

Tennis Coach interview questions

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What to expect

Tennis coaching interviews are usually practical and conversational. Clubs and head coaches want to see how you teach, how you talk to players and parents, and whether you'll turn up prepared for a scheduled lesson. Expect a mix of on-court demonstration and a sit-down chat.

- **Instructional and technical:** How you break down a stroke, sequence a lesson, and adapt drills for different ages and abilities.
- **Behavioural:** Past examples of coaching players through plateaus, handling a squad you inherited, or managing a difficult term.
- **Scenario and judgement:** What you'd do in the moment when a lesson plan falls apart, a parent pushes back, or a player gets injured.
- **Safety and child protection:** First aid response, supervision ratios, incident reporting, and how you maintain a child-safe environment on and around the court.
- **Program and administration:** Court bookings, fees, scheduling across venues, and how you keep a program running without double bookings or missed sessions.

A typical process starts with a phone or in-person screening with the head coach or club manager, followed by an on-court session where you run part of a real lesson or a short demonstration with a junior or adult player. Some clubs add a conversation with a committee member or the venue manager about programming and bookings. Smaller clubs may compress this into one visit, and bring your accreditation details, first aid certificate and Working with Children Check to that visit.

1. Walk me through how you'd structure a first lesson with a nine-year-old who has never held a racquet.

Why they ask

This is the most common junior entry point, and the interviewer wants to see whether you can sequence a lesson rather than just feed balls for an hour.

How to structure your answer

A walk-through: describe the warm-up, the first skill, the game or rally element, the feedback you give, and how you close and hand something to the parent.

Example answer

"I start with a couple of minutes of hand-eye work, bouncing and catching, then racket and ball taps, because a nine-year-old needs to feel the ball on the strings before the swing matters. I introduce a simple grip and a low-to-high swing, then get them into a cooperative rally over a mini net within the first ten minutes, because rallying is what keeps them coming back. I use modified balls and a smaller court so they can succeed early. I finish with a target game and one thing to practise at home, and I tell the parent what we covered so they can reinforce it during the week."

2. Tell me about a time a player's progress stalled and you changed your approach.

Why they ask

Interviewers want evidence you diagnose rather than just repeat the same drills, and that you can work with a player over a longer period.

How to structure your answer

STAR: the player and situation, what you were trying to achieve, what you changed and why, and what the outcome looked like on court.

Example answer

"I had a fourteen-year-old in my squad whose backhand broke down whenever she was pushed wide in match play, and my usual feeding drills weren't fixing it. I filmed a set with SwingVision and we watched it together, which showed she was arriving late and hitting off the back foot. I broke the stroke back to a shortened court, slowed the feed right down, and built in a split step and recovery pattern before we added pace again. Over about six weeks she stopped avoiding that side in matches and started holding her own in longer rallies against the same opponents."

3. A parent tells you their child should be in a higher squad. How do you handle it?

Why they ask

Parent conversations are a large part of club coaching, and the interviewer is checking you can hold a position without losing the relationship.

How to structure your answer

Judgement under pressure: acknowledge the concern, show the evidence, explain the pathway, and offer a clear next step.

Example answer

"I'd thank them for raising it and ask what they've noticed, because sometimes they're seeing something I'm not. Then I'd be straight about where the child sits against the squad's standard, using specific examples from recent sessions rather than a general impression, and I'd explain what the next level actually demands in terms of rally consistency, footwork and match play. I'd set out what we're working on over the next term and offer a review point, and where it's genuinely borderline I'd suggest a trial session with the higher group so the decision is based on how the child goes, not on an argument."

4. You're running a group lesson and a player rolls their ankle. What do you do?

Why they ask

Clubs need to know you can act safely and follow the right process when something goes wrong on your watch.

How to structure your answer

Immediate action first, then assessment and first aid, then reporting and follow-up, then what you'd change for next time.

Example answer

"I'd stop the session and get the rest of the group safely off the court to a spot where I can see them. I'd check the ankle using DRSABCD, keep the player still, and apply RICER, ice and support, without letting them walk it off. I'd call the parent or guardian straight away, complete an incident report while the details are fresh, and recommend they get it looked at rather than guessing. Afterwards I'd review the drill we were running and the court surface, and feed that back to the head coach so the same thing is less likely to happen again."

5. How do you keep a mixed-ability group of adult beginners engaged for a full hour?

Why they ask

Adult group lessons are a big part of club revenue and the hardest session to keep moving when the group is uneven.

How to structure your answer

A technique answer: how you group players, how you vary the drill, and how you keep everyone hitting rather than waiting.

Example answer

"I'd keep pairs matched where I can and rotate them through the session so nobody is stuck with the same partner the whole hour. I'd run most of it as cooperative feeding and live-ball drills on two courts rather than one line, so people are hitting instead of queuing for a turn. For the stronger players I'd add a target or a constraint, such as a rally that has to include a change of direction before they can score, and for the ones still finding contact I'd shorten the court and slow the ball down. I finish with a game everyone can play at their own level, because adults stay in programs when the last ten minutes are fun."

6. How do you manage bookings, payments and scheduling when you're coaching across two venues?

Why they ask

Casual and contract coaching lives or dies on admin, and clubs have been burned by coaches who double book or lose track of fees.

How to structure your answer

A process answer: the systems you use, how you keep venues separated, and how you handle a clash when it happens.

Example answer

"I keep one diary for all coaching and block out travel time between venues, so nothing gets booked back to back across town. I use Court Reserve for court allocations and client bookings, and I reconcile payments weekly rather than leaving it until the end of term, which makes it obvious if a session hasn't been paid for. Each venue has its own booking rules, so I check court availability before I confirm a lesson rather than assuming. If a clash does come up, I contact the affected players first and offer an alternative time, and I tell the venue manager so it doesn't look like I've simply not turned up."