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TENNIS

USA★TENNIS
FREE *for* ALL

USA★TENNIS
1 2 3

USA★TEAM
TENNIS

CURRICULUM GUIDE FOR ADULTS



GET IN THE GAME

UNITED STATES TENNIS ASSOCIATION INC.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Before *USA Tennis 1•2•3*, there was USTA PLAY TENNIS AMERICA. Championed by the USTA Adult Recreation Committee under the chairmanship of Bill Rombeau and the USTA Senior Recreation Committee under the chairmanship of Sandy Tueller and currently under Lucy Garvin. The pilot Senior Novice Instructional Program served as the foundation. Mervin A. Heller, Jr., USTA Board Liaison to both committees and author of the USTA Strategic Planning Report, did much to pave the way for PLAY TENNIS AMERICA.

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United States Professional Tennis Registry
USTA Play Tennis America Committee

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USA Tennis 1•2•3 incorporates aspects of several successful programs into one unified instructional program. The goal is to make the first exposure to tennis so positive that the result will be a lifelong tennis player who will enjoy the benefits of tennis and become an active member of the tennis community.

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PREFACE

Getting people started in tennis has never been easier. That's because USA Tennis provides a pathway of linked programs through the sport that is easy for everyone to access and follow.

Players can participate in the USA Tennis program that is ideally suited for them. These programs offer opportunities to:

TRY THE GAME

USA Tennis Free for All — A free, fun-filled introductory event designed to get people to try the sport.

LEARN THE SKILLS

USA Tennis 1•2•3 — A low-cost, introductory instructional program designed to teach basic skills quickly to new players in a group environment.

PLAY WITH FRIENDS

USA Team Tennis — An opportunity to play organized matches in a relaxed, friendly atmosphere.

COMPETE IN MATCH PLAY

Leagues and tournaments are available for more competitive play.

The key to attracting thousands of people to tennis and turning them into frequent players is getting them to:

- attend a **USA Tennis Free for All** event
- continue playing tennis by signing up in a **USA Tennis 1•2•3** program
- sign up for **USA Team Tennis**

LEAGUE COORDINATOR'S CONTROL SHEET

Use "H" for home matches and "A" for away matches. Pay careful attention to the number of courts available for play, the number of teams using the same home courts and the number of home away matches you may have guaranteed each team.



NAME OF COURTS							
NUMBER OF COURTS AVAILABLE							
NUMBER OF TEAMS AT FACILITY							
TEAM							
1ST WEEK							
2ND WEEK							
3RD WEEK							
4TH WEEK							
5TH WEEK							

LEAGUE CAPTAIN'S SCHEDULE

For Six Teams (See other options below.)

Site _____ City _____

MATCH DATES	TEAMS, CAPTAINS, PHONE NUMBERS
Team 1 at Team 2	Team 1 _____
Team 6 at Team 3	Captain _____
Team 5 at Team 4	Phone Number _____
Team 4 at Team 3	Team 2 _____
Team 1 at Team 6	Captain _____
Team 5 at Team 2	Phone Number _____
Team 4 at Team 6	Team 3 _____
Team 3 at Team 2	Captain _____
Team 5 at Team 1	Phone Number _____
Team 1 at Team 4	Team 4 _____
Team 3 at Team 5	Captain _____
Team 2 at Team 6	Phone Number _____
Team 6 at Team 5	Team 5 _____
Team 3 at Team 1	Captain _____
Team 2 at Team 4	Phone Number _____
	Team 6 _____
	Captain _____
	Phone Number _____

Week	1	2	3	4	5
4 Teams	2-1	4-2	4-1		
	3-4	1-3	2-3		
5 Teams	1-4	3-1	5-3	2-5	4-2
	2-3	4-5	1-2	3-4	5-1
Byes	5	2	4	1	3

INTRODUCTION TO USA TENNIS

The following USA Tennis programs are easy to stage and will help grow tennis in your community.

USA TENNIS FREE FOR ALL

Free tennis instruction is the perfect way to get adults and seniors to give tennis a try. This group event has proved to be a successful way of getting new and returning players on the court to hit balls, meet new friends and get some exercise.

Most of the players will be beginners, so simple racquet-handling skills, partner drills and short-court forehands are about all you will want to teach at this event. Your goal is to make tennis fun for new players and encourage them to continue with *USA Tennis 1•2•3*.

USA TENNIS 1•2•3

(LEVEL I: BASIC INSTRUCTION)

Level I is an accelerated six-lesson course that gives novice players the skills, confidence and knowledge to begin playing. Classes are scheduled in short time blocks, with one hour of on-court training and a half hour of off-court instruction (chalk talk).

The goal of each session is to introduce one or more of the skills necessary to play tennis. The teaching philosophy is centered on keeping the skill development simple and building confidence through success. Adult students want to see steady progress and, from the beginning, feel they are succeeding in learning the real skills necessary to play tennis. All attempts should be made to keep the learning as practical as possible, so students may choose to take a follow-up series of six sessions of supervised play or enroll in another USA Tennis program.

The on-court segment of each session is action-oriented, with a minimum of lecture. The sessions are designed to accommodate a ratio of eight players to one experienced instructor, utilizing one court. Of course, smaller groups can also utilize the curriculum. Presentations and discussions are reserved for the final half hour of the session, which can be held off-court. Since the surest way to build skill is through repetition, activities are designed to ensure plenty of hitting. A main attraction of tennis for adults is the opportunity for exercise, so movement activities are a part of each session.

TIPS FOR MANAGING CLASSES

Instructors will need to adjust each class and each session to the special needs of the participants. Players should experience success and challenge. With eight participants, there will naturally be a range of skills. Some classes will lend themselves to a division into two groups. In any case, great care must be taken with the selection and rotation of partners to provide the best possible experience for all the participants.

Additional Tips:

- Learn and use your students' names. Name tags are highly recommended.
- One of the main attractions of tennis is the social element. Help players meet others by rotating and mixing partners regularly.
- Have water available and encourage students to drink regularly, especially outdoors in hot weather.
- Sun protection should also be encouraged through proper clothing, hats and use of sunscreen.
- The single most important element of the lesson plans is your enthusiasm! Keep it upbeat, fun and positive!

The lessons allow for some range of challenge. Some students will progress rapidly to more challenging activities, while other students will spend more time on the basics. Even within the tightly scheduled lessons series, the instructor will need to use discretion both in matching and rotating partners and by adjusting the teaching style to match the students' needs.

Even the most experienced instructors will soon discover the benefit of following a simple, consistent agenda. *USA Tennis 1•2•3* lesson plans are field tested and proven to work. Instructors are encouraged to adhere closely to the curriculum.

TRAINING

This program guide is designed to help instructors learn the overall philosophy and presentation of a *USA Tennis Free for All* event, *USA Tennis 1•2•3* and *USA Team Tennis*. USTA sections also provide free half-day, on-court workshops for more extensive and explicit instruction. Contact the USTA or your section office for information.

The following pages consist of sample program materials. Quantities of Certificates, Scorecards and League Play Lineup Cards are available through USTA section offices. All other materials may be duplicated as needed.

USA TENNIS 1•2•3 AND USA TEAM TENNIS PROMOTIONS

Getting started in tennis has never been easier! *USA Tennis 1•2•3* offers the basics of tennis in just three weeks, followed by three weeks of supervised play. *USA Team Tennis* offers doubles competition in league play. Add fun, exercise and a chance to meet and mix with others, and it's a sure hit!

If you're 19 or older, interested in learning tennis or ready to return to the game, this program is for YOU!

USA TENNIS 1•2•3

(LEVEL I: INSTRUCTION)

Nine hours of innovative teaching techniques, activities and games will give you the full range of skills needed to start playing tennis. Classes meet twice a week for three weeks, for 1½ hours of instruction and drills per class.

USA TENNIS 1•2•3

(LEVEL II: SUPERVISED PLAY)

Continue playing with your friends and peers during three weeks of supervised play. Groups meet twice a week for a total of nine hours. The program features doubles play with instruction, offering plenty of action with a variety of tennis partners.

USA TEAM TENNIS: ORGANIZED PLAY

Join *USA Team Tennis* and enjoy the camaraderie of doubles play and friendly competition against players of similar abilities. Participants should be rated at 2.5 or below on the National Tennis Rating Program (NTRP). (It is not necessary to sign up with a partner.) *USA Team Tennis* is offered in cooperation with WORLD TEAMTENNIS.

Join *USA Tennis 1•2•3* or *USA Team Tennis* today!

TEAM MATCH PLAY

1. Team coordinators should keep a schedule of league play using the League Play Schedule Sheet. (See Appendix.)
2. Team captains are responsible for selecting the team lineup for each match. League Play Lineup Cards will be exchanged by team captains prior to commencement of a team match. Lineups must be in order of strength.
3. Each team match consists of three doubles matches. A match point is won when a doubles team wins two of three possible sets or completes the match as specified by league rules. (Play may be shortened to one set of 8 or 10 games, or played to a time limit.) A team match is won when a team wins two of three match points.
4. Teams should play each other twice during the league schedule on a "home and away" basis.
5. Home team supplies new balls and reserves the necessary number of courts.
6. Every effort should be made to field a full team for league matches. In case of an individual match default, the non-defaulting team will be credited with a match point. Consistent defaults should be subject to review by the team captains.
7. Rain-postponed matches should be rescheduled.
8. Match play shall be governed by *The Code*.

TEAM LEAGUES—SAMPLE SCHEDULE

First-Round Home Team on Left; Second-Round Home Team on Right.

Week	1	2	3	4	5
4 Teams	2-1	4-2	4-1		
	3-4	1-3	2-3		
5 Teams	1-4	3-1	5-3	2-5	4-2
	2-3	4-5	1-2	3-4	5-1
Byes	5	2	4	1	3
6 Teams	2-1	3-4	6-4	4-1	5-6
	3-6	6-1	2-3	5-3	1-3
	4-5	2-5	1-5	6-2	4-2

PROGRAM MATERIALS

USA Tennis program materials are available through the USTA in White Plains, New York. Check with them, or through your USTA section to secure an order form. These materials typically include:

- Flexibility cards
- Rules of Tennis
- Code of Conduct cards
- USTA membership application
- NTRP Self-rating cards
- USTA League Tennis brochure
- Catalog of assorted collateral material

Specific program materials for each level are itemized in the Introduction section for each USA Tennis program in this guide.

The handouts included in this guide should be photocopied for your use.

To find out whom to contact in your section, or to get additional information, call or write to:

United States Tennis Association
70 West Red Oak Lane
White Plains, NY 10604-3602
914-696-7000

USA Tennis Free for All events are more than just teaching stroke mechanics to beginners. Surveys indicate that people want to come to your site to have fun, get some exercise and meet new friends. More important than teaching them everything you know about the game in 90 minutes is to make each participant feel welcome at your site and to make them feel comfortable with the group of people they will meet and the skills they will learn. Make sure they have a fun, positive first experience on the court. Remember: they will not have fun unless you are having fun!

PRE-EVENT SUGGESTIONS

1. Designate a meeting or gathering place at your site, such as a porch, lounge, pro shop, patio or picnic area.
2. Alert your staff to be looking for these new players and to make them feel welcome and comfortable. Remember that these people are not players and are probably uncomfortable with the new surroundings.
3. Have name tags ready.
4. Greet each participant and use his or her name.
5. Give them a brief overview of the site. Show them how to get to the restrooms and water fountain.
6. Have demo racquets available and distribute racquets to anyone in need. Some people might come with racquets that are inadequate, such as vintage wood racquets. Do not force them to use a demo, but make sure you take extra racquets to the court so they will be available during the lesson.
7. Take a roll call, making sure you have everyone's name pronounced correctly and that all names, addresses and phone numbers are recorded properly.
8. Start and end the lesson on time.

Before you go on the court, take five minutes to introduce yourself. Explain that the *USA Tennis Free for All* event is part of a nationwide effort to get people to try the sport of tennis. If they enjoy this experience, explain that a continuing program (*USA Tennis 1•2•3*) is being offered at the site, and that they will get further details at the conclusion of the *USA Tennis Free for All* event. Answer any questions they might have before you go to the court.

SCORING

Scoring shall be conventional, with a tie-break game at six games all in each set. Depending upon conditions (such as limited courts or limited time), "no ad" scoring may be substituted. A match point is won when a doubles team wins two of three possible sets.

LEAGUE ORGANIZATION

League Coordinators will be responsible for the following:

- administering league
- scheduling matches
- charting match results
- determining team standings within the league

TEAM ORGANIZATION

Each team needs a volunteer captain to:

- represent the team at league meetings and activities
- schedule home and away matches with the other team captains
- maintain the team roster
- assign players for league matches
- chart match results
- report scores to the League Coordinator

The team captain should register at least six players on the Team Roster to field three doubles teams. Rosters should include more than six players to cover absence or illness and to provide an opportunity for more players to participate in team match play.

SCHEDULE

Two 1½-hour sessions per week are recommended.

Day One: Ladder matches (a method of selecting the order of players for a given week), practice drills and instruction review. Players do not necessarily have to play with the same partner each week.

Day Two: League team matches as prescribed in the schedule. If possible, match days and times should be scheduled on the same day of the week throughout the league schedule.

USA Team Tennis is organized play for players progressing past *USA Tennis 1•2•3* Levels I and II. Friendly competition through team play gives the developing player competitive experience while emphasizing the fun, fitness and social benefits of tennis. *USA Team Tennis* is offered in cooperation with WORLD TEAMTENNIS.

Players are encouraged to play on a doubles team, and continue to learn more about the competitive aspects of tennis. The instructor's job is to arrange the schedule and make sure that people are properly signed up for play each day. While any number of formats will work, the important thing is to give each player an opportunity to play at a regularly scheduled time and day of the week. Some leagues will collect scores and keep standings, while others encourage social play.

One way to establish a league is with an organized schedule and rotation. This requires that everyone show up every time or arrange a substitute. Other formats can be set up each day, depending on whoever shows up on that day. This drop-in format is popular if attendance is a problem or if the play will be social with no standings tabulated.

To participate in *USA Team Tennis*, a person should have completed *USA Tennis 1•2•3* (Levels I and II) or some other form of basic tennis instruction.

PROGRAM MATERIALS FOR USA TEAM TENNIS

Program Guide

INTRODUCTION

One of the most effective means of retaining new tennis players is to offer ever-increasing challenges. As players gain skills and confidence, many of them will find that the opportunity to play with new players and travel for competition is exciting and motivational. As novices, these players have never had the chance to experience the spirit and friendships that develop while playing on a team. A team format will give them this tremendous experience.

FORMAT

Team Leagues involve match play, with each team consisting of a minimum of 6 and a maximum of 10 players. Any combination of men and women is acceptable. A minimum of three teams, but preferably four to six teams, is required to form a league. Two days per week of scheduled play are recommended. (The number of weeks depends on the number of teams participating in the league.) Teams play each other twice during the league schedule on a "home and away" basis.

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL EVENT

1. The people are coming to your site because they have an interest in learning how to play tennis. It is up to you to make this experience a comfortable and challenging one. The coach plays the most important role in the success of this event. Your enthusiasm and excitement are the most important aspects of the event. If you are having fun, your students will have fun.
2. Keep things simple. These people are beginners, and this is only an introductory session. You don't want to try to teach them too much. Keep to some racquet handling skills and teach them a forehand. Use a variety of activities they can do individually or with a partner. If they have fun and want to learn more, they will sign up for *USA Tennis 1•2•3*.
3. Keep everyone's safety in mind. Make sure that all extra balls are picked up from the court and that the players have plenty of space for swinging their racquet. If someone becomes tired or affected by the heat, let him or her know it is all right to sit down in the shade and get some cool water. Nothing will cast a darker shadow over a great session than an injury to one of the participants.
4. Avoid having people stand in lines. It makes for too much inactivity, and the participants feel like they are on display when they become the hitter and everyone else is watching. It is better to use partners to toss, hit and catch over short distances rather than use drills that require feeding.
5. One of the major reasons people are coming to a *USA Tennis Free for All* event is to meet new people. Make sure you rotate partners frequently and give them an opportunity to introduce themselves.
6. Mix in a few group contests as team builders.
7. Because most of the activity will be in close proximity to a partner, encourage short, controlled swings with limited backswings.
8. Get people to move, meet others in the group, hit lots of tennis balls, have some success and receive plenty of positive feedback. Make them eager to return for additional instruction.

ON-COURT ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

The following suggested activities can easily be done with up to 20 people on a court. All of them can either be performed by an individual, with a partner or as part of a team. All lead to hitting a forehand over the net with a partner.

RACQUET HANDLING

Twenty minutes

Make sure everyone has a racquet and tennis ball. Have them find a spot where they have their own space and will not interrupt others as they go through the activities. If their ball gets away, have them retrieve it and return to their space, and continue the activity. If possible, play some active music during this portion of the lesson.

- **Ball Bounces** – Have participants bounce a ball down with the racquet at waist level. Don't worry about grips. Some people might even need two hands or will choke up on the handle. Just get them to continually dribble the ball with the racquet. Demonstrate first and have them try for 30 seconds.
- **Ball Tap-ups** – Have participants tap up the ball continuously, trying to keep the racquet above the waist and the ball about a foot from the strings. Demonstrate and have them try for 30 seconds.
- **Ball bounces with the edge of the racquet** – This activity is the same as Ball Bounces, but participants must use the edge of the racquet. Demonstrate and have them try for 30 seconds.
- **Ball bump-ups on alternate sides of the racquet** – Have participants bump up the ball using alternate sides of the racquet. They may have to adjust the grip so that they can use both sides of the racquet. Demonstrate and let them try for 30 seconds.
- **Ball bump-ups on alternate sides, with an up on the edge every other hit** – Just for fun, see if anyone can keep the ball in the air using both sides of the racquet but mixing in a hit on the edge of the racquet on every other hit. Explain that this is, by far, the most difficult drill they will do in the entire session. Demonstrate and let them try for 30 seconds.

Now that everyone is beginning to get a feel for the ball and the racquet, have them try some of the following activities for about 30 seconds each.

- Ball bounces down – while keeping the ball about 12 inches from the court.
- Ball bounces down – while trying to maintain control at about shoulder-level height.
- Have them choke up on the racquet and do ball bounces down in a figure-eight pattern around both legs.
- Have them bend their knees, place the racquet between their legs and bounce the ball up.
- Have them put the racquet around their body and bounce the ball up.

SUBSTITUTION DOUBLES

Try this method of rotation to add variety and to reinforce that, in tennis, most points at this level are lost rather than won. Here are the rules. Four players are playing points. The server will always serve from the same end of the court, but will alternate between deuce and ad sides after each point. No score is announced. If a point ends in an unforced error (hitting a ball into the net, outside the lines, or a double fault), the person making the error goes to the side and a new person takes that vacant position and plays the next point.

If the point ends with a winning shot or a forced error, everyone remains on the court and the next point is played. As long as a person can play without making an error, he or she will never have to leave the court. Players will realize that the highest error positions at this level are the server and serve returner.

You can add some excitement to this activity by being one of the players in the game.

Another variation would be to replace both players on the doubles team if one person makes an unforced error. Two people will rotate on and off the court after all points ending in an error. Have players change partners before rotating back on the court, so they don't get stuck with a bad or good partner.

EXTRA PLAYERS

In the case of two sitters (extra players), after the first round (four games), they go on Court 1, one with A, the other with B; O and P (winners from court 4) now become the sitters for one round. If only one player is sitting out, he or she enters Court 1 after the first round to play with A or B. At Court 4, O and P flip a coin to determine who enters Court 1, with the remaining person sitting out for one round. This sequence continues.

OTHER FORMATS

Groups of six to eight players can work on one court if the instructor provides off-court coaching during the students' time in the rotation while they are off the court. For example, teams can rotate on a clockwise basis, and those off the court can ask questions about what happened to them while they were on the court or ask about situations that occur while watching play. It is very helpful for the instructor to have a court board so they can diagram different situations while they coach and answer questions.

Depending on the numbers in the class, you can rotate one person on after each game, two at a time, or an entire group of four. To keep the game moving, always have the same end of the court be the serving side, so everyone will have an opportunity to rotate into the serving position. Some games might be all double faults. Explain that they are learning to keep score and switch positions. Serves will get better when they get used to scoring and positioning.

Students at this level like to have an opportunity to play with and against the instructor. If possible, work in a rotation near the end of the lesson where you are on the court. You should attempt to let everyone hit the ball during the point by keeping the ball in play. Show them that everyone can win points, especially if they know where to direct the volley. Give everyone an opportunity to win a few points when they hit the right shot.

If play begins to move too slowly, the instructor can rotate to the serving position. Since the server can determine the speed of play, points should be played much quicker. Have two balls, call the score and begin play. Students like to play points quicker, since they will all have an opportunity to move and hit more tennis balls. You can play an entire rotation with everyone on the court in just a few minutes. This will give you the opportunity to play with and against each person in the group. Nearly every point will begin on the first serve, so players will be more attentive.

- Bounce the ball down while on one knee.
- Bounce the ball down while in a sitting position.
- Standing in one place, tap the ball up, let it bounce and tap it up again. Everyone should be able to do this with no problem if they have tried all of the above racquet handling drills.
- Have them find a partner and do them do the same drill while using one ball and alternating hits between partners.
- Have them switch partners and do the same activity but have them attempt to tap up and hit a target ball that is placed between them on the court. After a 30-second practice session, hold a team contest for one minute. Each pair attempts to hit the target ball as many times as they can by tapping up alternately to the target ball on the court.

Be sure to explain a few simple rules: All balls must be tapped up at least three feet (the height of the net). All shots must be hit alternately and after one bounce (it is all right to move). All shots must be hit up – no spiking. Only target hits on the first bounce count.

Time them for one minute and see which team has the most target hits. Change partners, give them a short practice period and repeat the contest again. (This is a perfect time to give little prizes if you have them.) Also, if you are using music, begin each contest when the music starts, and stop the contest when it ends.

ALLEY RALLY

Ten minutes

Switch partners again and have pairs place one ball on the singles sideline and a second ball on the doubles sideline. Have partners stand behind and to the side of each of the balls and have them rally a third ball, trying to hit the partner's ball on the first bounce. Rallies go back and forth across the doubles alley. Have players hit up, at least three feet high, using a compact forehand groundstroke. After a warm-up period, time them for one minute to see which team can get the most target hits.

Change partners and time them for another minute.

Note: Left-handers should be on the same side of the ball as the right-handers, so everyone will be hitting a forehand.

ZIG-ZAG-ZIG

Ten minutes

This activity will get the entire group moving and give them a chance to hit with different partners. The skill needed is the Alley Rally skill, but now they will be moving. Form two lines in the backcourt behind the doubles alley. The first two players bump the ball back and forth across the alley while moving toward the net. When the pair reaches the net, and without stopping the hit-bounce-hit sequence, the person outside the doubles sideline runs around the net post, and the pair continues alternating hits but this time over the net, all the while moving from one net post to the other. When the pair reaches the end of the net, the opposite person runs around the net post and the pair continues alternating hits to the baseline. Rules are simple. All shots must be bounce-hit-bounce-hit. Anything else is an error (i.e., volleys, double bounces, balls in the net). After an error, the pair will pick up the ball and run to the end of the line for another try. If a pair is successful from one baseline to the net to the opposite baseline, they also pick up the ball and run to the end of the line. Make sure that players use a different partner every time they begin the sequence. Start each pair about every 10 seconds and go for 5 minutes.

TOSS-BOUNCE-HIT-AND-CATCH

Ten minutes

Position partners about 15 feet apart. One partner will be the tosser, the other will hit. Hitters begin sideways to the tosser with racquet positioned in the backswing position. The tosser will underhand toss a ball so it bounces on the court and goes to the hitter's racquet in the ideal contact zone. The hitter directs a controlled forehand back to the tosser in the air. If the toss is not perfect, the hitter will move to the ball and make the hit. Change hitters every five tosses.

TOSS-BOUNCE-HIT-AND-CATCH CONTEST

Ten minutes

Using the same positions as above, each pair must successfully complete three toss-bounce-hit-and-catch sequences. Change hitters after three successful tosses. The first team with three successful toss-bounce-hit-and-catch tries is the winner.

ROUND-ROBIN AND OTHER FORMATS

ROUND-ROBIN DOUBLES

Round-Robin doubles gives each player an opportunity to play with different partners and opponents in progressive doubles. Any number of persons may play. Round-Robin doubles consists of four games per round, with a minimum of four rounds per class. Winners of each round move to the next court and change partners; losers stay on the same court and change partners.

SCORING

"No ad" scoring is recommended to keep the class moving and to help ensure rounds end simultaneously. The first team to win four points wins the game, with the seventh point of a game becoming a game point for either team. The receiver has the choice of receiving the serve in the advantage court or deuce court on the seventh point. If the score is tied at two games each at the end of a round, a coin is flipped to determine the winner.

Players will keep a record of games won on individual scorecards. A cumulative total for each participant can be recorded. (The attendance roster may be photocopied and used for that purpose as well.) Scores are kept individually, not by team.

ROUND-ROBIN DOUBLES FORMAT

The following Round-Robin Doubles format provides easy mobility of players from court to court and gives players the opportunity to play both with and against a variety of different partners.

1. Players sign in. Order of arrival determines court assignment.
2. Use fixed rotations—players preassigned by mathematical rotations.
3. Start where you left off previous week.

Round-Robin play starts at the same time on all courts and consists of four games per round. At the conclusion of each round, the winners move to the next court and divide to become opponents; the losers remain on the court and change partners.

DESCRIPTION OF ROTATION

Winners C and D on court 1 move to court 2 and divide to become opponents. Losers A and B on Court 1 stay on Court 1 and divide to become opponents on Court 2, C now plays with F and D plays with E. On Court 1, A plays with P (winner from Court 4) and B plays with D (winner from Court 4).

LINE-CALLING EXERCISE

Place a series of balls on or near the baseline. With students on far baseline, ask them to “vote” in or out on each ball with hand signals.

Repeat exercise with a moving ball. (Instructor can feed it from about 10 feet away.) Designate someone to stand along the line to make the call—after your students vote.

This exercise will help cure anyone from attempting to second guess calls from the far court.

2. TALKING WITH YOUR PARTNER

Five minutes

Emphasize the following:

- Importance of being supportive.
- Commonly used communications between players during a point including the ever-popular “yours”.
- Some of the possibilities of tactical communication—both players staying back on service returns, pointing out weaknesses in opponents, etc.

3. WHAT’S “FAIR”

Five minutes

Consider discussing:

“Is it fair for a strong player to serve fast balls to a weak player?”

“If you get a high set-up at net—and can hit hard—are you obligated to ‘let up’ to protect your opponents?”

PICK-A-DRILL

Ten minutes

Choose one of your students’ favorites.

TEAM AROUND THE WORLD

Fifteen minutes

Divide the class into four equal groups. Have groups line up with the first person facing the net in the center of the service court. The other players extend in a line toward the baseline. The two groups on the left side of the court form one team. The two groups on the right side of the court form the second team. Each team uses one ball. The first person drops and hits the ball over the net, moves out of line toward the alley and to the end of the line. The first person in the other line hits the ball back, moves out toward the alley and to the end of the line. Each team sees how many consecutive hits they can make in one minute. If players have any difficulty, move them closer to the net and remind them this is like alley rally over the net but with a rotating line. Rotate teams after the first game and try one more 60-second game.

CONCLUDING THE ACTIVITIES

Fifteen minutes

Wrap up the event with time to gather all the balls and return the racquets. Give the participants a few minutes to ask questions. As the group is cooling down, tell them about all the benefits of tennis they experienced in the introductory session:

- They got a chance to move around the court and hit lots of tennis balls.
- They met a new group of people with a similar interest of learning a new sport.
- They learned how to hit a forehand groundstroke. Now they have the very basics of participating in a rally.
- They laughed and had fun.

This is the perfect time to explain the USA Tennis 1•2•3 program that is beginning shortly at your site. You might want to bring in someone who is an expert at selling the program, but the instructor can be the best salesman. Distribute flyers explaining when the classes are offered and register those who want to continue on the spot. You might want to offer an incentive for those signing up after the *USA Tennis Free for All* event, such as a racquet, t-shirt or special price.

Also let them know about other *USA Tennis Free for All* events you are conducting, and encourage them to send a friend. Have flyers available for times and dates for both children and adults. Don’t forget: the *USA Tennis Free for All* event is only successful if you entice the participants to sign up and pay for the *USA Tennis 1•2•3* program.

The first level of *USA Tennis 1•2•3* is a three-week instructional program designed to provide the basic skills needed to play tennis. The program typically consists of six sessions of 1½ hours each. Participants are taught by teaching professionals trained in the *USA Tennis 1•2•3* philosophy and methods.

USA Tennis 1•2•3 is designed for groups of adults to learn the basics of the game quickly with drills and activities stressing partners, and with less emphasis on an instructor feeding balls to people in a line. The lessons are fast paced but always have a review of the previous lesson.

For beginners to enjoy the game, they need to be able to move to and hit a forehand over the net. The rally is fun for everyone, relatively easy to learn and is fundamental to the game. The second fundamental is the serve. Every point begins with a serve, and students must be able to get the serve in play to begin and enjoy the movement and skills necessary to play.

The first lesson begins with the forehand, so students will have an opportunity to rally with a friend or family member, or practice against a wall. The serve is introduced during lesson two and practiced in every subsequent lesson.

The goal of each lesson segment is to introduce one or more of the skills necessary to play tennis. The teaching philosophy is centered on keeping the skill development simple and building confidence through success. Adults want to see steady progress and feel from the beginning that they are succeeding in learning the real skills they will need to play tennis. All attempts should be made to keep the learning as practical as possible, so students will be ready to participate in *USA Tennis 1•2•3* (Level II: Supervised Play).

The on-court segment of each lesson is action-oriented, with a minimum of lecture. Presentations and discussions are reserved for the final half hour of the session, which can be held off-court. Because the surest way to build skill is through repetition, activities are designed to allow for the hitting of lots of balls. A main attraction of tennis for adults is the opportunity for exercise, so movement activities are a part of each lesson.

The outline of each lesson is:

- I. Introduction and Demonstration of Skill
- II. Warm-up Activity
- III. Skill Development Through Practice and Repetition
- IV. Application of Skill Through Games and Drills
- V. Chalk Talk: Summary, Preview and Practice Assignments
- VI. Handouts are distributed at the conclusion of each class. The handouts in this guide should be photocopied for your use.

PROBLEM 2:

Eight minutes

“I completely muff those really high ones.”

Beginners will often have trouble judging high lobs—even though they will get plenty of them. They will often misjudge them, so that the ball bounces over their heads. Have players go through this sequence:

- Watch a series of lobs—where they bounce and where they end up.
- Practice catching ball at waist height.
- Players need to back up and wait for ball to come them.
- Rotate players through a series of high forehands and backhands.

PROBLEM 3

Ten minutes

“Why do I double-fault so often?”

Explain that beginning tennis players tend to hit more double-faults than the more advanced players—but the best players in the world double-fault, too. The keys are practice and to make sure students do not “waste” their first serves.

Serving practice—emphasis on consistency.

Ask players to see how many serves out of 10 they can successfully hit in the service box. Challenge them to practice on their own and set new “personal bests.”

MINI-LESSON 6: HANDLING COMPETITION

As developing players gain match experience, calling lines and communicating with their partner become more important.

1. CALLING LINES

Ten minutes

Cover these points:

- Returner’s role in service calls: service line (not sideline).
- Who calls baseline: closest player.
- When to call or get involved in other team’s calls: never—except to overrule. Against your own team—with the notable exception of first serves.
- What to do when partners disagree on call: the point goes to their opponents.

GUARDING ALLEY DRILL

Five minutes

Novices will often worry about protecting their alley. Demonstrate how one cross-over step can cover the down-the-line return. Show how placement of serve impacts return. Wide serves require shift toward alley. Rotate players at net through a series of down-the-line returns to give them confidence in their ability to cover alley.

OVERHEAD PRACTICE

Five minutes

Allow players to build overhead skills through repetition.

MINI-LESSON 5: HANDLING THE TOUGH ONES

“What shots/situations are giving you the most trouble?” When polled, novice players will often come up with similar responses. Here are some of the most troublesome — with answers and practice drills.

PROBLEM 1:

Five minutes

“So and so has such a hard serve. How can you get it back?”

In every group, there will be at least one player who can hit serves with reasonable power. Players need to be coached on the following:

- Stand back—the ball will come to you
- Shorten the backswing—most mistakes come from late hits
- Use the server’s power—block back the ball

RETURN DRILL

Five minutes

Have players rotate through the return position with the instructor serving. Include instructor’s partner at net as rotation station. Encourage players to just “volley” returns back. Modify speed of serve to challenge each student.

PROGRAM MATERIALS FOR USA TENNIS 1•2•3 (LEVEL 1)

Program Guide

USTA League Brochure

Yellow Registration Cards

Site Data Form

Class Handouts

Flexibility Cards

National Tennis Rating Program Brochure

Code of Conduct Cards

Rules of Tennis

USTA Membership Application Forms

LESSON ONE

INTRODUCTION TO FOREHAND GROUNDSTROKES

OBJECTIVE

Five minutes

To introduce the forehand groundstroke.

Following instructor and student introductions, the instructor previews the goals for the lesson series: to learn the basic shots and rules of tennis and begin to play tennis matches. Demonstrate a sample point using all the shots—serve, forehand, backhand and volley. Mention lines and basic rules, singles and doubles boundaries, hitting after one bounce (groundstroke) or in the air (volley).

RACQUET SENSE

Five minutes

Introduce forehand grip. Brief introduction to racquet skills through up and down dribbles, dribbling with edge of racquet, up dribbles with a bounce, and up dribbles with a bounce working with a partner. Note: Keep this moving very rapidly, and make it challenging and game-like.

FOREHAND ALLEY RALLY

Five minutes

Players are paired, and each places a ball on the doubles sideline and the singles sideline. They stand one step behind and to the side of the ball. They gently tap up (at least three feet) a forehand and attempt to land their shot on their partner's ball. After one bounce, the partner taps the ball back, attempting to hit their partner's ball. Make sure partners alternate hits and play all shots after one bounce.

TARGET RALLY OVER THE NET

Ten minutes

Move pairs so they are on either side of the net. Have them place the "target balls" on the court about four feet from the net. Partners hit forehand groundstrokes, attempting to hit the target ball on the opposite side of the net. Have them try with different partners.

INTRODUCTION OF SIMPLIFIED GROUNDSTROKE

Two minutes

Demonstrate simplified groundstroke from the service line. Start with a sideways stance, very little or no backswing, just lifting the ball over the net.

TOSS-HIT GROUNDSTROKE PRACTICE

Ten minutes

Using the full width of one court, or two courts if available, divide class into four pairs. Tossers start very close to the net, with hitters on the service line. Tossers use "friendly" underhand tosses. Change roles and partners every six hits.

This is the ideal time to teach how direction and trajectory are controlled by the angle of the racquet face. Even beginning tennis players are amazed at their control of the tennis ball once they understand the principles. This knowledge will help them self-correct errors by simple adjustments in their strokes.

You can introduce terms such as "open" and "closed" and demonstrate how hitting with an open racquet face will cause the ball to go high, and a closed face will result in a low hit.

Side-to-side direction is achieved by the angle of the racquet face at the contact point. If the racquet face points left, the ball will travel left, and vice versa. Some players find it helpful to think that an early contact point will send the ball crosscourt, and late contact will send it down the line.

OVERHEAD DRILL

Eight minutes

Players start at net post. Two hitting positions: right and left side. First two players take the court. Instructor should start overhead feeds with very simple lobs—tossing underhand for better control. Students should emphasize racquet preparation—racquet behind head as soon as possible—and sideways position.

OVERHEAD-LOB GAME

Eight minutes

Two players are stationed at net. On the opposite side of the court, two players start at baseline. (Others can rotate into baseline position.) Designated baseline player drop-hits lob and net players attempt overhead. Play out points, lobbers against smashers, first to five wins. Then rotate two new net players.

MINI-LESSON 4: EFFECTIVE NET PLAY

Beginners will often be shy net players, standing almost in the alley. This half hour is intended to encourage them to go after the ball.

WHERE TO HIT THE VOLLEY?

Six minutes

Place four players in a "one up, one back" formation. Describe a situation where an easy ball floats to one of the net players. Ask students to show where they might want to hit the ensuing volley. Actually have players place balls on the court. Show which are the best percentage shots, the easiest being the shot that splits the two players.

SPLIT TEAM VOLLEY DRILL

Seven minutes

Players line up at net post to take turns at net position. Instructor will feed a "set-up" ball; students try to hit "percentage shot"—aiming the ball behind the opponent's net player.

POACH DRILL

Five minutes

Same drill, only net players have to move to center of court to get to volley.

SERVING PRACTICE

Five minutes

MINI-LESSON 2: SERVE AND RETURN

Without effective serves and returns, beginning doubles can indeed be slow. Players need time to develop serving fundamentals and to practice return of serve.

SERVING CHECK-UP

Fifteen minutes

Starting with a quantity of balls, students serve from one baseline. Large groups can rotate in squads. Check each player for serving technique. Encourage full and controlled swings.

SERVE AND RETURN DRILLS

Fifteen minutes

Have players rotate serves and returns, playing cross-court points. Keep two points going alternately on each court.

MINI-LESSON 3: LOB AND OVERHEAD

Players will soon find themselves faced with the need to lob and the necessity for a response—the overhead. This half hour is designed to help make players comfortable with both of these new shots.

EXPLAIN AND DEMONSTRATE LOB AND OVERHEAD

Five minutes

LOB DRILL

Eight minutes

Have players spread out along baseline with a supply of balls. Larger groups can rotate in squads. Players will drop and hit lobs. Emphasize short backswing and full, smooth follow-through. Height achieved by opening face of racquet and upward path of stroke. Instructor or assistant can stand at the net with racquet extended to give hitters a sense of necessary height.

Power is increased by enlarging the size of the swing, increasing the speed of the swing, or transferring the body weight in the direction of the flight of the ball. To hit a softer, more delicate shot, players should loosen their grip slightly, shorten the backswing and move the racquet forward more slowly.

Greater depth on all shots is achieved by hitting higher over the net. If shots tend to go long, aim lower and, when the players are ready, have them add some topspin to their groundstroke drive to keep the ball in the court.

Quiz your students on these four controls: **height, direction, power** and **depth**. Urge them to practice placing their shots using these tips and varying the target for each shot.

Note: Hitters demonstrating success with hitting from the service line can be gradually moved further and further back toward the baseline. The key is controlled hitting to the tosser.

DROP-HIT GROUNDSTROKE PRACTICE

Seven minutes

Demonstrate a drop-hit from three-quarters court. Emphasize dropping (not throwing) the ball. Contact in front of the body in line with the front foot. Emphasize controlled backswing and high follow-through—swinging from low to high. Using two squads of four, have students practice drop-hits, with four players hitting at a time. After a few rotations, move to base line.

SIMPLIFIED GROUNDSTROKE PRACTICE

Five minutes

Students form two lines on service line. Instructor feeds a ball to alternate lines. Students rotate to the outside of the court after every hit and move to the end of the opposite line. Instructor should be looking for an Eastern forehand grip, a balanced sideways stance, and little or no backswing. The emphasis is on controlled hitting to targets placed straight ahead on the opposite side of the court.

GAME: GROUNDSTROKE TWENTY-ONE

Fourteen minutes

To provide a more realistic hitting environment and to emphasize hitting deeper in the court with a full swing, play “Groundstroke Twenty-One.” Students form two lines behind the service line. Each student hits two simple forehand groundstrokes. Balls landing in the service court receive one point. Balls landing in the backcourt score two points. Instructor can keep both lines moving by feeding balls quickly. After both shots are hit, students move to the end of their team line. The first team to 21 wins.

WRAP-UP

Two minutes

Instructor reviews the mechanics of the forehand groundstroke, emphasizing any common problems and corrections.

CHALK TALK

Ten minutes

Review names and make at least one positive, individual comment to everyone. Introduce stretching. (See flexibility card.) As stretching and cool-down are underway, initiate pep talk about progress made and how soon players will be playing tennis.

Discussion questions:

- “What was the highlight of the lesson?”
- “Were there any surprises?”
- “What was the favorite activity?”
- “What was the least favorite?”

REVIEW

Five minutes

Review forehand grip and demonstrate a serve, the stroke they will learn next lesson. Have students practice, while circulating and checking grips.

REVIEW

Five minutes

Introduce and review basic rules of the game and rudiments of tennis etiquette.

Include:

- Balls may be hit in the air or after one bounce.
- The meaning of the lines: singles, doubles, service boxes.
- Balls landing on lines are considered in.
- Procedures for reserving or waiting for a court.
- How to walk onto a court without disturbing adjacent courts.
- How to retrieve errant balls and how to return stray balls to neighboring courts.

HALF-AND-HALF DRILL

Five minutes

Purpose: To show players how to divide the court down the center—right and left.

Have players from a line deep behind the baseline. The first player comes to net on the opposite side of the court—creating a typical “one up, one back” formation. The instructor will feed one ball to the net person, who will volley, and then a second ball short to the opposite side. The first person in line will move forward to get the short ball. After playing the point, this player takes the net position, and the net player goes to the end of the line.

Emphasize how the net player takes all balls to his or her side, while the baseline player covers the other (rather than “up and back” coverage). Introduce more aggressive net play by feeding first shot close to the center of the court and encouraging the net player to cover it.

TOPIC II: SWITCHING

One minute

Explain switching.

HALF-AND-HALF DRILL

Five minutes

Same formation as above drill—“one up, one back.” Instructor starts a point by lobbing over the net player. Rotate players after every lob.

TOPIC III: ETIQUETTE, MATCH PROTOCOL AND SPEED OF PLAY

Five minutes

Bring players together and explain the following:

- How to warm-up—two balls in play at once.
- How to spin the racquet for serve (demonstrate).
- How receiving partners determine who plays right and left side; who serves first and second.
- Retrieving errant balls from adjacent courts.
- Need for two balls before starting a point.
- Importance for all players to help get balls back to server at the end of each point.

The second level of *USA Tennis 1•2•3* is a supervised play program designed as an immediate follow-up to the instructional component. Level II consists of six sessions and is typically offered in 1½-hour sessions given over a three-week period.

Participants play with different partners and opponents in round-robin doubles, with review and ongoing instruction.

The goal of beginning players is to get to the point where they can comfortably play a game of tennis. The best way to achieve this is through continued skill development coupled with actual match experience.

Players who are just beginning to play doubles will need support in many of the basic areas of play. Consideration of where to stand, how to score, and the mechanics of player positioning and rotation will likely be as challenging as hitting serves and returns. In addition, players will be faced with many situations and shots that have not been included in previous lessons.

The first 30 minutes of each class consists of warm-up and instruction using the *USA Tennis 1•2•3* (Level II) lesson plans, one for each of the six classes. The remaining hour of class consists of round-robin doubles play using “no ad” scoring.

Note: Before playing, it is suggested that you spend 5 to 10 minutes having the participants review and practice the serve each session. Everyone can practice at the same time, and you can offer instruction and tips to everyone in the group.

PROGRAM MATERIALS FOR USA TENNIS 1•2•3 (LEVEL II)

Program Guide

MINI-LESSON 1: BASIC DOUBLES STRATEGIES AND TEAMWORK REVIEW

REVIEW

Five minutes

Review starting positions and roles. Walk players through the basic movements after each point: serving team moves side-to-side; receiving team moves up and back. Review serving rotation and scoring, highlighting how 15-15 is always to the right; 15-30 is always to the left, etc.

TOPIC 1: WHO HITS WHAT BALL?

One minute

Beginning players are often confused about how partners decide who hits a given ball. Explain how the first two shots in doubles are fixed: a given player will serve and a given player will receive.

PRACTICE

Five minutes

Practice assignments for next lesson:

- Practice toss-hit exercises with a partner.
- Explain how to use a hitting wall or backboard. If one is accessible, demonstrate. You might want to direct students to possible practice walls in the area. Some sites also have ball machines available for students. If this is a possibility, explain the procedure and demonstrate.

HANDOUTS

Distribute:

- Handout 1
- Code of Conduct Cards
- Flexibility Cards

LESSON TWO

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERVE AND THE VOLLEY

OBJECTIVE

Three minutes

To introduce successful serving, and forehand and backhand volleys.

Overview of lesson: Review of the forehand groundstroke; introduce serve and volleys.

FOREHAND GROUNDSTROKE REVIEW AND WARM-UP

Eight minutes

Instructor-led three-ball movement exercise. Students line up behind the right-hand corner of the baseline. Instructor will feed first ball to the right side of the student, second ball wider to the forehand side of the court (at a pace that requires a gentle jog to the ball), and a soft, high short ball to the left forecourt, which will bring the player jogging toward the net. After these three shots, player retrieves balls that go into the net (still jogging) and returns to the end of the line.

Add targets to increase interest.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERVE

Three minutes

Provide quick review of rules of serving:

- Start from behind the baseline.
- Serve diagonally into the opposite service box.
- Server gets two tries to initiate a point.

Brief students on grip:

- Advanced players usually use backhand or Continental grip (halfway between forehand and backhand).
- Most people are more comfortable learning to serve with the forehand grip, and adjusting the grip as they gain confidence and power.

Demonstrate smooth, full serves, emphasizing:

- Diagonal stance (an arrow drawn through the toes will point toward the target service box).
- Similarity between throwing motion and serving motion.

Note: A **high** percentage of adult beginners will be able to achieve serving success strictly through imitation and crossover skills from throwing. **Do not burden these successful students with unnecessary stroke mechanics.** Students who show success can move directly into practice routines. Students who have problems with a “holistic” approach to serving should receive individual attention.

Allow students to try full-court serves. Start by having them throw a few balls toward or over the net. Follow this by allowing them to get the feel of swinging the racquet by pretending they are throwing it over the net. Emphasize reaching high with the racquet. Practice tossing with non-dominant hand, seeking a height at least as high as outstretched racquet. Ask students to put it all together.

Four students can serve simultaneously without danger. Make sure balls are accessible without having players move toward or behind other servers. Players waiting to rotate into the serving slots should be stationed well behind the servers. For safety, do not have players serving simultaneously from both ends of the court.

HANDOUT SIX

THE DOUBLES GAMES: STRATEGY AND PRACTICE

DOUBLES BASICS

1. Positioning

Server is wider than in singles, partner is at net. Receiver is a bit wider than in singles, partner is at mid-court or on baseline. After each shot, the player hitting the ball must concentrate on returning to the center of his or her playing area.

2. Switching

Players generally divide the court down the center, from the center of the net to the baseline. When it is necessary to cover a ball on the other player's side, the two players switch positions. This occurs most commonly when a lob goes over the head of a net player.

3. Movement as a Team

When one player is forced to the far right or left of his or her playing area, the other player should follow in the same direction, as if there were a rope attaching the two of them.

4. Serve and Return

Service returns should be hit away from a strong net player. This can be done by hitting cross-court, or by lobbing.

PRACTICE SUGGESTIONS

Keep playing. Join *USA Tennis 1•2•3* (Level II: Supervised Play).

HANDOUT FIVE

GAME PLAY THROUGH SHOT COMBINATIONS

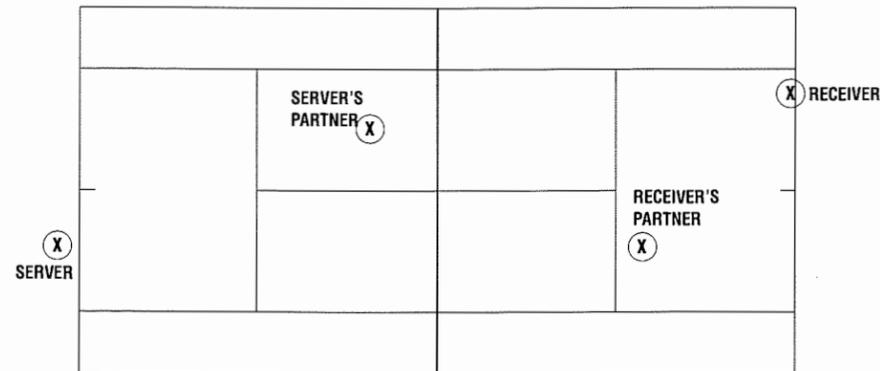
REVIEW OF SKILLS NEEDED FOR MATCH PLAY

- Serve with sufficient consistency to start points
- Return serves with consistency
- Cover court—right and left, up and back
- Play a sequence of shots (e.g., serve, groundstroke, volley)

DOUBLES POSITIONING

Server

Should stand between the center mark and the doubles sideline. This position is usually wider than in singles, where server starts closer to the center mark.



Receiver

Can start anywhere. As server moves further toward the sideline, receiver should move in the opposite direction closer toward his or her sideline.

Server's Partner

Can start anywhere. In standard formation, the server's partner assumes a net position. If the server is on the right side, the net player is on the left, and vice versa. This is an aggressive position, looking for the opportunity to win the point with a volley. After each point, the server and his or her partner will shift positions from the right to left, or vice versa.

Receiver's Partner

Can start anywhere. In standard formation, the receiver's partner starts either at the baseline or halfway to net on the service line, about three feet from the center service line. The latter has more offensive potential, since it is easy to move from this spot to the net. However, from the mid-court, players must learn to make snap decisions on whether to move forward or to retreat, depending on the quality of their partner's return.

PRACTICE SUGGESTIONS

- Play a set of doubles
- Practice serves and returns

SERVING PROGRESSION

Twenty minutes

1. **Lift and Catch:** With students standing three feet from the net in a single-file line parallel with the net, students toss ball with non-dominant hand into striking position and reach and catch ball with dominant hand.
2. **Lift and Touch:** From the same position, have students start with racquet behind shoulder and arm bent, like a quarterback preparing to pass. Upon command, students toss balls, reach up with racquet and touch ball. Racquets do not proceed past contact point. Have students "freeze" after contact and hold that position. Balls should bounce several times before they reach the service line.
3. **Lift, Touch, and Follow-Through:** Proceed as in step no. 2. After freezing, complete follow-through.
4. **Wind-Up, Lift, Touch and Follow-Through:** Students add wind-up, as in overhand throw.
5. **Serve from the service line.**
6. **If successful, serve from three-quarters court.**
7. **If successful, serve from full court.**

VOLLEY PROGRESSION

Fifteen minutes

Position students six feet apart in pairs on each side of the net. Students will share underhand tossing and hitting, switching after five volleys, through the following sequence:

- Hold racquet at the throat and bump ball back to the tosser. Move hand and racquet together so stroke is not wristy. Hitter gently volleys ball back to tosser.
- Move hand halfway down the handle and volley the ball back to the tosser.
- Hold racquet at the handle and gently volley the ball back to the tosser.
- Switch sides and repeat sequence on the backhand side.

GAME: TENNIS TWENTY-ONE WITH SERVE

Ten minutes

Students start in two lines from baseline. Students will serve, hit a groundstroke, and then a volley. Give two points for each successful serve and groundstroke, one point for a successful volley. First one to 21 wins.

CHALK TALK

Ten minutes

Highlight progress—find positive things to say about everyone. Use names. Cool down and review stretches.

REVIEW

Five minutes

Now that the serve has been introduced, review match play necessities: scoring (conventional and no-ad), warm-up protocol, spinning of racquet, service rotations in singles and doubles, rules governing position of players in singles and doubles. Using court diagram, play out an imaginary game with conventional scoring.

REVIEW

Ten minutes

Discussion topics for serve:

“Was serving harder or easier than expected?”

“What was the most demanding part of the serve?”

“Do you know what is meant by ‘double fault,’ ‘ace’ and ‘let’?”

“How tall do you think you have to be to serve ‘down’ into the service box?”

PRACTICE

Six minutes

Practice assignments:

- Practice the serving swing.
- Practice serving against a wall or backboard.
- Practice serving on a tennis court (depending on availability of courts and balls at the facility).
- Students can be encouraged to play matches “against themselves.”
- Student wins point if first or second serve goes in; loses if double faults.
- Practice forehand groundstrokes against a wall or backboard. Try to set a record for consecutive hits.

HANDOUT FOUR

SERVE AND RETURN OF SERVE: DEVELOPMENT OF GROUNDSTROKES

TENNIS MOVEMENT AND FOOTWORK

- Be prepared to move: knees slightly bent, weight on the balls of the feet
- Expect that the next shot will make you run
- Run to ball, shuffle return
- Recover after each shot: “magnets” on the center of the baseline and midway between the net and service line draw you back to a home base

RETURN OF SERVE

- Position should be in the center of possible serves (starting point bisects the widest possible serve to the forehand and backhand)
- Depth of position should be determined by pace and depth of the serve. Note where the serve will bounce the second time
- Adjust stroke to pace of the ball. For hard serves, use a short volley stroke

HANDLING TROUBLE SHOTS

Short Balls

Be prepared to start quickly. Because you are closer to the net, and because you may need to hit on the move, control is key. Use a short, smooth stroke.

Wide Balls

Try to start quickly, get to the right spot, stop and set up. If you do this, the wide ball is no more difficult than a ball hit right to you. Difficult shots that make you run and stretch should be returned with a simple stroke. The goal is to hit it back to the middle of the court.

High Balls

Be prepared to back up. Try to hit these balls in the comfort zone—around waist height. Recover to your home base after each shot.

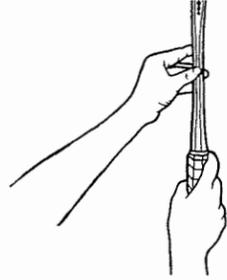
PRACTICE SUGGESTIONS

- Rally with partner, starting each rally with a serve
- Practice your serve on your own, rallying against a wall
- When practicing with a partner, try to get to every ball on the first bounce

HANDOUT THREE

BACKHAND VOLLEY AND GROUNDSTROKE

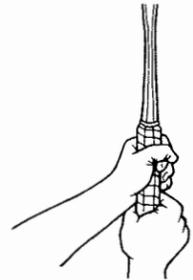
ONE-HANDED BACKHAND GRIP



SIMPLIFIED BACKHAND GROUNDSTROKE

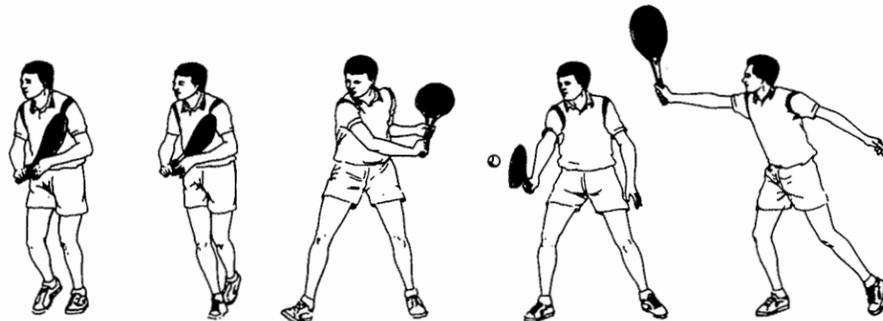
- Balanced sideways stance
- Short backswing
- Contact in front of forward foot
- Controlled, lifting follow-through

TWO-HANDED BACKHAND GRIP



PRACTICE SUGGESTIONS

- Practice grip change with the goal of moving from forehand to backhand without looking at the racquet
- Practice halfcourt rallies with a partner
- Hit against wall. Start with a drop and hit, move back and rally with two bounces. Try to alternate forehands and backhands



HANDOUTS

Distribute:

- Handout 2
- Rules of Tennis

LESSON THREE

INTRODUCTION TO BACKHAND GROUNDSTROKES

OBJECTIVE

Five minutes

To introduce the backhand, and review the forehand groundstroke, forehand and backhand volleys.

Instructor reviews students' names and then outlines the lesson—review of forehand, warm-up activity and introduction of the backhand groundstroke.

Brief review of the forehand grip and key elements of forehand volley and groundstroke.

WARM-UP ACTIVITY—ALLEY RALLY

Seven minutes

To introduce racquet-to-racquet hitting in a game situation. Alley-Rally is played by pairs of students, each of whom has three balls. Two balls are placed on the alley lines. Students stand a few feet behind and to the side of a ball. The third ball is put gently into play. Object is to strike the target ball in front partner. Rules: No “spiking” or hitting down. Change partners every minute.

SERVING PRACTICE

Ten minutes

Players serve from one of four stations on the baseline. (All players are on the same side of the court.) Use at least two supplies of balls so players can reach balls without leaving stations. Rotate players after a set number of serves. Players not serving over the net can practice serving into fences or backdrops. Put out targets to increase concentration. Emphasize control over power—ball should bounce but stay within baseline.

TOSS-VOLLEY-CATCH

Eight minutes

Form pairs of partners, up to four per court. Hitters will be stationed close to net, tossers six feet back. Hitter should attempt to control volley so that tosser can catch the ball. Tossers use “friendly” underhand tosses. Rotate roles and partners every six hits.

INTRODUCTION TO BACKHAND

Three minutes

Introduce the three key differences from the forehand: stance, contact point and grip. Introduce a two-handed backhand grip. Demonstrate backhand volley, half-court backhand groundstroke and full-court backhand.

INTRODUCTION OF SIMPLIFIED GROUNDSTROKE

Eight minutes

Standing on the service line, start with a two-handed backhand grip and a sideways stance. Demonstrate little or no backswing to lift the ball over the net to a partner. By utilizing both alleys, up to four pairs can use each court. Rotate roles and partners every six hits. Have them repeat after demonstrating a one-handed backhand grip. Explain advantages and disadvantages of both grips.

INTRODUCE READY POSITION AND GRIP SWITCH

Two minutes

Demonstrate ready position and use of non-dominant hand to achieve one-handed backhand grip, or the proper ready position for two-handed backhand play. (A player using a two-handed backhand should be encouraged to shift grip with the dominant hand—just like the one-handed player.)

ALTERNATE FOREHAND AND BACKHAND VOLLEYS

Five minutes

Players form two single-file lines at service line. First person in each line takes a net position. From the opposite service line, the instructor will feed a forehand to person on left, then a forehand to person on right, a backhand to person on left and a backhand to person on right. Repeat. Encourage focus on the grip change. After each player has hit four shots, have player retrieve balls and return to opposite line.

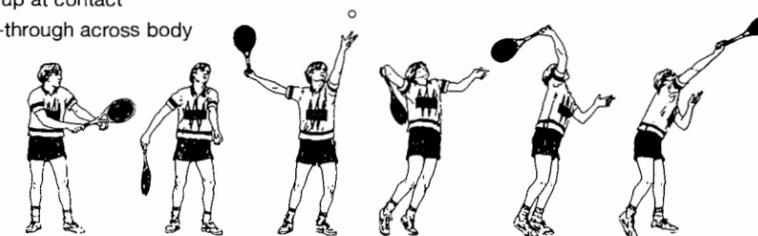
HANDOUT TWO

SERVING, SCORING, AND VOLLEYING

SERVING BASICS

- Target area is the service box immediately over the net, diagonally across from serve. Server must stand behind baseline (the line furthest from the net)
- Balanced stance, feet and shoulders angled toward target
- Smooth ball lift, at least as high as the racquet can reach
- Down together, up together swing
- Reach up at contact
- Follow-through across body

SERVE



PRACTICE SUGGESTIONS

- Practice service swing
- Practice hitting and serving against a wall or backboard
- Practice serving on a tennis court: Play a “match against yourself.” You win a point every time you get a first or second serve in play. You lose a point when you double fault (miss both service attempts)

CONVENTIONAL SCORING

Server's score is called first; server should announce score before each point.

No score	Love
First Point	15
Second Point	30
Third Point	40
Fourth Point	Game

When the score is tied at 40 to 40 (three points each), it is called **deuce**. One player must win two points in a row to win a game when it is at deuce. The player who is one point ahead is said to have the **advantage**. Server's advantage is called **ad in**; receiver's advantage is called **ad out**.

NO-AD SCORING

This is a simplified scoring system that eliminates ad-ins and ad-outs. At three points each, the next point wins the game. The receiver chooses into which service box the tie-breaking point will be served.

FOREHAND VOLLEY

- No backswing
- Balanced sideways stance
- Little racquet movement—abbreviated follow-through

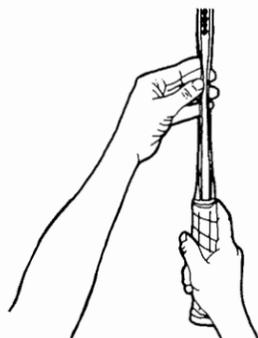
BACKHAND VOLLEY BASICS

- Balanced sideways stance
- No backswing
- Contact in front of body
- Little racquet movement—abbreviated follow-through

HANDOUT ONE

FOREHAND GROUNDSTROKE

FOREHAND GRIP



RACQUET SKILL EXERCISES

Requires only a ball and racquet. Develops a feel for the racquet and can help condition hand and arm for play. Try:

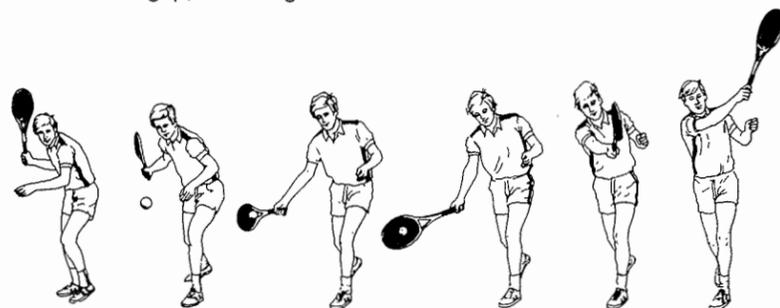
- Bumping balls up
- Dribbling down
- Dribbling up using alternate faces of the racquet
- Dribbling down with edge of racquet

SIMPLIFIED FOREHAND GROUNDSTROKE

- Balanced sideways stance
- Short backswing
- Lifting follow-through

PRACTICE SUGGESTIONS

- Practice racquet handling drills
- Hit against wall or backboard: hit and catch, two-bounce rallies
- Practice backhand grip, switching from forehand to backhand



ALTERNATE FOREHAND AND BACKHAND HALF-COURT GROUNDSTROKES

Seven minutes

Repeat above exercise using half-court groundstrokes. Have lines start behind baseline. Players achieving success can move back to three-quarters court.

GAME: CHAMPS OF THE COURT

Ten minutes

Two players assume baseline positions on one side of the court. These are the champs. The instructor is stationed behind these two players. Other players wait at the back of the opposite side of the court. The first two challengers assume baseline positions. Instructor feeds a ball to the challengers and a point is played. First team to earn two out of three possible points wins. Winning team always starts from instructor's side.

CHALK TALK

Fifteen minutes

Cool-down and stretches.

Discussion topics:

“Did either of the strokes, forehand or backhand, seem harder than the other? Why?”

“Did anyone experience any soreness as the result of the last lesson?” (Soreness is normal when undertaking a new physical activity. It is moderated by warm-up and stretching, and by doing the activity regularly.)

“How many people practiced between lessons?”

“Any comments or observations?”

“Any questions on forehands or backhands?”

“Any questions on rules?”

If discussion does not bring out these common problems for beginners, highlight:

- Overhitting—ball goes too far.
- Difficulty in judging the bounce of the ball—positioning. Emphasize the importance of footwork, which will be an area of concentration in future lessons.
- Difficulty in controlling the ball's direction. The ball goes where the racquet face is directed at point of contact. Explain open- and closed-face racquet and how they affect the trajectory of the ball. Explain how hitting early or late affect the direction of the shot.

REVIEW

Five minutes

Additional rules of tennis:

- Procedures and nuances of calling lines: make calls promptly and clearly; use hand signals when appropriate; when a ball appears to touch any part of the line, it is called good.
- If a player or a player's racquet touches the net, the point is lost.
- If a ball is caught or hits any part of a player or racquet before it bounces, it is assumed to have been good, even if the catcher is out of bounds or the ball was clearly headed out of bounds.

PRACTICE

Five minutes

Practice assignments:

- Grip change, with the goal of moving from forehand to backhand without looking at the racquet.
- Rally with partner, starting at the service line and working back toward the baseline.
- Practice hitting against a wall. Show how to practice alternating forehands and backhands, emphasizing control. Suggest letting the ball take two bounces to allow more time for racquet preparation and proper footwork.

HANDOUTS

Distribute:

- Handout 3
- National Tennis Rating Program Guide

OUTLINE

Ten minutes

Outline next step in *USA Tennis 1•2•3* is six sessions of supervised play, four players to a court. Explain format and logistics. Complete registration on the spot.

EVALUATIONS

Nine minutes

Hand out program evaluations. Ask all students to complete.

Collect evaluations and end with a positive wrap-up of the program and the great progress everyone has made.

HANDOUTS

Distribute:

- Handout 6
- USTA Membership Application (if not done previously)

The handouts on the following pages should be photocopied for your use during *USA Tennis 1•2•3* (Level I).

DOUBLES POSITIONING DEMONSTRATION

Five minutes

Instructor and three students play a series of points. Instructor rotates position and explains role of each. Emphasize the offensive potential of the volleyer and the need for cross-court groundstrokes.

DOUBLES PLAY—ROTATION

Ten minutes

Four players assume standard doubles positions. Extra players pair up with those on the court in the nearest off-court position. Play out three points. Players rotate to the waiting positions. Students who were sitting out step into the role nearest them.

DOUBLES PLAY

Twenty minutes

Regular doubles play, with players rotating after each “no ad” game. Circulate with positive comments emphasizing positioning.

SINGLES PLAY

Three minutes

Demonstrate singles game, emphasizing “home base” positioning and returning to center of baseline or net. Key strategic point: Keep ball in court.

SINGLES—CHALLENGE THE INSTRUCTOR

Seven minutes

Play a series of one-point matches against students. Instructor is not allowed to hit any winners but must return all balls with “friendly” hits. Highlight the effectiveness of this “human backboard” strategy. Encourage students on-court movement and positioning.

CHALK TALK

Eight minutes

Stretch and cool down. As this is underway, highlight positive achievements in doubles and singles. Encourage discussions:

“Anybody want to nominate the most amazing shot of the day?”

“Which position in doubles did you like to play?”

“How would you like your partner to act when you muff an easy shot?”

LESSON FOUR

SERVE AND RETURN OF SERVE; DEVELOPMENT OF GROUNDSTROKES

OBJECTIVE

Three minutes

To review serving skills and focus on returning serve, with the goal of initiating and sustaining rallies.

Instructor reviews progress made to date and briefs the students on the excitement of putting these skills together. Concentration will be on returning serve and court positioning, with the goal of a sustained rally.

WARM-UP ACTIVITY—TENNIS FOOTWORK

Five minutes

1. **Shuffle-run-stroke:** Students make a single-file line down the center of the court, from service line to baseline, facing the net. The instructor is on the opposite side of the net. First person in line will receive a wide forehand. This player will move and strike the ball. Other students will follow this movement and shadow a forehand. All players then shuffle back to center. Repeat on backhand. Go for 30 seconds.* Players may break as necessary. (This is a warm-up and students should not feel stressed.) Explain how this exercise mimics the actual side-to-side movement in a tennis match. Show the advantage of a shuffle return.
2. **Baseline-volley-baseline:** Players start on baseline in two adjacent lines at the center mark after hitting a short groundstroke. Right player and left player alternately move to net and hit a volley. Instructor will then feed each a lob down the line. Player on that side retreats to baseline, running sideways, keeping eye on the lob, and attempts to return it. Repeat for 60 seconds. During subsequent 60-second break, explain how tennis players need to learn to move around the court without taking their eyes off the ball.

3. **Repeat #1 or #2.**

* Change leaders every 30 seconds.

SERVING PRACTICE

Ten minutes

Players serve from four stations behind the baseline. Each player will serve two balls—a first serve and a second serve. Have players keep score against “Nobody.” A successful first and/or second serve wins the point. A double fault is a point for “Nobody.” The first one to 10 points wins.

RETURN OF SERVE

Five minutes

Return of serve is among the most important skills in tennis. The keys are to adjust the stroke and position to the particular serve.

Position: Demonstrate a medium-paced serve. Then ask, “Where did the ball bounce the **second** time?” Ask players to mark the spot. Demonstrate again. “Why is the second bounce important?” Show a very soft, short serve. “Where will you have to stand to return this serve?” “Where would I stand in terms of left to right position?” Demonstrate bisecting the possible angles of return.

Stroke: Have assistant serve a medium-paced ball. Simply block it back. “How big a swing did I take?” “How should I adjust the size of my swing to a harder or softer serve?”

RETURN-VOLLEY PRACTICE

Five minutes

Instructor serves from the service line, in the center of the court using a soft flat serve. Students form two lines behind the deuce and ad service boxes. Each player will return serve and move to net. Place targets near the doubles alleys for volleys. Feeding sequence is serve, serve, volley, volley.

SINGLES COURT POSITIONING

Three minutes

Review the preferred “home bases”: (1) centered on or behind the baseline and (2) centered at the net. Demonstrate how the center position shifts depending on the position of the ball. (Consider using the “magnet” theory—one magnet at the baseline and one magnet between the service line and the net. Players are drawn to the magnet nearest to them after each shot.)

HANDOUTS

Distribute:

- Handout 5

LESSON SIX

THE DOUBLES GAME: STRATEGY AND PRACTICE

OBJECTIVE

Three minutes

To become familiar and comfortable with the various roles in doubles play, and to practice these roles in game situations.

Help build confidence in student’s ability to begin to play match tennis and to bridge into the next three-week segment, *USA Tennis 1•2•3* (Level II: Supervised Play). Introduce these four concepts of doubles: 1) position, 2) switching when required, 3) movement as a team and 4) serve and return.

HALF-COURT WARM-UP

Five minutes

Cross-court rallies, ping-pong style (switch partners after every hit).

MOVEMENT ACTIVITY—DOUBLES SWITCHING

Ten minutes

When playing up and back positions, or with two players at net, a lob over one player’s head is often best retrieved by the partner, with the two switching sides of the court. All players start up at the net.

First two players take the net as a team. Instructor feeds a volley to the left player and then a lob over the right player, which the left player immediately tries to retrieve. As quickly as possible feed a volley to the right player, and then a lob to the left side of the court, which the right net player then retrieves. First two players return to end of the line, as two new net players move onto the court immediately.

GAME: SERVE-RETURN TEAM

Fifteen minutes

Using the same rotation, play games using conventional scoring—except for the rotation of service boxes. One pair will serve and play diagonal tennis with the other pair until the game is won or lost. Then the other pair will serve a game in the same fashion.

CHALK TALK

Ten minutes

Stretch and cool-down.

Review of today's activities—doubles positioning and playing out sequences of shots. Encourage players with positive observations and lead up to doubles play in next lesson.

Discussion questions:

“What seem to be some of the main obstacles to keeping a rally going?”

“Any other questions, concerns or comments?”

REVIEW

Fifteen minutes

Review and expand upon doubles positioning. Using court diagrams, outline the positions and responsibilities of the four players in doubles. Ask questions to involve the students: “Why do you think this is a good place to start the point?” “Do the rules of tennis require this person to start here?”

Review service rotation and scoring. Define a tennis set.

Add situational questions:

“If the service return goes here, how should the other players react?”

“If the return is lobbed over the net player, what do you think this team should do?”

PRACTICE

Five minutes

Practice suggestions:

- Play a set of doubles.
- Practice serves and rallies. Hit against a wall or backboard.

READINESS TRAINING

Five minutes

Explain how short balls are a major problem for people starting in the game—regardless of innate speed. With students on baseline, feed each one a short ball from opposite baseline. Demonstrate how it is possible to get to balls with ease—if students are prepared. Emphasize the physical difference between anticipating a short ball and getting caught unprepared—flat-footed versus on the balls of the feet, poised to run.

GROUNDSTROKE-SHORT BALL MIX-UP

Five minutes

Students start well behind baseline in two lines. Instructor will feed one ball to each line (one line is forehands, the other backhands), with students rotating to end of opposite line after each shot. Mix in short balls every few feeds. Feeds should be alternated rapidly from right to left line to keep all students moving.

HANDLING HIGH BALLS

Eight minutes

Note: Beginners often hit high, lobbing groundstrokes, but often have trouble judging where to play high-bouncing balls coming to them. (Lesson situations usually practice medium-paced, flat-trajectory balls.)

Hit a series of high semi-lobbs. “Has anyone noticed any problems in returning shots like these?” Ask players to notice where the ball bounces the second time. The easiest place to strike these balls is on the way down, when they are just a few feet from the ground. Players must learn to back up and wait for these high balls to come down. Have students practice judging ball by starting on baseline, moving back, and catching the ball with two hands at waist height.

COMBINATION: WIDE, SHORT AND HIGH BALL PRACTICE

Seven minutes

Have players form two lines at the baseline on either side of the center mark. Sequence of feed will be high, high, wide, wide, and short, short, alternating balls to each line.

CHALK TALK

Six minutes

Cool-down and stretches.

Emphasize that the previous activities are virtually real game situations. Highlight some of the achievements of the lesson. Ask if people found time to practice. Emphasize the benefit of a short hit against a wall or serving a bucket of balls.

REVIEW

Ten minutes

Review court positioning—baseline and net home bases, and how these bases shift with the position of the ball. (Use a chalkboard or court diagrams if available.) Explain where “no man’s land” is. Ask, “How do you think this area got its name?” Ask for any other questions from today’s lesson.

REVIEW

Five minutes

Introduce *The Code*—the unwritten rules of tennis. Highlight some of the key points:

- Retrieving balls for the server.
- Proper procedures for retrieving balls that roll onto or from other courts.
- Calling lines—never question a call unless making a call against oneself.
- Server announces score in a match before serving each point.
- Shaking hands after a match.

PRACTICE

Five minutes

Practice assignments:

- Rally with a partner, starting each rally with a serve.
- Practice serve independently. Hit against a wall or backboard.

HANDOUTS

Distribute:

- Handout 4

LESSON FIVE

GAME PLAY THROUGH SHOT COMBINATIONS

OBJECTIVE

Five minutes

To introduce patterns of play common in beginning doubles.

Demonstrate traditional doubles positioning. Emphasize this positioning is by convention, not rule. Positions should change with every shot, based on where the ball is at any given time. Ideal positions often cannot be reached in time. Stop, regardless, just before opponent strikes the ball. Note how many rallies in doubles are cross-court.

WARM-UP ACTIVITY—HALF-COURT CHAMPS OF THE COURT

Ten minutes

Pairs of players play a two-out-of-three-points match using the four service boxes. Remaining players rally in the backcourt. (Create makeshift courts using benches or short tennis nets, if available.)

SERVING PRACTICE

Ten minutes

Using up to four stations, have players serve from baseline. Each player gets two serves. Emphasize control and consistency by seeing how many points a player can serve in a row without double faulting.

SERVE-APPROACH-VOLLEY TWENTY-ONE

Five minutes

Students start behind the baseline in two lines, with a supply of balls. Each student will hit a serve. Instructor will then feed a short ball and a volley. Player earns one point for each successful shot. Add targets (triple points) to increase excitement.

SERVE-RETURN PRACTICE

Fifteen minutes

Players are paired at the four corners of the court. One side serves, the other returns. The goal is to rally cross-court. Switch players after every point. Rotate partners/pairs every few minutes.