



Competitive/ Situational Singles Games

Professional Development Course

-
- Warm-up Games
 - Singles Games
 - Competitive Skills Games
 - Concentration Games
 - Alternate Scoring Games



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Introduction

This course presents a variety of competitive and situational games that the instructor can organize for a group of students. The activities do not require the instructor to continually feed balls as is necessary in a drill situation. Generally, the instructor will only need to introduce the first ball to begin play. Many times it is the students' responsibility to begin play with a **courtesy feed**. A courtesy feed is considered a neutral shot that will not give either side an advantage.

Diagrams are included to assist in understanding and remembering some games. Extra blank court diagrams are provided at the end of this document for personal additions.

Most of the presented activities can be modified by the instructor to create other competitive situations. A simple change in the scoring can often greatly influence the competitive environment for the students. The categories of activities included in this course guide are: **Warm-up Games**, **Singles Games**, **Doubles Games**, **Competitive Games** and **Alternate Scoring Games**.

Remember that to be effective, even competitive games must be fun for students. It is always important for the instructor to motivate the participants, as well as provide relevant coaching comments to improve play.

Prelude

Warm-up / Stretching

Several activities are presented that can be used as a warm-up for students. In addition, the following stretches are recommended for tennis players who will be actively participating in competition and/or training. The development of flexibility can greatly influence performance and help to prevent injury.

Before stretching, it is advised that athletes warm up their muscles through aerobic activity.

Neck Stretch
Shoulder Stretch
Abdominal Stretch
Lower Back Stretch
Groin Stretch

Hamstring Stretch
Quadriceps Stretch
Achilles Stretch
Arm, Hand, Wrist Stretch

Warm-up Games

Drill Name: Short Court

Purpose: To serve as a warm-up exercise and to improve touch and finesse.

Procedure: Partners (opponents) are very close to the net. Play begins by one player holding a ball on top of the net cord. When the player releases the ball, it will fall on one of the player's sides. Play now begins and players must keep the ball in play by hitting **up only** on the ball. No spiking! Play is within the service boxes.

Instructor Emphasis: Movement and ball control.

Drill Name: Slinky

Purpose: To serve as a warm-up exercise.

Procedure: Partners begin a rally at the baseline and slowly begin moving forward toward the net, keeping the ball under control. They will transition to volleys as they reach the service line and continue forward until they are 2 yards (meters) from each other. Then they begin to make the transition back to the baseline, keeping control of the ball.

Instructor Emphasis: Ball control, movement and cooperation.

Drill Name: Butterfly Volleys

Purpose: To serve as a warm-up exercise and to improve touch and finesse.

Procedure: Partners begin close to the net and volley-volley the ball to each other. One player is hitting down the line and the other player hits crosscourt. Players switch roles after two minutes.

Instructor Emphasis: Ball and racquet control.

Drill Name: "Let" It Be

Purpose: To serve as a warm-up exercise and to improve touch and finesse.

Procedure: Players begin within 1 yard (meter) of the net. One player feeds the ball easily to begin. Players use a light touch attempting to make a let. If they succeed, they score 2 points. If the ball goes in the net, its minus 1 point. Play continues until one player reaches +5 or -10 points.

Instructor Emphasis: Touch, ball and racquet control.

Drill Name: Down and Out

Purpose: To provide a physical warm-up.

Procedure: Play is within the service boxes. Players hit the ball into the ground causing it to rebound over the net to a partner. Players should cooperate, keeping the ball in play using forehands and backhands. More skilled players may increase their distance from the net.

Instructor Emphasis: Energizing footwork.

Variation: Players may count or play a game.

Singles Games

Drill Name: Baseball Tennis

Purpose: To learn about positioning and strategy, and improve hand-eye coordination.

Procedure: One player uses a racquet to play and the other player uses only his hands. The player using his hands must catch the ball after one bounce (or out of the air) and, from wherever he is standing, throw the ball into his opponent's court for his shot. The point continues until an error is made. Matches may be to a predetermined number of points or use traditional tennis scoring.

Instructor Emphasis: Movement and positioning.

Drill Name: Winner Tennis

Purpose: For players to learn point development.

Procedure: Points begin with players positioned behind opposing baselines. One player makes a courtesy feed to begin a point. His opponent may attempt any type of shot, even going for a winner on the first shot. Players alternate serving 5 consecutive points and play to a predetermined number of points.

Instructor Emphasis: Having the first shot put an opponent on the defense.

Drill Name: Change Up

Purpose: To develop consistency and recognize an opening.

Procedure: Players are behind the baseline and begin a crosscourt rally with a courtesy feed. After a minimum of 3 shots, players may at any time go for a down the line winner, which scores 3 points rather than 1. If the opponent gets the down the line shot back, then play continues and 1 point is scored.

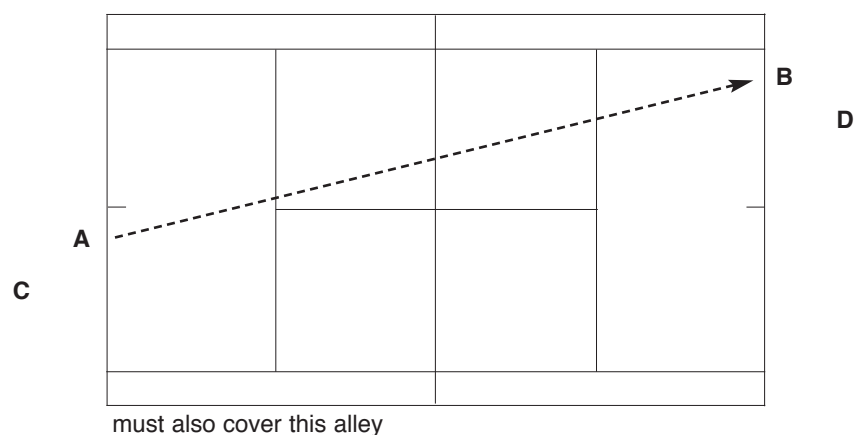
Instructor Emphasis: Creating opportunities, proper recovery and court positioning.

Drill Name: Cover the Alley

Purpose: To develop a better awareness of court coverage and positioning.

Procedure: Players compete in a singles match, however one player must also cover the corresponding alley on the deuce or ad side of the court from which he is serving. Only this one alley must be covered in addition to the singles court. When receiving, this player must also cover the corresponding alley on the deuce or ad side of the court from which he is receiving.

Instructor Emphasis: Court positioning and shot selection.



Drill Name: Billie Jean King Game

Purpose: To improve movement and net play.

Procedure: Several balls are placed at the net. One player makes a courtesy feed to begin a point. The winner of the point advances to the net, picks up a ball and makes a courtesy feed to the player at the baseline. If the net player loses, he retreats to the baseline and the opponent takes the net to start the next point. Games are played to a predetermined number of points.

Instructor Emphasis: Proper positioning at the net and baseline.

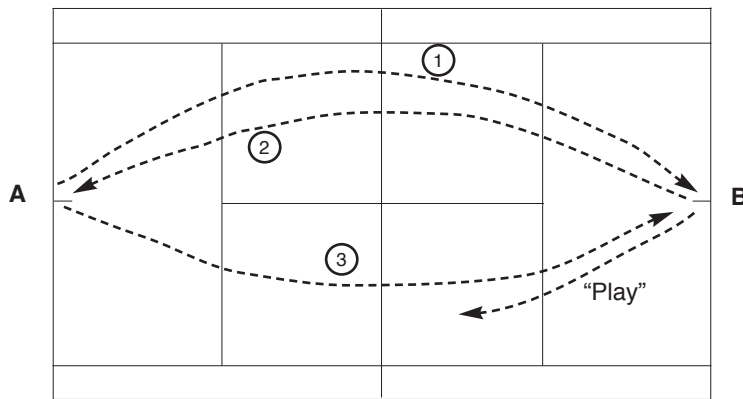
Drill Name: Twenty-one

Purpose: To improve consistency and concentration throughout the entire game.

Procedure: Players begin a rally and count out loud as they hit the ball. It doesn't matter who begins the rally. As either player is about to hit the 4th ball, they say "Play" and a point begins. They may opt not to play the ball, in which case they begin a new count. The game lasts until one player reaches 21, winning by 1 or 2 points (players or instructor decides). Four players may complete, alternating every 2 points.

Instructor Emphasis: Focus, footwork and depth of shots.

Variations: All shots must land beyond the service line.
 May only approach the net on a short ball (bounces short of the service line).
 May play only crosscourt or down the line.
 May play only in the alley.



Drill Name: Four Score

Purpose: To develop placement skills.

Procedure: Players begin point with a serve. After the serve, players must hit all 4 quadrants of their opponent's court to begin play. If a mistake is made before this is completed, then neither player scores a point. The serve does not count as a hit to that quadrant.

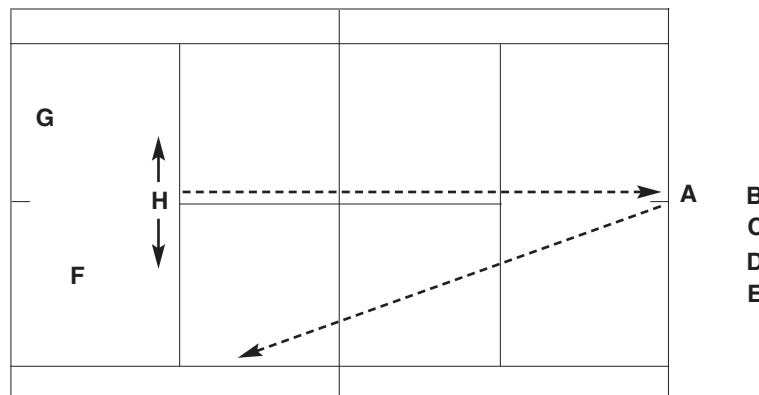
Instructor Emphasis: Movement and ball control.

Drill Name: Ghost

Purpose: To develop placement skills to pass an opponent.

Procedure: The instructor is positioned at the “T” and can only take one step in any direction. Players are lined up on the opposing baseline. The instructor feeds the ball to begin. If a player makes a passing shot, they go back in line. If they do not make the pass (the instructor is able to volley the ball back) or make an error, they become a “ghost”. The ghost positions himself behind the instructor and can “reincarnate” himself by returning a passing shot back in play. If the instructor makes an error, all ghosts return to the line.

Instructor Emphasis: Player movement and shot placement.

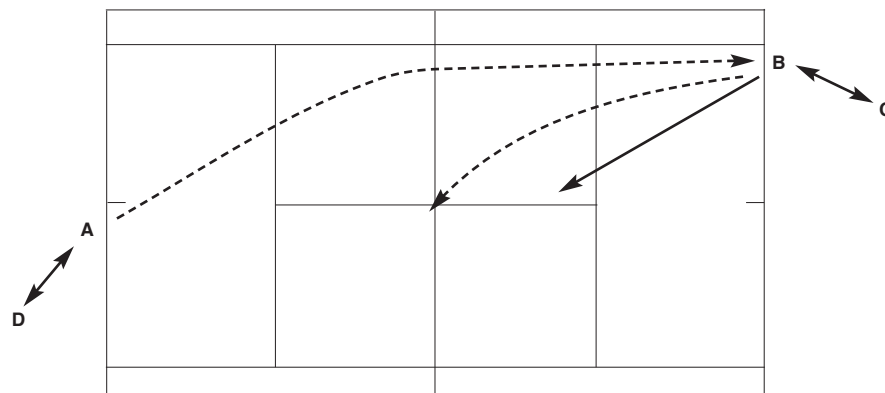


Drill Name: Chip and Charge

Purpose: To develop aggressiveness when returning a second serve.

Procedure: The serving player is allowed only one serve (2nd serve). The receiver must chip (slice) and charge the net on the return. The point is played out. If they fail to chip and charge, they automatically lose the point. Two servers may play against two returners, alternating every 2 points.

Instructor Emphasis: Moving forward on the return.

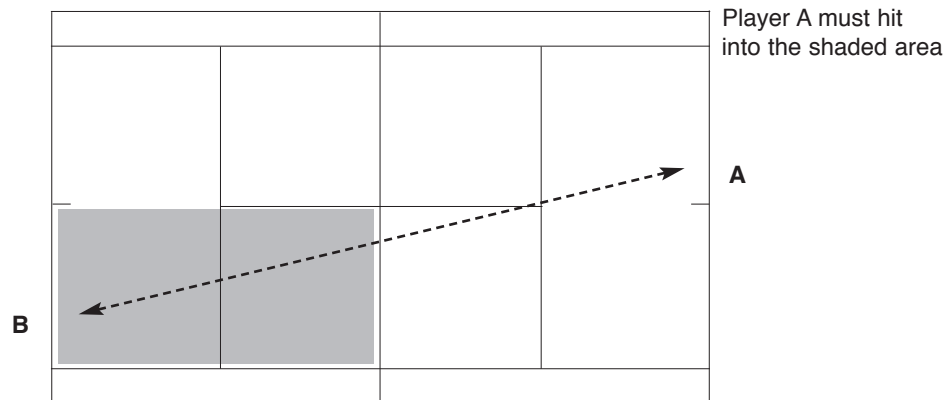


Drill Name: Not Playin' with a Full Court

Purpose: To improve competitiveness in a challenging situation.

Procedure: Players compete with one player allowed to hit into the full singles court, but his opponent is allowed to hit only into the one half (side) of the opposing court. A good game to use when one player is stronger than the other.

Instructor Emphasis: Fighting for every point regardless of the situation.



Drill Name: One-Two-Three

Purpose: To increase net approaches.

Procedure: Players alternate serving every 5 points. Players are awarded 3 points if they win the point with a volley, 2 points if they have a baseline winner, or 1 point on an error. Play is to a predetermined number of points, such as 21.

Instructor Emphasis: Shot selection when approaching the net.

Drill Name: 7-Eleven

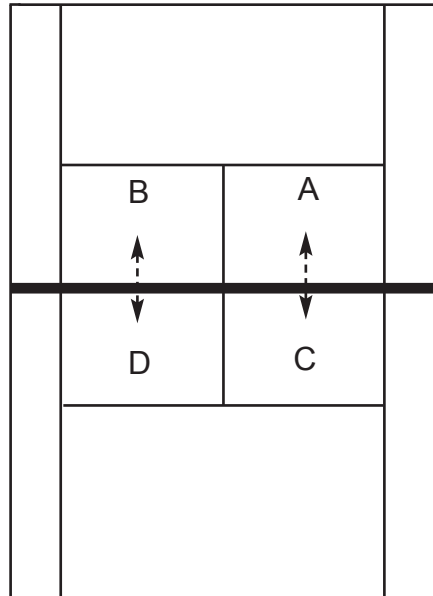
Purpose: To reinforce the importance of winning points while serving.

Procedure: One player serves the entire game. The server must get to 11 points before the receiver gets to 7 points. Players reverse roles after each game.

Instructor Emphasis: Having the player focus on the importance of service points and using a variety of serves.

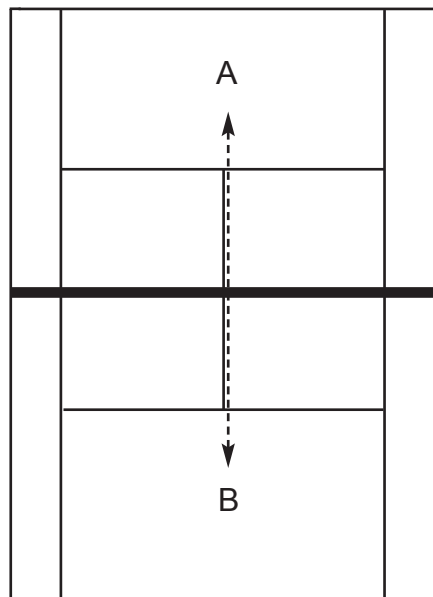
Drill Name: Racquet Circles

Procedure: Volley at net, racquet goes around back before every volley.



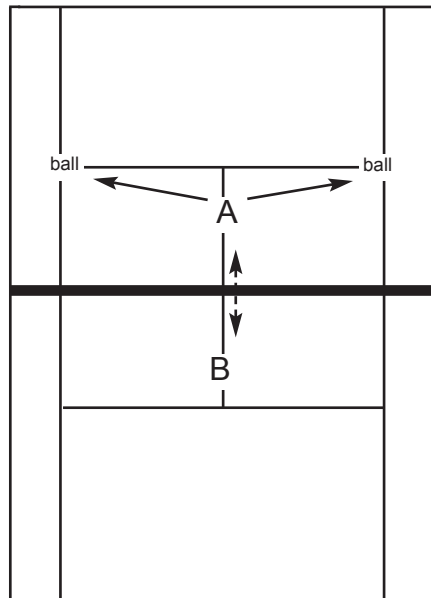
Drill Name: Upside Down Cap

Procedure: Players rally with cap upside down on their heads. Whoever misses or loses their cap loses the point. First player to 11 points wins.



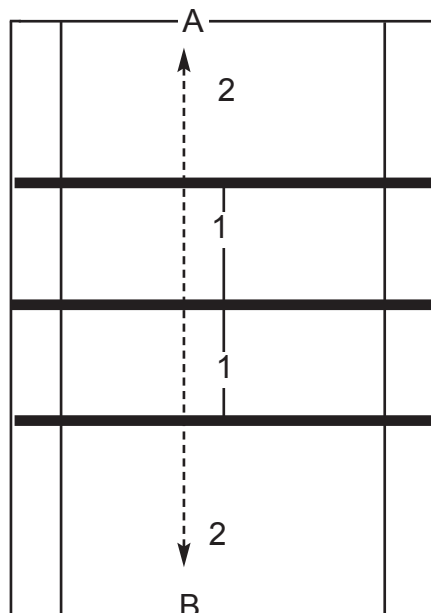
Drill Name: Recovery Groundstrokes

Procedure: Two balls are positioned at back corners of service line. Player A plays with a bounce, while B plays volleys in the air. After every hit, Player A must either pick up or drop off a ball in one of the two back corners. Switch after certain amount of time. Goal is to hit 10 balls in a row.



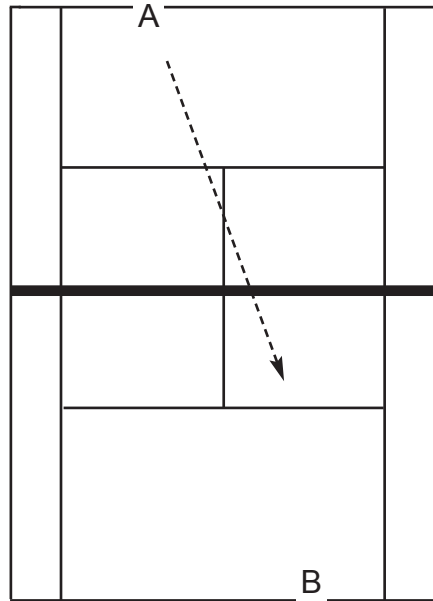
Drill Name: Adding Machine

Procedure: Players rally from baseline. Players count out loud to see who can get to 100 points first. Players earn one point before service line; two points between service line and baseline. For advanced players, Zones can be changed.



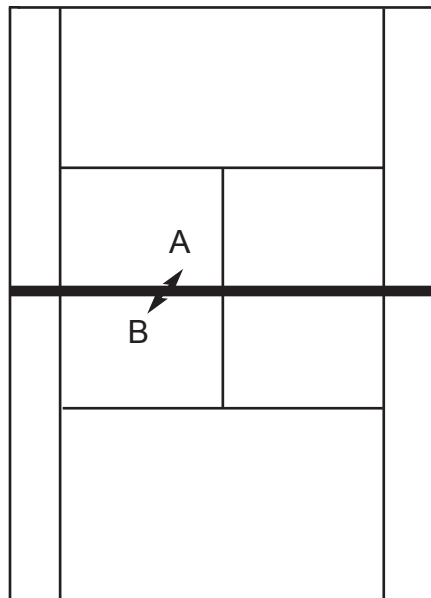
Drill Name: Winner of Force Error and Lose Game

Procedure: Points start with serve. All balls must land past service line. If balls land short, player loses the point.



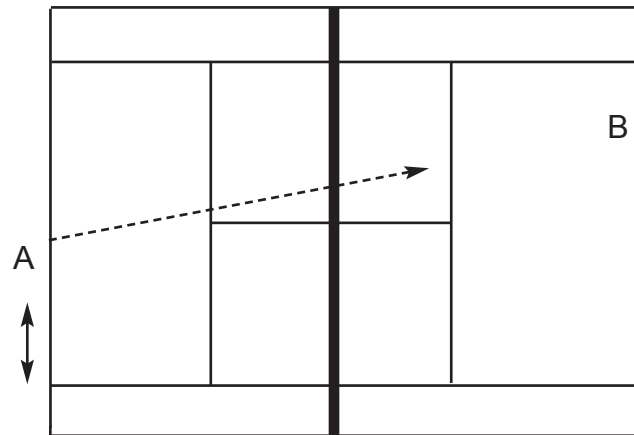
Drill Name: Micro Tennis

Procedure: Players hit volleys or drop volleys holding the net with their non-dominant hand.



Drill Name: Serve and Touch

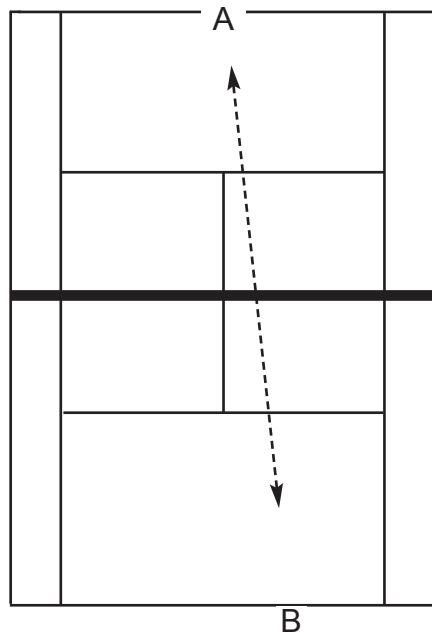
Procedure: Player serves, then must touch one of the singles sidelines before playing out the point. Spin serve should be used. Then have returner touch sideline after hitting first shot. Then have both players touch their sidelines before their first shots. Then play regular games.



Drill Name: Finger Tennis

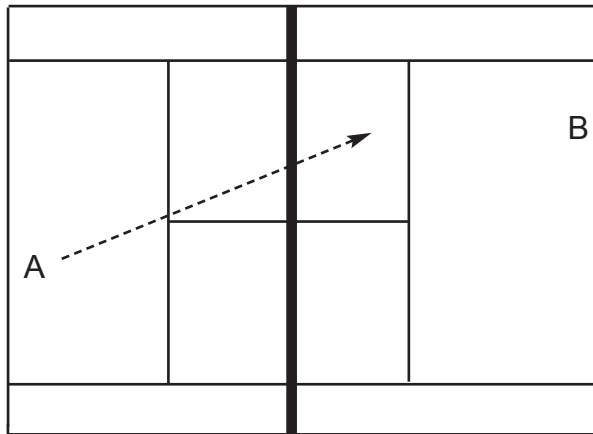
Purpose: To teach the player to look at opposite player.

Procedure: Players rally where, after each it, a player puts his fingers up (1 to 5) and the opposite player has to call out loud the number of fingers he saw.



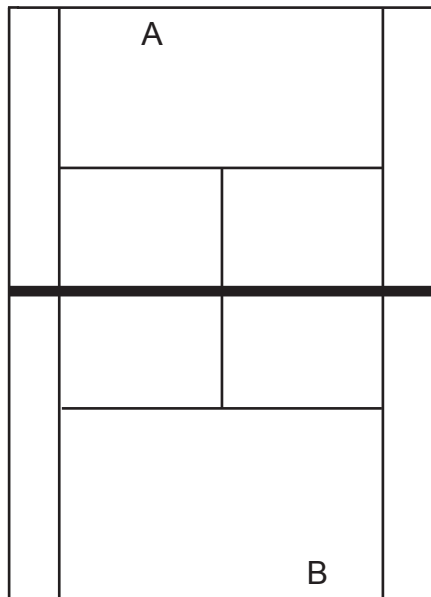
Drill Name: Server Game

Procedure: Play regular points with the server serving with one knee on the ground or sitting. Only gets one serve. Helps improve reaction to the return and helps in attacking weak serve.



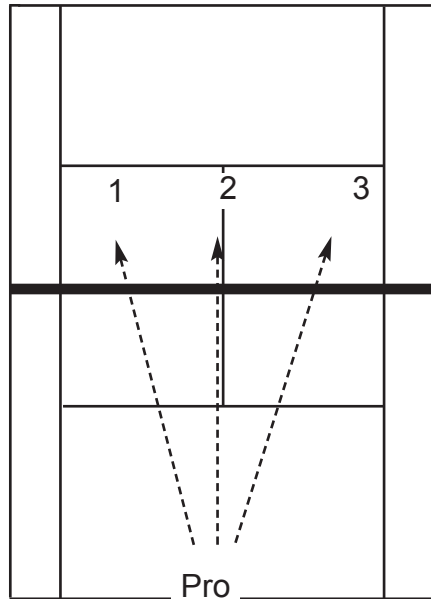
Drill Name: 180-Degree Return

Procedure: Play singles with only one serve. The return player is positioned with his back facing the net. As he hears the serve, he turns around and plays out point.



Drill Name: Reaction Volleys

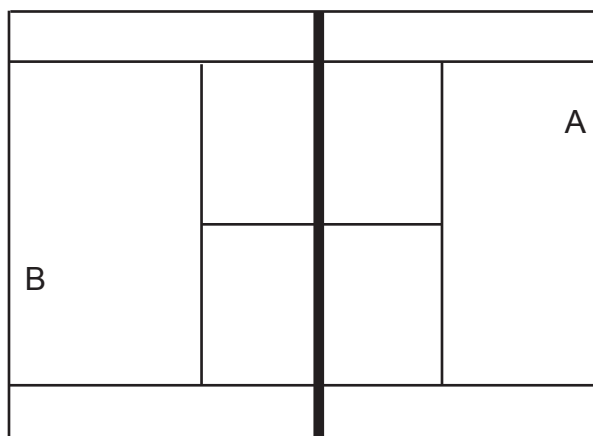
Procedure: Player's back is facing the net. Pro calls her number and then feeds a ball to one of the three players he called. Player must turn around and volley to selected target.



Drill Name: Second Bounce

Purpose: to encourage depth and better angles

Procedure: Players first hit some balls to see where the balls have to land in order to hit the fence with one bounce. They then play points. Before it lands on the opposite court, player can say, "Leave it". Player has to leave it, and if correct, hitting player gets 2 points. If incorrect, other player gets 2 points. Normal misses are 1 point. First player to 15 wins.

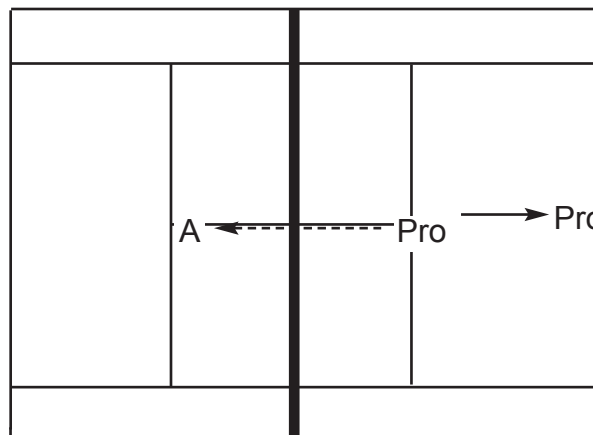


Drill Name: Catch or Hit

Purpose: To learn drop volley

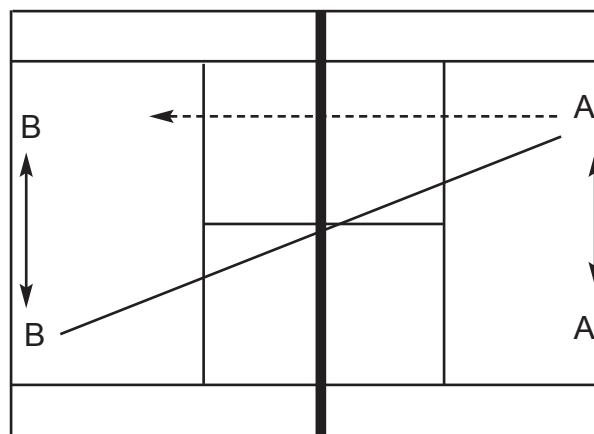
Procedure: Pro first tosses balls. He calls "Hit" or "Catch" immediately after ball is tossed. Player must either volley it back to the Pro, or toss it in the air and catch it with opposite hand depending on call. Pro then goes to baseline and feeds with racquet (bounce feed).

Variation: With two players, when Pro calls "Hit", player volleys. When Pro calls "Catch", player tosses ball up and other player must catch.



Drill Name: Over the Middle

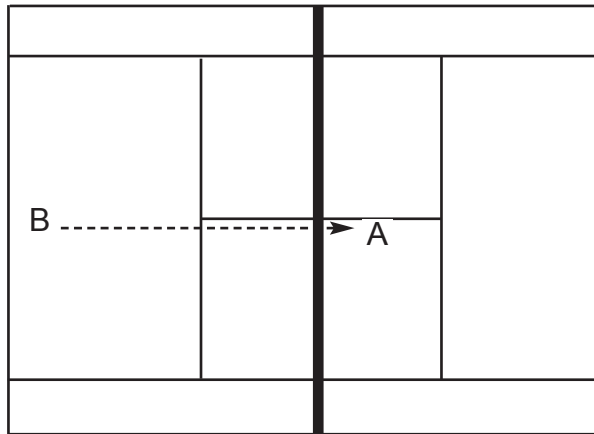
Procedure: Players A and B are across from each other and begin a crosscourt forehand rally. After the 4th shot, Player A hits down the line and the players now begin a crosscourt backhand rally. Again, after the 4th hit, Player A hits down the line and changes the direction of the backhand rally. Pattern continues for 8-10 sets. Players in various courts can compete in a longest rally contest. Points may be played out when the direction change is made.



Drill Name: Drop Volley to Win

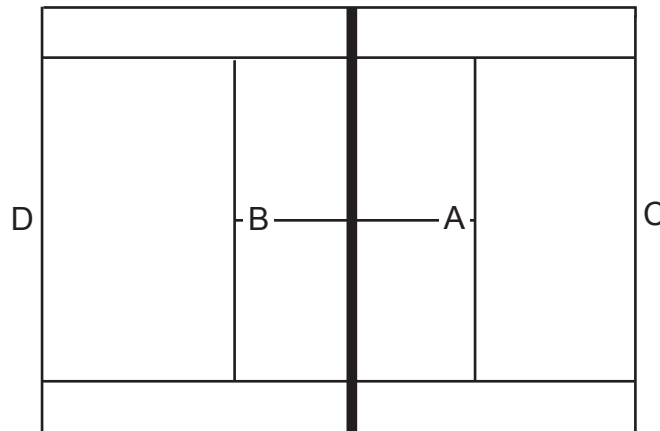
Procedure: Baseline hits a ball to player at net who hits a drop volley. Point is then played out. A ball too difficult to volley might be rejected by net player. Play to 11 then switch roles.

Variation: Player at baseline feeds balls close to fence then touches fence before playing point out.
 Play cross court only.
 Play doubles with same rule.



Drill Name: Black Hole

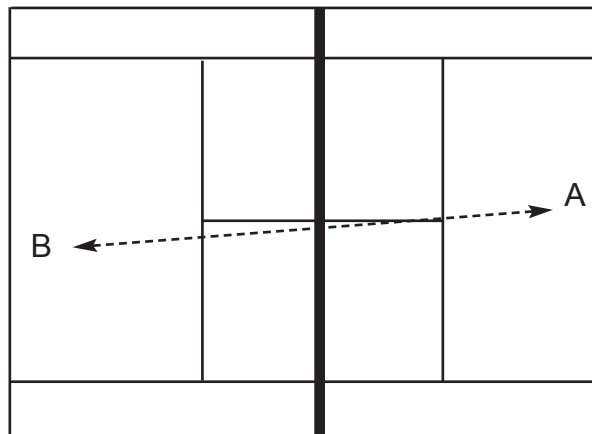
Procedure: Players A and B are sitting in a chair. Players C and D are at the baseline. Points are played out, but if A and B make a successful volley, their team automatically wins a point. When that happens, seated player changes position with partner. For more advanced players, points are won when any player hits a winner or makes error.



Drill Name: Freeze

Purpose: To focus on recovery.

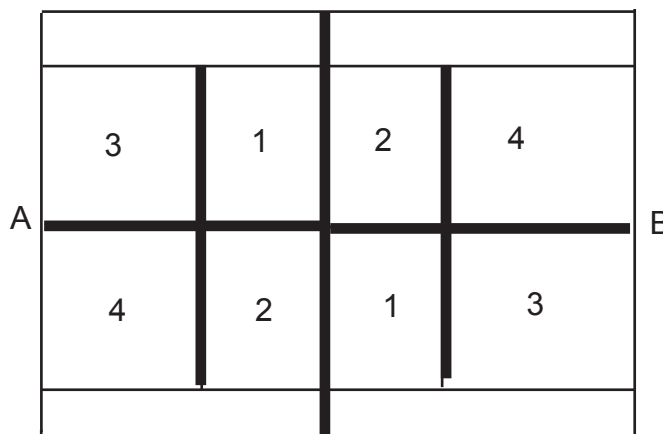
Procedure: Game begins with a bounce feed. 2 points are lost when the ball hits net or goes out wide at the baseline. 1 point is lost if the ball goes wide. At any time within a point a player can call, "Freeze". When this happens, the other player must have both feet outside doubles alley. When that happens, player who called gets 3 points. However, if that is not the case, 3 points are lost. Play to 21.



Drill Name: Quadrant Tennis

Procedure: First courtesy feed must be fed to Quadrant 3 or 4. Players must call in which quadrant the ball will land before it bounces. Players play points. Points can be lost by either hitting into the net, hitting out or calling the wrong quadrant.

Variation: Quadrant only on one side.



Drill Name: Return to Sender

Purpose: To work on deep returns and counter punching skills

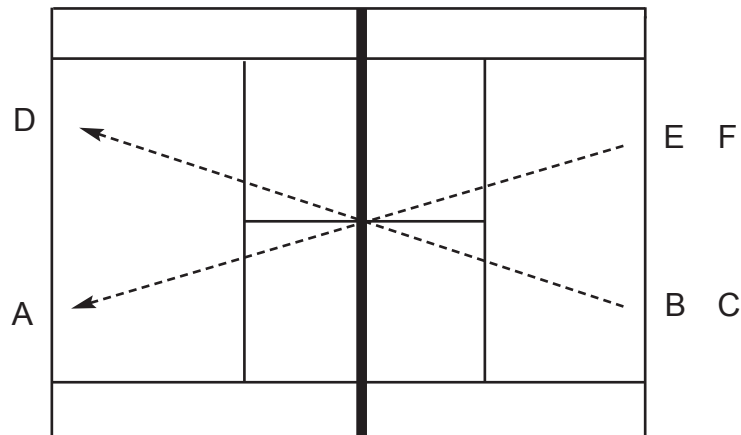
Procedure: A, B, C are a team vs. D, E, F, who are a team

Each team sends a returner over to return against the other team's two servers. Every time the returner hits the ball crosscourt before the service line, he gets 1 point. Crosscourt before the 3/4 line earns 2 points, and crosscourt beyond the 3/4 line earns 3 points.

The first returner to get 21 points wins the match for his team. Continue to rotate returners so every player gets a chance to return.

The serving teams alternate serves and keep track of the score out loud as the game goes on.

Note: This drill is good for teaching the server that his goal should be to get the returner to **return poorly** and not necessarily to get himself to serve **great**. It is better to be **effective** than **impressive**.



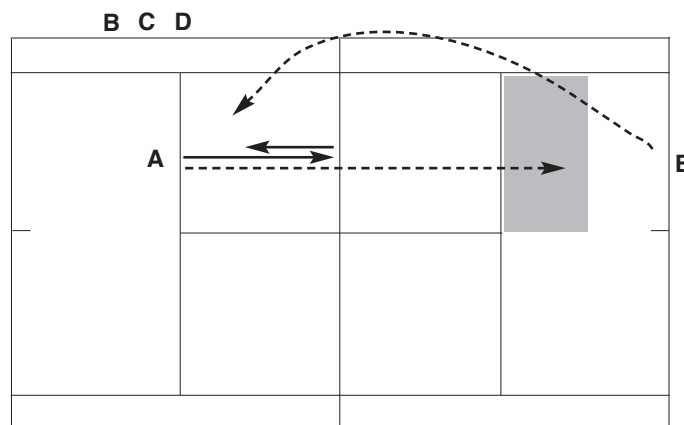
Competitive Skills Games

Drill Name: Over and Out

Purpose: To improve the lob and overhead.

Procedure: Play is on one-half of the court. A player stands immediately behind the service line and bounce feeds a ball into an area behind the service line, but forward of a designated marker on his opponent's side. After feeding, he must run forward to touch the net. His opponent may only lob his return to begin the point. Other players are waiting on the side of the court for their turn, rotating quickly in for 1 point each. This game can be played with a group of players on each half of the court. The lobber competes against the team of other players to a predetermined number of points (7, 11, etc.)

Instructor Emphasis: Conditioning, topspin lobs and overhead skills.



Drill Name: Over / Under

Purpose: To improve the ability to hit and return balls with spin.

Procedure: This is a groundstroke game with one player always slicing and the opponent always hitting topspin. The player that slices wins the contest by getting to 7 points before the topspin player gets to 11 points. A courtesy feed begins the point. Players reverse roles after each game.

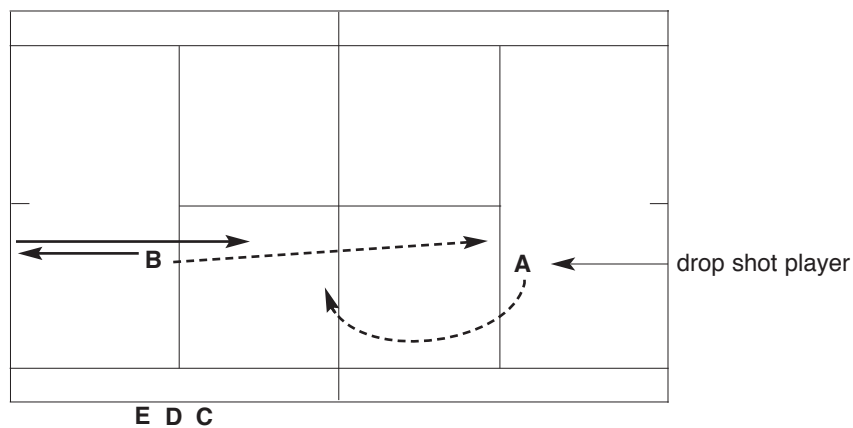
Instructor Emphasis: Working on topspin slice and playing the majority of shots with depth.

Drill Name: Drop It!

Purpose: To practice playing and defending against the drop shot.

Procedure: Three or four players compete as a team against one player (the drop shotter). The team of players goes one at a time, feeding a ball into the service box (they are standing just behind the service line). After the feed, they immediately run to touch the baseline with their foot or racquet (depending on skill level). The opponent must play a drop shot into the service box. The two players then play out the point on the half court. Play is to 10 points, then have a new drop shotter.
 Note: The feed must be no higher than players' height. No lobs!

Instructor Emphasis: Drop shot technique and conditioning.



Drill Name: Cross-Eyed

Purpose: To develop improved movement and positioning awareness.

Procedure: Players are behind the baseline and make simultaneous courtesy feeds to each other using a drop feed. Two points are played at the same time. When a mistake or winner is made with one ball, play continues with the second ball. A player must win both points to score a point, or instructor may make the first ball worth 2 points and the second ball worth 1 point.

Instructor Emphasis: Improving movement.

Drill Name: Killer

Purpose: To improve reaction time when returning.

Procedure: Server and receiver begin play at the service line. The server is allowed only one serve. Whoever loses a point must come back up one step. The returner must only get the ball in play to win the point. After completing a game, players switch roles and begin a new game positioned at the service line.

Instructor Emphasis: Quick racquet preparation and reactions.

Concentration Games

Drill Name: Four, Five, Six

Purpose: To competitively challenge players.

Procedure: No Ad scoring is used. When a player wins a game by getting to 4 points first, the player must then win 5 points to win the next game. If they win this game, then they must win 6 points to win the next game. Winning a game increases the points required to win the next game (but never below 4 points or above 6 points).

Instructor Emphasis Maintaining focus for every point in a game.

Drill Name: Game Point

Purpose: To increase a player's intensity on important points.

Procedure: Players compete with traditional scoring. When one player reaches game point (40-0, 40-15, 40-30), and they lose the game point, they go back to zero and their opponent gains a point. This can also be played as doubles.

Instructor Emphasis: Players should keep their game plan and not begin playing "not to lose".

Drill Name: Volley Juggling

Purpose: To develop racquet agility and improve concentration and focus.

Procedure: Players both begin with a volley, attempting to keep two balls in play simultaneously. When a mistake is made, they continue to keep one ball in play until a mistake is made. Repeat, trying for as many hits as possible with two balls.

Instructor Emphasis: Movement, concentration and cooperation.

Drill Name: Break Point

Purpose: To learn to cope with the pressure of being down break point on the serve.

Procedure: Players compete in a set or match with each game beginning at 30-40 (break point) and a second serve only. If the game goes to deuce, play continues normally (two serves) to complete the game. Because the games have been shortened, players can compete easily in a best of 3 or best of 5 match.

Instructor Emphasis: Mental toughness and break point opportunities.

Variation: No Ad scoring can be used to increase the pressure on both players.

Alternate Scoring Games

Net Gain

All points won at the net receive 2 points. You may play regular scoring or to a predetermined number of points.

Net Loss

Player loses 2 points for any point lost by hitting into the net. Play is to a predetermined number of points.

Give Me Five

Players are competing against each other, however the server must win the point by the fifth shot or he loses the point. The game may also be played as doubles.

Lucky 13

When a player or team wins a point, it counts as 1. If they win 3 points in a row, however, they get 3 bonus points. Games are to 21 or any predetermined number of points.

Bonus Ball

Each game the server has a bonus ball. The bonus ball is a different colored ball that can be used once a game and is worth 2 points for the server only.

Gotcha

This is the same as Bonus Ball, but the instructor determines who (the weaker player) gets the bonus ball during service games. This helps to handicap a match.

Three's a Charm

Player wins a game if he wins 3 points in a row. Offers a higher probability to win a game.

One Serve

A set is played, but players are allowed only one serve per point.

Three Serve Tennis

Players are allowed three serves for each point. This is a good format for beginners.

Ace Wins!

If the server hits an ace, he wins the game immediately.

Crosscourt

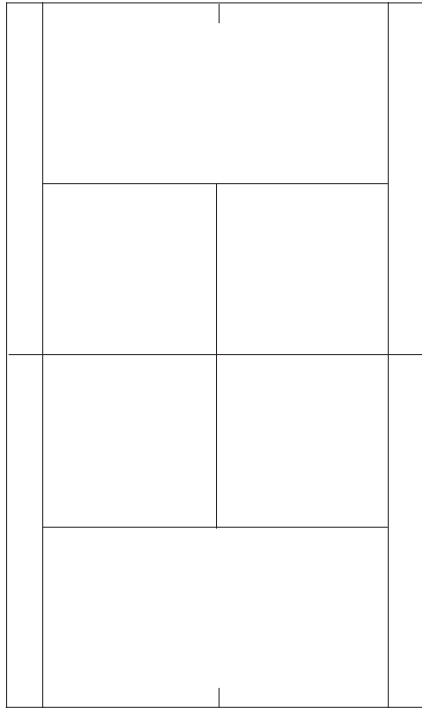
All service returns must be played crosscourt.

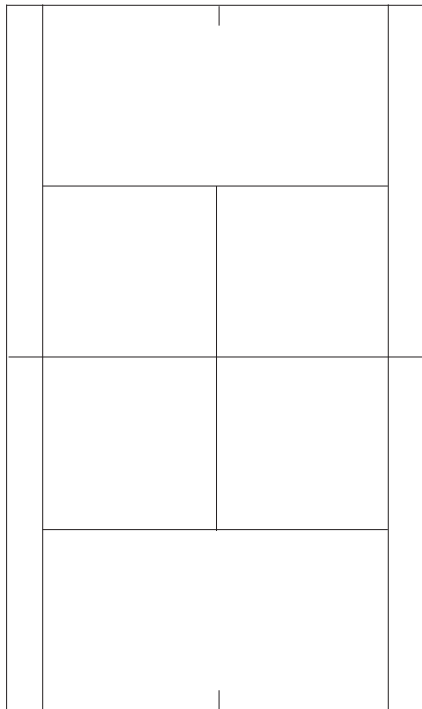
Serving Machine

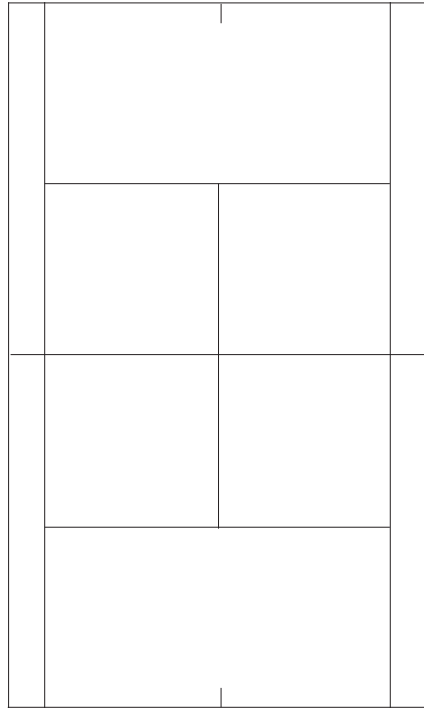
One player serves an entire set. Also may allow only one serve per point.

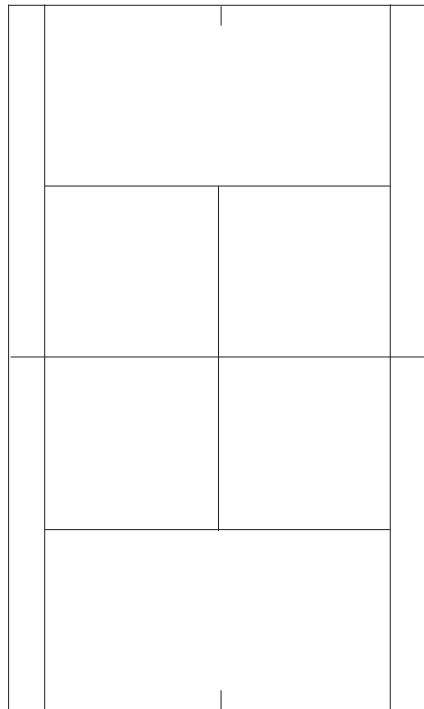
Takes Two to Tango

To score a point, a player of a team must win 2 consecutive points to score 1 point.









Professional Tennis Registry
PO Box 4739, Hilton Head Island, SC 29938 USA
843-785-7244 or 800-421-6289
fax: 843-686-2033 • ptr@ptrtennis.org
www.ptrtennis.org