Editorial

Dear friends,

There was a festive atmosphere in the Japan Sport Olympic Square on July 24th 2021 prior to the opening ceremony of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. The run-up to the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games was filled with concern about the ongoing pandemic. These Olympics have been like none that had come before, in that Tokyo was at all times under a state of emergency which lasted throughout the games. The games, though, were successfully completed. With the start of the Paralympic Games on August 24th the POC and IOC have provided the possibility for para athletes to also present their best. Despite the many negative effects of Covid-19, sport has again showed how important it is to stay positive and to get opportunity to compete in those uncertain times.

We all need to adjust to new circumstances. It would be remiss not to mention that this issue of Volume 3 is published during a global pandemic. Even though restrictions have influenced researchers' work, we know that the inability to hold tournaments and to meet and interact with players and coaches will have an impact on the number and content of research projects that can be conducted and subsequently reported.

It is a privilege to be given the opportunity to introduce the first issue of Volume 3 of the Journal. This volume contain papers that covered a range of sports science topics applied to racket sports, including sport psychology, statistics, biomechanics, motor control, motor learning and theory of training. The present issue brings 6 articles from different lines of racket sports.

The study conducted by Maridette Joyce D. Maranan and Arnulfo V. Lopez provides useful insights for practitioners in designing mental skills training geared towards optimal functioning and psychological wellness of young athletes. Table tennis student-athletes should be mentally tough as they train and perform under extreme pressure.

Michael Fuchs and Martin Lames investigate the »first offensive shot« (FOS), which is defined as the first shot after the serve without any kind of backspin/side-backspin. Compared to prevailing methods in table tennis match analysis, which are based on fixed shot numbers, taking the FOS as object of analyses of rally opening is an innovative new approach focusing on the tactical meaning of shots that is not expressed in shot number

Aline Miranda Strapasson and co-authors asked themselves: Are the technical and timing components of play different between two wheelchair classifications in Para-Badminton? Their study found that wheelchair athletes in one class showed a higher intensity (longer rally time and shorter pause time) and a higher frequency of technical actions (higher number of shuttle hits) when compared to a second class. This specific information can assist coaches during training to guide the development of the temporal and technical aspects of wheelchair play.

Another question come from Main Del Corto Motta and his co-authors: Knowledge and Competences of Racket Sports Coaches: What do They Think and Know? In general, knowledge and competences had high scores of attributed importance and perceived domain. However, knowledge of program implementation and evaluation, professional development of coaches and competence to develop the coaching philosophy had the lowest values of perceived domain.

What tennis player can do after serve, was investigated by Philipp Born and co-authors. Correlations were found between the placement of 4th stroke and the return, between the 4th and the 3rd stroke as well as between WTA and ITF players regarding all three strokes (return, 3rd stroke, 4th stroke).

Matthew James Wylde with co-authors sought to assess in their study the perception of racket sport coaches on the use of IMUs (inertial measurement unit) during training and competition. It was found that racket sports coaches were supportive of the use of IMUs during training. While coaches also indicated support for the use of IMUs during competition, no IMU placement was found to have a significantly positive response. This suggests that while coaches understand the benefits of collecting data from IMUs during competition, there remains concerns regarding inconvenience to the athlete, lack of comfort, and appearance.

I wish you pleasant reading and inspiration for new research projects and papers, which you can submit to IJRSS. We do not know how long we will live with the Covid-19 situation, but we are confident that researchers' interest for communicating their findings in a high quality forum will continue and so, we are sure, will the Journal.

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