

Case study: Confidence in Kids

Half a year ago I was approached by the parents of a young athlete. Their teenage son plays since his 7th birthday and has won already all regional and national tournaments in his age group. He dreams of becoming a professional tennis player and he performs strong in national tournaments. Internationally though he loses his confidence, he seems intimidated and just cannot perform well. As his mother tells me, her son hasn't won a single game yet in any international tournament, not even against much weaker opponents. His parents and his coach feel clueless, not quite understanding why this is happening. To prove himself also internationally would naturally be the next step though for the young boy, on his way to become a professional.

I agreed to talk to the boy and to see what exactly his issues are and how we can work together.

First, we did a short anamnesis to get some simple background info on the young boy. Right after, we got to work and started with a check on his belief system. I had him spontaneously finish sentences around the sport of tennis and his view of his own performance in comparison to others, both in national and in international tournaments. It turned out that he generally loved his sport. He loves to train and he loves to be with his tennis friends, he has made during all these years. He likes the travelling, that comes with playing tournaments and feels well supported by his coach and his family. Asked about the international career though, it turned out that he cannot really picture himself being successful in this league of players. He feels, he doesn't belong into one of these tournaments and doesn't believe he could be successful against his competitors.

There are different factors that are known to build confidence in any person. Amongst them is the self image, which should equal the task. This young man apparently had a huge deficit here. In the following sessions we had long talks and changed his self-image: With the boys, and the parents' approval I had a chat with the tennis coach, who assured me that the boy theoretically had what it takes to compete at the international level. I then spoke to the boy about his training regime, convincing him to believe his coach and his parents that he could play internationally and be successful in these tournaments. I had the boy day dream about these tournaments, making himself picture the success with all senses.

The young boy had his first tournament 3 months after our initial session. He did not win the tournament but he got into the quarter finals, which made him extremely proud and gave his confidence another boost!

Please note: the entire coaching process is represented in a shortened version. The entire coaching process to build the confidence of this young boy, took several sessions.



Kristin studied Economics in Germany and Italy and majored in Marketing and Global Management. She found her passion for mental coaching after having spent a year in Argentina, playing Polo. Her advice and coaching techniques are highly sought-after by professionals as well as amateurs or executives. Kristin is a Level I IMGCA Certified Mental Game Instructor, certified by the International Mental Game Coaching Association, USA and a Sports Mental Trainer, certified by the ZFU in Germany. She undergoes permanent training to gain new knowledge about the latest state-of-the-art techniques in the field of mental training.