

## FOCUS<sup>®</sup> ON THE FAMILY

BY DR BILL MAIER

### TRAINING DADS

What would happen if you started a new career with no training? You'd probably have a hard time doing your job. In the same way, you can't expect a new father to naturally know how to raise a family without a little training.

Most of us get that training by watching our own fathers, seeing how they react to certain situations, and taking notes as they care for their children.

But what happens to a boy who grows up without a father? How does he know what to do? In many cases, he doesn't.

I recently received a tragic letter from a young man in that very situation. He grew up fatherless, and now found himself unequipped to deal with his kids.

The best thing a new father can do in this situation is to find a mentor who can give advice and encouragement when problems arise. Every job takes a little training — especially fatherhood.

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### I SAY

## Beyond that \$500,000 offer

### STA must develop long-term plan to ensure tennis excellence

Letter from Kwan Jin Yao

I refer to "Forget school, play tennis: STA's \$500,000 Offer" (April 2).

While the concepts and plans are commendable — cognisant of the considerable space for development in tennis — the Singapore Tennis Association (STA) should not overlook potential challenges in the eventual implementation.

Tennis, like many other professional sports, requires the right mix of nature and nurture: Aspiring players must possess inherent talent at birth, and there must be dedicated forms of training and conditioning from young.

Singaporean players must be prepared to make several sacrifices should they decide to make their passion a long-term career.

This assortment of considerations are compounded by the fact that in spite of the sport's increasing popularity in schools and neighbourhoods, Singapore standards lag behind both internationally and regionally.

Nonetheless, putting in perspective

Singapore's infancy and the stern tests ahead, the concerns do not revolve around the STA's positive intentions and \$500,000 offer. Rather, it is imperative for it to develop a better-rounded long-term plan to ascertain Singapore's excellence in the sport in time to come.

**Ultimately, the STA should not be overly concerned about the dearth of accomplishments, and ignore the need to promote tennis as a leisure and recreational sport.**

First, the STA could consider working with the Singapore Sports School to include tennis as one of the developmental sports. Next, there should be close case studies made overseas — particularly in countries with exceptional players or outstanding academies — such that certain aspects can be incorporated into the proposed programme.

If possible, the STA's nominees could be sent overseas to special tennis colleges under scholarships to receive customised training.

Progressively, as the STA grooms a reliable pool of veteran players and coaches — as a possible alternative for players who do not make it on the world stage — and trainers through stringent criteria, special initiatives can be introduced to develop players from the time they are young.

Ultimately, the sports agency should not be overly concerned about the dearth of accomplishments, and ignore the need to promote tennis as a leisure and recreational sport.

The STA must continue to promote the sports in schools and neighbourhoods, probably coordinate the diverse coaching system, and enhance existing public courts.

Medals are important, but nothing beats tennis' enhanced participation and growing popularity to increase physical fitness and provide wonderful entertainment for Singaporeans.

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**COURSE PREVIEW**

Date : 19 April 2010 (Monday)  
Time : 6.30pm - 8.00pm  
Venue : Mt. Elizabeth Hospital, Seminar Room, Level 2  
Guest Speaker : Dr Arthur van Deth (Director, International Programs, Health Care Management, Flinders University)  
Reservation : Please email or call Adelene at adelene.kok@parkway.sg / 6508 6908 before 14 April 2010



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