Abstract

Title: Anticipation and cues for anticipation from the perspective of female tennis players

Objectives: The objective of this thesis is to determine what anticipatory sources and cues elite female tennis players perceive and consider when receiving serves, and subsequently compare these findings with the research results among elite male tennis players.

Methods: In this thesis, qualitative research was utilized, specifically a case study. The research involved eight former or current elite female tennis players who ranked between 5th and 169th place on the WTA ranking, aged 18 to 39. Seven out of eight of these players are still active, with one serving as a coach who ended her active career one year ago. The research employed a guided interview method with seven questions for active players and eight questions for the coaching subject. The interviews were structured to last between 20 to 50 minutes depending on the depth of responses. Players extensively discussed anticipation in tennis serving and its application to returning. The second part of the research involved transcribing the interviews, coding, analysis, and comparison with the studies by Reischlová (2020) and Vernon et al. (2018).

Results: In the thesis, the individual themes were discussed and taken from the research of Reischl (2020) and Vernon et al. (2018), in which anticipatory clues were described and discussed, and then the results of the themes were compared with the aforementioned research. Female tennis players, similarly to males with some differences, work with contextual (e.g., score) and kinematic information (e.g., pitch). Video preparation plays a significant role in match preparation for women, but they do not incorporate anticipation training per se into their training in a similar way to men. This work can serve tennis coaches to increase their understanding of anticipatory perception in female tennis players and its use in practice.

Key words: return, serve, training, interview, contextual and kinematic information sources