

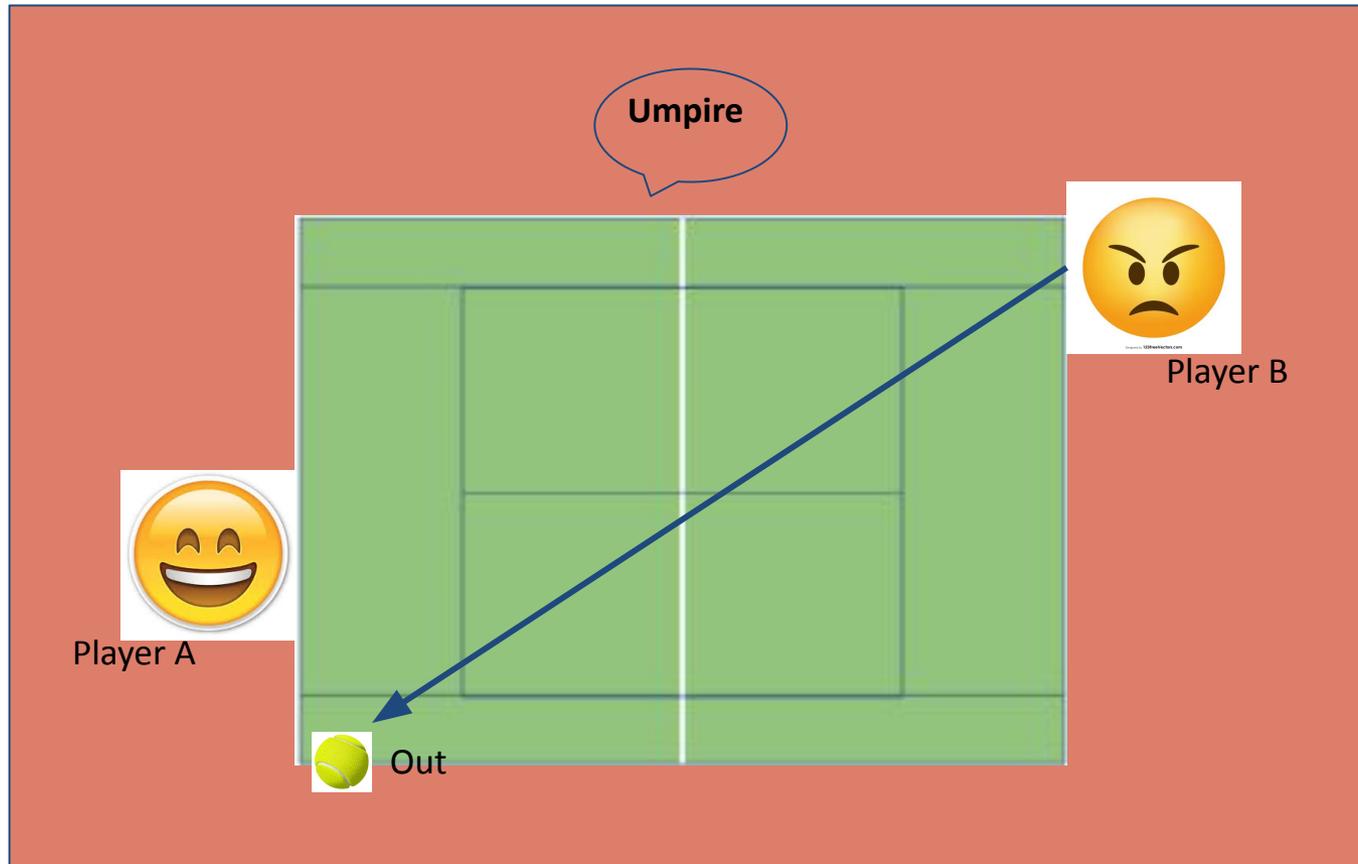


Mental Stability



in Tennis

Mental Stability



Player A wins the point and they feel great. Player B having lost the point feels frustrated.
What do you think the umpire feels? How do these feelings affect the match?

The umpire has no emotions because they are neutral, thereby being in a mentally stable place!
This mental place of peace requires great discipline to maintain when playing to win.
Players with too many “Highs & Lows” are potentially likely to feel unhelpful emotions that affect play.

Don't Always Judge Yourself

Learning not to judge or criticise yourself every time you miss is a great way to improve your mental stability. Nearly always we judge negatively. Learn to trust your inner self.

Learning to detach emotion and **“Keep your mind in the moment”** (just log the information in case you notice a pattern) is one of your biggest challenges in developing your mental strength.

If a coach sets a target or you start to have outcome related goals, the instinct to judge returns unless an extra special effort is made by the player not to. It's all too easy to criticise oneself and undermine self confidence. Keep your mind on the task.

Often you will play your best shots after you have called the ball out or you have decided to mentally give up! In this moment you detach your feelings, relax and just swing allowing your automated processes to take over.

Be your own coach on court but also learn to be your best friend! Tell yourself what you can do, not what you can't. If you keep telling yourself you can't do something, you are likely to prove yourself right.

Sue Rich quote, “Learn to control the controllables!”

Quotes from Aussie Open 2021

Sofia Kenin, who acknowledged that she struggled to control her emotions during her first-round win, was nowhere near her best against Kanepi, making 22 unforced errors and failing to convert any of her seven break-point chances. She said, "I know I couldn't really handle the pressure. I'm not used to this, so right now I just got to figure out how to play at that level that I played at."

Simona Halep clawed her way into the Australian Open third round after fighting back from the brink against Ajla Tomljanovic. The Romanian, a finalist in 2018, trailed 5-2 in the deciding set before beating the Australian 4-6 6-4 7-5."In the end I think mentally I was a little bit stronger, had the desire to win the match," she said."**I was not that positive when I was talking to myself**, I was just blaming myself that I am not strong enough to play against her."

Naomi Osaka underlined why she is one of the favourites for the title with a swift 6-3 6-3 victory over Caroline Garcia of France despite **fearing defeat after a bad dream**. "Last night I had a dream that I lost this match, and I really didn't feel good about it," the Japanese three-time Grand Slam champion said.

Dominic Thiem weathered everything home favourite Kyrgios threw at him to prevail 4-6 4-6 6-3 6-4 6-4. Kyrgios had his opportunities but his shot selection - and occasionally his temper - let him down. "I was dealing with the loss already before somehow I fought back in." It is the fourth time Thiem has come from two sets down to win at a Slam, which he memorably did to claim his first major title in New York in September.

Battles v Wars



A tennis match is made up of many battles that you have to win, before you can win the war!

In tennis, every point is a battle of sorts. These could include all or some of the following:-

1. The opponent's tactics
2. The opponent's / umpire's line calls
3. Weather conditions
4. Your physical ability
5. Your technical ability
6. Your tactical knowledge
7. Your experience
8. Your inner self

Try to treat each point as a match point. Focus in the moment and do what you have practiced.

Winning the war is just the outcome of winning more battles at the right moments!

Have a battle plan to help keep your mind focused on a positive and stop too many unhelpful thoughts.

However, it is possible to win more points and games and still lose the match! I.e. 6-4 1-6 6-4

Learn to play smarter when it comes to the "Big" points!

How to Play the Big Points

Learn to play the “BIG” points well these include;

1st point in a game - lead from the front

30-30 & Deuce - they set you up for game point

Game points + deciding deuce points

1. Don't rush, stick to your routine
2. Get your first serve in
3. Make your return
4. Play to win but don't take unnecessary risks

If you double fault at 15-0, it will have less impact on the game and on you mentally than if your score was 30 all!

The same can be true for games. Being 3-2 up feels like a fight but 4-1 up feels comfortable and can see the finish line! Mentally of course you should be treating both scenarios the same!

What happens when we get tired?

As our body and mind loses energy, mistakes can start to creep in. Which comes first Mental or Physical weakness? A bit of a Chicken & Egg situation.

Poor decision making and unforced errors all go up as we get tired, as do injuries and bad tempers.

It is reported that more climbers die coming down a mountain than going up. Physically they are tired and mentally they have achieved their goal and therefore relax. Put in tennis terms. If you know you are fitter than the opposition never give up, as the finish line appears there's a chance for you to come back.

My advice to climbers, make the hot bath at the end the focus, not the top of the mountain. Mini league players the finish line is 9 games not 6. It's just a matter of perspective!

In last week's presentation I voted Nadal as winner of the mentally strong category rather than physical, even though we know he is an incredible athlete. We could say he is mentally strong because he believes in his physical ability and that is why he hits so many shots players are amazed he gets back. He loves to challenge himself, to win the battle between him and the ball. Monfils however, who I put in the physical category loves to challenge himself physically, but we cannot say he has good mental stability. Being an incredible athlete is not enough. Typically like a large number of pro players he lacks the mental discipline to sustain a top ranking, he has great wins, but a lack of tournament victories.

Federer I put in the technical category and is commonly thought of as having the best forehand. In my opinion he has a measured (mental) approach to his physical efforts and this has gone a long way to him extending his longevity. I have observed many matches whereby he has not tried his hardest when he sees the point is not worth fighting for. This shows an inner confidence that he can put things back in his favour on the following points. Imagine the titles he would have won without Nadal, Djokovic or Murray, 3 of the Mentally & Physically best players - ever!