

# USTA SCHOOL TENNIS CURRICULUM, 9<sup>th</sup> Edition

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## INTRODUCTION

As part of its mission "to promote and develop the growth of tennis," the United States Tennis Association (USTA) works year-round to attract more players - particularly young players - to the sport.

The enhanced in-school curriculum is part of a national USTA initiative to provide resources to teachers and coaches offering tennis within a school environment. In addition to offering lesson plans, teacher training, and equipment support to schools, the USTA sponsors a National No-Cut Coach Recognition program for high schools and offers resources for the development of intramural and interscholastic tennis programs from elementary grades through college.

It is our hope that you will embrace USTA School Tennis as a vehicle to introduce your students to tennis at school. Equally important is that you enthusiastically promote their continued interest and development in tennis through an after-school program. You may be willing to sponsor a tennis activity at your school after hours or to encourage your students to join a program offered in your community.

The USTA School Tennis Curriculum is a vital component of a program that introduces tennis in a school setting. It recognizes and responds to the challenge of teaching large groups of students in gyms, activity rooms, and school yards.

Skills learned now will enable kids to embrace an active lifestyle throughout their lives. Tennis stimulates the mind, body, and emotions and fosters cooperative and competitive skill development. In fact, a number of studies indicate that tennis cuts the risk of heart disease; helps foster sociability, mental focus, teamwork, and discipline; is a great stress reducer; and burns more calories than many other popular sports. The beauty of tennis is that it is free of limitations based on gender, physical size, and age,

Thank you for helping children to learn new skills each day and to keep physically and emotionally fit for life.

If you would like additional copies of the USA School Tennis Curriculum, please contact the USTA section in your area (see USTA section map and telephone numbers at the end of the curriculum).

## ADAPTING TENNIS TO YOUR SCHOOL

### Equipment

Similar to learning other sports, tennis equipment and boundaries should be modified to ensure a high level of success. Imagine trying to teach basketball, football, volleyball, soccer, etc., to beginners using regulation balls, goals, and boundaries. There would be a high level of frustration with very few students experiencing a sense of “perceived competence” to continue the sport further.

The entire USTA School Tennis curriculum is dependent on using equipment that is developmentally appropriate for the beginning player. This includes utilizing modified, easy-bounce tennis balls and shorter, lighter racquets. Using the right equipment is paramount for ensuring a positive first time experience and helps lay the foundation for proper skill development in the future.

#### **The following equipment should be on hand for every lesson plan in this curriculum:**

- Large, foam tennis balls
- Tennis racquets--suggested sizes:
  - 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> grade – 21” - 23”;
  - 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade – 23” - 25”
  - 7<sup>th</sup> grade and above – 25” -27”
- Targets
- Nets/barriers
- Chalk or tape

\*Ball variations: balloons, beach balls, bean bags, yarn balls, streamer balls, low compression balls.

For more information on adapting your school for recess, lunchtime, or after school tennis programs, please refer to the USTA School Tennis Intramurals supplement.

### Indoor and Outdoor Space

Ideally, every school would have 10-15 tennis courts that could be used for tennis instruction. This is not the case. Consequently, the drills and activities contained in the Guide are designed to be taught in limited indoor areas and also outside on playground and blacktopped areas. While official tennis nets would be ideal, lowered volleyball or badminton nets are often used successfully. It is also possible to design enjoyable and beneficial activities using ropes, or barrier tape, stretched between fences or chairs. Boundaries can be defined using cones, ropes, and/or existing lines on basketball or volleyball courts.

### SAFETY RULES AND TIPS

Large classes and numerous racquets and balls make safety precautions important. Therefore, before starting to teach tennis, a physical education teacher must determine the rules that the students should follow to ensure a safe learning environment. We recommend five safety rules which need to be explained, demonstrated and practiced before students can be assumed ready to begin hitting:

1. Students should stop immediately on the “stop” or “freeze” signal (teacher’s voice or whistle, for example) and not begin until the “Go” signal.
2. As soon as possible after they hear the “stop” signal, students should hug their racquets against their chests with crossed arms between activities.

3. Each student (or group of students) needs a clearly defined area or “personal space” so she or she knows specifically where he or she is allowed and not allowed to swing a racquet.
  4. Striking balls recklessly is inappropriate; shots should be aimed and controlled to land in a certain space or to hit a target. In general, teach students that racquets should not rise above the head unless the serve skill is being practiced.
  5. Students should not chase balls out of their playing area. Loose balls should be picked up and stored immediately by students when it enters their space. Loose balls can be stored in pockets, tucked into clothing, etc. If a ball is lost, students should be able to obtain a ball from their peers or from supply stations located safely on the perimeter of the activity area.
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## **FORMING GROUPS FOR PLAY**

Listed below are a number of suggested formats for organizing students for play when space is limited and when you want to vary instructional activities to meet different skill levels.

### **SELF-SPACE**

A number of drills and activities require students to strike a ball (or other object) in their self-space. When using this format, you might want to require the students to stand on a carpet square or inside a hoop as a means of defining each student’s personal space and to keep them from traveling into another student’s personal space.

### **PARTNERS**

Your students will often be working with partners. Sometimes teachers assign students of equal ability to be partners; sometimes one student (typically a high-skilled student) might “coach” another student. Be sensitive to how partners are selected so that no student feels left out. It is a good practice to tell students who do not find a partner to come to the center so they can be paired up quickly. It is also a good idea to ask the partners to define their boundaries by using ropes or cones, for example, to avoid accidentally moving into another student’s space and being hit by a racquet.

### **SMALL GROUPS**

Some activities require students to work in small groups. Again, it is important that they define their space and are careful to work cooperatively and support one another’s efforts. Sometimes when students work in small groups, more skilled or unmotivated youngsters can become overly critical, and this should be discouraged. Criticism of unskilled players is not a recommended way to lead youngsters to the joys of playing tennis.

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### **SPORTSMANSHIP TIPS**

Many of us have been in a position to award a sportsmanship trophy, and we all regularly assess athletes as good or poor sports. But what are we judging?

Sportsmanship is an internalized attitude which reflects itself in a wide range of actions on and off the court. Good sports have a healthy attitude about competition. They have respect for their opponents and themselves. They tend to remain under emotional control even in adverse situations. As a result, they are often among the steadiest and most reliable competitors at every level of sport.

By incorporating practical tips and suggestions in every lesson plan and by exhibiting sportsmanlike behavior at all times, the physical educator can positively impact a student’s lifetime attitude towards competition

# How to Use the Tennis Lesson Plans

The following lesson plans are developmentally appropriate for 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade students and focus on how to safely and effectively teach tennis in a gym, activity room, or outside playing area. No tennis courts are required and no previous tennis experience is needed by the teacher or the students to have a successful unit. Higher grade levels can benefit from the activities presented and will be able to accelerate through the lesson plans at a faster rate.

The lesson plans are divided into 8 lessons. Teachers may choose to select from all the lessons depending on the experience and skill of their students. Each lesson plan offers enough activities for one day of instruction. The lesson plans are divided into four instructional parts to assure students are presented a lesson with variety and purpose.

Each of the parts is described in the following section:

1. **Introductory Activity:** Introductory activities change weekly and are used to physiologically prepare students for activity when entering the gymnasium or activity area. Activities used in this section demand little instruction and allow time to practice class management skills. This part of the lesson lasts 2-3 minutes.
2. **Fitness Development Activity:** The Fitness Development section utilizes 7 to 8 minutes of a 30-minute lesson. The purpose of this section is not to try to “whip students into shape” but, rather to familiarize them with many different types of physical fitness activities. A second major focus for this part of the lesson is to develop positive attitudes toward physical activity. Discussions about the values of physical activity for a healthy lifestyle should be included here also. **Please see the suggested fitness stations listed on the following page.**
3. **Lesson Focus Activities:** The purpose of the lesson focus is to teach toward NASPE Physical Education Standards and Outcomes such as the development of eye-hand coordination, body management competency, and fundamental and specialized skills. The lesson focus usually takes 15-20 minutes of the daily lesson depending on the length of the teaching period.

Content in each lesson is organized in a developmentally appropriate sequence, with the first activity being the easiest and the last activity the most difficult. Instruction starts with the first activity. This progression is designed to start each student with success, since all students are capable of performing the beginning activities. It offers a proper and safe sequence of activities for instruction. Developmentally mature students are allowed to progress further along the continuum of activities than less capable students.

4. **Game Activity:** This part of the lesson plan takes place at the closing of the lesson, utilizing the last 5-7 minutes of the period. Games can be used as a culminating activity for practicing skills emphasized in the lesson focus. At other times, games can be unrelated to the lesson focus and used to leave students with an enjoyable activity. The game should help students feel positive about activity so they look forward to the next lesson. If a lesson is physically demanding, a less active game can be played and vice versa. In some cases, a low key, relaxing activity might be used to help students unwind before returning to the classroom.

## Components of the Lesson Plans

Each lesson plan includes the following components:

1. **Outcomes:** Student objectives are what teachers should expect students to accomplish as a product of their teaching. The objectives give direction to instructional goals and expected student outcomes.
2. **NASPE Physical Education Standards:** These national standards should be viewed as the institutional objectives. In other words, the physical education standards are the expected outcomes the school leaders and parents expect teachers to accomplish.
3. **Equipment Required:** Specific equipment needed for each lesson is listed.
4. **Instructional Activities:** Instructional activities and skill experiences to be taught in the lesson are delineated in proper developmental sequence.
5. **Teaching Hints:** This section includes organization tips and important learning cues. How equipment is arranged, how students are grouped, and proper technique cues are examples of information placed in this column.

# INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES MENU

## 1. Toe to Toe:

Youngsters perform a locomotor movement around the area. On signal, each child finds the nearest partner and stands toe to toe (one foot only) with that person. It is important to emphasize that students must take the nearest person without searching for a friend. Youngsters who can't find a partner within two giant steps run quickly to the center of the area (use a marking spot or cone) to find a partner. The goal is to find a nearby partner as quickly as possible and avoid being the last pair formed. If the number of youngsters playing is uneven, make that student your partner and subtly assign them to another twosome. Use a variety of movements to mix the students each time.

This is an excellent activity for emphasizing character development. All students should feel a part of the group. Looking for a partner is unacceptable.

The center spot is called the "friendship spot" so students see the need to accept all peers as a partner.

## 2. Whistle Mixer:

Children are scattered throughout the area. To begin, they jog around in any direction they wish. Blow a whistle (or similar signal) a number of times in succession with short, sharp blasts. Children then form groups with the number in each group equal to the number of whistle blasts. If there are four blasts, children form groups of four—no more, no less. When players have the correct number, they sit down immediately to signal that no one may leave or enter their group. Youngsters who can't find a partner within two giant steps run quickly to the center of the area (use a marking spot or cone) to find a partner. After the circles are formed, the teacher calls "jog," and the game continues. Use a variety of locomotor movements.

The purpose of this activity is to teach students to group themselves quickly and to accept all students in their group.

Avoid making groups larger than four students. Students at this level will find it difficult when larger groups made. If you want larger groups, combine two smaller groups.

## 3. Fall-In: Racquet Quickness Circle

On signal, while continuing to move with racquets in hand, students move to the perimeter of the area and fall in line behind a designated student until a circle is formed. This exercise can be done while students are running, jogging, skipping, or walking. Have each student stand the racquet on the tip of its frame with the handle pointing up. When the teacher calls out either "right" or "left", students let go of their racquet, move in the direction called, and try and catch the racquet next to them before it falls to the ground! If every one has a successful catch, move back a step. If every one is not successful move in a step. Try and see how large the circle can get with everyone being successful.

This activity emphasizes readiness and quick movements and encourages cooperation amongst all the students.

Be sure to reinforce a good ready position by reminding students to keep the knees bent and the back straight before they make their move!

## 4. Home Base:

The class is divided in to teams of 5-6 players. One player in each group is designated the captain. Rubber spots are placed throughout the teaching area equal to the number of teams. Each spot serves as a home base for one of the squads. The teams begin in a straight line with the captain standing on a spot and the rest of the team lined up behind her. Students are told to perform an activity throughout the area (use tennis movements with racquets in hand). When the teacher calls "Home Base!" captains find the nearest spot and the rest of the team lines up behind their respective captain. The first team in position wins that round.

This is an excellent activity for teaching youngsters to move into small group quickly.

This activity is an excellent prelude to station teaching. By placing a marking spot at each station and calling "Home Base," a squad will end up at each station and be ready for instruction.

## 5 Switch-it-Up

While students are moving throughout the gym performing various locomotor or tennis related skills, the teacher calls out the following similar statements. "If you are wearing a white shirt, switch directions and continue jogging", if you have brown hair, switch directions and continue, if you are wearing shorts, switch directions, or, if you were born in June, July or August, switch directions, etc." Any type of grouping can be used in effort to mix your groups. When the group is mixed up as desired, move on to the next activity.

This management tool is great for mixing up those "best friends, or "off task" pairs. This will help to assure a positive and more manageable learning environment. It can be used in several other activities as well. (Whistle mixer, Toe to toe, Home base, etc).

## 6 Get a Racquet, Make a Friend:

Prior to the lesson, place the racquets and balls around the perimeter of the area. Jog students into the area and freeze on signal. Ask students to go get a racquet and ball, find a friend and exchange their equipment by address their partner by first name. "Hi John, here is a racquet and ball for you." Everybody runs with the racquet and ball until the next freeze that signals placing the equipment on the floor. On signal, the students pick up a ball and racquet and repeat the process by exchanging it with another friend.

The emphasis in this activity is to learn to address fellow students by name in a polite manner.

Moving with equipment is a related outcome for this activity. Encourage moving under control.

## INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES MENU— (continued)

### 7. Rock Paper Scissor Tag:

After students have found a partner using the “Toe to Toe” method, they will line up facing their partners in two parallel lines across the center of the gym. Students will play “rock, paper, scissors” with their hands and the winner will attempt to “tag” their partner on the shoulder before they reach a designated spot (i.e. tape, red line, marker, spot, etc.). The winner will attempt to tag their partner running in a straight line before they reach the designated spot.

It may help to practice the direction students must run before the game starts.

To incorporate different physical movements, ask students to form rock (squat position), paper (jumping jack pose), scissor (front straddle with legs, and arms are like scissors”), with their bodies.

### 8. Toss-Catch Tag:

After students have found a partner using the “Toe to Toe” method, they will line up facing their partners in two parallel lines across the center of the gym. Students use beanbags or foam balls to toss back and forth with partners. When the music is stopped or the whistle is blown, the student holding the ball attempts to reach the designated spot before he/she is tagged. (i.e. tape, red line, marker, spot, etc.). Students must work within their own lanes when trying to tag their partner.

This game reinforces tossing and catching skills and can allow for multiple changes in partners.

It may help to practice the direction students must run before the game starts to ensure a safe environment.

\*Note: Basic locomotor skills that can be incorporated into each lesson include: power walking, jogging, skipping, galloping, and sliding (shuffling).

## FITNESS ACTIVITIES FOR ALL YOUNGSTERS

Too often youngsters are asked to perform a fitness load that is impossible for them. For example they may be asked to do 20 push-ups when both the teacher and students know they cannot do one push-up. The following fitness activities should be taught to children early in the year. Then, when push-ups or abdominal activities are assigned, they can select any activity they **want and can do**.

Youngsters must be given the opportunity to select activities they enjoy. The workload must be dictated by the student, not the teacher. No teacher knows how many repetitions of an activity a youngster can perform. Better that they allow each student to **do their best**. Fitness is not effective if it is something that is forced upon them. Most will avoid activity in the future if they feel pressured and unsuccessful.

Stretching and flexibility activities should be alternated with aerobic activities to avoid excessively fatiguing youngsters. When youngsters are pushed too hard aerobically, they will express their fatigue in many different manners (i.e., complaining, quitting, misbehaving, or sitting out). Be aware of how far to push and when to ease up.

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### SPORT-RELATED FITNESS STATIONS

The fitness routine below is referenced in each of the following lesson plans. The fitness signs that accompany this unit alternate strength and flexibility activities with sport-related fitness activities. Ask students do the best they can at each station within the time limit. Students differ in their ability to perform fitness workloads.

1. Rope jumping
2. Tossing, rolling, or bouncing a ball back and forth with a partner. Balls can be tossed one at a time or two at a time, while stationary or \*moving, for an additional challenge.
3. Upper body fitness challenges – student choice of activity
4. Run and set – Students pivot, run a short distance laterally, and set their feet in a sideways stance. Students recover to their starting point with a shuffle step.
5. Flexibility challenges – student choice of activity
6. Beanbag Pass While Moving. Students pass the beanbag back and forth while side shuffling several steps to the left and right.
7. Abdominal fitness challenges – student choice of activity
8. Racquet Quickness with a Partner. Partners are about 3 feet apart while balancing their racquets upside down on the ground. On signal, they release their racquet and try to catch their partner's racquet before it falls to the ground. If both partners catch their racquet, they each step back one step and repeat the challenge. An additional challenge is to make a full turn after the release and before catching the racquet.

Refer to the station signs for fitness challenges for upper body & abdominal, strength and flexibility. Use signals such as start, stop, and move up to ensure rapid movement to the next station.

Music is highly motivating to students. Tape alternating segments of silence and music to signal duration of exercise. Music segments (begin at 30 seconds) indicate activity at each station while intervals of silence (10 seconds) announce it is time to stop and move forward to the next station.

Ask students to do the best they can. Expect workloads to differ.

## **TENNIS STATION ACTIVITIES OR LEARNING CENTERS**

For managing large numbers of students and to maximize equipment, it is helpful to set up the playing environment in stations. One of the advantages of a station format is that it gives the teacher an opportunity to vary the activities in a class and thus create opportunities for success for both low and high skilled students as well as for children with special needs. Students can rotate every few minutes following the teacher's signal. Playing music during the activities creates additional fun and motivation.



## TENNIS STATION DESCRIPTIONS

### 1. Racquet and Ball Handling - Lead-Up:

Partner Bean Bag/Ball Pass. Students work with a partner or small group and toss a beanbag (or foam ball) back and forth and catch it with racquet. Begin 4 to 6 ft apart. For each successful catch, students can back up a step.

### 2. Racquet and Ball Handling:

- Tap Downs—try and bounce the ball down at waist level
- Bump Ups—try and bounce the ball up eye level without letting the ball touch the ground
- Edgies—try and dribble the ball down at waist level using the edge of the tennis racquet
- Self-Rallies—Alternate bumping the ball off the racquet and off the ground
- Invent a Bounce—Students attempt different ways to dribble or bump the ball. This can be choreographed to music.

### 3. Forehand - Wall Rallies:

Standing 10-15 feet away, players attempt to rally the ball consecutively against a wall. Rallies can be done individually, in pairs, or in teams.

### 4. Partner Rallies over Line - Backhand:

Partners work together with a line or jump rope between them to serve as an imaginary net. They bump and bounce the ball back and forth over the backhand. To start the rally, students should start close, match up the racquet faces, and take two steps back. Have students try and set the “world record” for longest rally.

### 5. Forehand and Backhand in Combination

Ready Position and Catch. One student is the tosser and the other student is in ready position with the racquet. The tosser will toss the beanbag or foam ball to one side or the other of the student in ready position. Their goal is to catch it on the racquet (forehand or backhand side) and learn to move into position rather than reaching for the ball. Switch positions after 4 tosses.

### 6. Toss, Volley, and Catch:

Using a foam ball, one partner tosses to the forehand or backhand side of their partner. The partner volleys it back to their partner who catches it. Begin with partners three steps apart. Change roles after 6 tosses.

### 7. Serve and Trap:

Students serve the ball at the wall and trap the rebounding ball on the racquet strings. Students should hit the ball under control in order to successfully trap the ball. This activity can also be done with partners serving and trapping the ball to each other.

### 8. Mini Tennis:

Students rally and play over makeshift or portable nets incorporating the different skills they learned from each of the stations.

# Wrap-Up Games

## Red Light, Green Light Tennis

This game is played like the original Red Light, Green Light game except that students have a tennis ball (or bean bag) balanced on their racquets. If a student is caught moving when “Red Light!” is called, they move back to the starting line. Also, if they lose control of their ball (it falls off the racquet or they touch it with the other hand), they must move back to the starting line. Have students in the class take turns as the group leader calling out “red light, green light.” Students can be deputized as a group leader for calling out instructions.

## Tennis Four Square

A four square court is created using jump ropes, floor tape, rubber lines, etc. The ball is put in play amongst four players on the four square court. The goal is to work up towards the top square following a clockwise rotation. If a player loses a point, they go to the lowest square and the other players in the game advance one position closer to the top square. Extra players can wait on deck and rotate into the lowest square.

## Playground Tennis

Partners line up about 5 ft away from a dividing line. This “net” can be a chalk line, crack in the cement or sidewalk, or painted line. Play begins with a drop hit and a point is scored when the ball lands in the opponent’s court but cannot be returned. Students delineate their own court size and play can be singles or doubles. The ball may bounce as many times as desired in either court and a point is not scored until the ball can not be returned or is rolling on the ground. When a player or team earns 4 points, a new game begins. Change partners regularly so students get to meet other classmates. **Variation:** Require players to bump the ball to themselves one or more times before bumping it back over the net.

## Tennis Ping Pong

Teams of 2 or more players line up about 5 feet away from a dividing line. This “net” can be a chalk line, crack in the cement or sidewalk, or painted line. Similar to “Playground Tennis”, students attempt to rally the ball within the established boundaries but with teammates alternating hits with each other. Games can be played cooperatively to establish the “longest rally” or points can be awarded if teams make an error. When teams earn 4 points, a new game begins. The teacher can allow multiple bounces to ensure longer rallies.

## Pass the Racquet

Teams of 2 or more players line up about 5 feet away from a dividing line or makeshift net. Similar to “Tennis Ping Pong,” students attempt to rally the ball within the established boundaries but with teammates alternating hits with each other. Teams are only allowed one racquet, which must be passed off to each student between hits. Games can be played cooperatively to establish the “longest rally” or points can be awarded if teams make an error. When teams earn 4 points, a new game begins. If necessary, the teacher can allow multiple bounces to ensure longer rallies.

## Tennis Volleyball

Teams of 2-4 players are positioned in zones on both sides of the mini court. One side starts out by serving the point. The ball can be hit out of the air or off the bounce but must be returned over the net with 3 hits or less. Teams rotate and change serving sides the same as in volleyball. Students can be allowed additional hits or bounces if needed to sustain longer rallies.

## One Ball Live

Teams of two players line up across from each other about 5 feet away from a dividing line or makeshift net. Two separate individual rallies are started with an overhand or underhand serve (the serves should be aimed straight ahead to the opposite player). When one of the rallies ends, the remaining ball in play becomes “LIVE” and is played out in the mini court amongst the four players like doubles. A point is given to the team that wins the “LIVE” point. Games can be played to 7 or 11.

## Mini-Tennis Over a Net (unlimited bounces)

Mini-Tennis is a team game that uses no more than 2 students per team (2 against 2) per court. Students “bump” the ball over the net rather than taking wild swings. Tumbling mats, a stretch bungee cord, volleyball net or lunchroom tables in the folded position can be used to delineate the net. There is no spiking--all balls must have an upward trajectory. Multiple bounces and hits can be allowed as long as the ball stays within the boundaries. Score by ones; the first team to four is the winner and a new game starts. At the teacher’s signal, teams split up and find a new mini court. Games can be played 2 vs 2, 2 vs. 1, or 1 vs.1.

# USTA School Tennis

## Lesson 1: Racquet and Ball Lead-Up Skills

### Outcomes:

- To quickly find a partner and learn to accept all peers as equals.
- To learn the difference between forehand and backhand side of the racquet.
- To maintain control of a ball on the racquet face.

### NASPE Physical Education Standards

- Introductory Activity: 1, 3, 5, 6
- Fitness Activity: 3, 4, 6
- Lesson Focus: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6
- Game: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6

### Equipment Required:

- Signs for sport-related fitness stations
- One racquet, one transition ball and one beanbag for each student
- Equipment for stations – ropes, beanbags, and cones
- Rubber marking spots

### Instructional Activities

### Teaching Hints

#### Introductory Activity (2-3 minutes) – Toe to Toe

Students perform a locomotor movement around the area. On signal, each child finds the nearest partner and stands toe to toe (one foot only) with that person. It is important to emphasize that students must take the nearest person without searching for a friend. Students who can't find a partner within two giant steps run quickly to the center of the area (use a marking spot or cone) to find a partner. The goal is to find a nearby partner as quickly as possible and avoid being the last pair formed. If the number of students playing is uneven, make that student your partner and subtly assign them to another twosome. Use a variety of movements to mix the students each time. Students can also be asked to toss, dribble, juggle, or bounce a ball individually or cooperatively while moving.

This is an excellent activity for emphasizing character development. All students should feel a part of the group. Looking for a partner is unacceptable.

The center spot is called the “friendship spot” so students see the need to accept all peers as a partner.

#### Fitness Development Activity (7-8 minutes) – Sport-Related Fitness Stations

#### Lesson Focus (15-20 minutes) – Racquet/Ball Handling Skills

1. Place ball on racquet and attempt to roll it around the edge of the racquet without allowing it to fall off the racquet. Flip the racquet over with the backhand grip (palm down) and roll the ball.
2. Balance the ball on the racquet using the forehand grip (palm up) while trying the following challenges:
  - a. Touch the floor with hand.
  - b. Move to knees and back to feet.
  - c. Sit down and get back on feet.
  - d. Skip, gallop or any other locomotor movement.
3. Flip the racquet over (backhand grip) and balance the ball while trying the following challenges:
  - a. Pat your knees with the off hand.
  - b. While moving, do a full turn and keep walking.
  - c. Walk 5 steps forward and 5 steps backward. Repeat.
  - d. Sit down and get back on feet.
  - e. See how high you can balance the ball. How low can you carry the ball?
4. Beanbag Toss and Catch Activities.
  - a. Toss the beanbag in the air and catch it on the racquet
  - b. Toss the beanbag in the air from the racquet and catch it with the off-hand.
  - c. Toss the beanbag in the air from the racquet and catch it with the racquet.
  - d. Toss the beanbag a few feet in front with the off-hand, move and catch it with the racquet.
5. Beanbag Pass. Students work with a partner or group and toss a beanbag back and forth and catch it with racquet. Begin 4 to 6 ft apart. Students can add a step after each successful exchange.

Explain the difference between forehand and backhand in these activities, i.e., with the forehand, the palm of the hand is up. With the backhand, the palm of the hand is down.

When students are receiving instruction, teach them to cross their arms and hug the racquet. If instructions are longer than 15 seconds, have students place their racquet and ball on the floor and take one step backwards. Limit instructional episodes to 30 seconds.

Stay in your own space. When performing drills, teach students to stay at least an arm plus a racquet length from other students.

Limiting the height of the tosses will maximize safety and reduce management problems.

Beanbags are used in this lesson to help students find success quickly. Place emphasis on learning to watch the moving object.

#### Game Activity (5-7 minutes) – Tennis Lead-Up Games

#### Red Light, Green Light Tennis

Supplies: One racquet and one tennis ball per student

Skills: Racquet and ball control, reaction time.

This game is played like the original Red Light, Green Light game except that students have a tennis ball (or bean bag) balanced on their racquets. If a student is caught moving when “Red Light!” is called, they move to back to the starting line. Also, if they lose control of their ball (it falls off the racquet or they touch it with the other hand), they must move back to the starting line. Have students in the class take turns as the group leader calling out “red light, green light.” Students can be deputized as a group leader for calling out instructions.

# USTA School Tennis

## Lesson 2: Racquet & Ball Skills—Individual/Partner

**Outcomes:**

To know the proper method of holding a racquet  
 To learn to handle a racquet while moving  
 To bump the ball in a predetermined direction with a racquet

**NASPE Physical Education Standards**

Introductory Activity: 1, 3, 5, 6  
 Fitness Activity: 3, 4, 6  
 Lesson Focus: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6  
 Game: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6

**Equipment Required:**

Signs for sport-related fitness stations  
 One racquet and foam ball for each student  
 Equipment for stations – ropes, beanbags, and cones  
 Rubber marking spots

Instructional Activities	Teaching Hints
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**Introductory Activity (2-3 minutes) – Whistle Mixer**

Students are scattered throughout the area. To begin, they jog around in any direction they wish. Blow a whistle (or similar signal) a number of times in succession with short, sharp blasts. Students then form groups with the number in each group equal to the number of whistle blasts. If there are four blasts, students form groups of four. When students have the correct number, they sit down immediately to signal that no one may leave or enter their group. Students who can't find a partner within two giant steps run quickly to the center of the area (use a marking spot or cone) to find a partner. After the circles are formed, the teacher calls "jog," and the game continues. Use a variety of locomotor movements.

The purpose of this activity is to teach students to group themselves quickly and to accept all students in their group.

Avoid making groups larger than four students. Students at this level will find it difficult when larger groups made. If you want larger groups, combine two smaller groups.

**Fitness Development Activity (7-8 minutes) – Sport-Related Fitness Stations**

**Lesson Focus (15-20 minutes) – Racquet and Ball Skills with a Partner**

1. Ball Tap-Downs

- a. At waist level, bounce the ball down and catch with opposite hand.
- b. Continuously bounce the ball down with the racquet at waist level.
- c. Tap the ball down and move slowly while dribbling the ball with the racquet.
- d. Try bumping the ball down with the edge of the racquet ("Edgies").

Encourage students to "choke-up" on the racquet when they are first learning to make controlled bumps. Use the slowest moving ball possible for these activities.

2. Ball Bump-Ups

- a. Bump the ball up and catch with opposite hand
- b. Bump the ball up and try and cradle it on the racquet
- c. Try and bump the ball continuously ("eye high")
- d. Bump the ball while alternating sides of the racquet.

Students must also stay in their own "self space" and not chase their ball into another area.

3. Self Rallies (Bump-Ups with Bounces):

- a. Toss the ball, let it bounce off the floor, bump it up with the racquet, and trap it against the racquet with the off hand.
- b. Bump the ball up 5 times, let it bounce, and tap it up again.
- c. Alternate bumping the ball off the racquet and off the ground (self rallies).

Allow students to juggle the ball or allow multiple bounces to gain control of the ball.

4. Partner/Group Activities:

- a. Partner Bump-ups with Bounces. Partners stand close to each other and bounce the ball up off their racquet (eye high), let it bounce off the floor on a center target, before repeating the bounce up. Partners need to move and get in position for their turn.
- b. Circle Bump Pass. Divide the class into several groups in circle formation with a marking spot in the center to keep the circle of students from moving. All students have a racquet and there is one ball per circle. The goal is to bump pass the ball to other group members. The ball may bounce as many times as desired. The goal is for each circle to keep their rallies going as long as possible.

When students are having trouble mastering an activity, they can go back to the previously learned activities. All students do not have to be on the same activity at the same time. Students can go off-task when activities are too difficult or not varied enough

Beanbags can be substituted for foam balls to increase success.

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**Game Activity (5-7 minutes) – Tennis Lead-Up Games**

**Tennis Four Square**

Supplies: Racquet and foam ball for each student; dividing line for net

Skills: Footwork, directional intent and strategy

A four square court is created using jump ropes, floor tape, rubber lines, etc. The ball is put in play amongst four players on the four square court. The goal is to work up towards the top square following a clockwise rotation. If a player loses a point, they go to the lowest square and the other players in the game advance one position closer to the top square. Extra players can wait on deck and rotate into the lowest square.

# USTA School Tennis

## Lesson 3: The Forehand

### Outcomes:

To learn to perform the forehand using proper form and technique  
 To understand where the point of contact is when striking the ball.  
 To have students explain one or two key points of the forehand.

### NASPE Physical Education Standards

Introductory Activity: 1, 3, 5, 6  
 Fitness Activity: 3, 4, 6  
 Lesson Focus: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6  
 Game: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6

### Equipment Required:

Signs for sport-related fitness stations  
 One racquet and foam ball for each student  
 Equipment for stations – ropes, beanbags, and cones  
 Rubber marking spots

Instructional Activities	Teaching Hints
<p><b>Introductory Activity (2-3 minutes) - Fall-In: Racquet Quickness Circle</b>            On signal, while continuing to move with racquets in hand, students move to the perimeter of the area and fall in line behind a designated student until a circle is formed. This exercise can be done while students are running, jogging, skipping, or walking. Have each student stand the racquet on the tip of its frame with the handle pointing up. When the teacher calls out either “right” or “left”, students let go of their racquet, move in the direction called, and try and catch the racquet next to them before it falls to the ground! If every one has a successful catch, move back a step—if not, move in a step. Try and see how large the circle can get with everyone being successful.</p>	<p>This activity emphasizes readiness and quick movements and encourages cooperation amongst all the students.</p> <p>Be sure to reinforce a good ready position by reminding students to keep the knees bent and the back straight before they make their move.</p>
<b>Fitness Development Activity (7-8 minutes) – Sport-Related Fitness Stations</b>	
<b>Lesson Focus (15-20 minutes) – The Forehand</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Begin the lesson by reviewing some racquet and ball handling activities from the previous lessons (e.g. Forehand bump-ups with bounce).</li> <li>2. Show the forehand grip. Have the students hold the racquet out in front and shake hands with it.</li> <li>3. Without excessive talking, show students the forehand bump against the wall and let them find a wall space to practice. Give students a minute or two to practice the forehand stroke. Some points that often need practice are:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Setup sideways to the target.</li> <li>b. Make your swing move low to high (start low &amp; follow through high).</li> <li>c. Make contact with the ball when it is in line with the front foot.</li> <li>d. Keep the racquet strings pointed where you want the ball to go</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Partner Activities:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Toss-Hit-Catch: One student tosses the ball underhand and the other student hits a forehand under control back to the tosser. The hitter should be sideways to the partner and the racquet should be held in position with the strings pointed to the tosser.</li> <li>b. Hit and Trap – Partners practice drop-hitting the ball against a wall and trapping it against the racquet face. When they increase their accuracy, they drop-hit and trap the ball with each other.</li> <li>c. Hit-Return-Trap: Student A drop-hits the ball to Student B. Student B hits the ball back to Student A. Student A lets the ball bounce and traps the ball on the strings and repeats the sequence. Try 5 times and switch.</li> <li>d. Partner Rallies Over a Line or Jump Rope. Partners work together with a line or jump rope between them to serve as an imaginary net. They bump and bounce the ball back and forth over the net using the forehand. To start the rally, have students start close, match up the racquet faces, and take two steps back. Allow multiple bounces or juggling of the ball as necessary.</li> <li>e. Step Back Forehand Play Over a Net. Starting a few feet from a dividing line (net), begin play with a forehand drop hit. Students continue rallying using the forehand, trying to make 4 consecutive hits. If they are successful, they each take a step back (space permitting) and begin a new attempt to make another 4 consecutive hits. Taking a step back is not allowed unless 4 consecutive hits are made.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<p>Allow students to try a skill first before offering corrective feedback. This helps them see the need for help in improving their performance and allows you to see where they need help.</p> <p>Change partners often so students get to play with a number of their peers. Practicing with different partners will create friendships. Part of tennis is the social experience and learning to enjoy an activity with a friend. Remind students that “Everybody Counts! Make New Friends!”</p> <p>When trapping the ball against the racquet strings, the buttcap of the racquet should be tucked up against the belt buckle in line with the contact area.</p> <p>There are a number of ways to simulate nets for students in the physical education setting. Tumbling mats can be laid folded and on-edge as a net. Cafeteria tables can also be used. Some teachers use two cones with a jump rope stretched between them for a net. Other alternatives are to use a lowered volleyball net or caution tape tied between floor standards.</p>

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### Game Activity (5-7 minutes) – Tennis Lead-Up Games

#### Playground Tennis

Supplies: Racquet and foam ball for each student; dividing line for net

Skills: Beginning rally skills

This is an excellent carryover game for students to play with a partner outside of the school. It also is an early introduction to tennis and gives students a chance to rally. Use the slowest moving ball available to ensure success. Partners line up about 5 ft away from a dividing line. This “net” can be a chalk line, crack in the cement or sidewalk, or painted line. Play begins with a drop hit and a point is scored when the ball lands in the opponent’s court but cannot be returned. Students delineate their own court size and play can be singles or doubles. The ball may bounce as many times as desired in either court and a point is not scored until the ball can not be returned or is rolling on the ground. When a player or team earns 4 points, a new game begins. Change partners regularly so students get to meet other classmates. **Variation:** Require players to bump the ball to themselves one or more times before bumping it back over the net.

# USTA School Tennis

## Lesson 4: The Backhand

**Outcomes:**

To move into respective teams quickly  
 To learn to perform the backhand using proper form and technique  
 To learn to rally with a partner using backhand strokes

**NASPE Physical Education Standards**

Introductory Activity: 1, 3, 5, 6  
 Fitness Activity: 3, 4, 6  
 Lesson Focus: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6  
 Game: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6

**Equipment Required:**

Signs for sport-related fitness stations  
 One racquet and foam ball for each student  
 Equipment for stations – ropes, beanbags, and cones  
 Hoops or carpet squares for targets

Instructional Activities	Teaching Hints
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**Introductory Activity (2-3 minutes) – Home Base**

The class is divided into teams of 5-6 players. One player in each group is designated the captain. Rubber spots are placed throughout the teaching area equal to the number of teams. Each spot serves as a home base for one of the squads. The teams begin in a straight line with the captain standing on a spot and the rest of the team lined up behind. Students are told to perform an activity throughout the area (use tennis movements with racquets in hand). When the teacher calls "Home Base!" captains find the nearest spot and the rest of the team lines up behind their respective captain. The first team in position wins that round.

This is an excellent activity for teaching youngsters to move into small group quickly.

This activity is an excellent prelude to station teaching. By placing a marking spot at each station and calling "Home Base," a squad will end up at each station and be ready for instruction.

**Fitness Development Activity (7-8 minutes) – Sport Related Fitness**

**Lesson Focus (15-20 minutes) – The Backhand**

1. Begin the lesson by reviewing some racquet and ball handling activities from the previous lessons.
2. Demonstrate the two-hand backhand stroke. Focus on one of the following points.
  - a. The non dominant hand is placed just above the dominant hand in the "shake hands" position.
  - b. Turn sideways to target with dominant side facing target.
  - c. Contact the ball even with the front foot for the two handed backhand.
  - d. Move the racquet low to high with the strings pointed towards the target area.
3. Without excessive talking, show students the backhand bump against the wall and let them find a wall space to practice. Give students a minute or two to practice the backhand stroke.

Discuss how the two-hand backhand is similar to a forehand (side to target, contact out in front, low to high swing). Tell students the "top of the hand" leads the way on the backhand and the opposite hand grabs hold like a forehand.

Emphasize finding the nearest new partner so students don't seek out their friends. All students count and should be respected as partners.

**Partner Activities:**

- a. Toss-Hit-Catch: One student tosses the ball underhand and the other student hits a backhand under control back to the tosser. The student should be sideways to their partner and the racquet should be held at the contact point with the strings aimed at the tosser.
- b. Forehand, Backhand, Trap: Student A drop-hits a forehand to Student B. Student B hits a backhand back to Student A. Student A traps the ball on the strings and repeats the sequence.
- c. Partner Rallies Over a Line or Jump Rope. Partners work together with a line or jump rope between them to serve as an imaginary net. They bump and bounce the ball back and forth over the net using the backhand. To start the rally, have students start close, match up the racquet faces, and take two steps back. Variation: Allow one student to hit forehands and the other student to hit backhands. Switch roles after every 6 rallies.
- d. Step Back Backhand Play Over a Net. Starting a few feet from a dividing line (net), begin play with a forehand drop hit. Students begin to rally using the backhand, trying to make 4 consecutive hits. If they are successful, they each take a step back (space permitting) and begin a new attempt to make another 4 consecutive hits. Taking a step back is not allowed unless 4 consecutive hits are made.

By keeping the games short and moving to a new partner, students get many chances to win a game while playing with many friends.

The focus should be for students to have a chance to practice their skills rather than establish a winner. Competition will get in the way of learning skills because students think more about winning than learning the skill correctly.

Focus on the joy of the activity rather than the score. Points should be easily earned so all students can feel capable of succeeding.



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**Game Activity (5-7 minutes) – Tennis Lead-Up Games**

**Tennis Ping Pong**

Supplies: Racquet and foam ball for each student; dividing line for net

Skills: Beginning rally skills

Teams of 2 or more players line up about 5 feet away from a dividing line. This “net” can be a chalk line, crack in the cement or sidewalk, or painted line. Similar to “Playground Tennis”, students attempt to rally the ball within the established boundaries but with teammates alternating hits with each other. Games can be played cooperatively to establish the “longest rally” or points can be awarded if teams make an error. When teams earn 4 points, a new game begins. The teacher can allow multiple bounces to ensure longer rallies.

# USTA School Tennis

## Lesson 5: The Forehand and Backhand in Combination

### Outcomes:

Be able to coordinate racquet and ball handling skills with various locomotor movements  
 Develop a good ready position  
 Learn how to position appropriately for random forehand and backhand strokes

### NASPE Physical Education Standards

Introductory Activity: 1, 3, 5, 6  
 Fitness Activity: 3, 4, 6  
 Lesson Focus: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6  
 Game: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6

### Equipment Required:

Signs for sport related fitness stations  
 One racquet and foam ball for each student  
 Equipment for stations – ropes, beanbags, and cones  
 Hoops or carpet squares for targets

Instructional Activities	Teaching Hints
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#### Introductory Activity (2-3 minutes) – Switch-it-Up

While students are moving throughout the gym performing locomotor, or tennis related skills, the teacher calls out the following similar statements. "If you are wearing a white shirt, switch directions and continue jogging", if you have brown hair, switch directions and continue, if you are wearing shorts, switch directions, etc." Any type of grouping can be used in effort to mix your groups. When the group is effectively mixed, move on to the next activity.

This management tool is great for mixing up those "best friends, or "off task" pairs. This will help to assure a positive and more manageable learning environment. It can be used in several other activities as well. (Whistle Mixer, Toe to Toe, Home Base, etc).

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#### Fitness Development Activity (7-8 minutes) – Sport Related Fitness

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#### Lesson Focus (15-20 minutes) – The Forehand and Backhand in Combination

1. Ready Position and Catch. One student is the tosser and the other student is in ready position with the racquet. The tosser will toss the beanbag to one side or the other of the student in ready position. Their goal is to catch it on the racquet (forehand or backhand side) and learn to move into position rather than reaching for the ball. Switch positions after 4 tosses.
2. Forehand and Backhand Bump-ups with Bounces. Offer the opportunity for students to practice using the forehand and backhand strokes to perform bump-ups.
3. Forehand and Backhand Wall Rallies. Students alternate rallying forehands and backhands against a wall, trying to improve the length of their rallies each time.
4. Partner Activities:
  - a. Drop-Hit and Trap. Standing a few feet apart, partners practice drop-hitting and trapping the ball with each other.
  - b. Partner Rallies Over a Line or Jump Rope—Alternating Forehands and Backhands. Partners work together to bump and bounce the ball back and forth over the line/net, alternating forehands and backhands for each shot. To start the rally, have students start close, match up the racquet faces, and take two steps back.
  - c. Juggle Rally—Alternating Forehand and Backhand. Partners work together with a line or jump rope between them to serve as an imaginary net. Players self-rally the ball with a forehand bump-up, get in position, and hit the ball back over the line with a mini backhand ground stroke. Reverse the sequence with a backhand bump-up followed by a forehand ground stroke. Players will need to move quickly in position to hit the ball with the opposite stroke.
  - d. Step Back Forehand and Backhand Play Over a Net. Starting a few feet from a dividing line (net), begin play with a forehand drop hit. Students continue rallying, trying to make 4 consecutive hits. If they are successful, they each take a step back (space permitting) and begin a new attempt to make another 4 consecutive hits. Taking a step back is not allowed unless 4 consecutive hits are made and the strokes have been alternated equally.

Demonstrate that a good ready position is similar to fielding a ball in baseball.

To make sure they know the difference between forehand and backhand, have them call out the stroke they are using.

Encourage students to stay light on the toes and make a quick turn to the ball as soon as they recognize it is a forehand or backhand.

Use a change of pace activity if students start to go off-task. Play one of the games below if necessary. Students will begin to go off-task if they have to concentrate on learning new skills for a long period of time.

To start the rally, have students start close, match up the racquet faces, and take two steps back.

Remind students to bump the ball with the strings going toward the sky to help the ball clear the net.

- e. Zig Zag Rally. Two players are placed on both sides of the dividing line/net. Players attempt to keep a rally in play by following a Figure 8 (zig-zag) pattern. In order to accomplish this, the first shot is hit straight ahead and the next shot is hit diagonally. This pattern continues until all four players have hit the ball. See how many times students can complete the figure 8 rally working cooperatively. After several attempts, have students rotate one position so they can practice hitting the ball a different direction.

If students struggle keeping the rally going in the Zig Zag pattern, have them trap the ball with the racquet first before drop-hitting the ball to the next player.

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#### Game Activity (5-7 minutes) – Tennis Lead-Up Games

##### Pass the Racquet

Supplies: Racquets for each team of students and a foam ball for each mini-court; dividing line or makeshift nets

Skills: Rallying a ball off the bounce; working cooperatively with teammates

Teams of 2 or more players line up about 5 feet away from a dividing line or makeshift net. Similar to “Tennis Ping Pong,” students attempt to rally the ball within the established boundaries but with teammates alternating hits with each other. Teams are only allowed one racquet, which must be passed off to each student between hits. Games can be played cooperatively to establish the “longest rally” or points can be awarded if teams make an error. When teams earn 4 points, a new game begins. If necessary, the teacher can allow multiple bounces to ensure longer rallies.

# USTA School Tennis

## Lesson 6: Volley

**Outcomes:**

To move into respective teams quickly  
 To learn to perform the volley using proper form and technique  
 To learn to volley with a partner using the forehand and backhand

**NASPE Physical Education Standards**

Introductory Activity: 1, 3, 5, 6  
 Fitness Activity: 3, 4, 6  
 Lesson Focus: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6  
 Game: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6

**Equipment Required:**

Signs for sport-related fitness stations  
 One racquet, yarn ball, beanbag and foam ball for each student  
 Equipment for stations – ropes, beanbags, and cones  
 Hoops or carpet squares for targets

Instructional Activities	Teaching Hints
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**Introductory Activity (2-3 minutes) – Get a Racquet, Make a Friend**

Prior to the lesson, place the racquets and balls around the perimeter of the area. Jog students into the area and freeze on signal. Ask students to go get a racquet and ball, find a friend and exchange their equipment by address their partner by first name. “Hi John, here is a racquet and ball for you.” Everybody runs with the racquet and ball until the next freeze that signals placing the equipment on the floor. On signal, the students pick up a ball and racquet and repeat the process by exchanging it with another friend.

The emphasis in this activity is to learn to address fellow students by name in a polite manner.

Moving with equipment is a related outcome for this activity. Encourage moving under control.

Fitness Development Activity (7-8 minutes) – Sport-Related Fitness Stations
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**Lesson Focus (15-20 minutes) – Volleying**

A volley is any shot that is hit before it bounces. The volley can be explained to students as a blocked shot that is hit with the racquet held firmly in the path of a ball like a “stop sign.” There is no swing or follow through with the volley shot and the ball is hit out in front of the body. The following are key points of emphasis for the volley shot.

- a. The shake hands grip is used for the forehand volley. The wrist is held firm in either case.
  - b. The side of the body is turned sideways to the target before contacting the ball.
  - c. The ball is contacted in front of the body; the ball is blocked, not hit. There is no follow-through. Students can choke up on the racquet initially to develop control.
  - d. Similar to the backhand groundstroke, two hands can be used to hold the racquet for additional support on the backhand volley.
1. Toss and Catch. Partners take turns underhand tossing and catching/blocking the ball out of the air. Students can block the ball with the back of their hand to simulate the backhand.
  2. Toss, Volley, and Catch. Using a foam ball, one partner tosses to the forehand or backhand of their partner. The partner volleys it back to their partner who catches it. Begin with partners three steps apart. Change roles after 6 tosses.
  3. Forehand, Volley, and Trap. One partner drop-hits the ball to the other with a forehand stroke. The ball is returned with a volley to the hitter who traps the ball against their racquet after one bounce. Change roles after 6 tosses. For a variation, start students three steps apart and allow the hitter to back up a step each time a successful volley and trap is made.
  3. Ground Stroke and Volley Rally. One student tries to rally each shot with a forehand or backhand groundstroke while the other student attempts to rally each shot out of the air. Change roles after 6 rallies. For a variation, start students three steps apart and allow the hitter to back up a step each time a successful volley and groundstroke rally is made.
  4. Volley-Volley Rally. Pair off students and have them attempt to volley the ball out of the air without letting it bounce in between them. Have players work cooperatively to set a “world record” for the longest non-stop rally. One point can be awarded when the ball is played off the bounce and two points are given when the ball is played out of the air.

When introducing the volley, have students practice setting up in the forehand and backhand volley position and checking the direction of their racquet face. Remind them that the angle of the racquet face determines which way the ball will travel.

Focus on the forehand volley first because it is easier for students to perform. If students are having trouble with the backhand volley, stick to the forehand volley. Success is more important than presenting an activity that is too difficult for them to accomplish.

Hold the racquet firm and block the ball rather than swing.

Volleying requires quick feet. In the early stages of teaching the volley, have students start in the ready position. Call out forehand or backhand and get them in the habit of moving their feet into position for the volley.

Use the rule of six for most activities which means they change roles after six repetitions.

If the range of ability varies somewhat in a class, different objects can be used at the students’ discretion. They can choose the object they would like to volley based on their ability level. Care must be taken to assure there is room for using different objects such as beanbags and foam balls.

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**Game Activity (5-7 minutes) – Tennis Lead-Up Games**

**Tennis Volleyball**

Supplies: Racquets for each student and a foam ball for each mini-court; dividing line or makeshift nets

Skills: Rallying the ball off the bounce and out of the air.

Teams of 2-4 players are positioned in zones on both sides of the mini court. One side starts out by serving the point. The ball can be hit out of the air or off the bounce but must be returned over the net with 3 hits or less. Teams rotate and change serving sides the same as in volleyball. Students can be allowed additional hits or bounces if needed to sustain longer rallies.

# USTA School Tennis

## Lesson 7: The Simplified Serve and Return

### Outcomes:

- To coordinate the components of the serve including the toss, body rotation, and strike
- To be able to serve a ball in the desired direction
- To be able to initiate a rally with a serve and return

### NASPE Physical Education Standards

- Introductory Activity: 1, 3, 5, 6
- Fitness Activity: 3, 4, 6
- Lesson Focus: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6
- Game: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6

### Equipment Required:

- Signs for sport-related fitness stations
- One racquet, foam ball, beanbag, scarf, and beanbag for each student
- Equipment for stations – ropes, beanbags, and cones
- Hoops or carpet squares for targets

### Instructional Activities

### Teaching Hints

#### Introductory Activity (2-3 minutes) – Rock, Paper, Scissor Tag

After students have found a partner using the “Toe to Toe” method, they will line up facing their partners in two parallel lines across the center of the gym. Students will play “rock, paper, scissors” with their hands and the winner will attempt to “tag” their partner on the shoulder before they reach a designated spot (i.e. tape, red line, marker, spot, etc.). The winner will attempt to tag their partner running in a straight line before they reach the designated spot.

It may help to practice the direction students must run before the game starts.

To incorporate different physical movements, ask students to form rock (squat position), paper (jumping jack pose), scissor (front straddle with legs, and arms are like scissors”), with their bodies.

#### Fitness Development Activity (7-8 minutes) – Sport-Related Fitness Stations

#### Lesson Focus (15-20 minutes) – The Serve and Return

The serve should be taught in a simplified manner that involves the striking of the ball and the return of the ball by a partner. Students should not use wild and uncontrolled swings but start with an abbreviated motion that focuses on a controlled overhand hit and getting the ball to travel in the proper direction. The following are key points of the serve:

1. Use the shake hands grip.
2. Start with the non-dominant side to the target.
3. Toss the ball to the top of the racquet (when the racquet is extended overhead).
4. With the racquet held in a natural throwing position, fully extend the racquet overhead to strike the ball.
5. Follow through with the racquet and bring it across the body.

. Having students practice throwing and catching to each other is a good warm-up for learning the serve.

1. Self-Toss, Reach and Catch. In a sideways stance, toss the ball overhead with the opposite hand, reach up, and catch with the dominant hand (fully extended).
2. Self-Toss, Reach and Tap (with hand): In a sideways stance, toss the ball overhead with the opposite hand, reach up, and tap the ball with the dominant hand. The partner should catch the ball off 1-2 bounces and tap it back in the same manner.
3. Self-Toss, Reach and Tap (with racquet). With the racquet held in a natural throwing position and side to target, students toss the ball overhead, reach up, and gently tap the ball at point of contact. Standing a few feet away, partners react to the ball and trap it against the racquet after a few bounces. Encourage pairs to work together to achieve as many successful serves and traps as possible.
4. Serve, Return, and Trap: The ball is gently served to the returner who hits it back to the server. The server traps the ball waist high on the strings. Repeat 4 times and switch roles.
5. Serve, Return, and Rally. One partner gently serves the ball to the other student who returns the serve. The students work on keeping the ball in play cooperatively. Points can be earned for each successful serve, return, and rally. After two attempts, the other partner serves. Students can increase distance upon each successful 4 ball rally.

Most schools have beanbags, scarves, and yarn balls that are excellent for learning to serve. They can then practice the serve without causing injuries to others in close quarters.

Students can practice tossing and catching the ball with the opposite hand with the arm fully extended to improve the accuracy of the toss. Having the students trap the ball against a wall or fence with the hitting arm fully outstretched will reinforce the proper contact point.

Remind students to hit the ball softly in a controlled manner to allow their partner the opportunity to trap or return the ball.

Cooperative serving and returning can be practiced over a barrier or without depending on the proficiency demonstrated by the students.

Placing flat targets in front of each student can facilitate proper distance and placement of each shot.

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**Game Activity (5-7 minutes) – Tennis Lead-Up Games**

**One Ball Live**

Supplies: One racquet per student and one foam ball per game; rope, tape, or tumbling mats for nets.

Skills: Racquet and ball control; rallying the ball; team play

Teams of two players line up across from each other about 5 feet away from a dividing line or makeshift net. Two separate individual rallies are started with an overhand or underhand serve (the serves should be aimed straight ahead to the opposite player). When one of the rallies ends, the remaining ball in play becomes “LIVE” and is played out in the mini court amongst the four players like doubles. A point is given to the team that wins the “LIVE” point. Games can be played to 7 or 11.

# USTA School Tennis

## Lesson 8: Station Work: A Review of Skills

### Outcomes:

To learn the value of practicing previously learned skills  
 To learn to work responsibly in a self-directed station setting.  
 To enjoy working with peers

### NASPE Physical Education Standards

Introductory Activity: 1, 3, 5, 6  
 Fitness Activity: 3, 4, 6  
 Lesson Focus: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6  
 Game: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6

### Equipment Required:

Signs for sport-related fitness stations  
 One racquet and foam ball for each student  
 Equipment for stations – ropes, beanbags, and cones  
 Hoops or carpet squares for targets

Instructional Activities	Teaching Hints
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#### Introductory Activity (2-3 minutes) – Toss-Catch Tag

After students have found a partner using the “Toe to Toe” method, they will line up facing their partners in two parallel lines across the center of the gym. Students use beanbags or foam balls to toss back and forth with partners. When the music is stopped or the whistle is blown, the student holding the ball attempts to reach the designated spot before he/she is tagged. (i.e. tape, red line, marker, spot, etc.). Students must work within their own lanes when trying to tag their partner

This game reinforces tossing and catching skills and can allow for multiple changes in partners.

It may help to practice the direction students must run before the game starts to ensure a safe environment.

#### Fitness Development Activity (7-8 minutes) – Sport-Related Fitness Stations

#### Lesson Focus (15-20 minutes) – Tennis Skills at Stations

The focus of this lesson is to give students a chance to practice many of the skills they learned in previous lessons. Use the station signs included on the CD to explain to students what they are to practice at each station.

Using stations to teach tennis skills offers a chance to work individually with students who need additional help.

#### Station 1: Racquet and Ball Handling

Partner Bean Bag/Ball Pass. Students work with a partner or small group and toss a beanbag (or foam ball) back and forth and catch it with racquet. Begin 4 to 6 ft apart. For each successful catch, students back up a step.

Allow 2-3 minutes at each station for students to practice. Place emphasis on working in a responsible manner.

#### Station 2: Racquet and Ball Handling

Tap-downs, bump-ups, edgies, self-rallies (student choice).

Set up the tennis station signs around the perimeter of the teaching area. If necessary, explain one station at a time. It is usually counterproductive to sit the class down and explain all the stations. They can't remember all in explanations and fidget because they want to get started. Move between stations and explain the stations while students are engaged.

#### Station 3: Forehand

Wall Rallies. Standing 10-15 feet away, students practice rallying against a wall, alternating forehands and backhands. Students can try and rally for time or set a personal best for longest rally. Encourage controlled swings and allow multiple bounces to rally the ball back if needed.

Put the necessary equipment at each station and ask students to replace the equipment where they found it before they move to the next station.

#### Station 4: Backhand

Partner Rallies over Line. Partners work together with a line or jump rope between them to serve as an imaginary net. To start the rally, students should start close, match up the racquet faces, and take two steps back. Have students try and set the “world record” for longest rally with the backhand.

Some teachers find it helpful to play music softly in the background. When music is playing, students practice at their station. When the music stops, it signals time to move up to the next station. Using music frees the teacher from having to worry about how long students have been at each station.

#### Station 5: Forehand and Backhand in Combination

Ready Position and Catch. One student is the tosser and the other student is in ready position with the racquet. The tosser will toss the beanbag or foam ball to one side or the other of the student in ready position. Their goal is to catch it on the racquet (forehand or backhand side) and learn to move into position rather than reaching for the ball. Switch positions after 4 tosses.

It usually takes about 15-20 seconds for students to put back the equipment and move up to a new station.

#### Station 6: Volley:

Toss, Volley, and Catch. Using a foam ball, one partner tosses to the forehand or backhand volley of their partner. The partner volleys it back to their partner who catches it. Begin with partners three steps apart. Change roles after 6 tosses.

Less skilled students can serve the ball underhand and more skilled students can attempt a controlled overhand serve.

#### Station 7: The Serve and Return

Serve and Trap. Students serve the ball at the wall and trap the rebounding ball on the racquet strings. Students should hit the ball under control in order to successfully trap it. This activity can also be done with partners serving and trapping the ball to each other.



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### Game Activity (5-7 minutes) – Tennis Lead-Up Games

#### Mini-Tennis (unlimited bounces)

Supplies: One racquet per student and one foam ball per game; rope, tape, or tumbling mats for nets.

Skills: Racquet and ball control, rallying the ball, team play

Mini-Tennis is a team game that uses no more than 2 students per team (2 against 2) per court. Students “bump” the ball over the net rather than taking wild swings. Racquet control is the instructional cue. Tumbling mats, a stretch bungee cord, volleyball net or lunchroom tables in the folded position can be used to delineate the net. There is no spiking, all balls must have an upward trajectory. Score by ones, the first team to four is the winner and a new game starts.

There are three ways to win/lose a point.

1. If the ball rolls, it is dead and the point goes to the other team.
2. If the first bounce after the ball crosses the net does not land in the court, the point goes to the other team.
3. If the server double faults, the point goes to the other team.

The serve is drop-hit (i.e., one bounce on the court and then bumped over the net) from anywhere on the court. The serve can be rotated evenly among students or be held by one team for an entire game. Teams can be rotated every 1-2 minutes. When the teacher says switch, teams split up and find a new mini court. Games can be played 2 vs 2, 2 vs. 1, or 1 vs.1.

### **Effectively Managing Students in an Activity Setting**

Effective class management skills characterize quality teaching. Effective teachers take guidance from these assumptions: that teaching is a profession, that students are in school to learn, and that the teacher's challenge is to promote learning. These assumptions imply a responsibility to a range of students, both those who accept instruction and those who do not. Teachers must maintain faith that students who have not yet found success will eventually do so. Instructing the majority of children in a class is relatively easy, but making appreciable gains among low-aptitude and indifferent students is the mark of an effective teacher.

#### ***Class Management Skills***

Class management skills are a prerequisite to effective instruction. Moving and organizing students quickly and efficiently requires comprehension of various techniques coupled with student acceptance of those techniques. Observers of the teaching process agree that if a class is unmanageable, it is unteachable. Teaching management skills should not be viewed as a negative or punishing proposition. Most students and teachers enjoy a learning environment that is organized, efficient, and allows a maximum amount of class time to be devoted to learning skills.

Class management skills should be taught to students in a manner similar to physical skill teaching. All skills need to be learned through practice and repetition until they become second nature. If teachers view class management skills in this light, they will have more empathy for students who do not perform well. Just as students make mistakes when performing physical skills, they will sometimes perform management skill incorrectly. A simple statement to the effect, "It appears that you forgot how to freeze quickly, let's practice," is much more positive than indicting a class for its carelessness and disinterest. One final thought; motor skills are practiced many times over without perfection ever being reached. In similar fashion, class management skills must be practiced many times while understanding that students will not always achieve perfection in this area.

#### ***From Instruction to Activity***

A major goal of teachers is to have all students listen to directions prior to activity. The instructions should be specific and as clear as possible. A teacher who talks longer than 30 seconds during any single instructional episode will find a class beginning to lose interest. For this reason, teachers should alternate short instructional episodes with periods of activity. Too often, teachers sit students down and explain long and involved technical points of skill performance. In a series of points, most people remember only the first and last. This should help teachers understand that students will only be able to integrate and concentrate on one or two points during skill practice. Minimizing the amount of instructional content will reduce the length of an instructional episode and eliminate student frustration from having to remember an excessive amount of material.

Teachers should tell students "when before what." This implies telling the class when to perform an activity before stating what the activity is. An effective way to implement "when before what" is to signal starting an activity by using keywords. Keywords could be "Begin!" or "Start!" or the school nickname. Instructions are implemented by a statement similar to "When I say Sun Devils [school nickname], I'd like you to...." Another common example is "When I say Go! I want you to find a partner and practice tossing and catching." Any number of keywords can be used to

encourage youngsters to listen to the entire set of instructions. Since the keyword is not given until all directions have been issued, students cannot begin until they hear the selected keyword.

### ***Stopping the Class***

A consistent signal should be established for stopping the class. It does not matter what the signal is, as long as it always means the same thing. Using an audio signal (such as a whistle blast) and a visual signal (raising the hand overhead) is effective, since some youngsters may not hear the audio signal if they are engrossed in activity. Whereas a loud audio signal is used to stop a class, a voice command should always be used to start the class (see keywords above). Regardless of the signal used to indicate a stop, it is best to select a different signal than the one used to start the class. If children do not respond to the signal to stop, the procedure must be practiced. Asking a class to freeze on signal is effective practice. As children become more effective at stopping, their responses should be reinforced. Too often teachers reinforce skill performance but, fail to reinforce management behavior. If it is not reinforced regularly, it will not be performed well. To evaluate class effectiveness in responding to the stop signal, the teacher can time the latency of the response to the signal. If a class takes longer than 5 seconds to freeze and get ready for the next command, stopping and listening should be practiced.

Teachers must expect 100% cooperation when students are asked to stop. If some students stop and listen to directions and others do not, class morale soon degenerates. Students begin to wonder why they have to stop but other students don't. Teachers can easily scan the class to see if all students are stopped and ready to respond to the next set of directions. If a teacher settles for less than full attention, students will fulfill those expectations.

### ***Organizing Students into Groups and Formations***

Instructors should know how to divide classes into teachable groups. Simple activities can be used to accomplish this in an enjoyable and rapid fashion. For example, the activity **Toe to Toe** can be used to teach children to quickly find partners. The goal of the game is to get toe to toe with a partner as fast as possible. Other challenges can be to get foot to foot or shoulder to shoulder or to look into the eyes of a partner. Students without a partner are instructed to go to the center of the teaching area (marked by a cone or spot) immediately and find someone else without a partner. This gives students a secure feeling, as opposed to feeling unwanted while running around the area looking for a partner. Emphasis should be placed on rapid selection of the nearest person to keep children from looking for a favorite friend or telling someone that "they are not wanted" as a partner. If students insist on staying near a friend, teachers can tell the class to move throughout the area and find a different partner each time "back to back" is called.

Another effective activity for arranging students in groups of a selected size is **Whistle Mixer**. When the whistle is blown a certain number of times, students form groups corresponding to the number of whistles and sit down to signify that they have the correct number in their group. Students who are left out go to the center of the area and find the needed number of members. Once this skill is mastered, students move quickly into proper-sized groups depending on the number of whistle signals. Hand signals can also be used to show the size of the groups to be made.

To divide a class into two equal groups, teachers can have students get back to back with a partner. One partner sits down while the other remains standing. Those standing are asked to go to one area, after which those sitting are then moved to the desired space. Getting into groups is a skill that needs to be learned and practiced on a regular basis.

Other suggestions for finding partners are to ask students to find a partner wearing the

same color, with a birthday during the same month, with a phone number that has two similar numbers in it, and so on. To arrange students in equal-sized groups, the instructor can place an equal number of different colored beanbags or hoops on the floor. Students are asked to move throughout the area. On signal, they sit on a beanbag. All students with a red beanbag are in the same group, green beanbags make up another group, and so on.

**Fall-in** is an effective technique for moving a class into a single-file line or circle is to have students run randomly throughout the area until a signal is given. On signal, while continuing to move, students move to the perimeter of the area and fall in line behind someone until a circle is formed. This exercise can be done while students are running, jogging, skipping, or walking. As long as students continue to move behind another person, the circle will form automatically. The teacher or a student leader then leads the line into a desired formation or position.

Another method of moving a class into formation is to ask students to get in various formations without talking. They can offer visual signals but cannot ask someone verbally to move. Two groups can be used to compete against one another to see which forms the desired formation fastest. Teachers can hold up a desired shape drawn on a large card to signal the desired formation. Young students can learn to visualize various shapes through this technique.

### ***Using Equipment***

The first and most important guideline when using equipment such as balls, hoops, jump ropes, and the like is that every youngster must have a piece for personal use. When large equipment or apparatus is used, as many stations or groups as possible should be established. For a class of 25, six benches, mats, or jumping boxes should be the minimum amount of equipment available so students have only a short wait in line. One way to avoid standing and waiting for a turn is to use return activities. When using this approach, students are asked to perform a task or tasks on their return to the end of the line.

Instructors must demonstrate the proper method of using equipment. Youngsters should learn to get a piece of equipment and work with it in an acceptable fashion. Equipment should always be placed in the same (home) position when the class is called to attention. For example, beanbags might be placed on the floor, balls placed between the feet, and jump ropes folded and placed behind the neck. Home positioning equipment avoids the problem of youngsters striking one another with the equipment, dropping it, or practicing activities when they should be listening. Having students hug tennis racquets against the chest or positioning the equipment out of the student's hands is usually preferable.

Equipment should be distributed to students as rapidly as possible. When students wait for a piece of equipment, time is wasted. Often, teachers assign student leaders to get the equipment for a squad. This means that only the leaders are assigned a task, while other students sit and wait (and may become discipline problems). The easiest and fastest method is to have the leaders place the equipment around the perimeter of the area. On signal youngsters move to a piece of equipment and begin practicing immediately. The reverse procedure can be used for putting equipment away. This contrasts with the practice of placing the equipment in a bag and telling students to "run and get a ball." This approach often results in youngsters being knocked down and bruised. The child who first picks up a piece of equipment is entitled to retain possession of it. Others should respect this right and not attempt to take the piece away from the individual. This principle also holds for space possession. The child who first steps inside a hoop, on a mat, or into any designated space is entitled to occupy that space.

## **Improving Class Behavior**

The time out procedure is an equitable technique for dealing with classes on a day to day basis. An advantage of this approach is that it deals with children in a manner that is consistent with society. Rules are clearly posted and consequences are clear and easy to comprehend. It should be the approach of choice when problems are not severe.

Behavior games and contracts are used when effective management of an entire class is difficult. Peer pressure and contingencies are used to improve behavior. Behavior games and contracts require a greater amount of teacher monitoring and should be used only when necessary. As a general rule, use the time-out procedure for dealing with a few individuals and implement behavior games when a majority of the class is out of control.

### ***Time-out***

Teachers need to use a consistent approach for dealing with undesirable behavior that occurs randomly on an individual basis. The time-out approach moves youngsters out of the class setting and places them in a predesignated area when they misbehave. Being placed in the time-out area does not imply the student is a "bad person," but rather that a rule has not been followed. When placing students in time-out, teachers should communicate they are valued members of the class, but their misbehavior is unacceptable.

Being placed in time-out communicates to youngsters that they have disrupted the class and must be removed so that the rest of the class can participate as desired. Children can also use the time-out area as a "cooling-off" spot where they can move voluntarily if they become angry, embarrassed, or frustrated. If youngsters have been placed in the time-out area for fighting or arguing, they should be placed at opposite ends of the area so the behavior does not escalate. In addition, mandate that they stay in their half of the activity area until the next meeting of the class. This prevents contact between the two combatants and the possibility of continued animosity.

The behavior plan should be discussed and accepted by students, so they know exactly what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior and understand what actions will be taken if they exhibit undesirable behavior. Desired behavior, as well as consequences for unacceptable behavior, should be posted in the teaching area. Examples of desirable behavior are listening when the teacher is instructing, keeping one's hands off others, and performing promptly the activities presented by the teacher. In most cases, the list of desired behaviors should number no more than three to five items. A larger number of behaviors confuses a class and makes it difficult to comprehend the focus of the management strategies.

A key concept to remember is that time-out does not serve as punishment if the youngster is reinforced. Time-out implies receiving no reinforcement. If class is a negative experience and the teacher does not reinforce students, taking them out of class will be a positive experience. For example, the student who is sent to the office may get to avoid school-work and visit with friends who come into the office. Notoriety can be achieved among peers for surviving the office experience and being able to tell others "I was not scared at all." Sitting on the side of the gymnasium and making faces at peers may be more reinforcing than participating in class activities. Remember! If students don't enjoy being in class, time-out does not work. A possible set of consequences for unacceptable behavior follows:

**First misbehavior:** The student is warned quietly on a personal basis to avoid embarrassment. This could be a peer or teacher warning. At times, students are not aware that they are bothering others and a gentle reminder by a peer or teacher will refocus the

youngster.

**Second misbehavior:** The student is told to go to a pre-designated time-out spot. This might be a chair in the corner of the activity area. The student must stay there until ready to reenter the activity and demonstrate the desired behavior. It is acceptable for the student to go to the area and immediately return to activity since the assumption is that they have agreed to terminate their misbehavior.

**Third misbehavior:** The student goes to time-out for the remainder of the period. If the misbehavior continues, the student will ultimately be serve time in an in-school suspension program. In-school suspension requires the student to leave his class of students, move into another room, and receive little, if any, reinforcement.

The foregoing steps assume that the teacher will communicate with the student about the misbehavior and the expected behavior. If these consequences are ineffective, the last alternative is to call the parents for a conference with the principal and teacher. Students and parents must understand that participating in educational endeavors is a privilege and that people who choose to disrupt society ultimately lose their privileges (e.g., incarceration in reform school, prison, etc.).

### **Characteristics of Quality Practice Sessions**

Regardless of the activity, an effective environment is characterized by a set of teaching behaviors that occur regularly. These behaviors do not describe a specific method or style and allow significant room for individual approaches to teaching. The focus is less on what the teacher does and more on what students are doing. For example, any style of teaching that produces high rates of player-engaged time and positive attitudes toward the sport is considered an effective learning environment. Regardless of teaching style, the environment is most effective when the following elements are present:

1. **Students are engaged in appropriate learning activities for a large percentage of practice time.** Effective teachers use practice time wisely. They plan carefully and insist on appropriate learning activities that deal with the subject matter. Students need time to learn; effective teachers assure that students use practice time to receive information and practice skills. Developmental skill sequences are matched to students' abilities and contribute to overall learning objectives.
2. **The learning atmosphere is success oriented, with a positive, caring climate.** Evidence shows that teachers who develop a supportive atmosphere foster learning and positive player attitudes toward sport. Appropriate social and organizational behavior needs to be supported by teachers. Students and teachers need to feel positive about working and learning in the physical education setting.
3. **Students are given clear objectives and receive high rates of information feedback from the teacher and the environment.** Students need to know what they are going to be held accountable for during practice. Arrange activities so students spend large amounts of time practicing to reach required team objectives. Teaching skills must have a clear-cut tie to the desired team goals. Positive and corrective feedback must be regularly offered. The environment is designed so students receive feedback on learning attempts even if the teacher is not available.
4. **Progress is monitored regularly and students are held accountable for reaching achievable goals.** Students are expected to practice and make progress toward team

objectives. Students are able to assess and record their progress toward objectives. Students know exactly what is expected of them and how these expectations are tied to the accountability system. Rewards are available for small steps of progress toward larger goals.

5. **Low rates of management time and smooth transitions from one activity to another characterize the environment.** Effective teachers are efficient managers of students. Students move from one learning activity to another smoothly and without wasting time. Timesaving procedures are planned and implemented efficiently. Students spend little time waiting during instructional transitions. Equipment is organized to facilitate smooth transitions and to assure maximum time for practice.
6. **Students spend a limited amount of time waiting in line or in other unproductive behaviors.** Effective practices are characterized by high rates of time engaged in skill practice. This implies high rates of time spent practicing, drilling, and playing. The sporting experience should be activity based; students learn by practicing the activity, not waiting in line for an opportunity.
7. **Teachers are organized with high but realistic expectations for player achievement.** Structure teaching activities so they challenge but don't threaten students. Activities should not be too easy or too difficult. Students need success and challenge from learning activities. Expect students to learn, and hold them accountable for their progress.
8. **Teachers are enthusiastic about what they are doing and are actively involved in the teaching process.** Students need an enthusiastic model—someone who incorporates appropriate behaviors into his or her lifestyle with a positive and caring demeanor. Active involvement means active supervision, enthusiasm, and high interaction rates with students. These characteristics enhance learning regardless of the teaching style used; they are important for assuring player achievement and positive attitudes.

## **TENNIS FOR YOUNGSTERS WITH DISABILITIES**

### ***Inclusion***

Inclusion is part of a much larger picture than just being mainstreamed in the regular physical education class. The larger picture demands that youngsters be taught to use their abilities to become active members of the school and community. Inclusion demands that the school and regular classes get ready to include students with disabilities. Too often, the youngster with a disability has to adapt to the class and school. Adaptations need to be made to teaching materials, equipment used, and expectations so youngsters can meaningfully achieve individual and academic goals. Through inclusive education, children with disabilities can mature into adults who are fully participating members of society. Meeting their needs helps them achieve academic and physical goals and enhances their overall quality of life. Inclusive education teaches all children to function together regardless of whom or what they are. The focus is on valuing diversity, viewing the ability of others to contribute, and learning to become one with others regardless of differences.

### ***Guidelines for Successful Inclusion***

The concern is not whether to plan for inclusion, but how to do it effectively. Regardless of the setting, it is always necessary to teach a number of children with diverse impairments. Current learning strategies may not be appropriate for children with disabilities. Attitudinal change by the

teacher is important—accept children as full-fledged participants and assume the responsibility to educate all students.

An important consideration when planning the IEP is whether the child is ready for inclusion. Some children with disabilities have developmental lags that can limit successful integration into normal classes. Both the class and the youngster with a disability must adapt. When children are deemed ready for placement, consultation between the physical education teacher and the special education supervisor is of prime importance. In a setting where emotions and feelings can run high, be sure that regular communication and planning occur. The reception and acceptance of the special child must not be left to chance. A scheduled plan should be instituted before the youngster is mainstreamed. Special and physical education specialists should discuss the needs of youngsters and develop realistic expected outcomes. Early in the inclusion process, the special education teacher may have to participate in physical education classes to ensure a smooth transition. Emphasize what children can do rather than what they cannot do.

All students need opportunities to make appropriate progress. The educational needs of children with disabilities can be met without jeopardizing the progress of other students. Help all students understand problems related to having a disability. Encourage students to understand, accept, and live comfortably with persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities are functional and worthwhile individuals who have innate abilities and can make significant contributions to society. The concepts of understanding and appreciating individual differences merit positive development and include three aspects:

1. Recognize the similarities among all people: their hopes, rights, aspirations, and goals.
2. Understand human differences and focus on the concept that all people have some type of disability. For some, disabilities are of such nature and severity that they interfere with normal living.
3. Explore ways to deal with individuals who differ and stress the acceptance of all children as worthwhile individuals. People with disabilities deserve consideration and understanding based on empathy, not sympathy.

Inclusion should allow children to make commendable educational progress, to achieve in those areas outlined in the IEP, to learn to accept limitations, to observe and model appropriate behavior, to become more socially accepted by others, and in general to become a part of the real world. Guidelines for successful integration of children with disabilities into physical education follow.

1. Beyond the regular program of activities, meet target goals as specified in the IEP. This involves resources beyond the physical education class, including special work and homework.
2. Build ego strength; stress abilities. Eliminate established practices that unwittingly contribute to embarrassment and failure.
3. Foster peer acceptance, which begins when the teacher accepts the child as a functioning, participating member of the class.
4. Concentrate on the child's physical education needs and not on the disability. Give strong attention to fundamental skills and physical fitness qualities.
5. Provide continual monitoring and assess periodically the child's target goals. Anecdotal and periodic recordkeeping are implicit in this guideline.



6. Be constantly aware of the child's feelings and anxiety concerning progress and integration. Provide positive feedback as a basic practice.
7. Modify the regular program to meet the unique capacities, physical needs, and social needs of youngsters with disabilities.
8. Provide individual assistance and keep youngsters active. Peer or paraprofessional help may be needed.
9. Consult regularly with the special education consultant.
10. Give consideration to more individualization within the program so youngsters with disabilities are smoothly integrated. Individual attention is based on the target goals of the IEP.

### ***Modifying Activities for Inclusion***

Inclusion requires modifying activities to increase the opportunity for success. Children with disabilities are not the only students who need additional consideration; most youngsters benefit from modifications. Rules can be changed for everyone so that all youngsters have a chance to contribute to group success. When children learn to accept that everyone has a right to participate, physical education contributes to the development of quality citizens. Be aware of situations that devalue a child socially. Never use the degrading method of having captains choose from a group of waiting children. Elimination games should be changed so that points are scored instead of players being eliminated. (This is an important consideration for all youngsters.) Determine the most desirable involvement for children with disabilities by analyzing participants' roles in game and sport activities (Figure 7.4). Assign a role or position that will make the experience as natural or normal as possible.

Offer a variety of individual and dual activities. Youngsters with disabilities may want to build confidence in their skills before they participate with others. Individual activities give children more practice time without the pressure of failing in front of peers. Try to arrange the environment so children with disabilities are not set apart from able classmates. Overprotectiveness benefits no one and prevents the special student from experiencing challenge and personal accomplishment. Avoid the tendency to underestimate abilities of students. The following sections offer ideas for modifying activities to facilitate integration of youngsters with disabilities.

### **Modify Tennis Activities to Increase the Opportunity for Success**

1. *Modify the tempo of the game.* Stop the game regularly for substitution. Auto-substitution is an excellent method for allowing students to determine when they are fatigued. They ask a predetermined substitute to take their place.
2. *Reduce the weight and/or modify the size of the projectile.* A lighter object moves more slowly and inflicts less damage on impact. A larger object is easier to track visually and to catch. A beanbag will not roll when missed. A beach ball or balloon floats and allows more time for reaction. Scarves can be used for practicing the service toss.
3. *Reduce the distance that a ball must be thrown or served.* Options are to reduce the dimensions of the playing area or add more players to the game. In serving, others can help make the serve playable. For example, in tennis, other teammates can bat the serve over the net.
4. *In games that are played to a certain number of points, reduce the number required for a win.* For example, play volleyball games to 7 or 11, depending on the skill and intensity of the players.

5. *Modify striking implements by shortening and reducing their weight.* Racquets are much easier to control when they are shortened. Softball bats are easier to control when the player “chokes up” or selects a lighter bat.
6. *Play the games in a different position.* Some games may be played in a sitting or lying position, which is easier and less demanding than standing or running.
7. *Provide matching or substitution.* Match another child on borrowed crutches with a child on braces. Two players can be combined to play one position. A student in a desk chair with wheels can be matched against a child in a wheelchair.
8. *Youngsters can substitute skills for each other.* For example, a child may be able to serve an object but may lack the mobility to return it.
9. *When learning to strike the ball, begin with one that is held stationary.* The use of a batting tee or tennis ball fastened to a string offers children the opportunity for success. In addition, a larger racquet can be used and the youngster can choke up on the grip.
10. *Increase the size of the goals or targets such as hoops or carpet squares.* Another alternative is to offer points for getting near a goal. Since scoring is self-motivating, modification should occur until success is ensured.

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## **WHEELCHAIR TENNIS**

Tennis is the fastest-growing sport for wheelchair users. In fact, wheelchair tennis players participate in domestic and international tournaments, clinics, and programs. Wheelchair tennis is the same as able-bodied tennis, except the wheelchair player can hit the ball on two bounces. Wheelchair players can play with able-bodied players using the two bounces, with all the other rules remaining the same. (If you would like additional information on specific techniques, equipment requirements, and rules for wheelchair tennis, contact the USTA national office or your local USTA section office listed at the back of the curriculum.)

Students who find themselves restricted to a wheelchair because of a neurological, musculoskeletal, or other physical impairment can easily be mainstreamed into tennis activities, providing they have good upper-body balance, strength, and dexterity. To check their balance, ask them to bend over and raise up without having to grasp the wheelchair for support. Dexterity and strength can be determined simply by having them squeeze your hand. Students without these attributes can still be mainstreamed for tennis activities, but will require more attention from you or another student.

### **TIPS FOR WHEELCHAIR USERS**

1. **Approaching the Ball.** Always keep the racquet in a hand—not in the lap—when pushing to get the ball.
2. **Getting Ready.** Keep both hands on the push rim, with the racquet in one hand, when in the ready position.
3. **Forehand Positioning.** Approach the ball at a 45 degree angle using both hands to push. Use the non-dominant hand to turn the chair and body into the ball while swinging.
4. **Backhand positioning.** Approach the ball at a 45 degree angle using both hands to push. Use the non-dominant hand to turn the chair and body side on to the net while swinging. The player will continue this turn, turning his/her back to the court to recover.

## TEACHING CUES FOR TENNIS SKILLS

### **Racquet and Ball Handling:**

- a. Choke up on the racquet if needed for more control
- b. Bump the ball softly
- c. Use a controlled stroke, not wild swings.
- d. Hit the ball “eye high” for bump ups and “waist high” for tap downs

**Forehand Ground Stroke:** This is a stroke that is played when the ball comes to the dominant side. The ball is played off the bounce.

- a. Have the students hold the racquet out in front and shake hands with it
- b. Setup sideways to the target
- c. Path of the racquet should move low to high
- d. Make contact with the ball in line with the front foot
- e. Keep the racquet strings pointed where you want the ball to go (left, right, high, low)

**Backhand Ground Stroke:** This is a stroke that is played when the ball comes to the non-dominant side. The ball is played off the bounce. It is suggested for beginners to use two hands to gain additional support.

- a. For the two handed backhand stroke, the non dominant hand is placed just above the dominant hand in the “shake hands” position
- b. Turn sideways to target with dominant side facing target
- c. Contact the ball even with the front hip for the two handed backhand
- d. Move the racquet low to high with the strings pointed towards the target area
- e. For the one-handed backhand, the index knuckle of the dominant hand is on top of the handle and contact with the ball is a foot beyond the front foot

**Volley:** A volley is any shot that is hit before it bounces. The volley can be explained to students as a blocking motion with the racquet held firmly in the path of a ball like a “stop sign.” The following are key points of emphasis for the volley shot.

- a. The shake hands grip is used for the forehand volley. The wrist is held firm in either case
- b. The side of the body is turned sideways to the target before contacting the ball
- c. The ball is contacted in front of the body; the ball is blocked, not hit. Students can choke up on the racquet initially to gain control
- d. Similar to the backhand groundstroke, two hands can be used to hold the racquet for additional support on the backhand volley

**Serve:** The serve should be taught in a simplified manner that involves the striking of the ball and the return of the ball by a partner. Students should start with an abbreviated motion that focuses on a controlled overhand hit and getting the ball to travel in the proper direction. The following are key points of the serve:

- a. Use the shake hands grip.
- b. Start with the non-dominant side to the target.
- c. Toss the ball to the top of the racquet (when the racquet is extended overhead).
- d. With the racquet held in a natural throwing position, fully extend the racquet overhead to strike the ball.
- e. Follow through with the racquet and bring it across the body.

# Instant Rally Progression--Learn to rally in 15 minutes— Learn to Serve, Return, Rally, & Score in 1 hour

## INSTANT RALLY (Forehand and Backhand):

1. **Self-Rally on Target:** Player alternates bumping the ball off the ground and out of the air (“eye high”) trying to land it on a flat target or line. *Players should practice rallying the ball both palm up (forehand) and palm down (backhand).*
2. **Partner Rally on Target:** Two players rally the ball (“eye high”) trying to land it on a shared target.
3. **Partner Rally over a Line:** Standing a few steps apart, players rally the ball (“eye high”) over a line. *Targets can be placed in front of each player to help with placement.*
4. **Partner Rally over a Net:**
  - Forehand Rally: Players match up racquets on the forehand side and take two steps back before attempting to rally. *Matching up racquets helps get the player sideways to the target with the racquet face in the proper position to make contact.*
  - Backhand Rally: Players match up racquets on the backhand side and take two steps back before attempting to rally.
  - Alternating Forehand and Backhand Rally: Players rally the ball back and forth trying to alternate hitting forehands and backhands. *This helps players develop footwork skills and directional control.*
  - Add-a-Step: Have players take a step back after each 4-ball rally.

## INSTANT RALLY (Volley):

1. **Hit-Return-Trap:** First person bounce-hits the ball to the volleyer. The volleyer bumps it back to the feeder, who traps it on his/her strings)
2. **Mini Rally:** Player A bumps a groundstroke to Player B who volleys it back
  - a. Alternate forehand and backhand volleys
  - b. Add-a-step: For each successful 4 ball rally, ground stroke player takes one step backwards
3. **Volley-Volley Rally:** Both players attempt to volley the ball out of the air

## INSTANT RALLY (Serve and Return):

1. **Serve and Trap:** With the racquet in throwing position, the server hits the ball to the returner. The returner traps the ball waist high against the racquet strings. Repeat.
2. **Serve, Return, and Trap:** The ball is served to the returner who hits back to the server. The server traps the ball waist high on the strings. Repeat 4 times and switch roles.
3. **Serve, Return, and Rally:** Players attempt to sustain a rally starting with a serve and return. Repeat 4 times and switch roles.

## STUDENT SKILLS ASSESSMENT

1. Ball balance: Keep a ball balanced on the racquet strings while walking a distance of 30 feet.
2. Racquet handling: 20 tap downs/20 bump ups
3. Racquet handling: 20 bump-ups with bounces (self rallies)
4. Forehands: Drop and hit 10 forehand ground strokes to a partner. (The partner should be able to catch the ball against their racquet strings to count as a point.)
5. Backhands: Return 10 backhands directly back to a partner from an underhand toss.
6. Wall Rally: Hit 10 consecutive ground strokes against a wall or backboard.
7. Partner Rally: Rally the ball 10 times in a row over a line or net with a partner.
8. Demonstrate good sportsmanship and cooperation with others.

### **Optional:**

9. Volleys: Rally the ball out of the air with a partner 5 times.
10. Serve: Serve a ball 5 times in a row over a line marked on a wall 3 feet high. The ball should be trapped against the racquet strings on the return to count as a point. (If a wall is not available, conduct this activity with partners serving and trapping to each other.)

\* For partner activities, students should stand approximately 10 feet apart.

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## TENNIS: HISTORY AND RULES

### **HISTORY**

From the days of the ancient Greeks to the present, tennis has enjoyed great popularity. Tennis actually started as handball in Greece. In the Middle Ages, it changed to a game of batting the ball with the open hand across a cord over a mound of dirt. The early court was shaped like an hourglass, and the game was played with leather balls stuffed with hair. The type of racquet has also changed from hands to a glove, to a paddle, to a racquet shaped like a snowshoe, and finally to its present form.

### **THE GAME**

The object of tennis is to hit the ball with a racquet over the net into the opposite court so that the opponent(s) cannot return it. A game between two individuals is called singles and between teams of two is called doubles.

Play begins when one player, standing behind the baseline, hits or serves the ball over the net so it lands in the opponent's service court. Before the serve is returned, the ball must bounce one time in the opponent's service court. After the return of the serve, the ball may be hit either after the first bounce or before it bounces. The ball is hit back and forth until a player makes an error by hitting the ball out of bounds, failing to hit the ball before it bounces twice, or failing to return it over the net.

A game is played to 4 points. Points in the game are referred to by the following terminology:

0 points Love  
1 point 15  
2 points 30  
3 points 40  
4 points Game

A score of 40~40 is called deuce. If the score goes to deuce, one player must win two points in a row to win the game. The first point after a deuce is called advantage. If the player does not win the second consecutive point, the score goes back to deuce.

## TENNIS AND THE CURRICULUM

Tennis can provide numerous opportunities to work with concepts across curricular areas. The activities described below use tennis as a theme to reinforce interdisciplinary skills in communications and mathematics.

### DEVELOPING COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Objective: To improve writing, reading, speaking, and/or listening skills.

#### Have Students

- List a simple set of rules.
- Describe the execution of a skill.
- Review an outstanding tennis play.
- Comment on a game.
- Share what it feels like when one wins or loses.
- Recall a sequence of events that occurred during a game.
- Compare the performance of one player with another.
- Use tennis vocabulary in written expression.
- Prepare a biographical sketch about a tennis star.
- Create an imaginary autobiographical sketch (e.g., "My Life as a Pro").
- Express their feelings about tennis as a recreational activity.
- Read a biography of a tennis player.
- Review a biography of a tennis player or a book about tennis.
- Describe what to do off the court to improve one's game.
- Describe how to encourage others to learn the game.
- Comment on a newspaper article about tennis.
- Create newspaper headlines or articles about a game.
- Learn tennis vocabulary and terminology.
- Demonstrate a skill that has been described.
- Instruct classmates in the proper execution of a skill.
- Explain how players rotate positions after each point.
- Explain how to keep score.
- Explain simple tennis strategy.

### DEVELOPING MATHEMATICS SKILLS

Objective: To improve mathematics skills.

#### Have students:

- Determine the square feet of the court when given the court dimensions (Singles: 27' x 78'; doubles: 36' x 78')
- Determine the percentage of successful serves in a game based on the number of serves and the number of successful serves.
- Convert percentages into fractional equivalents.
- Keep track of successful and unsuccessful serves and determine the percentage of serves that were faults.
- Use graphs and charts to record successful serves of individuals and teams.
- Analyze graphs and charts to encourage better performance.
- Record wins and losses and determine the percentage of wins and losses.

- Create a scale diagram of a singles and a doubles court (Scale:  $1/8'' = 1$  foot)
  - Diagram a strategic play in doubles by placing players in their exact location in a drawing made to scale.
  - Create a bar or line graph that indicates a player's performance over an extended period of time.
  - Compare successful tennis serves to base hits in baseball. (For example, if a baseball player bats 45 times and has 19 base hits, what is his batting average? If a tennis player serves 20 times and has 13 successful serves, what is her service average?)
  - Study diagrams about court dimensions.
  - Review charts and graphs that record tennis statistical data.
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