

# THE PLANNING AND INTEGRATION OF MENTAL TRAINING PROGRAMS

BY TIM BACON, MA

*This article is reprinted from an article featured in "SPORTS", by Tim Bacon, MA. Tim is a mental training consultant with the Canadian National Racquetball Team, the Canadian Junior Men's Squash Team, and nationally ranked junior tennis players at an elite sports school in Montreal.*

## INTRODUCTION

The growing importance of mental training is best illustrated by the results of a survey of 235 Canadian Olympic athletes who competed at the 1984 Olympic Games. More than 99% of these athletes reported using mental training to assist them in preparing for competition (Orlick and Partington 1988). The purpose of this article is to describe an approach to planning mental training programs that emphasizes the integration of mental training with the other training components (e.g. technical, physical, tactical) in an annual or seasonal plan.

This approach to planning mental training is based on recent sport psychology research and principles of training theory outlined by Bompa (1983) in his book *"The Theory and Methodology of Training"*. Although some excellent guidelines for coaches wishing to implement mental training with their athletes have been published (e.g. Martens 1987; Orlick 1986a; Williams 1986), it is hoped that this article will provide an explicit and comprehensive framework to enable coaches to plan and integrate their mental training programs into the athletes' overall yearly training program.

## A SKILLS APPROACH TO MENTAL TRAINING

The basic foundation of mental training is that mental skills can be learned and developed in a manner similar to physical skills. Some of the qualities of a well-prepared athlete are confidence, optimism, calmness under pressure, being mentally focussed in the present, and determination (Loehr 1983). Athletes can improve these qualities by using psychological techniques derived from five basic mental skills: relaxation, positive self-talk, energisation, visualisation, and concentration. Table 1 contains a list of the more common techniques and terms associated with these skills. Some techniques are classified under more than one heading, and others are combinations of several techniques from different skill areas. Coaches should note that this classification of qualities, skills, and techniques is arbitrary, and that some sport psychologists have classified mental skills and attributes differently (e.g. Vealey 1988; Weinberg 1988).

Reviews of the applied sport psychology literature (e.g. Dishman 1983) do not reveal any consensus regarding the use of one particular technique over another. It is important, however, to ensure that athletes are competent in each of the five basic skills.

Table 1: The Basic Mental Skills and Related Techniques

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Relaxation</b></p> <p>The ability to relax the body and/or mind to an appropriate level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• centring</li> <li>• progressive relaxation training (PRT)</li> <li>• autogenic training</li> <li>• meditation</li> <li>• breath control</li> <li>• biofeedback</li> <li>• stress management</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Positive Self-Talk</b></p> <p>The ability to stay positive and eliminate inappropriate negative thoughts or feelings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• positive thinking</li> <li>• positive affirmations</li> <li>• thought stopping</li> <li>• positive thought control</li> <li>• rational emotive therapy</li> <li>• stress inoculation training (SIT) (relaxation + positive self talk)</li> <li>• cue words</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Energization</b></p> <p>The ability to raise physical and/or mental activation to an appropriate level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• music</li> <li>• psychic energy management</li> <li>• self-regulation</li> <li>• energy control</li> <li>• energizing cue words</li> <li>• rapid tensing and relaxing of muscles</li> <li>• physical exertion</li> <li>• quick deep breaths</li> <li>• visualize energizing scenes</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Visualization</b></p> <p>The ability to imagine (sight, feel, etc.) scenes to enhance effectiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• imagery</li> <li>• mental rehearsal</li> <li>• mental practice</li> <li>• visuo-motor behavior rehearsal (VMBR)</li> <li>• self-hypnosis (relaxation + visualization + positive suggestions)</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Concentration</b></p> <p>The ability to focus on the appropriate thing, while blocking out irrelevant distractions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• centring</li> <li>• meditation</li> <li>• focussing</li> <li>• attention control training (ACT)</li> </ul>	

Detailed instructions for many of these techniques can be found in any of the sport psychology books listed in the reference section at the end of this article.

## INDIVIDUALIZING MENTAL TRAINING

The personality and needs of each athlete are unique. Not all mental skills will enhance the performance of every athlete. For example, teaching relaxation to a laid-back athlete, or energisation to a highly nervous athlete, may hamper performance. One approach to individualizing mental training involves offering athletes a variety of mental skills, having them try them out, and allowing them to select those that work best. The most important finding in a study conducted by Seabourne, Weinberg, Jackson, and Suinn (1985) was that subjects who were able to choose their own mental techniques improved as much as subjects who had a program designed for them by the experimenters. The mental training manual (Suinn 1986) used in the study contains simple self-assessments that athletes and coaches can use to assist them in selecting appropriate mental skills. Table 2 contains an example of a self-assessment form for the skill of energisation.

Although offering athletes one technique for each of the basic skills should be adequate for most situations, a coach should develop expertise in teaching alternate techniques since some athletes do not respond well to certain methods. For example, some athletes prefer progressive relaxation (relaxing the body) to meditation (calming the mind) as a way of relaxing.

**Table 2: Example of a Mental Skill Self-Assessment**

*(Adapted from Suinn 1986; and Loehr 1986)*

**Energisation Self Assessment**

A. Listed below are some typical signs of under-activation, and low energy levels. Place a check ( ) beside those items which you have experienced in the last year.

Feeling as if you don't have much energy

Feelings of being slow - heavy legs

Poor concentration - easily distracted

Low patience and "don't care" attitude

Noticeable lack of enthusiasm or intensity

Poor sense of timing - often late preparation

You appear physically bored or uninterested

A sense of helplessness ("nothing I do works")

B. How often do you have these signs during competition?

Always   Rarely   Often   Never   Sometimes

C. How often do you have these signs during practice?

Always   Rarely   Often   Never   Sometimes

**You can benefit from energisation training if:**

for question A you checked three or more of the items; or

for questions B or C you circled sometimes, often, or always

## ORGANIZING THE ANNUAL TRAINING PLAN

Teams in Eastern Bloc countries, as well as most national teams in Canada, divide the training year or season into specific phases (at least for the physical, technical, and tactical components). By dividing the training year into smaller, more manageable segments - each with its own specific objectives - an athlete's development can follow a logical and more effective progression. The specific objectives for each phase are based on principles that have evolved from years of observation of the training process (physiological, biomechanical, psychological, motor learning control, etc.). This division of the annual plan into phases of training has been termed periodisation (Bompa 1983). The main advantage of this approach to planning is that it allows athletes to peak at the

right time of the year (e.g. Olympic Games).

Table 3 contains an outline of the major phases, sub-phases, and general objectives of an annual training plan. Each sub-phase is further subdivided into macro-cycles (lasting four to six weeks) and micro-cycles (usually lasting one week). Goals derived from annual objectives are set and evaluated at each level of the plan, including micro-cycles. Since goal-setting is considered an integral part of proper planning and not a sport psychology "topic" it has not been included as part of the mental training program presented in this article. (Readers interested in a more comprehensive treatment of periodisation theory are referred to Bompa's (1983) book.)

**Table 3: Phases of the Periodized Annual Plan**

Phase	General Objectives
<b>Preparatory</b>	
General	develop basic technical skills and general fitness
Specific	perfect technique and basic tactics, and develop sport-specific fitness
<b>Competitive</b>	
Pre-competitive	to make training competition-specific, raise intensity
Competitive	maximise competitive performance
Unloading	to regenerate in preparation for main competition
<b>Transition</b>	active rest, maintenance of training gains

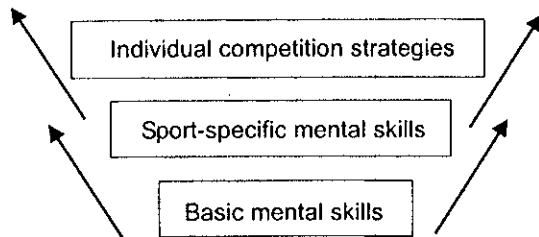
## WHY PERIODISE MENTAL TRAINING?

Most mental training materials available to coaches and athletes are in the form of self-help books that are organized in a manner unrelated to an athlete's training schedule and competitive season (e.g. Loehr 1986; Weinberg 1988). Although the quality of these sourced may be high, few guidelines are provided for planning annual mental training programs. Problems can occur if mental training is not integrated with the athlete's other training activities. For example, a coach may decide to start mental training halfway through a season because a team is having confidence and concentration problems. Such a late start may not leave the athletes with enough time to assimilate and effectively utilize mental skills, and may in fact interfere with their preparation and performance.

When planning the progression of a mental training program, the mental objectives for each phase must be compatible with the objectives of the other training components. It doesn't make sense, for example, for a basketball team to be emphasizing pre-competition preparation and competition strategies during their mental training sessions at the start of the season, when the athletes are primarily involved in building general fitness in the weight room and on the track, and their first official tournament is another five months away. First, the foundation of basic mental skills needs to be developed.

Boutcher and Rotella (1987) have described a conceptual model for the development of mental skills, which supports the periodization approach to mental training outlined in this article.

In this process an athlete first learns a basic mental skill such as relaxation (in a quiet, darkened room). Then he/she learns how to adapt it to the sport (e.g. a football place-kicker using a brief breathing technique to relax before each kick in practice). Finally, the athlete develops a strategy for using relaxation in a game situation (using progressive relaxation before a game, taking centring breaths as he walks on to the field, then shaking out his legs just before the kick).



Sport psychology consultants working with athletes should have a knowledge of periodisation to maximize their effectiveness. Failure to provide mental training programs that are consistent with the ups and downs of training cycles and the competitive season can lower motivation and self-confidence, increase anxiety, and possibly lower athletic performance (Dirkin & Burton 1987). Using a periodisation approach to planning can help ensure that mental training is integrated smoothly with the other training components.

## PLANNING PERIODISED MENTAL TRAINING PROGRAMS

The type of program that can be designed for athletes will depend on such factors as type of sport (individual/team, open/closed, etc.), budget, age of athletes, level of competition, facilities, availability of qualified consultants, and personality of the coach. The planning guidelines outlined in this section should be appropriate for most situations, especially if the suggestions for individualising mental training presented earlier are kept in mind. The design of the mental training component of the annual plan should directly parallel that of the physical, technical, and tactical training components. Objectives for each component - including mental training - should closely follow the general objectives of each phase outlined in Table 2. The plan described in this section is monocyclic - meaning that only one championship competition occurs during the year. If two or more major competitions occur at different times of the year (e.g. track and field), the plan should be adjusted based on the same planning principles (see Bompa 1983). Table 4 contains the mental training objectives for each phase of the annual plan.

### GENERAL PREPARATORY PHASE

At the start of this phase, an athlete's mental skills should be evaluated. Athletes and coaches can arrive at an assessment through discussion and evaluation of the previous year's performance. This can be facilitated by using simple self-assessment tools such as Orlick's (1986) Competitive Reflections Form or Suinn's (1986) self-assessment questionnaires. As with the other training components, annual mental goals should be set based on this evaluation. If time, money, and a qualified consultant are available, psychological questionnaires such as the Test of Attentional and Interpersonal Style (Nideffer 1976) can be utilized to assist in this process.

In this phase the teaching of the basic mental skills is emphasized. Most of the mental practise should be done in a quiet setting so that the skills can be learned in a stress-free environment. The general preparatory phase usually lasts two to three months depending on the characteristics of the sport (Bompa 1983).

A review of 30 applied research papers indicates that the acquisition of a basic mental skill can take an average of about eight weeks (practising three to five times per week, 15 to 30 minutes per session). Although athletes should be introduced to all mental skills, they should focus most of their efforts on learning those skills most related to their personal goals.

Williams (1986) has suggested that relaxation be taught first, since it is needed for effective visualisation; and concentration last, since the skills of positive self-talk and energisation can be used to

control concentration. Positive self-talk and energisation are two of the least complex skills; these can be taught in a program before the more involved visualisation skills. This rationale suggests the following order for teaching mental skills: relaxation, positive self-talk, energisation, visualisation, and concentration.

Once the basics of each mental skill have been learned, they can be used to help achieve the athletes' other training goals for this phase. Visualisation can be used to rehearse technique, positive self-talk can be used to manage mistakes during practice, etc.

### SPECIFIC PREPARATORY PHASE

The emphasis in this phase shifts from learning to use the basic mental skills, to adapting them to the specific requirements of the sport. According to Bompa (1983), the length of this phase is typically two to three months depending on the sport. He recommends that 70-80% of training efforts in this phase should be sport-specific. This means developing and practising the use of mental skills during practice and "friendly" competition. For example, instead of relaxing by lying down and centring in a darkened room for 10 minutes, a basketball player would develop and use a free-throw ritual that incorporated a relaxation and concentration technique (e.g. one centring breath - three ball bounces focusing only on the ball - a shoulder shrug to relax neck and shoulders - shoot). At practice, the player can work for 10 minutes on using his/her ritual to get totally relaxed and focused for each shot.

Loehr (1985) has developed tennis-specific mental exercises that are excellent examples of how the basic psychological techniques can be adapted to a particular sport. Some of these are illustrated in Table 4.

**Table 4: Summary of the Mental Training Objectives in Each Phase of the Annual Training Plan**

Phase	Mental Training Objectives
General	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evaluation of mental skills</li> <li>2. Learn basic mental skills in a quiet setting</li> </ol>
Specific	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adapt and practice mental skills in sport-specific Preparatory situations</li> <li>2. Use mental skills to help attain training objectives</li> <li>3. Maintain basic mental skills</li> </ol>
Pre-Competitive	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop and practise focus plan</li> <li>2. Use focus plan in simulations</li> <li>3. Maintain basic mental skills</li> </ol>
Competitive	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evaluate and refine focus plan</li> <li>2. Use mental skills to prepare for specific opponents and competitions</li> <li>3. Use mental skills for stress management</li> </ol>
Unloading	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use mental skills to aid regeneration and lower stress</li> </ol>
Transition	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recreational activities to maintain fitness and prevent staleness.</li> </ol>

Although there has been little direct research on the learning of sport-specific mental skills, it seems logical to assume that the amount of time needed to learn sport-specific adaptations of these skills would be similar to that required to learn the basic mental skills.

The basic mental skills can also be used to work towards other training objectives of the specific preparatory phase. For example, in this phase visualisation can be used to work on different tactics in certain competitive situations (tactical preparation is emphasised over technical in this phase for some sports).

## PRE-COMPETITIVE PHASE

The primary objective in this phase is to ensure that mental skills are fully integrated into an athlete's pre-competition preparation and competitive performance. This phase can last from one to two months. Most of the emphasis is placed on using, and then evaluating, mental skills and strategies in competitive exercises and less important competitions.

Athletes should develop and refine pre-competition and competition strategies for maintaining concentration and playing to the best of their ability.

**Table 5: Examples of Sport-Specific Mental Exercises for Use During the Specific Preparatory Phase**

(adapted from Loehr 1985)

### 1. Exercise: Finding Ideal Level of Activation

Description: The coach hits a series of balls alternately to a player's forehand and backhand. The player starts off returning them at his/her lowest possible level of energy "0", exercise they are at their highest possible level of activation "10". Coach and player discuss where the player performed best.

Basic Mental Skill Incorporated: Energisation.

### 2. Exercise: Finding Ideal Level of Muscle Tension

Description: Similar to the drill above, a player hits forehands and backhands starting with extremely tight and contracted muscles "0", until at the end of the drill muscles are totally loose and relaxed "10". Coach and player discuss where the player performed best.

Basic Mental Skill Incorporated: Relaxation

### 3. Exercise: Mistake Management

Description: The coach sets up a challenging drill that is likely to produce frequent errors from players. Athletes use one of the following strategies after each mistake. Ensure each athlete has time to try out each strategy. Coach and player discuss which worked best.

- Visualize correction
- Centre 0 to relax and clear mind
- Positive self-talk - "Relax, hit it earlier next time"

Basic Mental Skill Incorporated: Visualisation, Relaxation, Positive Self-Talk

### 4. Exercise: Eye Control

Description: Players play short, 10-point games. The object of the exercise is to stay totally focussed for the entire 10 points by keeping the eyes in one of three places - the ball, the racquet strings, or the floor. The player whose eyes stray the least wins the game.

Basic Mental Skill Incorporated: Concentration

They should test these out in progressively more challenging situations (dress rehearsals => simulations => exhibitions). The primary tool used to help accomplish these objectives is the focus plan, a written plan that contains pre-competition and competition strategies. If followed, the plan should hold and athlete's focus on his/her sport throughout a competition.

Typically, a focus plan contains three parts:

- Pre-competition Preparation Plan - a detailed list of activities that best prepare an athlete for competition (e.g. carbohydrate meal night before, jogging, stretching, visualisation, positive self-talk, talk with coach, etc.).
- Competition Focus Plan - the key points an athlete needs to concentrate on during the actual performance. Depending on the sport these could be technical, tactical, or effort-related reminders.
- Refocus Plan - a list of potentially distracting situations and the

solutions that will allow the athlete to regain concentration or improve performance. One possible situation would be feeling too nervous before the start of a competition. The solution would be to use centring to relax and in the case of a gymnast, to focus only on the first few moves of the routine, perhaps even visualize them. Coaches are referred to Orlick (1986) for a complete explanation of focus plans.

A secondary objective of this phase is to maintain the mental skills that have been developed in the previous phases, and to assist athletes to continue using these skills to help achieve training and performance goals. For example, athletes can visualize different parts of their focus plan.

## COMPETITIVE PHASE

During this two to five month phase, mental training is directed toward allowing athletes to compete to the best of their ability. Focus plans are evaluated after each important competition, and refined if necessary. Any weaknesses in an athlete's mental performance can be improved by repeating mental training exercises from previous phases.

Mental skills such as visualisation can be used to prepare for specific opponents and competitions. Relaxation and positive self-talk can be used to manage stress during this period of high intensity leading up to the major competition of the year.

## UNLOADING PHASE

This competitive sub-phase takes place in the one to two weeks prior to the major competition (Bompa 1984). In order to facilitate peaking, the impact of stressors (e.g. training, competitive anxiety, etc.) on an athlete needs to be gradually decreased. Although a major reduction in the volume of physical training is a major factor in unloading, mental skills can also play an important role in lowering stress, enhancing confidence, and maintaining a task focus. For example, athletes can spend 10-20 minutes per day using a relaxation technique, and then visualise their best-ever performances.

## TRANSITION PHASE

Following the major competition, athletes should spend four to six weeks recuperating from the training year by participating in recreational activities that allow them to maintain to required level of fitness, while avoiding staleness.

## AN INTRODUCTION OF A PERIODISED MENTAL TRAINING PROGRAM

An example of a periodised mental training program is described in Table 6. This program was implemented as part of the annual training plan at a Squash Canada National Training Centre during the 1986-87 season. Two similar programs have since been organised and successfully implemented with high-performance tennis juniors.

Seventeen nationally and provincially ranked squash players (nine females, eight males), aged 14 to 30, trained at the centre from June to the end of April. Table 7 (at end of article) contains a typical annual training plan for an athlete at the centre.

The schedule in Table 6 does not follow the exact sequence of teaching the basic mental skills recommended earlier. This program was altered to meet the specific needs of this group of athletes. The initial evaluation revealed that visualisation was by far the group's weakest skill, so it was introduced first.

Also, since this was the first year of mental training for this group, most of the pre-competitive phase was spent on the pre-competition part of the focus plan. Using a periodised approach allows

**Table 6: Mental Training Schedule for the Squash National Training Centre**

<b>General Preparatory (June-August)</b>	
Session 1	Introduction to mental training Assessment questionnaire
Session 2	Athletes score questionnaire, discuss areas for improvement
Session 3	Set mental training goals based on assessment Introduce visualization, visualize best-ever performance
Session 4	Review visualization Introduce centring, practise sitting quietly between track intervals
Session 5	Review centring, visualization Introduce meditation
Session 6	Review meditation Introduce positive self-talk, practise between track intervals
Session 7	Review positive self-talk Introduce breath control, practise between intervals
Session 8	Review all skills Improving self-confidence using mental skills
Session 9	Repeat session 8
<b>Specific Preparatory Phase (September-November)</b>	
Session 10	Introduce pre-match preparation
Session 11	Review all skills
Session 12	On-court visualization drills for technique Assessment and setting of new mental goals
Session 13	Introduce strategies for working on individual weaknesses On-court relaxation and energization drills Develop and practice rituals
<b>Pre-Competitive Phase (November-January)</b>	
Session 14	Simulation: pre-match preparation and evaluation
Session 15	Simulation of entire match, evaluation of pre-match preparation On-court drills for mistake management
Session 16	On-court energization drills Practised concentration - distraction control Practised handing refocus situations
Session 17	Assessment and program evaluation
<b>Competitive Phase (January-April)</b>	
Session 18	Develop match focus plan On-court practice of different match situations using plan
Session 19	Develop refocus plan Introduce competition evaluation forms
Session 20	Review entire focus plan: pre-, game, and refocus Match play to evaluate plans using evaluation form
Session 21	Review entire focus plan, discuss how to refine it Make individual pre-match audiocassettes
Session 22	Year-end program evaluation

considerable flexibility in the scheduling and content of a program while still ensuring effective delivery.

### PROGRAM EVALUATION

At the end of the year a written evaluation of the mental training program (Orlick 1986a) was distributed to the athletes. The effect of the program on their mental readiness for competition was highly rated (mean = 3.6), on a scale of -5 (hindered) to +5 (helped a lot). The positive results of other parts of the evaluation indicate that the athletes felt that they benefited from the mental training program.

### SUMMARY

An organised approach to planning annual mental training programs has been presented in this article. There are five key points for coaches to remember:

1. Organise your annual training plan using principles of periodisation: general preparatory => specific preparatory => pre-competitive => competitive.
2. Teach the basic mental skills first, then develop and practise sport-specific versions of these skills. Finally, develop a plan for each athlete to use these skills in competition.
3. To individualise mental training for athletes, introduce them to the different skills and techniques, and let them choose (self-assessment or discussion) the ones that work best. Reinforce this approach by setting individual mental goals with them at the start of each phase of the annual plan.
4. Integrate mental training into your regular practice. Devote 10 minutes of every practice to mental training. This demonstrates to athletes that you think it is important. Encourage them to spend 15 minutes, three times per week, working on their mental training.

5. Don't be afraid to experiment. Every situation and athlete is unique. Remember, athletes and coaches used mental training long before sport psychology ever came along.

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ANNUAL TRAINING PLAN FOR ELITE SQUASH PLAYERS

SPORT NAME DATE	SQUASH Senior Women 1997												OCTOBER	NOVEMBER												
	DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	TORONTO OPEN	ONTARIO JUNIOR			CALGARY OPEN											
MONTH	6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27
WEEK BEGIN MONDAY																										
DOMESTIC																										
INTERNATIONAL																										
EVENT AND LOCATION																										
TRAINING PHASE	COMPETITIVE												TRANSITION													
STRENGTH/POWER	GENERAL PREPARATORY (GPP)												REHAB													
ENDURANCE	GENERAL STRENGTH												GEN. STRENGTH													
SPEED	GENERAL												SPECIFIC STR.													
SKILL ACQUISITION	ACQUISITION												SPEC. SPEED													
PSYCHOLOGY	ASSESS/BASIC SKILLS												ASSESS/GOALS													
MICROCYCLES	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52												12													
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Legend:  
 1 = transition  
 M = maintenance  
 AN = anaerobic  
 STRESS MAN = stress management  
 UNL = unload

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# STATE ROUNDUP

## TASSIE TALK

BY CHRIS DOIG

### TASMANIAN SQUASH ACADEMY

The Tasmanian Squash Academy has been operating for over four years now and, this year, the focus was shifted towards developing younger players (12-17 years) to help them on their way to reaching their full potential as squash players.

The 2001 Development Squad comprises 12 members, including 2 regional members. The 2001 coaches are **Chris Doig, Reto Vogel** and **Sam Easter**.

The training year began with a very successful three-day summer camp held in late January for 30 juniors.

The Tasmanian Squash Academy is leading the way with squash coaching within Tasmania, currently employing six coaches at the Eastside Squash Centre.

Coaching programs are available for primary school juniors, high school juniors and adults. As a result, the courts have a high occupancy rate and the centre is happy to be investing in the future of the game.

The Academy hopes that, by employing qualified and accredited, coaches it will increase participation in the game and also encourage more people with a wide experience in the sport to become coaches. There is still a shortage of coaches in Tasmania and until we can increase the number of coaches it will not be possible to duplicate the Academy programs in other centres.

The Academy is also responsible for conducting regular one-day Graded Tournaments with an average attendance of around 40 players. Every three months a two-day Age-Based tournament is conducted and this forms the basis for the Tasmanian Junior rankings.

### SOUTHERN SCHOOL PENNANT

The Southern School Pennant continues to be successful. Since the school pennant was rescued from the point of extinction by **Reto Vogel** in 1987 it has continued to grow and no doubt this year there will be more teams than last year. The School Pennant commences after Easter and runs through to the start of September.

### EASTSIDE CLUB PENNANT

As a result of the success of the school pennant and Eastside Junior Squash Programs, Eastside have introduced a club pennant which has forty juniors participating.