

TENNIS PARENTS

See the person behind the player.

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A letter to parents.

If you are reading this, it is likely because you care. You care about your child's development, their potential and their future.

You care about effort, discipline, and growth. You may also carry worries — about performance, about motivation, about whether you are doing enough or doing it right.

This letter is not written to judge you. It is written to stand beside you. Tennis is a demanding sport. It asks for precision, resilience, patience, and courage. It also asks for emotional endurance — often more than we openly acknowledge.

While we are busy measuring ball speed, rankings, and win-loss records, many young players are keeping score in another way. They are quietly asking questions that rarely make it into training plans:

Do I belong here?

Am I valued when I struggle?

Can I be honest about how I feel?

Is it safe to fail in front of you?

These questions are not distractions from development. They are part of it. Children and adolescents come into tennis with basic human needs — to be seen, to be heard, to be validated, and to feel emotionally safe.

When these needs are met, learning accelerates. When they are ignored, performance may continue for a while, but confidence and connection erode.

I don't argue against discipline, standards, or ambition. I argue for something deeper. I invite parents to consider not only what their child is achieving, but how they are experiencing the journey. Many players struggle silently — with self-doubt, emotional overwhelm, loneliness, and fear of disappointing the people they depend on most. They often lack the language to express these struggles, and they depend on the adults around them to notice.

It is about becoming more human. Children do not need perfect coaches or parents. They need regulated adults who are willing to listen, to repair, to set boundaries without humiliation, and to have honest conversations — even when they are uncomfortable.

The greatest gift you can offer a young athlete is not constant praise or relentless pressure. It is the assurance that their worth does not disappear when they lose, struggle, or change.

At some point, every coaching or parent-child relationship will face challenge, disappointment, or transition. How those moments are handled will matter far more than the trophies collected along the way.

This letter is an invitation — to slow down just enough to see the person behind the performance, to mentor as well as instruct, and to remember that the impact of your presence may last far longer than any result.

Thank you for caring. Thank you for staying curious. Thank you for choosing to grow alongside the children you guide.

Long Arnold
Concluding remarks
Book Match of Life



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TENNIS IS MY SPORT

In my blog, I share what I've learned from decades of working with players of all ages and skill levels. You'll find posts on technique, mental toughness, personal growth, and the deeper values that tennis teaches us.

Tennis Know-How

www.longarnold.ch/blog

