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**TAKING KIDS TO THE NEXT LEVEL**  
with a follow up program to usa school tennis

Special thanks to the following contributors:

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*Kristy Harris*, Colorado Tennis Association Community Development Director, who coordinated and edited the project

*Kristy Jenkins*, USA School Tennis Coordinator for the Colorado Tennis Association, who completed the lesson plans and manual

#### References:

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Dear Tennis Coordinator:

Thank you! You are providing an important service to the youth of your community by offering a healthful, fun activity to students outside of school. The lifetime benefits of tennis go beyond school and the court! And you are taking steps to be sure your community youth are exposed to those benefits.

The Colorado Tennis Association wants to assist you in your efforts to provide a well-organized tennis program no matter what your tennis coordinating and teaching background is.

This manual was started as a result of inquiries and needs of communities attempting to start new tennis programs to follow up the USA School Tennis program. Our goal is to work with physical educators to expose their students to the sport of tennis in PE class through USA School Tennis, and then assist communities in providing follow-up tennis programs to students who are excited about continuing the sport. This is a compilation of information from a variety of resources and can be used independently or in conjunction with other materials available to you.

No matter where the program is conducted - in a multi-purpose room, on the playground blacktop, at neighborhood tennis courts, in a gymnasium - this manual will provide you with support from the planning stages through the last day of the program. Keep in mind that we encourage you to modify the lesson plans according to the skill level of your students.

The Colorado Tennis Association is available to you at 303-695-4116 for additional assistance! Best wishes!

Sincerely,

Kristy Harris  
*Community Development Director*

Kristy Jenkins  
*USA School Tennis Coordinator*

# *The Opportunity To Go To The Next Level*

## **A USA Team Tennis Clinic**

### **Organizing the Program**

#### **A. LOCATION**

If you are teaching a follow-through tennis program in a gym or cafeteria, your set up will depend on the size of the room. You may be able to arrange one to four small courts using Wilson Pee Wee tennis nets or modified tennis nets. If you don't have access to a gym or cafeteria, don't forget you can set up tennis courts in church foyers, playgrounds, parking lots or aerobic rooms. Use chalk, carpet tape, ropes or other creative tools to add lines.

#### **B. FREQUENCY OF SESSIONS**

Depending on space or court availability and interest in the program, the sessions may vary in length and frequency. We suggest each session meet at least 6 times for 60 minutes.

Keep in mind that in order to make this activity easily accessible to the students, you will want to provide the activity right after or before school. You may want to schedule different age groups after school every day of the week.

#### **C. LESSON LENGTH**

A 60-minute lesson allows you to include Court Chatter (Court Manners, Rules of the Game, Sportsmanship, and Scoring), a Warm-Up, Demonstration of the Stroke, Skill Practice, Games, and a Wrap-Up. USA Team Tennis competition should be incorporated into the program on a separate day or for an additional 30-60 minutes after the lesson. Micro Tennis and Ralleyball are two popular USA Team Tennis formats for beginners. A comprehensive Ralleyball Manual is available through the Colorado Tennis Association, as well as information on Micro Tennis.

Children between the ages of 5-8 have short attention spans, so keep your games short, fast moving, and active. If a child struggles with a particular skill, make the activity easier by *reducing the speed of the ball, shortening the distance the child must hit the ball and/or increasing the size of the ball.* You want each child to have

success. If they become frustrated, they may give up the game and may not return. Always remember: **If the game or drill is not working, throw it out!**

#### **D. PROGRAM COST**

The cost of your program will be influenced by factors such as instructor fees, utility costs, advertising and equipment needs. Calculate your costs on the budget worksheet provided in the appendix.

The United States Tennis Association provides incentives and other assistance for USA Tennis programs. Contact the Colorado Tennis Association to learn about the specific financial incentives, additional resource materials, advertising benefits and other support that may be available to your USA Tennis program. The incentive money could be used to offset administrative costs, go back into your school tennis program, purchase additional equipment for your program or purchase gifts for volunteers. It could also be used for tennis scholarships for children in your school who would love to play but can't afford the program.

General liability and accident insurance is available through the USTA for organizational members. Organizational memberships cost just \$25 annually, in most cases, for schools and community tennis organizations. This insurance plan provides protection to the organization, employees, coaches, officials, volunteers and participants acting on behalf of the organization. When creating your budget, consider insurance needs and keep in mind that many facilities require a certificate of insurance for programs conducted at their site.

#### **E. PLAYER-COACH RATIO**

When teaching a USA Team Tennis follow-through program you will want to include the right amount of children per coach. The ideal ratio is 8-12 players per one instructor so that players are kept in motion most of the time. Less experience coaches may feel more comfortable with 8 players, while those more experienced will be able to effectively work with 12 players. Always keep in mind the safety issues, however, when playing games or running relays. Remember that sharing racquets is possible with many of the activities.

#### **F. COACHES/ASSISTANTS**

Your staff requirements will vary. Coaches and assistants could be seniors, high school tennis players or parents. Contact your local community tennis association to see if they would like to be involved. The most important requirements for the

coaches are an ability to relate to the children so that they enjoy tennis, to keep the drills and games moving, and to establish order throughout the lesson. They may also need to keep score and/or coach during a Ralleyball or Micro Tennis competition.

We encourage you to hold a coaches/assistants meeting prior to the start of your program. There you may brief your coaches on how to insure quality instruction and give them lesson plans ahead of time so they are prepared. You may also want to include a brief evaluation form for them to fill out at the end of the session so that you can make positive adjustments to your program. When conducting USA Team Tennis, coaches will also need to know the format and how to keep score.

## **G. PARENTAL/VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT**

Offer a free one-hour clinic for parents/volunteers so that they can become familiar with the structure of the lessons, Micro Tennis and/or Ralleyball. Make sure they wear tennis shoes and bring a racquet, if they have one!

## **H. PROMOTING THE PROGRAM**

Put up posters in the halls. Make special tennis announcements before school begins. Place sign-up sheets on teachers' desks and in the principal's office. Set up some kind of tennis display in the foyer of your school. Send out flyers in the children's weekly folders explaining the program, dates, times, and prices.

Things to include in the take-home flyer:

- Times, Dates, and Length of program
- What to wear
- When and where the children should be picked up after the program
- The cost of the program and how to pay for the program
- What you will be providing to the children (instruction and/or Ralley play opportunity, snacks, end of season party, etc.)

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**Court Safety**

- "Hug the Racquet" - If the player is not attempting to make contact with the ball in one of the activities, then the racquet should be folded into their arms as if to hug it.
- Self-Space - Self-space is an arms-length area all the way around the player. Players should not chase after a ball that is out of their control. Ask them to raise their hand or racquet to get your attention.
- Space Your Players - When players are in a single-file line and ready to play an activity, set up two cones or use spots for a door way, so players contacting the ball are protected.
- "Just Bump It" - Never let your players swing out of control. This will keep the players safe. "Just bump it" means basically no back swing and should be used in conjunction with the cue words "contact" and "follow-through". This will allow the players to hit the ball over the net with more control and consistency.
- Ralleyball/Micro Tennis Boundaries - When playing Ralleyball or Micro Tennis in the gym, never allow a player to cross over the cone boundaries that are set up in between each of the mini-courts. If a ball rolls off of the court into another court, the ball should be left and a new ball should be served into play.
- Encourage "The Team" - Remind children that they are part of a team and they should be on the sidelines cheering each other on and watching the point. When the children are busy encouraging their teammates, they will be more involved in the point and less likely to "get into trouble".



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### **Court Rules**

- The ball may only bounce once. If working with very young children, it may bounce more than once. (In a real match you may hit the ball in the air, or volley.)
- A ball landing on the boundary line or just touching a boundary line is considered a good ball.
- Do not ask the spectators to help make a line call.
- If the ball is not clearly out before it bounces, wait until it bounces and then call the ball. A call needs to be made immediately after the ball bounces out.
- If you call a ball out and then realize it was good, you should correct your call immediately.
- If you have any doubt as to whether a ball is out or good, you must give your opponent the benefit of the doubt and play the ball as good.
- If there is a disagreement on the score, go back to the last score you both can agree on.
- You lose the point if the ball hits you or if you catch the ball with your hands or racquet on the fly, no matter where you think it might land and even if you are standing outside of the court.
- If you can't see that a ball is definitely out, you should continue playing the point.

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**Court Conduct**

- Talk quietly when near tennis courts that are in use.
- When waiting to play never hit balls inside the fence, but hit outside the courts until it is your turn to play.
- Wear sneakers for tennis. Other shoes will hurt your feet and damage the court.
- Eat snacks outside the fence or gymnasium.
- Don't walk across the back of another court until players have finished the point. It can be distracting.
- If your ball bounces into another tennis court, kindly yell "ball please" after they play their point or finish a rally.
- If their ball bounces into your court, wait until they finish their point or rally and toss or hit it back directly to them.
- Accept all calls made by your opponent - without arguing.
- Keep a good attitude about the game. Remember that you're playing for the fun of it!

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**Player Sportsmanship**

- Keep the game moving. Don't stall and waste time between points.
- Don't distract your opponent on purpose by unnecessary movements or talking.
- If your opponent made a great shot, say "good shot", but you need not say it on every point.
- If you find yourself getting angry, remember that you are playing to have fun. Focus your thoughts not on your emotions, but playing the next ball.
- After the last point of the match, win or lose, come quickly to the net and shake hands. Let your opponent know that you had fun, or that he/she played a good match, etc.

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### **Scoring**

**0 points ----- Love**

**1 point ----- 15**

**2 points ----- 30**

**3 points ----- 40**

**4 points ----- Game**

- To determine which team serves first, spin a racquet or toss a coin. The butt of the racquet usually has an "m or w" (Wilson Racquets), "p or d" (Prince Racquets), or "right or left" (Dunlop Racquets). If you win the spin or toss, the choice is yours. You may serve first, or you may choose to receive first, or pick which end of the court you want to start playing on. As a third choice you may let your opponent choose first.
- To put the ball into play for each point, one player serves the ball from behind the baseline. The player who serves is called the server; the other player is called the receiver.
- The server always calls his/her score first.
- The first point won by a player is **15**; the other player who has no points has **Love**.
- If the same player wins the next point, the score is **30-Love**.
- If the same player wins the third and fourth points, the score is **40-Love** and finally **Game**.
- If the other player wins any points, the scoring could change. It could go like this - **15-Love, 15-all, 15-30, 30-all, 30-40, Game**.
- A score of 40-40 is called **Deuce**. If the score goes to deuce, one player must win 2 points in a row to win the game. The 1<sup>st</sup> point after deuce is called **Advantage**. If the player does not win the second consecutive point, the score goes back to deuce.
- The first player to win at least six games and to be ahead by two games wins a **set**. The first one to win two sets wins a **match**.
- Alternative scoring such as "no-ad" and pro-sets may also be used, but usually on a more limited basis.

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## A USA Team Tennis Clinic

### Equipment

#### **Needed for all programs:**

- Nets

If program is conducted inside:

- Wilson Pee Wee net  
*contact Wilson at 800-272-6060 or wilsonsports.com for more information*
- Two chairs and a broom
- A lowered volley ball net
- Two cones and a jump rope
- Racquets
- Bucket of balls for each court
  - Dead tennis balls or practice tennis balls
  - Lizard skinned balls indoor play only  
*contact Wilson at 800-272-6060 or wilsonsports.com for more information*
  - Pro Penn Stars or other pressureless balls  
*contact Oncourt Offcourt Inc. at 800-752-7673*

#### **Additional needs for Ralleyball programs:**

- A set of different colored wristbands or tee-shirts for each team
- Score keeping sheets  
*contact Colorado Tennis Association at 303-695-4116*
- Boundaries (indoor play only)
  - Cones
  - Carpet or Velcro tape
  - Create-a-Court lines  
*contact Wilson at 800-272-6060 or wilsonsports.com for more information*

#### **Optional teaching aids:**

- Poly Spots
- Bean Bags
- Hula Hoops
- Beach Balls
- Laundry Baskets
- Rope

## The Games Approach to Coaching Tennis

Do you remember how as a kid you were taught by adults to play a sport, either in an organized sport program or physical education class? They probably taught you the basic skills using a series of drills that, if the truth be known, you found boring. As you began to learn the basic skills, they eventually taught you the tactics of the game, and showing you when to use these skills in various match situations. Do you remember how impatient you became during what seemed to be endless instruction, and how much you just wanted to play? Well, forget this traditional approach to teaching sports.

Now can you recall learning a sport by playing with a group of your friends in the neighborhood? You didn't learn the basic skills first; no time for that. You began playing immediately. If you didn't know the basic things to do, your friends told you quickly during the game so they could keep playing. Try to remember, because we are going to ask you to use a very similar approach to teaching tennis to young people called the games approach, an approach we think knocks the socks off the traditional approach.

On the surface, it would seem to make sense to introduce tennis by first teaching the basic skills of the sport and then the tactics of the game, but we've discovered that this approach has disadvantages. First, it teaches the skills of the sport out of the context of the game. Kids may learn to serve and hit a forehand and backhand ground stroke, but they find it difficult to use these skills in the real game. This is because they do not yet understand the fundamental tactics of tennis and do not appreciate how best to use their newfound skills.

Second, learning by doing drills outside of the context of the game is so-o-o-o boring. The single biggest turnoff about adults teaching kids sports is that we over-organize the instruction and deprive kids of their intrinsic desire to play the game.

As a coach we're asking that you teach tennis the **GAMES APPROACH** way. Clear the traditional approach out of your mind. Once you fully understand the games approach, you'll quickly see its superiority in teaching tennis. Not only will kids learn the game better, but you and your players will have much more fun. And as a bonus, you'll have far fewer discipline problems.

With the games approach to teaching tennis, we begin with a match-like situation. This will be a modified point designed to suit the age and ability of the players. As the kids play in these "mini" games, you can begin to help them understand the nature of the game and to appreciate simple concepts of positioning and tactics. When your players understand what they must do in the game, they are then eager to develop the skills to play the game. Now that players are motivated to learn the

skills, you can demonstrate the skills of the game, practice using game-like drills, and provide individual instruction by identifying players' errors and helping to correct them.

In the traditional approach to teaching sports, players do this:

**Learn the skill ---- Learn the strategy and tactics ---- Play the game**

In the games approach players do this:

**Play the game ---- Learn the strategy and tactics ---- Learn the skill**

In the past we have placed too much emphasis on the learning of skills and not enough on learning how to play skillfully - that is, how to use those skills in competition. The games approach, in contrast, emphasizes learning what to do first, then how to do it. Moreover - and this is the really important point - the games approach lets kids discover what to do in the game not by you telling them, but by their experiencing it. What you do as an effective coach is help them discover what they've experienced.

In contrast to the "skill-drill-kill the enthusiasm" approach, the games approach is a "guided discovery method of teaching." This is a teaching style where the coach allows the player to discover effective strategies, tactics, and skills of the game. It empowers your kids to solve the problems that arise in the game, and that's a big part of the fun in learning a game.

Now let's look more closely at the games approach to see the four-step process for teaching tennis:

1. Play a modified tennis match.
2. Help the players discover what they need to do.
3. Teach the skills.
4. Practice the skills in another match.

### **Step 1. Play a Modified Tennis Match**

OK it's the first day of practice; some of the kids are eager to get started, while others are obviously apprehensive. Some have rarely hit a ball and most don't know the rules. What do you do?

If you use the traditional approach, you start with a little warm-up activity, then line the players up for a simple stroke drill and go from there. With the games approach, you begin by playing a modified game that is developmentally appropriate for the level of the players and also designed to focus on learning a specific part of the game.

Modifying the game emphasizes a limited number of situations in the game. This is one way you "guide" your players to discover certain strategies and tactics in the game.

For instance, you have your players play a game in which the object is to just get the ball over the net and into the court consistently. Playing the game this way forces players to think about what they have to do to get the ball over the net.

## **Step 2. Help the Players Discover What They Need to Do**

As your players are playing the game, look for the right spot to "freeze" the action, step in, and hold a brief question-and-answer session to discuss problems they were having in carrying out the goals of the game. You don't need to pop in on the first miscue, but if they repeat the same types of mental or physical mistakes a few times in a row, step in and ask them questions that relate to the aim of the game and the necessary skills required. The best time to interrupt the game is when you notice that they are having trouble carrying out the main goal, or aim, of the game. By stopping the game, freezing the action, and asking questions you'll help them understand

- what the aim of the game is,
- what they must do to achieve that aim, and
- what skills they must use to achieve that aim.

For example, your players are playing a game in which the object is to hit the ball over the net into the left side of the court using a ground stroke. They are having trouble doing so, so you interrupt the action and ask the following questions:

**Coach:** What are you supposed to do in this game?

*Players:* Hit the ball over the net into the left side of the court using a ground stroke.

**Coach:** What do you have to do to hit the ball into the left side of the court?

*Players:* Control the ball by the angle of the racquet face at contact.

**Coach:** Yes, and what else?

*Players:* You have to be able to get to the ball, too.

**Coach:** OK. You have to be able to control the direction of the ball and get to the ball before you hit it. Why don't we practice getting into position to hit the ball and focusing on the angle of the racquet face when the ball is hit?

Through the modified game and skillful questioning on your part, your players realize that accurate ground strokes are essential to their success in controlling the ball. Just as important, rather than *telling* them that getting into position and focusing on the angle of the racket face are critical, you led them to that discovery through a well-designed modified match and through questions. This questioning that leads to players' discovery is a crucial part of the games approach. Essentially



you'll be asking your players - usually literally - "What do you need to do to succeed in this situation?"

Asking the right questions is a very important part of your teaching. At first asking questions will be difficult because your players have little or no experience with the game. And if you've learned sport through the traditional approach, you'll be tempted to tell your players how to play the game and not waste time asking questions. Resist this powerful temptation to tell them what to do, and especially don't do so before they begin to play the game.

If your players have trouble understanding what to do, phrase your questions to let them choose between one option versus another. For example, if you ask them, "What's the best way to hit the ball with consistency?" and get answers such as, "As hard as you can," then ask, "Is it the sweet spot of your racquet or the edge?"

Immediately following the question-and-answer session you will begin a skill practice, which is Step 3 of the four-step process.

Sometimes players simply need to have more time playing the game, or you may need to modify the game further so that it is even easier for them to discover what they are to do. It'll take more patience on your part, but it's a powerful way to learn. Don't be reluctant to change the numbers in the teams or some aspect of the structure of the game to aid this discovery.

### **Step 3. Teach the Skills**

Only when your players recognize the skills they need to be successful in the game do you want to teach the specific skills through focused drills. This is when you use the more traditional approach to teaching sport skills.

### **Step 4. Practice the Skills in Another Match**

Once the players have practiced the skill, you then put them in another match situation to let them practice the skill in the context of a match.

And that's the games approach. Your players will get to *play* more in practice, and once they learn how the skills fit into their performance and enjoyment of the game, they'll be more motivated to work on those skills, which will help them to be successful.

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### **A USA Team Tennis Clinic**

#### **Day One - Week One:**

**Age Level:** 8 & under (grades 1 & 2)

**Lesson Duration:** \_\_\_\_\_ (1-hour time frame)

**Equipment:** hula hoops, bucket of balls, racquets

**Objective of the Day:** To review the forehand ground stroke, safety rules and racquet parts.

#### **1. Welcome/Roll Call**

- Sign-In Sheet

#### **2. Court Safety Rules and Racquet Parts**

#### **3. Warm-Up**

- Slalom Run
- Simple Stretching

#### **4. Racquet Handling Skills**

- Tennis Sandwich

#### **5. Game 1:**

- Hula Hoop Hops

#### **6. Forehand Demonstration and Review - skill practice**

- Discuss forehand - emphasize low-to-high swing
- Toss-Hit-Catch with a Partner

#### **7. Game 2:**

- Jacks

#### **8. Wrap It Up**

- Ask question about racquet parts, safety rules, and stroke cues
- Ball Pick Up - Kids will all make pizzas on their racquet faces with the balls

# *The Opportunity to Go To The Next Level*

## **A USA Team Tennis Clinic**

### **Day Two - Week Two:**

**Age Level:** 8 & under (grades 1 & 2)

**Lesson Duration:** \_\_\_\_\_ (1-hour timeframe)

**Equipment:** cones, bucket of balls, racquets, net, rope

**Objective of the Day:** To review the forehand and court manners

- 1. Roll Call/Encourage Sign-In**
- 2. Review Safety and Court Manners**
- 3. Warm-Up**
  - Ball Pyramid
  - Simple Stretching
- 4. Game 1:**
  - Tennis Baseball
- 5. Forehand Review**
  - Review control of height and low-to-high swing
  - Have students return the feed and encourage deep shots with significant height - can also feed three balls so that they can practice accuracy (aiming for targets or alleys)
- 6. Games 2:**
  - Rally Over The Rope (modify this activity so that students do not have to rally. If they are struggling, pairs should just attempt to get the drop-hit over the rope.)
- 7. Wrap It Up**
  - Review court manners
  - Ball Pick Up

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## **A USA Team Tennis Clinic**

### **Day Three - Week Three:**

**Age Level:** 8 & under (grades 1 & 2)

**Lesson Duration:** \_\_\_\_\_ (1-hour timeframe)

**Equipment:** beach balls, hula hoops, net, racquets, bucket of balls

**Objective of the Day:** To introduce the backhand and practice "ready position"

#### **1. Announcements/Encourage Sign-In**

#### **2. Review Court Manners and Tennis Rules**

#### **3. Warm-Up**

- Racquet Relay- have students run different cone courses while balancing a tennis ball on their racquet (or while doing ups or downs)
- Simple Stretching

#### **4. Game 1:**

- Bull in the Pen with backhands

#### **5. Backhand Instruction - skill practice**

- Discuss racquet face, open and close
- Discuss side stance
- Bump-ups with a Bounce using backhands
- Bump-Ups with a Partner using backhands

#### **6. Game 2:**

- Backhands to Targets (hula hoops, poly spots, tape, balls can be used as targets)

#### **7. "Ready Position" Demonstration**

- Quick Draw McGraw

#### **8. Wrap It Up**

- Ask questions
- Ball Pick Up - (kids stuff their shirts)

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## **A USA Team Tennis Clinic**

### **Day Four - Week Four:**

**Age Level:** 8 & under (grades 1 & 2)

**Lesson Duration:** \_\_\_\_\_ (1-hour timeframe)

**Equipment:** bucket of balls, racquets, net, stickers, etc.

**Objective of the Day:** To review the backhand and to practice rallying with a partner.

#### **1. Announcements/Encourage Sign-In**

#### **2. Warm-Up**

- Memory - recite for students a particular run (i.e. baseline to net to service line to net and back to baseline). Have them race to see who can remember the sequence and run it the fastest.

#### **3. Game 1:**

- Tennis Workup with Backhands

#### **4. Backhand review - skill practice**

- Have students pay attention to their strike zone. You can help them recognize that their strike zone and the position of their racquet determines the accuracy of their shot. Feed each child three tennis balls. One must go into the net, one very high over the net and the other deep into the court. Set up other students on the side of the court so they can observe the hitter's strike zone and racquet position.

#### **5. Game 2:**

- Statues with backhands

#### **6. Game 3:**

- Racquet Quickness

#### **7. Wrap It Up**

- Answer any questions so far
- Ball Pick Up - Fastest court doesn't have to run final lap

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## **A USA Team Tennis Clinic**

### **Day Five - Week Five:**

**Age Level:** 8 & under (grades 1 & 2)

**Lesson Duration:** \_\_\_\_\_ (1-hour timeframe)

**Equipment:** bucket of balls, racquets, net, cones, stickers

**Objective of the Day:** To learn how to score, review the "ready position" and introduce the volley

#### **1. Announcements/Encourage Sign-In**

#### **2. Warm-Up**

- From the baseline, jog to the net, back pedal to baseline, shuffle step to the net, back pedal to baseline.

#### **3. Review Tennis Rules and Learn Scoring**

- 15-30-40-Game
- Crazy Tennis

#### **4. "Ready Position"**

- Quick Draw McGraw

#### **5. Game 1:**

- Stop Sign Volley Tap

#### **6. Volley Introduction - skill practice**

- Introduce forehand volley - share with students the "shake hands grip", palm forward, step and punch. Have them practice this technique first by using just their palm. Then have them step and punch while holding the neck of their racquet and finally the head of their racquet. Make sure they feel comfortable and do not swing before you put their hand back on the grip.

#### **7. Game 2:**

- Skeleton Volleys

#### **8. Wrap It Up**

- Answer any questions so far
- Ball Pick Up - "Make a Pizza" on the racquet

## *The Opportunity to Go To The Next Level*

### **A USA Team Tennis Clinic**

#### **Day Six - Week Six:**

**Age Level:** 8 & under (grades 1 & 2)

**Lesson Duration:** \_\_\_\_\_ (1-hour timeframe)

**Equipment:** bucket of balls, racquets, net, bean bag, 9 hula hoops, stickers/prizes

**Objective of the Day:** To review the volley and to introduce students to serve progression activities.

- 1. Announcements/Encourage Sign-In**
- 2. Warm-Up**
  - Bean Burrito Tag
- 3. Volley Review Game:**
  - Tic-Tac-Toe Volleys
- 4. Game 1:**
  - Serve to Targets (If overhand serving is too difficult for this age group, drop-hit serves from the service line or base line into the appropriate box can still be an effective learning activity.)
- 5. Serve Progression Activities - skill practice**
  - Toss, Touch and Freeze
  - Toss, Touch and Follow-Through
- 6. Game 2:**
  - Beat Mr. Nobody
- 7. Wrap It Up**
  - Answer any final questions
  - Conclude with prizes and final questions for prizes

# *The Opportunity to Go To The Next Level*

## **A USA Team Tennis Clinic**

### **Day One - Week One:**

**Age Level:** 10 & under (grades 3 & 4)

**Lesson Duration:** \_\_\_\_\_ (1-hour timeframe)

**Equipment:** bucket of balls, racquets, hula hoops, cones

**Objective of the Day:** To introduce the forehand ground stroke, safety rules and racquet parts.

- 1. Announcements/Encourage Sign-In**
- 2. Warm-Up**
  - Simple Stretching
  - Slalom Run
- 3. Court Safety Rules and Racquet Parts**
- 4. Racquet Handling Skills**
  - Tennis Sandwich
  - Ups and Downs Practice
- 5. Game 1:**
  - Hula Hoop Hops
- 6. Forehand Introduction - skill practice**
  - Emphasize keeping your eye on the ball, side stance, hitting low to high, "shake hands grip", contact out in front and backswing/follow through. Practice with drop hits, partner drop hits and toss-hit-catch with a partner
- 7. Game 2:**
  - Jacks
- 8. Wrap It Up**
  - Ask questions about racquet parts, safety rules, and stroke cues
  - Ball Pick Up - "Make a Pizza" on the racquet



# *The Opportunity to Go To The Next Level*

## **A USA Team Tennis Clinic**

### **Day Two - Week Two:**

**Age Level:** 10 & under (grades 3 & 4)

**Lesson Duration:** \_\_\_\_\_ (1-hour timeframe)

**Equipment:** bucket of balls, racquets, net, and cones

**Objective of the Day:** To review the forehand, introduce the backhand ground stroke and court manners

#### **1. Announcements/Encourage Sign-In**

#### **2. Warm-Up**

- Stretching
- Ball Pyramid

#### **3. Review Forehand Ground Stroke**

- Tennis Workup

#### **4. Game 1:**

- Tag the Cone

#### **5. Backhand Introduction - skill practice**

- Review the strategies of hitting a successful forehand shot, a backhand uses the same techniques. Practice with drop hits, toss-hit-catch with a partner and backhands against a backboard so that they start to understand the importance of footwork. May want to attempt a side-shuffle activity to encourage the importance and difficulty of moving to a moving object.

#### **6. Game 2:**

- Three Across with backhands

#### **7. Wrap It Up**

- Discuss Safety and Court Manners
- Ball Pick Up

## *The Opportunity to Go To The Next Level*

### **A USA Team Tennis Clinic**

#### **Day Three - Week Three:**

**Age Level:** 10 & under (grades 3 & 4)

**Lesson Duration:** \_\_\_\_\_ (1-hour timeframe)

**Equipment:** Bucket of balls, racquets, net

**Objective of the Day:** To review the backhand, introduce the backhand/ forehand combination and "ready position."

- 1. Announcements/Encourage Sign-In**
- 2. Warm-Up**
  - Stretching
  - Cat and Mouse
- 3. Review Backhand Ground Stroke**
  - Tennis Workup with Backhands
- 4. Game 1:**
  - Team Around the World
- 5. Backhand/Forehand Combo Introduction - skill practice**
  - Review the strategies of hitting a successful forehand and backhand shot. Share with them "ready position" and practice the footwork and shuffle. Toss tennis balls to them, but do not indicate where they will land. Let them start in ready position.
- 6. Game 2:**
  - Random 4
- 7. Play Tennis Baseball**
- 8. Wrap It Up**
  - Ball Pick Up - kids stuff their shirts

## *The Opportunity to Go To The Next Level*

### **A USA Team Tennis Clinic**

#### **Day Four - Week Four:**

**Age Level:** 10 & under (grades 3 & 4)

**Lesson Duration:** \_\_\_\_\_ (1-hour timeframe)

**Equipment:** bucket of balls, racquets, 2 laundry baskets and cones

**Objective of the Day:** To review the forehand/backhand combo, "ready position" and introduce the volley

#### **1. Announcements/Encourage Sign-In**

#### **2. Warm-Up**

- Stretching
- Shuffle Step the Lines

#### **3. Review Backhand/Forehand Combo Ground Stroke**

- Move Up, Move Back

#### **4. Game 1:**

- Dirty Laundry Basket Volleys

#### **5. Volley Introduction - skill practice**

- Introduce forehand volley - share with students the "shake hands grip", palm forward, step and punch. Have them practice this technique first by using just their palm. Then have them step and punch while holding the neck of their racquet and finally the head of their racquet. Make sure they feel comfortable and do not swing before you put their hand back on the grip. Have them toss-hit-catch with volleys.

#### **6. Game 2:**

- Avalanche Volleys

#### **7. Wrap It Up**

- Ask them what they know about keeping score
- Ball Pick Up

## *The Opportunity to Go To The Next Level*

### **A USA Team Tennis Clinic**

#### **Day Five - Week Five:**

**Age Level:** 10 & under (grades 3 & 4)

**Lesson Duration:** \_\_\_\_\_ (1-hour timeframe)

**Equipment:** bucket of balls, racquets, empty tennis cans, targets, foam ball

**Objective of the Day:** To review the volley, introduce scoring and learn how to serve

#### **1. Announcements/Encourage Sign-In**

#### **2. Warm-Up**

- Stretching
- Side to Side Alley Hops

#### **3. Review Volley**

- Hacky Sack Tennis
- Volley to Targets

#### **4. Game 1:**

- Move Back Serving - Add Return

#### **5. Serve Introduction - skill practice**

- Introduce serve - Encourage players to stand sideways to the net, grip the racquet like a hammer, racquet on back (unless child is proficient enough to control a full backswing) and then toss, tap and follow through (cue: scratch back, swat fly and put away sword). You may want players to practice toss by placing a hula hoop in front of them to see where it lands, toss up the fence and/or toss and catch.

#### **6. Game 2:**

- Tennis Bowling with Serves

#### **7. Wrap It Up**

- Work on keeping score
- Ball Pick Up

## *The Opportunity to Go To The Next Level*

### **A USA Team Tennis Clinic**

#### **Day Six - Week Six:**

**Age Level:** 10 & under (grades 3 & 4)

**Lesson Duration:** \_\_\_\_\_ (1-hour timeframe)

**Equipment:** bucket of balls, racquets, cones, targets, prizes

**Objective of the Day:** To review the score and to put all stroke progressions together. Discuss strategy

#### **1. Announcements/Encourage Sign-In**

#### **2. Warm-Up**

- Stretching
- Pass the Ball Relay

#### **3. Review Scoring**

- 15-30-40-Game

#### **4. Game 1:**

- King of the Court

#### **5. Discuss Strategy for Singles and Doubles**

- Keep the ball in play, hit to the middle, avoid the net player, attack the opponents' weakness or weaker player and play to your strength

#### **6. Game 2:**

- Shot Combinations

#### **7. Wrap It Up**

- Hit at targets for prizes, offer awards, etc
- Ball Pick Up

# *The Opportunity to Go To The Next Level*

## **A USA Team Tennis Clinic**

### **Day One - Week One:**

**Age Level:** 12 & under (grades 5 & 6)

**Lesson Duration:** \_\_\_\_\_ (1-hour timeframe)

**Equipment:** bucket of balls, racquets

**Objective of the Day:** To introduce the forehand ground stroke, safety rules and racquet parts.

#### **1. Announcements/Encourage Sign-In**

#### **2. Warm-Up**

- Simple Stretching
- Slalom Run

#### **3. Court Safety Rules and Racquet Parts**

#### **4. Racquet Handling Skills**

- Ups and Downs Practice -practice flip-flops, bump ups with a bounce, downs while on their knees, sitting and then laying down

#### **5. Game 1:**

- Forehand Mini-Rally and Move Back

#### **6. Forehand Introduction - skill practice**

- Emphasize keeping your eye on the ball, side stance, hitting low to high, "shake hands grip", contact out in front and backswing/follow through. Practice with drop hits, partner drop hits and toss-hit-catch with a partner. Discuss and practice control of height and direction

#### **7. Game 2:**

- Three Across

#### **8. Wrap It Up**

- Ask questions about racquet parts, safety rules, and stroke cues
- Ball Pick Up

# *The Opportunity to Go To The Next Level*

## **A USA Team Tennis Clinic**

### **Day Two - Week Two:**

**Age Level:** 12 & under (grades 5 & 6)

**Lesson Duration:** \_\_\_\_\_ (1-hour timeframe)

**Equipment:** bucket of balls, racquets, net, cones

**Objective of the Day:** To review the forehand, introduce the backhand ground stroke and discuss court manners

#### **1. Announcements/Encourage Sign-In**

#### **2. Warm-Up**

- Stretching
- Ball Pyramid

#### **3. Review Forehand Ground Stroke**

- Tennis Workup

#### **4. Game 1:**

- Alley Rally with backhands

#### **5. Backhand Introduction - skill practice**

- Review the strategies of hitting a successful forehand shot, a backhand uses the same techniques. Practice with drop hits, toss-hit-catch with a partner and backhands against a backboard so that they start to understand the importance of footwork. May want to attempt a side-shuffle activity to encourage the importance and difficulty of moving to a moving object.

#### **6. Game 2:**

- Two Ball Chase

#### **7. Wrap It Up**

- Discuss Safety and Court Manners
- Ball Pick Up

## *The Opportunity to Go To The Next Level*

### **A USA Team Tennis Clinic**

#### **Day Three - Week Three:**

**Age Level:** 12 & under (grades 5 & 6)

**Lesson Duration:** \_\_\_\_\_ (1-hour timeframe)

**Equipment:** bucket of balls, racquets, net

**Objective of the Day:** To review the backhand, introduce the backhand/ forehand combination and "ready position."

#### **1. Announcements/Encourage Sign-In**

#### **2. Warm-Up**

- Stretching
- Cat and Mouse

#### **3. Review Backhand Ground Stroke**

- Zip-Zip-Zip Relay

#### **4. Game 1:**

- Around the World

#### **5. Backhand/Forehand Combo Introduction - skill practice**

- Review the strategies of hitting a successful forehand and backhand shot. Share with them "ready position" and practice the footwork and shuffle. Toss tennis balls to them, but do not indicate where they will land. Let them start in ready position.

#### **6. Game 2:**

- Tag Team Tennis

#### **7. Wrap It Up**

- Ball Pick Up



## *The Opportunity to Go To The Next Level*

### **A USA Team Tennis Clinic**

#### **Day Four - Week Four:**

**Age Level:** 12 & under (grades 5 & 6)

**Lesson Duration:** \_\_\_\_\_ (1-hour timeframe)

**Equipment:** bucket of balls, racquets and cones

**Objective of the Day:** To review the forehand/backhand combo, "ready position" and introduce the volley

#### **1. Announcements/Encourage Sign-In**

#### **2. Warm-Up**

- Stretching
- Shuffle Step the Lines

#### **3. Review Backhand/Forehand Combo Ground Stroke**

- Move Up, Move Back

#### **4. Game 1:**

- One Bounce Volley Rally

#### **5. Volley Introduction - skill practice**

- Introduce forehand volley - share with students the "shake hands grip", palm forward, step and punch. Have them practice this technique first by using just their palm. Then have them step and punch while holding the neck of their racquet and finally the head of their racquet. Make sure they feel comfortable and do not swing before you put their hand back on the grip. Have them toss-hit-catch with volleys.

#### **6. Game 2:**

- Avalanche Volleys

#### **7. Wrap It Up**

- Ask them what they know about keeping score
- Ball Pick Up

## *The Opportunity to Go To The Next Level*

### **A USA Team Tennis Clinic**

#### **Day Five - Week Five:**

**Age Level:** 12 & under (grades 5 & 6)

**Lesson Duration:** \_\_\_\_\_ (1-hour timeframe)

**Equipment:** bucket of balls, racquets, empty tennis cans, targets

**Objective of the Day:** To review the volley, introduce scoring and learn how to serve

#### **1. Announcements/Encourage Sign-In**

#### **2. Warm-Up**

- Stretching
- Side to Side Alley Hops

#### **3. Review Volley**

- Tennis Volleyball
- Volley to Targets

#### **4. Game 1:**

- Move Back Serving - Add Return

#### **5. Serve Introduction - skill practice**

- Introduce serve - Encourage players to stand sideways to the net, grip the racquet like a hammer, racquet on back (unless child is proficient enough to control a full backswing) and then toss, tap and follow through (cue: scratch back, swat fly and put away sword). You may want players to practice toss by placing a hula hoop in front of them to see where it lands, toss up the fence and/or toss and catch.

#### **6. Game 2:**

- Tennis Bowling with Serves

#### **7. Wrap It Up**

- Work on keeping score
- Ball Pick Up

## *The Opportunity to Go To The Next Level* **A USA Team Tennis Clinic**

### **Day Six - Week Six:**

**Age Level:** 12 & under (grades 5 & 6)

**Lesson Duration:** \_\_\_\_\_ (1-hour timeframe)

**Equipment:** bucket of balls, racquets, cones, targets, prizes

**Objective of the Day:** To review scoring and to put all stroke progressions together. Discuss strategy.

**Alternate Objective:** At this time, depending on ability, you may want to introduce the backhand volley, approach and/or the overhead smash

1. **Announcements/Encourage Sign-In**
2. **Warm-Up**
  - Stretching
  - Army
3. **Review Scoring**
  - Play a Game, include overhead serve - monitor the scoring
4. **Game 1:**
  - King of the Court
5. **Discuss Strategy for Singles and Doubles**
  - Keep the ball in play, hit to the middle, avoid the net player, attack the opponents' weakness or weaker player and play to your strength
6. **Game 2:**
  - Beat the Pro (drop hits or coach fed)
7. **Wrap It Up**
  - Hit at targets for prizes, offer awards, etc
  - Ball Pick Up

# Taking Kids to the Next Level

*A USA TEAM TENNIS CLINIC*

**APPENDIX**

# **APPENDIX A**

## **Budget Worksheet**

# USA Team Tennis Clinic Sample Budget Worksheet

## EXPENSES:

- A. EQUIPMENT COST \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- B. UTILITIES COST (rental fee, electricity, etc.) \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- C. COACHES COST \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Coach: \_\_\_ hours at \$\_\_\_/hour \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Assistant: \_\_\_ hours at \$\_\_\_/hour \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Gifts/Awards for coaches & volunteers \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- D. FLYERS & PROMOTIONAL COST \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- E. SNACKS AND/OR SEASON ENDING PARTY \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- F. INSURANCE \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- G. TOTAL EXPENSES \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## INCOME:

- H. PLAYER FEES  
    \_\_\_ players at \$\_\_\_/each \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- I. USA TENNIS FINANCIAL INCENTIVES \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- J. TOTAL INCOME \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## NET PROFIT FROM TENNIS PROGRAM:

- K. ENTER THE TOTAL FROM LINE "J" HERE \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- L. SUBTRACT THE FIGURE FROM LINE "G" \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- M. TOTAL EARNINGS \$ \_\_\_\_\_

# **APPENDIX B**

## **Sample Liability Waiver Form**

# USA TEAM TENNIS CLINIC PROGRAM

## Emergency Medical Authorization for Participating Players (THIS DOCUMENT IS A RELEASE OF LIABILITY)

I, \_\_\_\_\_ the parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_ has my approval to participate in the USA Team Tennis Clinic at \_\_\_\_\_ (school, facility). I understand and agree that the \_\_\_\_\_ (school, facility) and its teachers and volunteers, and the Colorado Tennis Association, assume no responsibility of liability for any accident or injury as a result of any aspect of participation in the USA Team Tennis Clinic Program. I understand and acknowledge that participation in this program creates the potential for receiving an injury. With the knowledge of this potential risk of injury, I am giving my son/daughter permission to participate and I accept full responsibility for this decision. In the event of an injury, permission is hereby granted to \_\_\_\_\_ (school, facility) teachers or volunteers to render, secure, and/or authorize necessary medical treatment without further authorization from me. I understand that the teachers or volunteers, associations, or schools will not pay medical expenses for injuries.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signed (parent/guardian) \_\_\_\_\_

Print name of parent/guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (B) \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

### In case of emergency, contact:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Family Physician \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Family Hospital \_\_\_\_\_

My child has the following medical conditions \_\_\_\_\_

My child is allergic to the following \_\_\_\_\_

My child is currently taking the following medications \_\_\_\_\_



# **APPENDIX C**

## **Sample Promotional Flyer**

# Taking Kids To The Next Level!

## USA Team Tennis Follow-Through Program

\_\_\_\_\_ (school, facility) will host a new after-school tennis program, "The Opportunity To Go To The Next Level!" Now that your children have been introduced to the lifetime sport of tennis through their physical education curriculum, we want to give them a chance to increase their skills through a unique series of group tennis lessons, fun games and drills, and a little competition!

Designed for children grades 1-6, tennis will be an experience they'll never forget - packed full of fun things to learn and do. Basic strokes like the forehand, backhand and volley will be taught and practiced through fun games like "Jacks", the "Jolly Rancher Challenge", "Tennis Baseball", and "Avalanche Volleys". Besides the exciting activities, we will also learn court manners, the rules of tennis and how to score.

Your own physical education teacher or community volunteer will instruct your child's follow-through tennis program.

The USA Team Tennis Clinic will be conducted at \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ on these dates \_\_\_\_\_. Your child will need to come directly to the (gym, facility) \_\_\_\_\_ after/before school. You will need to pick up and sign the child out when leaving the facility.

Where:

When:

Time:

Dates:

**For more "Winning" information contact  
the school office at:**

# APPENDIX D

## Resources

# Resources

Colorado Tennis Association  
1191 S. Parker Road, Suite 101  
Denver, CO 80231  
303-695-4116  
303-695-7631 (fax)  
[www.coloradotennis.com](http://www.coloradotennis.com)

Wilson Sporting Goods Co.  
8700 West Bryn Mawr Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60631  
1-800-946-6060  
[www.wilsonsports.com](http://www.wilsonsports.com)

Head/Penn  
306 S. 45<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Phoenix, AZ 85043  
1-800-289-7366  
[www.head.com](http://www.head.com)

Oncourt-Offcourt  
5427 Philip Ave.  
Dallas, Texas 75223 USA  
214-752-7673 or  
Toll Free: 1-800-752-7673  
[www.oncourtoffcourt.com](http://www.oncourtoffcourt.com)

Prince  
One Sportsystem Plaza  
Bordentown, NJ  
08505-9630  
1-800-2-TENNIS  
[www.princetennis.com](http://www.princetennis.com)

# APPENDIX E

*Games*

Description and Diagrams

# TABLE OF SYMBOLS

**X=PLAYERS**

**Ⓢ=COACH**

**△=CONES**

**↕=PLAYER MOTION**

**⋮=BALL MOTION**

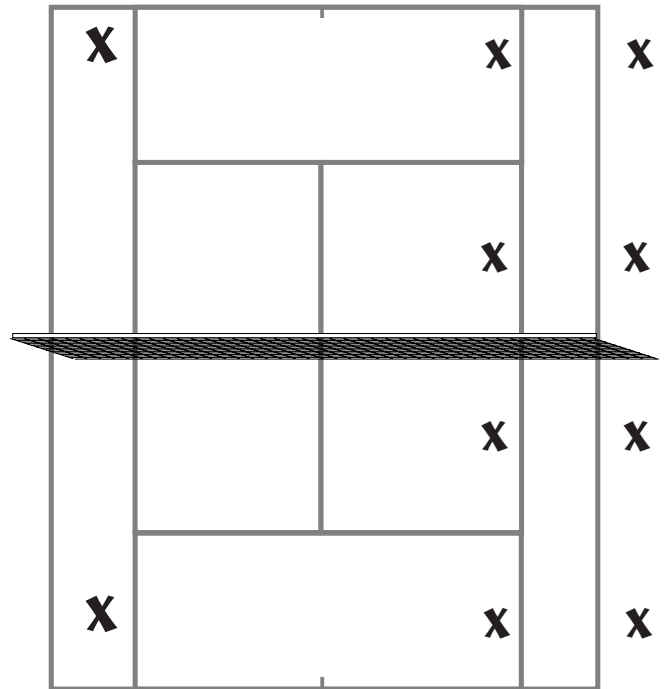
*Please see the individual exercises for definitions of additional symbols used in this manual.*

# ALLEY RALLY

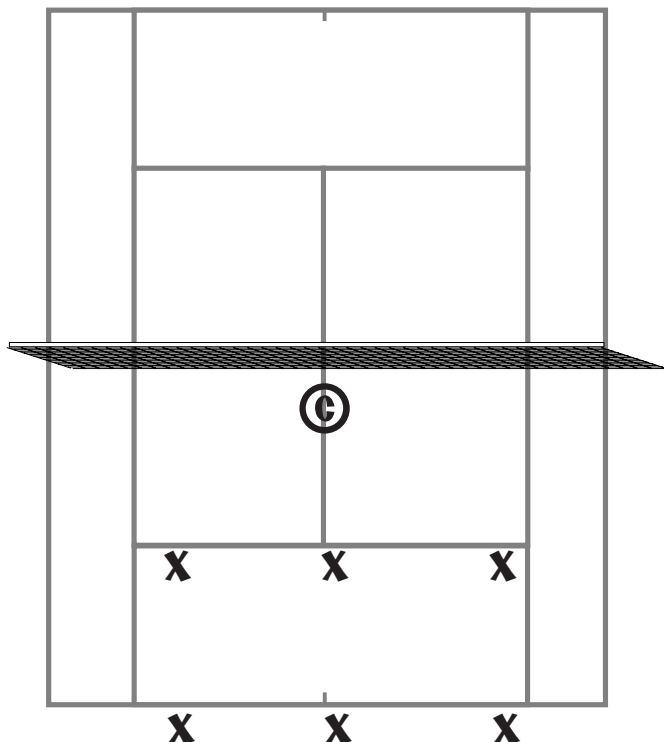
Players work in teams, with one partner on the doubles sideline facing a partner on the singles sideline. The ball is put into play with a bump forehand. Player's alternate bumps, and all bumps must be upward, without spiking. Targets of tennis balls or spots placed in between the players may be used for accuracy, with the goal that each player's ball lands on the target. The number of successful hits in 30 seconds is a variation for scoring.

## ANOTHER VARIATION FOR MORE SKILLED PLAYERS:

Players work in pairs, stationed on opposite ends of the court in the alley. One puts the ball into play using a self-drop and hit, and the players begin a rally. All shots must land in the alley to be good. After an error, the player who initially put the ball into play begins the next point, until he has begun play five times. The other player then initiates the next five points, and the game continues until one player reaches 21 points.



# ARMY



Players find personal space on the baseline and service line and face the net. Each player has a racquet and a ball. The coach has a racquet and a ball and is facing the players.

The players "bump down" the ball.

When the coach says left, the players shuffle to the left and bump the ball down at the same time. When the coach says right, the players bump the ball down to the right.

The coach should mix up commands.

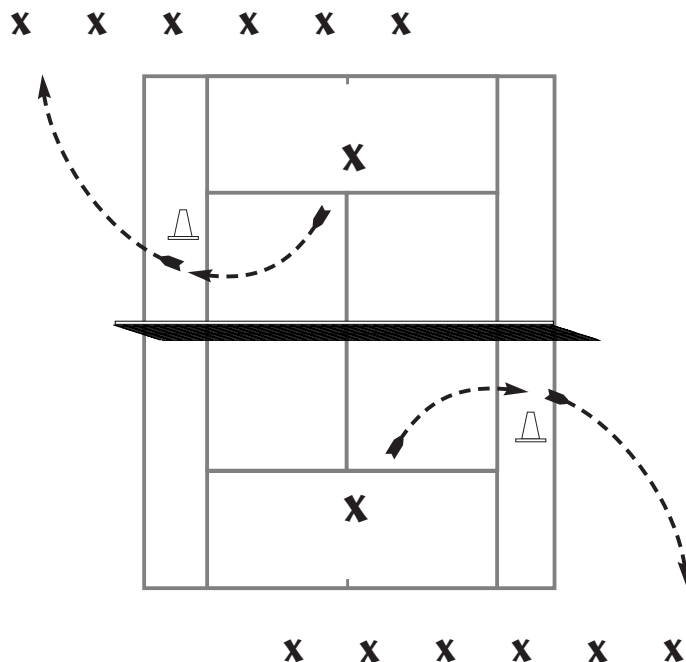
# AROUND THE WORLD

10 to 20 players divide up and form single file lines behind each baseline. Each team has a racquet or each player may have a racquet.

The point can be started with a drop hit or coach feed. After every hit, that player moves to the back of their line (or in another variation the hitter can run to the back of the other line on the opposite side of the net) while the next player tries to keep the ball in play.

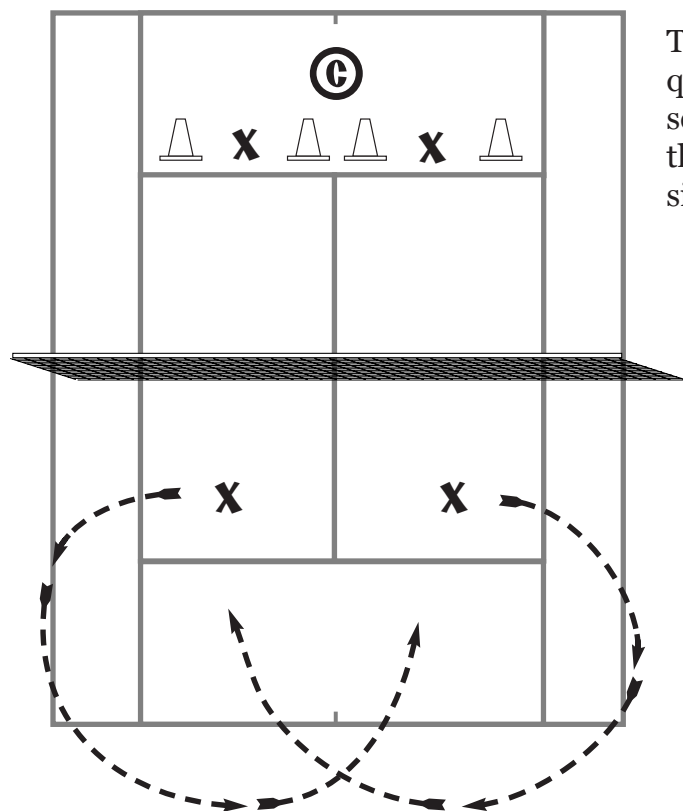
Each player has two faults. Play continues until only one player from each team is left.

As the ball is hit, the final players put their racquet on the ground, turn around, pick it up and then hit the ball.



# AVALANCHE VOLLEYS

NAMED AFTER THE COLORADO AVALANCHE HOCKEY TEAM



Two defenders each have their own cone goals and racquets. Goals are set up near the service lines in each service box. The coach stands behind the "T" to feed the balls. The challengers are in two lines on the other side of the net. The first two volleyers are at the net.

The volleyers try to hit a volley through the cones on their half of the court (cannot attempt opposite goal).

If the player makes it past the goalie then they trade places and there is a new goalie.

If the player loses, the player goes to the end of the opposite line to try again.

The two goalies that are still in after all balls in the hopper are hit are the winners.

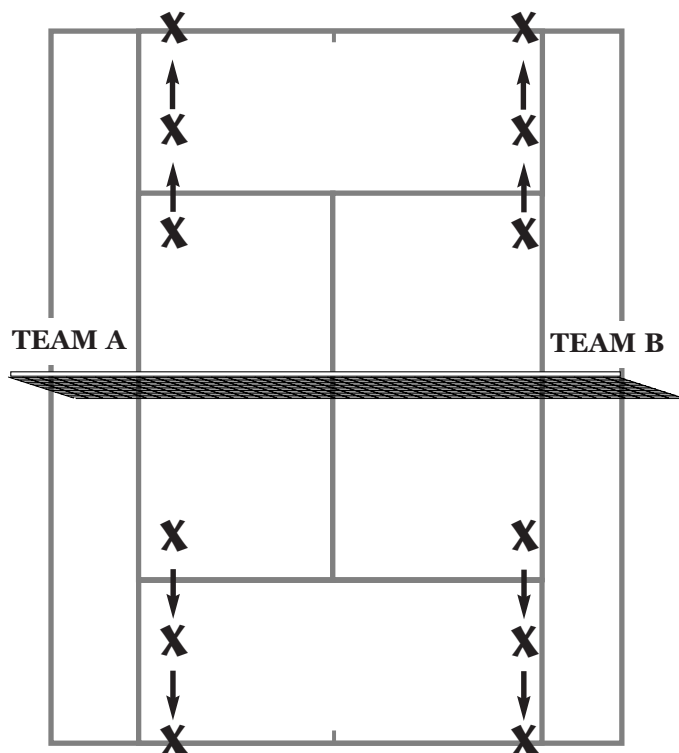


# FOREHAND MINI-RALLY & MOVE BACK

Players work in pairs and begin facing each other on opposite sides of the net while standing just inside the service line.

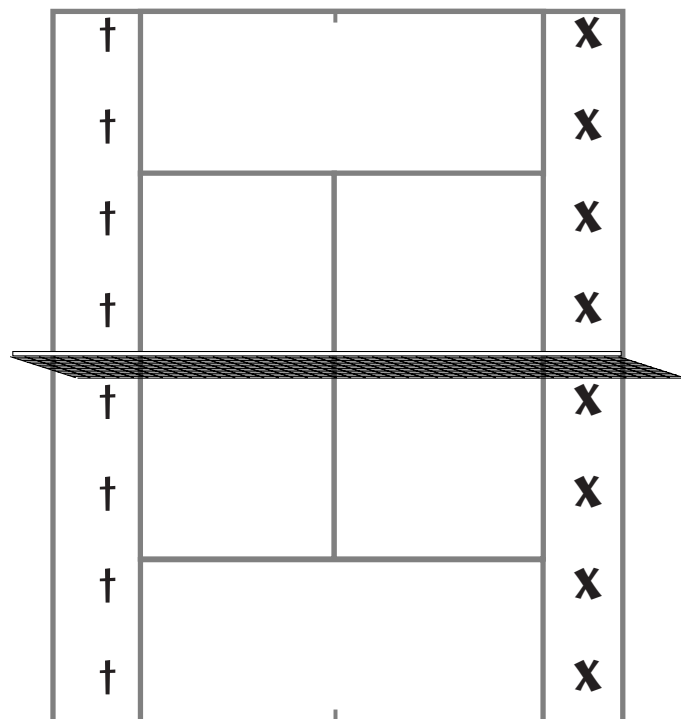
Play begins with a self-drop and bump across the net, and players continue to rally forehand to forehand (or backhand to backhand) until one player misses. After a pair reaches 10 consecutive hits without an error, each player takes two giant steps back toward the baseline, and the pair repeats the process.

At the end of 10 minutes, the team of players closest to the baseline wins.



# BALL PYRAMID

Each player lines up behind a set of four balls stacked like a pyramid at the singles sideline. Across from each player, on the opposite singles sideline, is the player's racquet. When you blow the whistle, each player runs one ball at a time to rebuild the ball pyramid on the racquet face.



†=RACQUET

The player then can pick up their racquet and carry their ball pyramid back across the starting line to win.

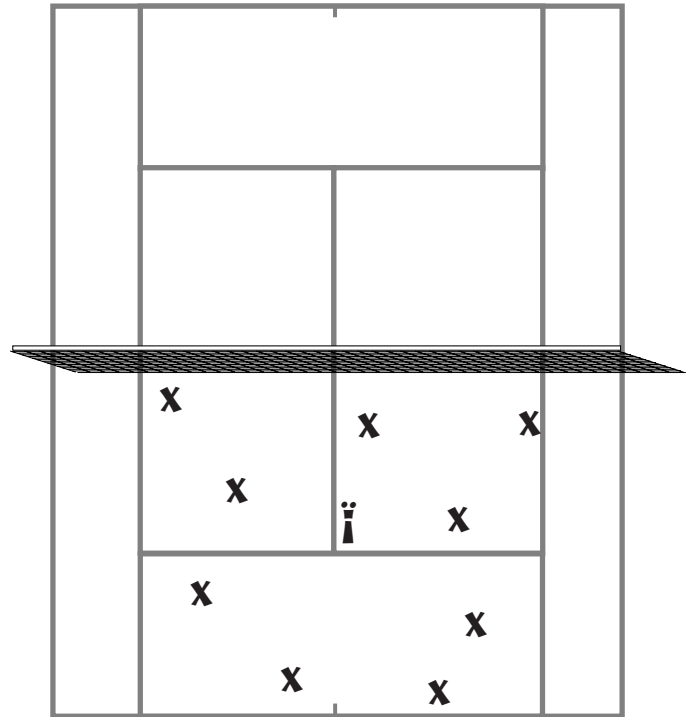
# BEAN BURRITO TAG

Players are scattered randomly around the court within boundaries set by the coach. Every player has a “burrito” (beanbag) on a “frying pan” (racquet). Pick someone to be “IT”. The “IT” player attempts to tag another player with their frying pan. If “IT” drops the burrito, he picks it up to continue the chase. A player who drops his burrito while being chased or runs out of bounds becomes “IT”.

## ANOTHER VARIATION:

When playing in a limited space you may only want “IT” to hold a burrito on his frying pan and chase the other students by lightly tapping them with the head of his racquet.

 = PLAYER WHO IS “IT”



---

# BEAT MR. NOBODY (NO DIAGRAM)

Players serve a complete game against an imaginary opponent.

As long as the serve goes into the proper box, the player wins the point. Mr. Nobody only wins a point on a double fault.

To accommodate more than one player at a time, have players rotate in to serve their first point.

Players serve the number of complete games that time allows.

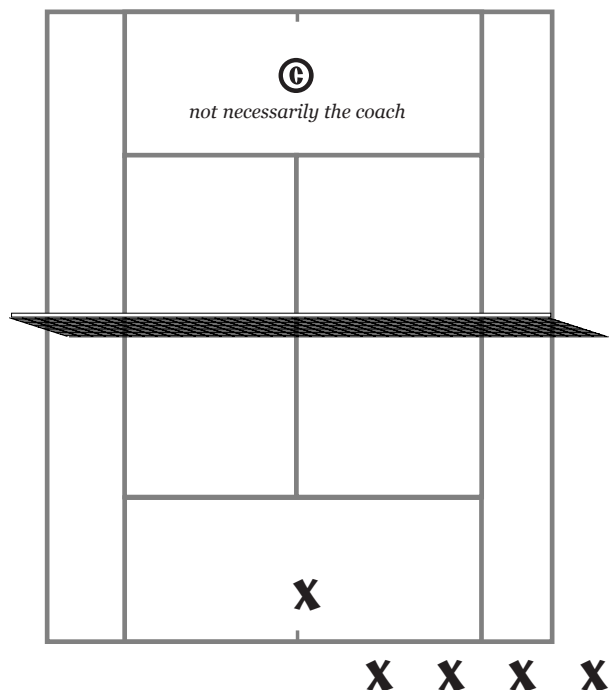
# BEAT THE PRO

One player is the pro. He stands alone on one side of the net. The competition is standing in a single file line near the baseline or in the alley.

The player trying to beat the pro serves a drop-hit ball to the pro. The two players play out the point.

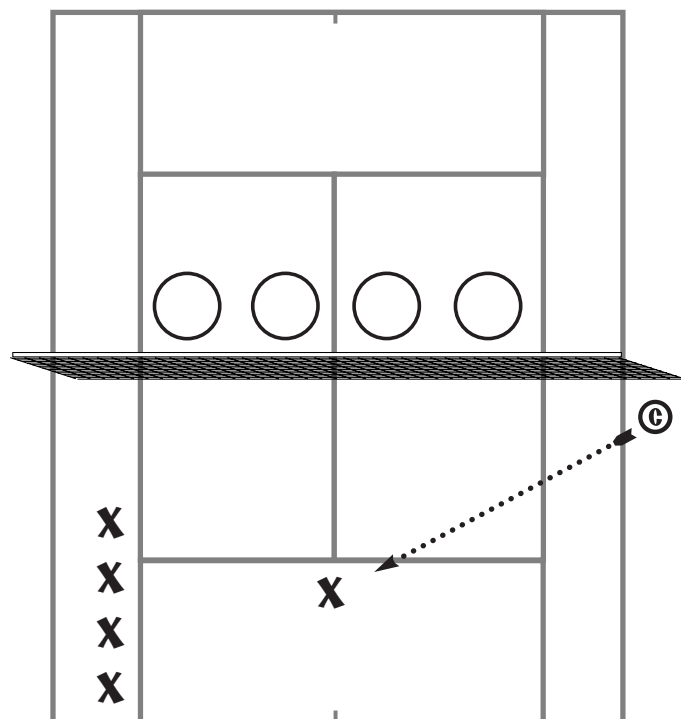
If the opposition wins, he gets one point and takes the place of the pro (or you can count points if working with students that have difficulty rallying). The pro that lost goes to the end of the competition line.

The player that gets to 5 points first is the World Famous Pro.



# BULL IN THE PEN

Children line up at one sideline. You toss a ball to the first child who has moved to the center "T" for a forehand or backhand ground stroke. If they return the ball over the net and into the court, they return to the end of the line.



If they don't make a successful return, they move to the other side of the court, into the "bullpen" (you can use hula hoops as a bull pen).

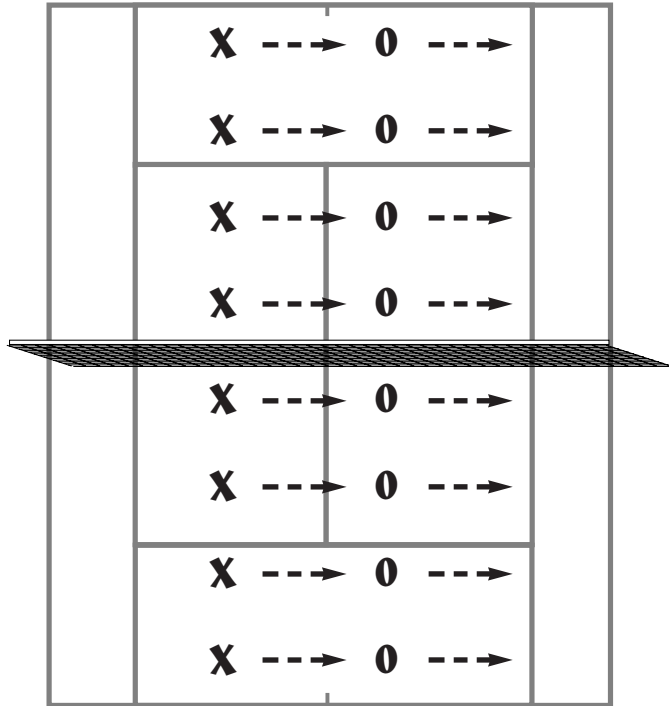
The next child moves to the center "T" and hits a forehand or backhand from your toss. If it is out, they also go to the bullpen. If the shot is good, they return to the end of the line and bring back the first person in the bullpen line (or all of the children, you decide).

The game continues until all the children are in the original line or all are in the bullpen.

○ = HULA HOOPS

# CAT & MOUSE

This is a great warm-up activity to build endurance. Children are put into pairs. One is the mouse and the other is the cat. Each pair stands with their racquet (or without their racquet) around 4 feet away from each other.



When the coach yells, "CAT," then the cat chases the mouse until the coach yells "MOUSE" (mid-run); then the mouse will turn around and try to catch the cat.

Make sure there is the distance of least two courts for the players to run. The coach determines the best time to change it up.

If a cat catches a mouse or vice versa, that pair starts over.

**O**=MOUSE

**X**=CAT

# CRAZY TENNIS

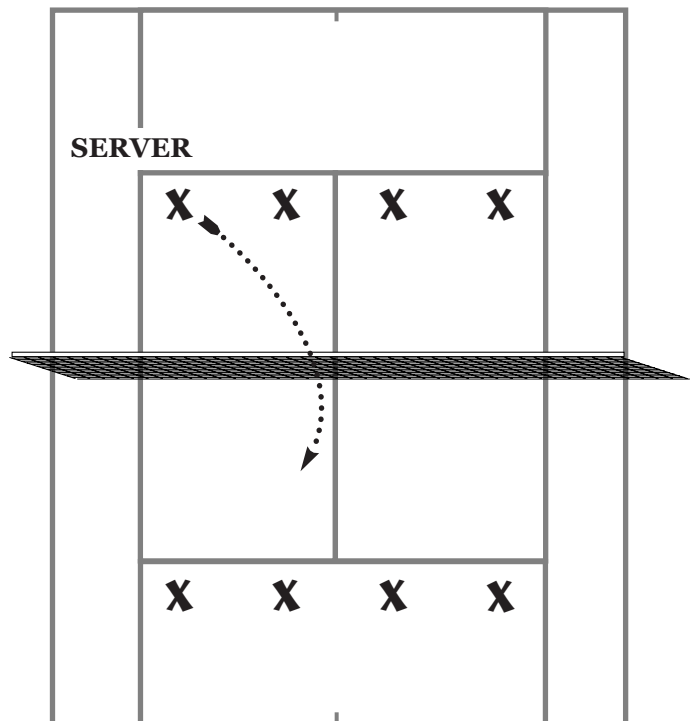
Four players find personal space on one service line and another 4 players do the same on the opposite side of the net.

The game begins after the spin of the racquet to determine which team serves first. The first player on the team serves a drop-hit. The first ball has to bounce inside the boundary lines, after that "anything goes" as long as the ball is not rolling. Any player can return the shot and each side will play as a team.

After the point is won, the server will call out the score using regular tennis scoring.

When a game has been completed, a player from the other team will serve for the second game, and so forth until one team has won a set.

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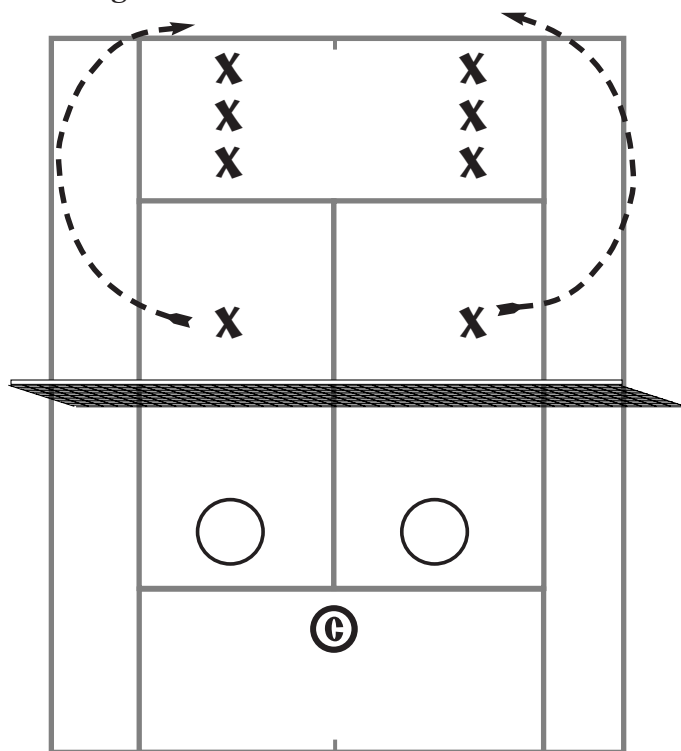
# DIRTY LAUNDRY BASKET VOLLEYS

Two laundry baskets with towels are required for this game.

Fold the towels on the bottom of the laundry baskets. Two players hold the baskets and the other players form two lines behind the net on the other side.

The pro stands at the "T" to feed a forehand or backhand volley. The volleyers work on accuracy and not power trying to hit their volley into the basket located on their half of the court.

The team with the most balls in their basket wins.



○ = PLAYERS WITH LAUNDRY BASKETS

## 15-30-40 (NO DIAGRAM)

Each player has a partner. Each team has one racquet and one ball.

One partner will do 4 bump downs and says the score out loud after each bounce.

Upon saying, "game," the player "bumps up" the ball to his partner who then catches it. A cone may be used to make it easier to catch.

They exchange roles and practice several times to get the scoring.

# HACKY SACK TENNIS (NO DIAGRAM)

In a circle formation, players attempt to keep a foam ball in play by bumping it up from one racquet to another.

Players cannot hit twice in a row. All hits must be upward.

Competition can be added by counting consecutive hits.

To make game progressively more difficult, increase the size of the circle and use a real tennis ball.

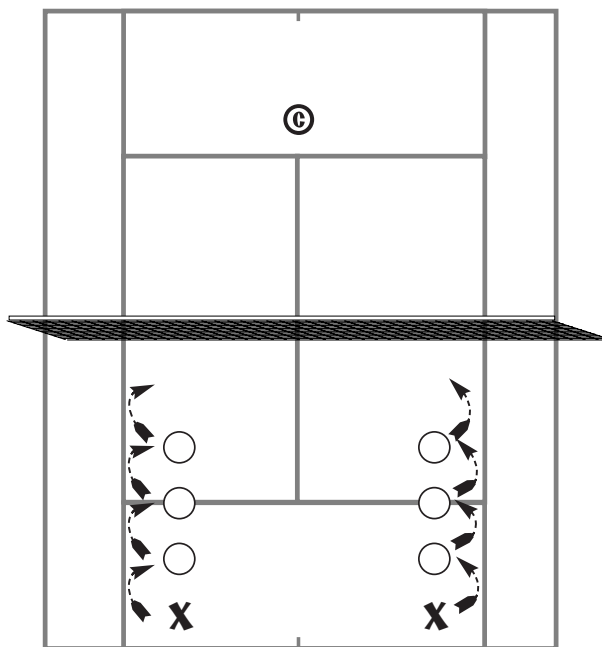
# HULA HOOP HOPS

Make two teams - can work on forehand, backhand or a combination.

One player hops through the hoops on "go." The coach then tosses the ball to each player.

If they contact the ball their team gets a point. If they hit the ball over the net and in bounds, they get 2 points.

After a number of points (decided by you) then they trade sides (if you are working with combination strokes).



○ = HULA HOOPS

↪ = HOPPING DIRECTION

X X X

X X X

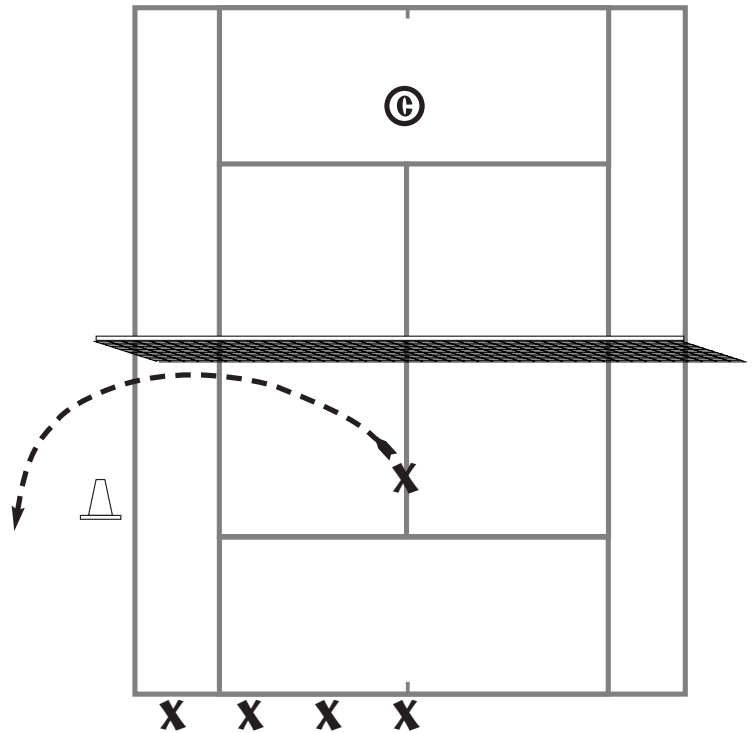
# JACKS

All players line up on the center line of the court about 4 feet behind the net. Check grips.

Toss up one ball to the first player in line. He will attempt to hit it over the net and may keep trying as long as the ball is not rolling. The ball may bounce more than once. If the player is successful, the next time in line the coach tosses up two balls (twosies), and then threesies, etc. If the player is not successful, the next time in line the coach tosses up the number of balls he missed his last turn. Some children have been able to get 8 balls over the net at one time.

For large groups, the coach may have two lines and toss to two players at a time.

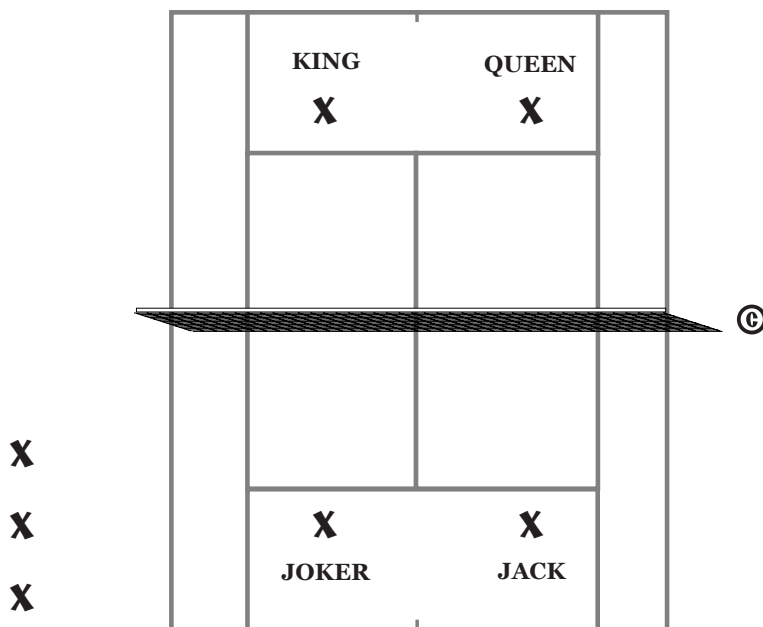
This game can be played with forehands or backhands.



# KING OF THE COURT

This is very similar to box ball that children often play at recess. This is doubles format play.

The children stand on the service line, only using the service boxes. One box is for the King and the box next to it is the Queen (or vice versa). Across from the Queen is the Jack and next to the Jack is the Joker. All the other players stand on the doubles line next to the Joker's box.



The coach feeds the ball and the four players play out the point. Whoever misses the shot or hits it out of the service box goes to the end of the line and the other players move over into the next box. The Joker's box would then be empty and will be filled by a player in waiting.

The object of the game is to be in the King's Box at the end of the game. That person is "The King of the Court."

*NOTE: Tail balls (available through Wilson Sporting Goods) are a useful tool to slow down the game and give children more success.*

# MOVE BACK SERVING - ADD RETURN (NO DIAGRAM)

Players start as close to the net as needed.

They must hit two successful serves cross-court into the service box. If they do, they can move back to the next marker for two more.

The goal is to move back to three-quarters court and then switch to the other half of the court.

You can then add the return by a partner and have pairs move back only if the serve and return are successful. Require all returns to go cross-court.

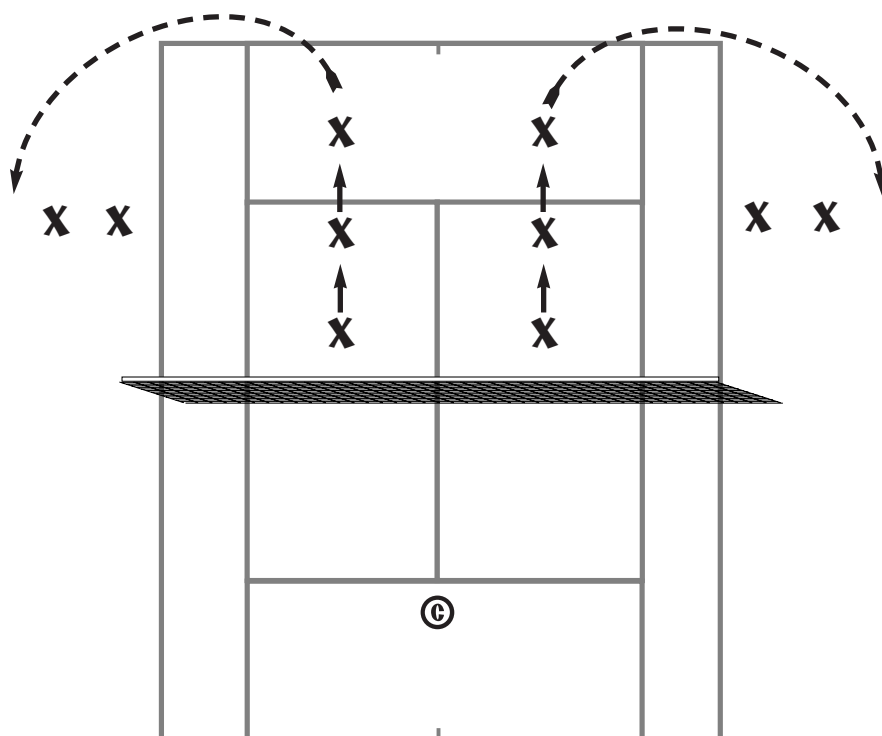
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## MOVE UP, MOVE BACK

Players will start in two lines at the net. While at the net the coach will toss a ball which should take a rather high bounce. Players will start sideways to the net with their racquet taken back ready to strike the ball. They will need to shuffle back to get in a good contact position. The hitter starts close and moves back to hit the ground stroke.

After completing 3 or 4 hits, each player will move to the outside of the court and back in line.

This drill can be done with one or two lines and can include forehand, backhand or a combination.

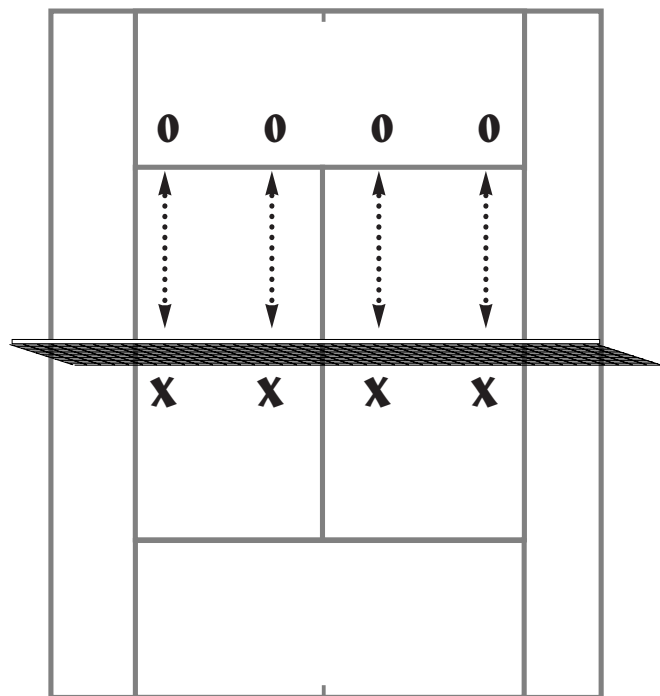


To modify this activity a player may be allowed two or more bounces, if necessary.



# ONCE BOUNCE VOLLEY RALLY

Students pair up with a volleyer at the net and ground stroker in the middle of the service court on the opposite side of the net. The volleyer holds his or her racquet up in forehand volley position as a target for the partner's first shot (a drop-hit forehand) and attempts to block back every shot to the partner's forehand side.



The goal is to have the longest rally of ground strokes and volleys.

Change positions after two minutes.

**O**=GROUND STROKER

**X**=VOLLEYER

# PASS THE BALL RELAY (NO DIAGRAM)

Teams line up in single file. Each player has a racquet and the player who is first in line stands with the ball balanced on his racquet. When the team leader calls "Go," the ball is passed from racquet to racquet to the last person in line. The end position person runs to the beginning of the line and continues the relay. Pass the ball until the original person is in the front of the line.

Another variation (Caterpillar):

Same set up as above with single file lines perpendicular to the net. When the team leader calls "Go", the ball is passed from racquet to racquet. Once a player has passed the ball, he turns the opposite direction and runs around the back of the line and stands next to the last person. The line moves towards the baseline. The first team to go past the baseline is the winner.

## QUICK DRAW *(NO DIAGRAM)*

Instructor will face the group. Children will be in ready position. When the instructor raises his/her right hand then the children move into the stroke to the right (generally the forehand). If the instructor raises his/her left hand they shuffle to the left, making that stroke. After each stroke they always go back into ready position.

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## RACQUET QUICKNESS *(NO DIAGRAM)*

Each player balances a racquet with its head on the ground a few feet away from a partner, who is also balancing a racquet.

On command, players attempt to switch racquets before they fall.

Distance between racquets may gradually be increased.

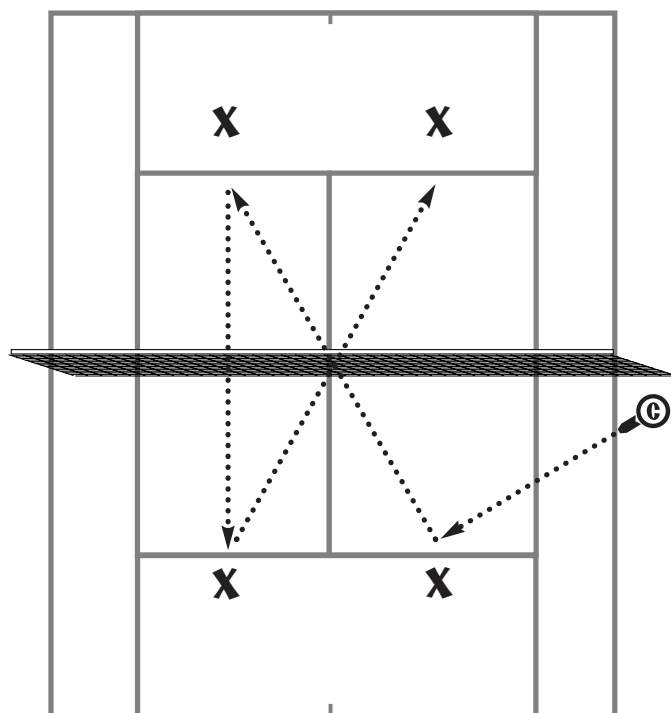
Player may work in pairs across from each other, or with groups 3 or more, in a circle.

# RALLY CONTEST FOR TIME

Four players are on the court in the Ralleyball format.

A coach or feeder puts the ball into play to one player who aims to return it over the net. Play continues until a miss, when the next ball is put into play.

The object is to score as many points in 30 seconds as possible, counting every successful hit by all four players.



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# RALLY OVER THE ROPE (NO DIAGRAM)

Emphasizing low-to-high swings, players work in pairs. Using a self-feed, partners attempt to rally forehands or backhands (or just hit one, depending on level of students) over a rope that is stretched three feet over the net.

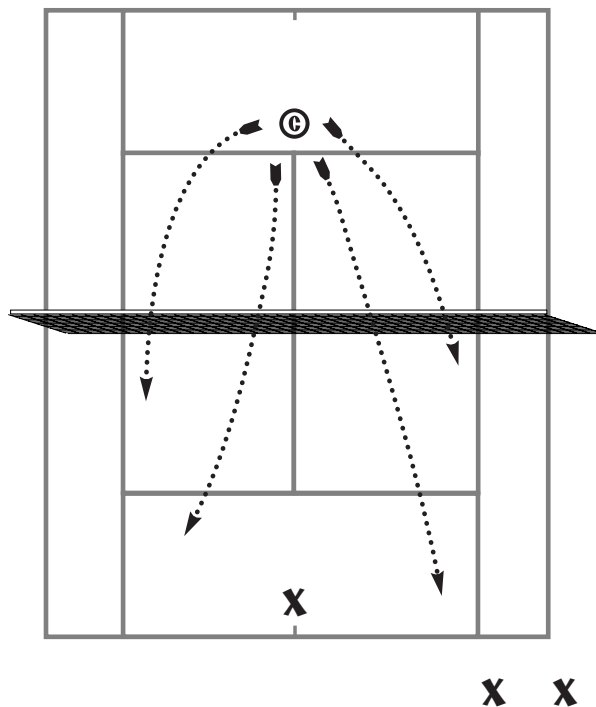
# RANDOM 4

All players line up in a single file line behind the baseline at the center of the court. The first player stands in ready position.

The coach tosses 4 balls in random directions and waits until the player returns to the ready position before each toss.

If the player hits all 4 balls over the net and within the boundary lines, that player does not need to jog around the court.

If he misses just 1 ball, he jogs around the court and picks up all the balls he hit.



---

# SERVE TO TARGETS (NO DIAGRAM)

Targets like tennis ball cans, poly spots, cones or hula hoops are set up in each service box.

As the players try to serve the balls they attempt to hit a target.

If a target is hit then the player gets a jolly rancher or other reward.

# SHOT COMBINATIONS

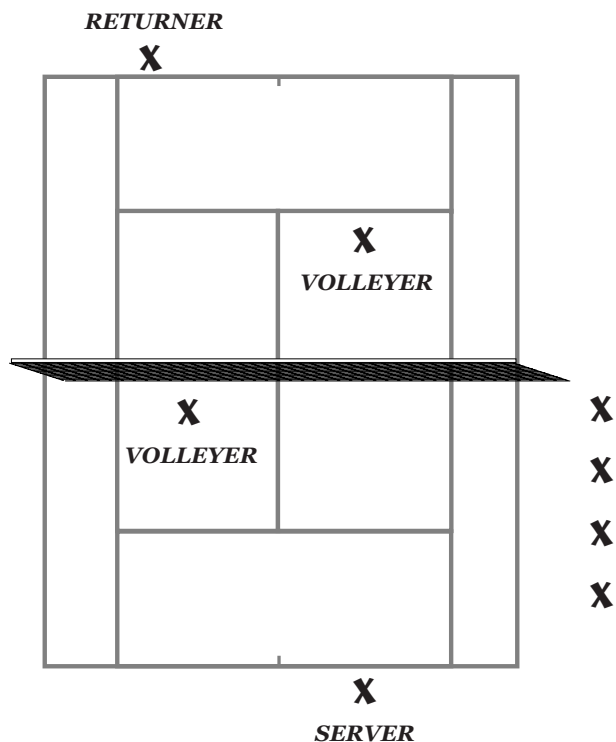
Serve-return-volley-volley.

Four players are in a doubles formation and everyone else is in a line at the net post. In a cooperative fashion, the team attempts to hit four consecutive shots: serve, return, volley and volley.

If they complete the four shots consecutively, they score one point and go again.

If someone misses a shot, a new person takes his or her place.

This may be done with any series of shots.



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# SHUFFLE STEP THE LINES (NO DIAGRAM)

Players line up in a single file line on the doubles sideline.

Players will touch the line they are standing on then shuffle to the singles line, touch it and shuffle back to their original line, touch it, then shuffle to the center line and back.

Players will then continue to shuffle over to the opposite singles line, touch it, and then shuffle back.

The final line they will shuffle to is the opposite doubles sideline and then back.

## SIDE TO SIDE ALLEY HOOPS (NO DIAGRAM)

This is a warm-up activity to encourage good footwork.

Players hop side to side in the alley.

One foot lands on the singles sideline, the other foot on the doubles sideline.

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## SKELETON VOLLEYS (NO DIAGRAM)

Each child will stand at the appropriate spot on the court to hit a volley (racquet length away from the net, one small step back).

Feed one forehand volley to each child. If the volley does not land in the court (ie, in the net or out of bounds), then the player is “sick.”

The next time the volley is out of bounds or in the net, the player is “in the hospital.”

The third time, the volleyer is “dead,” and the fourth time the player is a “skeleton,” and has to run to the other side of the net to the graveyard and catch a volley in order to return to the land of the living.

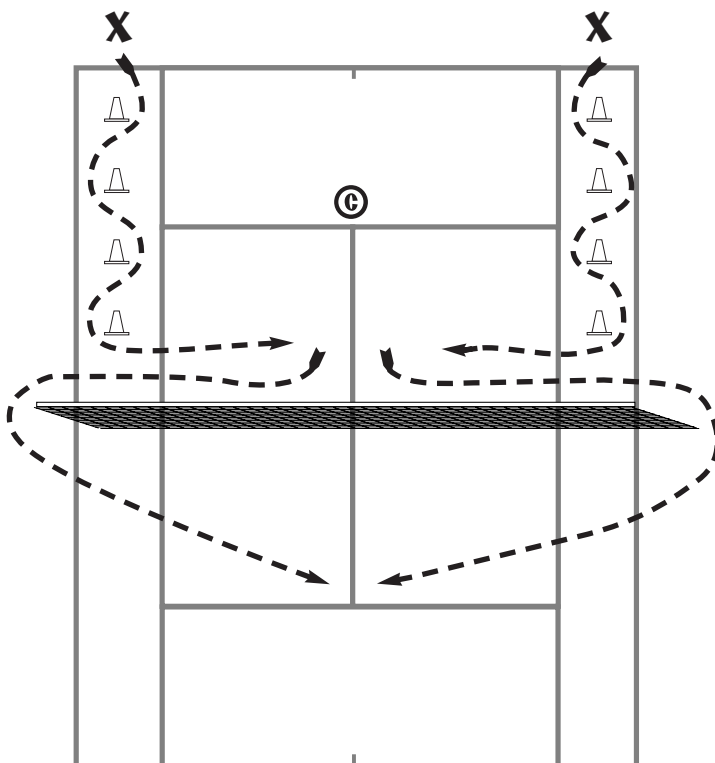
# SLALOM RUN

Space four cones in each alley (sidelines) on one side of the net and line up a team behind the cones in each alley facing the net. The coach stands on the same side of the net as the players with a bucket of balls.

A player from each team weaves his way through the cones and shuffle steps to the center of the net and shuffle backs to the alley. The player runs to the other side of the net and catches a ball tossed by the coach.

The ball can be caught in the air or off the bounce. Cones can be used to catch the tennis balls.

Balls are then rolled into the corners while another set of players run.



---

# STATUES (NO DIAGRAM)

This game is similar to Bull in the Pen.

When players miss, they must freeze in their follow-through position (like a statue). The only way they can become "unfrozen" and return to the end of the hitting line is for someone on the team to return the ball successfully back in the court.

The person who is a statue the longest is the first person to be unfrozen.

Make sure you are aware of spacing as the players form statues on the court.

## STOP SIGN VOLLEY TAP (NO DIAGRAM)

Players work in pairs, standing no more than five feet apart.

One player tosses the ball underhand to the partner.

The hitter holds the racquet to the forehand side as if signaling "Stop!"

The hitter gently taps the ball back to the feeder and the sequence is repeated five times before players switch roles.

---

## TAG TEAM TENNIS (NO DIAGRAM)

Divide the group into two teams. Each team is in a line along the rear fence on their side of the court.

One person from each team goes to the baseline and plays a singles point beginning with a drop-hit serve.

The winner of the point stays and adds a second person to their side of the court. The loser goes to the end of the line and the next person becomes the player.

### EXAMPLE:

A1 plays B1 and A1 wins the point. B1 goes to the end of the "B" line while A2 joins A1 in the court. A1 must put the ball in play with a drop hit and team "A" must play into the singles court while B2, the next in line, can play in the doubles court.

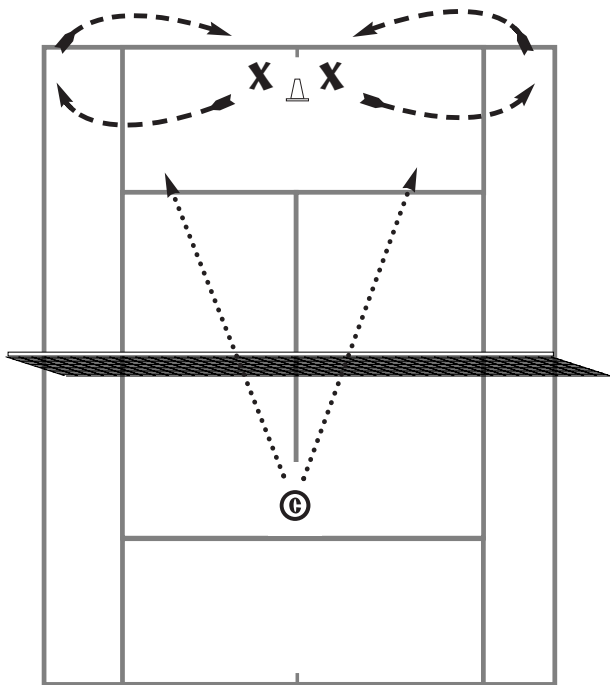
If Team "A" wins, A3 is added to the court to play against B3. If B3 wins, he adds B4 to his court and plays A4 only. A1-3 return to the end of the line.

Play continues until all of one team is on the court and wins the next point.



# TAG THE CONE

This game is for both backhand and forehand ground strokes.



Pick a forehand (backhand for left-handers) team and a backhand (forehand for left-handers) team. Each team stands behind the baseline (or service line, depending on the ability level of the players) near the center of the line. An orange cone is placed in the center of the baseline between the two teams. The coach is standing on the opposite side of the net with a bucket of balls.

When the coach says "go," the first players on each team tag the cone with their racquets and hustle to hit the tossed ball. Again they run back, tag the cone, and hustle to hit another ball.

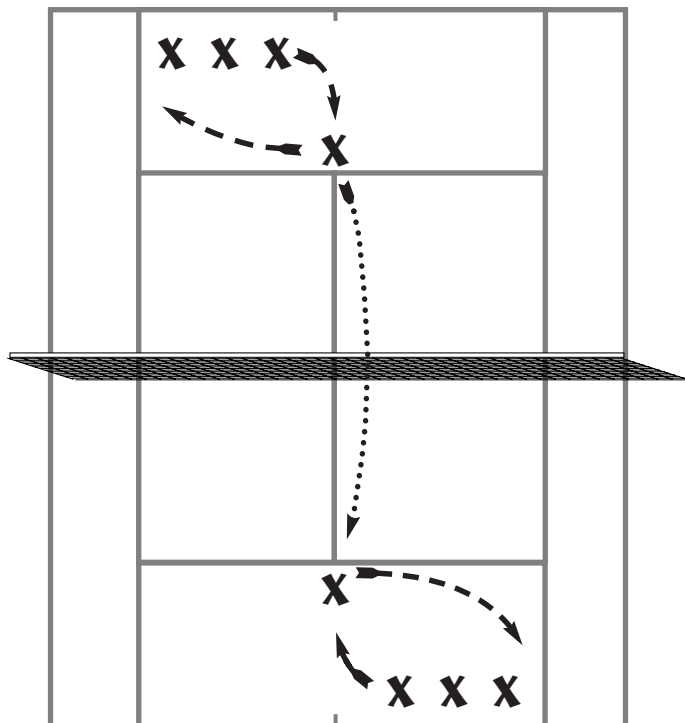
For every ball hit over the net, their team gets a point.

The first team to get to 8 or 10 balls wins.

Players trade sides to practice the other stroke.

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# TEAM AROUND THE WORLD



Divide players into two groups behind the center service line. The first player on the service line will drop and hit a forehand over the net to the first person on the other side. The group tries for the most consecutive forehands in a row.

After a hit, each player goes to the end of the line on his or her side of the court.

Count how many successful consecutive hits there are after a specified time.

Mix up hitting order and try again.

The instructor may also use this drill to practice backhands and combination shots.

# TENNIS BASEBALL

Divide players into two teams. One team will be the hitters and the other team will be the outfield. One player on the hitting team comes to the back court while the rest of his team waits by the fence.

The coach feeds a ball to either the forehand or backhand (can mix them up or play with just one stroke).

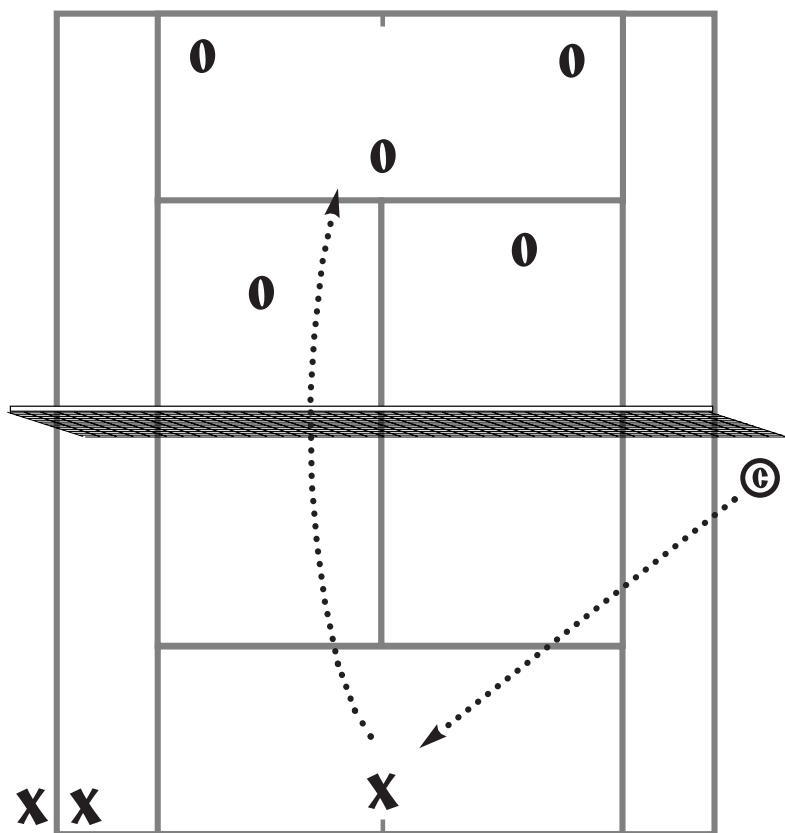
The hitter tries to get the shot over the net before getting three strikes. A child can get three strikes by missing three balls, hitting them in the net or hitting them out.

If the player does hit it over the net and it lands in the service box it is a single (first net post is the base). If the ball lands in the back court it is a double (baseline center mark is the base). If the player hits it in either one of the alleys it is a triple (opposite net post). If the player hits the baseline it is a homerun. After the player hits the ball the outfield tries to catch it in the air. If the ball is caught then the player is out.

When there are three outs the teams switch sides.

You may not steal a base or run, a player may only be bumped to the next base by a good shot from another teammate.

If you are working with younger students you may want to let the outfielders catch the ball after the bounce.



The coach determines the number of innings.

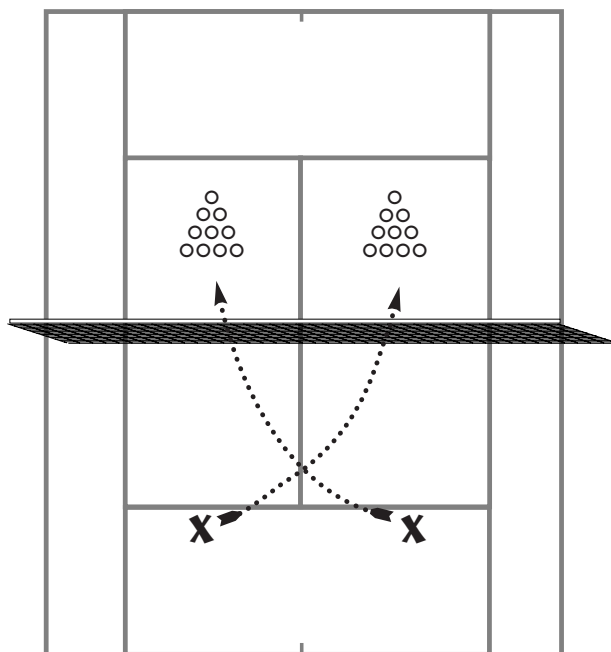
**X**=HITTERS    **O**=OUTFIELDERS

# TENNIS BOWLING WITH SERVES

Tennis cans or cones are set up like bowling pins in the service court.

Divide the players into two teams. Have them take turns serving as they try to knock down the cans in a single file line from behind the service line. Have players hit one or two balls into the target area.

One person will serve as the "pin setter" and will rotate to the serving line after everyone serves.



○=TENNIS CANS

X X X

X X X

---

# TENNIS SANDWICH (NO DIAGRAM)

Three or more players make a sandwich by starting with one player holding a racquet, placing a ball on this racquet, having another player put a racquet on the ball, etc., to build a "sandwich."

Players attempt to move to the net and back as a unit.

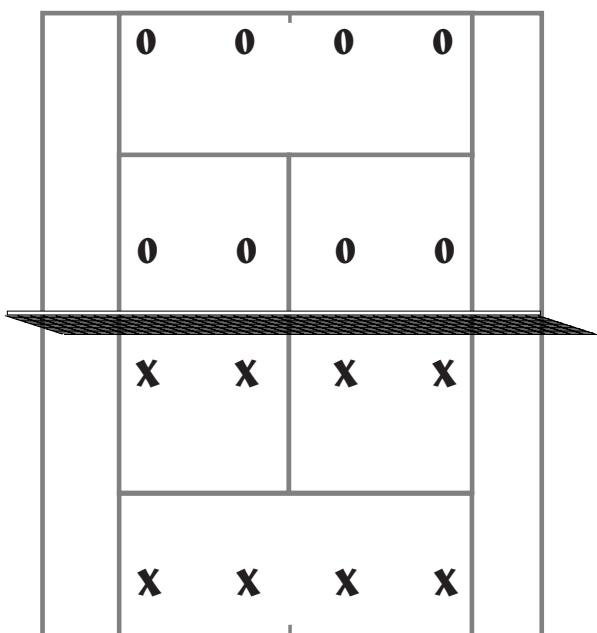
# TENNIS VOLLEYBALL

This game can be played with as many as eight players on each side. Every child can play when you allow unlimited bounces once the ball goes over the net and lands in the court.

Players are spaced in rows, starting close to the net to behind the service line. Begin the point with a drop hit over the net. After the ball lands in the court, the ball can be hit after any number of bounces - as long as the ball continues to land within the playing area.

Players should rotate spots as in volleyball and serving follows the same format as a volleyball game. For safety, each child must stay in his or her zone and all shots must be hit up, even volleys.

You can make the game more challenging by reducing the number of players per side, reducing the number of bounces per side, reducing the number of hits per side or increasing the size of the boundary area..



**X=TEAM A**

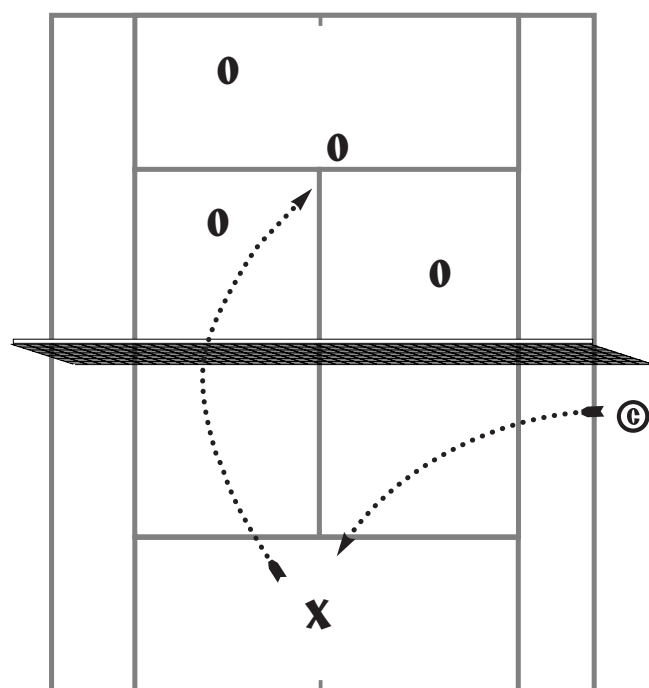
**0=TEAM B**

# TENNIS WORKUP

All players line up on one side of the court.

The Coach feeds one ball to each player's forehand. Players who fail to hit the ball into the court leave their racquet at the net and come around to the other side to serve as fielders. A fielder who catches the ball on the fly returns to the hitting line.

To remain in the hitting line, hitters must hit into the court and avoid having their shot caught.



**X X X**

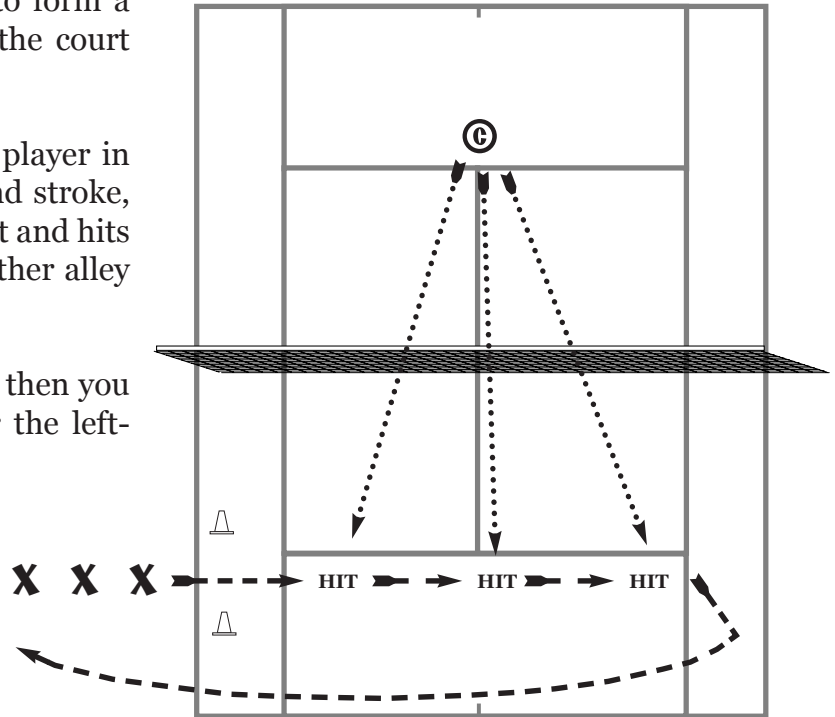
**0=CATCHER**

# THREE ACROSS

All players line up in a single file line behind the baseline near the alley on the ad or left side of the court. Left-handers may need to form a line on the deuce or right side of the court and wait their turn.

The coach tosses a ball to the first player in line. After he hits a forehand ground stroke, he shuffles to the middle of the court and hits another shot, then shuffles to the other alley to hit one more forehand.

After each right handed player hits, then you could toss balls in like manner for the left-handed players to hit forehands.



# TIC-TAC-TOE VOLLEYS

There are two teams of players at the net in a line waiting for volleys.

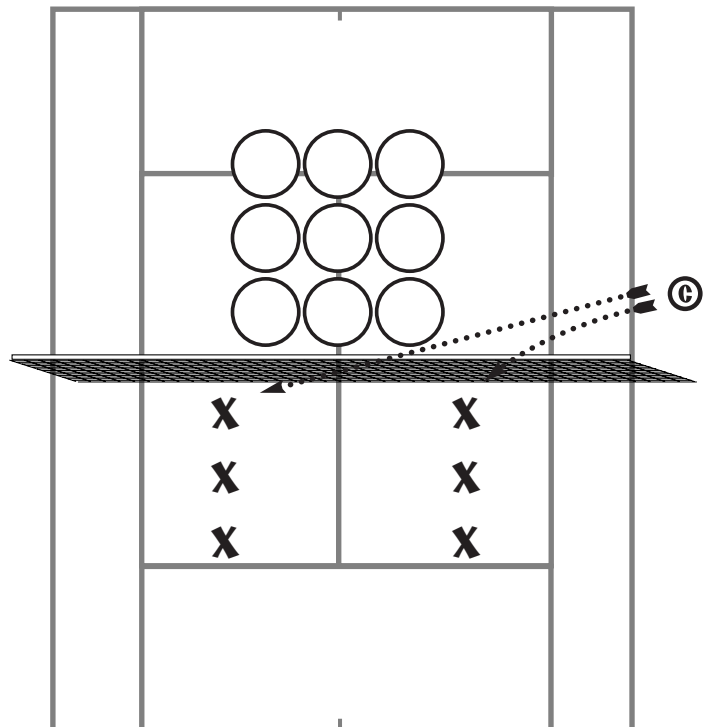
○ = HULA HOOPS

Set up 9 hula hoops like a tic-tac-toe board on the other side of the net from where the coach will be feeding balls.

The coach will feed a ball to one team member and that player will attempt to hit his volley into the tic-tac-toe board. If he is accurate enough to hit inside a circle, the coach will place a marker (tennis can lid, chalk mark) inside that hula hoop.

That team will then try to make a tic-tac-toe by hitting the appropriate hoops while the other team tries to block them and/or make their own tic-tac-toe (using a different marker).

The first team to make a tic-tac-toe is the winner.



## TOSS, TOUCH & FREEZE (NO DIAGRAM)

Children line up single file about four feet from the net.

They start their racquet with their arm back and elbow bent at a right angle.

Toss or lift the ball, turn and reach up with the racquet and touch the ball. The racquet does not proceed past the contact point.

Have the children freeze at the contact and hold that position until the ball stops bouncing and begins to roll on the court.

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## TOSS, TOUCH & FOLLOW-THROUGH (NO DIAGRAM)

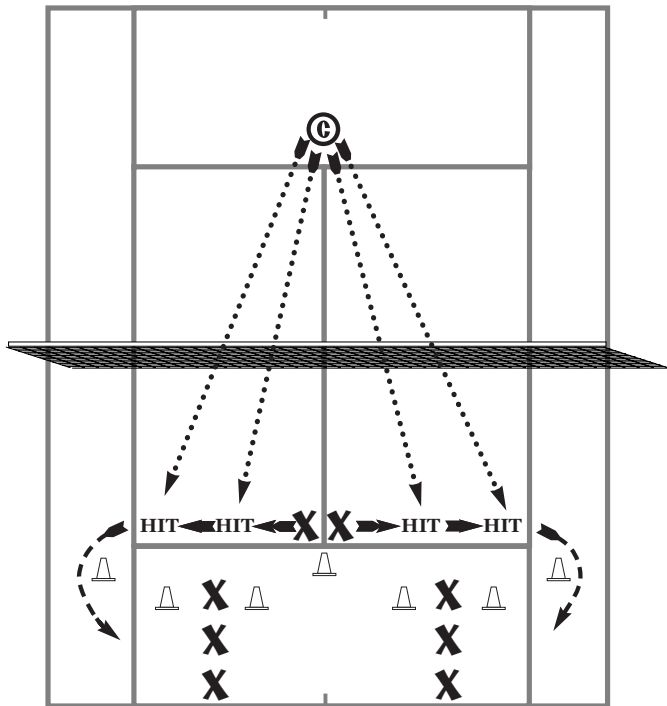
Children proceed as in previous activity but complete a slow-motion swing with the tossing arm coming down first across in front of the body, and the racquet and dominant arm finishing across and atop the other arm.

The head of racquet sweeps past the knee on the non-dominant side of the body, making an "X" position.

To avoid over-hitting, have the children count the bounces before the ball goes out of the service court.

# TWO BALL CHASE

Two lines of players will be standing in the backcourt and one player from each team will be fed 2 balls moving toward the sidelines. Children must go around the cone to avoid running into the next hitter.



One line will be hitting forehands and the other will be hitting backhands. After they run around the cone they go into the other line.

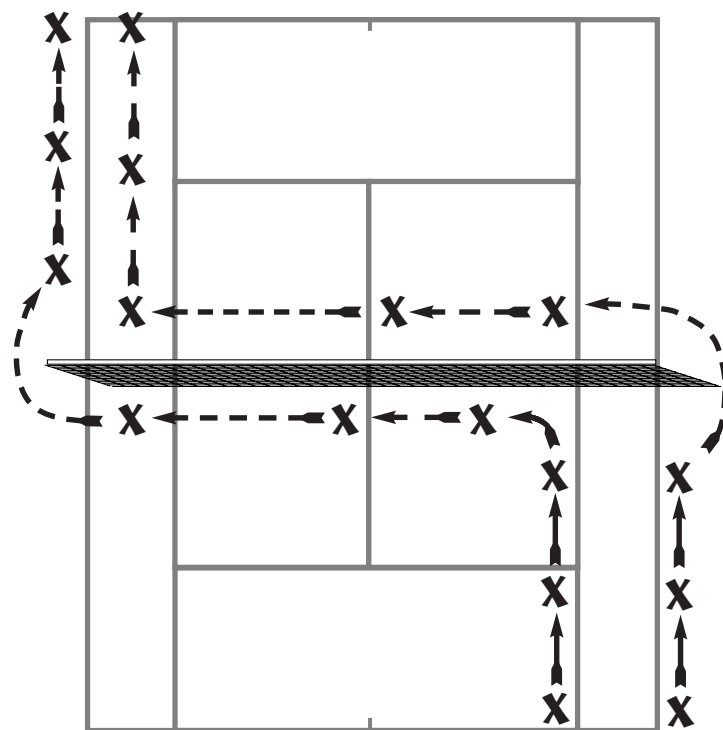
Increase the distance of the feed (coach to player) as the skill of the player increases. Less skilled players may need two bounces, may need to be closer to the net and/or receive a higher feed.

You can divide into two teams to give a point to each team member who hits a ball in the court.

# ZIP-ZIP-ZIP RELAY

Pairs begin at the baseline of one alley and attempt to bump-rally as they move up one alley, continue over the net (one student must run to opposite side of the net at the net post area), and then continue across the net and then down the opposite side alley.

See which pairs complete this without a miss.





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