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USA Tennis 1-2-3 for Adults Program Guide

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UNITED STATES TENNIS ASSOCIATION

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UNITED STATES TENNIS ASSOCIATION

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Printed in the United States of America.

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Preface

This *USA Tennis 1-2-3 for Adults Program Guide* is designed to give coaches and other instructors the tools to get adults and seniors (from 19 to 90 years of age) on the tennis court and playing tennis in a short period of time. It revises and updates the *USA Tennis Curriculum Guide for Adults*. The program guide is for use with the beginning player or the player who has been away from the game for a while. Six one-and-a-half-hour lessons give players the skills and confidence they need to begin playing, while an additional six sessions of the same length review strokes learned in the first six lessons, introduce new skills, and provide practice and supervised playing time.

In addition to the USA Tennis 1-2-3 program, this guide briefly presents an introductory fun-filled 90-minute lesson that is offered free in many parts of the country to get people to try the sport.

Two primary attractions of tennis for adult and senior players are the opportunities for exercise and for meeting new people that tennis provides. USA Tennis 1-2-3 introduces players to a sport that provides overall conditioning and improves flexibility, strength, endurance, and weight control, while at the same time providing a highly satisfying social experience.

Adult students also want to see steady progress and to feel, from the beginning, that they are succeeding in learning the real skills necessary to play tennis. This is what USA Tennis 1-2-3 is all about. Each lesson introduces a new skill and then reinforces it through repetitive practice so that the player comes away with the satisfaction of mastery.

Currently more than 72 million Americans are 50 years of age or older (representing more than 26 percent of the total population). This number will increase in the next ten to twenty years. The United States Tennis Association has tournaments for men in the 90-and-over age category and for women 85 and over. Tennis can be learned at any age and has been shown to foster better physical and mental health throughout life. It is truly the sport of a lifetime. The *USA Tennis 1-2-3 for Adults Program Guide* will help coaches introduce—or reintroduce—the sport of a lifetime to these players.

Kirk Anderson
National Administrator, USA Tennis
United States Tennis Association

Acknowledgments

The USA Tennis 1-2-3 program was established in 1998 as part of an overall initiative—the USA Tennis Plan for Growth—to grow the game of tennis in the United States. As we enter our fifth year, we want to recognize the Play Tennis America program, which was the predecessor of USA Tennis 1-2-3. Many USTA volunteers and staff along with others in the tennis industry influenced and helped to craft Play Tennis America. In addition, several key organizations led the effort to recruit new adult players to tennis. Joining the USTA in this meaningful undertaking were the Tennis Industry Association, National Recreation and Park Association, Professional Tennis Registry, and the United States Professional Tennis Association.

Introduction to the Program Guide

USA Tennis 1-2-3 for Adults is a low-cost instructional program designed to teach basic tennis skills to new or returning adult and senior players in a group environment. It consists of six Skill Development lessons followed by six sessions of Practice and Play. All twelve sessions are one-and-a-half hours in length.

Skill Development Component

The Skill Development component of USA Tennis 1-2-3 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 discussion, review of the lesson, Q&A, and stretching and cool down.

The goal of each lesson is to introduce one or more of the skills necessary to play tennis. The lessons are designed to accommodate a ratio of 8 to 10 players to one experienced coach on one court. Of course, this curriculum can also be used with smaller groups and it can be used with larger groups if a second court and coach are available so that the group can be divided in two.

The teaching philosophy of USA Tennis 1-2-3 for Adults is centered on keeping skill development simple and building confidence through success. Adult students want to see steady progress and to feel, from the beginning, that they are succeeding in learning the real skills necessary to play tennis. The on-court segment of each lesson is action-oriented, with a minimum of lecture. Since the surest way to build skills 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.

Presentations and discussions are reserved for the final half-hour of the lesson, which can be held off-court. The handouts at the end of each lesson in the guide summarize what was learned in the lesson and provide suggestions for practice between lessons. The coach should photocopy these handouts and give them to the students after each lesson. All attempts should be made to keep the instruction, both on and off the court, as practical as possible, so students will learn quickly, enjoy the learning, and want to continue with the follow-up series of six sessions of practice and play.

Practice and Play Component

During the Practice and Play component, the basic strokes are reviewed, new skills are introduced, and students participate in modified match play. Each 1½-hour session begins with a half-hour of instruction and is followed by an hour of modified doubles play with frequent rotations and partner changes. Coaches are on the court during match play to assist the players with positioning, shot selection, rules, and scoring.

Tips for Managing Classes

Coaches need to adjust each class and each session to the special needs of the participants. With eight or more participants, there will naturally be a range of skills. All players should experience challenge and success. Since many of the practice drills and games require partners, the selection and rotation of partners should be done carefully to ensure that everyone has the chance to play with players at different skill levels and of different temperaments and personalities.

To make students feel comfortable and provide the best chances for their success, follow these additional tips:

- Be upbeat, fun, and positive! The single most important element of the program is your enthusiasm!
- Learn and use your students' names—nametags are highly recommended.
- Help players meet others by frequently rotating and mixing partners. One of the main attractions of tennis for adult and senior players is the social element.
- Have water available and encourage students to drink regularly, especially when playing outdoors in hot weather.
- Encourage the use of sunscreen, hats, and proper clothing to protect against sunburn and other potential dangers from sun exposure.

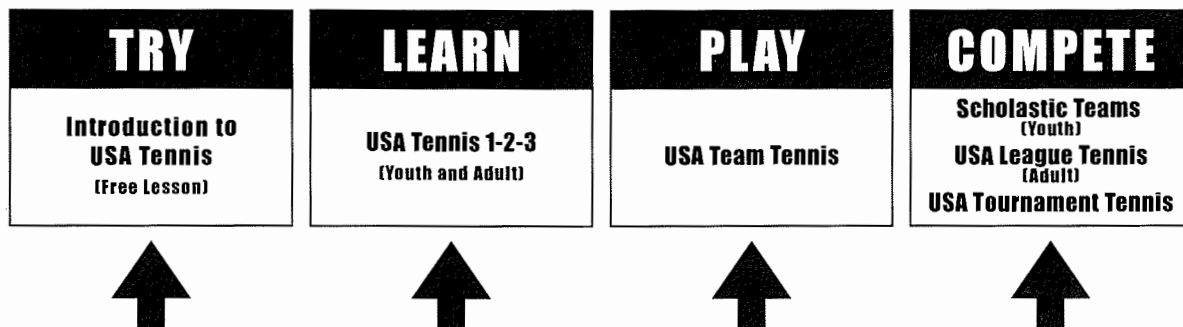
Even the most experienced coaches will soon discover the benefits of following a simple, consistent agenda. USA Tennis 1-2-3 for Adults has been field tested and proven to work. Coaches are encouraged to adhere closely to the outline provided for each lesson and session in the program. At the same time, the lessons and sessions provide a range of challenge, and coaches should recognize that some students will progress rapidly to more rigorous activities, while other students will spend more time on the basics. Within the tightly scheduled outline, the coach will need to use discretion in matching and rotating partners and in adjusting the teaching style to meet each student's needs.

What Is USA Tennis?

In 1998, the U.S. Tennis Association and its industry partners introduced a five-year plan to grow the game of tennis throughout the United States. This plan was named the USA Tennis Plan for Growth. USA Tennis events and programs are the centerpiece of this nationwide initiative. The programs—Introduction to USA Tennis, USA Tennis 1-2-3 for Youth, USA Tennis 1-2-3 for Adults, USA Team Tennis, USA League Tennis, and USA Tournament Tennis—are designed to encourage prospective tennis players to TRY, LEARN, PLAY, and, if they wish, to eventually COMPETE in this lifetime sport. These programs comprise the USA Tennis Program Pathway. (Scholastic Teams shown on the program pathway are for high school competitors.)

This program guide is for one of these programs—USA Tennis 1-2-3 for Adults. It also briefly outlines Introduction to USA Tennis, a free 90-minute lesson that often

USA TENNIS PROGRAM PATHWAY



inspires adult players to move on to USA Tennis 1-2-3. The USTA offers 6, 12, and 18-hour USA Tennis Development Coach Workshops for coaches involved in USA Tennis 1-2-3. A select group of national trainers conduct these workshops and each participant receives a packet of reference materials.

USA Team Tennis is a logical next step after USA Tennis 1-2-3 for Adults for players interested in playing matches in a relaxed, supportive atmosphere. The USTA also offers development workshops for coaches involved in USA Team Tennis.

Program Materials

All USA Tennis program materials are available through your USTA section office (see Appendix for contact information) or by ordering them through the *USA Tennis Materials Catalog* (call 914-696-7236). In addition to program guides and promotional brochures, the following materials are available:

- **USTA Flexibility Exercises Card:** A two-sided 5" x 9½" laminated card that illustrates 10 stretches to increase flexibility. These stretches are included in the Appendix of this program guide.
- ***Summarized Rules of Tennis:*** A 9-page booklet that summarizes the official rules of tennis. The complete *Rules of Tennis*, which includes *The Code: The Players' Guide for Unofficial Matches*, can be obtained from the U.S. Tennis Association by calling the toll-free number: 888-832-8291, ext. 1.
- ***Illustrated Introduction to the Rules of Tennis, Second Edition:*** A summary of the rules of tennis in simplified language and with appealing illustrations. Recommended for beginning players (and spectators) from 8 to 90.
- **Code of Conduct Card:** A two-sided laminated 4"x 8¾" card that lists expected types of good sportsmanship and conduct on and around the court. It can easily be carried in racquet covers.
- **NTRP Pocket Guide:** The National Tennis Rating Program is a simple self-rating method devised for the purpose of grouping individuals of similar tennis ability levels for group lessons or play. The 3½" x 5½" four-page foldout NTRP Pocket Guide contains the rating system.
- ***The Games Approach to Coaching Tennis* (video):** A USTA video released in 2002 that is a perfect supplement to the USA Tennis 1-2-3 program. The video demonstrates both skills development and play aspects of the USA Tennis 1-2-3 program.
- ***Backboard Tennis* (video):** Provides challenging practices against a backboard that are perfect for solo workouts.
- ***USTA's Teaching Group Tennis* (video):** Demonstrates how to get the most out of your court time and space regardless of the size of the class.
- **USA Tennis 1-2-3 Certificate of Merit:** Attractive 8½" x 11" certificate is a nice way to award participants who complete a USA Tennis 1-2-3 program.

To get a *USA Tennis Materials Catalog*, call 914-696-7236. To find out whom to contact in your section for more information about the USA Tennis 1-2-3 program, see the USTA Section Map, which has telephone numbers for each section, in the Appendix.

Introduction to USA Tennis



Free tennis instruction is the perfect way to get adults and seniors to give tennis a try. Introduction to USA Tennis is a fun-filled community event that offers free group instruction and is designed to attract people of all ages to “try” the sport. The 90-minute lesson can be used with up to 40 people on a court.

Most of the participants 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. This introductory lesson is about more than just teaching stroke mechanics to beginners, however. Surveys indicate that people come to your site to have fun, get some exercise, and meet new friends. More important than trying to teach them everything you know about the game in 90 minutes is to make each participant feel welcome at your site and comfortable with the group of people they meet and the skills they learn. Make sure they have a positive first experience on the court. Remember: They won't have fun unless you're having fun! Your goal is to make tennis fun for new and returning players so that they will want to continue with USA Tennis 1-2-3 for Adults.

Pre-Lesson Suggestions

Here are a few suggestions on how to prepare for your Introduction to USA Tennis lesson:

- Designate a meeting or gathering place at your site, such as a porch, lounge, pro shop, patio, or picnic area.
- Alert your staff to be looking for the new participants and to make them feel welcome and comfortable. Remember that these people are not players and are probably uncomfortable with the new surroundings.
- Have nametags ready.
- Greet each participant using his or her name.
- Give participants a brief overview of the site. Show them where the restrooms and water fountain are.
- Have demo racquets available, and distribute them to anyone who needs one. Some people might come with racquets that are inadequate, such as vintage wood racquets. Don't force them to use a demo, but make sure you take extra racquets to the court so they will be available during the lesson.
- Take a roll call, making sure you have everyone's name pronounced correctly and that all names, addresses, and phone numbers are recorded properly.

Before you go on the court, take five minutes to introduce yourself. Explain that this introductory lesson is part of a nationwide effort to get people to try the sport of tennis and that if they enjoy it, they might like to take USA Tennis 1-2-3 for Adults or USA Team Tennis, programs that continue where the introductory lesson leaves off.

Tell them that they will get further details at the conclusion of the lesson. Answer any questions they might have before you go to the court.

Tips for a Successful Introduction to USA Tennis Lesson

People are coming to your site because they want to learn how to play tennis. It is up to you to make this experience a comfortable and challenging one. As coach, you play the most important role in the success of this event. If you are enthusiastic and having fun, your students will have fun too.

Keep things simple. The participants are beginners, and this is only an introductory session. You shouldn't try to teach them too much. Keep to some racquet handling skills and to teaching them a forehand ground stroke. Use a variety of activities that 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 for Adults.

Here are some additional tips on how to make this introductory lesson a success!

- Start and end the lesson on time.
- 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 racquets. If someone gets tired or is affected by the heat, encourage him or her to sit out for a while or to get some cold water. Nothing will cast a darker shadow over a great session than an injury to one of the participants.
- Because most of the activity will be in close proximity to a partner, encourage short, controlled swings with limited backswings.
- Avoid having people stand in lines waiting to hit the ball. It makes for too much inactivity, and participants feel like they're on display when they become the hitter and everyone else is watching. It's better to have partners toss and hit the ball to each other over short distances than to use drills that require the coach to feed the ball to the first person in a long line.
- One of the major reasons people come to the introductory tennis lesson is to meet new people. Give participants an opportunity to introduce themselves at the beginning of the lesson, and rotate partners frequently so that everyone has a chance to meet.
- Mix in a few group contests as team builders.

In summary, get people to move around the court, 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.

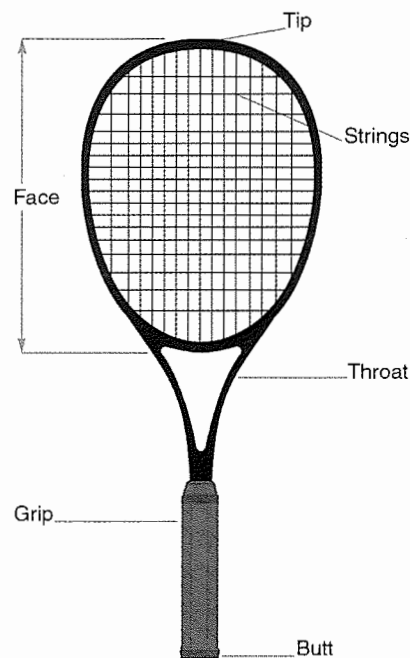
The following **activities**, **games**, and **concluding proceedings** can all be done in a 90-minute class with up to 40 people on a court. Some activities can be done by individual participants; others are done with a partner or as part of a team. The first part of the Introduction to USA Tennis focuses on developing racquet handling skills, which leads to the ultimate objective of the lesson—to hit a forehand over the net with a partner.



RACQUET HANDLING SKILLS – 20 MINUTES

Make sure everyone has a racquet and tennis ball. Briefly review the parts of the tennis racquet (see illustration). Then have participants find a spot where they have enough space so that they won't interfere with others as they go through these activities. Explain that if their ball gets away from them, they should retrieve it, return to their space, and continue the activity. If possible, play some active music during this portion of the lesson.

- Ball tap-downs—Have participants bounce a ball down continuously with the racquet at waist level. Don't worry about grips. Some people might even need two hands or might 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 tap-downs with the edge of the racquet—This activity is the same as ball tap-downs, but participants must use the edge of the racquet. Demonstrate and have them try for 30 seconds.



- Ball tap-ups on alternate sides of the racquet—Have participants tap 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 tap-ups on alternate sides of the racquet, with a tap-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 and 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 racquet, have them try some of the following activities for about 30 seconds each.

- Ball tap-downs—while keeping the ball about 12 inches from the court.
- Ball tap-downs—while holding the racquet at shoulder-level height and trying to maintain control.
- Have them choke up on the racquet and do ball tap-downs in a figure-eight pattern around both legs.
- Have them bend their knees, place the racquet between their legs, and tap the ball up.
- Have them put the racquet behind their back and tap the ball up.
- Ball tap-downs—while on one knee.

- Ball tap-downs—while hopping on one foot.
- Ball tap-downs—while in a sitting position.
- While 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 the above drill while using one ball and alternating hits between partners.
- Have them switch partners, tap the ball up and attempt, on the bounce, to hit a target ball that has been 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 and trying to hit the target ball on the bounce.

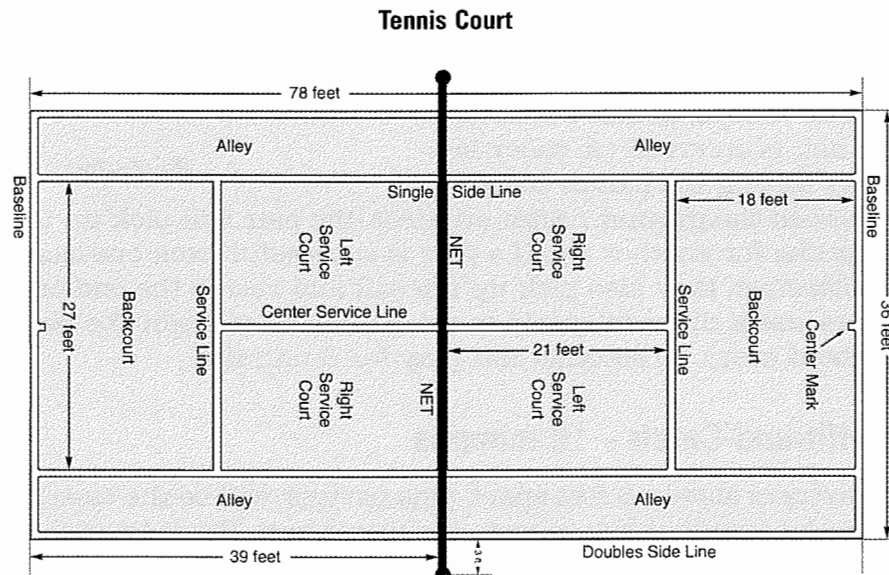
For this activity, be sure to explain a few simple rules: All balls must be tapped up at least three feet (the height of the net) and then hit by the partner after one bounce unless the ball hits the target ball on the bounce. It is all right for players to move to go after the hit ball. All shots must be hit up—no spiking (i.e., hitting down). Only target hits on the first bounce count.

Time the partners for one minute and see which team has the most target hits. Then change partners, give them a short practice period, and repeat the contest. 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.



FOREHAND GROUND STROKE SKILLS – 55 MINUTES

A forehand ground stroke is the stroke used to return balls hit to the right of a right-handed player and to the left of a left-handed player after the ball has bounced. See Lesson One in the Skill Development Component of USA Tennis 1-2-3 for Adults for information and illustrations on the forehand grip and the forehand ground stroke.



Alley Rally – 10 minutes

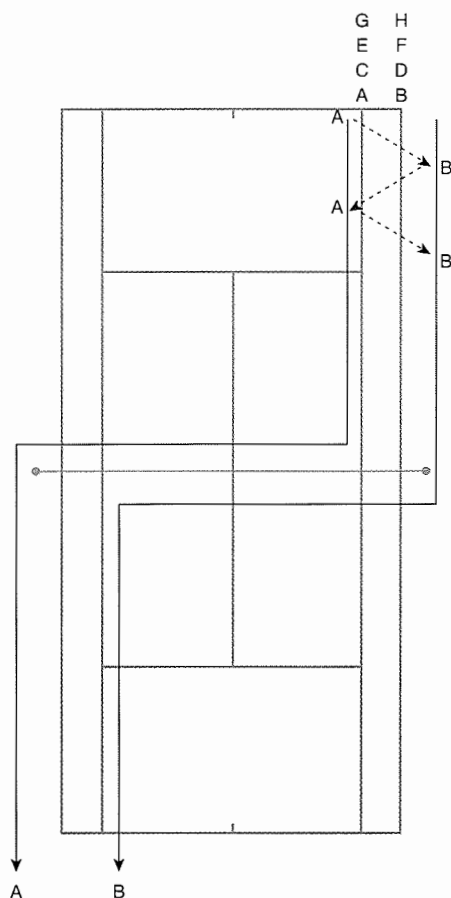
Have participants switch partners again and place one ball on the singles sideline and a second ball on the doubles sideline directly across from each other (i.e., 4½ feet apart). The area between the singles and doubles sidelines is called the *alley*.* Partners stand one step behind and to the side of each of the balls and hit a third ball, trying to hit the partner's ball on the first bounce. They continue to hit the ball back and forth across the alley. Players should hit the ball up at least three feet high, using a compact forehand *ground stroke*. (A *ground stroke* is a stroke made after the ball has bounced.) Make sure partners play all shots after one bounce. After a warm-up period, time players for one minute to see which team can get the most target hits.

Change partners several times and play one-minute games each time. **Note:** Left-handers should be in back of and on the same side of the ball as the right-handers, so everyone will be hitting a forehand.

Zip-Zip-Zip – 10 minutes

This activity will get the entire group moving and give them a chance to hit with different partners. It uses the same skills as Alley Rally, but now the players will be moving. Form two lines in the backcourt with one line beginning at the baseline on the doubles sideline and one beginning at the baseline on the singles sideline. The first player in each line bumps the ball back and forth to each other across the doubles alley while moving toward the net. When the pair reaches the net, and without stopping the hit-bounce-hit sequence, the person on 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 along the opposite doubles alley to the baseline.

Rules are simple. All shots must be of a bounce-hit-bounce-hit sequence. Anything else, such as *volleys*, double bounces, or a ball in the net, is an error. (A *volley* is a stroke made by hitting the ball in the air before it has touched the ground.) 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 a different pair about every 10 seconds and play for 5 minutes.



Zip-Zip-Zip

Toss-Bounce-Hit-and-Catch – 10 minutes

Position partners about 15 feet apart. One partner will be the tosser, the other will hit. Hitters begin by standing sideways to the tosser with the racquet in the backswing

* The first time a tennis term is mentioned, it appears in italic.

position. The tosser will toss the ball underhand so that it bounces on the court and goes to the hitter's racquet in the ideal contact zone. The hitter directs a controlled forehand in the air back to the tosser and the tosser catches it. If the toss is not perfect, the hitter will move to the ball to try to make the hit. Hitters and tossers change places after every five tosses.

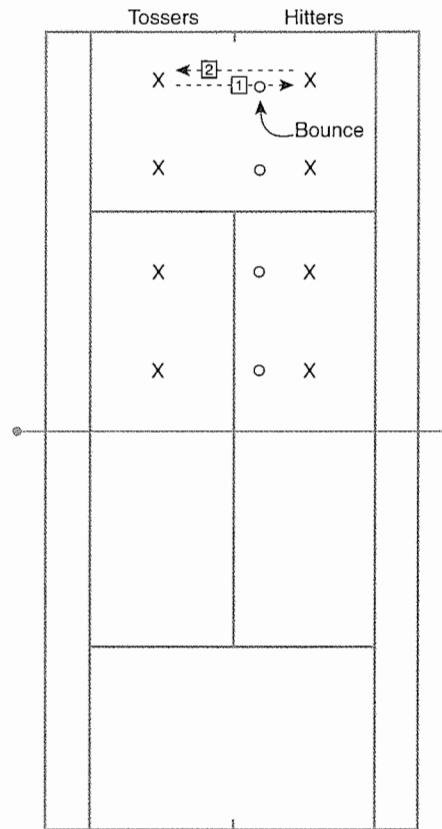
Toss-Bounce-Hit-and-Catch Contest – 10 minutes

Using the same positions and skills as above, the objective is for each pair to successfully complete three toss-bounce-hit-and-catch sequences. The first pair to do this is the winner. Change hitters after three successful sequences.

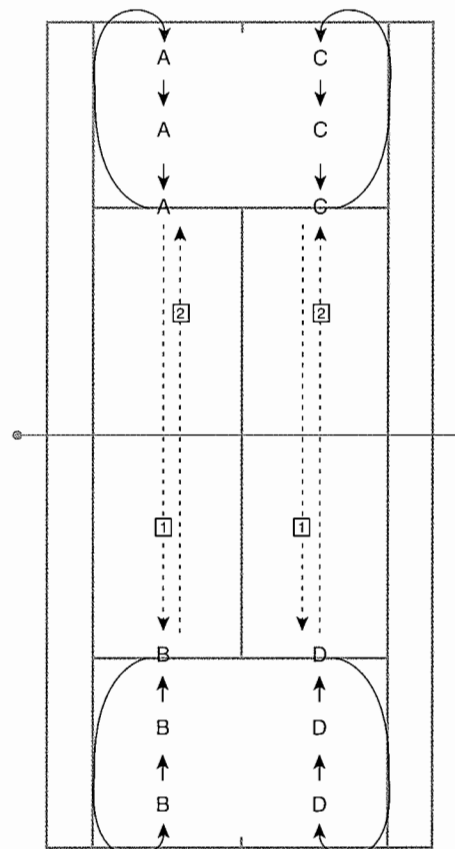
Team Around the World – 15 minutes

Divide the class into four equal groups with two groups on either side of the net. The first person in each line is on the center of a service line of a service court with the other players extending 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.

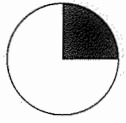
Each team uses one ball. For each team, the first person on one side of the net drops and hits the ball over the net, moves out of line toward the alley, and goes to the end of the line. The first person in the line on the opposite side of the net hits the ball back, moves out toward the alley, and goes 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 that this is like alley rally over the net but with a rotating line. Rotate teams after the first game and try another 60-second game. Repeat one-minute games as time allows.



Toss-Bounce-Hit-and-Catch



Team Around the World



CONCLUDING PROCEEDINGS – 15 MINUTES

Wrap up the event by having everyone gather up all the balls and return them and the racquets. Give the participants a few minutes to ask questions. As the group is cooling down, review 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 in learning a new sport.
- They became comfortable with handling the racquet.
- They learned how to hit a forehand ground stroke. Now they have the very basics for participating in a *rally*. (A *rally* is a series of good hits made successively by players. It's also the practice procedure in which players hit the ball back and forth to each other.)
- They laughed and had fun.

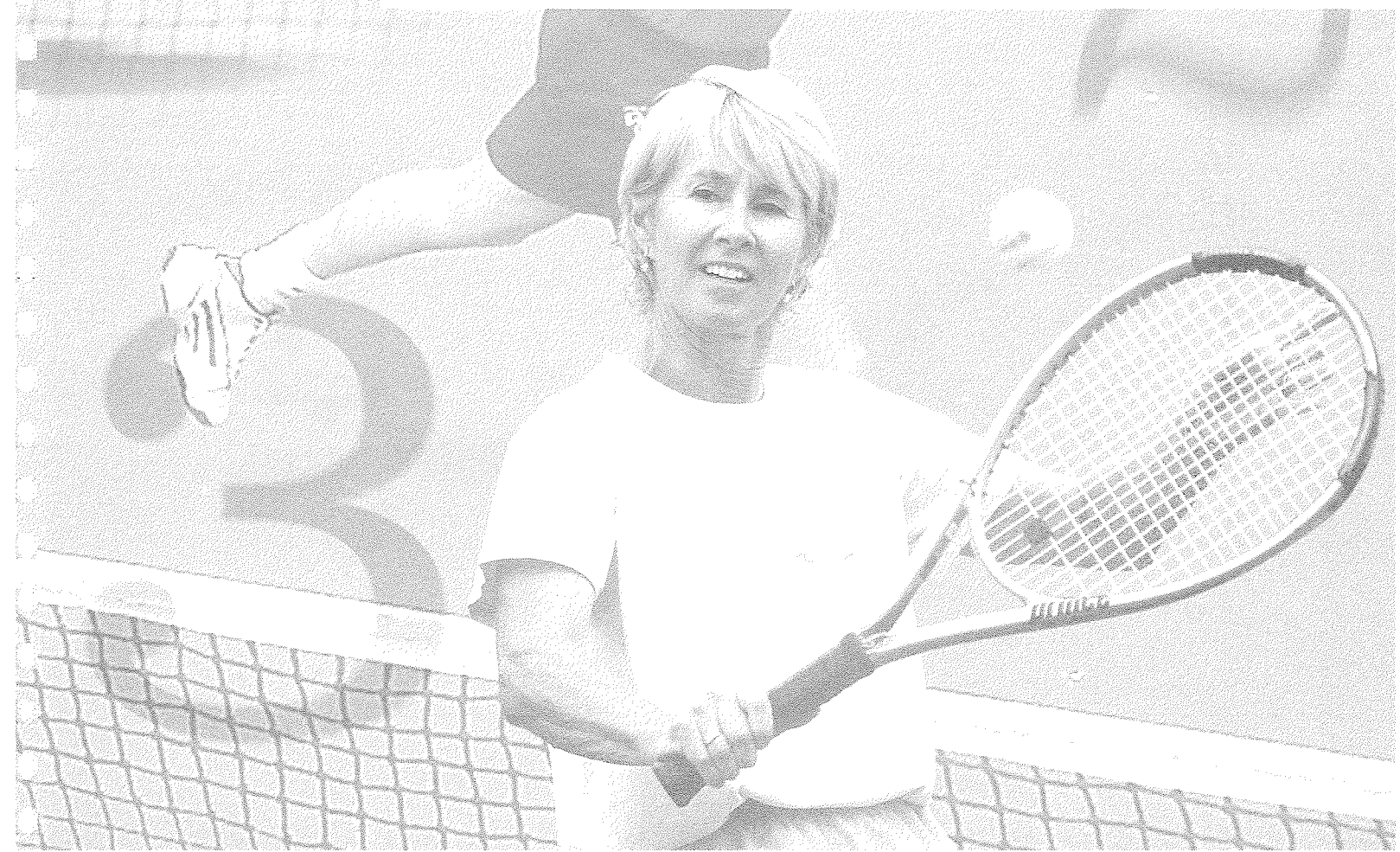
This is the perfect time to explain the USA Tennis 1-2-3 for Adults program that will begin at your site shortly. The coach is usually the best salesman for the program. Distribute flyers that specify when the classes will be offered, and try to register as many participants as possible on the spot. You might want to offer an incentive for those signing up after the USA Tennis introductory lesson, such as a discount on a racquet, a free T-shirt, or a special price for the USA Tennis 1-2-3 course. Keep in mind, the Introduction to USA Tennis free lesson is successful only if you entice the participants to sign up for USA Tennis 1-2-3 for Adults or USA Team Tennis.

Finally, be sure to let the participants know about other Introduction to USA Tennis lessons that you will be conducting, and encourage them to send a friend. Have flyers available with times and dates of lessons for both children and adults.

The following section, USA Tennis 1-2-3 for Adults, is the primary focus of this program guide.



USA Tennis 1-2-3 for Adults



Skill Development Component

The **Skill Development Component of USA Tennis 1-2-3 for Adults** is a six-part instructional program designed to provide the basic skills needed to play tennis. The program typically consists of six lessons of 1½ hours each.

USA Tennis 1-2-3 is designed for use with groups of adults who want to learn the basics of the game quickly. It stresses drills and other activities, which are often done with partners, and de-emphasizes feeding balls to people in a line. The lessons are fast paced but always allow time for a review of the previous 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 to feel from the beginning that they are succeeding in learning the real skills they'll need to play tennis.

The first lesson begins with the forehand ground stroke, which is fundamental to the enjoyment of the game. For beginners to have fun playing the game, they need to be able to move to and hit a forehand over the net. Once the simple forehand ground stroke is learned, students will be able to rally with a friend or family member or practice against a wall. The second fundamental stroke a beginner needs to learn is the serve, since every point begins with a serve. The serve is introduced in Lesson Two and practiced in every subsequent lesson.

The six lessons in the Skill Development Component of USA Tennis 1-2-3 for Adults are:

Lesson One: Introduction to Forehand Ground Strokes

Lesson Two: Introduction to the Serve and the Volley

Lesson Three: Introduction to Backhand Ground Strokes

Lesson Four: Return of Serve and Trouble Shots

Lesson Five: Court Positioning and Shot Selection

Lesson Six: The Doubles Game—Strategy, Practice, and 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 players to hit a lot of balls. A main attraction of tennis for adults and seniors is the opportunity for exercise, so movement activities are an important part of the lessons.



The outline of each lesson is as follows:

- Objective of the Lesson
- Warm-up Activity(ies)
- Review of Skill(s) Learned in the Previous Lesson
- Introduction and Demonstration of a New Skill or Skills
- Skill Development Through Practice and Repetition
- Skill Application Through Games and Drills
- Review of Lesson and Cool Down
- Tennis Rules and Conduct
- Practice Assignments
- Distribution of Handouts at the Conclusion of Each Class. (The handouts in this guide should be photocopied for this use.)

Every attempt should be made to keep the learning as practical and enjoyable as possible, so that at the end of the Skill Development Component, students will be ready to play on their own or to participate in the Practice and Play Component of USA Tennis 1-2-3 for Adults or even USA Team Tennis.

Program Materials for Skill Development Component

We recommend that selected program materials be given to students at the end of most lessons in the Skill Development Component of USA Tennis 1-2-3 for Adults. Among other things, these materials help reinforce tennis rules and conduct learned in the lessons and provide exercises that increase flexibility and reduce injuries. These recommended handouts are inexpensive and can be ordered through the *USA Tennis Materials Catalog* by calling 914-696-7236. Recommended materials for USA Tennis 1-2-3 for Adults are the following (see Introduction for a description of each item):

Material	Quantity	Price
<i>Summarized Rules of Tennis</i>	15	\$2.50
Code of Conduct Card	15	2.00
USTA Flexibility Exercises Card	15	1.50
NTRP Pocket Guide	15	1.50
Certificate of Merit	15	2.00

In addition to these program materials and others mentioned in the Introduction to this guide, coaches can obtain participant cards and site data forms from your USTA section office. If you complete and return to them to your section office, you will be eligible for an incentive.

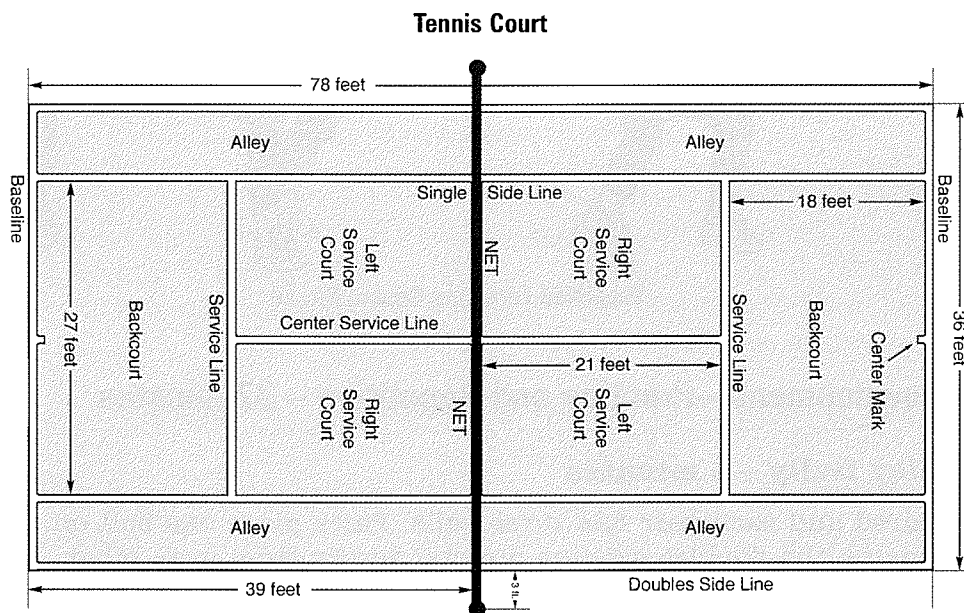
LESSON ONE: INTRODUCTION TO FOREHAND GROUND STROKES

Objective: To introduce the forehand ground stroke



General Introduction to USA Tennis 1-2-3 – 5 minutes

Following coach and student introductions, the coach should preview the goals for the six-lesson series: to learn the basic shots and rules of tennis and to begin to play tennis matches. Identify the parts of the court (service line, baseline, singles and doubles boundaries, etc.), and explain key terms like ground stroke (hitting the ball after one bounce), volley (hitting the ball in the air before it hits the ground), rally (hitting the ball back and forth to each other or a series of good hits made successively by players).

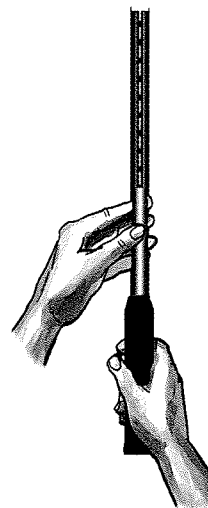


Warm-Up Activity

Racquet Sense – 5 minutes

Introduce forehand grip. Using the forehand grip, practice racquet handling skills through ball tap-ups and tap-downs on the face of the racquet, tap-downs with the edge of racquet, and tap-ups with a bounce and with a bounce working with a partner.

Note: Keep this moving very rapidly and make it challenging and game-like.



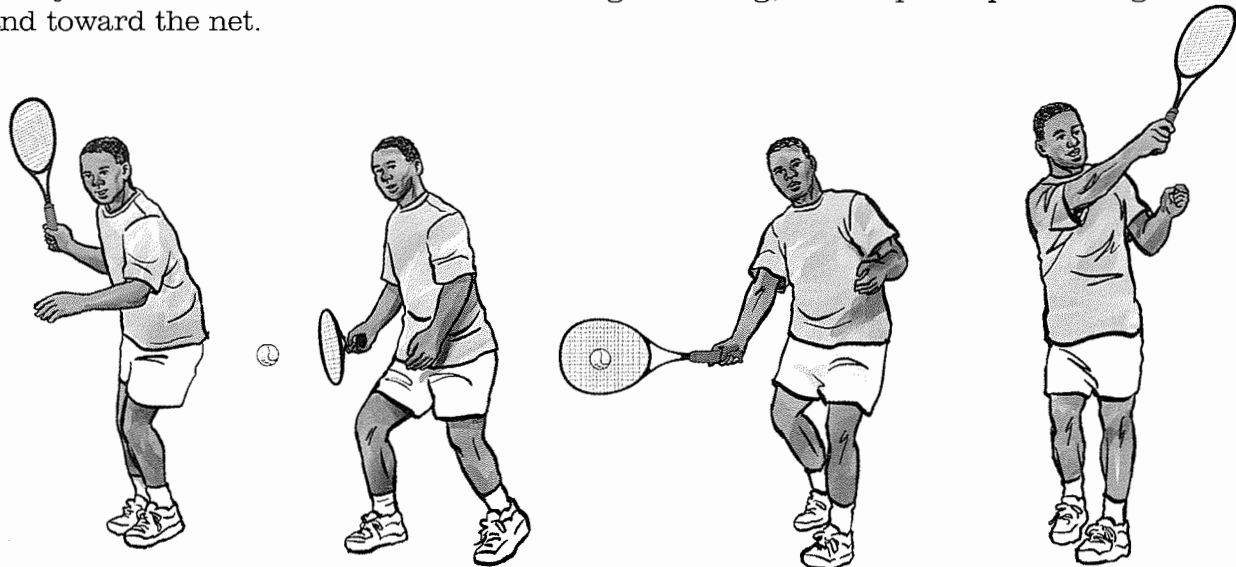
Forehand Grip



Introduction and Demonstration of New Skill

Simplified Forehand Ground Stroke – 2 minutes

Demonstrate a simplified forehand ground stroke from the service line. Start with a sideways stance. Using a short, compact backswing, move the racquet forward from low to high. The racquet face should be perpendicular to the court at contact with the ball and then just lift the ball over the net. In finishing the swing, the racquet is pointed high and toward the net.



Simplified Forehand Ground Stroke



Skill Development—Practice and Repetition – 37 minutes

Forehand Alley Rally – 5 minutes

Players are paired and each pair has three balls. Pairs place one ball on the singles sideline and one on the doubles sideline directly across from each other (i.e., 4½ feet apart). The area between the singles and doubles sidelines is called the alley. Players stand one step behind and to the side of each ball and gently tap up (at least three feet) a third ball with a forehand ground stroke 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 – 10 minutes

Move pairs so that they are on either side of the net. Have each partner place a “target ball” or “target spot” on the court about 4 feet from the net. Partners hit forehand ground strokes, attempting to hit the target on the opposite side of the net. Have them try this with different partners.

Toss-Hit Forehand Ground Stroke Practice – 10 minutes

Using the width of one court, or two courts if available, divide the class into four pairs with one partner in each pair being the tosser and the other the hitter. Have tossers and hitters stand approximately 15 feet apart. Tossers use “friendly” underhand tosses so that the ball will bounce approximately two-thirds of the way to the hitter (or at the hitter's waist level). The hitter hits the ball with a forehand ground stroke to the tosser, who catches it (see illustration on page 9). Change roles and partners every six hits.

This is the ideal time to explain how to control four elements—direction, height, power, and depth—when playing tennis. Even beginning tennis players are amazed at how they can control the tennis ball once they understand these principles. This knowledge will help them self-correct errors by making simple adjustments in their strokes and in the way they hold the racquet.

Height and Direction

Explain how the height and direction of the tennis ball is controlled by the angle of the racquet face. Introduce the terms “open” and “closed” and demonstrate how hitting with an open racquet face (i.e., angled toward the sky) will cause the ball to go high, while hitting with a closed face (i.e., angled toward the ground) will result in a low hit. Side-to-side direction is controlled 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.

Power

Power is increased by enlarging the length of the backswing, 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.

Depth

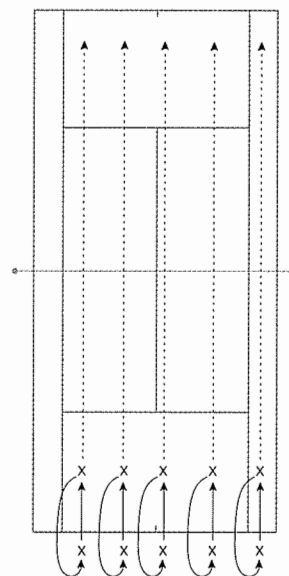
Greater depth on all shots is achieved by hitting higher over the net. If shots tend to go long, aim lower and, when the players are ready, have them add some top-spin to their ground stroke to keep the ball in the court.

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: Once pairs are successful with the tosser throwing friendly underhand tosses to hitters while standing 20 feet apart on the full width of the court, they can try the exercise from the service lines on opposite sides of the net. The key is to achieve controlled hitting to the tosser.

Drop-Hit Forehand Ground Stroke Practice – 7 minutes

Demonstrate a drop-hit forehand ground stroke from three-quarters court (i.e., midway between the service line and the baseline). Emphasize dropping (not throwing) the ball. The player hitting the ball drops it and makes contact with it in front of the body in line with the front foot. Emphasize a 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. Have each squad hit two balls and then move out of the way for the next squad. After a few rotations, move to the baseline.



Drop-Hit Forehand Ground Stroke Practice

Simplified Forehand Ground Stroke Practice – 5 minutes

Students form two lines on the service line. The coach feeds a ball to the first person in one line and then to the first person in the other line. The first person hits a simplified forehand ground stroke, rotates to the outside of the court, and moves to the end of the line. The coach continues to feed balls to the remaining players in each line. The coach should be looking for a 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.



Skill Application—Games and Drills

Ground Stroke Twenty-One – 14 minutes

This game provides a more realistic hitting environment and emphasizes hitting deeper into the court with a full swing. Players form two lines (each comprising a team) behind the service line. Each player hits two simple forehand ground strokes. A player receives 1 point for balls landing in the service court and 2 points for balls landing in the backcourt. The coach should keep both lines moving by feeding balls quickly. After hitting two balls, players move to the end of their team's line. The first team to make 21 points wins.



Review of Lesson and Cool Down – 17 minutes

Review – 12 minutes

The coach should review the mechanics of the forehand ground stroke, emphasizing any common problems and illustrating corrections. Review names of participants and make at least one positive comment to each student. Initiate a pep talk about progress made and how soon players can expect to be playing tennis.

Discussion topics:

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

Cool Down – 5 minutes

Introduce stretching and go through the Flexibility Exercises in the Appendix.



Tennis Rules and Conduct – 5 minutes

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

- Balls may be hit in the air or after one bounce except on the return of serve, which can only be hit after one bounce.

- Balls landing on lines are considered in. Review the meaning of lines on the court: singles, doubles, service boxes, etc.
- Don't walk across the back of another court until the players have finished a point.
- If people are using your court, don't disturb them until their time is up.
- If your ball goes into an adjacent court, wait until the players on that court have finished the point before you ask for the ball. If a ball comes onto your court, return it as soon as play has stopped on both courts.



Practice Assignments – 5 minutes

Explain practice assignments to be done between lessons:

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

Handouts

Distribute:

- Handout 1
- Code of Conduct Cards
- Flexibility Exercises Cards

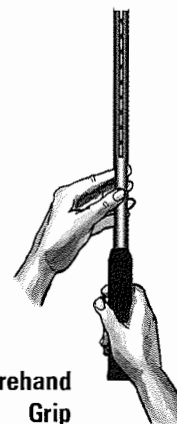
Circulate a sign-in sheet for students to provide their name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address. From this, compile a roster of participants and distribute it at the next lesson so that participants will be able to contact others in the class for additional play and practice. A form for the roster is provided in the Appendix. Make it clear to participants that providing the information is optional.

FOREHAND GROUND STROKES

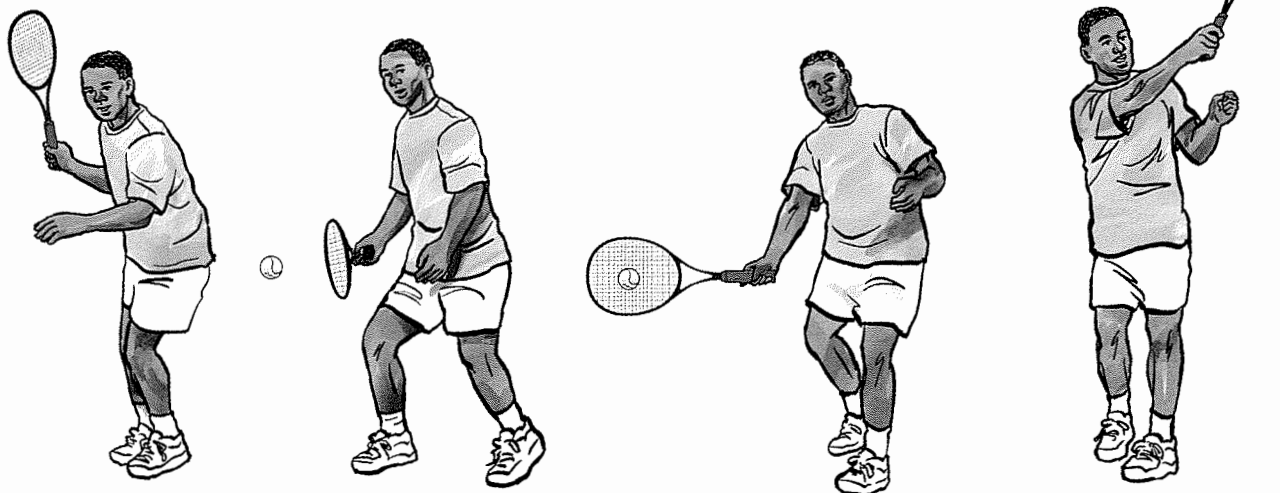
Racquet Skill Exercises

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

- Ball tap-ups
- Ball tap-downs
- Ball tap-ups using alternate sides of the racquet
- Ball tap-downs with the edge of the racquet



Forehand Grip



Simplified Forehand Ground Stroke

Simplified Forehand Ground Stroke

- Balanced sideways stance
- Short, compact backswing
- Racquet moves forward from low to high and its face is perpendicular to the court at contact with the ball and then lifts the ball over the net.
- The racquet is pointed high and toward the net when the swing is finished.

Practice Suggestions

- Practice toss-hit exercises with a partner.
- Practice hitting the ball against a wall or backboard. Try two-bounce rallies against the wall.

LESSON TWO:

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERVE AND THE VOLLEY

Objective: To introduce the serve and forehand and backhand volleys.



Warm-Up Activity

Forehand Ground Stroke Three-Ball Movement Exercise – 8 Minutes

Students line up behind the right-hand corner of the baseline. The coach stands on the opposite side of the net and feeds the first student three balls: the first ball to the right side of the student, the second ball wider to the forehand side of the court (at a pace that requires a gentle jog to the ball), and the third ball, a soft, high short ball, to the right service box, which will bring the player jogging toward the net. After these three shots, the player retrieves balls that have gone into the net (while still jogging) and returns to the end of the line. Add targets to increase interest.



Review of Skills Learned in Previous Lesson

Forehand Ground Stroke – 3 Minutes

Review the forehand ground stroke and answer any questions students might have about the previous lesson or the practice assignment.



Introduction and Demonstration of New Skill

Introduction to the Serve – 12 Minutes

Review the rules of serving:

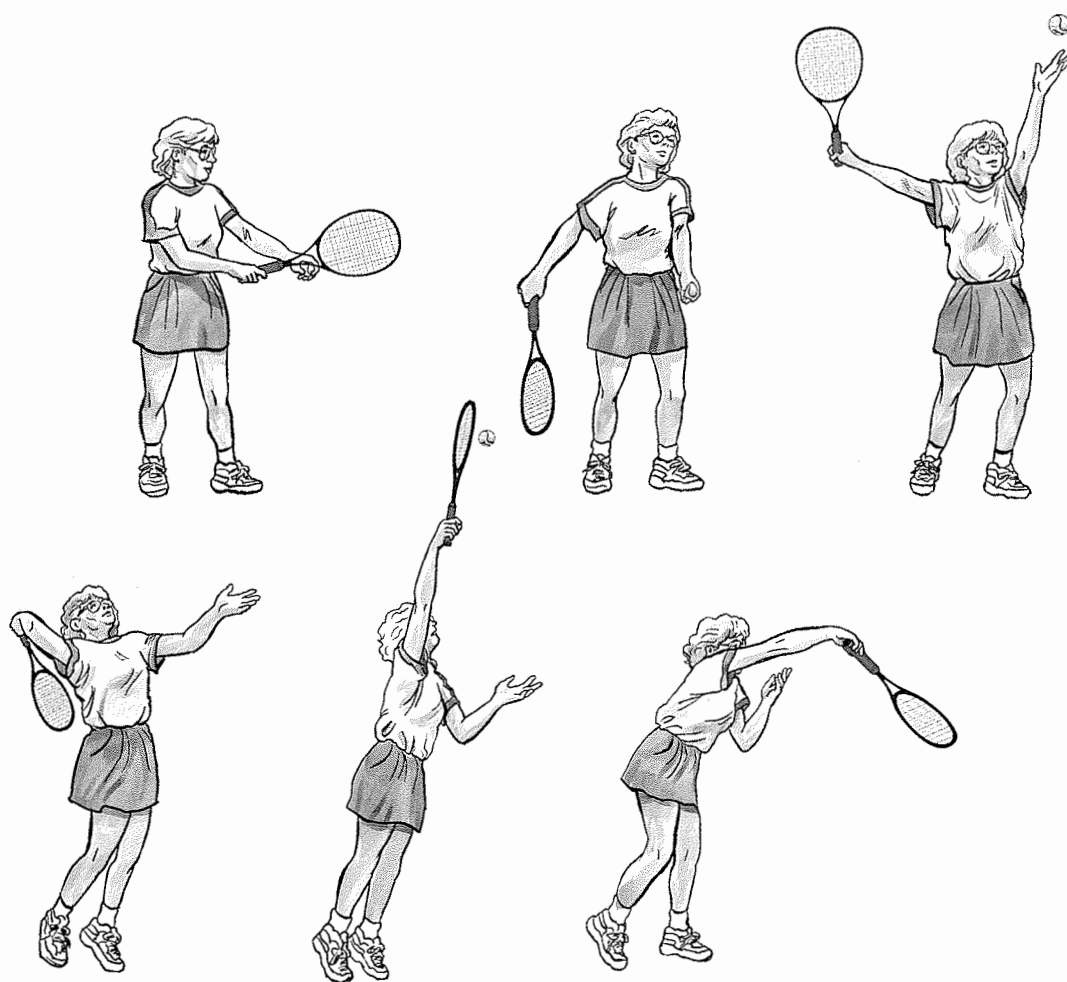
- Start from behind the baseline.
- Serve diagonally into the opposite service box.
- The server gets two tries to initiate a point. (If the ball hits the top of the net in a serve, but is otherwise good, it is called a *let*. In the case of a *let*, the serve does not count and the server serves again.)

Brief students on grip:

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

Demonstrate smooth, full serves, emphasizing:

- A stance at a 45° angle to the baseline
- The similarity between a throwing motion and serving motion



The Serve

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 demonstrate a successful serve can move directly into practice routines. Students who have problems with a “holistic” approach to serving should receive individual attention.

Start by having players throw a few balls toward or over the net from the baseline. 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. Have students practice the ball toss with the *non-dominant* hand, while trying to reach a height at least as high as the outstretched racquet. Ask students to try to put all these movements together in some practice serves. (**Note:** The *dominant hand or side of the body* is the hand or side that is preferred. For example, a right-handed person typically prefers to hold the racquet in the right hand. The *non-dominant hand or side* is the opposite hand or side of the body.)

Four players can serve simultaneously without danger. Make sure balls are accessible without players moving 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.



Skill Development—Practice and Repetition

Serving Progression – 15 Minutes

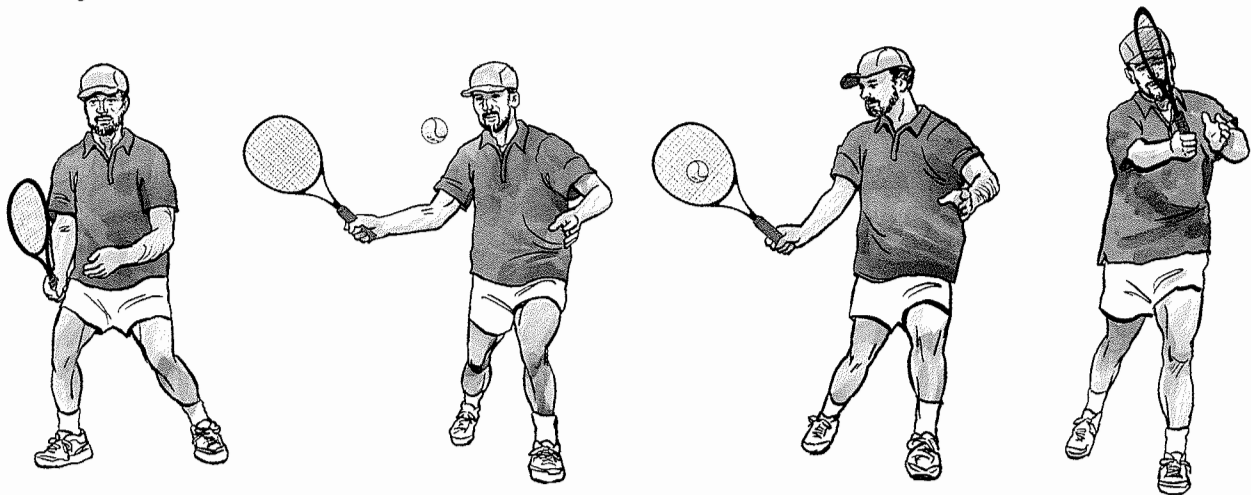
- **Lift and Touch.** Standing 3 feet from the net in a single file, have students start with the racquet behind the shoulder with arm bent. Upon command, each student tosses a ball, reaches up with the racquet, and touches the ball. Racquets do not proceed past contact point. Have students “freeze” upon contact and hold that position. Balls should bounce several times before they reach the service line.
- **Lift, Touch, and Follow-Through.** Proceed as in the previous step. After contact, complete follow-through.
- **Wind-Up, Lift, Touch, and Follow-Through.** Students add wind-up, as in over-hand throw. Hands swing down and up in unison in the wind-up.
- Serve from the service line, one ball to the left half and one to the right half of the service court.
- If successful, serve from three-quarters court (i.e., midway between the service line and the baseline).
- If successful, serve from the baseline.



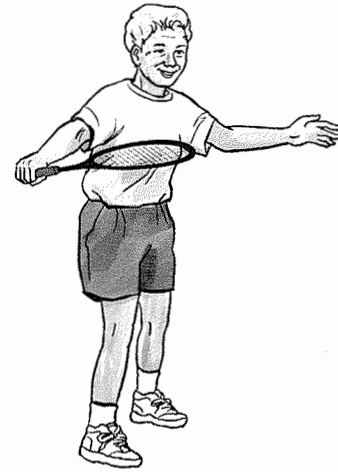
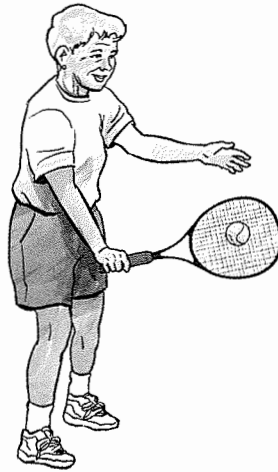
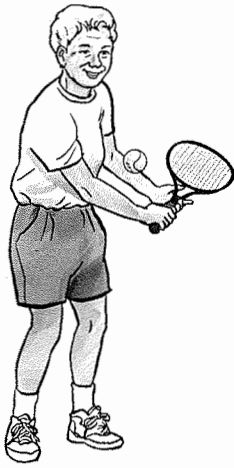
Introduction and Demonstration of New Skill

Introduction to the Volley – 2 Minutes

A *volley* is a stroke made by hitting the ball before it touches the ground. Emphasize that there is no backswing in the volley. Demonstrate both the forehand and backhand volleys.



Introduction to the Forehand Volley



Introduction to the Backhand Volley

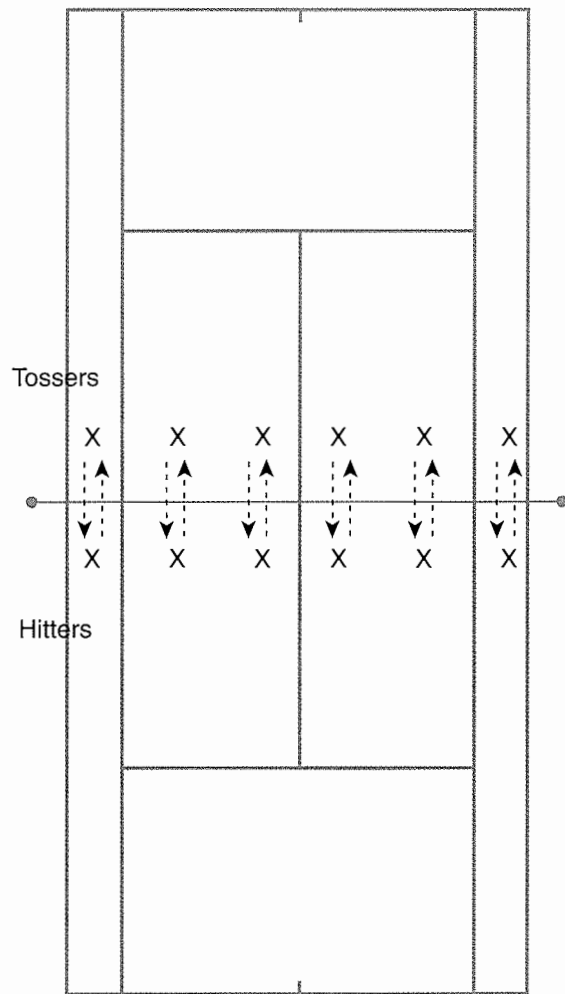


Skill Development – Practice and Repetition

Volley Progression – 15 Minutes

Position players 6 feet apart in pairs on either side of the net. Players will take turns tossing underhand or hitting a forehand volley through the following sequence:

- Hold the racquet at the throat and bump ball back to the tosser. Move hand and racquet together so the stroke is not “wristy.” The hitter gently volleys the ball back to the tosser. (5 tosses)
- Move hand halfway down the handle and volley the ball back to the tosser. (5 tosses)
- Hold racquet at the handle and gently volley the ball back to the tosser. (5 tosses)
- Switch sides and repeat the sequence with a backhand volley. Tossers and hitters change places.



Volley Progression



Skill Application—Games and Drills

Twenty-One with Serve – 10 Minutes

Players start in two lines from the baseline on the same side of the net. (Some players might be more comfortable serving from three-quarters court.) They will apply three skills they have now learned. Each player will first serve and then hit a ground stroke and volley, which the coach feeds to them. The coach alternates, feeding first to one line and then the other. Players are awarded two points for each successful serve and ground stroke and one point for a successful volley. First player to get 21 points wins.



Review of Lesson and Cool Down – 15 Minutes

Review – 10 Minutes

Highlight progress—find positive things to say about everyone. Use your students' names.

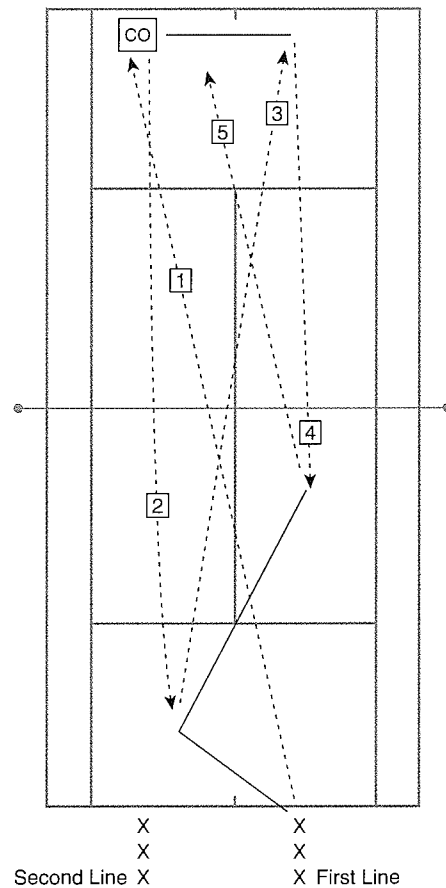
Discussion topics:

- Was serving harder or easier than expected?
- What was the most demanding part of the serve?
- Do you know what “double fault,” “ace,” and “let” mean?
- How tall do you think you have to be to serve “down” into the service box?
- Was the volley easier or harder than you expected?
- What's the main thing you have to remember about the volley?

Cool down – 5 Minutes

Go through the Flexibility Exercises in the Appendix.

CO = Coach



Twenty-One with Serve



Tennis Rules and Conduct – 5 Minutes

- Warm-up protocol: You should do 5 to 10 minutes of general body warm-up exercise (slow jog around the court, easy jumping jacks, etc.) before starting to play.
- To see who serves first, spin your racquet. If you win the spin, you may: (1) choose to serve first; (2) choose which end of the court you want to start playing on; or (3) require your opponent to serve first.
- Conventional Scoring:

No score.....Love
 First point.....15
 Second point30
 Third point.....40
 Fourth pointGame

When the score is tied at 40 to 40 (i.e, 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 after deuce 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 game-deciding point will be served.

Using a court diagram, play out an imaginary game with conventional scoring.



Practice Assignments – 5 Minutes

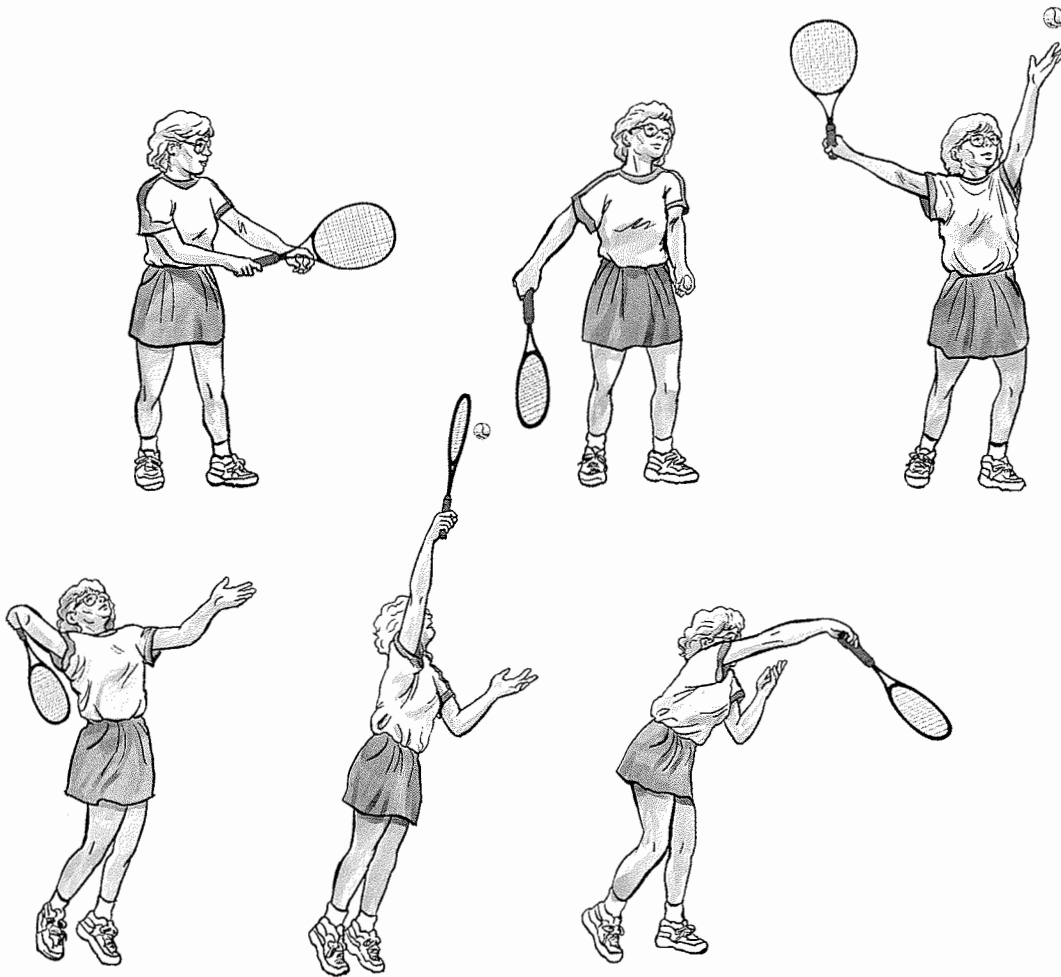
Explain practice assignments to be done between lessons:

- Practice the service swing.
- Practice serving against a wall or backboard.
- Practice serving on a tennis court (depending on availability of courts and balls at the facility). Play matches “against yourself.” The student wins a point if the first or second serve goes in, but loses a point if he or she double faults.
- Practice forehand ground strokes against a wall or backboard. Try to set a record for consecutive hits.

Handouts

Distribute:

- Handout 2
- *Summarized Rules of Tennis*
- Participants' names and telephone numbers, which were compiled from the previous lesson's sign-in sheet (it was optional for students to provide information).

HANDOUT 2 –
THE SERVE AND THE VOLLEY

The Serve

Serving Basics

- The target area is the service box immediately over the net, diagonally across from server. The server must stand behind the baseline (i.e., the line furthest from the net).
- Use a balanced stance, with feet and shoulders angled toward target.
- Swing arms down together and up together in unison during the wind-up.
- Toss ball up smoothly, at least as high as the racquet can reach.
- Reach up at contact.
- Follow-through across body.

Conventional Scoring

The server announces the score before serving for each point. The server's score is called first.

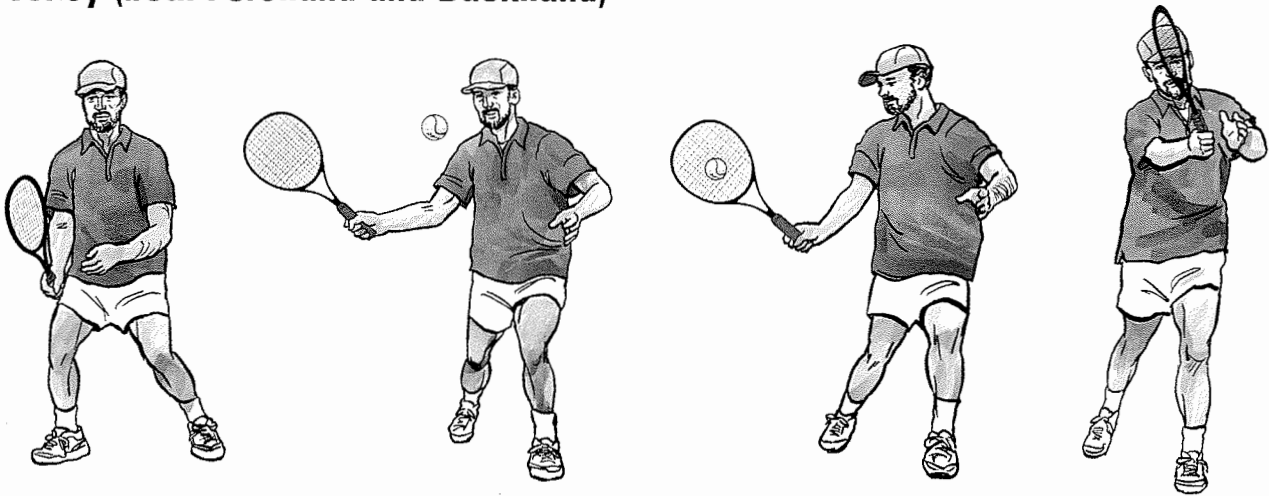
No score.....	Love
First point.....	15
Second point	30
Third point.....	40
Fourth point	Game

When the score is tied at 40 to 40 (i.e, 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 after deuce is said to have the *advantage*. Server's advantage is called *ad in*; receiver's advantage is called *ad out*.

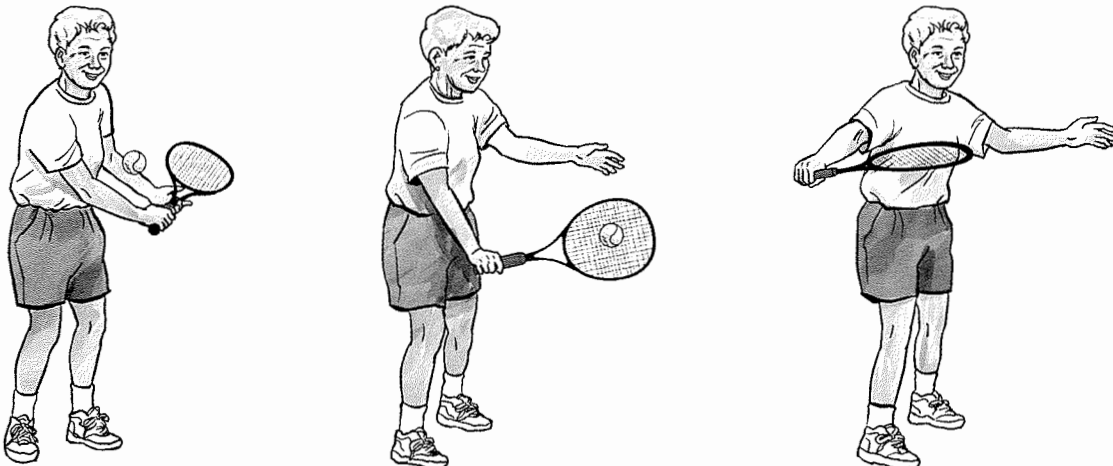
No-Ad Scoring

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 game-deciding point will be served.

Volley (both Forehand and Backhand)



Forehand Volley (above) and Backhand Volley (below)



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

Practice Suggestions

- Practice service swing.
- Practice 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).
- Practice forehand ground strokes against a wall or backboard. Try to set a record for consecutive hits.

LESSON THREE: INTRODUCTION TO BACKHAND GROUND STROKES

Objective: To introduce one-handed and two-handed backhand ground strokes.

Warm-Up Activity

Alley Rally – 7 Minutes

Alley Rally is a good way to introduce racquet-to-racquet hitting in a game situation. It is played by pairs of students. Each pair has three balls. Have pairs place one ball on the singles sideline and a second ball on the doubles sideline directly across from each other (i.e., 4½ feet apart). Partners stand one step behind and to the side of a ball and gently put the third ball into play, hitting short forehand ground strokes. The object is for each partner to try to hit his or her partner's ball on the first bounce. Players should hit the ball up; no "spiking" (i.e., hitting down) is allowed. Make sure partners play all shots after one bounce. Change partners every minute.

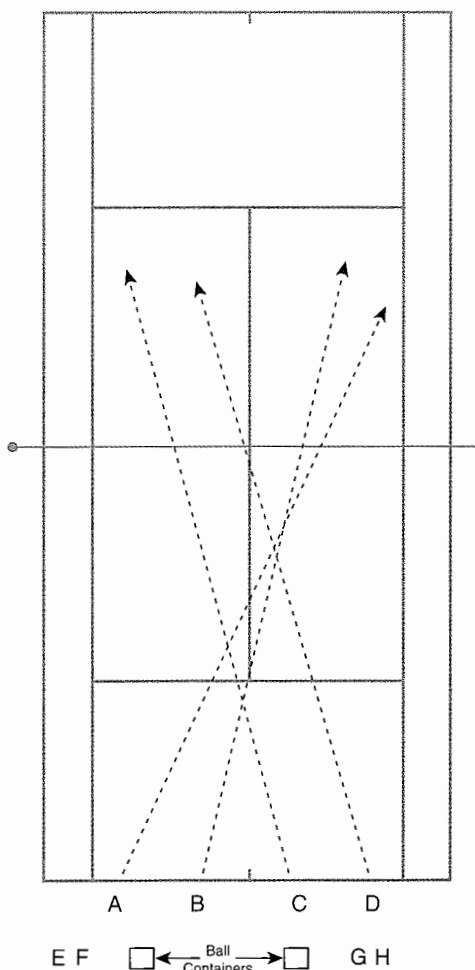
Review of Skills Learned in Previous Lesson – 23 Minutes

General Review – 5 Minutes

Review the forehand grip and the forehand ground stroke, serve, and forehand and backhand volleys. Answer any questions students might have about the previous lesson or the practice assignment.

Serving Practice – 10 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. A net isn't necessary for practicing the serve. For larger groups, you can practice serving into fences or backdrops. Use targets to increase concentration. Emphasize control over power.



Serving Practice

Toss-Volley-Catch – 8 Minutes

Form pairs of partners and position them face to face on opposite sides of the net. Hitters and tossers stand about 6 feet apart. The tosser gently tosses the ball underhand to the hitter, who volleys it back to the tosser. The hitter should try to control the volley so that the tosser can catch the ball. Rotate roles and partners every six hits.



Introduction and Demonstration of New Skills – 7 Minutes

Introduction to the Simplified Backhand Ground Stroke – 5 Minutes

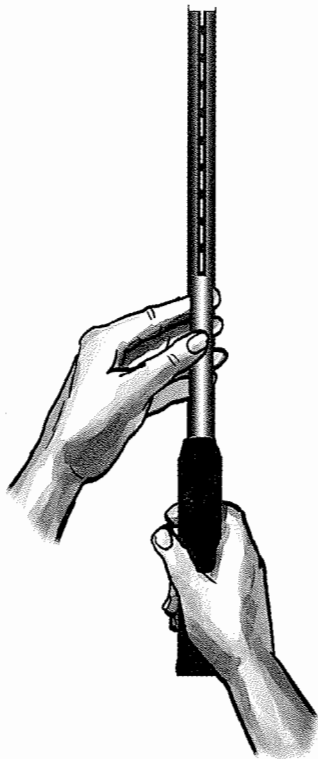
Explain two key differences between the forehand and the backhand: the grip and where the racquet is at the point of contact.

Grip

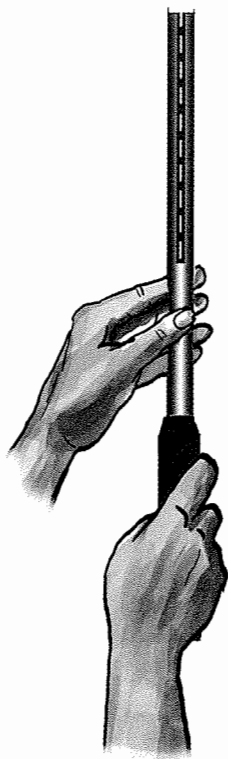
Forehand: the dominant hand is in the same plane as the racquet face.

One-Handed Backhand: the dominant hand is on top of the racquet handle.

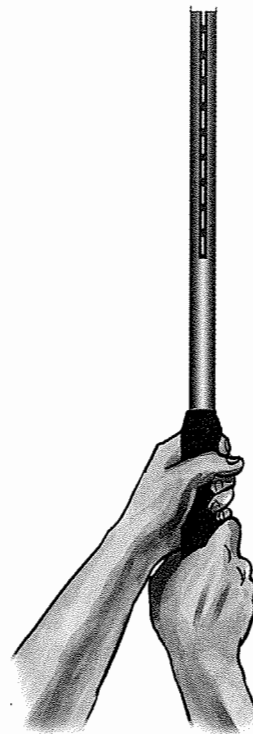
Two-Handed Backhand: the dominant and non-dominant hands are in the same plane as the racquet face, but on opposite sides of the handle.



Forehand Grip



One-Handed Backhand Grip



Two-Handed Backhand Grip

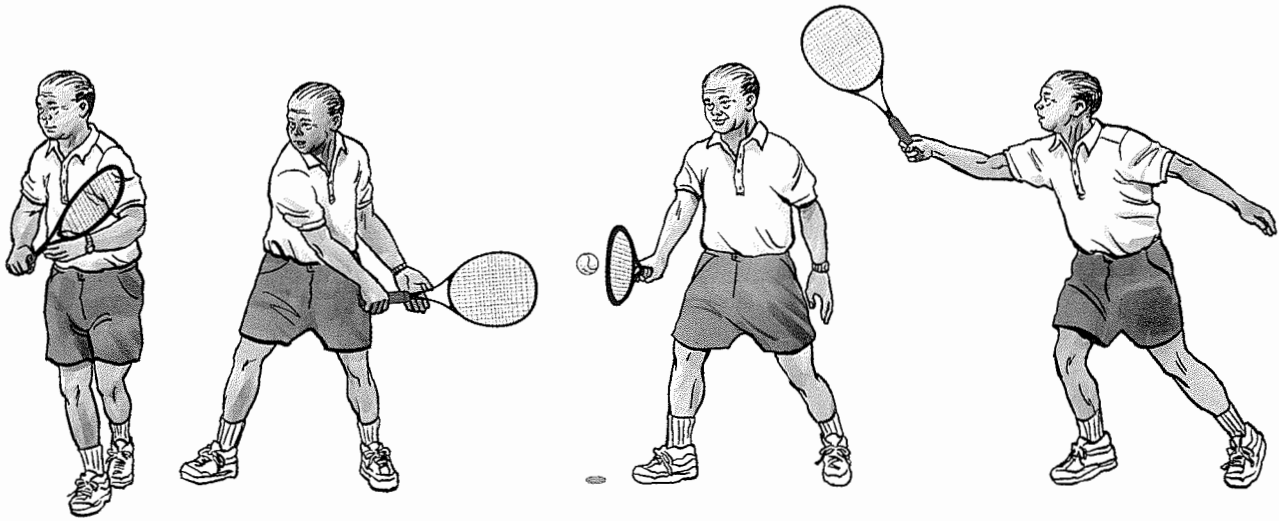
Contact Point

Forehand: the racquet is even with the front hip.

One-Handed Backhand: the racquet is in front of the front hip.

Two-Handed Backhand: the racquet is even with the front hip.

Standing on the service line, demonstrate a simplified backhand ground stroke. Start with a two-handed backhand grip and a sideways stance. Using little or no backswing, lift the ball over the net. Demonstrate the same using a one-handed backhand grip.

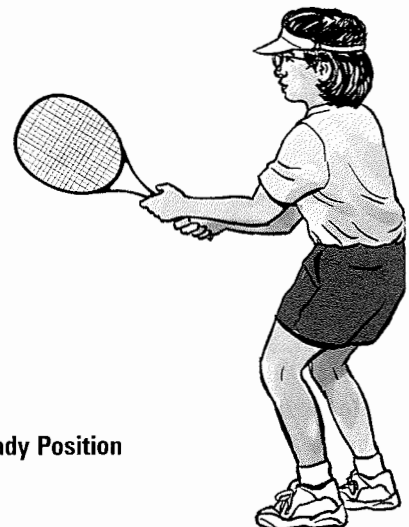


One-Handed Backhand Ground Stroke (above) and Two-Handed Backhand Ground Stroke (below)



Introduction to Ready Position – 2 Minutes

Demonstrate ready position and use of non-dominant hand to achieve a one-handed backhand grip and the proper ready position for the two-handed backhand.



Ready Position



Skill Development—Practice and Repetition – 18 Minutes

Toss-Hit Backhand Ground Stroke – 10 Minutes

Using the full width of one court, or two courts if available, divide the class into four pairs, with one partner in each pair being the tosser and the other the hitter. Have tossers and hitters stand approximately 20 feet apart. Tossers use “friendly” underhand tosses so that the ball will bounce approximately two-thirds of the way to the hitter (or at the hitter’s waist level). The hitter attempts to return the ball with a two-handed backhand ground stroke. Change roles and partners every six hits. Repeat this practice using a one-handed backhand.

Alternate Toss-Hit Forehand and Backhand Ground Stroke – 8 Minutes

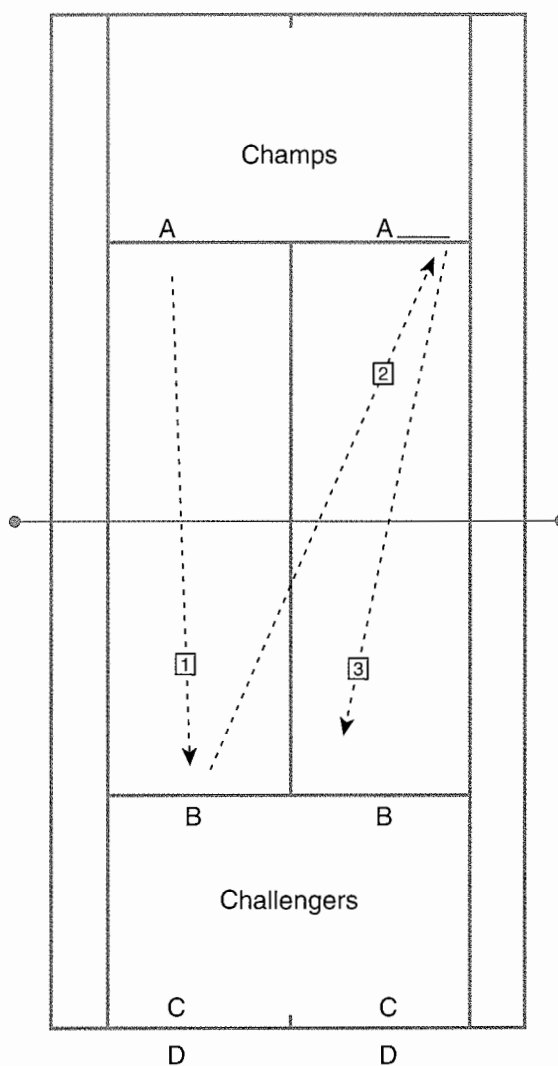
Repeat the above exercise, using alternate forehand and one-handed and two-handed backhand ground strokes.



Skill Application—Games and Drills

Champs of the Court – 10 Minutes

Two players assume service line positions on one side of the court. These are the champs. Other players (i.e., the challengers) wait at the back of the opposite side of the court. The first two challengers assume service line positions. The champs drop hit a ball to the challengers and a point is played using the service court boundaries. The first team to earn two out of three possible points wins and becomes the new champs. The winning team always starts from the champ’s side. Repeat until time is up. **Note:** Players may have more success using a slower ball, such as a foam ball, since this is the first time that they are actually rallying back and forth.



Champs of the Court



Review of Lesson and Cool Down – 15 Minutes

Review – 10 Minutes

Highlight progress—find positive things to say about everyone. Use your students' names.

Discussion topics:

- Did either of the strokes, forehand or backhand, seem harder than the other? Why? Any questions on forehands or backhands?
- Did anyone experience any soreness after the last lesson? (Soreness is normal when undertaking a new physical activity. It is reduced by warm-up and stretching and by doing the activity regularly.)
- Any questions on rules?
- Overhitting—ball goes too far.
- Positioning—difficulty in judging the bounce of the ball and where you should be when you hit the ball.

Cool down – 5 Minutes

Go through the Flexibility Exercises in the Appendix.



Tennis Rules and Conduct – 5 Minutes

Review some 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 when the ball is in play, 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. The ball is not out until it lands out.



Practice Assignments – 5 Minutes

Explain practice assignments to be done between lessons:

- Practice grip changes for a one-handed backhand.
- Rally with a partner, starting at the service line and working back toward the baseline.
- Practice hitting against a wall. Show how to practice alternating forehands and

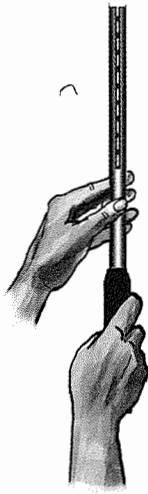
backhands. Emphasize control. Suggest letting the ball take two bounces to allow more time for racquet preparation and proper footwork. (**Note:** The video *Backboard Tennis* provides challenging practices that are perfect for solo workouts. The video can be obtained from the U.S. Tennis Association by calling the toll-free number: 888-832-8291, ext. 1, or through the *USA Tennis Materials Catalog* by calling 914-696-7236.)

Handouts

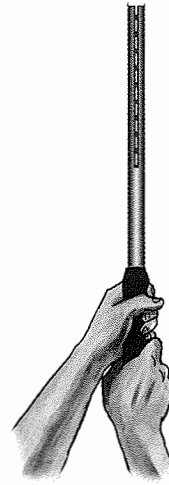
Distribute:

- Handout 3
- NTRP Pocket Guide

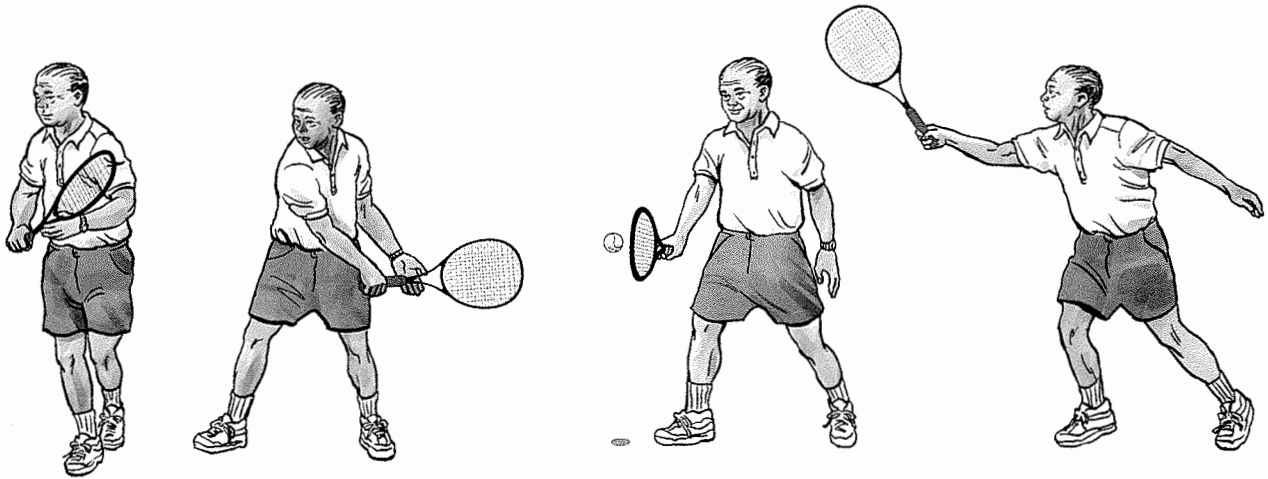
BACKHAND GROUND STROKES



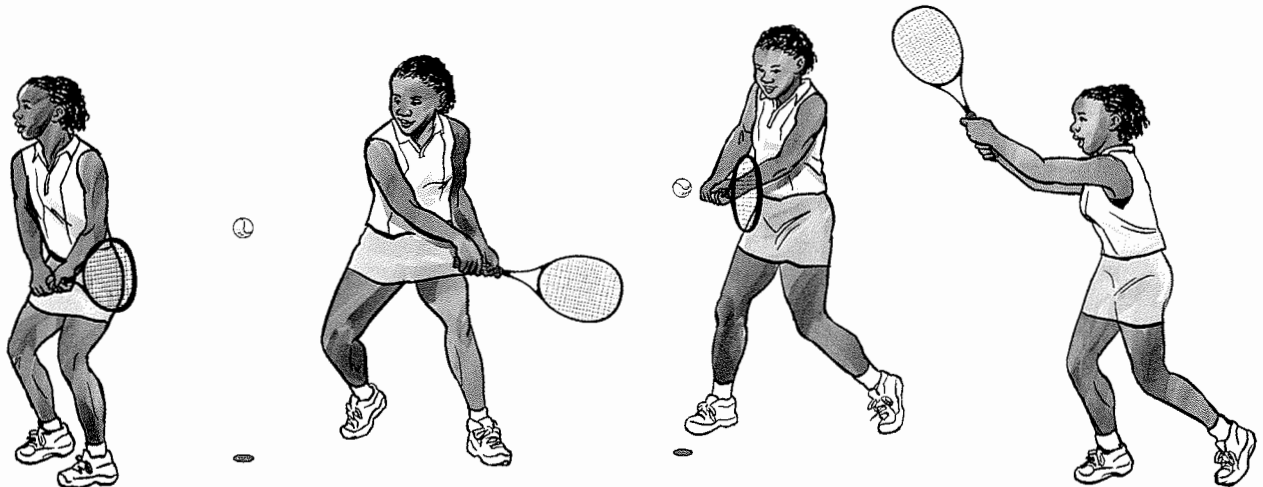
One-Handed Backhand Grip



Two-Handed Backhand Grip



One-Handed Backhand Ground Stroke (above) and Two-Handed Backhand Ground Stroke (below)



Simplified Backhand Ground Stroke

- Backhand grip (one-handed or two-handed)
- Balanced sideways stance
- Short backswing
- Contact in front of forward foot
- Controlled, lifting follow-through



Ready Position

Practice Suggestions

- Practice grip changes for a one-handed backhand.
- Rally with a partner, starting at the service line and working back toward the baseline.
- Practice hitting against a wall alternating forehands and backhands. Emphasize control. Let the ball take two bounces to allow more time for racquet preparation and proper footwork. (**Note:** The video *Backboard Tennis* provides challenging practices that are perfect for solo workouts. The video can be obtained from the U.S. Tennis Association by calling the toll-free number: 888-832-8291, ext. 1, or through the *USA Tennis Materials Catalog* by calling 914-696-7236.)

LESSON FOUR: RETURN OF SERVE AND TROUBLE SHOTS

Objective: To introduce the return of serve and explain and demonstrate how to handle trouble shots.



Warm-Up Activity

Mini-Tennis – 7 Minutes

This is similar to Alley Rally, except that pairs of players are positioned on opposite sides of the net, 5 to 8 feet from the net. Each pair has three balls. A target ball or poly spot is placed in front of and to the side of each player. The pair then hits the third ball back and forth with a forehand ground stroke, with each player trying to hit his or her partner's target ball or poly spot on the first bounce. After a few minutes, players move back to midway between the net and service line and eventually to the service line and do the same exercise (at these distances, it's best to use poly spots as a safety precaution).



Review of Skills Learned in the Previous Lesson – 13 Minutes

General Review – 3 Minutes

Review the serve and progress made to date. Brief students on the excitement of putting the skills that have been learned to date together.

Serving Practice – 10 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.” For each successful serve, the player wins a point. A double fault is a point for “Nobody.” Each player plays a game using conventional scoring. Remember to serve into both the *deuce* (i.e., right) and *ad* (i.e., left) service boxes.



Introduction and Demonstration of New Skill

Introduction to Return of Serve – 5 Minutes

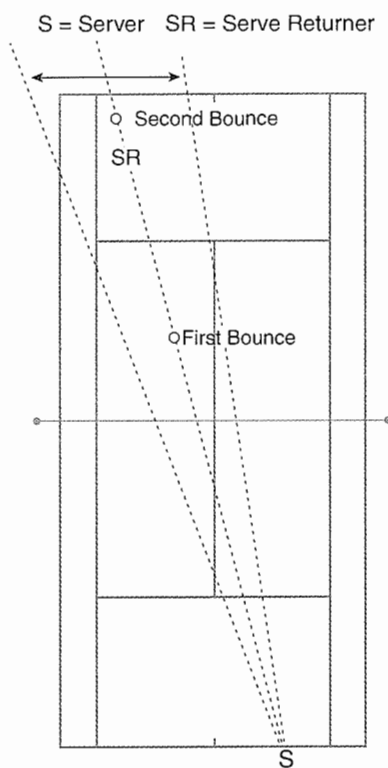
The return of serve is one of the most important skills in tennis. There are two major components to successfully returning serve: the position of the receiver and the length of the backswing in returning the serve.

Position

The **left-to-right position** of the receiver depends on the position of the server when serving. The receiver should be in the center of the angle made from the server's position to the outer edges of the service box the serve must go into. The **depth of the receiver's position** is determined by the velocity and depth of the serve. The receiver needs to be in front of the spot where the ball would bounce a second time. This means the receiver needs to stand closer in for shallow serves and further back for deep serves.

Backswing

The harder the ball is served, the shorter the backswing of the receiver should be. A long backswing puts more power on the ball. On a hard serve, the server applies a lot of power; therefore, a long backswing on the part of the receiver will send the ball out of the court. In addition, since you do not have the time to make a big backswing when the ball comes fast, the ball will often get past you before you can hit it. On a softer serve, the receiver has time to lengthen the backswing, which will provide the necessary power for the return.



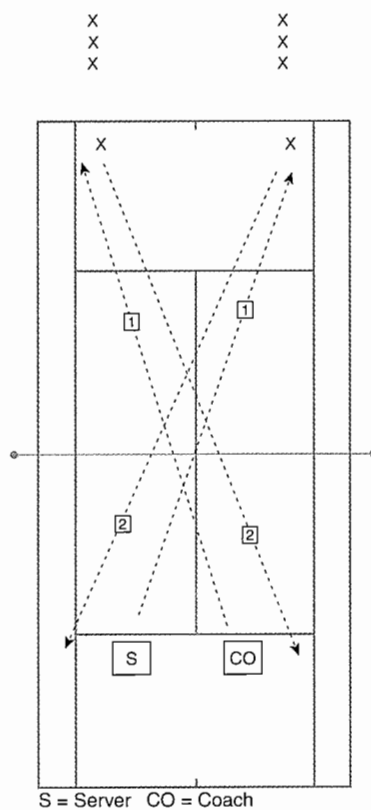
Return of Serve



Skill Development—Practice and Repetition

Return of Serve Practice – 10 Minutes

Students form two lines, one each behind the deuce and ad service boxes. The coach and another student stand on the service line on the opposite side of the net and serve a ball to the first person in each line, using a soft flat serve. Each player will return serve. Place targets so that the return is hit deep and crosscourt. After players return two serves, they move to the end of the opposite line.



Return of Serve Practice



Introduction and Demonstration of New Skill

Handling Trouble Shots – 5 Minutes

When you play a real game of tennis, it isn't always possible to use conventional hitting form in returning balls and sustaining rallies. That's because most balls do not land in the perfect place to be hit in the conventional manner. Many balls are hit wide, short, high, or over the head. In order to sustain a rally, you must be able to handle all of these trouble shots. The following practice exercises will help you to do this. These exercises also simulate a game-like situation and provide practice and repetition for real match play.



Skill Development—Practice and Repetition – 24 Minutes

Handling Short Balls – 8 Minutes

Explain how short balls are a major problem for people starting to play the game—regardless of how fast a player is. With students on the baseline, feed each one a short ball from the opposite baseline. Demonstrate how it is possible to get to balls with ease—if students are prepared. Emphasize how important it is to anticipate a short ball and get prepared by standing on the balls of the feet poised to run versus standing flat-footed and inattentive. These shots will probably be hit on the run. Students should use a short or no backswing and an open racquet face if the ball is low.

Handling High Balls – 8 Minutes

Beginners often hit high-bouncing ground strokes, but have trouble judging where to play high-bouncing balls that come to them. (Lesson situations usually practice medium-paced, flat-trajectory balls.) Hit a series of high semi-lob and ask players to notice where the ball bounces the second time. Explain that the easiest place to strike these balls is on the way down (before the second bounce), when they are about waist high. Players must learn to back up and wait for these high balls to come down. Have students practice judging where to hit the ball by starting on the baseline, moving back, and catching the ball with two hands at waist height.

Handling Balls Hit Wide or Over the Head – 8 Minutes

This practice will help players to handle balls hit wide and over the head as well as short and high. Have players form two lines at the baseline on either side of the center mark. The coach stands in the center of the service line and feeds balls alternately to the two lines. The sequence of feed is high, high, wide, wide, short, short, and over the head, over the head, as the coach alternates balls to each line. **Note:** When returning wide balls, the goal is to hit the ball high back over the net to the middle of the court. By hitting the ball high, you will have enough time to recover and get in position for the next shot.

Following these practices, explain how tennis players need to learn to move around the court without taking their eyes off the ball. They also must always be prepared to move, expecting that the next shot will make them run.



Review of Lesson and Cool Down – 16 Minutes

Review – 10 Minutes

Review the stroke and court positioning for return of serve. Ask if there are any questions about today's lesson.

Explain 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 benefits of hitting against a wall or serving a bucket of balls.

Cool Down – 6 Minutes

Go through the Flexibility Exercises in the Appendix.



Tennis Rules and Conduct – 5 Minutes

Introduce *The Code: The Players' Guide for Unofficial Matches*. (The *Rules of Tennis*, which includes *The Code*, can be obtained from the U.S. Tennis Association by calling the toll-free number: 888-832-8291, ext. 1.) Highlight some of the key points:

- Retrieve balls for the server so that he or she always has two balls.
- If your ball goes into an adjacent court, wait until the players on that court have finished the point before you ask for the ball. If a ball comes onto your court, return it as soon as play has stopped on both courts.
- Calling lines—never question a call unless making a call against yourself.
- Announcing scores—the server announces the score before serving each point.
- Always shake hands with your opponent after a match and thank him or her for playing.



Practice Assignments – 5 Minutes

Explain practice assignments to be done between lessons:

- Rally with a partner, starting each rally with a serve. Notice how many balls are hit high, wide, short, or over the head.
- Practice serve independently. Hit against a wall or backboard.

Handouts

Distribute:

- Handout 4

RETURN OF SERVE AND TROUBLE SHOTS

Tennis Movement

- Be prepared to move: knees slightly bent, weight on the balls of the feet.
- Expect that the next shot will make you run.

Return of Serve

- The position of the receiver should be in the center of possible serves, which is the center of the angle made from the server's position to the outer edges of the service box the serve must go into.
- The depth of position of the receiver is determined by the velocity of the serve. The receiver needs to be in front of the spot where the ball would bounce a second time.
- Adjust backswing to the pace of the ball. For hard serves, use a short backswing similar to a volley; for softer serves, lengthen the backswing.

Handling Trouble Shots

Short Balls

Be prepared to start quickly. Because the shot will be made 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 in returning the wide ball is to hit the ball high back over the net to the middle of the court and to leave yourself plenty of margin for error.

High Balls and Balls Hit Over the Head

Be prepared to back up and wait for these balls to come down. Try to hit these balls in the comfort zone—around waist height.

Practice Suggestions

- Rally with a partner, starting each rally with a serve. Notice how many balls are hit high, wide, short, or over the head.
- Practice serve independently. Hit against a wall or backboard.

LESSON FIVE: COURT POSITIONING AND SHOT SELECTION

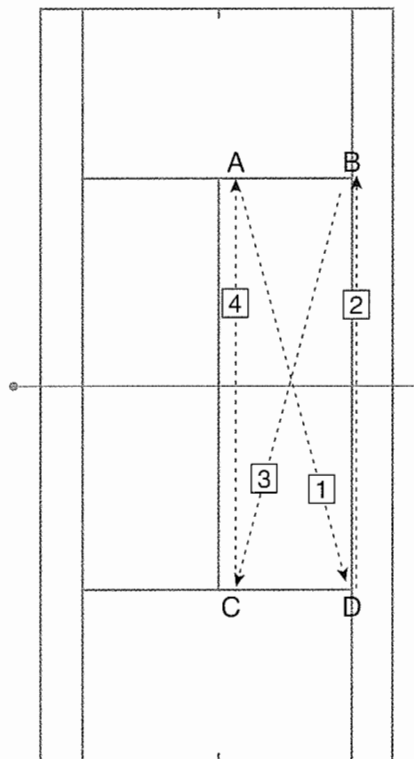
Objective: To introduce singles and doubles court positioning and basic shot selection.



Warm-Up Activity

Crosscourt and Down-the-Line Mini-Tennis - 6 Minutes

A team of four people play on each side of the court (i.e., the court is divided vertically). Up to eight people can play on a court. For each team, the players are positioned on the service line on either side of the net. Player A begins by hitting a crosscourt shot to Player D; Player D hits a down-the-line return to Player B; Player B hits a crosscourt shot to Player C, who hits a down-the-line return to Player A. Players A and B hit all crosscourt shots and Players C and D hit all shots down the line. Each team attempts to see how many four-ball sequences (a sequence is complete when Player C returns the ball to Player A) they can play in a row successfully.



Crosscourt and Down-the-Line Mini-Tennis



Review of Skills Learned in Previous Lesson

Return of Serve Practice - 5 Minutes

Students form two lines, one each behind the deuce and ad service boxes. The coach and another student stand on the service line on the opposite side of the net and serve a ball to the first person in each line, using a soft flat serve. Each player will return two serves. Place targets so that the return is hit deep and crosscourt.



Introduction and Demonstration of New Skills - 7 Minutes

General Introduction to Court Positioning - 2 Minutes

When teaching beginning tennis, many coaches concentrate too much on **skill development** and neglect the equally important need to teach **court positioning** and **shot selection**. Players need to understand where they should be on the court and how their position and the position of their opponents influence the particular shot they should choose in returning a ball. Explain to students that this lesson will cover court positioning for both singles and doubles play and demonstrate why a particular shot is chosen over another depending on positioning.

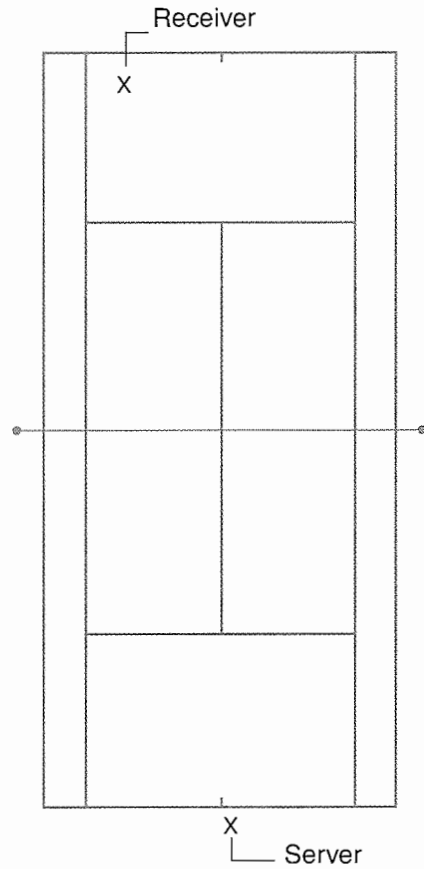
There are two types of positions that players need to know and use in both singles and doubles play. They are the *starting positions* and the *home base positions*.

Singles Starting Positions - 2 Minutes

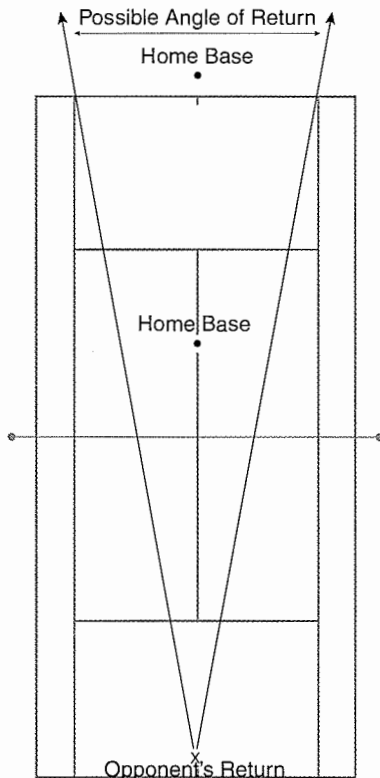
To start singles play, the server and receiver stand on opposite sides of the net. The server stands behind the baseline close to the center mark. The server stands alternately behind the right and left halves of the court, beginning from the right in every game. The receiver stands diagonally opposite the server near the baseline on the opposite side of the net.

Singles Home Base Positions (Magnet Theory) - 3 Minutes

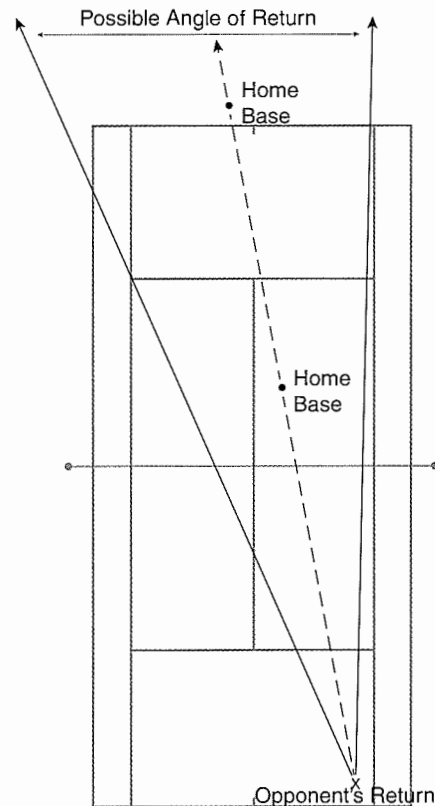
In singles play, there are two home bases—one at the baseline and one at the net. The home base concept is a method of determining where the player should go after hitting a shot. The home base positions are determined by bisecting the possible angle of return from the opponent. Generally the net player's home base moves to the side of the court where the ball lands and the baseline player's home base moves to the opposite side of the court. See illustrations below for examples of how the home bases change depending on the spot from which the return is hit. According to the magnet theory, players are drawn to the nearest magnet (i.e., home base) after each shot.



Singles Starting Positions



**Singles Home Base Positions
When Ball Is Hit from the Middle of the Court**



**Singles Home Base Positions
When Ball Is Hit from the Side of the Court**



Skill Development – Practice and Repetition – 8 Minutes

Singles Home Base Positioning Without Racquet – 3 Minutes

Have players take turns assuming the home base positions. The coach stands on the opposite side of the net and throws a ball to each player. The player catches the ball and throws it back to the coach and then returns to the nearest home base. The coach checks to see if the player recovered to the appropriate home base. The objective of this exercise is to become more aware of the need to return to a home base after hitting a ball.

Handling Tough Shots – 5 Minutes

Players begin behind the baseline at the center mark (i.e., the baseline home base or magnet). The coach feeds each player three balls—they can be high, wide, or short, ground strokes or volleys. All three balls should be returned to a target placed on the right side of the backcourt. Emphasize recovering to the nearest home base position after each shot.



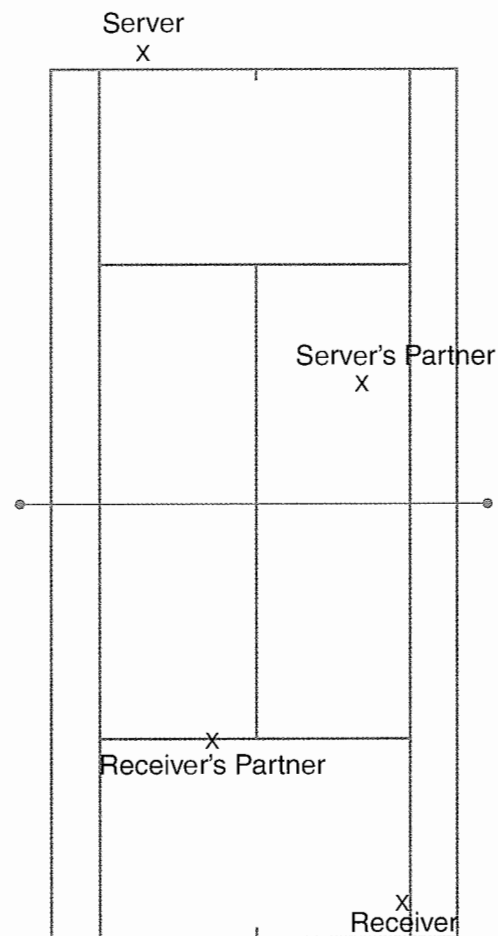
Introduction and Demonstration of New Skills – 15 Minutes

Doubles Starting Positions – 5 Minutes

In doubles play, a team of two players plays on each side of the net. The starting positions for each of the four players are as follows:

- The **Server** stands at the baseline between the center mark and the doubles sidelines.
- The **Receiver** stands at or near the baseline. As the server moves further toward the sideline, the receiver should move in the opposite direction toward his or her sideline.
- In standard formation, the **Server's Partner** assumes a net position.
- For our purposes, the **Receiver's Partner** stands on or slightly behind the service line about 3 feet from the center service line.

Demonstrate doubles starting positioning and explain that each person is responsible for covering half of their team's side of the court.

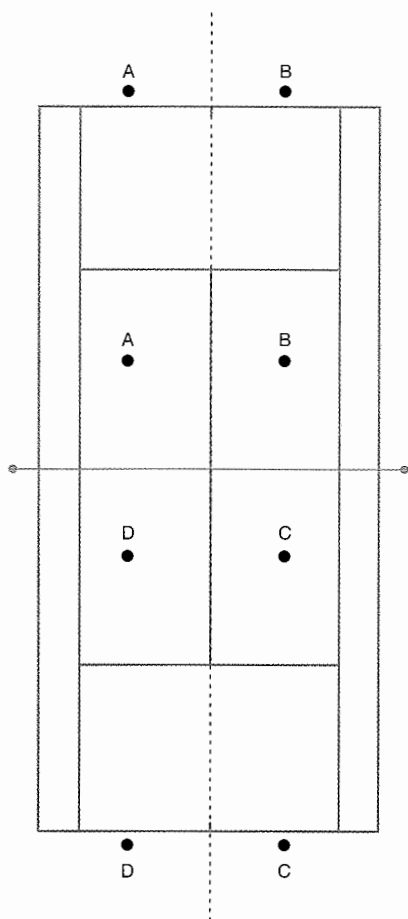


Doubles Starting Positions

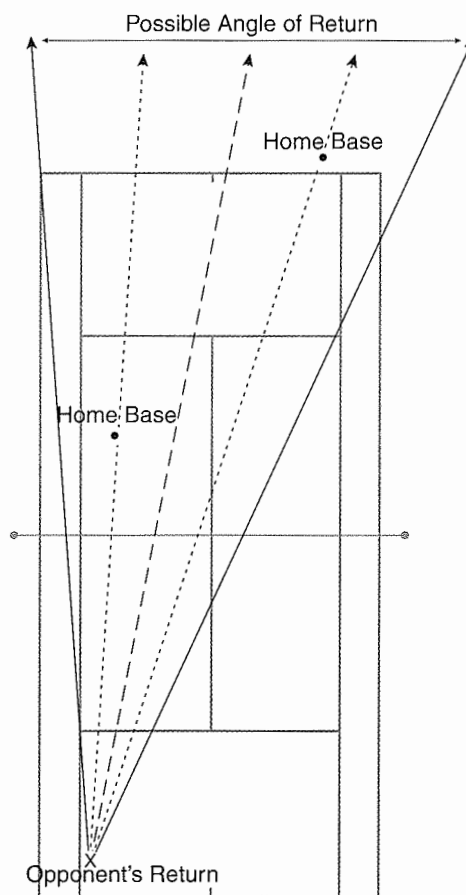
Doubles Home Base Positions (Magnet Theory) – 5 Minutes

Home base positions are just as important in doubles as they are in singles. In doubles, there are four home base positions on each side of the net—two at the baseline and two at the net. See below for illustration of doubles home base positions at the beginning of play. The letters A, B, C, and D each represent the home bases for one player.

Unlike in singles, where one player covers one entire side of the court, in doubles, each player covers only half of one side of the court. Therefore, if you bisect the possible angle of return from the opponent, the home base positions will fall within the angle formed on either side of this bisection. See illustration below. As in singles, you will see that the net player's home base moves to the side of the court where the ball lands and the baseline player's home base moves to the opposite side of the court.



**Doubles Home Base Positions
at Beginning of Play**



**Doubles Home Base Positions
When Ball Is Hit from the Side of the Court**

Shot Selection – 5 Minutes

Explain how important it is for a player to understand that the best shot selection is dependent on where all players are on the court at the time of the shot. A simple rule to follow is for deep (backcourt) players to return the ball to the opposite deep player, and for the close (i. e, forecourt) players to try to direct their shots to the other close player's feet. Walk through several points concentrating on shot selection.



Skill Development – Practice and Repetition

Doubles Home Base Positioning Without Racquet – 5 Minutes

Have players take turns assuming the doubles positions. The server throws a ball over the net and the person on that side of the net closest to the ball catches it, tosses it back, and goes to the nearest home base position. The coach checks to see if all players recovered to their appropriate home bases. The objective of this exercise is to become more aware of the need to recover to a home base after hitting a ball.



Introduction and Demonstration of New Skill

Rotation of Serve Positioning – 5 Minutes

The server stands alternately behind the baseline of the right and left halves of the court, beginning with the right half in every game. Other players should be in the starting positions, either for singles or doubles play (see previous diagrams). At the end of the first game, the receiving side becomes the serving side and so on alternately in all the subsequent games of a match. (See also Order of Serve under Tennis Rules and Conduct.) The players change ends of the court after every odd-numbered game.

Have all players walk through the rotation of serve several times in order to become familiar with how it works.



Skill Application – Games and Drills – 18 Minutes

Doubles Points – 10 Minutes

The coach begins in the service return position. Begin the point with a serve and play out the point. If the serve is a fault, the coach will put the ball in play with a drop hit “serve return.” After the point is completed, the coach checks positions and makes corrections before putting a second ball in play. Do this for three points. All players should hit to the correct location (deep to deep or close to close) and recover to the correct home base position. Emphasize returning to the closest “magnet” (i.e., home base) either at the net or behind the baseline. Rotate players clockwise into a new position after three points are played.

Serve, Return, and Crosscourt Rally – 8 Minutes

Divide the class into a serving group and a receiving group with a player at each corner of the court. The rest of the players form two lines, one on the side with the servers, the other on the side with receivers. One side serves, the other returns crosscourt, after which they continue to rally crosscourt. The goal is to rally crosscourt (deep to deep) until an error is made. Switch players after every point with the winner staying in and the player who lost the point going to the opposite side of the court.



Review of Lesson and Cool Down – 11 Minutes

Review – 5 Minutes

Review 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?” Encourage players to ask questions. Make positive observations that will give them a good feeling about starting to play doubles in the next lesson. Review shot selection, service rotation, and scoring.

Discussion questions:

- Why is it so important to return to home bases after the ball is hit?
- When the service return goes deep, how should the other players react?
- What are some of the main obstacles to keeping a rally going?

Cool Down – 6 Minutes

Go through the Flexibility Exercises in the Appendix.



Tennis Rules and Conduct – 5 Minutes

- The order of serving is decided at the beginning of each set. The pair who serves in the first game of a set decides which partner will serve first. The other partner then serves in the third game and they alternate serving in each subsequent odd-numbered game until the set is completed. The partners of the opposing team alternate serving in even-numbered games.
- The order of receiving serve is decided at the beginning of each set. The pair who receives in the first game of a set decides which partner will receive first. The other partner then receives on the second point and they alternate receiving on each subsequent point until the game is completed.
- Help your partner with line calls. If you think an opponent's ball that your partner called out actually hit the line, you must call it good.
- Always encourage your partner, even if he or she makes a foolish error. You're a team!



Practice Assignments – 5 Minutes

Explain practice assignments to be done between lessons:

- Play a set of doubles (concentrate on your court position and shot selection as you play).
- Practice serves and rallies. Hit against a wall or backboard.

Handouts

Distribute:

- Handout 5

COURT POSITIONING AND SHOT SELECTION

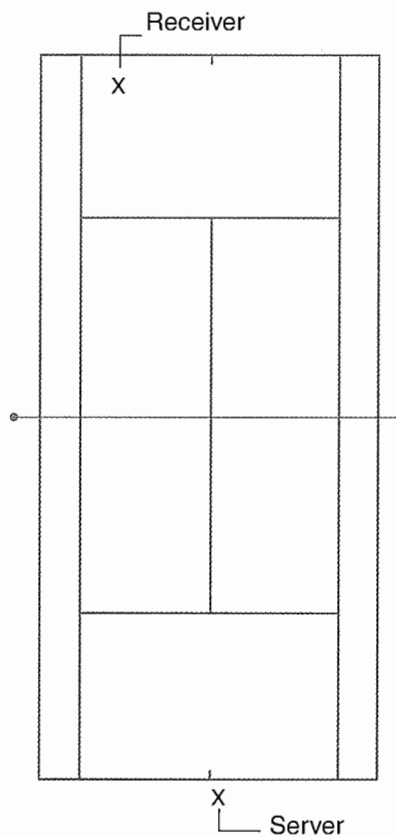
Review of Skills Needed for Match Play

Players must be able to:

- Serve with sufficient consistency to start points
- Return serves with consistency
- Cover the court—right and left, up and back
- Play a sequence of shots (e.g., serve, ground stroke, volley)
- Maintain correct court positioning
- Choose shot for each play that's appropriate to the position of all players and the ball

Singles Starting Positions

To start singles play, the server and receiver stand on opposite sides of the net. The server stands behind the baseline close to the center mark. The server stands alternately behind the right and left halves of the court, beginning from the right in every game. The receiver stands diagonally opposite the server near the baseline on the opposite side of the net.

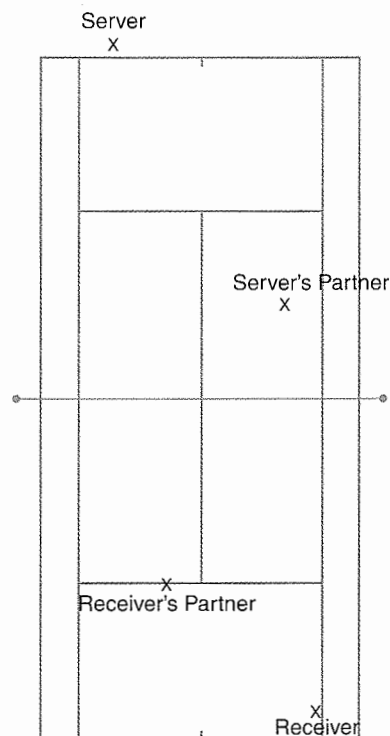


Singles Starting Positions

Doubles Starting Positions

In doubles play, a team of two players plays on each side of the net. The starting positions for each of the four players are as follows:

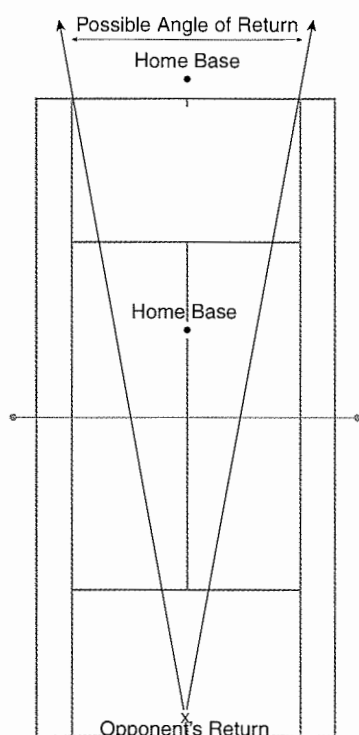
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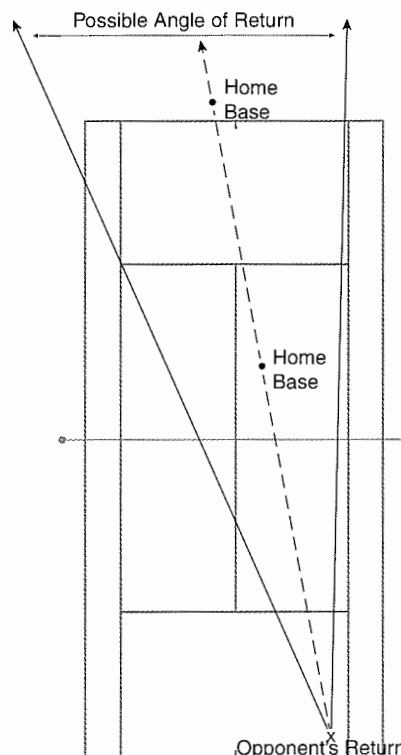
Doubles Starting Positions

Singles Home Base Positions (Magnet Theory)

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Singles Home Base Positions
When Ball Is Hit from the Middle of the Court



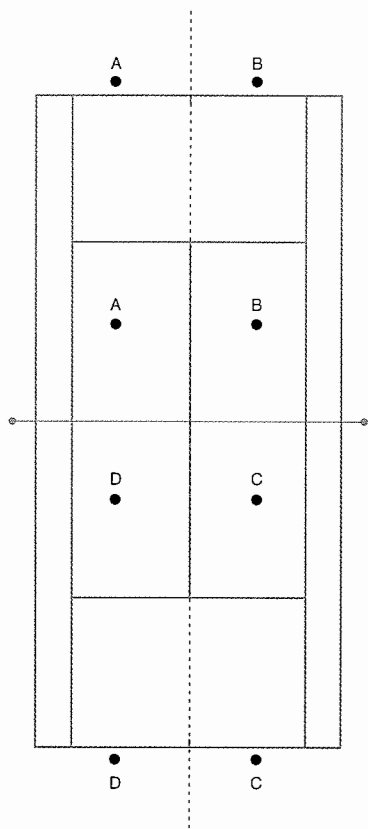
Singles Home Base Positions
When Ball Is Hit from the Side of the Court

the court where the ball lands and the baseline player's home base moves to the opposite side of the court. See illustrations on previous page for examples of how the home bases change depending on the spot from which the return is hit. According to the magnet theory, players are drawn to the nearest magnet (i.e., home base) after each shot.

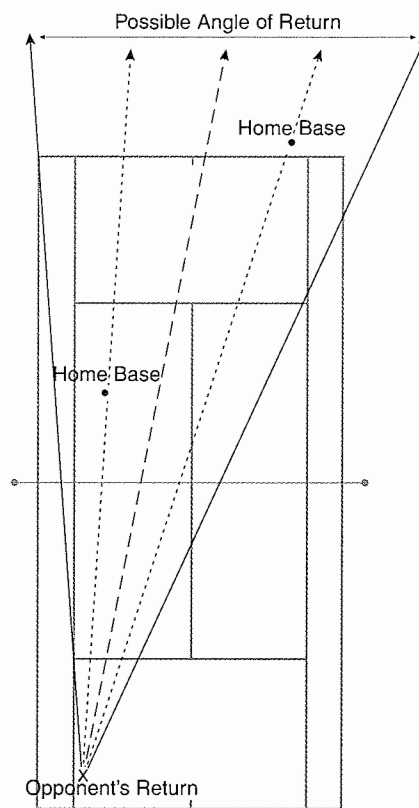
Doubles Home Base Positions

Home base positions are just as important in doubles as they are in singles. In doubles, there are four home base positions on each side of the net—two at the baseline and two at the net. See below for illustration of doubles home base positions at the beginning of play. The letters A, B, C, and D each represent the home bases for one player.

Unlike in singles, where one player covers one entire side of the court, in doubles, each player covers only half of one side of the court. Therefore, if you bisect the possible angle of return from the opponent, the home base positions will fall within the angle formed on either side of this bisection. See illustration below. As in singles, you will see that the net player's home base moves to the side of the court where the ball lands and the baseline player's home base moves to the opposite side of the court.



Doubles Home Base Positions at Beginning of Play



Doubles Home Base Positions When Ball Is Hit from the Side of the Court

Practice Suggestions

- Play a set of doubles (concentrate on your court position and shot selection as you play).
- Practice serves and returns. Hit against a wall or backboard.

LESSON SIX:

THE DOUBLES GAME: STRATEGY, PRACTICE, AND PLAY

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



Warm-Up Activity

Short Court Warm-Up Ping-Pong Style – 7 Minutes

Using the service courts on one half of the court (i.e., with the court divided vertically), players begin at the service line in teams of two. The first player drop-hits into the service court where the first player of the other team returns back into the service court. Partners switch after every hit as in ping-pong.



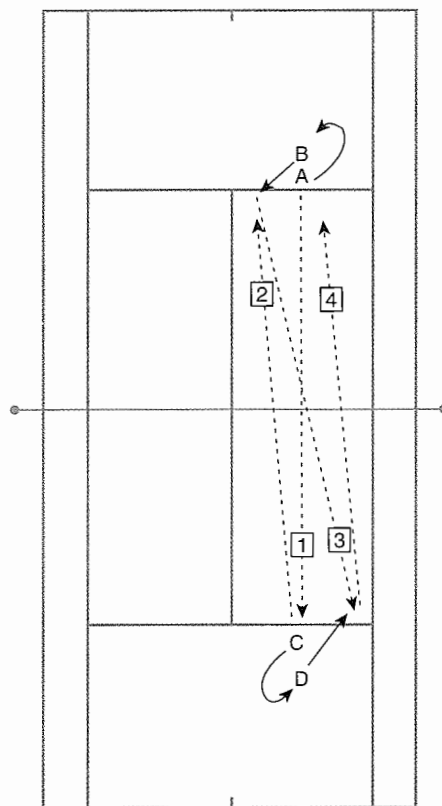
Review of Skills Learned in Previous Lesson – 17 Minutes

Doubles Starting and Home Base Positions – 5 Minutes

Review the position of each of the four players in doubles play to start a point (i.e., starting positions) and where they should recover to each time after the ball is hit (i.e., home base positions).

Serve and Serve Return Practice – Stay Until You Miss – 12 Minutes

Divide the class into a serving group and a receiving group and have two people serving and two receiving at any one time. The other players form two lines, one on the side with the servers, the other on the side with the receivers, and are ready to step in when an error is made either with a double fault or a service return. To begin the drill, one server serves to the deuce court and the other to the ad court. All serve returns must be hit crosscourt. This is a two-shot drill—serve and serve return. Servers and receivers stay in their positions until they make an error. When an error is made, the first person in line takes the place of the person who made the error, and the drill continues. Servers get two faults before it is counted as an error.



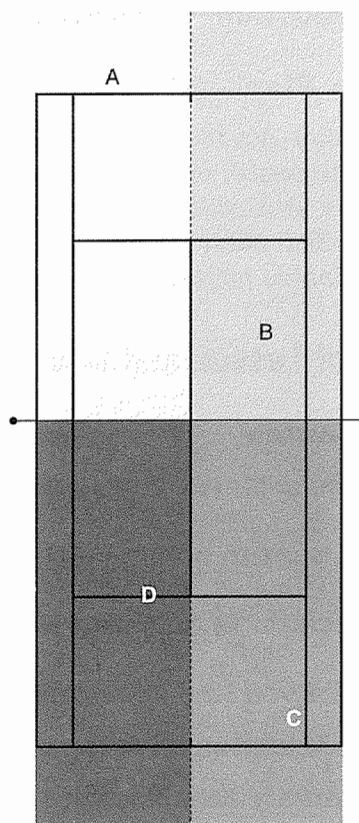
Short Court Warm-Up Ping-Pong Style



Introduction and Demonstration of New Skill

Introduction to Switching – 5 Minutes

Explain to students how in doubles match play, partners usually divide their side of the court in half (from the net to the baseline) and each partner is responsible for covering one half of their team's side of the court. 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. See illustration for the general area that each player is responsible for.



Each Player's Area of Responsibility

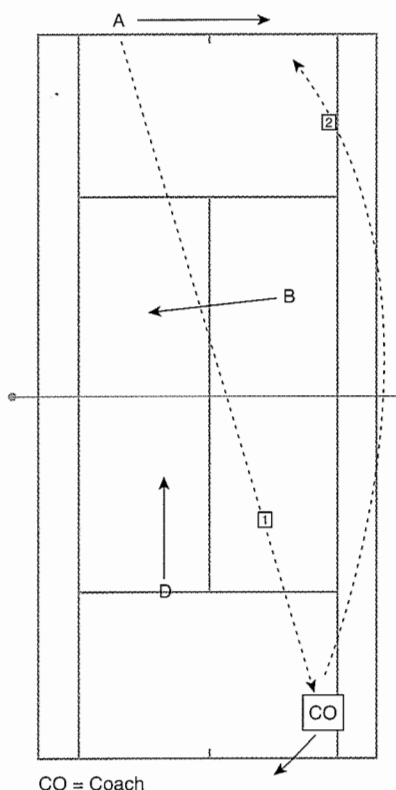


Skill Development – Practice and Repetition

Switching in Doubles – 13 Minutes

Four players assume doubles starting positions as in Lesson 5. Play begins with a serve hit to the coach who is in the receiver's position. If the serve isn't good, the coach drop hits a "return serve." This time the coach hits a lob over the net player's head. The server (i.e., backcourt player) will switch sides and return that shot to the deep player. The server's partner at the net will switch sides and assume the net position on the opposite half of the court.

Three points will be played with the coach starting the final two points with a drop hit and checking to make sure that all players are in the correct position before playing the next point. The coach should mix in shots to the net person so everyone has a chance to hit. Players rotate clockwise into new positions after three points are played.



Switching in Doubles

Skill Application – Games and Drills

Doubles Match Play – 30 Minutes

Have students play doubles using conventional scoring. Players must keep track of and announce the score, call lines, and move into the correct *starting positions* before each point begins and recover to the correct *home base positions* after each ball is hit. Rotate players after each game. The coach should circulate and make positive comments and emphasize correct positioning and shot selection.

Review of Lesson and Cool Down – 11 Minutes

Review – 5 Minutes

Highlight positive achievements. Encourage discussion with open-ended questions:

- Anybody want to nominate the most amazing shot of the day?
- Which position in doubles did you like to play? Which didn't you like to play?
- How would you like your partner to act when you muff an easy shot?

Cool Down – 6 Minutes

Go through Flexibility Exercises in the Appendix.

Practice Suggestions – 2 Minutes

Tell students that the best way for them to become comfortable with playing tennis is to play. Encourage them to get a foursome together to play doubles and to concentrate on covering their court area of responsibility and switching with their partner when necessary. Tell them to work on hitting to the correct location (deep to deep and close to close) and on recovering to the correct home base. Also encourage players to use a backboard to practice and improve their stroke skills.

Certificate of Merit and Next Steps – 5 Minutes

Congratulate players on their performance during the six sessions. Award all players with a Certificate of Merit for their successful participation.

Encourage them to continue with the six-session Practice and Play Component of USA Tennis 1-2-3 for Adults. Explain its format. Complete registration on the spot.

Handouts

Distribute:

- Handout 6

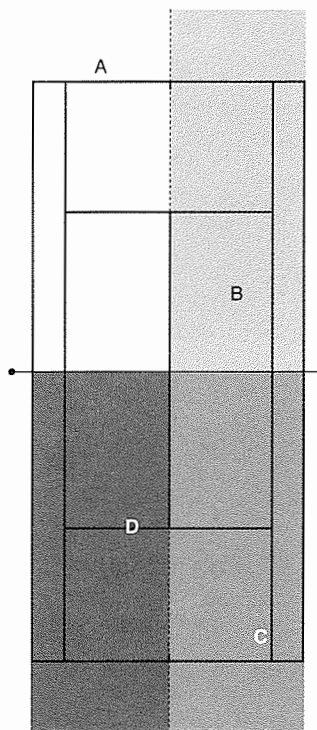
THE DOUBLES GAME: STRATEGY, PRACTICE, AND PLAY

Switching

Players generally divide the court down the center, from the net to the baseline, and each partner is responsible for covering one half of their team's side of the court. 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 is hit over the head of a net player.

Serve and Return

Service returns should be hit away from a strong net player. This can be done by hitting crosscourt or by lobbing the ball over the net player's head.



Each Player's Area of Responsibility

Practice Suggestions

Keep playing. Try to get a foursome together to play doubles and to concentrate on covering your court area of responsibility and switching with your partner when necessary. Concentrate on hitting to the correct location (deep to deep or close to close) and recovering to the correct home base position. Use a backboard to practice and improve your stroke skills.

Sign up for the six-session Practice and Play Component of USA Tennis 1-2-3 for Adults or USA Team Tennis! See Appendix for registration form for USA Team Tennis.

Practice and Play Component

The **Practice and Play Component of USA Tennis 1-2-3 for Adults** is a six-session program that emphasizes the game approach to improving tennis skills and play. Players can take the series of six 1½-hour sessions immediately after completing the **Skill Development Component** or after a period of time, perhaps even a few years, has elapsed since completing it.

The sessions build from a limited skills base and add more skills, such as the lob and overhead, along with refining and practicing skills that were introduced in the first six lessons of USA Tennis 1-2-3. Even though the participants have limited skills, the curriculum emphasizes the game approach with a concentration on doubles play. We believe that through actually playing the game, students can best learn the strategies and tactics as well as the skills necessary for success.

To play the game of tennis requires more than just having the skills to hit balls. Equally important are correct court positioning and shot selection. As emphasized in Lesson 5 of the Skill Development Component, players need to understand where they should be on the court at all times and how their position and the position of their opponents influence the particular shot they should choose in returning a ball. These are the strategy and tactics aspects of playing tennis.

Coaches sometimes emphasize skill development and do not give enough time to strategy and tactics (i.e., court positioning and shot selection). When your players understand what they must do in the game, they are eager to develop the skills to play the game.

In the game approach to tennis, players:

Play the game or a modified game → Learn the strategies and tactics → Learn the skills

The beauty of the game-based approach is that it helps players to quickly understand how to play the game of tennis better. It blends strategy and tactics with the more traditional model of stroke and skill development. As a coach, you need to be flexible and patient with technique that is less than perfect, particularly if players choose the right shot and return to the correct position after a play.

Many of the sessions in the Practice and Play Component of USA Tennis 1-2-3 for Adults include a combination of skill development and strategy. This balanced approach allows players to see what skills they need to work on to accomplish the strategic goals for the session. For example, if players cannot volley accurately to the correct targets, it will be clear that they need to spend some time developing direction skills for the volley.

Most of the 90-minute sessions are divided into 40 minutes of practice and 40 minutes of doubles play, with the other 10 minutes being used for warm-up at the beginning of the session and review and stretching at the end. (In Sessions Three and Six, the time allocations are somewhat different.) The practice segment of each session allocates some time to the serve and serve return, because these two shots are the most important ones in the game. It is always difficult to get enough service return practice, so be sure to divide your group so that all players have an opportunity to practice both serves and returns.



During the time for doubles *play*, it is important to encourage players to try the new strategies and skills they worked on during the *practice* portion. Try to “catch them doing the right thing,” such as correct positioning or good shot selection—and reinforce it. You also might consider adding special rules to encourage experimentation, such as awarding two points for a successful poach or winning angle volley.

The following pages provide an outline of strategies, drills, games, skill development, and match play for each of the six sessions of supervised play. (A variety of popular play rotations that coaches often use can be found in the Appendix.) This combination of activities has been field tested and proven to be successful in getting people out on the court and playing in short order!

PRACTICE AND PLAY – SESSION ONE

Purpose: To teach consistency in ground strokes.

Strategy: To keep the ball in play.

Warm-Up Activity

Mini-Tennis – 5 Minutes

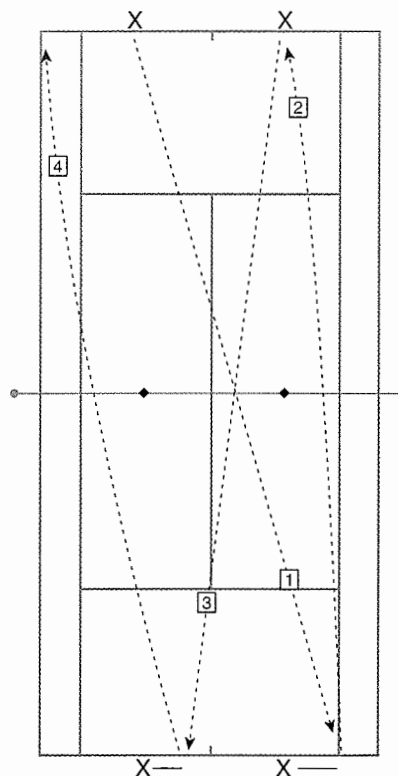
Pairs of players are positioned on opposite sides of the net, 5 to 8 feet from the net. Each pair has three balls. A target ball or poly spot is placed in front of and to the side of each player. The pair then hits the third ball back and forth with a forehand ground stroke, with each player trying to hit his or her partner's target ball or poly spot on the first bounce. After a few minutes, players move back to midway between the net and service line.

Practice with Games and Drills – 40 Minutes

Hit to the Middle – 15 Minutes

Mark the middle third of the net by attaching brightly colored cloths to that area. Have two teams rally from the backcourt on opposite sides of the net. Extra players wait in the back for their turn to play. One team hits all shots between the markers; the other team hits down-the-sidelines shots over the outside thirds of the net. Play three points and rotate teams. After all teams have been in both positions, have them discuss over which parts of the net they were more effective in keeping the ball in play. Hitting the ball down the middle should cause fewer errors because:

- The net is lower.
- There is less risk because you are not aiming close to the sidelines.



Hit to the Middle

Note: Throughout this second part of USA Tennis 1-2-3 for Adults, games or modified game situations will be introduced. The coach might have to interrupt them to spend time on technique when players have difficulty with some aspect of a game. For example, if players cannot direct shots to the appropriate targets, you might have to teach and practice how to control direction and then return to the game.

Crosscourt with Partner – 15 Minutes

Four players are positioned in the backcourt on either side of the net. Players on one side of the net begin crosscourt points with a drop and hit. All shots are returned crosscourt over the middle of the net between the center service line and the doubles sideline. Players earn one point for winning a rally and two points when the opponent hits a ball into the net. Play until one player wins five points. The winner stays and a new player steps in for the loser.

Serve and Serve Return – 10 Minutes



Doubles Play – 40 Minutes



Review of Session and Stretch – 5 Minutes

While players stretch (use some of the Flexibility Exercises in the Appendix), the coach can review problem areas from the session and highlight positive aspects of the participants' play. Players also have a chance to ask questions at this time.

PRACTICE AND PLAY – SESSION TWO

Purpose: To learn to recognize and hit the correct target when volleying at the net.

Strategy: To hit to the middle of the court.



Warm-Up Activity and Review of Previous Session

Mini Ground Strokes and Volleys – 5 Minutes

One player is at the net position and the partner is positioned on the opposite service line. This is a cooperative drill where the player on the service line hits soft ground strokes and the person at the net volleys the ball back. Players will have an opportunity to hit both forehand and backhand ground strokes and volleys.



Practice with Games and Drills – 40 Minutes

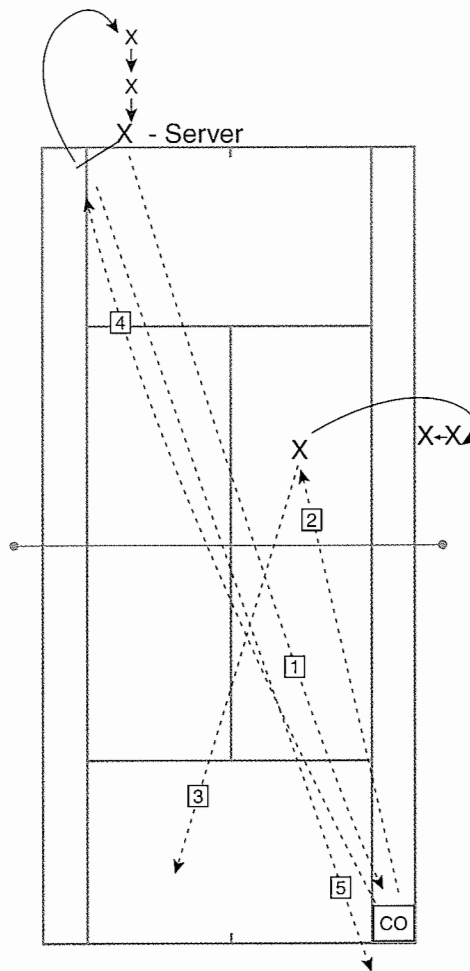
Where to Hit the Volley – 10 Minutes

Place four players in a “one up, one back” formation. Describe a situation where the ball goes to the net player. Ask students to show where they might want to hit the volley. Have players place the balls on the court at the point where they feel they should land. Explain which shots give the highest chances of success, the easiest being the shot that splits the two players on the opposite team.

Split Team Volley Drill – 20 Minutes

The serving side is set up in the one up, one back position. The coach is the receiver. From the deuce court, the backcourt player serves a ball to the coach, and the coach returns it to either the net player or the backcourt player. The backcourt player should return everything cross-court down the middle. The net player should volley every ball down the middle. Have each player hit two shots before rotating. After 10 minutes, begin points from the ad court.

Serve and Serve Return – 10 Minutes



Split Team Volley Drill



Doubles Play – 40 Minutes



Review of Session and Stretch – 5 Minutes

While players stretch (use some of the Flexibility Exercises in the Appendix), the coach can review problem areas from the session and highlight positive aspects of the participants' play. Players also have a chance to ask questions at this time.

PRACTICE AND PLAY – SESSION THREE

Purpose: To introduce lobs and the overhead smash.

Strategy: Offensively, to either force the opposing team away from the net or to switch positions. Defensively, to gain time to get back in position when a player is pulled off the court.



Warm-Up Activity and Review of Previous Session

Split Team Volley Drill – 5 Minutes

The serving side is set up in the one up, one back position. The coach is the receiver. From the deuce court, the backcourt player serves a ball to the coach, and the coach returns it to either the net player or the backcourt player. The backcourt player returns the ball with a crosscourt ground stroke, while the net player plays a volley down the middle. Each player hits one shot and then moves to the end of the opposite line.



Introduction and Demonstration of New Skills

Explain and Demonstrate the Lob and Overhead Smash – 5 Minutes

This lesson will focus on skill development of two new strokes, the *lob* and the *overhead smash*. Explain that the *lob* can be used strategically as a shot to either force the opposing team away from the net or to switch positions. It is also hit defensively to allow players time to get back in position when they have been pulled off the court.

The *overhead smash* is the shot that is played to return a lob when a player can move into the correct position.



Practice with Games and Drills – 40 Minutes

Drop-Hit Lob Drill – 7 Minutes

Position up to four players at the baseline, each holding two balls. From the baseline they drop and hit lobs. After hitting two balls, these players move to make room for the next group of players. Emphasize a short backswing and a full, smooth follow through. The height of the lob is achieved by opening the face of the racquet and using an upward path during the stroke. The coach or assistant can stand at the net with racquet fully extended to give hitters a sense of the height necessary to hit a lob over the player at the net.

Overhead Drill – 8 Minutes

Position three players at the net position and three others on the opposite side of the net just inside the service line as feeders. The feeders toss high underhand tosses so that the hitters can play soft overheads. The hitters should emphasize: (1) side-to-the-net position, (2) early racquet preparation, and (3) contact in front of the body at full arm extension. Change hitters and tossers after every five overheads.

**Overhead Smash -
Lob Game - 15 Minutes**

Two players are stationed at the net and two others are on the opposite side at the baseline (i.e., home base positions). The baseline team begins the point with a drop-hit lob and a point is played with the baseline team hitting all lobs and the net team hitting all overheads. Play out points, lobbers against the smashers. Rotate new players after three points.

**Serve and Serve
Return - 10 Minutes**

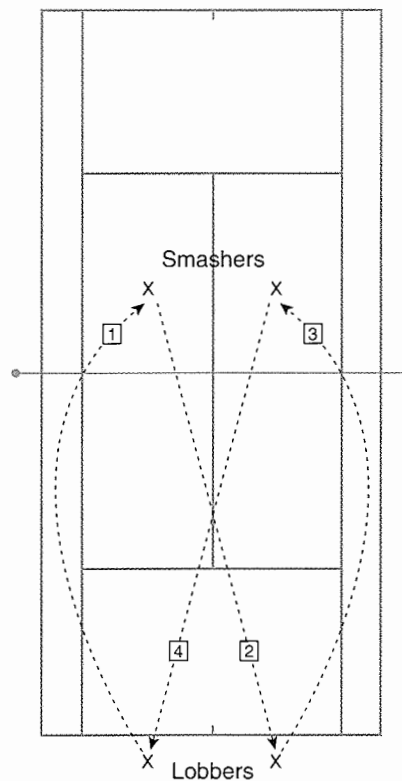


**Doubles Play -
35 Minutes**



Review of Session and Stretch - 5 Minutes

While players stretch (use some of the Flexibility Exercises in the Appendix), the coach can review problem areas from the session and highlight positive aspects of the participants' play. Players also have a chance to ask questions at this time.



Overhead Smash/Lob Game

PRACTICE AND PLAY – SESSION FOUR

Purpose: To stress the importance of knowing when to poach and how to communicate this to your partner.

Strategy: To take advantage of your opponents' highest percentage return.



Warm-Up Activity and Review of Previous Session

LoB and Overhead Mini-Tennis – 5 Minutes

Partners are positioned on opposite sides of the net in the net position and at the service line. The player on the service line hits soft lobs to the partner at the net who hits soft overheads back to the partner. Both players work together to keep one ball in play using the lob-overhead sequence.



Practice with Games and Drills – 40 Minutes

Serve Down the Middle and Poach – 15 Minutes

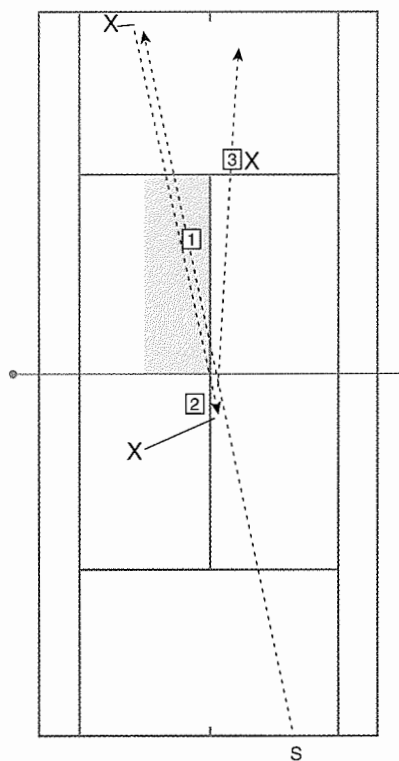
Players take normal doubles starting positions. The server must serve the ball to the inside half of the service court. When this happens, the server's partner should poach (i.e., invade his or her partner's territory) to cut off the return, and the point is played out. When the ball is hit down the middle, it reduces the possible angles of return and allows the net player to be more aggressive.

Drill – 10 Minutes

- Review and practice serves to the inside of the service court.
- Practice volley placement to the middle on both wide balls and shots down the middle.

Signal and Poach – 15 Minutes

Before every serve, the server and server's partner as a team decide where the serve will land and whether or not to poach. Depending on the signal given by the server, the server will serve to the outside (A-Alley), middle (B-Body), or inside (C-Center). The server's partner then indicates whether he or she will poach. The server and server's partner can negotiate both the shot and whether to poach. The net player poaches or stays, depending on the plan. The receiver must return crosscourt or down the line. If the net player is able to make a successful volley, that team wins two points. If the receiver avoids the net player, the receiving team wins one point.



Serve Down the Middle and Poach



Doubles Play – 40 Minutes



Review of Session and Stretch – 5 Minutes

While players stretch (use some of the Flexibility Exercises in the Appendix), the coach can review problem areas from the session and highlight positive aspects of the participants' play. Players also have a chance to ask questions at this time.

PRACTICE AND PLAY – SESSION FIVE

Purpose: To learn how to move as a team.

Strategy: The ability to move as a team guards against openings down the line and between both players. It also ensures that both players are where they need to be to play the next shot cooperatively.



Warm-Up Activity and Review of Previous Session

Mini-Tennis – 5 Minutes

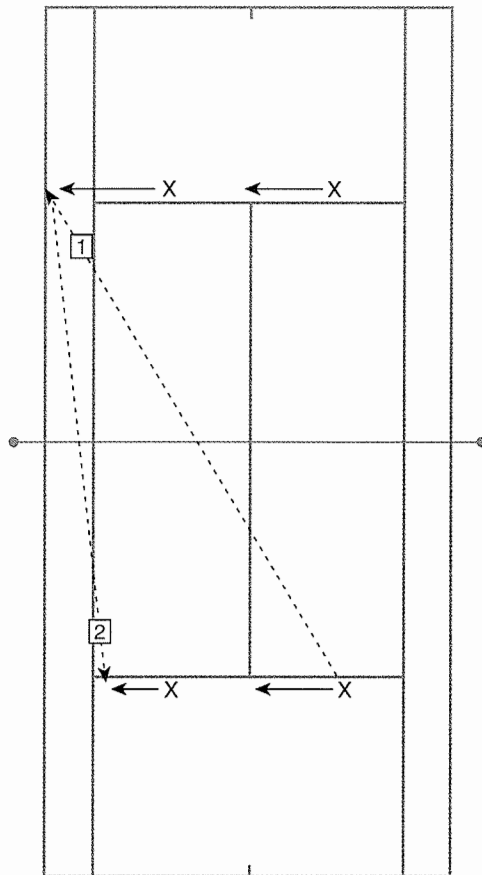
Pairs of players are positioned on opposite sides of the net, 5 to 8 feet from the net. Each pair has three balls. A target ball or poly spot is placed in front of and to the side of each player. The pair then hits the third ball back and forth with a forehand ground stroke, with each player trying to hit his or her partner's target ball or poly spot on the first bounce. After a few minutes, players move back to midway between the net and service line.



Practice with Games and Drills – 40 Minutes

Mini-Tennis: Moving As a Team – 10 Minutes

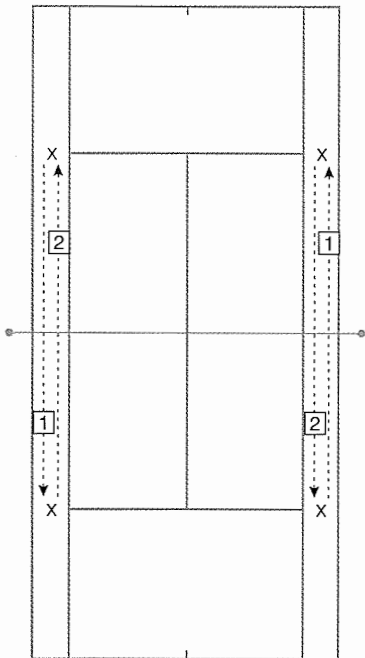
The court is divided vertically and a team of two players is on each half of the court on opposite sides of the net. Each of the four players stands at the midway point on the service line in his or her part of the court. The first team puts the ball in play with a drop and hit and a point is played. Both teams must hit up and soft on every shot. Players try to move the opposing team from side to side by using angled returns. Both teams should learn to follow the ball from side to side to avoid openings down the line and between both players. Play to three points, then rotate with other players who have been waiting in the back.



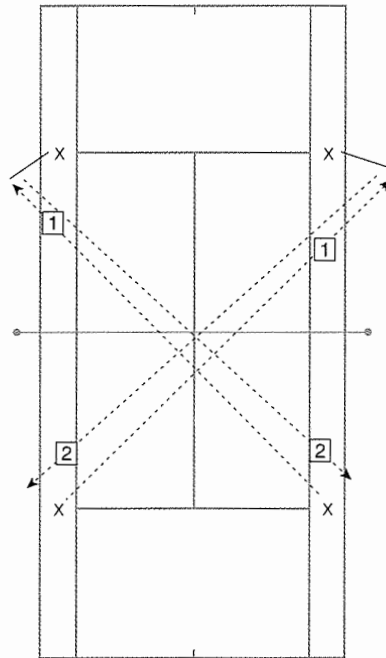
Mini-Tennis: Moving As a Team

Skill Practice: Hitting Crosscourt and Down the Line - 10 Minutes

To practice hitting down-the-line and crosscourt shots, position two players in each alley on both sides of the court. Players should begin at the service line and move back when they have success with this drill. Using the alleys as targets, have all players rally straight ahead (i.e., down the line), while trying to keep all shots landing in the alley. After 30 seconds, have them hit all shots crosscourt, again trying to keep the balls landing in the alley. Switch positions after one minute.



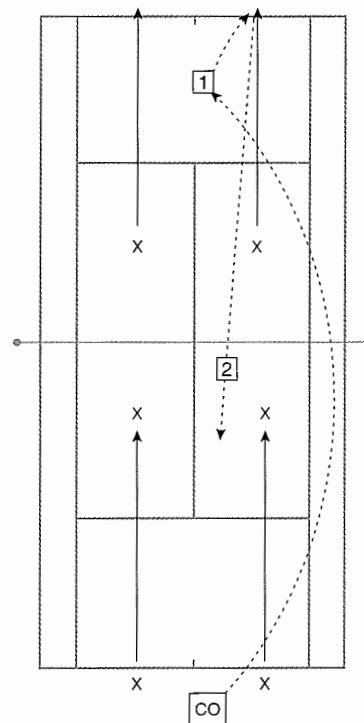
Hitting Down the Line



Hitting Crosscourt

Defending the Lob - 15 Minutes

Form two teams, one at the net and the other at the baseline on the opposite side of the net. The coach puts the ball in play with a lob over the net players' heads that they must chase and retrieve. The return should be a defensive lob. When the team at the net moves toward the baseline, the opposing team at the backcourt home base positions should move in to the net home base positions and be prepared to hit an overhead smash or volley. If the lob is very high, it is best to let it bounce before smashing. A team waiting at the sideline replaces the team that loses the point.



Defending the Lob

Note: The coach should explain that it takes lots of practice and experience for “moving as a team” to become automatic. Players need to continually reinforce it through drills and being aware of it during match play.

Serve and Serve Return – 5 Minutes



Doubles Play – 40 Minutes



Review of Session and Stretch – 5 Minutes

While players stretch (use some of the Flexibility Exercises in the Appendix), the coach can review problem areas from the session and highlight positive aspects of the participants' play. Players also have a chance to ask questions at this time.

PRACTICE AND PLAY – SESSION SIX

Purpose: To learn how to react quickly to defend against a volley from the “hot seat.”

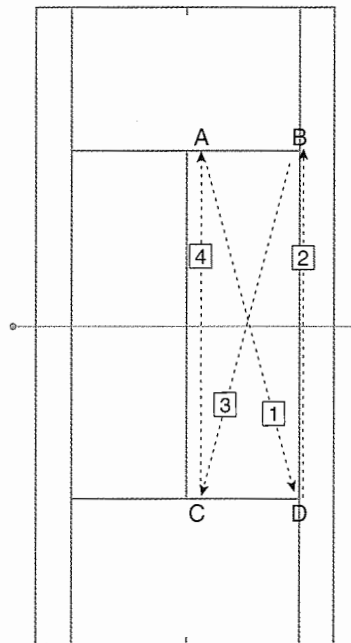
Strategy: To play defensively in order to keep the ball in play.



Warm-Up Activity and Review of Previous Session

Crosscourt and Down-the-Line Mini-Tennis – 5 Minutes

The court is divided vertically, and a team of four people play on each half of the court. For each team, the players are positioned on the service line on either side of the net. Player A begins by hitting a crosscourt shot to Player D; Player D hits a down-the-line return to Player B; Player B hits a crosscourt shot to Player C, who hits a down-the-line return to Player A. Player A and B hit all crosscourt shots and Players C and D hit all shots down the line. Each team attempts to see how many four-ball sequences (a sequence is complete when Player C returns the ball to Player A) they can play in a row successfully.



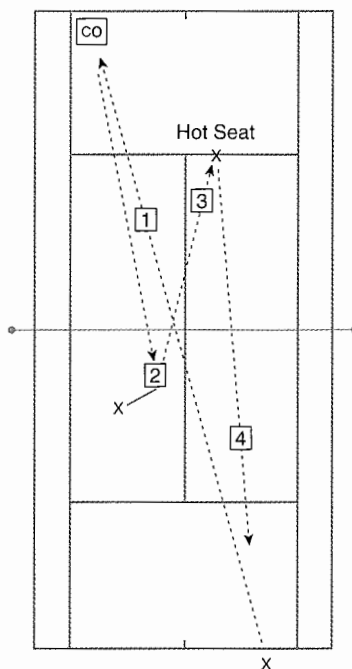
Crosscourt and Down-the-Line Mini-Tennis



Practice with Games and Drills – 45 Minutes

Hot Seat – 15 Minutes

The focus of this drill is on the partner of the receiver, who is at the service line. The coach is in the receiver's position and hits the ball straight ahead to the net player who volleys aggressively to the receiver's partner's feet (close to close). The receiver's partner is in the “hot seat” when in this position. The hot seat player tries to maintain his or her position and to direct the ball back into the opposite court. After three to five trials, the players rotate from the serving position to the net to the hot seat, while the coach continues to return.



Hot Seat

Skill Development: Volley to Volley – 10 Minutes

Position players in pairs on either side of the net in the standard net position. Each pair attempts to volley all balls back to their partner. Each team is trying to keep all balls in play. Demonstrate that balls hit at the body must be played with a backhand volley. **Note:** A slower ball, such as a foam ball, is softer and gives players a little more time to learn this skill.

Hot Seat – 15 Minutes

Repeat the above game, but this time, the receiver (coach) begins all points in the ad court and servers are limited to one serve to begin a point.

Serve and Serve Return – 5 Minutes



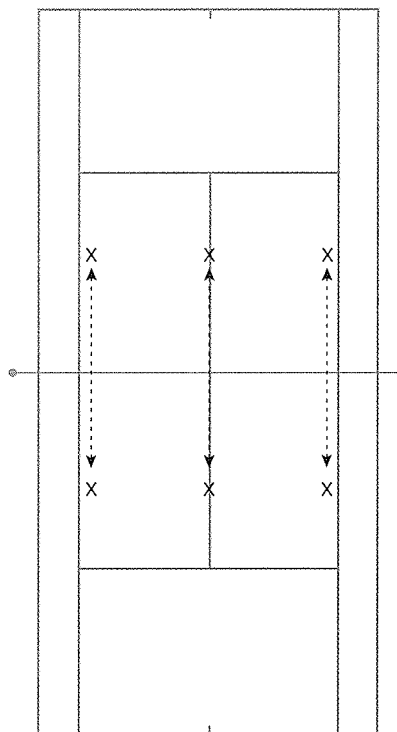
Doubles Play – 35 Minutes



Review of Session and Stretch – 5 Minutes

While players stretch (use some of the Flexibility Exercises in the Appendix), the coach can review problem areas from the session and highlight positive aspects of the participants' play. Players also have a chance to ask questions at this time.

Congratulate players for their successful completion of the program. If not given at the end of the Skill Development Component, award each participant with a USA Tennis 1-2-3 for Adults Certificate of Merit, and encourage them to join USA Team Tennis or USA League Tennis. See Appendix for registration form for USA Team Tennis.



Volley to Volley

Combining Wheelchair and Able-Bodied Athletes in a USA Tennis 1-2-3 for Adults Program*

Wheelchair athletes have a mobility-related physical disability that results in substantial or total loss of function in one or more extremities. In quadriplegic players, the disability affects at least three extremities. Tennis is a sport that can be played and enjoyed by wheelchair athletes. Not only can wheelchair (WC) players play the game with other WC athletes, but they can also play with able-bodied (AB) athletes.

Wheelchair students can be integrated with able-bodied students in a USA Tennis 1-2-3 for Adults program. The coach or instructor should keep in mind that teaching tennis to players who sit in wheelchairs is quite similar to teaching it to students who play tennis standing on their feet. The only major difference between able-bodied and wheelchair tennis is that WC players are allowed two bounces of the ball before it must be returned. The ball must land inside the court boundaries on the first bounce; it can land anywhere—inside or outside the court boundaries—on the second bounce. The player must return the ball before it hits the ground a third time. All other applicable rules of tennis as endorsed by the International Tennis Federation apply to wheelchair tennis. For example, the wheelchair is considered to be part of the body; therefore, all ITF rules that apply to a player's body apply to the wheelchair.

Remember the entry-level wheelchair tennis player is at the same level as the entry-level able-bodied player. Wheelchair players want to be treated like everyone else. Being able to learn to play tennis with AB players enhances the WC player's feelings of adequacy and independence, and it helps to dispel some of the myths AB players might have about people with disabilities. It's a win-win situation for all.

General Considerations

Whereas WC tennis players are bound by the same rules of tennis as AB players (except for being able to return the ball after two bounces), there are some special considerations the coach should understand when teaching them USA Tennis 1-2-3 for Adults. These include:

- The coach should have as much information as possible about the type and severity of the disability, and the age, general ability, and fitness levels of all WC players and how these factors might impact their participation and progress in the program.
- Assistance should be provided only to the degree to which it is needed. It is important to allow students to take appropriate risks and to make their own choices whenever possible.
- Because they sweat little or not at all, quadriplegics may need access to a spray bottle with water and shade to cool down their bodies during and after play.
- A moving wheelchair can cause serious injury to an AB player. Some games and drills may need to be modified because of this.

* This section was written by Scott Douglas, Athletic Director, Lakeshore Foundation, Birmingham, AL, and 2000 USA Paralympian.

- WC players should always push their chairs forward while on court. The backward push (or pull) is rarely used and can be dangerous to the novice wheelchair user.
- WC players should never use wheel brakes, armrests, or other off-court conveniences during a lesson.

Lesson Considerations

In addition to the general considerations cited above, the coach needs to understand factors specific to WC players that impact how they play different strokes and move around the court. For example, the wheelchair player starts his or her stroke at a lower level than the person who stands to play tennis does. This will add topspin to each stroke.

Further, depending on the type and degree of disability, it may be necessary to secure the racquet to a WC player's hand with white athletic tape. The coach should test a WC player's grip strength before beginning the lessons, and, if necessary, secure the racquet in an Eastern forehand grip (handshake grip) by wrapping tape carefully around the hand and handle of the racquet. Cover as much of the hand as is necessary to secure the racquet firmly, but not too tightly, in the WC player's hand.

One of the most important things the coach should do is to pair players by ability, not by disability. Having all players participating in the same activities is a vital step toward integration of the entire group.

Warm Up/Cool Down

WC players stretch muscles of the upper body in a similar manner as AB players. Because of their disability, some WC players may have upper body extremity limitations, in which case, it may be helpful to have a volunteer assist with the stretching exercises. However, it is important that WC players learn how to stretch independently at some point. As AB players are stretching the lower extremities, have WC players lift their knees to the chest by grabbing the front of the knee or shin.

On-Court Mobility

Just as running, skipping, hopping, shuffling, and jumping are important to the AB player, mobility and "pushing" skills are important to the WC player. Include the WC player in all facets of conditioning by adapting the push of the wheelchair to your drills. Incorporate stops, starts, sprints, left and right turning, and any form of forward movement into this part of your lesson. It is important to stress that the WC player uses diagonal movement patterns, rather than moving straight forward or backward as AB players often do.

The WC player should always hold the racquet in his or her hand during a lesson. When performing these mobility drills, WC players, just like AB players, should return to their home base after playing a shot. However, the WC player's home base or point of recovery is three feet behind the AB home base.

Racquet Skills

Drills to teach these skills to WC students should be similar to those used with AB students.

Ball Feeding

Although the WC player is allowed two bounces, initial feeds should be on one bounce to ensure consistent feeds and a greater probability of early success. Novice players should be fed with a dropped ball or tossed balls from a very short distance (from the net to mid-court area). The WC player should start pushing forward before the ball is fed. As the player's skill develops, so should the difficulty of the feed itself. As with all learning, the goal is to ensure early success.

Stroke Development

Forehand and Backhand Ground Strokes

The forehand and backhand ground strokes are among the few situations where the AB and WC player use different skills. The backswing or racquet preparation is basically the same, but the WC player should pivot the wheelchair with his or her non-dominant hand (forward for forehand, backward for backhand) to a 45° angle to the net. **This is the fundamental difference between AB and WC players.** This move is equivalent to the hip and shoulder turn of an AB player. The non-racquet hand of the WC player should be kept on the wheel throughout the shot for stability and mobility purposes.

The point of contact and follow through are basically the same for WC and AB players. WC players achieve the equivalent of an AB's knee bend simply because their sitting position is low to the ground.

Serve

The serve is not as lethal a weapon for the WC player as for the AB player. Basic serve mechanics are the same except for the obvious use or lack of use of the legs. Players with a more severe disability should position themselves perpendicular (facing the net) to the baseline. This allows the backrest of the wheelchair to be a support mechanism for the twisting and bending of the upper torso. WC players with good upper body strength and balance (ability to bend at the waist and recover) should start at about a 45° angle to the baseline. This angle allows for proper shoulder turn and trunk rotation as well as a better position from which to move the wheelchair into the next shot. As with all players, the ball toss is vital and should be practiced regularly.

There are three basic serving styles for the WC player:

- Toss, racquet preparation, grab non-dominant wheel (keeps torso erect and stable), serve.
- Toss, racquet preparation, lean forearm on non-dominant wheel, serve.
- Toss, racquet preparation, keep non-dominant arm across the chest, serve.

Volleys

There are two basic differences for able-bodied and wheelchair players in executing volleys: the ready position and contact point. The WC player should assume a forward position facing the net with both hands on the wheels. A quick pivot and push in either direction to 45° will place the WC player in proper volleying position. Balls hit directly at the body should be hit with a backhand volley. The WC player cannot move laterally to get out of the way of the ball and, therefore, must hit a backhand volley

using the elbow and wrist to get the racquet into the correct hitting position. Teach the Continental grip (i.e., the grip that is halfway between the forehand and backhand grips) for all volleys, because WC players will not have time to change grips after maneuvering the wheelchair properly.

Serve Return

The big question for WC players is whether to one bounce or two bounce the return of serve. **The two-bounce return should be the choice for most beginning WC players.** This allows the player more time to place the wheelchair into the proper hitting position. Position WC players deep behind the baseline to allow the maximum time possible to attain proper hitting position after the second bounce. It is very important that the WC player keep his or her non-dominant hand on the wheel while preparing and hitting this shot. This facilitates the quick chair movements necessary to keep the ball in a good hitting zone.

Note: More skilled WC players can use the one-bounce return of serve. This return is considered more offensive than the two-bounce return, because it allows your opponent less time to react to your return. This is true with all ground strokes but especially true of the service return.

Overheads

This is the least performed shot in WC tennis; nevertheless, it should be practiced. WC players should hit this shot moving forward and with the non-dominant hand on the wheelchair at contact. This allows for quick chair adjustments, proper body position, and ease of recovery. Once in the proper position, the fundamentals of this shot are basically the same.

Appendix

USA Tennis 1-2-3 for Adults Class Roster

Name of Coach: _____ Session: _____

Name	Address	Phone #	E-mail Address



Play Rotations

There are many ways to rotate players on the court in the game of tennis. Following are a few popular ones that coaches can use in USA Tennis 1-2-3 for Adults lessons.

Round Robins

The Round Robin rotation is a series of matches in which every player has an opportunity to compete against all other participants in the event before the series is completed. Any number of players can play, and it can be used in either singles or doubles play. To make a Round Robin draw with any number of players (or pairs if doubles), leave one player (or pair) in a fixed position (as in the case of Number 1 below) and rotate the other numbers counterclockwise one place for each round. With an odd number of players (or pairs), there will be one *bye* in each round. A *bye* is a player (or pair) who advances to the next round without playing.

Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Round 5
1 vs. bye	1 vs. 5	1 vs. 4	1 vs. 3	1 vs. 2
2 vs. 5	bye vs. 4	5 vs. 3	4 vs. 2	3 vs. bye
3 vs. 4	2 vs. 3	bye vs. 2	5 vs. bye	4 vs. 5

Since Round Robins are based on a series of matches, it's important to keep the match on each court of similar length. This can be accomplished by playing for a predetermined period of time (e.g., 20 minutes) or by having each court play the same number of *No-Ad* games. *No-Ad scoring* is a system of scoring in which the first player (or pair) to win four points wins the game. If the score reaches 40-40 (or 3-all), the next point decides the game. The receiver has the choice of receiving the serve in the advantage court or deuce court on the deciding point.

Winning Team Moves Up

Another popular rotation is one in which the winning team moves up. The rotation consists of four games per round. Winners of each round move to the next court and change partners; losers stay on the same court and change partners. This rotation 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. Two ways to begin play are:

- To assign each person a position on the court.
- To start play where it ended on the previous session.

On Court/Off Court

It's possible to make the time off court as productive as the time players spend on the court if the coach provides coaching to players during their off-court time. For example, teams of players can rotate time on court on a clockwise basis. While players are off court, the coach can explain play situations and discuss the stroke selection, court positioning, and strategies the players used while they were on court, and players

can ask questions about the positioning and strokes they see as they watch other participants play. The coach should have a court board to diagram different situations as he or she explains them.

Depending on the number of players in the class, you can rotate one or two persons or an entire group of four on after each game. To eliminate confusion and keep the game moving, keep the serving side on the same end of the court throughout the set. Everyone will have an opportunity to rotate into the serving position. It's possible that some games might be all double faults. If this happens, the coach should explain to the students that what's most important at this point is that they're learning to keep score and switch positions and that serves will improve as scoring and positioning improves.

Coach As Player

Students at this level like to have an opportunity to play with and against the coach. If possible, the coach should participate in a rotation near the end of the lesson. When on the court, the coach should try to keep the ball in play and have everyone hit the ball at some point. It's important to demonstrate to players that everyone can win points, especially if they know where to direct the volley. Everyone should be given the opportunity to win a few points when they hit the right shot.

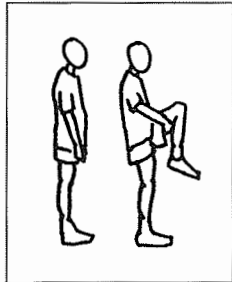
If play begins to move too slowly, the coach can rotate to the serving position. Since the server can determine the speed of play, points should be played more quickly. With two balls in hand, the coach should call the score and begin play. Students like to play points quicker, because it gives them greater opportunity to move and hit more tennis balls. An entire rotation can be played in just a few minutes and everyone will have an opportunity to play with and against the coach. Nearly every point will begin on the first serve, so players will be more attentive.

Substitution Doubles

Try this method of rotation to add variety and to reinforce that at this level of tennis most points are lost rather than won. Here are the rules. Four players play points. The server always serves from the same end of the court, but alternates between the 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 or outside the lines or in a double fault), the person making the error leaves 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 come to realize that the highest error positions at this level are the server and serve returner.

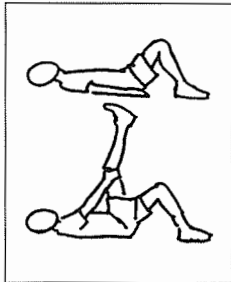
The coach can add some excitement to this activity by being one of the players in the game. Another variation would be to replace both players on the doubles team if one person makes an unforced error. In this case, two people will rotate on and off the court after all points ending in an unforced error. Have players change partners before rotating back on the court, so they don't get stuck with a bad partner or have the advantage of always being with a good partner.

Flexibility Exercises



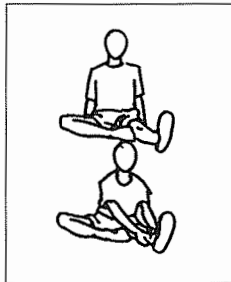
1. KNEE-CHEST FLEX

Bend one leg and grasp the back of the thigh just above the knee. Slowly pull the knee to your chest. Hold this position.



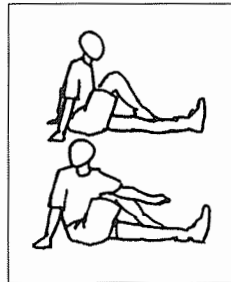
2. HAMSTRING STRETCH

Straighten one leg and raise it toward the trunk. Use your hands to gently increase the stretch. Point your toes toward the face to stretch the calf.



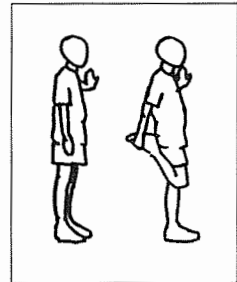
3. FIGURE 4 HAMSTRING STRETCH

Try to bring the chest to the thigh by bending forward from the hips. Keep the back straight. Pull your toes back to point toward your face.



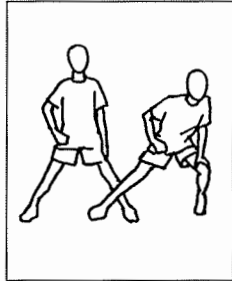
4. SPINAL TWIST

Place the right foot on the outside of the left knee. Bring the left arm around the right knee, resting the elbow above the outside of the right knee. Slowly turn the head and upper body to the right. You'll wind up looking over your right shoulder.



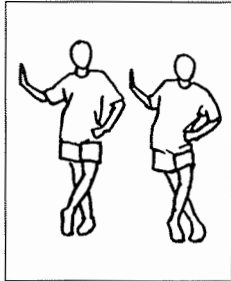
5. QUADRICEPS STORK STRETCH

Stand on one leg. Bend the opposite knee while grasping the ankle. Keeping the back flat and the buttocks tucked under, bring your knee down as far as you can, trying to point it straight down to the floor. Do **not** point the knee out or twist it!



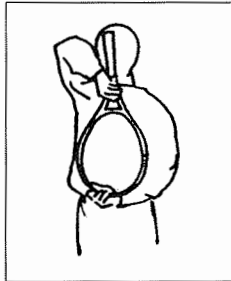
6. GROIN STRETCH

Place one hand above the knee, the other hand on the opposite hip. With toes pointing forward, slowly bend the knee your hand is on until you feel a stretch in the groin area. Roll your weight onto the inside of your foot.



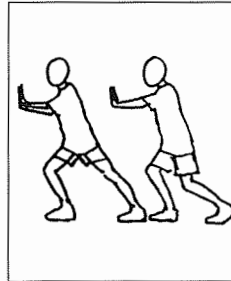
7. HIP STRETCH

Stand with your right hand on the wall, your weight on your right leg, and your left leg crossed in front of it. Gently push the right hip toward the wall. Increase the stretch by standing farther from the wall.



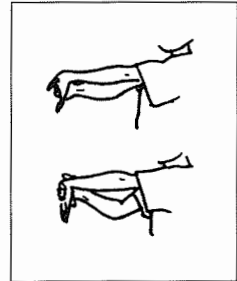
8. SHOULDER STRETCH

With the lower arm, slowly pull the racquet down, bringing the upper elbow to your ear and pointing it to the ceiling. Then slowly pull up with the top arm, pointing the lower elbow to the floor.



9. CALF STRETCH

Keep the back knee straight, the heel on the floor, and the foot pointing forward. Bend the forward knee and lean your trunk forward. Do not arch the lower back. Then slightly bend the back leg, raise the heel 2 inches off the floor, and lean into the wall. This time, feel the stretch near the heel.



10. FOREARM STRETCH

With the elbow straight and palm up, use the opposite hand to gently stretch the wrist back (extension). Turn the palm down and gently stretch the wrist downward (flexion).



USA Team Tennis Registration Form

USA Team Tennis focuses on the social benefits of tennis and having fun rather than on the rigors of stiff competition. Participants have the chance to play and compete in team matches and to define and develop their skills through supervised team practices. USA Team Tennis participants enjoy improving their overall health and fitness as they compete with players of similar interests and abilities.

Location (name of park, club, etc.): _____

Address: _____

Tel. #: _____

Dates: _____

Day(s): _____

Time: _____

Cost: _____

Please provide the following information to register for USA Team Tennis:

Name: _____

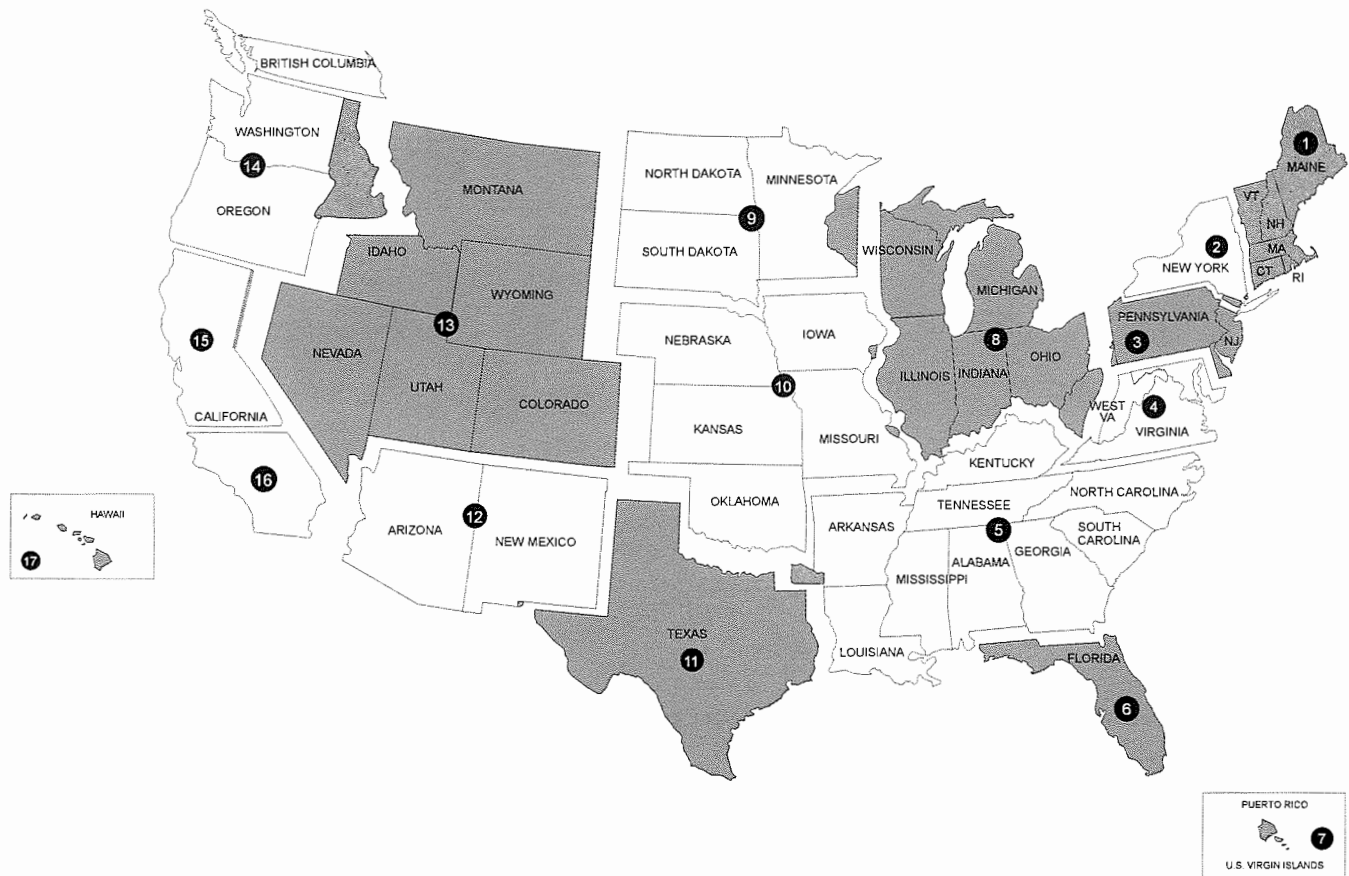
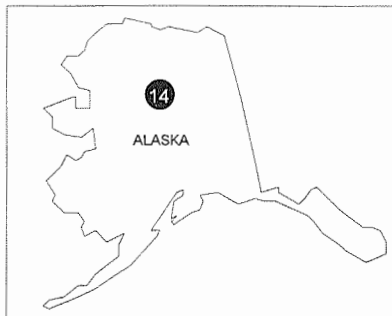
Address: _____

Tel. # (Work): _____ Tel. # (Home): _____

E-Mail: _____

(You may photocopy this form for registration purposes.)

For more information visit us online at www.usta.com



1.	USA Tennis New England	508-366-3450	10.	USTA Missouri Valley	816-472-6882
2.	USTA Eastern	914-698-0414	11.	USTA Texas	512-443-1334
3.	USTA Middle States	215-322-6789	12.	USTA Southwest	602-956-6855
4.	USTA Mid-Atlantic	703-560-9480	13.	USTA Intermountain	303-695-4117
5.	USTA Southern	770-368-8200	14.	USTA Pacific Northwest	503-520-1877
6.	USA Tennis Florida	954-968-3434	15.	USTA Northern California	510-748-7373
7.	USTA Caribbean	787-726-8782	16.	USTA Southern California	310-208-3838
8.	USTA Midwest	317-577-5130	17.	USTA Hawaii Pacific	808-955-6696
9.	USTA Northern	952-887-5001			