

Breaking Point: The Last Serve Against the Human Brain

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Mental health is a breaking point among tennis players. Even the greatest tennis players have real breaking points in life, for example, Djokovic with his anger attacks, Naomi Osaka dealing with depression, and Mardy Fish with anxiety and heart attacks after retirement. As human beings, masters or learners, no one is excluded from the battle against our brain.

For starters, Djokovic, who is currently the number one tennis player in the world, suffers from anger management. There have been two incidents that have stood out. The first one was when he threw a ball to a linesman and was disqualified from the U.S. Open. It was by accident, but the incident was a result of him being frustrated for not being able to play the game as he wanted. Most recently, in the Tokyo Olympics, Djokovic was the favorite to win the gold medal. However, he was unable to win the semifinals, and he threw and damaged his racket against the post of the central mesh and left the match without the bronze medal. It was a great failure for the world's number one tennis player caused by the anger between his mind and actions. And no wonder, the spotlight and publicity is always on him. He carries too much pressure from his bookmakers and sponsors in every individual game.

Another public display of mental health in tennis was Naomi Osaka's depression. The Japanese tennis star was the greatest revelation of the U.S. Open 2018, defeating the legend of women's tennis, Serena Williams. During the match, local fans booed at Naomi and cried in discontent when she received the championship trophy. Immediately, the U.S. press made her an icon putting her on the cover of magazines, in television shows and ads, and in fashion shows. This created a big insecurity about her priorities in life. Maintaining a public profile and not being able to concentrate on her sport caused her to fall into a deep depression that made her resign from some tournaments and not be able to defend her title in the 2021 tournament. Currently, she continues to be highly criticized by tennis fans who think that she has left the sport to become just another celebrity.



Last but not least, there is the case of Mardy Fish. He spent all his youth dodging the pressure of the game with a very discreet career, though he was seen as a promising star for American tennis. At the end of his career, he decided to try something he had never done before, to stand out above the rest and so he did. He managed to be number one in the United States, and he earned a position among the best in the world. The pressure which he was subjected to was so much that the physical exhaustion of a very good season left him with heart problems, anxiety, and depression caused by his last breath on the courts. On the day before a match against Roger Federer, he decided not to present himself and retire permanently as a professional tennis player. In his own words, he could not bear the pressure added to his physical problems, and finally, he realized that no one was forcing him to do it anymore. He wrote a book, exposed his case to the press, and received a lot of support from other tennis players who, like him, felt mentally ill but did not comment on it because they thought that it would be a weakness against their rivals.

Finally, we can conclude that each of us, as human beings, are always exposed to mental problems. It is up to us to know how to control them or how to let them out. We must not feel intimidated by our own thoughts, and we must always search for help. We can learn to let things go that affect us and focus on those that give us peace of mind. Be aware that with success there are also falls, and with duties, there are also responsibilities.

