

SEEING it COMING

ALLISTAIR McCAW INVESTIGATES THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN BEING A GREAT MOVER

Believe it or not, but the most important element in creating a great mover in sport is actually developed and trained between the ages of four and 12.

And what is the greatest element and factor in a great athlete you ask? Anticipation.

Ever watched an athlete or player who maybe

doesn't look athletically quick, but who somehow seems to get to every ball or be in the right place all the time?

Ever wondered, besides other great attributes, why tennis legend Roger Federer, soccer star Cristiano Ronaldo or squash wizard Ramy Ashour are at the top of their sports?



ALLISTAIR McCAW

Allistair is a sports performance specialist based in Sarasota, Florida, USA. He has worked with some of the world's best Olympians and athletes, including triple world squash champion Ramy Ashour. He was a former international athlete himself.

● For more on Allistair, visit his Facebook page at 'McCaw Method'.

HERE'S WHY:

The best movers on court not only have great footwork and movement skills, but also have the ability to read

the game and ANTICIPATE it better. They see a move before it happens.

Even though the required muscle and properly-trained movement patterns are essential in developing a great mover, it's the ability of an athlete's reaction and reflexes that determine just how great they will move in their chosen sport.

Simply put, all movement starts with the brain telling the body that it needs to move. The neuro-muscular system or 'brain to body wiring', as I like to call it, needs to be continually trained.

Good anticipation and response skills are essential qualities to

being a good mover on a tennis court. Knowing your opponent's next shot, the one that's coming back, already allows you to move early and into the correct position to be ready.

THE KEY TO BEING A GOOD MOVER IN SPORT IS REACTING FASTER. GOOD MOVERS ARE EARLIER INTO POSITION AND READY.

REACTION AND ANTICIPATION EXERCISES SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN ALL PLAYERS' MOVEMENT PROGRAMS, NOT JUST ATHLETICS-BASED SKILLS.

These skills are best developed in their 'skill-hungry' years (between four and 12 years of age). This is when an athlete is more teachable and 'plastic' to acquiring the skill better.

The later an athlete is left in their development to acquire reaction and anticipation skills, the less chance that athlete is going to be a great mover.

It's highly recommended for a coach or trainer to develop and work on these motor skills in their kids' sessions by including lots of games challenging the child's ABC (agility, balance and co-ordination) skills with catching and throwing.

Even when I'm giving my professional athletes a movement training session, I still include anticipation and reaction skills as part of their routines. Great movers in sport read a move early; they see it before it happens.

Train them early, when they're young, and remember: all great movers are great anticipators!

Ramy Ashour

