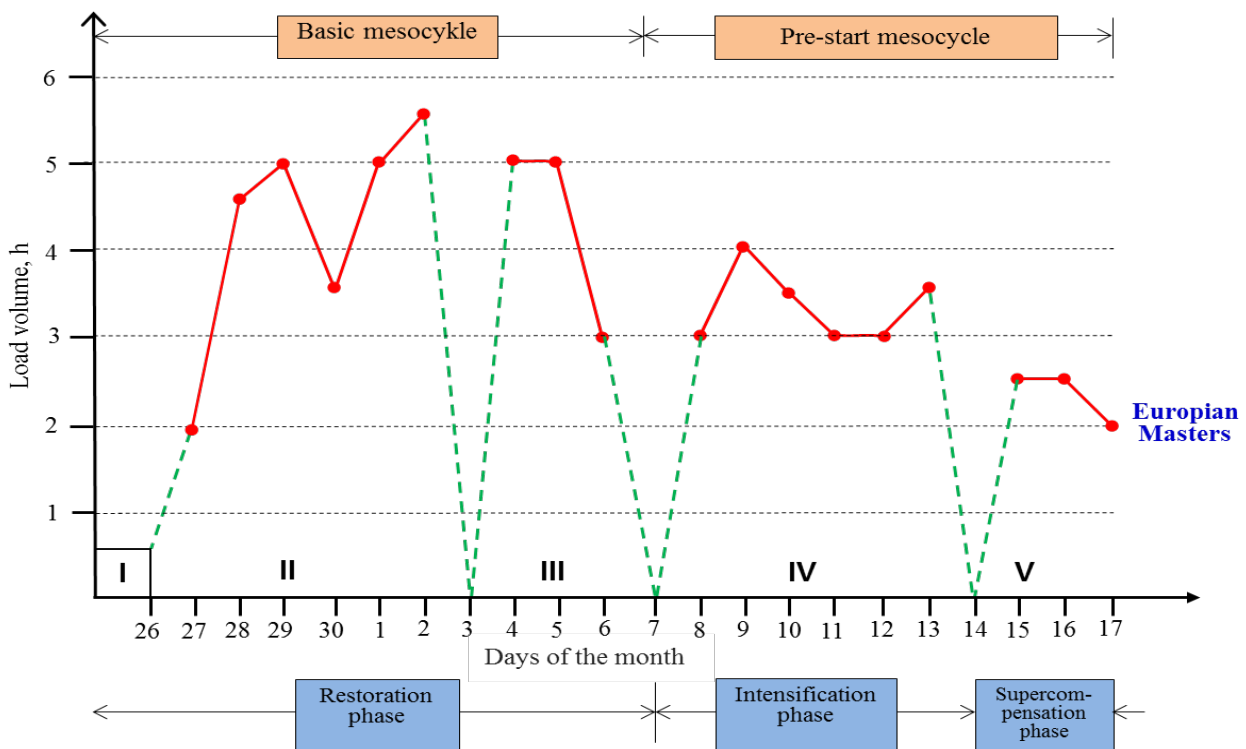


Fig. 1. M.L.'s direct preparation for the Girls' Tennis Europe Junior Masters, 2002.

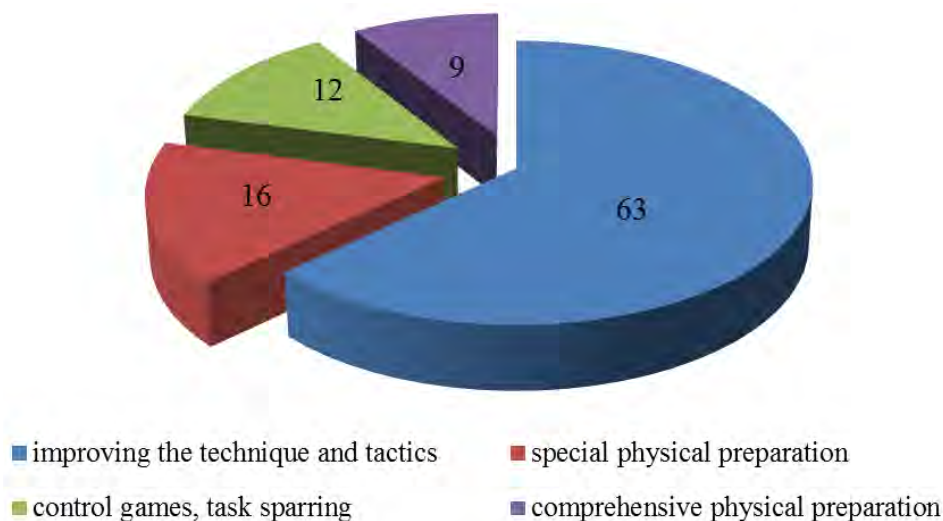


Fig. 2. Proportions of training measures in the intensification phase, %.

phase is presented in Table 2.

Discussion

Planning of direct competitive preparation (dcp) to the main tournament of the season in the category of younger juniors (14 years old) seems to be fully justified

and at present does not raise any doubts among tennis professionals. Many authors [1, 9, 12] emphasise the fact that 14-year-old girls are beginning to compete in professional tournaments, and at the age of 17-18, and sometimes even at 16, already achieve the highest level of

Table 1

The content of training in the intensification phase (4th microcycle)

Day	Date	Morning classes	Afternoon classes
21	07.10	-----	-----
22	08.10	=> Basketball technical training - 120 min	=> Swimming pool (=500 m) - 1 hour
23	09.10	=> Basketball technical training - 90 min	=> Perfecting the technique and tactics, playing task combinations with a sparring partner – 90 min. => Small running game - 1 hour
24	10.10	=> Perfecting the technique and tactics, playing task combinations with a sparring partner – 120 min.	=> Basketball technical training - 90 min
25	11.10	=> Training footwork on the court – 60 min	=> Perfecting the technique and tactics, playing a combination of tasks with a sparring partner – 120 min.
26	12.10	=> Task sparring– 90 min	=> Perfecting the technique and tactics, playing task combinations - 120 min
27	13.10	=> Perfecting the technique and tactics, playing task combinations - 60 min.	=> Training footwork on the court – 60 min => Control games – 60 min

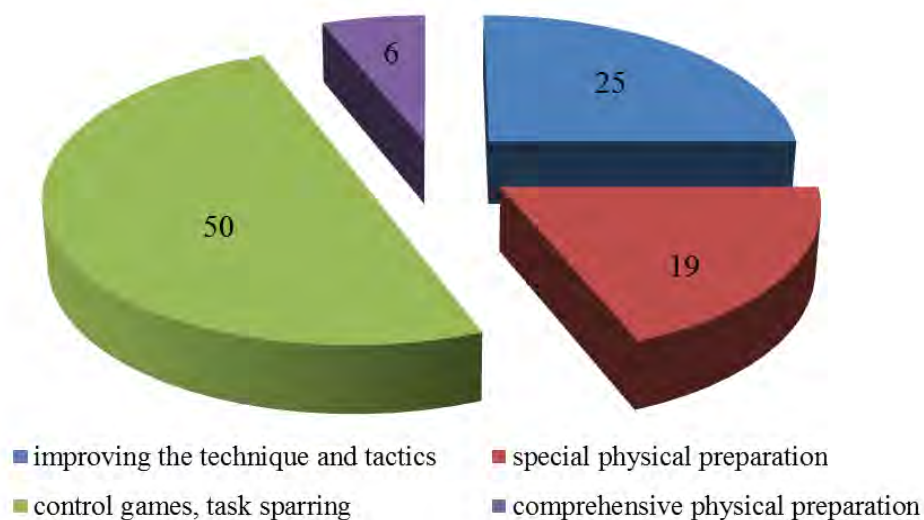


Fig.. 3 Proportions of training means in the supercompensation phase, %.

The content of training in the supercompensation phase (5th microcycle).

28	14 Sep.	Flight to Italy	=> Training footwork on the court – 60 min
29	15 Sep.	=> Perfecting the technique and tactics, playing task combinations 60 min. => Compensating exercises – 30 min.	=> Task sparring – 60 min
30	16 Sep.	=> Perfecting the technique and tactics, playing task combinations 60 min.	=> Training footwork on the court – 30 min => Control games – 60 min
31	17 Sep.	=> Control games – 60 min	=> Control games – 60 min
32	18 Sep.	Tennis Europe Junior Masters	

skills and preparation, winning tournaments of the highest rank.

Ivo Van Aken [3] stresses that already in younger juniors one-year planning should take into account the main start and preparing for it, and in 15-year-old players, one can already plan 2-3 peaks of form. In 16-year-old tennis players the planning is close to the one characteristic of adults.

Analysing M.L.'s direct preparation to compete in the Girls' Tennis Europe Junior Masters (2002), it should be noted that training during that period was of a custom character, and the way of its implementation deviated from the generally accepted "standard" to which some tennis coaches are used and with which they identify their factual competence.

This situation resulted from irregularities in the planning of year-long training preceding the mentioned period. The player competed in an excessive number of tournaments, far beyond the capabilities of an athlete at this age – 24 (86 singles matches and 44 doubles matches). M.L.'s starting practice was based on cycles of 4-5 tournaments in a row. An important shortcoming of such training was also a lack of adequate amount of rest – the transition period was one of the most underrated periods in M.L.'s yearly training.

Numerous scientific studies and practical experience of the best coaches in the world [9, 10, 12] unequivocally indicate that in youth categories in a single cycle of competitions players should not play more than three tournaments. This position is consistent with the main objective that training should meet at a given stage of long-term training [3, 9].

The effect of M.L.'s such scheduled training was injuries and a decline in both physical and mental form in the mid-season. During the World Championships in

August, the athlete lost 70% of the matches, and the two next tournaments (Polish Masters and B. Tomaszewski's Cup) were also unsuccessful. After the Polish Masters the player was scheduled to prepare directly to compete in the main tournament of the Girls' Tennis Europe Junior Masters (2002).

However, given the player's state, it was decided that she should devote the first microcycle (11 days) to rest, thus reducing the period of training in direct preparation to 3 weeks.

The second significant change was the content of the second 10-day microcycle. Trainings took place in the mountains, and so in conditions rather unspecific to tennis, and the player was deprived of contact with a racket for the next days.

The purpose of these changes in the structure of direct competitive preparation was to create conditions for full recovery after a strenuous competitive season, and what is extremely important, for mental restitution (the so-called *hunger for tennis*). Due to such a unique situation, the intensification phase lasted only 7 days and the supercompensation one – 4.

Therefore, in this variant of direct competitive preparation training was mainly aimed at the restitution of the player's general physical and mental disposition, at the expense of specialized training. The traditional variant of direct competitive preparation, with great intensification of training, saturated mainly with specialized means, in this case would probably deepen the player's overtraining.

Unfortunately, the proposed direct competitive preparation met with a lack of understanding on the part of the club coaches, who could not imagine that training 2 weeks before the main start was dominated by means of a general character and argued for a continuation of special competitive preparation only on the court.

In the Girls' Tennis Europe Junior Masters (2002) M.L. was seeded with number 6. Having completed so scheduled direct competitive preparation, the contestant reached the final, where after equal fight, she won the European Vice-Championship.

Conclusions

As a result of the conducted study and the analysis of literature, one can draw the following conclusions:

1. Among many factors that have an impact on the construction of direct competitive preparation one should mention: the calendar of tournaments, the amount of time remaining to prepare for the main competition, the nature of preparations (orientation of classes, the type of applied means) and the volume of the basic parameters of the training work (volume and intensity) preceding the given period.

2. Regardless of the methodological and organizational determinants of specific training solutions, direct competitive preparation should meet the principles generally accepted in the theory of training, among others related to the periodization of training and the phase system of shaping sports form.

3. Appropriate proportions of the applied means and the overall volume of loads is of fundamental importance in constructing individual phases of direct competitive preparation.

In specific cases direct competitive preparation may significantly vary. An efficient, proven in certain circumstances model of preparation may be inefficient in others. Each cycle is a unique process.

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