

BECOME A COACH



**“Some coaches would be better off
being employed than entrepreneurs.”**

Jürg Bühler

Head of Training / Development

Swiss Tennis

**DIPL. TENNISLEHRER
WETTKAMPFTRAINER B**

TEL. 079 325 41 21
LONG.ARNOLD@BLUEWIN.CH

WWW.LONGARNOLD.CH

QUOTE

“Some coaches would be better off being employed than entrepreneurs.”

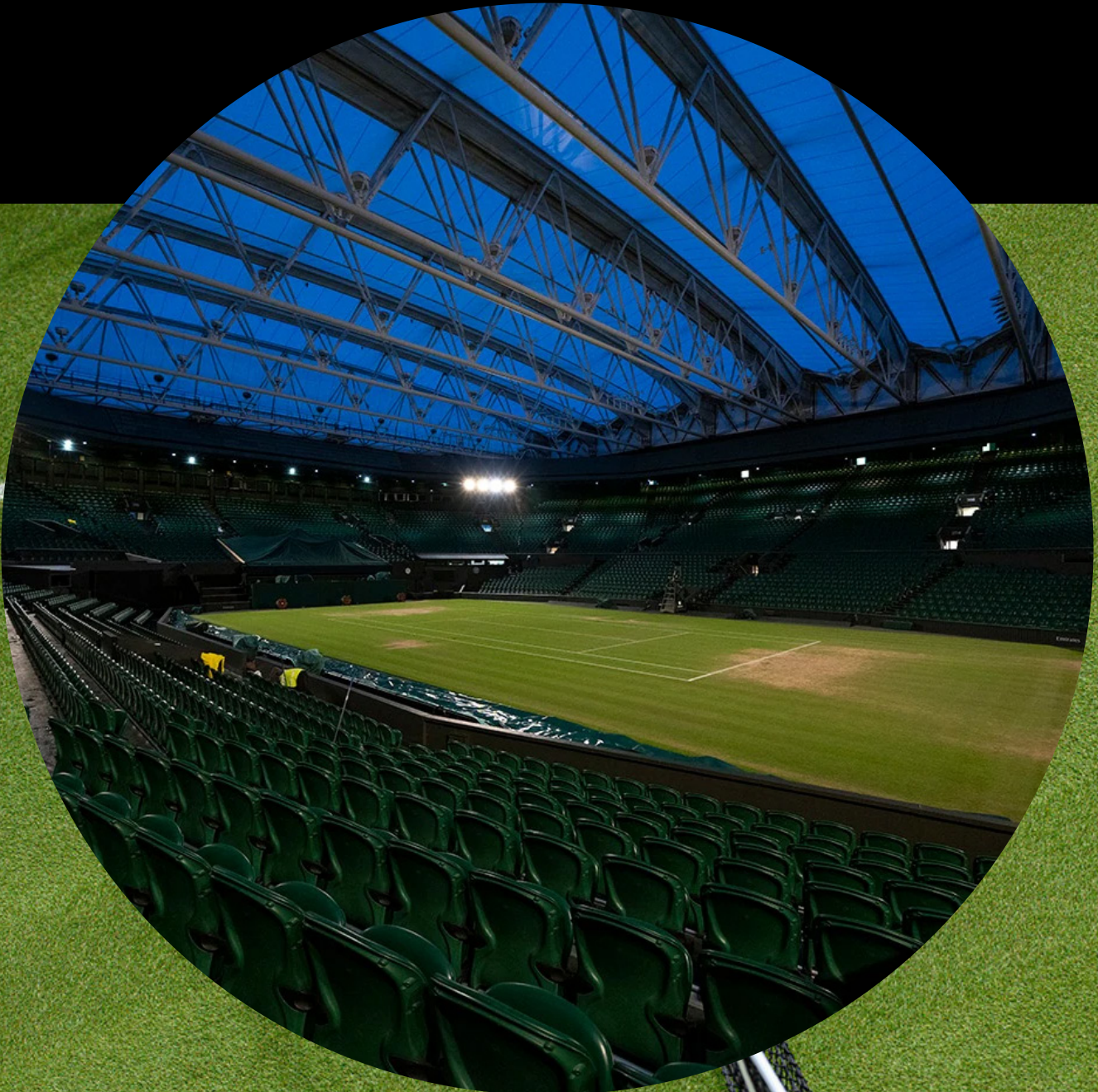
When Jürg Bühler, Head of Training and Development at Swiss Tennis, says that some coaches would be better off employed than self-employed, he isn't making a judgment. He's making a distinction that is rarely voiced openly in the tennis world.

Behind his words lies a simple but uncomfortable truth: The qualities that make an outstanding coach and the qualities that make a successful entrepreneur are not the same – and they don't always combine in one and the same person. Passion for the sport, profound technical knowledge, the ability to read a player and build a relationship over years – none of this automatically qualifies anyone to run a business, acquire clients, manage finances, or bear the uncertainty that self-employment brings on a daily basis.

The problem isn't that coaches are choosing the wrong path. The problem is that the profession rarely provides them with the information they need to make an informed decision in the first place. The barrier to entry is so low that the question **“What kind of coach are you?”** is never asked. People simply start – and discover the answer later, often at considerable personal cost.

Jürg's quote isn't criticism. It's an invitation. An invitation to build a profession that's honest enough to help people find the right framework for their talent – before the market does it for them, and in a less kind way.

"The tennis court is not a marketplace. It is a place where a person grows – and a coach who has forgotten that is no longer truly coaching. Technique can be taught in a single season. Trust takes years to build and can be lost in an instant. The coach who thinks in terms of transactions has already lost the most important match." Long Arnold



The main problem: Low entry barriers.

The four open doors – why anyone can become a tennis coach

1. Unprotected title

The terms “tennis coach” or “tennis instructor” are not legally protected in Switzerland. Anyone can use them without qualifications, consequences, or oversight. In contrast, physiotherapists, pharmacists, and even driving instructors are legally protected. Tennis coaching falls completely outside this system.

2. Minimal capital investment

No machine. No office. No staff. A court, a racket, a ball basket – and you’re ready to go. The financial hurdle that deters undecided applicants in most professions simply doesn’t exist here.

3. No mandatory training

Switzerland offers high-quality training opportunities – Youth & Sport leadership training, Swiss Tennis programs, competition coach and tennis instructor training. Participation is voluntary. A coach can work with children, teenagers, and adults without having completed a single hour of formal training in child development, pedagogy, sports psychology, or methodology.

4. No prior business knowledge required

Marketing, finance, communication, legal foundations – none of this is expected before the opening. The temptation to monetize the passion for tennis encounters hardly any institutional resistance. The market is the only filter, and the market corrects only slowly.

What follows

The low barriers to entry are enticing. Reality catches up with you later – in terms of customer loyalty, reputation, and the

discrepancy between promises and reality. The profession pays the price quietly, over time, in the form of players who weren’t optimally supported and coaches who weren’t adequately prepared.

The employed coach

Some coaches thrive in a structured environment. They perform at their best when someone else handles the administration, client acquisition, invoicing, marketing, and difficult conversations. Give them a space, a program, and a team of players—and they are exceptional. The structure doesn’t restrict them; it liberates them.

These coaches often become self-employed not because they consciously chose self-employment, but simply because it was the path of least resistance. The barrier to entry was low. The first clients came. And then the structure that should have supported them was never built—because they were never trained for it and never asked if they even wanted it.

The entrepreneurial coach

The entrepreneurial coach willingly bears a different burden. He endures the empty weeks, the difficult clients, the months with uncertain income. He invests in his own development – not only as a coach, but also as a communicator, marketing expert, and entrepreneur. He builds something that can grow beyond his working hours. He thinks in systems, not in individual sessions.



The hidden architecture of risk

Most people who watch a tennis coach at work see someone pursuing their passion. A court, a player, a basket of balls, the sound of a clean ball contact. It looks simple. It looks effortless.

What they don't see is what the coach carries with them.

Tennis clubs and centers provide the infrastructure—the courts, the nets, the locker rooms—but they don't offer a business. The coach working within this structure isn't an employee with the associated job security. They are a guest on someone else's property, competing for court time with other coaches, members, and the demands of a facility that isn't designed around their schedule. A court free on Tuesday morning might be booked on Thursday afternoon. Another coach has priority. A club tournament occupies the facility over the weekend. The hours that generate income simply vanish.

And then there's the weather.

An outdoor court in Switzerland is not a reliable place to build a stable livelihood. A summer with unpredictable weather is more than just an inconvenience. It's a financial wound that silently festers over weeks – without compensation, without financial security, and without anyone sharing the loss. The coach bears the burden alone.

The club or center offers no marketing. No client acquisition. No billing infrastructure. No administrative support. The coach builds their client base from scratch, retains them through the quality of their work and the strength of their relationships, invoices

each client individually, and chases after unpaid invoices. All this is done alongside preparing training sessions, their own professional development, and the daily commitment that good coaching demands, requiring the energy and dedication necessary.

There are no pension contributions from the club. No insurance. No sick pay. No paid vacation. If the coach is ill, their income dries up. If a long-term client leaves, there is no severance package.

The coach carries the entire burden. Every risk. All costs. Every uncertainty. Within a structure that benefits from their presence without sharing their burden.

This is not a criticism of clubs or centers. Most of these facilities fulfill their purpose—they provide a place to play tennis. But it is an honest account of what coaching within this structure actually means. And that's why Jürg Bühler's observation is so spot on:

Some coaches don't fail because of a lack of talent. They fail because they carry a burden that the profession never warned them about—within a system that was never designed to support them.

Genuine coaching

Something has quietly changed on the tennis court. It didn't happen suddenly, and no one announced it. But anyone who's been in this profession long enough can feel it.

In the past, the coach-player relationship was based on the question: **"Who can this person become?"** It was a comprehensive question. It required time, consistency, and a commitment that extended beyond the next lesson, the next season, the next payment. The coach who asked this question wasn't simply teaching tennis. They were guiding a person through some of the most formative experiences of their life—learning to compete, to lose, to recover, and to try again. That's no small feat.

Today, a different question takes center stage: **"What good are you to me?"** It's asked on both sides of the net—by players who switch coaches as soon as something better or cheaper comes along, and by coaches who, out of financial necessity, have learned to think in terms of survival cycles rather than development arcs. Summer season. Winter season. Enough players to cover costs. Enough playing time to keep the business afloat.

No one chose this. It's the consequence of a profession being structurally exposed—without protection, without stability, without shared infrastructure—and forcing its members to adapt. With an uncertain income, one's horizons narrow. When horizons narrow, long-term thinking becomes a luxury. And when long-term thinking disappears, so does the kind of relationship that makes coaching so valuable.

But the role of a coach was never intended to be purely transactional. **A good coach builds trust over time**—not the superficial trust of a pleasant hour on the court, but the deeper trust that allows a player to speak honestly about their fears, frus-

trations, and limitations. A good coach is engaged—present not only physically, but also in the relationship, and perceiving what's happening beneath the surface of the game. A good coach imparts knowledge—not just in technique and tactics, but also in resilience, self-awareness, and the ability to face adversity without crumbling. A good coach cares – and care can't be billed, planned, or exist in an environment where every relationship is silently evaluated based on its commercial value.

The transaction-oriented model devalues not only the coach but also the player.

A player treated as a source of income learns over time that the pitch is a place for exchange, not personal growth. He brings his money and his schedule. He doesn't bring his whole self. And without his whole self, the real work – the work that creates lasting change – cannot happen.

This is the silent price of what the profession has become. Genuine coaches who resist this aren't naive. They aren't ignoring economic reality. They simply refuse to let that reality limit their possibilities. They are choosing to remain the kind of coach a player remembers not for corrected technique, but for truly being present.



June 2026

TENNIS IS MY SPORT

In my blog, I share my decades of experience working with players of all ages and skill levels. Here you'll find articles on topics such as technique, mental strength, personal development, and the deeper values that tennis teaches us. It.

Tennis Experience

www.longarnold.ch/blog