



RED BALL

COMMUNITY PRACTICE AND PLAY PLANS

COMMUNITY 1 / COMMUNITY 2 / COMMUNITY 3



NetGeneration.com

DEAR COACH,

WELCOME TO NET GENERATION!

On behalf of the USTA, we thank you for supporting Net Generation. Together, we will shape the future of tennis. Net Generation isn't just a new brand—it's a comprehensive platform and development program for kids ages five through 18. By creating a singular platform for tennis that we all can rally behind, and through the support the USTA will offer along the way, we believe we can grow participation, instill the love of the game in future generations, and ensure that tennis remains a vibrant sport in our communities for years to come.

As a former #1 world tennis player, former President of the Women's Tennis Association, ESPN analyst, business owner, entrepreneur, and mother, I'm a Net Generation ambassador because I believe this new approach will benefit the growth of youth tennis. Sports today don't meet the needs of parents, players, coaches, and community organizations quite like we will with Net Generation.

By registering and becoming an active part of Net Generation, you will get access to the very best curricula that will help you facilitate play and deliver programs, digital tools and resources that make teaching, coaching, planning and playing easier, and marketing resources and support to enhance your programs' visibility.

This manual is just one item under the Net Generation brand and we hope it becomes a valuable resource for you. It's comprehensive, competency-based, collaborative, and also packaged conveniently online with additional resources to help you customize your approach to creating programs for the sport you love.

Again, thank you for being a part of Net Generation! Together, we will shape the future of tennis!



Chris Evert

Former World #1 Tennis Player

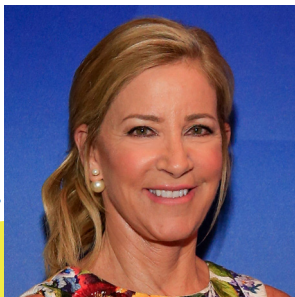


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INTRODUCTION

Net Generation Community is a “Learn to Play” program designed to engage more players in the game of tennis. The program uses modified equipment to promote early success, with a focus on challenge, skills and play. The Net Generation Community was created for coaches who may have little to no experience in delivering tennis.

Community Red encompasses three levels of Practice and Play Plans.

COMMUNITY 1

A challenge and skills program that helps develop a passion for tennis and builds the foundation for future success.

Recommended Age/Level:

Five- to eight-year-old beginners.

COMMUNITY 2

Covers the beginning stages of serve, rally and play in a team environment.

Recommended Age/Level:

Players who complete Community 1, or seven- to nine-year-old beginners.

COMMUNITY 3

Designed to further develop serve, rally and play in a team environment.

Recommended Age/Level:

Players who complete Community 2 or have some prior tennis experience. Target age is eight to ten.



The program has been designed to allow for local flexibility regarding the length of the individual and overall sessions.

RECOMMENDED EQUIPMENT

PLAYGROUND BALLS

Large, lightweight balls available at most big-box stores.

RED BALLS

Low-compression red felt and foam balls. Two of each type per player.

RACQUETS

23 inches and smaller.

BALL BUCKETS

One 40- to 60-quart plastic container and one small plastic paint bucket per coach. The large containers can hold the playground balls or red balls, and the small buckets are ideal when children work in small groups and need a limited supply of red balls.

POLY-SPOTS AND THROW-DOWN LINES (TDL)

For targets, recovery spots, court lines, group control, etc.

CONES

One nine-inch or half-cone for every two players.

NETS

18-foot pop-up nets are available for 36-foot courts. You can also attach things like barrier tape, rope or pennant banners to a standard net, the 18-foot pop-up net or objects such as fences, teaching carts, hoppers, chairs/benches or cooler stands.

COURT

You can conduct Community 1 on any flat surface. Community 2 and 3 are designed for a tennis court.

CLOTHESPINS

Use for scorekeeping—one packet of 200 per class.

PLAYING CARDS

Use for challenges in different activities—two packs per class.



STRUCTURE OF PRACTICE AND PLAY PLANS

WARM UP

Each practice starts with a simple, fun activity that gives players a chance to become engaged and the coach time to make final adjustments for the session.

PLEDGE/CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

All players will recite the pledge, and the coach will introduce the character development “word of the day.”

ATHLETIC SKILLS

These are fundamental movement skills that work on the ABCs (agility, balance and coordination), along with sending and receiving skills that include rolling, tossing (underhand), throwing (overhand) and catching.

TENNIS SKILLS

Each session has activities for players to build the foundation for serve, rally and play. These include individual and partner activities.

GAMES

Players are divided into teams to work on the skills covered in each practice.

FREE PLAY

For Community 2 and 3, all players will have an opportunity to play the game of tennis at the end of the session.

PLAY AT HOME

Each week, players have specific challenges to practice at home. They can practice independently or with a friend or family member.

TEAM HUDDLE

Players can end the session with a team chant, such as “1-2-3 Net Generation.”

DESCRIPTIONS OF ACTIVITIES



SETUP

Location of players, balls and equipment.

MISSION

What we want players to do, followed by bullets with specific instructions.

LEVEL 2, LEVEL 3, ETC.

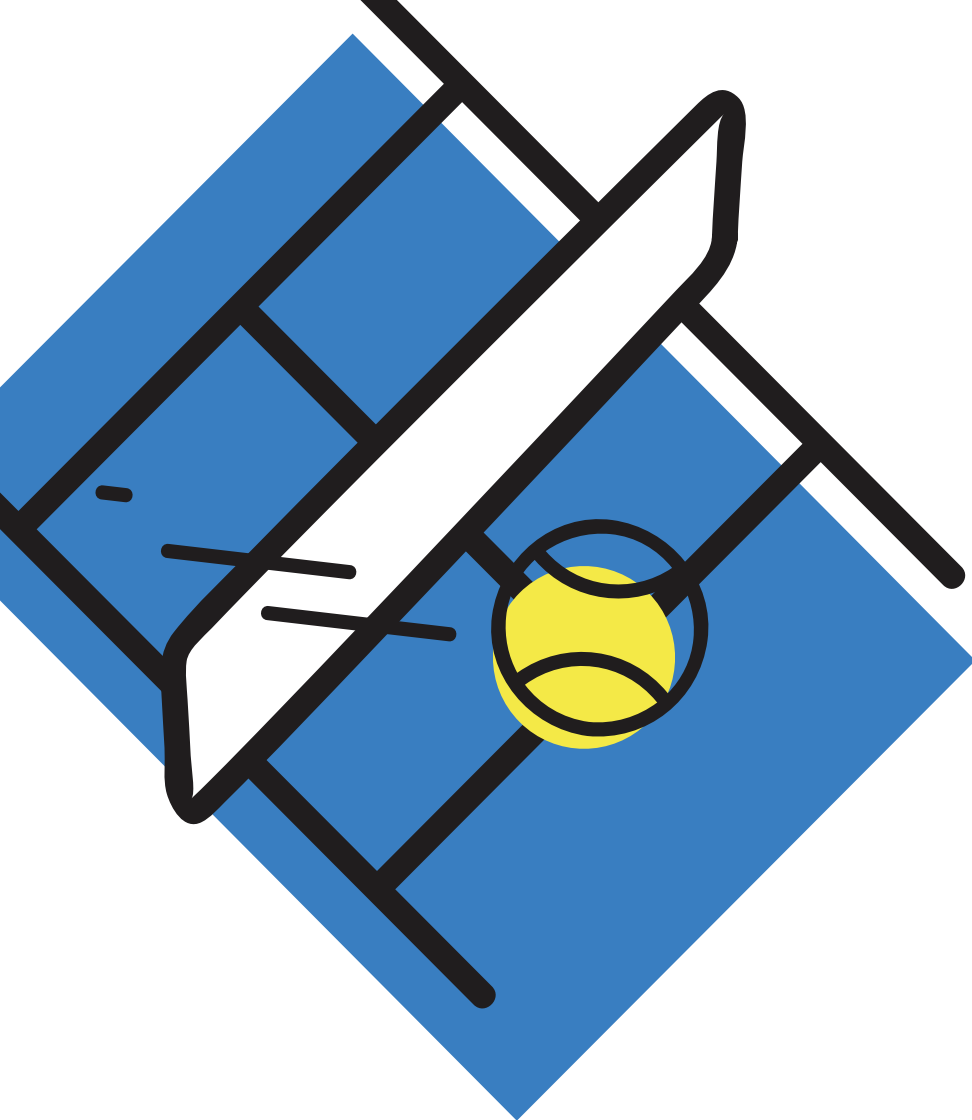
Progressions to make activities more difficult.

COACHING CUES

Short tips to help players with the challenge, skills and play.

GOAL

How we want players to execute the activity, related to a specific outcome.



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Community Red 1 Practice and Play Plans! This challenge and skills based program was developed for the first time player (ages five to eight) as an introduction to tennis. It is written specifically for any flat surface including a tennis court, gymnasium, or even a parking lot! Players will work on rally skills which are the foundation for playing with a partner.

A station format is suggested for this program. It will assist a first time coach with the organization of larger groups. Stations should be created around the playing area, a safe distance from each other. Have a coach or volunteer at each station to direct the activity. Players will rotate through the stations every 10 minutes while a coach remains at the designated area.

PLANS AT A GLANCE



Community 1	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4	Lesson 5	Lesson 6
Lesson Plan Theme	Meet The Ball	Meet My Racquet	Check Out My Forehand	Check Out My Backhand	Let's Rally	Let's Play
Warm Up	Tag	Obstacle Course	Messy Bedroom	Peaks And Valley	Freeze Tag	Your Choice!
Character Theme	Listen	Respect	Effort	Teamwork	Responsibility	Sportsmanship
Station 1	Self-Toss	Pizza Delivery	Jacks	Walk The Dog Zig Zag Backhand	Walk The Dog Zig Zag Alt	Walk The Dog With Partner
Station 2	Walk The Dog	Bungee Jump	Lobster Trap	Jacks With Backhand	Bungee Flips	Jacks Alt
Station 3	Walk The Dog With Partner	Start Your Engines	Walk The Dog Zig Zag With Partner Forehand	Tunnel Ball	Rally Me With Partner Alt	Rally Me With Partner Alt
Game	Bullseye	Tennis Sandwich	Splat	Survivor Backhand	Keep It Moving	Team Rally
Take Home Tennis	Toss And Catch To Wall	Bungees	Jacks	Rally Me Backhand	Rally With A Friend Or Family	Keep Playing!

CHAPTER 01

MEET THE BALL

Equipment: Barrier tape; 23-inch racquets and smaller, playground balls and red balls; small buckets/containers, poly-spots or paper plates, chalk and throw-down lines (TDLs); a deck of cards. **Optional:** Pop-up nets and cones.

I. WARM UP (5 – 10 MINUTES)

TAG

Setup

- Spread players out in defined spaces with four to six in each area.
- Use chalk, lines or cones to establish a playing area.

Mission

- One player is “It.”
- Once tagged, players move out of the playing area and do a fun exercise such as “I’m a Star” jumps and then come back in.
- Rotate the “It” player every minute or less.
- Start by skipping, then switch to side-shuffling.

II. CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT (3 MINUTES)

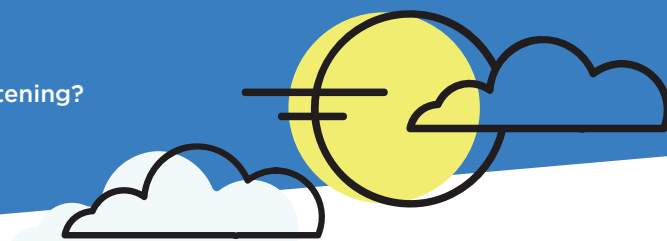
PLEDGE

I will listen to my coach, be nice to my teammates, try my best and HAVE FUN!

WORD OF THE DAY: LISTEN

Introduce Character Theme

- How can you show someone speaking that you’re listening?
- We listen with our eyes, ears, mind and body.



III. SKILLS (25 – 30 MINUTES)

STATION ONE

SELF-TOSS

Setup

- Give each player a red ball.
- Spread players out around the defined space, using chalk or TDLs to create boundaries.

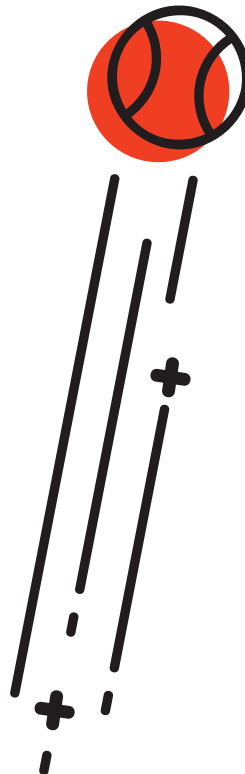
Mission

- Toss the ball with one hand (palm up) above head level.
- Let it bounce and catch it with both hands.
- **Level 2:** Toss it higher and catch with both hands.
- **Level 3:** Toss it farther away and catch with both hands.
- **Level 4:** Toss and catch with one hand.



CHARACTER CHECKUP

How did you show the coach you were listening to instructions?



WALK THE DOG

Setup

- Make sure each player has a red ball and a racquet.
- Spread players out on a sideline, each with a spot positioned 15 to 20 feet away. Mark each spot with chalk, a poly-spot or any flat object.

Mission

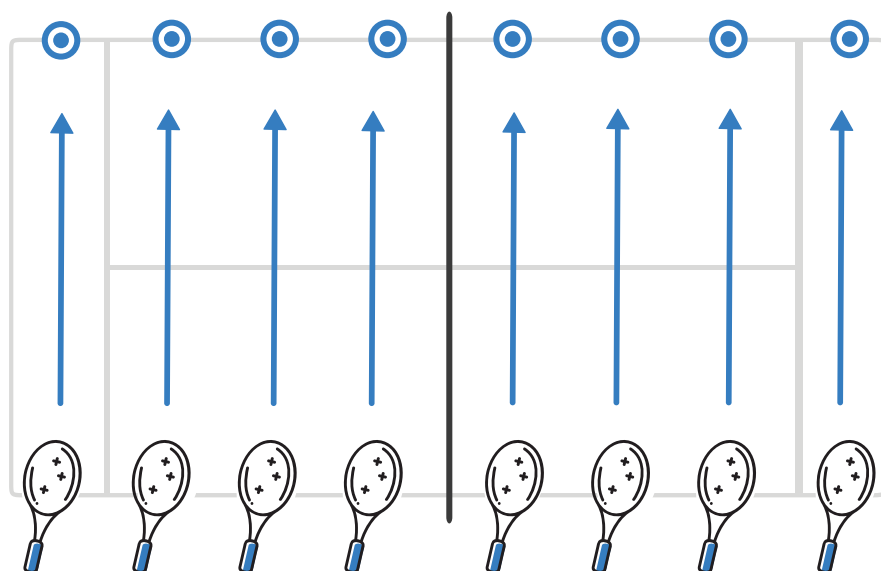
- Starting on the sideline, roll the ball to the spot using the edge of the racquet.
- Stop the ball on the spot with the edge of the racquet, then roll it back to the sideline and stop it again.
- Need help? Use a big ball.
- **Level 2:** Use your backhand.
- **Level 3:** Zig-zag to the end spot and back by using both sides of the racquet.



COACHING CUE

Touch the ground lightly with the edge of the racquet and keep the strings on the ball.

ILLUSTRATION: WALK THE DOG



STATION THREE

WALK THE DOG WITH PARTNER

Setup

- Pair players up, with racquets and one red ball.
- Spread pairs out on a sideline, each with a spot 15 to 20 feet away. Mark each spot with chalk, a poly-spot or any flat object.

Mission

- Starting on the sideline, roll the ball with the edge of the racquet to the opposite sideline.
- Stop the ball on the spot, turn, send the ball along the ground back to your partner and walk back to the starting sideline.
- Partner stops the ball with the racquet and repeats.
- Need help? Use a bigger ball.

Level 2: Use forehands (palm forward) and backhands (knuckles forward).

Level 3: Zig-zag to the spot using both sides of the racquet.

**COACHING CUE**

Roll the ball to the side of the body and follow-through toward the target.

**CHARACTER CHECKUP**

How did you and your partner listen to each other?



IV. GAME (10 – 12 MINUTES)

BULLSEYE

Setup

- Have teams create their own areas using chalk, lines...be creative!
- Give each team a supply of red balls.
- Create a big target (about 8x8 feet) using lines or chalk, with a smaller target inside. Use chalk or place an object in the center of the smaller spot as a bullseye.

Mission

- Players stand outside the playing area and take turns tapping the ball with the racquet (palm forward) toward the target.
- Create a scoring system for different target areas—the big target could be one point, the smaller target could be five points and the bullseye, 10.
- Add up the teams' scores to see if they can get to a certain number or play by time and go for a "team best."
- Need help? Let players use their hands to roll the ball.

Level 2: Start farther back.

Level 3: Use backhands and forehands.

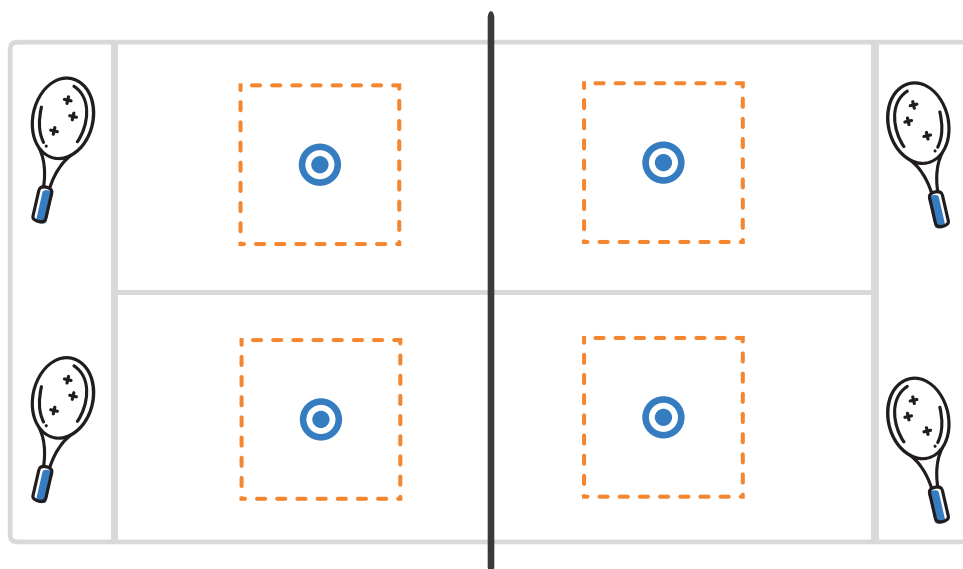
Level 4: Drop-hit to targets.



COACHING CUE

Use a short and simple motion. How can you make it go softer? Harder?

ILLUSTRATION: BULLSEYE



V. WRAP UP (5 MINUTES)

TEAM TALK

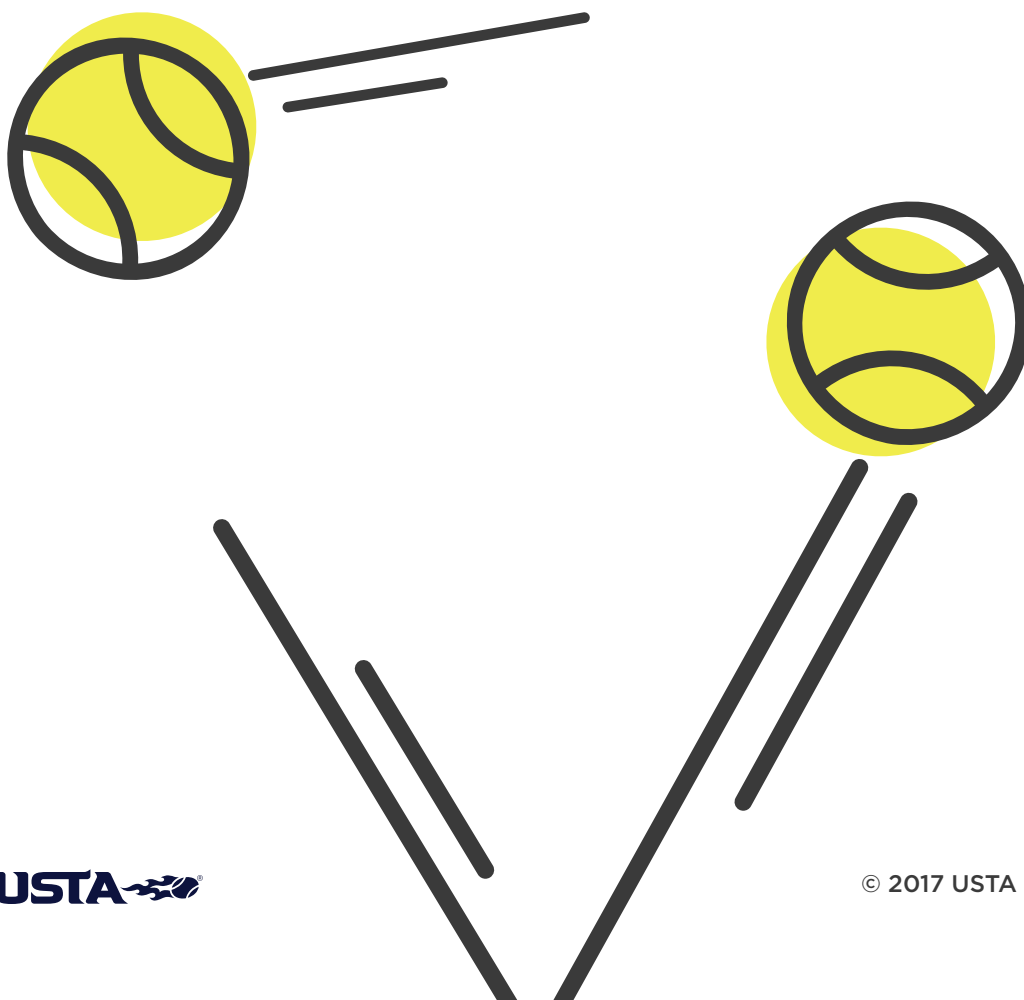
- What was one new skill you enjoyed learning today?
- How can listening help you in school?
- Whom can you work on listening to better at home?

PLAY AT HOME: TOSS TO THE WALL AND CATCH

- Toss the ball to the wall, let it bounce and catch it with two hands.
- Toss the ball low, medium and high. Catch with two hands, then one.

TEAM HUDDLE

Huddle all players together to perform a team chant. For example, ask players to form a circle, put one hand on top of one another's and on the count of three shout "Net Generation!"



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Community Red 2 Practice and Play Plans! This challenge, skills and play program has been created to support and follow the Community 1 curriculum as an introduction for young players (ages seven to nine). Designed for a tennis court, this program focuses on partner rallies and being on a team. Players will work on fundamental skills including an introduction to the serve which will help prepare them for play. Simple play situations will be introduced. Progressions are used to match the skill level of the individual. After completing Community 2, players will be more comfortable with playing the game.

GAME COMPONENTS

For each of the tennis activities in Community 2 and 3, coaches can use different tools to motivate players.



Numbers

These measure players' success and increase the challenge. Can use four or seven to work on tennis scoring.



Time

Each activity has a specific start and end time.



Cards

Use a deck of cards to determine how many points players must attain or how many repetitions to complete.



Clothespins

Use these to keep track of the score in games or the number of repetitions for skills-development activities. You can put them on the net or an article of clothing for players and coaches to keep track of success.

Example of Game Components

These can be used singularly (try to get 10 in a row) or in combination (players have one minute to see how many points they can score in a game), using clothespins to track their totals.

PLANS AT A GLANCE



Community 02	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4	Lesson 5	Lesson 6
Character theme	Listen	Respect	Effort	Teamwork	Responsibility	Sportsmanship
Lesson plan theme	Meet The Ball	Meet My Racquet	Control It!	Watch My Skills	Watch Me Rally	Let's Play
Team game	Messy Bedroom	Hits	Racket Quickness	Freeze Tag	Pizza Delivery	Circle Dodge Ball
Athletic skills	Fire Ants	Ice Cream Cones	One Bounce- Two Bounce	Tunnel Ball	One Bounce- Two Bounce	Tunnel Ball
Tennis skills	Big Ball Tennis	Walk The Dog	Bungee Jumps	Jacks	Half Pound Lobster	Rally Pyramid
Game skills	Add 'Em Up	Walk The Dog With Partner	Keep It Moving	Lobster Trap	Battle Spots	Serve Pyramids
	Roll And Splat	Touchdown	Survivor	Battle Spots	Team Challenge (Coop)	Tag Team singles
Free play	Free Play	Free Play	Free Play	Free Play	Free Play	Free Play
Play at home	Toss And Catch	Walk The Dog	Bungee Jumps	Jacks	Lobster Trap	Serve Against Wall

MEET THE BALL

Equipment: Barrier tape, rope or 18-foot pop-up net; 23-inch racquets and smaller; playground balls and red balls; small buckets/containers, throw-down-lines (TDLs), paper plates or poly-spots, chalk and cones; a deck of cards and clothespins.

I. WARM UP (7 MINUTES)

MESSY BEDROOM

Setup

- Create teams of three to five, with each team on its own side.
- Have teams create their own space using a net or barrier tape to separate the teams.
- Position players on one side of the net or line (preferably the side opposite the fence) with a bucket of red balls.

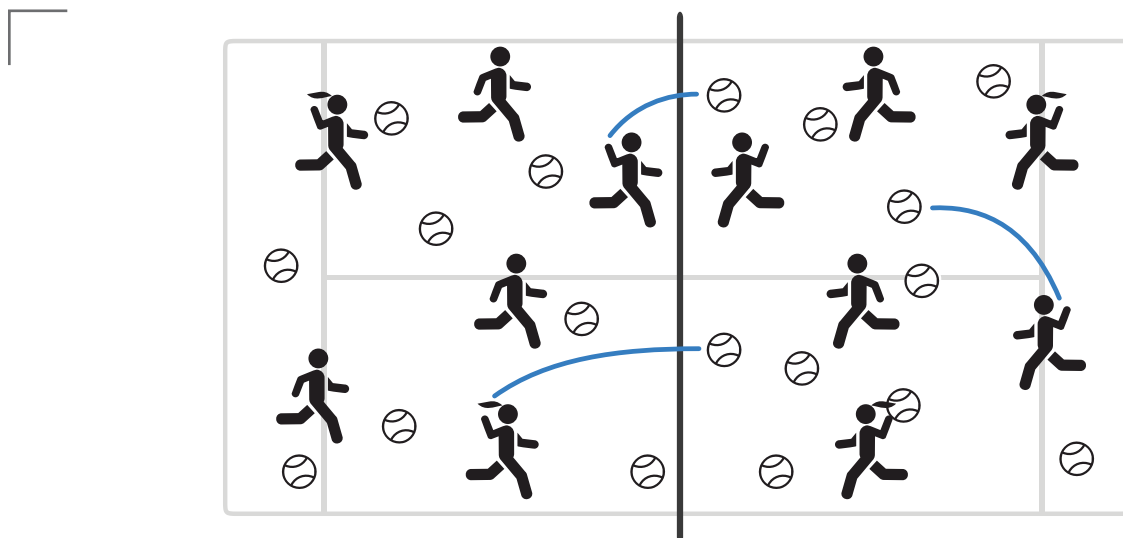
Mission

- The coach tips the bucket of balls over on each side.
- Players throw the balls overhand one at a time to the other side.
- Throw as many balls as possible in one minute or less. Adjust the time to the number of balls in the buckets.
- After time is up, have players pick up all the balls on the other side and count how many they threw.
- Do it again and try to beat the team record.

Level 2: Throw with non-dominant hand.

Level 3: Must throw into a service box or designated area.

ILLUSTRATION: MESSY BEDROOM



II. CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT (3 MINUTES)

PLEDGE

I will listen to my coach, be nice to my teammates, try my best and HAVE FUN!

WORD OF THE DAY: LISTEN

Introduce Character Theme

- How can you show someone you're listening?
- We can listen with our eyes, mouth, ears and body.



III. ATHLETIC SKILLS (5 MINUTES)

FIRE ANTS

Setup

Spread players out around the court and have them stand in ready position.

Mission

- When the coach says “go,” players try to stomp as many fire ants as possible in a stationary position.
- Stomp as many ants as possible in a set period of time.

Level 2: Skip and stomp: Skip around the court and stomp when the coach shouts “fire ants!”

Level 3: Shuffle and stomp: Side-shuffle around the court and stomp when the coach shouts “fire ants!”

IV. TENNIS SKILLS (15 MINUTES)

BIG-BALL TENNIS



Setup

- Position two pairs on each side of the net and give each pair a playground ball.
- The service boxes are the boundaries.
- Position one player in each service box.



COACHING CUE

When players toss with both hands, have them start sideways and finish facing forward.

Mission

- Toss the ball with both hands to your partner's box straight ahead.
- Partner lets it bounce, catches with both hands and tosses it back.
- Need help? Move closer to the net.

Level 2: Toss from one side of the body, then the other.

Level 3: Toss straight ahead, then crosscourt.

Level 4: Catch in front, then to the side of the body.



Setup

- Create teams of two to four.
- Place cones, poly-spots or targets in a row six to eight feet from a line teams will use as a starting point.
- If using cones, mark each with a number. If using poly-spots, use different colors.
- Assign each team a specific starting spot and a supply of red balls.

Mission

- Players attempt to hit the cones by sending the ball along the ground with the racquet using a forehand.
- The coach calls out a color or number and the first player from each team aims for that spot.
- Players score points each time they hit a target.
- Rotate players after a certain number of hits (one or two).
- Add up scores as a team.

Level 2: Use forehands and backhands (knuckles forward).

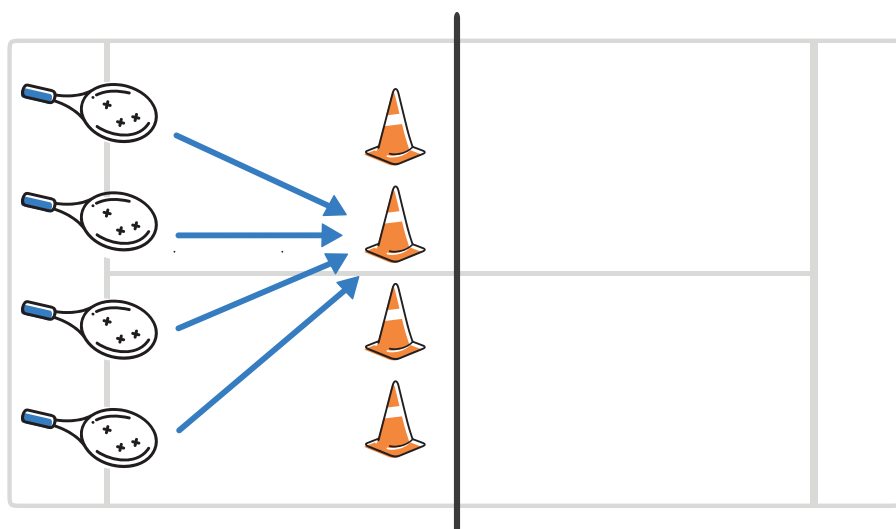
Level 3: Drop-hit to cones/spots.



COACHING CUE

Keep the edge of the racquet on the ground and follow through toward the target.

ILLUSTRATION: ADD 'EM UP



V. GAME (15 MINUTES)



ROLL AND SPLAT



Setup

- Pair up players with one red ball and spread them out around the court.
- Players face each other about six feet apart.
- Use existing lines, chalk or TDLs to indicate the starting position.

Mission

- Begin by pushing the ball to your partner with a forehand.
- Partner traps the ball with the racquet, then pushes it back using a forehand.
- Rally back and forth with your partner in the designated area.
- Once successful, have players stop the ball with the racquet on edge and then send it back.

Level 2: Move back after a certain number of successful rallies.

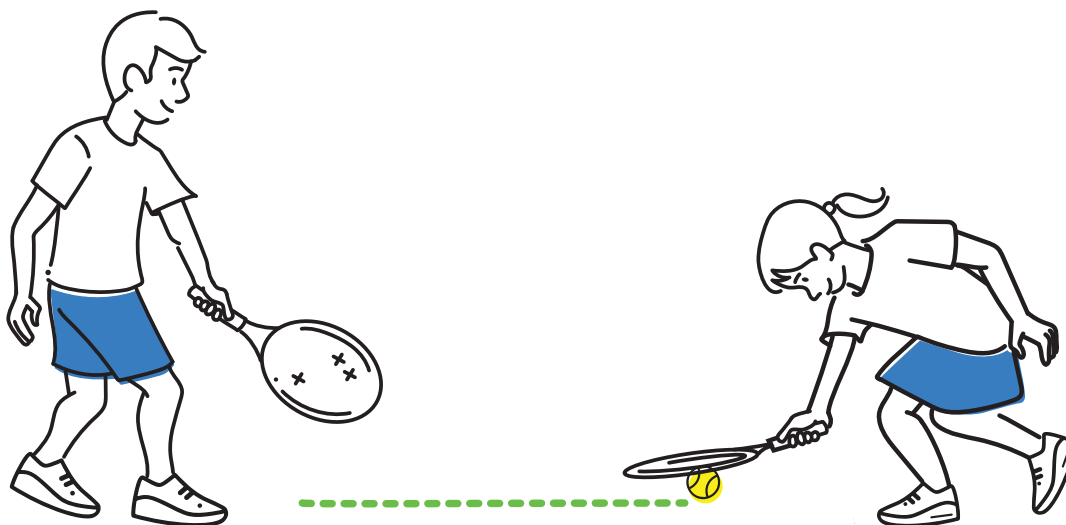
Level 3: Push the ball forward using a backhand (one hand or two).

Level 4: Hit over a line or net, still trying to stop/trap the ball and hit it back.

CHARACTER CHECKUP

- How did you and your partner listen to each other?
- Did you listen when the coach gave you instructions?

ILLUSTRATION: ROLL AND SPLAT



VI. FREE PLAY (10 MINUTES)

Note: This is an opportunity to play the game of tennis, as all kids like to try to hit the ball over the net. Players may struggle, so focus on the effort.

Setup

- Pair up players according to skill level and assign them a line or net to hit over.
- Give each pair two red balls.
- For a net, use tape or rope so the ball can go under and still be in play.
- Mark boundaries using existing lines, TDLs or chalk. Start with small boundaries, then increase them as players are successful.

Mission

- Rally over a line, starting with a drop-hit or hand toss. Trap and drop-hit back or try to hit it.
- Once successful, hit over a net, starting with a drop-hit. Trap and drop-hit back or bump the ball up, let it bounce and hit it back (can bump up multiple times).
- Need help? Use a rolling rally—start with a roll and splat/stop on the ground, then progress to hitting back and forth along the ground.

Level 2: Drop-hit and rally after one bounce.

Level 3: Hit over a regular net.

VII. WRAP UP (5 MINUTES)

TEAM TALK

- What was one new skill you enjoyed learning today?
- Who can you work on listening better at home?
- How can listening help you in school?

PLAY AT HOME: TOSS AND CATCH

Toss and catch with a friend or family member or against a wall.

TEAM HUDDLE

Huddle all players together to perform a team chant. For example, ask players to form a circle, put one hand on top of one another's and on the count of three shout "Net Generation!"