

JTT SAMPLE LESSON PLANS FOR BEGINNERS

See www.amadortennisclub.org/jtt_training.html for more resources.

Questions? Benita Asher 257-1208 or basher@volcano.net

- Make it fun! Mix in games and group activities, and keep it moving. If an activity is working well, stay with it a few minutes. If it is not, move on. Remember that the kids don't know what you've planned.
- Keep it safe! Explain guidelines for proper behavior and use of equipment up front. Practice how to use the equipment properly and safely.
- Have players hug their racquet against their chest when instructed to stop an activity.
- Be sure to obtain everyone's attention before progressing to the next activity. Bring the group close to you for instructions.
- Provide clear visual demonstrations when demonstrating skill components.
- Get children started on an activity, roam the group to give feedback and assistance, then go to your clipboard and plan your next activity. Don't think you have to memorize it all!
- Check child's shoes and racquet sizes
- Typical format for a 1-hour practice:
 - 5 minutes intro/review from previous week
 - 5-7 minute warm-up/stretch
 - 5-7 minutes games
 - 5-10 minutes skills practice (forehand, backhand, volley)
 - 10 minutes introduce new skill or concept and practice it
 - 15 minutes scrimmage using match day format
 - 5 minutes wrap-up/reminders
 - One water break
- If it is hot, bring a spray bottle with water to "spritz" the kids as a reward.

Week 1: As you go through the weeks, emphasize the important skills for tennis: eye-hand coordination, control, balance, quickness, footwork, teamwork, etc. Please check shoes and racquet sizes.

1. Only 3 Rules:
 - a. listen for whistle and stop what you are doing when you hear it; look at instructor and hug racquet
 - b. treat the equipment carefully -- if the ball goes over fence or you bang or drop the racquet, you won't have equipment to play
 - c. HAVE FUN!
2. **Warm up** (2-4 minutes)
 - a. Jog perimeter of the court always facing one direction
 - b. **Racquet quickness** – Two children face each other with racquet head on ground and fingertip on endcap. One counts down 3-2-1 and then both release racquet and grab partner's racquet without letting it drop. If successful, back up about a foot. Continue until someone misses, then they must come together and start again.
3. **Stretch** (3-4 minutes)
 - a. Arms – triceps stretches, wrist, elbow and shoulder circles
 - b. Legs – quadriceps (flamingo), ham strings (toe touch)
4. **Basket/box catch with two lines:** Children form two lines at the service line. First person in each line has a basket or box. Coach feeds high lobs alternating lines. Players attempt to catch the ball in box/basket on one bounce, then quickly hand the basket to the teammate behind. Continue until all balls are used, then count up which team caught the most.
5. **Demonstrate Grip:** Establish dominant hand, then slide hand down racquet face and shake hands with racquet. Dominant hand is always closest to endcap of racquet – no switching hands. You'll need to watch for this throughout season.
 - a. Balance ball on racquet face, then do it standing on one leg, other leg, hopping
 - b. Roll ball around face of racquet without dropping it
 - c. Red light green light
6. **Bounce downs** – Encourage children to hold racquet with thumb towards ground.
 - a. Advanced Variation (future week): Travel to net and back while dribbling.
 - b. Advanced Variation (future week): Use edge of racquet (edgies down)
7. **Bounce ups** – Thumb up. Bounce should be no higher than nose (CONTROL).
 - a. Easier Variation: Bounce up then let ball hit ground once then bounce up again and repeat without stopping. GOAL=5
 - b. Advanced Variation (future week): Flip flops up (change side of racquet used each time)
8. **Juggles** – Thumb up. Lift ball up to nose-height, then let drop to ground, and scoop under the ball after it bounces in order to tap it up again nose-high. Emphasize knee bend and eye on ball, racquet flat when tap contact is made.
9. **1-2-3 forehand** –Break the stroke down into three positions
 - a. **Position 1:** Ready position, facing forward, feet shoulder width apart, knees bent, both hands on racquet with racquet head up in front of face.
 - b. **Position 2** (forehand): Pivot both feet to the dominant side, take racquet over 90 degrees, keeping racquet head up as in #1. Only dominant hand should be on racquet.

- c. **Position 3:** Almost like position 1 except one hand will be on racquet. In the early stages, we are not really teaching a big swing. There is almost no follow through. Use words like tap and bump rather than swing.

10. Forehand exercises:

- a. Coach bounces a feed to forehand for each player to trap on strings with other hand
- b. Coach bounces a feed to forehand for each player to tap back gently so coach can catch.
- c. Partner bounces a feed to forehand – player waits for bounce and taps to partner who catches it. 5X then switch
- d. 3-2-1 juggles then tap to partner.
- e. Coach feeds forehands over net

11. Scrimmage (may not get to this during first practice, but kids will want to “play a real game”) –

Explain game day format and do two 5-minute sets (see last page for format). Be sure to cover: racquet spin, feed, rotation, line calls (what is in? what is out?), scoring, handshake at end of match.

Some match considerations:

Learning to judge balls that are going out. Don't touch them, let them go out, and you'll win the point

Ball hits net and goes over. It's still in play if it bounces in.

Either player can hit the ball on any point (teamwork)

Always hustle back to ready position in between hits

Coaches – If you make an awful feed, just call a “do over”. Don't be afraid to reposition child for best feed result, especially in the case of left handed players.

12. Recap – Important elements of tennis (eye hand coordination, balance, footwork, teamwork)

DID YOU HAVE FUN?

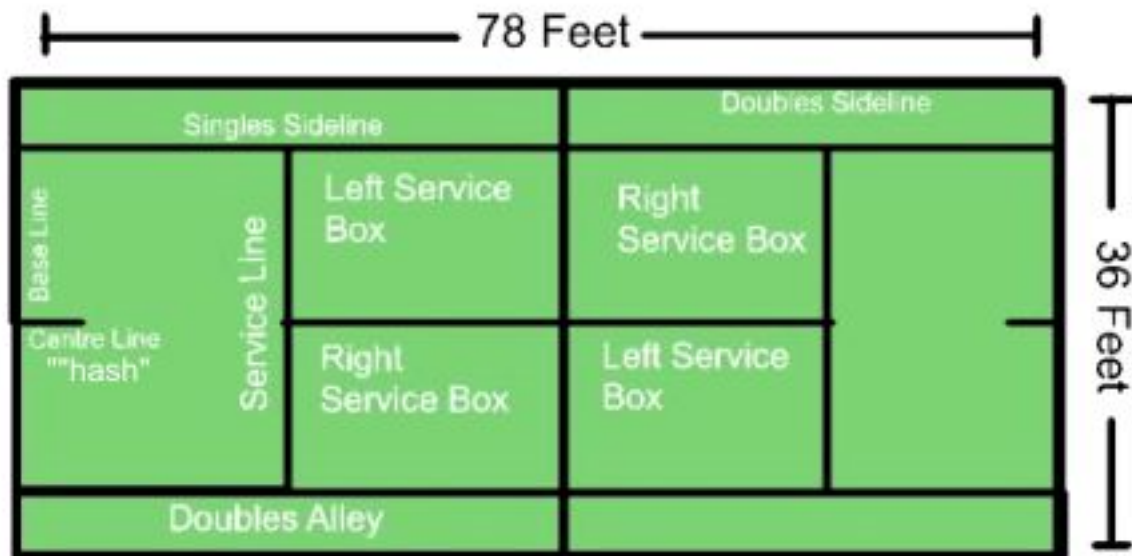
Week 2

1. Chalk talk

- Review 3 rules from first practice
- Do you play other sports? Team sports?
- What is sportsperson-like conduct? On court and off; treat others like you want to be treated
- What it means to be on a team? Support each other, no criticism
- Why are we here? To learn, practice and have fun.
- Distribute and go over court conduct handout

2. Warm up (4 minutes)

- Sideline to sideline racquet touches (30 seconds – how many?)
- Identify parts of court and run to them on command (net post, net cord, baseline, singles and double sidelines, service line, baseline, hash)



3. Stretch (4 minutes)

4. Ball only drills (5 minutes) eye hand coordination

- Toss and catch, with clap, how high can you toss? How many claps?
- With a partner, standing facing each other across doubles alley
 - both children bounce balls
 - both toss balls
 - one bounce-one toss
 - (difficult) one person bounces two bounces simultaneously to partner

5. Review forehand grip. Practice forehand juggles (2 minutes)

6. Review 1-2-3 forehand (2 minutes) Demonstrate and have them mimic you.

7. Bounce Trap With a partner (one has racquet, one has ball, stand about 6 feet apart) – bounce and trap on racquet, bounce and tap back to partner who catches, then switch roles

8. Self-bounce forehand over net (2 minutes). Place targets for starting (standing) point about ½ way between net and service line, with two lines, children pick a ball out of hopper placed in center of court and step up to line to drop bounce tap over net.

9. **Hit forehands fed by coach over net** (4 minutes)
10. **Introduce backhand** (2 minutes): 1-2-3 like forehand only on other side of body. Make sure dominant hand stays at bottom of racquet. This is when kids sometimes switch their hands.
11. **Backhand juggles** (2 minutes) Same as forehand except other side of racquet; knuckles – not thumb – facing upward. Have kids try to do this one handed.
12. **Bounce feed to backhand** Have kids line up shoulder to shoulder in position 2 for backhand. Coach bounces a ball to each of their backhands, they then tap back and coach catches (4 minutes). They do it with pairs of kids -- have hitter stand in position 2 for backhand about 5-6' from bouncer. Then switch roles.
13. **Coach feeds backhands over net** (3 minutes)
14. **Mix forehand and backhands fed over net** (3 minutes)
Call out "forehand" or "backhand" so they know what you plan to feed them. For the better kids, you can feed the balls farther away from them and make them move more. Or don't tell them which side they are getting.
15. (5-10 minutes) Scrimmage & recap of what we've covered today

Week 3

Next couple weeks are all about more playing time and practicing some challenging playing situations like:

- Balls down the middle (teamwork)
- Deep balls (move back)
- Short Balls (run up)
- Accuracy and aim (hitting to targets)
- Consistency (more playing time)

You will not cover all these points this week; use some in future weeks.

1. Warm up (4 minutes)
 - a. **Hot potato** No racquets, 3 kids per side (1 or 2 balls). Kids throw ball over net and must get rid of it quickly if it comes to them.
 - b. **Red light green** light to net and back while balancing ball on racquet face
2. **Stretch** (4 minutes)
3. (4 minutes) **Review forehand & backhand**...partner bounces ball to hitter who taps back to partner who catches, both sides, both roles.
4. **Forehand and backhand coach feeds** over net. Have kids say "hit" when the ball meets the strings.
5. (4 minutes) **Practice feeding balls down the middle** to two teammates on the court at a time (explain TEAMWORK – player nearest to the ball should call it, if you call it, you must go for it and other player backs off)
6. (4 minutes) **Feed short balls** (have kids stand in ready position for start of a point and practice running up)
7. **Accuracy and aim** (hitting to targets)
 - a. (5 minutes) Feed forehands or backhands. Award points for hitting different zones (alleys are 2 points, service boxes are 1 point, hula hoops or beach towels randomly placed are 10 points, back in the basket = 100 points). Each player keeps track of own score.
8. (10 minutes) **Wipeout** – Explain the difference between singles court and doubles court (sidelines). Two teams in a line on opposite baselines, start with singles point between two players. Losing team rotates line, winning team adds player from line. If 2+ people on court, team plays doubles court, 1 person team plays singles court
9. (10 minutes) **Scrimmage** Don't keep points--- Instead, count number of times ball goes over net during each point (kids can count along too). Trying to get the longest rally (consistency)
10. **Recap**

Week 4

1. Discuss last weekend's match – what did you learn? What did you observe about other team?
2. Warm up (4 minutes)
 - a. Jog in place while juggling one ball from right hand to left hand
 - b. High knees and regular juggle
 - c. Heel kicks and regular juggle
 - d. Pass ball under left leg 3x
 - e. Pass ball under right leg 3x
 - f. Dribble ball from right to left hand
 - g. Dribble ball from right to left hand while running through the group
3. **Sandwich** Split your team into two lines at baseline. Each player needs racquet and ball. First player holds racquet flat and balances ball to net and back. Then second player puts racquet on top of first player's ball, then ball on top of that. BOTH PLAYERS to go net and back. They must work together and keep eyes on balls. Then add third player, etc. sandwiching the balls in between the racquets at each layer. Bottom player should be strong and can hold handle with both hands.
4. **Stretch** (4 minutes)
5. **Toolbox for winning points** What are some ways to win points?
 - a. Hitting ball in between opponents (confuse them)
 - b. Hitting ball in alleys (make them run)
 - c. Hit ball to weaker player
 - d. Hit ball deep
 - e. Hit ball short
6. (4 minutes) **Feed deep balls** and practice hitting from a little deeper. This is a more advanced skill, will need a bigger "swing". CAREFUL not to hit the ball long.
7. Feed short balls
8. Feed balls down the middle (teamwork – one player calls it!)

IF TIME – otherwise do this next week

1. **Intro to volley** (2 minutes) – Only use volley in very specific situations...if you are close to the net and can put away the ball. It is usually best to move your feet and get in position to hit a groundstroke after it bounces (forehand or backhand)
2. **Volley Trolley** (5 minutes) Recruit as many parents as you can to stand on one side of net about 2' from net with a couple balls each and spare hopper behind them. Players line up on other side of net about 1-2 feet away from net, holding racquet like a stop sign with thumb facing net (forehand volley). Players walk from station to station as each parent feeds an easy underhand ball to their racquet which they tap back on the fly. Then reverse it for backhand volleys (kids hold racquet with knuckles facing net)
3. (5-8 minutes) **Feed each child one forehand, then feed a high ball and have them run up to knock off volley**. Then repeat for backhand and backhand volley. If they are doing well, then you can mix it up (forehand groundstroke, backhand volley, etc).

Week 5

1. Warm up (5 min)

- a. Hot potato no racquets, 3 kids per side (1 or 2 balls)
- b. Racquet quickness – See week 1, but do it with the entire group all in one circle. Coach calls out left or right.

2. Stretch (4 min)

3. Hitter/Fielder Game (5 min)

- a. Start with kids evenly divided on either side of net. One side has no racquets (these are fielders). One side has racquets and form line at the T (hitters). Coach feeds groundstrokes from net post position. Fielders try to catch the ball on one bounce. If the hitter is caught on one bounce, they become fielders. Hitters try to hit it over w/o being caught on one bounce. Hitters must hit a winner to remain hitters. Use doubles court boundaries.
4. Two lines self drop hit over net with basket in middle
 5. Two lines self drop hit with partner on other side who hits back to finish rally (keep basket out of the way)
 6. Rally three abreast using alleys and center, rotate kids every few minutes
 7. Teamwork – feed balls down the middle
 8. Aim – hit to targets
 9. (remaining time) Scrimmage

Week 6

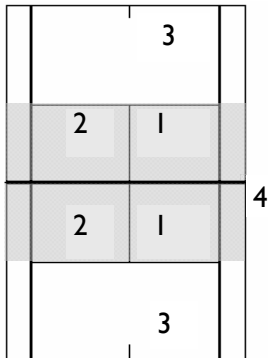
1. Warm up –
Inchworm – line up all players shoulder to shoulder very close. Players hold racquet flat out in front of them. Put a ball on the back player's racquet. Using CONTROL and when their teammate is ready, roll the ball to his/her strings. Then run around the BACK of the line and get on the other end. In this manner, the line will "inch" along towards the net. This one usually gets out of control, kids get excited and go too fast. Emphasize that it's not a race, they're trying to get all the way to the net without dropping the ball!
2. Stretch
3. Two lines – bounce and trap a fed ball against racquet then run the ball over to put in coach's basket and go to back of line.
4. Feed forehands and backhands. Kids should think about positioning themselves like they're going to trap the ball. Ask each player to say "BOUNCE" when the ball bounces and "HIT" when the ball contacts the racquet.
5. Three pairs rally simultaneously over net for longest rally, then rotate one position. Line up forehands, then backhands.
6. Reminder about "toolbox for winning points". Review some strategies for winning points.
7. One ball live: Two separate individual rallies are started with a drop serve (the serves should be aimed straight ahead to the opposite player). When one of the rallies ends, the remaining ball in play becomes "LIVE" and is played out in the mini court amongst the four players like doubles. Rotate new players in after each point.
8. Around the world with two teams of 3 on opposite sides of the net (singles). Each player hits one ball then goes to end of his/her line. Try to keep rally going. Kids really have to hustle.
9. TENNIS (horse) – Player names shot and zone (1 = alley, 2=service box, 3 = other service box, 4 = other alley). If player doesn't make shot, they get a letter (to spell out "TENNIS"). If they make the shot, they get no letter and they get to decide on a new shot.
10. Scrimmage

Final Practice

I like to let the kids be the coaches. You can still dictate pacing and the warmup and scrimmage if you want, but let each child choose their favorite activities. Bring all your equipment so you are ready for any game or drill.

Reminder: Season end celebration, probably adjusted match times.

Junior Team Tennis Beginners



Court Set-up:

1 & 2: Players on court

3: Line of additional players

4: Feeder & a scorekeeper (one of these or a parent can run the timer)

Boundaries:

Any ball that bounces in the shaded area is in play.

Everything else is considered out. Players should make their own line calls, but coaches can assist.

Scorekeeping:

Spin a racquet to see who receives first feed. Three twelve-minute sets are played. Teams earn a point for every rally that they win, regardless of which team received the feed. Feeder should call the score before every feed and the feed alternates from Team A to Team B on each point. When time is called, the existing rally is finished to determine the winner of that point. A tie is OK at the end of each 12 minute set. Teams change ends of the court after each set and first feed goes to the other team. At the end of three sets, total up all points won by each team to determine the week's winner (the score could be something like 58-63 for example). If tied, whoever won the very last point is the week's winner.

Rotation:

Players stay in the same position FOR TWO CONSECUTIVE POINTS.

After every second point is over, call "ROTATE" and position 1 moves to 2; 2 moves to back of the line at 3; front of the line at 3 moves to 1. Next ball is fed to player 1 on the opposite team from the last feed. Always feed ball to forehand (be aware of any left handed players). Rotation occurs on both sides after every 2 points regardless of whether or not the player manages to hit the fed ball into play. All players must play, and line order should remain the same.

All players & coaches shake hands at end of match & please turn in scorecards!