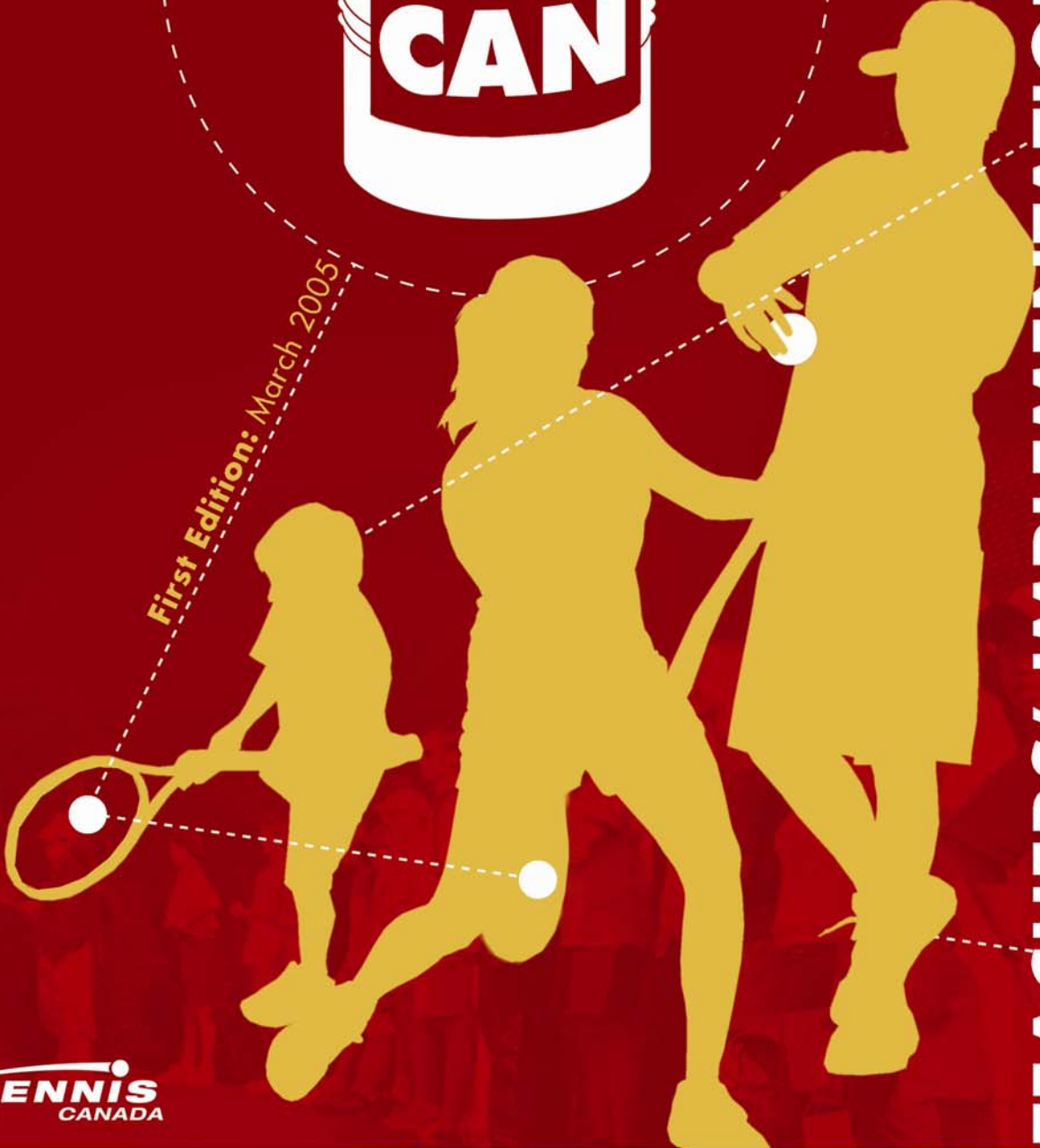


First Edition: March 2005



TEACHERS' IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE 

TENNIS
CANADA

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SECTION 1

TENNIS IN A CAN

Congratulations on choosing to run this tennis program as part of your high/middle school physical education curriculum

This manual, the equipment in the kit and the accompanying video, has been developed to provide you with a turnkey school tennis program. Recognizing that not all teachers have a tennis background, this program was designed to be very easy to implement for classes of up to thirty-two students.

To successfully run Tennis in a Can, you will need to have access to a minimum of two tennis courts either on school grounds or within your community.

This manual will outline how to set up the space to have active participation among all students; the drills and games you will use to help them learn and; basic teaching points to assist them in achieving the tasks.

The following list will outline what you will need to run the program:

Tennis Courts	Minimum of two courts for up to 32 students
Tennis Racquets	32 Wilson tennis racquets have been provided in the TIAC kit
“Special” Tennis Balls	40 soft, decompressed Penn tennis balls have been provided in the TIAC kit
Rope	2 pieces of rope (130 feet each) are in the TIAC kit
“Spots” (safety markers)	32 flat “spots” have been provided in the TIAC kit
Tennis Basics Video	3 DVDs have been provided in the TIAC kit
Implementation Guide	This booklet
Carry Bags	Two large carry bags have been provide in the TIAC kit

Tennis Canada and *for the love of kids* Foundation wish you much success in teaching your students the sport of a lifetime.



Alan Trivett
Consultant, Tennis Canada
Board Member, *for the love of kids* Foundation



Ari Novick
Director of Coaching
Tennis Canada

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Tennis in a Can has been developed to make it easy for teachers in middle/high schools, to teach tennis to their students within their regularly scheduled physical education program. Designed for students between the grades of seven and twelve, it can accommodate up to thirty-two students on as few as two tennis courts. Although a gymnasium can be used as a backup due to inclement weather, it is not recommended as the main site for running the class.

The main focus of the program is to introduce the sport of tennis through the use of fun drills that will ensure the students successfully experience the most common shots in tennis in a consistent manner.

Designed to supplement the *Tennis Basics For Schools* Video (DVD) included in the Tennis in a Can “kit”, this implementation guide will serve as a resource to help you set up your court and organize the students in the class. The drills and games will provide you with the tools to safely manage large classes on only two tennis courts.

Finally, the goal of this introductory tennis program is to initiate students to the sport and to provide them with some of the basic skills and knowledge they will need to play with their friends or join organized tennis programs in their communities. Hopefully it will spark their interest to continue to play tennis beyond their physical education classes.

SECTION 2

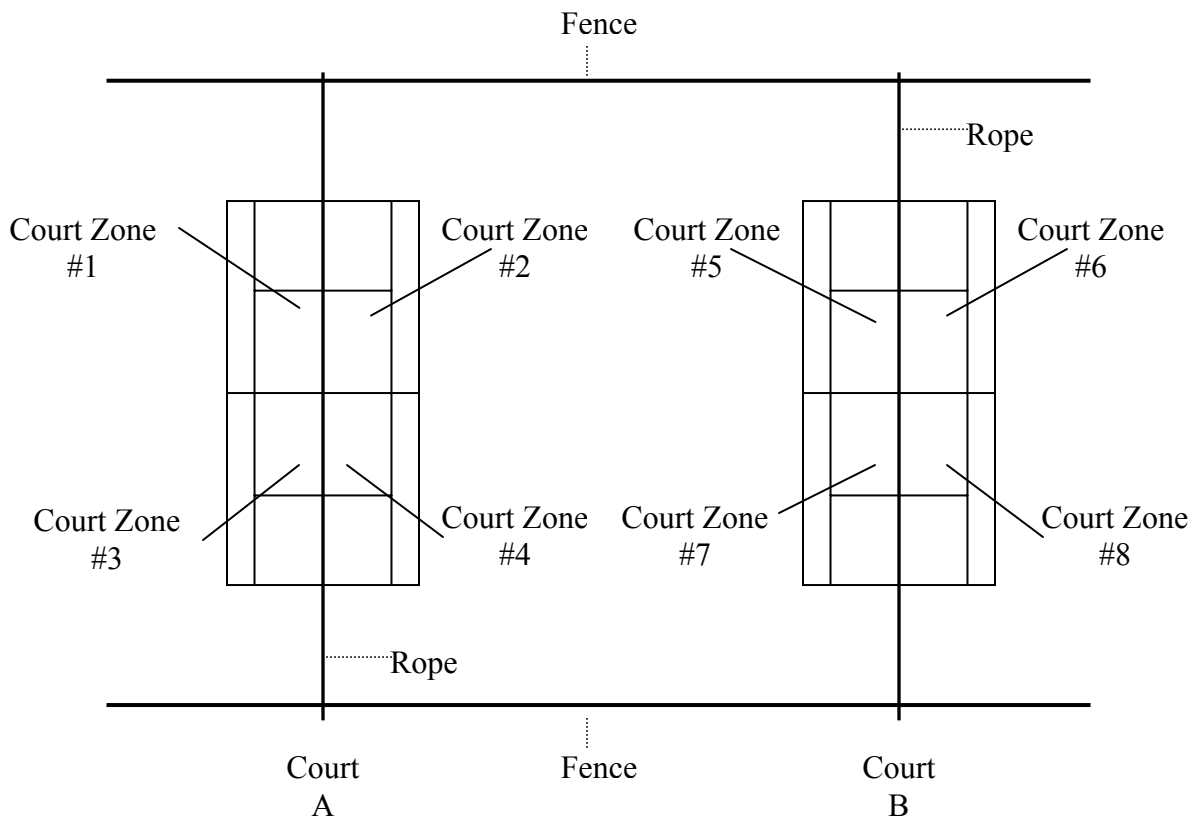
HOW TO USE THE “KIT”

Court Set-Up

You will use the rope provided in the kit to divide the regulation tennis court in half. You have been provided with two pieces of rope measuring 130 feet each.

Rope: On each tennis court, you will run the rope from fence to fence through the net. Begin by attaching one end of the rope to the fence, roughly in the middle of the court, approximately 3 ½ feet above the ground. Then run the rope through the top rung of the tennis net toward the fence at the other end of the court. Pull the rope tight and tie it to the fence approximately 3 ½ feet above the ground. Do the same for the second tennis court.

The illustration below shows how using the rope and the tennis net will divide each court into 4 zones in which the students will play.



Using the Supplied Equipment

Tennis in a Can takes advantage of technological improvements to enhance the learning experience for your students.

Tennis Basics for Schools DVD (Program Orientation video)

This manual is supplemental to the DVDs that were included in the kit. Teachers, prior to commencement of the tennis program, should view the *Tennis Basics for Schools* video to have a visual understanding of how the program can be implemented for their students.

Wilson Tennis Racquets

The kit includes 32 Wilson tennis racquets that have been specifically designed for Tennis in a Can. They possess a large “sweet spot” and are the ideal size and weight for students in middle/high schools. **Note:** These racquets are not appropriate for elementary aged school children due to their length and weight.

Penn Star Tennis Balls

The supplied Penn Star tennis balls are far superior to regular tennis balls for beginning tennis players and for playing tennis on modified sized tennis courts. Their low compression allows for complete swings by the students, which in turn facilitate better rallies.

Spots

Each Tennis in a Can kit includes 32 “spots”. For safety purposes, these spots will be used to identify positions on the court for the students as well as serving as targets for them when hitting with their partners.

Rope

In order to accommodate up to 32 students on two regulation tennis courts, the use of rope is necessary to create a net across which students will play on a modified length playing-surface.

SECTION 3

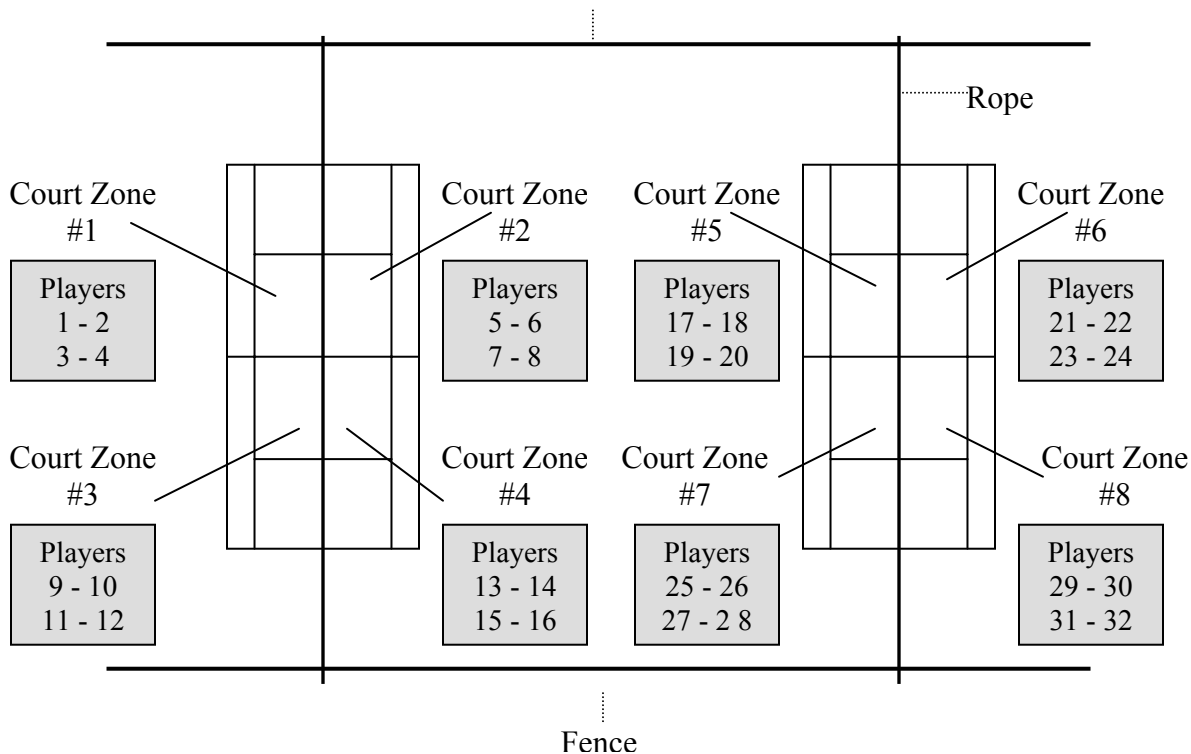
RUNNING THE CLASS

Organizing the students using groups

Students: Divide the class of 32 students into eight groups of four players. Attempt to put the best 4 players in group #1, the second best into group #2 and so on. If you don't yet know the students' playing level, make your best guess based on your knowledge of their athleticism. Compatibility of playing levels among the students will maximize their experience.

The players will then take positions on the courts as the following diagrams illustrate.

IMPORTANT NOTE! *For each stage, note how the players have been positioned and who they have been paired with as this is the key for ensuring the practice stays organized and for ensuring that players practice with other players of similar level.*



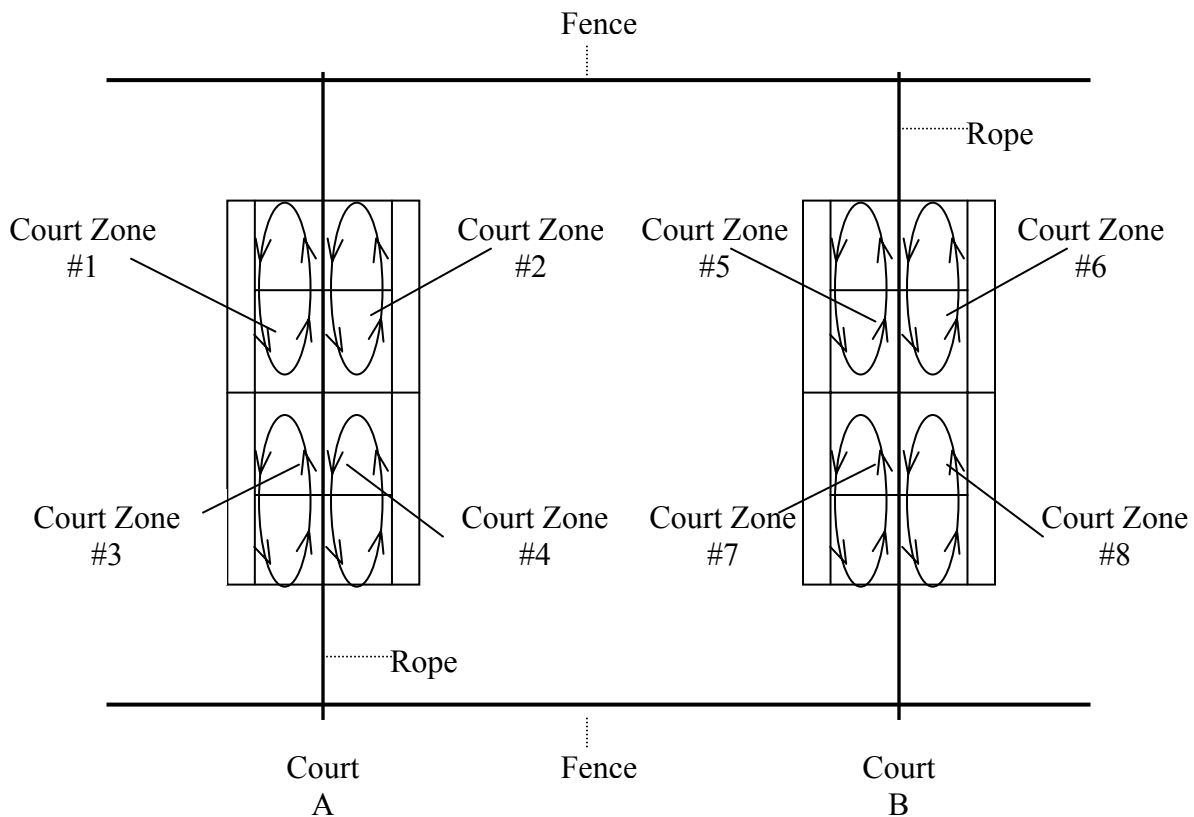
Four stages of each tennis class

Each tennis class, regardless of length of time, will be organized into four stages. They are:

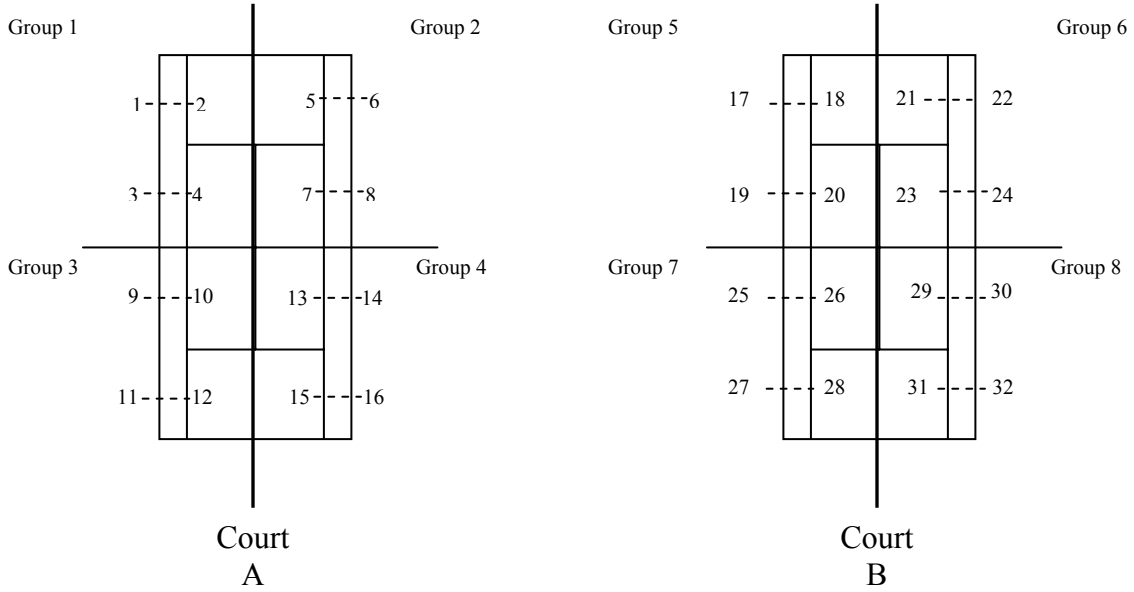
- Stage I: Warm-up
- Stage II: Alley Tennis
- Stage III: Short court Tennis
- Stage IV: Full court Tennis

Below are illustrations showing court set-up for each stage.

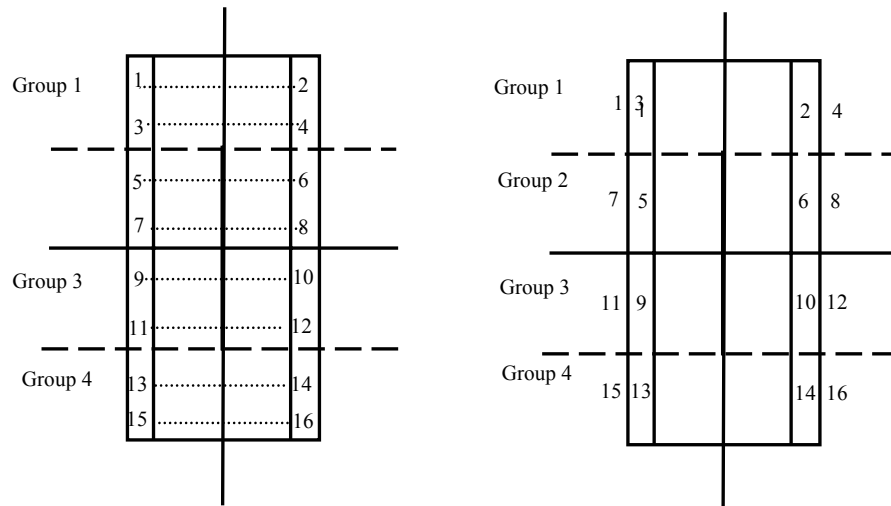
Organization for the Warm-up



Organization for Alley Tennis

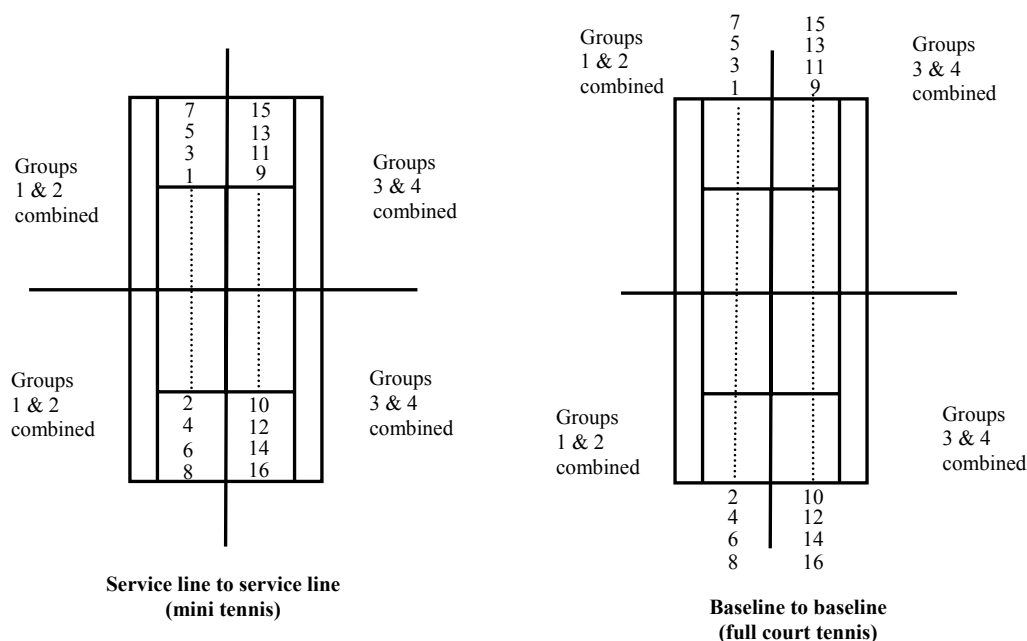


Organization for Short Court Tennis



2 options – depending on the drill/game

Organization for Full Court Tennis



Additional Organizational Issues

Dealing with Odd Numbers

When a situation arises where you have odd numbers, or some students don't show up for class, we recommend doing the following:

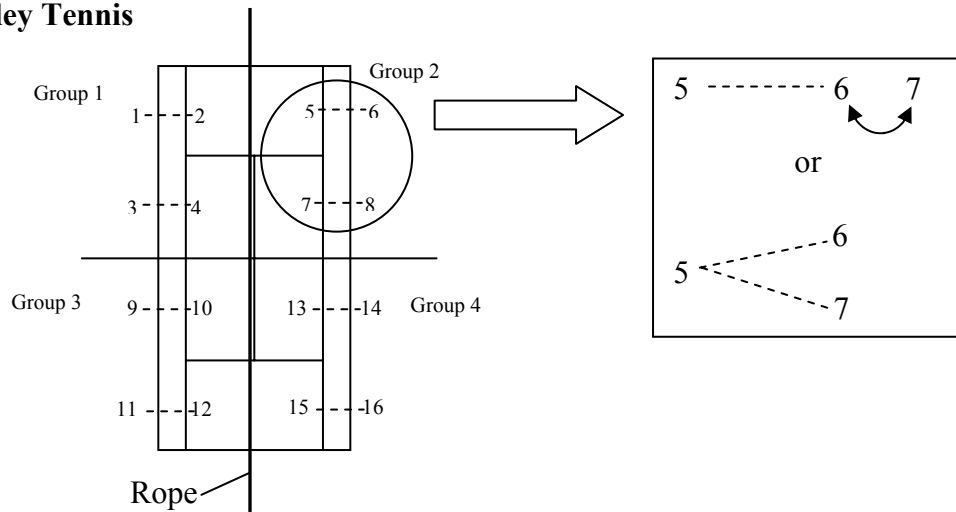
- Try to keep groups of players with similar playing levels together i.e. do not take the odd players from different groups to make an even group
- Try to keep changes to a minimum
- Try using the schematics below to address the issues

Even Number Organization

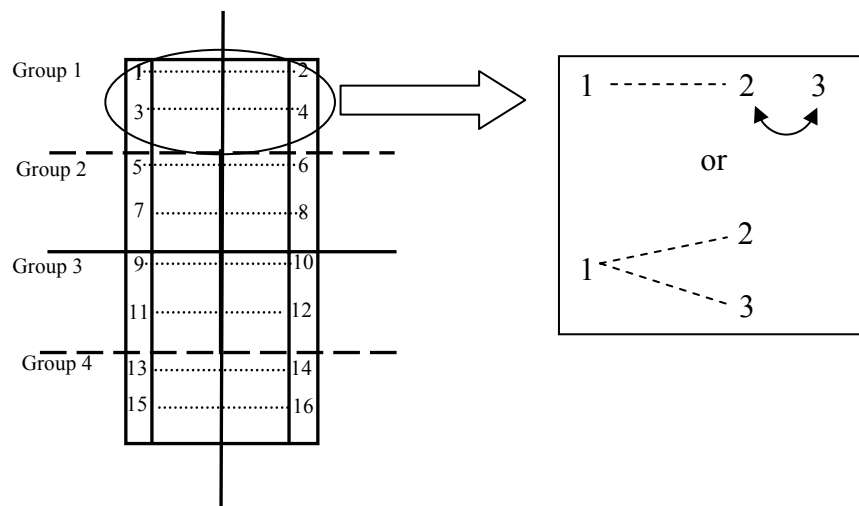


Odd Number Organization

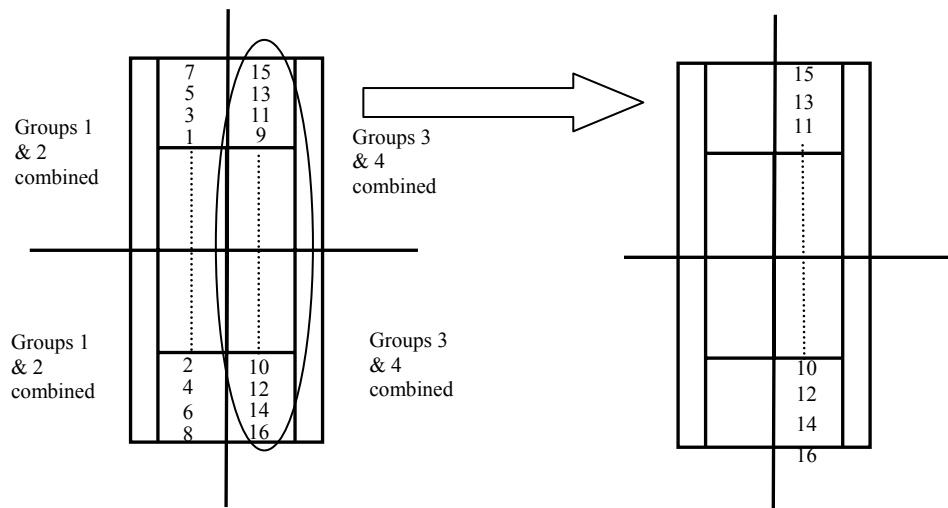
Alley Tennis



Short Court Tennis



Full Court Tennis



SECTION 4

DRILLS AND GAMES

Demonstrate each Drill/Game using one Group of Players

With large class sizes, it is often difficult to provide individual instruction. We recommend bring all the students together prior to making changes to drills and games. Explain the drill/game to the class and then have one of the groups demonstrate the exercise for the entire class and then have the groups return to their Court Zone to implement the game/drill/

Check to see if Drill is going well

Once the students have returned to their Court Zone, check to see that each group is executing the drill/game properly. Then you can attempt to provide a few tips to the students who are struggling with the skill.

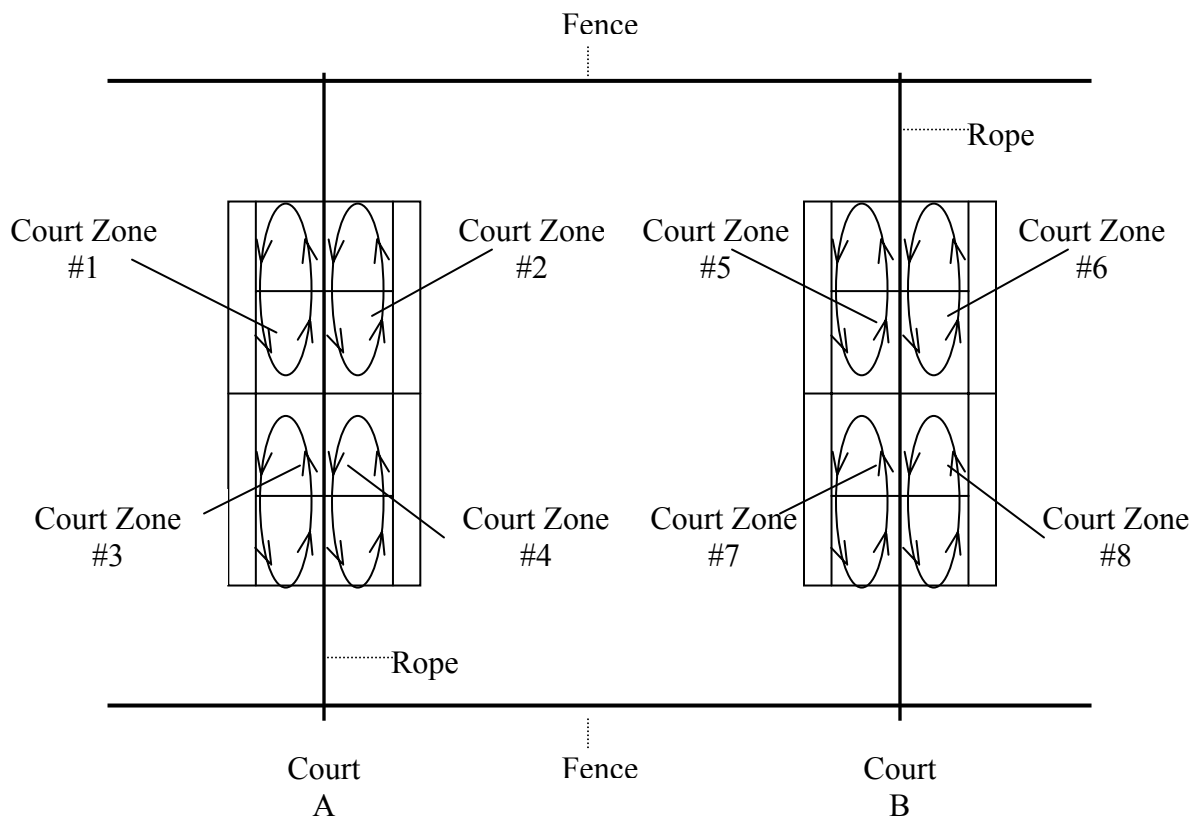
Time Limits when Running Drills

During drills and games, use time limits rather than scoring to determine the end. This will ensure each group ends at the same time.

For example: when setting up a competitive situation, it is beneficial to use time limits to determine the winners. Some examples include: highest number of rallies in 3 minutes or whoever is leading at the end of 3 minutes wins. This allows for good time management and maximum play for all students.

A) STAGE I: WARM-UP

Rather than a conventional warm-up, which includes some running around and mobility exercises, we encourage you to begin right away with some hand and eye coordination drills that involve the use of the ball and racquet. Here are some various warm-up options: Note: We suggest that in order to ensure safety and an orderly warm-up, you have the students work within the various sections made by the ropes.



Warm up drill # 1: Hit and Catch

Each student has one ball. They toss the ball upwards with their non-playing hand and hit it gently upwards to catch the ball with the same hand. They continue this hit and catch sequence as they run around their court zone.

Warm up drill # 2: Continuous Hits

Each student has one ball. Students continuously bounce the ball on their racquet (“self rally”) as they run around their court zone.

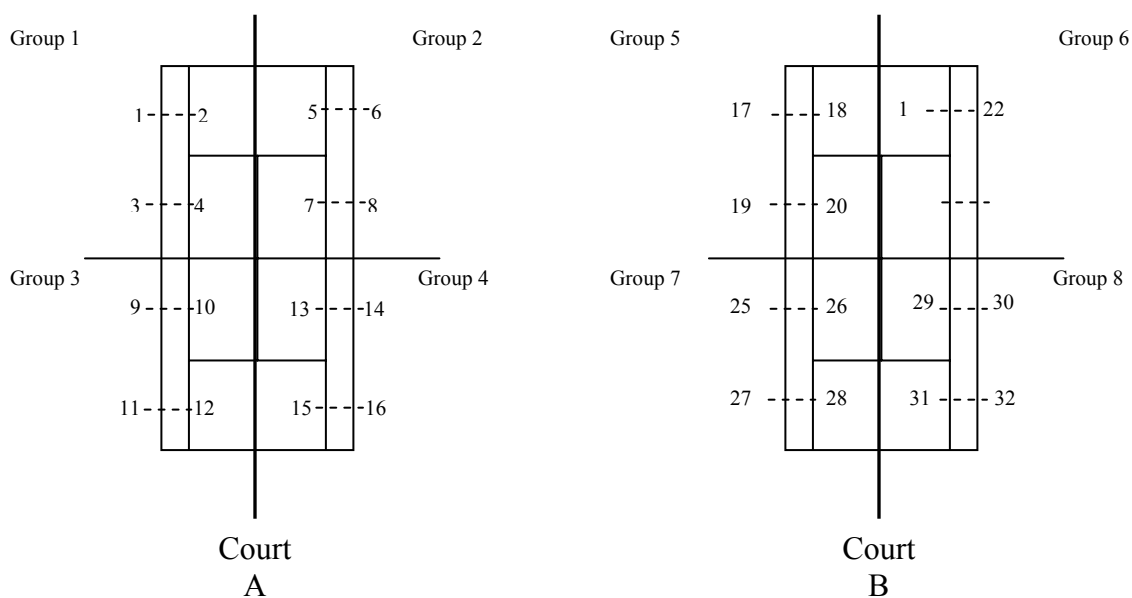
Warm up drill #3: Bounce and Hit

Each student has one ball. Each student bounces the ball upward (to the height of their head) on their racquet, then lets it fall to the ground and repeats as they run around their court zone. **Note:** Ensure that you leave enough space between each student.

NOTE: Warm-up drills should be 2-3 minutes in total length.

B) STAGE II: ALLEY TENNIS

Following the warm up, students should begin playing *Alley tennis*. As shown on the diagrams below, partners begin to rally across the alley on the court. This progression will promote the concepts of control and consistency. Partners are working cooperatively to have long rallies through a selection of a list of games below.



Longest rally (groundstrokes):

- The team counts out loud how many times they exchange the ball between them with the ball only bouncing once as they make the exchange.
- A variation to this game can also be for the students to count how many times the ball hits the marker as they exchange the ball between them.
- *Repeat on backhand side.*

Moat Game:

- Players positioned behind 3 feet behind their line.
- Use the alley as a moat – players must hit ball with an arch.
- The ball must land in between the two lines in the alley.
- Count how many times the ball lands in the moat as the two players exchange the ball or provide a point for each 6 consecutive point hit, most points win.
- Repeat on backhand.

Note!

The following progression can be used to help ensure success when players rally together:

- ☆ One player stands with one foot on the outside line (doubles court line) of the court, the other player stands on the inside line (singles court line).
- ☆ Progression to sharing the ball (rallying): The drill starts with each player bouncing the ball upwards on their racquet then bouncing to the ground, (self rally) repeating 3 times. After they each practice with their own ball, they use only 1 ball – thus after 3 hits, the other player takes over.
- ☆ Then each player repeats the same drill above, but with two hits only, and then finally each player hits the ball only once, (i.e. 1st player hits the ball, the ball bounces and then the 2nd player hits the ball. They are now rallying together)
- ☆ Use a marker in between the two players as a spot/target for them to hit the ball on.

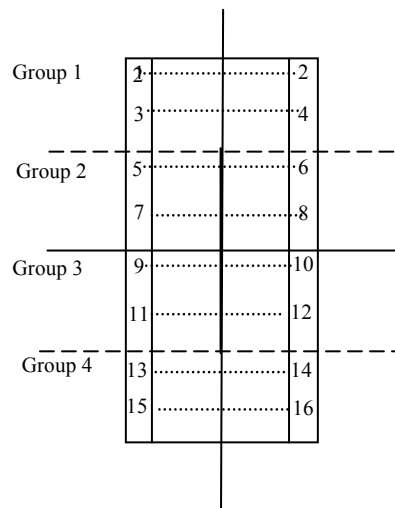
- Volley (hitting the ball out of the air): hitting the ball in a continuous motion without letting it bounce in between each hit.
- Each player should stand by, keeping one foot on each line in the alley.
- Each student hits the ball 3 times to him/herself (without letting the ball bounce) and ensures that the ball rises to at least head height with each hit.
- After the first student has hit the ball three times, they pass the ball to their partner who also hits the ball three times.
- Then each player hits the ball twice before passing the ball to his or her partner, who also hits the ball two times.
- Then the two players volley the ball between them, i.e. one hit each as they pass the ball between them without letting the ball bounce in between each hit.
- It is important to hit the ball in an arc in order to maintain the exchange between the two players.
- Repeat on both forehand and backhand sides.

“3 Lives” Game *(to help practice what the students have just learned)*

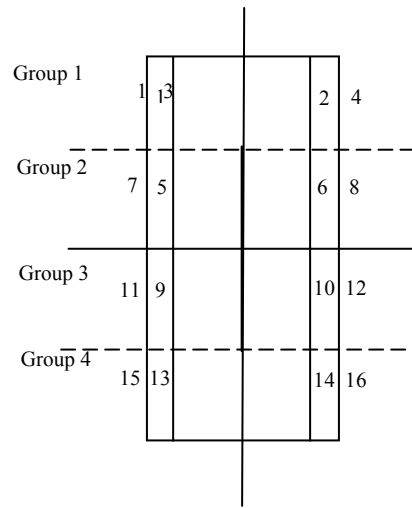
- Each student will take a step back from the alley.
- Each team of two students volleys the ball back and forth for one minute between them. If they miss a volley then they lose a life. Each team has a maximum of three lives.
- You can vary this game by putting time limits on the rally to create some competition between the various teams. You can also see how many teams were able to keep all three of their lives for the full one-minute.
- You can repeat similar game using groundstrokes.

C) STAGE III: SHORT COURT TENNIS

Following *alley tennis* students will progress to *short court tennis*. Using the width of the court and the rope as the net, players will rally with their partners using the games/drills below. Note: the length of the court can be to either the singles sideline or the doubles sideline depending on level of play and space beside the court.



Set-up A



Set-up B

Rally Game:

- Use “Set-up A” above
- Which two players can have the longest exchange between them in a 3-minute period.
- The players rally over the rope with the ball bouncing half way between the rope and their partner.

Team Alternate Shot:

- Use “Set-up B” above
- Use the boundaries of the court; players alternate hits
- Use safety marker for player on deck
- Ball must be hit with an arch
- Teams compete against one another (i.e. which team is winning after 4 minutes, or first team to 10 pts)
- Variations: each player hitting twice before rotating

Short Court Doubles:

- Both players from each team are on the court at the same time and there is only one ball in play between all four players (use “Set-up A”)

Volley vs Groundstrokes:

- Use “Set-up A” above
- Each pair must hit 10 balls in a row to get one point.
- One player from the pair hits groundstrokes from the baseline while the other player is at the net hitting volleys.
- Then the players can switch positions – the player at the net will now move back and hit the groundstrokes and the player hitting groundstrokes will move to the net and volley.

Approach and Volley:

- Use “Set-up B” above
- 2 players play point, then next 2 players play point in one court area.
- 1 player hits the ball and comes into the net and plays out the point against partner; players then go off and other 2 players play; players alternate roles each turn (volleyer vs. groundstroker).
- The approaching player has to hit the volleys all the time and the other player has the choice of either hitting a groundstroke or a volley

Serve (practice for one minute):

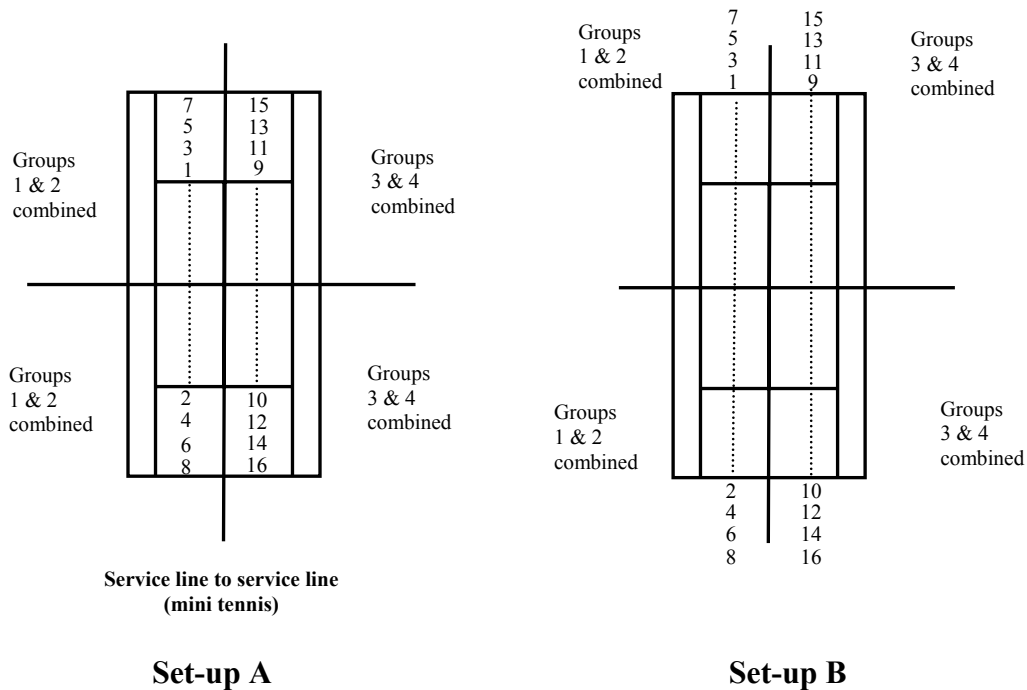
- Use “Set-up A” above
- The players practice serving back and forth to each other.
- One player serves to their partner and the other player catches the ball with their hand and serves the ball back.
- It is important that player toss the ball above their head and hit the ball with an arch over the rope (net) so that it bounces in front of their partner.

Team Serve Game:

- Use “Set-up B” above
- One side (made up of two players who alternate – a doubles team) serves for 5 points. The server plays two points in a row while the returner only plays 1 point and then switches with his/her partner. After 5 points, serving team and returning team switch.
- Competitive game as team

D) STAGE IV: FULL COURT TENNIS

In Stage 4 of each tennis class has the students progress to full court tennis. We will now use the rope to serve as a dividing area between two playing areas within the full court (left side and right side). In the initial days of the program, the students will be closer to the net (mini tennis) to ensure success and will gradually move back towards the baseline (full court tennis) by the end of the program.



Around the World:

- Either “Set-up A” or “Set-up B” above
- Players form two lines on each half of the court.
- There is only one ball in play and the players rotate around.
- Start with the serve and the player then moves to the back of the line and the next person hits the ball.
- If the next player misses the shot, then he/she moves to the back of the line and the other team starts the point with the serve.
- Competence Game: which team gets the most points in 3 minutes.

Share-One-Racquet Game *(allow players two minutes to play this game)*

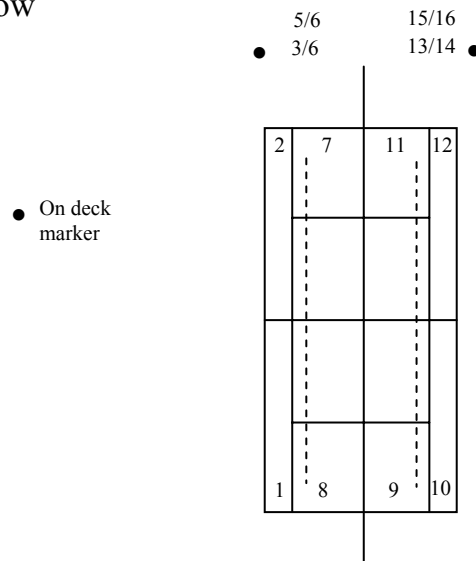
- Either “Set-up A” or “Set-up B” above
- Place a safety marker, half way between the service line and the baseline and have three players behind the marker (for players waiting on deck).
- Have one player with the racquet standing at the service line.
- The player with the racquet serves the ball over the net and then passes the racquet to the player waiting behind the marker.
- If the player misses the ball then the team that missed the ball starts the point over again with a serve.

Variations to this game:

1. Each player hits two shots before passing the racquet to the next person.
2. Each player has their own racquet and they each take one shot

Top of the Court:

- One two-person team (both on the court at the same time) starts on the far court (they are *on top*).
- The remaining players wait on the other side of the court and rotate in after each point.
- The first two-player team starts the point with a serve and the point is played out; after each point the side with 3 teams rotates until one team gets 3 points.
- Once a team gets 3 points, they go to the other side of the court and replace the team on the far side (they take over *top of the court*).
- See set-up below



SECTION 5

TENNIS IN A “NUTSHELL” Understanding The Game

Tips to Improve Students' Games!

BASIC SINGLES STRATEGY AND TACTICS

SINGLES STRATEGY

The following are some basic strategies that a player can use for the game of singles:

- The Importance of “Consistency”:
 - The most basic strategy in tennis is to be more consistent than your opponent.
 - Even pros win the majority of points through opponent errors (unforced or forced).
- Hit to your Opponent's Weakness: Weakness could be a:
 - particular stroke (eg. backhand groundstroke)
 - certain types of balls (eg. high deep shots are quite often difficult)
- Make your Opponent Move: Quite often players have difficulty when they have to hit the ball after a run or while running (eg. moving your opponent from side to side).

RECOMMENDED STRATEGY WHEN SERVING AND RETURNING:

First and foremost, *put the ball into play*. One does not want to give the opponent “free points”.

If player can consistently put the ball into play, they may want to *direct the ball to the opponent's weakness*, quite often the *backhand side*.

KEYS FOR CONSISTENCY AND CONTROLLING SHOTS

1. CONTROLLING THE *HEIGHT* OF YOUR SHOT:

- Hit with an **ARCHED TRAJECTORY** in order to have good clearance of the net and to allow plenty of time to get ready for the next ball. This approach will help players maintain longer rallies.
- One can hit with an **ARCHED TRAJECTORY** by having an open racquet face and a low to high swing.



2. CONTROLLING THE *DIRECTION* OF YOUR SHOT:

- One can control the direction of the ball by ensuring that the *strings of the racquet face are directed towards their target when making CONTACT with the ball*. A good analogy is to keep the “*eyes of the racquet face facing your target*”.



3. CONTROLLING THE *SPEED* OF YOUR SHOT:

The ability to control the speed of the ball that you hit is one of the most important elements in being able to become *consistent*. One of the most important elements of speed control relates to the *speed at which you swing the racquet*. The faster the swing, the faster the ball is hit; the slower the swing, the slower the ball is hit.

HINT FOR CONTROL OF SPEED:

- On groundstrokes and volleys, one should generally maintain a firm wrist when making contact with the ball. This will assist you with gauging the speed with which you swing your racquet and hence, the speed at which you send the ball.



4. CONTROLLING THE DISTANCE OF THE SHOT:

- In order to have a consistent rally is best to try to recreate the same flight of ball each turn in order for the ball to consistently land in the same target area. In other words, “trace” the flight of the ball.
- The distance a ball goes is mainly influenced by the speed and height at which the ball is hit.
- A 45-degree trajectory will provide the longest distance, a higher trajectory and a lower trajectory will reduce the distance a ball travels.

FUNDAMENTALS FOR CONSISTENCY

“SETTING UP” IN ORDER TO HIT THE BALL:

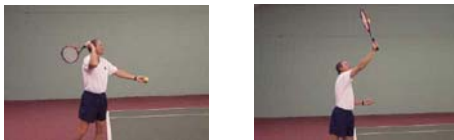
One of the most important skills to develop is the ability to be “set up” properly when getting ready to hit the ball. “Setting up” on groundstrokes entails:

- preparing the body in a sideways position before the bounce of the ball (*this will help with balance and directional control*)
- being balanced with the knees slightly bent (*this will help when you need to move to the ball*)
- having the racquet and body prepared before the ball bounces (*to ensure plenty of time to hit the ball*)
- hitting the ball at waist height, slightly in front of our body (*this is the most comfortable position to make contact*)



Serve:

- Feet positioned in neutral stance
- Hips and shoulders facing the net
- Impact in front (have their feet behind the marker on ground and have them contact in front of marker)
- Coordination of arms: toss and hit
- Racquet face slightly open, short, gentle upward hit into target area (ball should be slightly declining when it reaches target)



Forehand Groundstroke:

- Feet positioned neutral stance
- Hips and shoulders facing the net
- Impact in front (have their feet behind the marker on ground and have them contact in front of marker)
- Racquet face slightly open, short, gentle upward hit into target area (ball should be slightly declining when it reaches target)

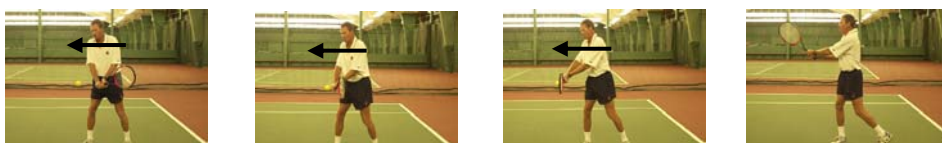


Backhand Groundstroke:

- Feet positioned neutral stance
- Hips and shoulders facing the net
- Impact in front (have their feet behind the marker on ground and have them contact in front of marker)
- Racquet face slightly open, short, gentle upward hit into target area (ball should be slightly declining when it reaches target)
- Additional notes on backhand:
 - When starting the ball with a backhand (i.e. target practicing) have them toss the ball upward over the racquet arm with their non racquet hand



- Participants can choose one or two hand... if you have to recommend... encourage 2 hands



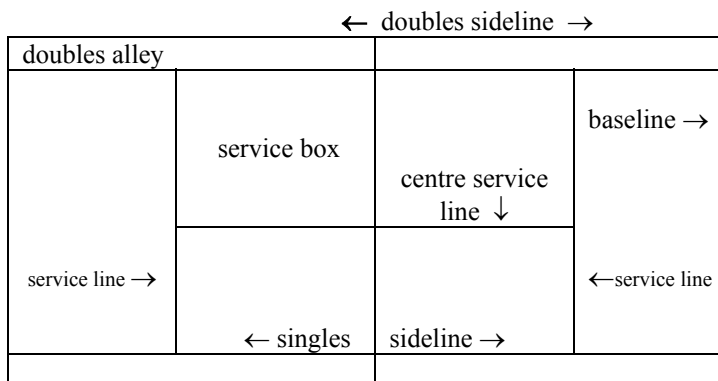
Volleys

- Impact Point in front, racquet ready before ball reaches net
- Adjust movement for perfect impact
- Open racquet face and short catching action



SCORING, RULES AND ETIQUETTE

Knowing the Court



SCORING:

- Players need to win 4 points to win a game; 6 games to win a set.
- Servers score is called first; server should announce score before starting each point:
 - No score: *Love (from the French "l'oeuf")*
 - First Point: *15*
 - Second Point: *30*
 - Third Point: *40*
 - Fourth Point: *Game*
- When the score is tied at 40 to 40 (3 points each), it is called *deuce*. One player (or team in doubles) must win two points in a row to win a game from deuce. The player who wins the first point after "deuce" is said to have the *advantage*, i.e. advantage server ("ad in") or advantage receiver ("ad out")
- The first player (or team in doubles) to win 6 games with a margin of two games is the winner of the set. If the score goes to 6-6 in games, a tiebreak is played and the set ends 7-6. A match is best 2 out of 3 sets.

"NO AD" SCORING:

This is a simplified scoring system that eliminates the need to win 2 consecutive points, once the score gets to deuce (40-40) to win the game. At deuce, the next point wins the game. It's like "sudden death", and is generally used to get many matches played where court time is limited. The person who is returning serve, gets to choose to which service box the server must serve to start the point, i.e., deuce side, or ad side.

TIE BREAK SCORING:

- The first player to score 7 points with a two point margin wins.
- The player who is scheduled to serve next in the rotation will serve the first point of the tiebreaker to the deuce court.
- The other player will then serve the next 2 point, one to the ad court, then one to the deuce court.
- The players then continue to alternate serving every 2 points, one to the ad court, then one to the deuce court until one player reaches 7 points with a 2 point margin (e.g. 7-5, 8-6, 10-8).

RULES:

- Balls must be hit after one bounce or may be hit in the air (without a bounce). Serves must be permitted to bounce in the court.
- Balls landing on any part of the line are considered "in"; if the ball appears to touch any part of the line, it should be called good.
- Make your line calls promptly and clearly; use hand signals when appropriate;
- If a player or a player's racquet touches the net, the point is lost.
- If a ball is caught or hits any part of a player or racquet before it bounces, it is assumed to have been good, even if the person touching the ball is out of bounds or the ball was clearly headed out of bounds.

ETIQUETTE:

- Going to/from the court: In order to walk on a tennis court without disturbing adjacent courts, be sure to wait (usually at the back of the court) for the point to be completed on the court that you will be passing; then quickly move to the next court.
- Retrieving errant balls: If an errant ball comes on your court or one of your balls goes on an adjacent court, wait for the point to be completed prior to returning a ball or receiving back your ball.
- Spinning of the Racquet: The butcap of a tennis racquet has a logo or writing on it. Prior to the beginning of a match, one player should spin his racquet and allow his opponent to guess which way the logo or writing will be displayed (up or down). This is equivalent to “flipping a coin. The player winning the spin of the racquet has one of four choices to make - to serve, to receive, to select the end, or to require the opponent to choose.
- Calling Lines: As a general rule, never question a call of your opponent.
- Shaking Hands: Players should shake hands after a match.

SOME SERVING TERMINOLOGY:

Ace: A very good serve that does not allow the returner to touch the ball.

Fault: A first serve which does not land in the boundary of the service box.

Double Fault: A second serve which does not land in the boundary of the service box.

Foot Fault: When a part of the foot touches the court area prior to contact of the serve.

Let: A serve that hits the net, then lands in the targeted service box. Replay the serve.

SECTION 6

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Tennis Canada and *for love of kids* Foundation gratefully acknowledges the support and vision of Nick Bollettieri and his world-renown tennis academy.

We would also like to thank our corporate sponsors – Wilson Racquets and Penn Tennis Balls – for providing us with the equipment essential to offer this program to schools across Canada.

We believe that tennis is the *sport of a* lifetime and support all efforts to provide Canadians with the skills and tools necessary to play from eight to eighty.

For information about Tennis Canada and our Provincial Tennis Associations, please visit our website at: www.tenniscanada.com

To download additional copies of this manual, please go to:

<http://www.tenniscanada.ca/federation/english/coaching/?page=resources/startingintennis>

