

High School Coach Tennis Lesson Template

TABLE OF CONTENTS

How to Use This Practice Template	1
Completed Template	2
Blank Template	3
Suggested Topics of Life Lessons.....	4-6
Competition & Fitness.....	7-9
Eighteen Player/9 Station Tennis Workout.....	10-11
Eighteen Player/9 Station Tennis Workout Diagram.....	12
How to Use the Stroke Consistency Table	13
The Stroke Consistency Table.....	14
FAQs	15-19

How To Use This Practice Template:

This Practice Template is a means for a coach to efficiently organize an entire practice by using six subject tabs.

Each tab has a subject(s) and an amount of time suggested for that specific tab. Examples of subjects to be plugged into the tabs are included with descriptions of the subject.

Tab I-The Subject is: **The Huddle**-This is for beginning the practice including roll call, news, practice overview, and especially the Life Lesson of the Day.

Tab II-The Subject is: **Warm Up**-This is a very important part of practice to maximize the output of the players during the practice and reduce injuries to players who may try to go too fast too soon. Dynamic warmup should be taken seriously by coaches and players.

Tab III-The Subject is: **Stroke/Strategy of the Day**-We believe the players will absorb, retain, and better utilize information in matches if they are given specific areas to work on at each practice. A suggestion, in this Tab, is to only pick one or two strokes and/or strategies to work on so as not to overload the players with too much information and give enough time to each specific area.

Tab IV-The Subject is: **Competition**-This is where Points and/or Games are implemented into the practice to specifically work on the strokes and strategies the players worked on in Tab III.

Tab V-The Subject is: **Fitness**-This is an important area to work on footwork speed, agilities, explosiveness, anaerobic conditioning, and some static stretching.

Tab VI-The Subject is: **The Wrap-up**-This is the time to review the practice, tie back in the Life Lesson of the Day, answer any questions, preview of what is coming up, and let the seniors/captains have a couple minutes alone with their team before dismissal.

High School Coach Tennis Lesson Template

#/TIME	SUBJECT	DESCRIPTION	NOTES
I. 10 min	The Huddle	Roll Call/Greeting Discussion on reputation vs character-which is more important? Review practice plan	Definition of reputation and character available. See if players can come up with a real life example. Emphasis on value of character.
II. 15 min	Warmup	Footwork Cone Drills Mini Tennis Competition	Lateral, Up and Back cone drills variety Mini Tennis games to 5 points-play 3-5 games total
III. 40 min	Stroke/Strategy of the Day	Approach Shots and Transitioning Effective Overhead Progression Serve and Return	Focus on making the approach shot and moving to net position Emphasis on placement of overhead-deep versus angle Designate targets for server and receiver to work on
IV. 20 min	Competition	Toss and Approach-Doubles Games to 11 3 vs 1 Overhead Game for 3 minute rotations	Fast paced and high energy-focus on making the approach shot Placement and stamina game for the OH
V. 15 min	Fitness	Circuit Rotation-3 rounds 6 Ball Sprints-2 rounds	Emphasis on quick rotations and footwork Encourage quick sprints and change of direction
VI. 5 min	Wrap-Up	Review Life Lesson & what was emphasized today and preview practice tomorrow	Seniors/captains talk with players and huddle a team cheer

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#/TIME	SUBJECT	DESCRIPTION	NOTES
I. 10 min	The Huddle		
II. 15 min	Warmup		
III. 40 min	Stroke/Strategy of the Day		
IV. 20 min	Competition		
V. 15 min	Fitness		
VI. 5 min	Wrap-Up		

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SUGGESTED TOPICS OF LIFE LESSONS:

I. The Huddle:

- I. Champions approach to practice & competition
- II. Getting better every day
- III. Confidence-how to find it
- IV. Credit Card vs Debit Card
- V. Defensive Driving
- VI. Helping Out Around the Home (before being asked)
- VII. Time Management-Juggling School
- VIII. Athletics and a Social Life
- IX. Facebook & the Internet
- X. How to be a Good Teammate
- XI. Goals & Goal Setting
- XII. Mentoring
- XIII. Reputation & Character
- XIV. Your Contributions to Home, School , Community, & Team
- XV. How to Win...How to Lose...Gracefully
- XVI. Do You Learn from Your Mistakes?
- XVII. **Select a book or quotes** with character messages that kids can learn from such as the book "Energy Bus" or a handful of quotes to read and share for discussion.
- XVIII. **Admire and Give:** Each person says what they admire and what they would give to each of their teammates. It is an open, heartfelt and honest activity-helpful after a tough loss or some type of team adversity.
- XIX. **Role Playing:** Give a groups of 3-4 kids a scenario of a situation that they act out; select real life situations that can happen that focus on leadership, sportsmanship, teamwork, peer pressure and bullying.

II. Warm-ups:

- XX. **On court Movement:** jog, lateral slides, karaoke, high knee skips, lunges, zig zags, butt kicks, backward bounds, etc
- XXI. **Cone Drills:** figure 8's (1 step, 3 step 5 step distances to be covered), lateral & vertical movement; stroke patterns such as: 1) forehand, 2) backhand, 3) approach shot, 4) volley, 5) overhead; return of serve footwork; serve footwork-set up, during the serve and the repositioning after the serve at baseline or going to the net;
- XXII. **Shadow Patterns:** with cones-forehand to backhand; forehand-backhand-approach shot-volley-overhead; forehand to inside out forehand; first volley-second volley-overhead-into another volley.
- XXIII. **Short Court:** service box rally with change of spins; one player closes to net takes 3 volleys then backpedals to service line while the other player comes in (reduce to 2 volleys then 1 volley to make it quicker); volley to volley (forehand only, backhand only, X).

High School Coach Tennis Lesson Template

- XXIV. **Consistency Drills:** on baseline half court-5 x 5 x 5 (5 groundstrokes then both players advance to the service line for 5 shots either bounce or in the air then they advance to volley position and keep 5 shots in the air (if that is done without a mistake go to 10 x 10 x 10. If a mistake is made start from the beginning at the baseline).
- XXV. **Soccer Tennis:** Use the small soccer balls and divide up into doubles teams for competition. Basic soccer rules apply, use the service box boundary and play games to 5 points.
- XXVI. **Mini Tennis Competition:** Use full service box area or use half service box depending on number of kids involved. Play games to five points and rotate.
- XXVII. **Up and Down the River:** Play full court games to seven points without serve and rotate up and down the river after each game.

III. Stroke/Strategy of the Day:

- IV. **Singles Positioning-at baseline**-work recovery position after hitting a crosscourt ground stroke vs a down the line ground stroke. Example 1)-Feed the ball to a baseline player and call X court. The player executes a X court ground stroke and recovers about one step shy of the hash mark. If the call is down the line, the player recovers to the other side of the hash mark. Example 2)-Feeding 2 players at the baseline at a time: one player is hitting X court forehands and the other player is hitting X court backhands and recovering to within a step of the hash mark each time. When the coach calls down the line, the players execute down the line strokes and recover to the other side of the hash mark with the player on the add side going behind the player coming from the deuce side. Continue with X courts with these two players or have an on deck team (who have been shadow stroking behind the hitting players) come up to the baseline and the hitting players go behind to shadow stroke.
- V. **Singles Positioning-at net**-work recovery position after hitting a down the line volley vs hitting a X court volley. Example 1)-Feed the ball to a net person and call down the line. The player executes a down the line volley and recovers to the same side of the net, within about one step of the center service line, as the target. When the coach calls X court, the player recovers to the other side of the center service line. Example 2)-Feeding two players at the net at the same time: Players hit down the line volleys and stay on the same side of the center service line. The coach calls for a X court volley and the players recover to the other side of the center service line with the add court player going behind the deuce court player.
- XXVIII. **Doubles Positioning**-split formation; both back; both up at net.
- XXIX. **Defense & The Art of the Lob**-start with a player (or team) at the net and a player (or team) at the baseline. On deck players ready to take the place of these players. The start of the point can be fed by the coach or net player or even a drop feed by a baseline player. The baseline player hits a defensive lob and the point is played out. After the point the players rotate from net to baseline.
- XXX. **Approach Shots and Transitioning**-A player (or team) at the baseline will defend and a line of players (or teams) at the other baseline will attack. An attack player drop feeds an approach shot to himself and goes to the net. The point is played out. Another on deck attacker(s) rotate in and another point is played. When an attacker(s) get 3 points they become the defenders.

High School Coach Tennis Lesson Template

XXXI. **Overhead Progression:** Feed lobs so players can take turns working on hitting overheads-emphasis on keeping their head up through contact and follow through. Use targets on the court-two angle targets in service box and two deep targets in backcourt. Then move OH hitter around where they must work their feet to hit all forehand overheads, head up and specific targets. Review the technique differences for the angle overhead versus the deep overhead.

XXXII. **Slice Progression:** With a partner in service box work on executing a slice forehand cross court-technique of a bigger forehand volley and moving feet to only hit forehand slices. Then move halfway between the service box and baseline and continue hitting slices with a longer stroke and bigger follow through. Finally move to the baseline and continue hitting slice forehands extending follow through. Repeat on backhand side.

XXXIII. **Volley Progression:** Partner up and volley cross court from a position in the middle of the service box working on keeping ball in the air (no bounce) and moving feet with each volley. Move back to the service line and continue hitting volleys but focus on using legs more and using a bigger volley stroke. Rotate during this progression to hit with different players-usually do three rotations a each station.

XXXIV. **Swinging Volley:** Feed lobs to players standing near the service line where they can hit swinging volleys. Select targets well within the lines and work on moving the hitter east and west. You can use a target where the hitter must tag up to with their feet after each hit. Emphasis on contacting the ball at shoulder level-in the wheelhouse- and not reaching too high for the ball or letting the ball drop too low.

XXXV. **Spins:** Hitting up the middle of the court working on spins. Coach can call out the combination of spins. Topspin to Slice, Topspin to Topspin, Slice to Heavy, Slice to Slice, Topspin to Heavy, Heavy to Heavy, etc..Emphasis on where to strike ball (slice is before the bounce peaks or at peak and topspin and heavy are after bounce peaks or at peak). Rotate players and courts so they hit with different players and keep calling out different plays every 2-3 minutes.

XXXVI. **Other topics are:**

XXXVII. Serve and Return

XXXVIII. Drop Shots and Touch

XXXIX. Individual Shots from Serve to Finishing Shot

XL. Being Consistent Doesn't Mean You Are a Pusher

XLI. The Score Matters

XLII. Pre Match Preparation and Post Match Lessons to Learn

XLIII. DNO-Defense, Neutral, Offense and Knowing When to Employ Each

XLIV. Second Serve-The Most Important Shot in Tennis

XLV. Points Won (and Lost) on Second Serves

XLVI. Changing Strategies in a Match

XLVII. Different Tactics but the Same Strategy

XLVIII. The Moon Ball and Sneak In

High School Coach Tennis Lesson Template

1) Competition:

- V. **Mississippi Doubles**-1 or 2 courts (side by side) with 9-12 players per court. 1 coach per court. On one baseline is a doubles team (Bryan Bros.) the other 7-10 players (challengers) are on the other side of the court. 2 challengers step up to the baseline and the coach feeds (from next to the net post) to the challengers a short ball. The challengers attack the net and play the point out vs the Bryan's. If the Bryan's win the point the challengers go to the back of the line (or switch courts if two courts are used) and the Bryan's stay at their baseline. If however the challengers win the point then they must run to the other side of the court (both go around the same net post that was determined by the coach) before the coach counts "one Mississippi, two Mississippi, 3 Mississippi" and feeds another ball to the next set of challengers. This can be a very quick paced game with some different partners if there is an odd number of players. It teaches the players to come into the net as a team, positioning, and hopefully finishing points at the net.
- VI. **Offense & Defense (Doubles or Singles)**-Both players (teams) start with their racquets touching the net. The coach is stationed at the net post and feeds a lob over one player's (team's) head(s). The point is played out with the player (team) being lobbed chasing and lobbing back to the player (team) at the net. Other players (teams) can be waiting on deck at the net posts ready to jump into action after the point is finished.
- VII. **Toss & Approach (Doubles or Singles)**-A player (team) at one baseline. A line of attacking players (teams) at the other baseline. The attacker(s) toss a ball into the court and hit an approach shot and get to the net. The point is played out. The attacker(s) take the place of the defender(s) when so many points are won.
- VIII. **Second Serve Importance**-Play tie breaks using only one serve instead of two.
- IX. **3 vs 1 Overhead Game to 3 points or 3 minutes**- Three players on the baseline and one at the net hitting lobs to overheads. The OH hitter is trying to get three clear winners by moving their overhead around using the entire doubles court. If they get three winners players rotate or if three minutes passes, coach can rotate players. Game helps the overhead hitter work on placing the ball and trying to hit winners.
- X. **Games to 7 points**-either half court or full court where one player must slice all shots off baseline and mid court. Other player can hit what they want. Coach can call a game of slice to slice-where both players must only slice. Rotate players after each game.
- XI. **Reaction Volley Games:** Players start behind the service line either cross court or down the line. One player feeds the ball to partner and both players are allowed to move forward. Focus on placing or deflating the volley where partner cannot hurt them. Quick reactions and low center of gravity. After each point, return to starting position. Coach can also feed in a game of 2 vs 2 closing-play games to 5 points.
- XII. **Games 2 vs 1 Swinging Volleys:** Two players on the baseline take turns feeding lobs to player at service line who hits a swinging volley to either side of singles court and they play the point out 2 vs 1. The swinging volley hitter must win 5 points before rotating.

High School Coach Tennis Lesson Template

XIII. **Spin Games:** Players play games to 7 points either full court or half court. Coach calls out which spin each player must hit during games. Games are drop hit-no serve. Play 4-6 games using different spin combinations and rotating players.

V. Fitness:

XIV. **Circuit Rotation:** Players are grouped in teams of 3 (2-4 player teams work best. This puts 12-16 players on or around 1 court). Player A is hitting serves (5), player B is jumping rope and player C is shadow stroking forehands & backhands. 4 servers spread safely across the baseline with room behind the baseline and to the sides of the court for the rope jumpers and shadow strokers. The coach says go and as soon as player A can get 5 serves in he takes B's place as a jumper, B takes C's place as a shadow stroker and player C becomes the server. Continue until player A returns as the server-this is 1 round. Do 3 or more rounds.

XV. **Partner Spider:** Place three tennis balls on each singles sideline-one at Baseline intersection, one at Service Line intersection and one about a yard from the net. Total of six balls and one racquet at the hash mark on the baseline. Pair players up with partners. Partner one will pick all six balls up-one at a time and place on the strings of the racquet on the baseline. Partner two will place the balls back out one at a time.

XVI. **PAC-MAN:** Players spread out inside the lines of the court. Coach calls out a player's name and they become PAC-MAN and try to tag as many players as they can in 20 seconds. Encourage them to tag below the shoulders and players may not run outside of the courts during game. If player gets tagged, they step outside the court. Play 5-6 games with a short recovery between each game. Good game to work on change of direction. Repeat 2-4 times depending on the fitness level of the players. Make it a game where each pair is competing against each other.

XVII. **6-Ball:** Players place six tennis balls near the net in two rows of three. They place their racquet on the baseline. When coach says go, each player must run to the net and get ball one and place on their racquet strings. They continue until all six balls are on the racquet strings. Coach can repeat this or have them progress down with 5 balls then 4 balls. Their recovery is placing the balls back at the net-great cardio.

XVIII. **Relays:** Kids love relays and coach can vary distance, footwork and abilities. Divide players into teams and pick the footwork pattern. Side slides, hop on one foot, skip, karaoke, sprint, and bound backwards. Use one court or two for distance. Have kids start sitting down, backwards or forwards.

High School Coach Tennis Lesson Template

XIX. **4 Corners:** Divide players into teams of two. Play game to 7, 11 or 15 points- players must be able to keep and gather balls quickly during game to keep it moving. Player A1 and player B1 will drop hit the ball and play out a singles point. Their partners players A2 and B2 will be standing on the baseline in one of the alleys with balls in their hands. The team that wins the point stays in and the team that loses the point feeds a ball anywhere on the court. For example: If A1 wins first point, then B2 feeds quickly to any part of the court and plays out the point. During this B1 is on baseline in either alley with balls in hand ready to feed. Say B2 wins the point (score 1-1) , then A2 feeds quickly to anywhere in the court and A1 moves to baseline in alley with balls in hand. If a player coming in to the point misses the feed they lose point and other team feeds quickly. This game is fast tempo and fun but players must keep balls in their hands and pay attention!! Coach could have a game on every court and play to a lower number and rotate courts or play one game to a higher point score.

VI. Wrap Up: Use this time to remind the players of the day's life lessons. Compliment the team members on their hard work and the progress they made in practice. Remind players of the next practice/meeting. Allow team captains to speak and lead a team huddle of energy and positive reinforcement.

Eighteen-Player/Nine-Station Tennis Workout

Everyone is busy and working to improve their tennis game.

How It Works:

Station workouts are nothing new, but if used correctly, can have a very high player to space ratio. Station workouts keep everyone moving and have a positive effect on keeping players attention and focus because they don't have time to get bored with a drill.

In the example shown there are 9 stations pictured. Each station has an important role to keep things moving and get the most out of the workout. The coach will put the players together in pairs and the players will remain together throughout the entire circuit. If there is an odd number of players, say 17, the coach can be player 18 to make the 9 pairs; if there are only 12 players some stations could be eliminated or not, but I would suggest always having station 1-Ball Pickers active since this will supply balls to the serve and groundstroke stations without having to stop and pick up balls. The coach sends each pair of players to a station 1-9. He then blows a whistle to begin. After 60-90 seconds the coach blows the whistle to signal stop action and the player pairs change stations (players from station 1 go to station 2, players from station 2 go to station 3, etc). Allow about 20-30 seconds for the players to hustle to the next station.

Station Explanations:

Station 1-Ball Pickers-these 2 players have to hustle with ball hoppers/ball tubes to collect balls that are being hit and make sure the servers' and droppers' hoppers are loaded with balls.

Station 2-Footwork Using Cones-this can be done with groundstroke footwork using a figure eight pattern moving around the cones and shadow stroking forehands and backhands. This can also be done with volley footwork doing a split step then moving forward into the cones shadow stroking volleys and then resetting back behind the cones.

Station 3-Droppers-these players stand over by the doubles alley and about a step up from the baseline. They reach into their hopper and pull out as many balls as they are comfortable holding (maybe 4-6). They reach out at about eye level with 1 ball in their hand and simply drop the ball for the ground stroke player. Note: emphasize that they just drop the ball not toss the ball. This will make the ground stroke player have to move to the ball. Be sure the dropper also gives the ground stroke player a chance to recover back toward the center of the court (but not too close to the servers).

Eighteen-Player/Nine-Station Tennis Workout

Station 4-Shadow Stokers-these players stay behind (but not too close to) the ground stroke players and pretend they are hitting the dropped ball. They are concentrating on preparation, keeping their head still at impact, follow through, movement to and recovery from the ball. Players usually don't do these shadow strokes with good technique unless they are reminded by the coach about the focus and the importance of this drill.

Station 5-Ground Stokers-these players hit forehands/backhands depending on which side of the court they are on (a right handed player on the deuce side of the court will hit forehands). They will practice all of the elements they did in station 4 with the addition of hitting the dropped ball toward a target (T) deep cross court, short cross court, or down the line (see targets on the court). The coach could ask the players to consider hitting a moon ball deep cross court then a hard drive down the line or some other combination of shots.

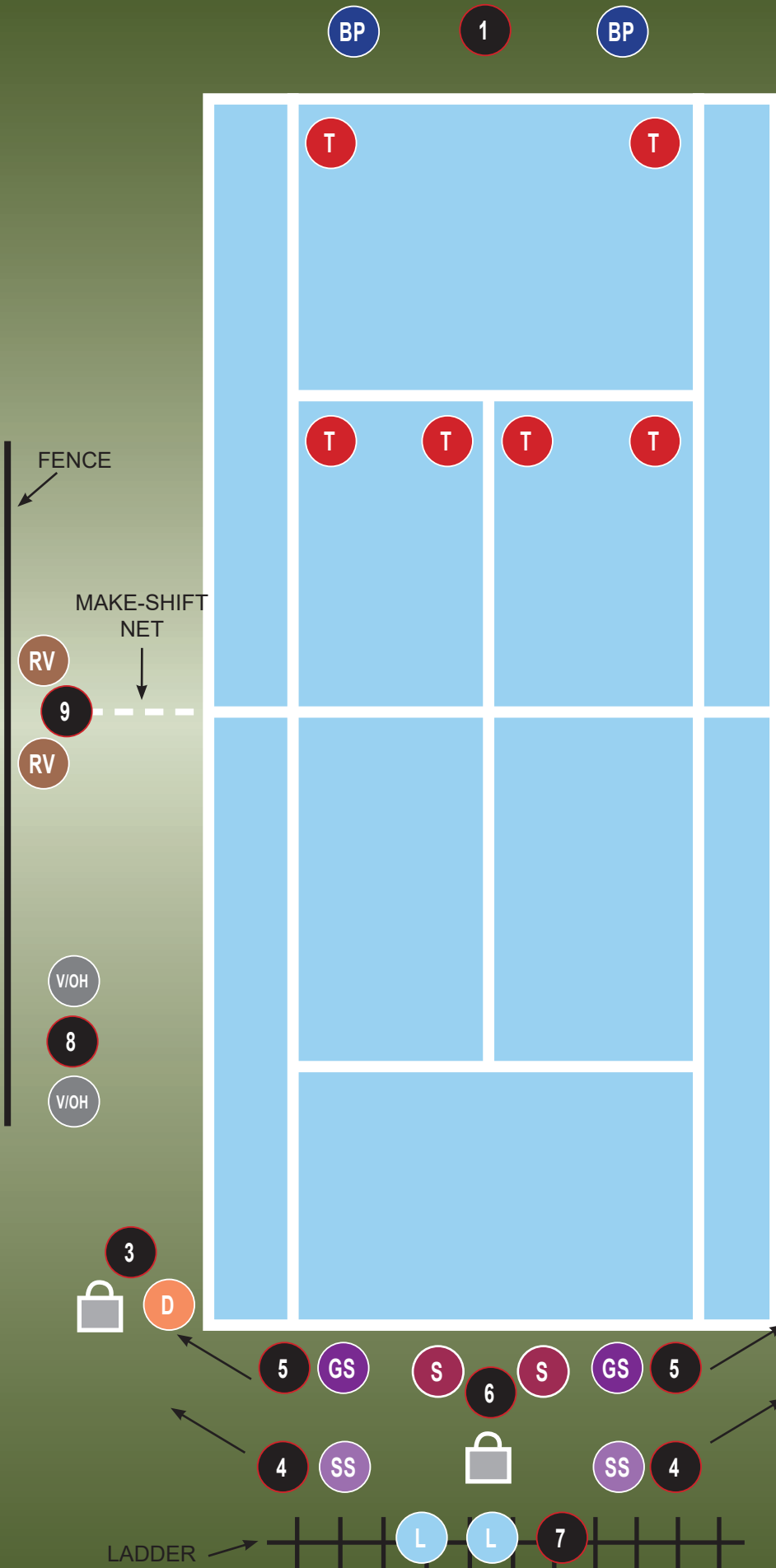
Station 6-Servers-these players should be aiming for targets. They should also be aware of the percentage of serves made (10 serves can be hit in 60 seconds and not be rushed). The players should set a goal to make 7 out of 10 first serves and 10 out of 10 second serves. Servers could also practice recovery after they hit the serve as if a return of serve was coming back to them.

Station 7-Ladder Players-a ladder (or cones) can be set up back by the fence for players to work on quick feet. This could also be a pushup, jump rope, medicine ball toss, burpee, etc station. High intensity station.

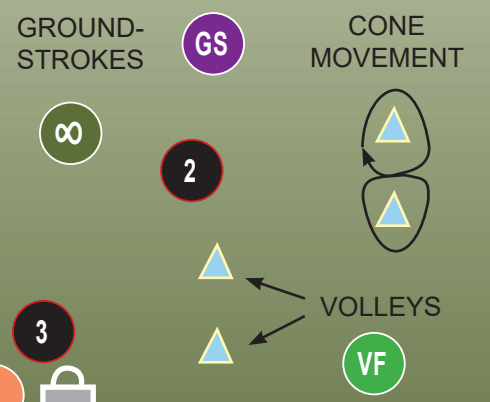
Station 8-Volley/Overhead Players-balls are stuck in the fence (2 balls per player) about 3 feet off the ground and separated by about 5-6 feet. The players do a split step and attack the forehand volley (touching the racquet strings to the ball then going back about three steps and jumping for an overhead. The player then comes back in about 2-3 steps does a split step hits a backhand volley and goes back for another overhead. The player could also practice going for some backhand overheads. This is a tough station and most players are happy when the whistle blows to stop.

Station 9-Reflex Volley Players-on this station an extension from the net post to the fence could be yellow caution tape to make a net for the volleyers. The players will do reflex volleys. The coach could task them to go forehand to forehand or backhand to backhand or one player hits cross court and the other player hits down the line.

18 PLAYERS 9 STATIONS



- BP** Ball Pickers 1
- ∞** Figure 8 Footwork (2) 2
- VF** Volley Footwork 2
- D** Ball Droppers (3) 3
- GS** Ground Strokes (5) 4
- SS** Shadow Strokes (4) 5
- S** Servers (6) 6
- L** Ladder (7) 7
- VOH** Volley/Overhead (8) 8
- RV** Reflex Volley (9) 9
- T** Targets
- Ball Hoppers



How to Use the Stroke Consistency Table

Consistency with strokes in tennis is the number one way to win matches. From players just learning to compete to ATP/WTA world ranked players knowing what strokes are consistent and which need more practice is the link to good match play.

This table allows the player and coach to:

- I. Get an idea of the strokes that may need more attention during practice.
- II. As a general means of grouping new unknown players at the start of the season.

There are a number of ways a player can be tested.

- I. Players can partner up and one can feed balls and tabulate the results for the player being tested.
- II. A ball machine could be used to deliver the balls.
- III. The coach(es) could feed balls.
- IV. The player being tested could do the serve, forehands and backhands (by drop feeding) themselves.

The targets used can be more general or specific according to the level of players. Generally in high school tennis a larger target will be best.

Target examples are:

- IV. Serve-JV-the service box; Varsity-1/2 the service box.
- V. Groundstrokes, Volleys, and Overheads-JV-1/2 the court; Varsity-1/2 the court past the service line.

Shots attempted and shots made as well as notes made by the coach could prove to be very helpful in a player's tennis improvement.

How to Use the Stroke Consistency Table

Name:	Date:		
STROKE	ATTEMPTS	MADE	NOTES
SERVE	10 DEUCE/10 ADD	/	
RETURN SERVE	10		
FOREHAND X COURT	10		
FOREHAND LINE	10		
BACKHAND X COURT	10		
BACKHAND LINE	10		
VOLLEY FH	10		
VOLLEY BH	10		
OVERHEAD	10		
TOTAL STROKES	100		

High School Coach FAQs

Why is my child not playing in more matches?

- At this time your child needs to improve in certain areas (your coach can be specific on the areas) of his/her game in order to move into the lineup on a more consistent basis.
- Your child is young and lacks the playing experience of the older teammates. So I am purposely inserting your child in certain matches for him/her to gain match experience and match confidence this year.
- Many coaches use a challenge ladder to determine the lineup for matches, and players are encouraged to challenge teammates in a higher position throughout the season.
- At times, players not in the lineup may be able to play an exhibition match depending on court availability and the opponent's number of players.

Should my child be taking tennis lessons?

- Yes. In order to improve on certain technical and tactical aspects of his/her game, one-on-one tennis lessons can be extremely productive.
- Yes. Our team practices do not allow individual instruction as we have many athletes at practice and only one coach presiding. So I would suggest arranging private lessons in addition to team practices in order to work on your son/daughter's individual needs.
- You should confirm that the player wants to participate in lessons and that these lessons do not conflict with high school practice times.

What can I do to help my child improve?

- Your child needs to work with a certified tennis professional once a week for an individual tennis lesson focusing on the areas in his/her game that need improvement.
- Keeping your child in tennis during our off-season through private lessons and group clinics.
- Finding local or district tournaments during the off-season for your child to compete in.
- Enrolling your child in a summer tennis camp. Many colleges and universities offer these in the summer months.
- Extra hitting before or after practice, along with parent/player on-court activities may be beneficial.

High School Coach FAQs

Why do players play high school tennis?

- To be involved in a team sport that they enjoy and to represent their school.
- To develop friendships and learn to support each other through athletic challenges.
- To work toward a common goal with a group of friends and peers.
- To develop discipline and time management skills.
- To learn to encourage others and develop empathy.
- To add to their resume for college admittance.

What should players do in the off-season to get better?

- Players should work with a certified tennis professional in the off-season to improve their game.
- Players can attend group tennis clinics two to three afternoons a week after school.
- Players can enter local or state USTA tennis tournaments to improve their match toughness and competitive drive.
- Players can attend summer tennis camps.
- Players can do off-court conditioning to improve their stamina, agility, power and speed.

What are some good team building exercises?

- “Get to Know Me” exercise where you give each team member the same list of 3-5 questions about themselves or their family. Allow time to have each team member answer them in front of their teammates. Coaches should participate. Questions are encouraged as well.
- Group dinners or any gatherings off the court are productive for the team to promote bonding.
- Community service activities are excellent! Allows the team to work together to serve a cause greater than themselves.
- Ropes courses are always fun and interactive and the cost is minimal.
- If the season is in the fall, the team can carve pumpkins together.
- Coach can google team building activities that are easily administered and throw in one every week or before a BIG match to lighten up the spirits.
- Varsity players work with the jr. varsity players 15-20 minutes before practice.
- Take the team to a college tennis match.

High School Coach FAQs

Should the team consider a community service project?

- Yes. This is a great way to develop team chemistry.
- Yes. This is an excellent way for the kids to see a world bigger than themselves.
- Yes. Learning to give back and volunteer is a valuable characteristic to instill in young people.
- Yes. Give the team a list of different community service projects and let them choose the one they want to participate in. Let them have a voice; this will develop greater commitment.

How should a captain be chosen?

- Team vote.
- Coach chooses.
- Seniors are always captains.
- Productive to discuss what being a team captain means and what are the responsibilities of a team captain before one is chosen.

How should I run the challenge and ladder system?

- Use last year's lineup as a starting point and schedule the rotation of challenges.
- Play a round robin where everyone plays everyone then chart the results.
- Winning percentage is an excellent way to make a lineup after you have lots of results. You divide the number of sets won by the number of sets played to get the percentage. List the players in order from highest percentage to lowest. If two players are close or have the same percentage, as a coach you could choose the more experienced player to play higher or have them play each other for the position.
- Some coaches use a shortened format (play 8 games total with tie break at 4 all, 8 game pro set, etc) for the initial challenge ladder and then utilize a longer match format when players challenge each other throughout the season.

How do I get the parents involved?

- Set up a player/parent meeting before the season to discuss team rules, expectations and ways parents can assist.
- Have the parents be in charge of drinks and snacks at home and away matches.
- Have the parents host a team dinner.
- Have the parents help with any needed fundraising.
- Have the parents purchase school team t-shirts to wear at all matches.
- Parents with tennis experience may be asked to help feed balls during practice.

High School Coach FAQs

How can players practice together when there is a large discrepancy of ability levels?

- Group players by ability levels for live ball drills, competition games and match play.
- Mix up the ability groups for dynamic warmup, fitness, serving practice and dead ball drills.
- Assistant coaches or volunteers may be useful by working with intermediate level players.

How do I keep the enthusiasm alive when the season finishes?

- Plan a fun dinner together after the season.
- Encourage input from the team on how to do this and see what they come up with.
- Plan a few get togethers once a month or an optional hit-around to create enthusiasm.
- Use technology to send group texts or tweets of encouraging and inspiring thoughts.
- Communicate with players about instructional articles or local tennis tournaments and encourage them to enter.
- Send them an off-season fitness packet eight weeks before season starts.
- Take them to a team tennis camp in early summer. (UGA offers one.)

How do you handle the situation of a top player who wants to play for the team but does not want to attend practices?

- If the team agrees to this situation and has no hard feelings, a coach could accept the situation.
- A coach could try to meet the player halfway and ask him/her to attend one practice per week.
- A coach may disagree totally with this situation and tell the player the only way she/he can play on the team is to attend practices like every other player.
- Meeting with players/parents about this topic is crucial to make sure that the team policy is clear.

What are key indicators to help me pair up my doubles combinations?

- Many times your top singles players will make up your doubles pairs but sometimes you will have a doubles specialist that you need to look out for. This player is usually aggressive, moves well, energetic, has good volleys and overhead but is not consistent enough to play singles.
- Mixing a steady player with an explosive player can be a good combination.
- Mixing a player that loves the net with a player that loves the baseline can be a successful combination.
- Positive chemistry and strong enthusiasm between the two players is important.

High School Coach FAQs

How do I handle an inter-team personality conflict or group clicks?

- Addressing this issue early is key. Otherwise it will build and be a poison to your team.
- Face-to-face communication is vital. A coach might have to meet individually or with a small groups (captains/seniors) to address this situation.
- It's always important to "do what is best for the team" and instilling this concept into players that are exhibiting selfish actions or choices.
- Have the players answer the questions on what behavior is best for the team and what they can do to be a better team member.
- Setting a few team rules at the beginning of the season could benefit a coach if this situation arises later in the season. For instance, "Inappropriate behavior is not allowed on the team. This includes any behavior that is disrespectful, harmful or hurtful to any team member, opponent, official, coach, parent or spectator."
- If the situation becomes a poison after several attempts to correct it, then a coach can choose to dismiss players from the team. Written documentation should be kept at all times.