

Practice makes a man perfect. Feedback makes practice perfect

Tennis is a real royal game. In no other sport is the entire body made to work in wholesome synchronization as in tennis. Swimming and dancing may require whole body coordination, but temporal triggering is non-existent in such sports. In tennis all this coordination need to be timed to the moving ball with millisecond precision.

My mentor Mr. Ragavan said tennis shot should be divided into three R.
Read, reach and react.

- Reading starts sometimes much before the ball is being hit by the opponent.
- Reaching is positioning oneself to meet the ball at the optimal location in 3D space. Football players do this excellently.
- React is the stroke.

React can again be divided into three phases.

Leg and trunk phase, shoulder and arm phase and finally wrist phase.

Federer's powerful shots are said to come from his legs. Strange but true leg muscles do add power to the shot.

Coming to Barathanattiyam, actress Keerthi Suresh in a recent interview revered the impact of technology on her rapid blooming. Her mother generation relied on the director's face to know if they performed to precision. Corrections were in form of hard admonitions from the director; learning cycles were long. But today after a take she reviews her performance in a video recording and able to learn, correct and perfect very fast.

If tennis is more demanding than dancing why is video time shifting not practiced in tennis? Elegant free flowing movements fetch applause and claps in a dance. The same fetches points in tennis. Stroke correction is the first step to playing enjoyable tennis. It is common sight to see coaches trying their best to correct strokes. The player under test is seeing his errors in the words of the coach. But is not a picture worth a thousand words. If so then what would be the worth of a motion picture.

Right after ones turn in a feeding session if one could review ones strokes, how short the feedback loop would be. The players reviews and compares his strokes to the corrections advised by the coach. He comes back into the next turn determined to correct them. Life is made easy for one and all. We might see more beginners moving into the next stage more quickly. And one of them might be the next Federer, bringing laurels and acclaim to the ecosystem they rooted in.

Earliest video feedback is a desirable tool in learning tennis.