

Men's tennis; a theory...

Saturday, 08 July 2006

Credit where due, it started with Andy Murray.

The young tennis player seemed to invent his own rules against Andy Roddick. Because he needed to beat him, instead of going down the standard route of huge serve and relentless aces, he rushed around looking gawky and ungainly but got amazing results. Poor Roddick (who HAS gotten fat and sluggish) collapsed.

But the interesting game was when Murray lost to Baghdatis, who used the same trick. Equally ungainly he made Andy shout at himself "Horrid horrid tennis" but he missed the point - Marcos was doing the same as Andy had; sized up the opponent strength and adapted his game accordingly.

It's a young thing. Even though my favourite Super Mario failed to dent Federer THIS time, he played great - but he didn't do that thing that the youngsters were doing.

Baghdatis did it again against Nadal the Rodent and won the entire British nation over (we will champion him in the future) by, again, using all his different tricks against Nadal... but remember, Nadal's a kid too and he beat Marcos by doing that same thing...

He changed his game to fit and the result was amazing.

Now whether it works against Federer tomorrow Sunday God only knows but I reckon he's in with a real chance against Roger.

And he's won us all over. Whilst we were all cheering for Marcos, we loved Nadal too.

What is "that thing"?

It's imagination. It's energy. It's breaking the rules; adapting the conventions to fit the moment.

Nadal... Baghdatis... Murray... they are all the new generation - all teenagers or nearly. Poor old Roger, Roddick, the last generation are in their middle twenties. They are more experienced but far less imaginative. And I absolutely adore this new form of tennis (which actually owes more to Andre Agassi than anyone else). It doesn't look graceful but by God it's effective!