



INSTRUCTOR'S PROGRAM NEWS

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SPOTLIGHT: RACQUETBALL DURING COVID

The pandemic raises many issues for our sport and especially for instructors and players. Master instructors Fran Davis and Jim Winterton provide their perspectives on how best to handle different aspects of the issues.

INSTRUCTOR'S INSURANCE

In this very litigious society, it is extremely important that all instructors and coaches take every precaution to protect oneself. Although USAR-IP provides the most updated and complete instructor information available (which is required for certification) every instructor needs additional insurance for personal protection. Many of our master instructors pay up to \$700 extra each year, just to purchase additional coverage to protect their businesses, but EACH USAR-IP instructor is covered by—5 million per event aggregate, 2 million per occurrence and \$1 million for sexual abuse/harassment —THE MOST COMPLETE COVERAGE IN THE SPORT!



TEACHING RACQUETBALL DURING COVID

BY MASTER PROFESSIONAL
JIM WINTERTON

Losing Lessons During Pandemic? You're not alone!

On March 16 , I was averaging 12 hours a week in lessons, visiting athletes coming into town to work out with me, plus coaching at Arizona State University. All that added up to an average of 20 hours per week coaching racquetball. On March 23 those dropped to zero. The clubs closed and the University furloughed me. Then they outright excessed me. Excessed is a fancy synonym for "fired."

Here is some of the good and some of the bad of what has happened to me.

Good

- I got to spend much more time with my wife and my family.
- I got to slow down.
- My car stopped logging so many miles.
- I began to work out and spend time on myself.
- I began to play racquetball again and rediscover how to hit a forehand and backhand!
- I moved all of my business online.

Bad

- I miss tournaments.
- I miss coaching in-person.
- I miss hanging out and socializing with racquetball players.
- I miss the on-court time with athletes.



TEACHING RACQUETBALL DURING COVID

BY MASTER PROFESSIONAL
JIM WINTERTON

So what's the bottom line?

Well, with six pros to four cons means the pandemic is not all bad!

But what are your business goals?

For me it was maintaining instruction for the athletes I care about and teach. It was about keeping athletes motivated during the pandemic and refocusing them on the fact that once the vaccine is administered, the game will come back.

How to keep athletes motivated?

Drills off the court is one way. My colleague, Fran Davis will explain the ways in a separate article.

Indoor racquetball is out in some states, still happening in others. Where there is racquetball the use of video instruction is a way of keeping your teaching relevant to your students.

Masking up and encouraging your students to play and video themselves and send the video to you to analyze is a way of continuing instruction.

Outdoor racquetball is viable in Western and Southern states and do not overlook that chance to earn money or coach new players.

In the snowbelt with no indoor clubs open in some states, there is still a way if there is the will! Reebok steps in the basement with footwork drills and racquet simulation of forehand and backhand.

Pinterest has a multitude of fitness companies with workouts printed to promote their businesses. Download those workouts to continue to train off-court and in your house. Peleton, Mirror, and other subscription type fitness places are in business.

Zoom conference with your club members and help them through the crisis.

All of the above can be done. Will you lose income? Well, everyone in our sport has lost to my knowledge but if you can stay in the game, you will be ready to rock and roll when the pandemic eases.

Winners
are not people who
never fail,
but people who
never
quit



PRACTICE WITHOUT HAVING AN INDOOR COURT

BY MASTER PROFESSIONAL
FRAN DAVIS

It's a challenging time right now due to Covid-19 as many people cannot practice or play on an indoor court due to the courts and/or clubs being closed. So we must be creative and think outside the box.

Here are a few suggestions I recommend of what you can do to practice and to keep your game sharp even though you cannot get onto an indoor court:

- 1) Practice Outdoors** – If there are outdoor 1-wall or 3-wall courts around that's ideal to hit on, but not all areas of the country have this as an option.
- 2) Find a Wall** – Research and find a building with a cement wall, then put lines on the floor to depict the various measurements on the court...perimeter, short line, service line, dotted line, etc. and use that to hit.
- 3) Find a Tennis Court that also has a hitting wall for warm-up** –The wall is about 4-5 feet high and tennis players use it to warm up for their matches and you can use that as well.
- 4) Visualization** – Practice in your mind a full practice session based on what you are working on or a match. Your body goes through a 1/3 of the neuro-muscular contraction every time you think of a thought...and it gets imprinted in your brain/muscles. It is as if you are actually on the court practicing or playing a match. It is the most powerful mental toughness tool out there.
- 5) Watch Video** - Of yourself playing an opponent or a pro playing an opponent and look at:
 - a) stroke mechanics, court positioning, shot selection, footwork, serves, return of serves, relocating out of the service zone, how the play/point developed etc.
 - b) watch rally by rally and analyze
 - c) do slow-mo frame by frame

As they say, "A picture is worth a thousand words". Remember the camera doesn't lie and you can see SO SO much.

If you do incorporate the above 5 tools you will be well on your way to not missing a beat. You could possibly take off where you left off and probably be 1 or 2 steps ahead of your competition... good luck!

**Go to the USAR_IP Teaching Manual on the USAR website and/or contact me
for further information at Fran@FranDavisRacquetball.com**



WHY WARM-UP?

Warming up prior to any physical activity does a number of beneficial things, but **the main purpose of the warm up is to prepare the body and mind for strenuous activity.**

- One of the ways it achieves this is by increasing the body's core temperature, while also increasing the body's muscle temperature. By increasing muscle temperature you're helping to make the muscles loose, supple and pliable.
- An effective warm up also has the effect of increasing both your heart rate and your respiratory rate. This increases blood flow, which in turn increases the delivery of oxygen and nutrients to the working muscles.

All this helps to prepare the muscles, tendons and joints for more strenuous activity.

Warm Up Stretching Guidelines

As with most activities there are rules and guidelines to ensure that they are safe; stretching and the warm up is no exception. Stretching can be extremely dangerous and harmful if done incorrectly. This short video shows you how to warm up properly to get the most out of your stretching.

The Greatest Misconception

Confusion about what stretching accomplishes, as part of the warm up, is causing many to abandon stretching altogether. The key to understanding the role stretching plays can be found in the previous sentence. But, you have to read it carefully.

Stretching, as part of the warm up! Stretching is a critical part of the warm up, but stretching is not THE warm up. Don't make the mistake of thinking that doing a few stretches constitutes a warm up.

An effective warm up has a number of very important key components, which work together to minimize the likelihood of sports injury and prepare the individual for physical activity.

How to Structure Your Warm Up

It's important to start with the easiest and most gentle activity first, building upon each part with more energetic activities, until the body is at a physical and mental peak. This is the state in which the body is most prepared for the physical activity to come, and where the likelihood of sports injury has been minimized as much as possible. So, how should you structure your warm up to achieve these goals?

There are four key components, or parts, which should be included to ensure an effective and complete warm up.

- 1) **The general warm up**
- 2) **Static stretching**
- 3) **The sports specific warm up**
- 4) **Dynamic stretching**



WHY WARM-UP?

Important: All four parts are equally important and any one part should not be neglected or thought of as not necessary. All four components work together to bring the body and mind to a physical peak, ensuring the athlete is prepared for the activity to come. This process will help ensure the athlete has a minimal risk of sports injury.

The 4 Key Components of a Warm-Up

Identifying the components of an effective and safe warm-up, and executing them in the correct order is critical. Remember, stretching is only one part of an effective warm up and its' place in the warm-up routine is specific and dependent on the other components. These are the four key components that should be included to ensure an effective and complete warm-up...

1) General warm-up

The general warm up should consist of a light physical activity, like walking, jogging, easy swimming, stationary bike riding, skipping or easy aerobics. Both the intensity and duration of the general warm up (or how hard and how long), should be governed by the fitness level of the participating athlete. Although a correct general warm up for the average person should take about five to ten minutes and result in a light sweat. The aim of the general warm up is simply to elevate the heart rate and respiratory rate. This in turn increases the blood flow and helps with the transportation of oxygen and nutrients to the working muscles. This also helps to increase the muscle temperature, allowing for a more effective static stretch. Which bring us to part two.

2) Static stretching

Yes, Static stretching! (Short-hold static stretching of 10 - 15 seconds) This is a very safe and effective form of basic stretching. There is a limited threat of injury and it is extremely beneficial for overall flexibility. During this part of the warm-up, static stretching should include all the major muscle groups, and this entire part should last for about five to ten minutes.

There's quite a bit of controversy about whether static stretching should be included in the warm-up, and recent studies have shown that static stretching may have an adverse effect on muscle contraction speed and therefore impair performance of athletes involved in sports requiring high levels of power and speed. It is for this reason that static stretching is conducted early in the warm-up procedure and is always followed by sports specific drills and dynamic stretching.

This part of the warm up is extremely important, as it helps to lengthen both the muscles and tendons, which in turn allows your limbs a greater range of movement. This is very important in the prevention of muscle and tendon injuries (see related articles below).

The above two components form the basis, or foundation for a complete and effective warm up. It is extremely important that these two components be completed properly before moving onto the next two components. The proper completion of components one and two, will now allow for the more specific and vigorous activities necessary for components three and four.



WHY WARM-UP?

"...no significant differences in either performance variable were evident when the skill-based warm-up was preceded by static stretching or a dynamic warm-up routine. This suggests that the practice of a subsequent high-intensity skill based warm-up restored the differences between the two warm-up interventions. Hence, if static stretching is to be included in the warm-up period, it is recommended that a period of high-intensity sport-specific skills based activity is included prior to the on-court/field performance."

• Taylor, K. Sheppard, J. Lee, H. Plummer, N. (2009). Negative effect of static stretching restored when combined with a sport specific warm-up component. Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport, 12(6):657-61.

3) Sport-specific warm-up

With the first two parts of the warm-up carried out thoroughly and correctly, it is now safe to move onto the third part of an effective warm up. In this part, the athlete is specifically preparing their body for the demands of their particular sport. During this part of the warm up, more vigorous activity should be employed. Activities should reflect the type of movements and actions that will be required during the sporting event, including sports specific drills and technical drills.

4) Dynamic stretching

Finally, a correct warm up should finish with a series of dynamic stretches. However, this form of stretching carries with it an increased risk of injury if used incorrectly. Dynamic stretching is most effective after a moderate to high level of general flexibility has been established.

Dynamic stretching involves a controlled, soft bounce or swinging motion to move a particular body part to the limit of its range of movement. The force of the bounce or swing is gradually increased but should never become radical or uncontrolled. If you've never done any dynamic stretching before, please seek instruction and guidance from a professional sports coach or trainer before attempting dynamic stretching (see related articles below).

During this final part of an effective warm up it is also important to keep the dynamic stretches specific to the athlete's particular sport. This is the final part of the warm up and should result in the athlete reaching a physical and mental peak. At this point the athlete is most prepared for the rigors of their sport or activity.

How Long Should I Warm Up for?

The above information forms the basis of a complete and effective warm up. However, I am well aware that this entire process is somewhat of an 'ideal' or 'perfect' warm up. I am also well aware that this is not always possible or convenient in the real world. Therefore, the individual athlete must become responsible for assessing their own goals and adjusting their warm up accordingly.



RACQUETBALL WARM-UPS

The purpose of a proper warm-up is to gradually increase your heart rate, increase your core temperature, increase your range of motion, and prepare you for more intense movement. At the completion of a proper warm up you should be “breaking” a sweat. One trick in getting the body prepared is to actually dress in a dry sauna. This will warm up your muscles and some athletes even begin their stretch routine in the sauna.

Warm-up on court:

- 1) Steady light jog with small arm circles -up and down length of court
- 2) Heal flicks -put hands behind butt and touch with foot- loosen knees joints
- 3) Side to side skip – lateral bounding motion -face one way
- 4) Skipping- start low and get a little higher each time -swing arms
- 5) Grapevine-start rotation of body - work on coordination
- 6) High knees- get knees up to at least waist-hold hands at waist level- increase intensity

Dependent on how much time you have we recommend each exercise do at least 4 lengths of the court. Often your athlete may not have enough time on the court to properly warm up. In these situation you need to find an alternate space and do some pulse raising exercises.

Warm-up in a limited space: (each exercise 20-30 seconds)

- 1) Jog in one spot – gradually increase intensity also do arm circles (5 front, 5 back)
- 2) Side-kicks- let each foot swing out to side
- 3) Heal flicks- hold hand behind butt -flick foot to hit hand
- 4) Heal flicks to side -turn your foot out slightly and touch hand-
- 5) Heal front flicks -bring foot up in front and touch each foot in the instep
- 6) High knees – keep knees high entire time

(if you have access to a bike you also may want to cycle for a few minutes)

Check the USRA-IP website under videos to see videos of all the listed exercises. We will cover phase two of the warm-up in the next newsletter.