



Case Study – Lillie Page-Warr, Noosa QLD.

She may have been a quarter-finalist in the recent Queensland Claycourt Championships and yet to record a tournament win this year, but at 15, tennis player Lillie Page-Warr said her biggest “win” of this year had been successfully teaching four-year-olds how to hit a ball over the net.

Page-Warr is one of 4000 people nationally who have graduated from an Australian Sports Commission-sponsored online coaching course.

The free course includes topics ranging from planning and safety to coach responsibilities, working parents and group management.

Page-Warr, along with three other juniors at the Noosa Springs Tennis Centre, was prompted to complete the course by competition and program director, Bill Lodge.

Lodge, who also completed the course, said the concept of teaching juniors basic coaching skills was one that provided enormous advantages not only to the juniors, but to the Centre and future tennis players.

“In a way, they become tennis ambassadors,” he said. “Particularly with girls, we’ve found that at 14, 15 they’re looking for part-time work and it’s usually work that pulls them away from tennis. It’s a chance to close the loop by giving them an income and reason to stay with the game.”

He said that the juniors had already become assistant coaches, helping to coach younger students over the school holidays and potentially could do the same at regional schools after school hours.

“This training course is perfect because it gives them an insight into some of the more different issues they might face, it gives them some theory, some practical work and some recognition.”

Page-Warr said that completing the course online at home over three days had given her greater appreciation for the work her own coaches do.

“The module about planning had a lot of work in it, it was pretty involved,” she said. “It showed me that it’s not just a matter of showing up before a session but you have to think about what needs to be done.”

Page-Warr said she also found the sections about coping with different skill levels and abilities to be an eye opener. “It was talking about how to cope with a person who was blind or in a wheelchair and I haven’t come across anyone like that yet, but it was also about all different levels, from someone who could play quite well to someone who couldn’t hit a ball and how to get them involved.

“I learned that if someone was doing something right, I should show everyone and I also learned to put together drills that got everyone involved.”

Page-Warr helped to run sessions over the recent school holidays and said one of the biggest challenges was keeping everyone occupied.

“I had up to 8 at a time and the youngest I had was a 3½-year-old to a 7-year-old. I had to keep things interesting and they all always needed to be doing something.”

She said she was glad to have the opportunity to do the coaching and hoped to continue.

“I loved it. I could do it forever. Seeing the improvement in four-year-olds who couldn't hit a ball and then were having rallies was pretty amazing.”