

Denise Bonilla
10/20/15
NUSEA

Value Number 8

Since joining Squash Haven in 5th grade, up until my third year, I have had to practice with my teammates in the same grade as me-- who were all boys. Ironically enough, they taught me what it truly means to “run like a girl”, and more importantly, how to play squash like a girl. Because they were always one step ahead of me, I had to run as fast as I could. I, not only needed to retrieve all of their shots, but needed to make sure that I stood right beside them on the ladder, so I wouldn't always have to stare at their backs knowing how far I fell behind them. To play squash like a girl is to keep running forward, because no matter how far we think we've come, we can always lunge a little farther.

To “run like a girl” means that once you take off, you never stop. The same goes for squash. In other words, there's always room for improvement. Even simply switching the foot you step in with to hit the ball can make the difference between winning and losing. Just recently, I began to subtly take my game to the next level just by a very small tweak in my footwork. It was the middle of the summer and I had just come back to practice from being away at a camp for a month. However, I didn't let the fact that I was rusty prevent me from wanting to make my first practice back a good one. That day, we were working on movement, and in just the few seconds that it took for my coach to explain its significance, I realized that I could improve my game. My coach explained that you have more time than you think to get to the ball, so there's no reason to drain all your energy rushing to get to it. Even if it seems that you're running your fastest and hardest and not getting anywhere, I've learned that sometimes, after a big jump in your level, it's the subtle growths that end up mattering the most. For playing squash like a girl, this is not an easy realization, but it's essential to know that there's always something new to learn, and one should be motivated to improve by that alone.

Going into the upcoming squash season, I'll be playing the number one position for Squash Haven's high school girls team. Though I've finally made it to the top, a place I've always wanted to be, I don't feel like I'm at the top of my game. I know that there's still so much I haven't learned, and there's so much I have learned that I'm still learning to utilize and

Denise Bonilla

10/20/15

NUSEA

incorporate into my match play. More importantly, I know reaching the next level of my game starts with my running for every shot-- and running for every shot like a girl.