

## **13-17 Intermediate**

**Saturday 3pm, Sunday 3:30pm, Monday/Tuesday/Thursday 5:30pm**

13-17 Intermediate is consistently one of the largest groups of players at Empire Tennis Academy. These students have generally played between 1-3 years of tennis and understand the basic mental and physical fundamentals of the sport. They aspire to succeed at the high school (JV and Varsity) level and therefore it's now critical that they begin to understand how to construct points using the knowledge they possess. Our goal when teaching the 13-17 Intermediate level is to provide them a wide array of different conceptual tools on the court so they can make better tactical decisions during point play. As they acquire these skills, it is important to reinforce that they should be making a decision with each shot they hit to become more successful when competing.

**\*Players must complete a 15-minute dynamic warmup before coming on court including jogging, 10 different dynamic stretches, and jump rope.**

### **Mini Tennis Warmup - 15 Minutes - Every week**

- Mini Groundstrokes - 5 minutes
  - Slow, full swings with follow through
  - Ball bouncing halfway between service line and net
  - Round of backhands only
  - Round of backhand slices only
- Mini Volleys - 5 minutes
  - Players standing halfway between net and service line
  - Continental grips and open racquet faces
  - Players should be moving to contact ball on side of body
- Power Volleys - 5 minutes
  - Players volleying from service line
    - Goal is to keep ball at shoulder height consistently
  - Firm grip on racquet and stepping with opposite foot through contact
- 1-2 partner competitions for each progression with exercises for non-winners

### **General format for Champion of the Court games:**

- Champion side and Challenger side
  - Try to keep numbers of Champions and Challengers as even as possible. There should be less Champions overall but the difference should be no more than two players.
    - 5 players on court means 2 Champions and 3 Challengers
- Champion initiates point with first shot unless stated otherwise
- Players count cumulative points they win on Champion side
- Champion may play two points in a row before switching out with other Champion(s)
- Challenger must win one point against Champion to take their spot
- First player to win 10 points unless stated otherwise

**Week 1 - Groundstrokes** - Players at the Intermediate level have demonstrated they can consistently hit 2-3 consecutive groundstrokes in play. Their success at the Intermediate level is dictated by their ability to direct the ball to either half of the court by choice. Today's drills will help them develop consistency in hitting groundstrokes crosscourt or down the line, deuce or ad side. Games will reinforce the decision-making process that allows them to direct the ball to the most effective location during a point.

- **Mini Tennis Warmup - 15 Minutes**
- **Dead Ball Drills - 50 Minutes**
  - Volleys & Overheads - 10 Minutes
    - 2 lines of players starting inside the service line
    - Double-rhythm feeding - one volley one overhead - players switch lines after hitting
    - 2-ball patterns
      - CC-DTL
      - DTL-CC
      - Deuce-Ad
      - Ad-Deuce
  - Approach Shot & Volley - 10 Minutes
    - 2 lines of players starting at the baseline
    - Double-rhythm feeding - one approach shot one volley - players switch lines after hitting
    - 2-ball patterns
      - CC-DTL
      - DTL-CC
      - Deuce-Ad
      - Ad-Deuce
  - **Groundstrokes (Theme) - 20 Minutes**
    - **Focal Points**
      - Swingpath - Players draw capital "C" with racquet to create a loop on takeback and a full swing with follow through.
      - Racquet face angle - Racquet face should be flat and wrist should be firm at contact to begin creating a small amount of topspin. They'll also need to make slight directional changes to their racquet face angle when aiming the ball to either half of the court.
      - Players should be improving fundamentals in the progression of: **making balls in play -> directing balls to halves of the court -> increasing swing speed**
      - Players should be starting at and recovering to a spot approximately one racquet-length behind the baseline. We call this spot "Home Base". This allows them to keep any ball that lands in play in front of them so they can move forward while hitting.
    - Running Forehands
      - 1 line of players starting at baseline in Ad corner
      - Double-rhythm feeding - Players hit two shots, first on Ad side and second on Deuce side
      - Single-rhythm feeding - Players hit one shot moving wide to the Deuce side

- Must reach a certain number of balls in play in a row as a team.  
Pick a number between 6-10 that's realistic but challenging
      - Anywhere
      - Crosscourt
      - Down the line
  - Running Backhands
    - 1 line of players starting at baseline in Deuce corner
    - Double-rhythm feeding - Players hit two shots, first on Deuce side and second on Ad side
    - Single-rhythm feeding - Players hit one shot moving wide to the Ad side
      - Must reach a certain number of balls in play in a row as a team.  
Pick a number between 6-10 that's realistic but challenging
        - Anywhere
        - Crosscourt
        - Down the line
  - Running Groundstrokes
    - 1 line of players starting at baseline in the middle
    - Single-rhythm feeding - Players will hit one shot running wide - Mix up forehands and backhands
      - Must reach a certain number of balls in play in a row as a team.  
Pick a number between 6-10 that's realistic but challenging
        - Anywhere
        - Crosscourt
        - Down the line
        - Deuce side
        - Ad side
- Serves (10 minutes)
  - 3 sets of five serves in a row
    - Deuce side
    - Ad side
    - Alternating sides
  - **These should predominantly be second serves**
- **Games - 50 Minutes**
  - **Focal Points**
    - Players should be actively making decisions about where to direct their ball based on either their opponent's position on court or their opponent's weakness
  - Serving Champ
    - Champion begins point with a serve
      - One serve only
      - Champion must say score before serving
  - Running Backhand Game
    - Champion begins in Deuce corner
    - Pro feeds ball to Ad side for Champion to hit a running backhand
    - Challenger begins in center of baseline
    - 2 rounds
      - Round 1: First backhand crosscourt
        - Champion's first ball must land crosscourt or it's out
        - Challenger must hit backhand on their first ball or they are out

- Round 2: First backhand down the line
    - Champion's first ball must land down the line or it's out
    - Challenger must hit forehand on their first ball or they are out
- Running Forehand Game
  - Champion begins in Ad corner
  - Pro feeds ball to Deuce side for Champion to hit a running forehand
  - Challenger begins in center of baseline
  - 2 rounds
    - Round 1: First forehand crosscourt
      - Champion's first ball must land crosscourt or it's out
      - Challenger must hit forehand on their first ball or they are out
    - Round 2: First forehand down the line
      - Champion's first ball must land down the line or it's out
      - Challenger must hit backhand on their first ball or it's out

**Week 2 - Volleys and Overheads** - Players have the coordination skills to get volleys and overheads in play but are still developing the technical fundamentals required to hit these shots with accuracy and increased power. They also may or may not understand the tactical advantages of being at the net. Today's drills will provide ample opportunities for them to practice the technical aspects of volleys and overheads - particularly the continental grip. Games will allow them to recognize how much offensive pressure they create by playing in the front half of the court.

- **Mini Tennis Warmup - 15 Minutes**
- **Dead Ball Drills - 50 Minutes**
  - **Volleys & Overheads (Theme) - 20 Minutes**
    - **Focal Points**
      - Continental Grip - Make sure players are aware of how to find their Continental Grip. Their index knuckle should be on Bevel 2 (Bevel 8 for lefties) and they should be pushing the bottom of the grip into their palm with their middle, ring, and pinky fingers so their hand is laid back on the grip.
      - Gripping the racquet firmly - Players must be able to hold the racquet tight when volleying to stay in control of their shots. They'll begin by gripping tightly almost to the point of discomfort
      - Ready Position - Players should be holding the racquet perpendicular to the ground and in front of their eyes between shots.
      - Racquet/Body movement - Players' racquets should remain in front of their front foot the entire volley. They should be turning to meet the ball on the side of their body and stepping with their opposite foot (turning left and stepping with the right foot, viceversa) to meet the ball with a slightly open racquet face. Their racquet should move no more than one foot through the volley.
      - Overhead movement - Players will learn to use crossover steps to move backward for overheads. As they recognize the lob they should be turning sideways quickly and pointing both their racquet and opposite arm up to track the ball. They'll crossover (front over back foot ONLY) with the goal of getting one racquet length behind the ball so they can step forward through contact.
      - Positioning - Players should be starting one racquet-length inside the service line. This is their "Home Base" at the net. This position gives them enough space to react to the ball and allows them to move forward to volleys and hit them in the air within a couple steps. They are also positioned properly to react to most lobs with an overhead.
    - **Volleys**
      - 2 lines of players starting inside the service line
      - Double-rhythm feeding - two volleys mixing up forehands and backhands - players switch lines after hitting
      - Must reach a certain number of balls in play in a row as a team. Pick a number between 8-12 that's realistic but challenging
        - Anywhere
        - CC-DTL
        - DTL-CC
        - Deuce-Ad

- Ad-Deuce
  - Overheads
    - 2 lines of players starting with racquets touching net
      - Remaining players waiting next to net posts for safety
    - Double-rhythm feeding - two overheads with players touching net again between shots - players switch lines after hitting
  - Approach Shot & Volley - 10 Minutes
    - 2 lines of players starting at the baseline
    - Double-rhythm feeding - one approach shot one volley - players switch lines after hitting
    - 2-ball patterns
      - CC-DTL
      - DTL-CC
      - Deuce-Ad
      - Ad-Deuce
  - Groundstrokes - 10 Minutes
    - Running Groundstrokes
      - 1 line of players starting at baseline in the middle
      - Single-rhythm feeding - Players will hit one shot running wide - Mix up forehands and backhands
        - Must reach a certain number of balls in play in a row as a team. Pick a number between 6-10 that's realistic but challenging
          - Anywhere
          - Crosscourt
          - Down the line
          - Deuce side
          - Ad side
  - Serves (10 minutes)
    - 3 sets of five serves in a row
      - Deuce side
      - Ad side
      - Alternating sides
    - **These should predominantly be second serves**
- **Games - 50 Minutes**
  - **Focal Points**
    - Players should be actively making decisions about where to direct their ball based on either their opponent's position on court or their opponent's weakness. They should also be focusing on maintaining the Continental Grip whenever they are at the net.
  - Serving Champ
    - Champion begins point with a serve
      - One serve only
      - Champion must say score before serving
  - Tower of Power
    - Champion starts at "Home Base" at the net
      - Pro feeds champion a volley to begin the point
      - Champion must hit every ball in the air or they lose the point
    - Challenger begins at baseline

- Challenger must let first ball bounce on their side
- 3 rounds
  - Round 1 - First volley crosscourt
    - Champion's first ball must land crosscourt or it's out
    - Challenger must hit outside shot on their first ball or they are out
  - Round 2 - First volley down the line
    - Champion's first ball must land down the line or it's out
    - Challenger must hit outside shot on their first ball or they are out
  - Round 3 - First volley to Ad side
    - Champion's first ball must land on the Ad side or it's out
    - Challenger must hit backhand on their first ball or they are out

**Week 3 - Transitioning Forward** - Players are beginning to feel more comfortable hitting volleys and overheads and have the desire to move forward to net. We want them to know when and how to move up and have the capability to execute a transition ball effectively. We'll teach them to recognize the signs of their opponent being in trouble - both body language and ball quality - and how to choose and hit the right ball to follow in. Drills will help players direct approach shots with more accuracy and power and introduce the transition concepts of high volleys and serve-and-volley. Games will allow them to put these shots into play and evaluate the effectiveness of the combination of their decision-making and execution skills.

- **Mini Tennis Warmup - 15 Minutes**
- **Dead Ball Drills - 50 Minutes**
  - Volleys & Overheads - 10 Minutes
    - Volleys
      - 2 lines of players starting inside the service line
      - Double-rhythm feeding - two volleys mixing up forehands and backhands - players switch lines after hitting
      - Basic patterns
        - CC-DTL
        - DTL-CC
        - Deuce-Ad
        - Ad-Deuce
    - Overheads
      - 2 lines of players starting with racquets touching net
        - Remaining players waiting next to net posts for safety
      - Double-rhythm feeding - two overheads with players touching net again between shots - players switch lines after hitting
  - **Transition Balls (Theme) - 30 Minutes**
    - **Focal Points**
      - Players must be able to recognize when they should be moving forward to net. There are both body language and ball quality signs that their opponent is in a defensive position.
        - Body Language
          - Opponent moving backward
          - Opponent positioned close to sidelines
          - Opponent losing control of their body
        - Ball Quality

- Balls landing inside the service line
  - Balls traveling higher through the air
  - Balls moving slower
  - Balls landing in middle quarters of court
- Momentum - Players should have the control over their bodies to be able to maintain forward momentum through their transition shots. They should be traveling in a diagonal path to the ball instead of separating movement into lateral and forward paths.
- Strikezone - Players should seek to contact their transition balls higher in the strike zone - right around shoulder height.
- Swingpath - Players will need to begin differentiating between their rally ball and approach shot swingpath. They should be applying fast (7/10) swing speed and creating a more linear swingpath from shoulder to shoulder.
- High Volley - Players will need to track and space the ball appropriately to be able to move forward and hit a volley at shoulder height from behind the service line. This volley should perfectly resemble a normal volley with the exception of their contact height and positioning on the court when hitting it.
- Approach Shots
  - 2 lines of players starting at the baseline
  - Double-rhythm feeding - one approach shot one volley - players switch lines after hitting
  - Must reach a certain number of balls in play in a row as a team. Pick a number between 8-12 that's realistic but challenging
    - Anywhere
    - Crosscourt
    - Down the line
    - Deuce side
    - Ad side
  - Running forehands/backhands
    - Instead of two balls from baseline, pro will feed first ball to baseline and second ball inside service line.
    - Players will be challenged to differentiate swingpaths
      - They should be using an angular swingpath on the first ball
      - They should be using a linear swingpath on the second ball
    - Players must also move effectively in a forward diagonal to reach the ball early enough and strike it around shoulder height.
- High Volley & Low Volley
  - 2 lines of players starting at the baseline
  - Double-rhythm feeding - one floating feed for players to hit high volley behind service line and second low feed for players to hit low volley close to the net
- Serve & Volley
  - 2 lines of players starting at the baseline

- **For safety, players must serve from at least halfway out from the middle of the baseline**
    - Players will serve then move forward in a straight line to hit a volley from “Home Base”
  - Groundstrokes - 10 Minutes
    - Running Groundstrokes
      - 1 line of players starting at baseline in the middle
      - Single-rhythm feeding - Players will hit one shot running wide - Mix up forehands and backhands
        - Must reach a certain number of balls in play in a row as a team. Pick a number between 6-10 that’s realistic but challenging
          - Anywhere
          - Crosscourt
          - Down the line
          - Deuce side
          - Ad side
- **Games - 50 Minutes**
  - **Focal Points**
    - Players will need to pay attention to recognize when and how to transition forward to the net during games. They will then have to execute effectively by directing the ball accurately and beginning to apply the linear swingpath that will help them create more power on their approach shots.
  - Serving Champ
    - Champion begins point with a serve
      - One serve only
      - Champion must say score before serving
    - **Extra rules**
      - Up to 15 points
      - Champion receives a bonus point if they attempt to serve and volley and win the point standing inside the service line.
      - If they win the point off the serve but are inside the service line as it ends they still receive the bonus point
  - Approach Shot Game
    - Champion and Challenger both begin in middle of baseline
    - Pro feeds one of two options to champion:
      - Short ball for approach shot
      - Floater for high volley
    - Champion must hit all balls in the air **except for approach shots**
    - 3 rounds
      - Round 1 - First shot crosscourt
        - Champion’s first ball must land crosscourt or it’s out
        - Challenger must hit outside shot on their first ball or they are out
      - Round 2 - First shot down the line
        - Champion’s first ball must land down the line or it’s out
        - Challenger must hit outside shot on their first ball or they are out
      - Round 3 - First shot to Ad side
        - Champion’s first ball must land on the Ad side or it’s out
        - Challenger must hit backhand on their first ball or they are out

**Week 4 - Defense** - With two weeks in a row emphasizing players' abilities to create pressure we are conditioning them to search for offensive opportunities to move to net. As players begin to move forward more often it's also important they learn to absorb pressure when their opponent is on the attack. Playing defense requires both mental and physical composure. We'll teach them how to recognize a defensive situation so they can choose the right shot under pressure and challenge them to get an extra ball in play from an uncomfortable spot on court. Drills and games will focus on executing lobs and slices effectively while under physical (high intensity of movement to the ball) and tactical (opponent's positioning) pressure.

- **Mini Tennis Warmup - 15 Minutes**
- **Dead Ball Drills - 50 Minutes**
  - Volleys & Overheads - 10 Minutes
    - Volleys
      - 2 lines of players starting inside the service line
      - Double-rhythm feeding - two volleys mixing up forehands and backhands - players switch lines after hitting
      - Simple patterns
        - Anywhere
        - CC-DTL
        - DTL-CC
        - Deuce-Ad
        - Ad-Deuce
    - Overheads
      - 2 lines of players starting with racquets touching net
        - Remaining players waiting next to net posts for safety
      - Double-rhythm feeding - two overheads with players touching net again between shots - players switch lines after hitting
  - Approach Shot & Volley - 10 Minutes
    - 2 lines of players starting at the baseline
    - Double-rhythm feeding - one approach shot one volley - players switch lines after hitting
    - 2-ball patterns
      - CC-DTL
      - DTL-CC
      - Deuce-Ad
      - Ad-Deuce
  - **Defense (Theme) - 20 Minutes**
    - **Focal Points**
      - Players must be able to recognize when they are on defense to make the correct shot selection. They can recognize signs both in their own movement and in the ball quality of their opponent.
        - Movement
          - If the player is moving backwards
          - If the player is moving off the court
          - If the player feels they are losing control of their body
        - Opponent's ball quality
          - If the opponent adds additional power to the ball

- Mindset - Players must understand that, on defense, their main objective is to keep the ball in play. Many believe that they must hit good shots to get out of trouble, however at the Intermediate level making an additional ball in play is often enough to neutralize their opponent's pressure.
- Lobs
  - Swingpath - Players will now add a third swingpath to their repertoire. This swingpath for their lob should be more angular than their rally ball, with the racquet starting deeper below the ball and a higher follow through after contact.
  - Racquet face angle - Players must understand that an open racquet face is required to create effective height on their lobs
  - Swing speed - Players' initial reaction will be to slow down significantly with an open racquet face and angular swing path. However, effective lobs require both height and depth which make the ball travel a longer distance overall. Players may need to slow down, however this decrease in swing speed is usually no more than 10%.
- Backhand Slices
  - Continental grip and very firm hold on the racquet
  - Swingpath - Players should start with their racquet just above shoulder height on the side of their body. The racquet should travel mostly linearly to waist height at contact then rise again to shoulder height on follow through. As their racquet moves forward, their opposite arm should be moving backwards in an identical motion.
  - Racquet face angle - Players will start with their racquet face almost completely open during the preparation phase. However, at contact their racquet face should only be slightly open - almost flat. Upon follow through the racquet face should be completely open again
  - Body positioning - Players should be starting turned sideways and doing their best to prevent rotation in their shoulders and torso. As they finish a slice their shoulder line should remain parallel to the sideline.
  - Side effects
    - Sidespin - This will occur for one of two reasons:
      - Players are moving their wrist through contact
        - Advise them to squeeze the racquet tight and try to maintain a 90 degree between racquet and forearm
      - Players are rotating body through contact
        - Advise them to pay attention to their body positioning upon follow through as their shoulders should still be parallel to the sideline. It may also be helpful for them to lift their back foot off the ground through contact to prevent twisting.



- **Games - 50 Minutes**
  - **Focal Points**
    - Players should be doing their best to stay in control of their body and get an extra ball in play to keep points alive.
  - Serving Champ
    - Champion begins point with a serve
      - One serve only
      - Champion must say score before serving
  - Lobbing Champ
    - Running Forehand Lobs
      - Champion begins in Ad corner of baseline
        - Pro feeds wide ball to Deuce side for Champion to hit a forehand lob
        - Lob must go over height of side curtain or it's out
      - Challenger begins at "Home Base" at the net
        - Challenger must hit their first shot in the air
        - Challenger may choose to remain at net or move to baseline after first shot
          - This is based on the quality of their shot and their positioning in the court
    - Running Backhand Lobs
      - Champion begins in Deuce corner of baseline
        - Pro feeds wide ball to Ad side for Champion to hit a backhand lob
        - Lob must go over height of side curtain or it's out
      - Challenger begins at "Home Base" at the net
        - Challenger must hit their first shot in the air
        - Challenger may choose to remain at net or move to baseline after first shot
          - This is based on the quality of their shot and their positioning in the court
  - Slicing Champ
    - Champion and Challenger both begin in middle of baseline
    - Pro feeds Champion a backhand slice to begin the point
    - Champion must create backspin and follow through for their slice to count

**Week 5 - Doubles** - Many of our Intermediate players will end up playing doubles for at least one of their high school seasons. It's imperative they understand how to communicate and move properly with a partner and know the tactics leading to successful doubles play. Drills will ensure that players can direct the ball effectively at the net and also test their abilities to communicate and move while getting lobbed using the terms "switch" and "stay". Games will allow them to practice doubles tactics and communication in various contexts - both at the beginning of and during points.

- **Mini Tennis Warmup - 15 Minutes**
- **Dead Ball Drills - 50 Minutes**
  - Volleys & Overheads - 10 Minutes
    - Volleys

- 2 lines of players starting inside the service line
- Double-rhythm feeding - two volleys mixing up forehands and backhands - players switch lines after hitting
- Basic patterns
  - CC-DTL
  - DTL-CC
  - Deuce-Ad
  - Ad-Deuce
- Overheads
  - 2 lines of players starting with racquets touching net
    - Remaining players waiting next to net posts for safety
  - Double-rhythm feeding - two overheads with players touching net again between shots - players switch lines after hitting
- Transition Balls (Theme) - 15 Minutes
  - Approach Shots
    - 2 lines of players starting at the baseline
    - Double-rhythm feeding - one approach shot one volley - players switch lines after hitting
    - Must reach a certain number of balls in play in a row as a team. Pick a number between 8-12 that's realistic but challenging
      - Anywhere
      - Crosscourt
      - Down the line
      - Deuce side
      - Ad side
  - Serve & Volley
    - 2 lines of players starting at the baseline
    - **For safety, players must serve from at least halfway out from the middle of the baseline**
    - Players will serve then move forward in a straight line to hit a volley from "Home Base"
- Groundstrokes - 10 Minutes
  - Running Groundstrokes
    - 1 line of players starting at baseline in the middle
    - Single-rhythm feeding - Players will hit one shot running wide - Mix up forehands and backhands
      - Must reach a certain number of balls in play in a row as a team. Pick a number between 6-10 that's realistic but challenging
        - Anywhere
        - Crosscourt
        - Down the line
        - Deuce side
        - Ad side
- Doubles (Theme) - 15 Minutes
  - Focal Points
    - Doubles is about communicating and moving effectively as a team
      - Calling ball
        - "Mine"

- “Yours”
  - Moving together
    - “Switch”
    - “Stay”
    - When to use these terms?
      - Opponent lobbing with both players at the net
      - First must determine “mine” or “yours”
        - Who calls this?
          - **Always** person getting lobbed
          - They get to choose whether they’ll be able to hit an overhead or not
        - When calling “mine” player getting lobbed will also call “stay” and hit an overhead
        - When calling “yours” player getting lobbed will also call “switch” and move laterally to other half
          - Their partner will move diagonally backward to retrieve lob
- Roles and positions of all 4 players at beginning of point
  - Server
    - Standing at least halfway out from middle at the baseline
    - First priority is to call the score
    - Second priority is to get their serve in play
  - Returner
    - Standing at “Home Base” behind baseline crosscourt from server
    - Only priority is to get the return in play
  - Server’s Partner
    - Standing at “Home Base” at the net halfway between singles sideline and center line
    - Priority is to reach returner’s shot and hit it as a volley
      - If they succeed they should be aiming at returner’s partner
        - Why?
          - Returner’s partner is closest and has least time and space to react
  - Returner’s Partner
    - Straddling service line with outside foot in front and inside foot behind service line
    - Returner’s Partner is guaranteed not to hit a shot until the fourth ball in rally at earliest
      - Then what is their responsibility?
        - To call the serve out if it’s past the service line.



- If Champions can hit an overhead they should be looking to stay at net
  - If Champions call a switch they will most likely need to retreat to baseline
    - Challengers should begin to recognize this and look for opportunities to move forward, even possibly before the Champions retrieve the lob
- Doubles Skyball
  - Champion and Challenger teams both begin at baseline
    - **One Champion team only**
  - For the first point and whenever Champions win, pro feeds them another groundstroke to begin point.
  - When Challengers win, pro will count down from 3 then feed a lob, the “Skyball”, as they rotate to Champion side
  - Both teams must call every ball on their side as “Mine” or “Yours” or lose the point automatically

**Week 6 - Serves** - The most important shot in the sport. Players at the Intermediate level are capable of making serves in play consistently but their fundamentals are still a work in progress. This lesson will reinforce their ability to use the continental grip and execute a full-motion serve. We'll practice accuracy, hitting a slice serve, and producing more power on a flat serve. Games will provide them opportunities to test the effectiveness of both first and second serves using the various concepts they've practiced.

- **Mini Tennis Warmup - 15 Minutes**
- **Dead Ball Drills - 50 Minutes**
  - Volleys & Overheads - 10 Minutes
    - Volleys
      - 2 lines of players starting inside the service line
      - Double-rhythm feeding - two volleys mixing up forehands and backhands - players switch lines after hitting
      - Simple patterns
        - Anywhere
        - CC-DTL
        - DTL-CC
        - Deuce-Ad
        - Ad-Deuce
    - Overheads
      - 2 lines of players starting with racquets touching net
        - Remaining players waiting next to net posts for safety
      - Double-rhythm feeding - two overheads with players touching net again between shots - players switch lines after hitting
  - Approach Shot & Volley - 10 Minutes
    - 2 lines of players starting at the baseline
    - Double-rhythm feeding - one approach shot one volley - players switch lines after hitting
    - 2-ball patterns
      - CC-DTL
      - DTL-CC

- Deuce-Ad
  - Ad-Deuce
- Groundstrokes - 10 Minutes
  - Running Groundstrokes
    - 1 line of players starting at baseline in the middle
    - Single-rhythm feeding - Players will hit one shot running wide - Mix up forehands and backhands
      - Must reach a certain number of balls in play in a row as a team. Pick a number between 6-10 that's realistic but challenging
        - Anywhere
        - Crosscourt
        - Down the line
        - Deuce side
        - Ad side
- Serves (Theme) - 30 Minutes
  - Focal Points
    - The serve is the only shot which gives you 100% control of the outcome. This means it allows you to create situations that benefit you by dictating which shot your opponent hits at the beginning of the point. It's extremely important for players to feel confident in their ability to get points started with a serve so they can begin to use it to create more pressure.
    - Continental grip
    - Starting position - Players should begin turning sideways and start by holding the ball on top of their strings. This creates a supinated wrist.
    - Toss and preparation phase - Players should be aiming to toss the ball 6-8 inches inside the baseline and to their right (left for lefties). As they toss the ball they should be reaching their hitting arm back to the wall. By the time they release the toss, their hitting arm should be parallel to the ground.
    - Swinging to contact - As their hitting arm breaks parallel, their elbow should bend to 90 degrees. They'll then raise their elbow which should drop the tip of their racquet toward the ground. This will help them "bounce" the racquet up as they extend their elbow and reach toward contact.
    - Pronation - When using Continental Grip to serve, if players keep their wrist in a neutral position while swinging they will lead with the edge of their racquet. To contact the ball with their strings they'll need to move their forearm and wrist outwards (pronation) before contacting the ball.
  - Warmup - 3 sets of five serves in a row
    - Deuce side
    - Ad side
    - Alternating sides
    - **These should predominantly be second serves**
  - Accuracy - 4 sets of five serves
    - Use cones to divide each service box in half
    - Players must make a set of 5 serves to each half of each box
      - Not 5 in a row

- 5 serves plus or minus
      - +1 if they hit to the correct half of the box
      - No change if they hit to the incorrect half of the box
      - -1 if they hit a serve out
  - Players must understand that serving to a specific half will force their opponent to hit a specific shot.
    - On the Deuce side, serving toward the center line will force right-handed players to hit a backhand
- Flat Serve
  - Players must now increase their swing speed 10-15%
  - They should be practicing their pronation and trying to pronate faster to create more racquet head speed. They should be trying to hit the center of the ball by pronating right through contact.
  - Players should be focusing on how fast their racquet is moving instead of how fast the ball is moving.
    - 10% more racquet head speed does not always equal 10% more ball speed.
  - Players should be listening for a louder “pop” sound as the ball hits their strings
- Slice serve
  - Players should maintain the same swing speed as their flat serve.
  - Now, instead of pronating through contact they’ll lead with the edge of their racquet and pronate as the ball leaves their strings.
  - Players should be trying to hit the outside edge of the ball to create a slice serve.
    - They should be doing this by changing their racquet face angle, **not** their swingpath
      - Swingpath should still be completely forward into the court
  - Players should be listening for a higher pitched “click” sound as the ball hits their strings.
  - Side effects
    - Players may end up hitting too much of the outside of the ball. This will create lots of spin but not enough power for it to go over the net. It may also lead to more mishits.
      - Advise players to try to hit the ball one inch to the right of center to begin, and adjust more to the outside as they become successful
    - Players may find that they hit the outside of the ball but that it still sounds like a flat serve
      - This means they are altering swingpath instead of racquet face angle to hit the outside of the ball. Make sure they swing forward into the court and use their wrist to lead with the edge of their racquet
- **Games - 50 Minutes**
  - **Focal Points**
    - We’ve provided three ways for players to improve their serves - developing more accuracy, more power, and creating spin. As we play serving games, they

should be trying to implement these solutions to apply more pressure at the beginning of the point.

- Serving Champ
  - Champion begins point with a serve
    - One serve only
    - Champion must say score before serving
  - **Different scoring format**
    - Players will keep track of their own score as if they're playing a match.
      - 1 point is 15, 2 is 30, 3 is 40, and 4 is Game
    - The score limit is first player to win 2 Games
    - Players have "Pressure Point" situations
      - The first time a Champion reaches 40 they are in a "Pressure Point"
        - If the Champion loses this point they return to 0 (Love)
        - If this happens, the next time they reach 40 it is no longer a "Pressure Point" and their score is safe
      - This also occurs the first time they reach Game-40
        - If the Champion loses this point they return to 1 Game
- Serving Champ with 2 serves
  - Champion begins point with a serve
    - They now have both first and second serve opportunities
    - Champion must say score before serving
  - **Different scoring format**
    - Up to 15 points
    - If the Champion begins with a first serve and wins the point, they receive a bonus point to their score
    - If the Champion begins with a second serve and wins the point, they add a point as usual
    - If the Champion double faults they must do an exercise (5 pushups, burpees, etc)
    - This is to incentivize Champions to get a high percentage of first serves in play that create situations where they can win points easier. They do not need to hit aces to receive the bonus point.

**Week 7 - Returns** - The second-most important shot. This lesson we'll set players up with the proper footwork to prepare and return properly. We'll distinguish the differences in mindset and shot selection between first and second serves. Players will learn how to recognize and react to both faster and spinning serves that apply more pressure to them. Games will give them a look at the variety of serves from players in the group and allow players to adjust to the differences between them.

- **Mini Tennis Warmup - 15 Minutes**
- **Dead Ball Drills - 50 Minutes**
  - Volleys & Overheads - 5 Minutes
    - 2 lines of players starting inside the service line
    - Double-rhythm feeding - one volley one overhead - players switch lines after hitting
    - 2-ball patterns
      - CC-DTL

- DTL-CC
  - Deuce-Ad
  - Ad-Deuce
- Approach Shot & Volley - 5 Minutes
  - 2 lines of players starting at the baseline
  - Double-rhythm feeding - one approach shot one volley - players switch lines after hitting
  - 2-ball patterns
    - CC-DTL
    - DTL-CC
    - Deuce-Ad
    - Ad-Deuce
- Groundstrokes - 5 Minutes
  - Running Groundstrokes
    - 1 line of players starting at baseline in the middle
    - Single-rhythm feeding - Players will hit one shot running wide - Mix up forehands and backhands
      - Must reach a certain number of balls in play in a row as a team. Pick a number between 6-10 that's realistic but challenging
        - Anywhere
        - Crosscourt
        - Down the line
        - Deuce side
        - Ad side
- Serves - 15 Minutes
  - 3 sets of five serves in a row
    - Deuce side
    - Ad side
    - Alternating sides
    - **These should predominantly be second serves**
  - Accuracy - 4 sets of five serves
    - Use cones to divide each service box in half
    - Players must make a set of 5 serves to each half of each box
      - Not 5 in a row
      - 5 serves plus or minus
        - +1 if they hit to the correct half of the box
        - No change if they hit to the incorrect half of the box
        - -1 if they hit a serve out
- Returns (Theme) - 30 Minutes
  - Focal Points
    - Mindset
      - On a first serve, the returner is on defense. This means their priority needs to getting the ball in and they should consider defensive shot selection to make this objective easier.
      - On a second serve, the returner has an opportunity to create pressure. They should be looking to hit a more aggressive shot and perhaps even move forward to net afterward.

- Positioning - the default starting position to return is at “Home Base” behind the baseline. Players should also be starting with their outside foot behind the singles sideline to cover their angles correctly.
- Momentum - regardless of where the player starts and how fast the serve is moving, they should have enough time and space to move forward through contact.
- Adjustments - Players will receive a variety of serves from their pro and other players today. They have both technical and positioning adjustments they can make based on if they need more time and space.
  - Technical - Players can shorten their backswing to a lowercase “C” to make it easier to meet the ball in front of their body.
  - Positioning - Players can move their starting position back another racquet length to provide more time and space.
    - **They should still be moving forward through contact.**
- Footwork - Step, Splitstep
  - Players should be taking a step forward with either foot as the server tosses the ball. As the server contacts the ball, players should be landing in a split step - on their toes with knees slightly bent so they store power in their legs and can move in any direction immediately.
- Second Serve Returns
  - Two lines of players, one on each half, starting in the correct return position - “Home Base” with their outside foot behind the singles sideline.
  - Double-rhythm feeding - Pro will hit slow second serves to both returners. As the pro feeds, they should be saying “Step, Split” as they toss then hit the ball to help players execute footwork with correct timing. Returners will hit two shots before going out and switching lines.
  - These returns should be treated like approach shots. Players should have forward momentum through contact and should be standing at least a racquet length inside the baseline when hitting the ball.
  - As players begin to feel more confident and make more balls, encourage them to swing 10% faster to create more power.
  - Must reach a certain number of balls in play in a row as a team. Pick a number between 6-10 that’s realistic but challenging.
    - Anywhere
    - Ad Side
- First Serve Returns
  - Two lines of players, one on each half, starting in the correct return position - “Home Base” with their outside foot behind the singles sideline.
  - Double-rhythm feeding - Pro will hit serves to both returners. As the pro feeds, they should be saying “Step, Split” as they toss then hit the ball to help players execute footwork with correct timing. Returners will hit two shots before going out and switching lines.
  - Flat serves
    - Players should be starting another racquet length behind “Home Base” so they have more time and space to return. They should also be trying to use a shorter backswing when returning.

- Since these returns are more defensive, players should be trying to get the ball high and deep through the middle of the court. This allows them plenty of margin for error.
- Slice Serves
  - Players should be starting another racquet length behind “Home Base” so they have more time and space to return. They should also be trying to use a shorter backswing when returning.
  - Since these returns are more defensive, players should be trying to get the ball high and deep through the middle of the court. This allows them plenty of margin for error.
  - Since this ball curves from left to right for returners, they should be prepared to hit more forehand returns. If they see the ball bouncing directly in front of them, most likely it will spin to their forehand side.
  - As the ball spins more, it moves forward through the court less. It’s important that players move in a forward diagonal to intercept the serve earlier.
- Random
  - Players hit one return before switching lines
  - Pro mixes up flat and slice serves randomly.
  - Players need to react to the two different serves they may receive.
    - Watch for racquet face angle of server at contact
    - Listen for sound off server’s racquet
      - “Pop” means flat serve
      - “Click” means slice serve
- Games - 50 Minutes
  - Focal Points
    - Returning is an often overlooked and underpracticed aspect of the sport. However, being an effective returner puts mental pressure on the server to go for higher risk shots. Returners who can neutralize pressure on first serves and apply their own pressure on second serves force their opponents into poorer decision making. Returning well means applying their footwork correctly, recognizing the serve coming to them, and making the right decision in their shot selection before executing.
  - Serving Champ
    - Champion begins point with a serve
      - One serve only
      - Champion must say score before serving
    - Different scoring format
      - Players will keep track of their own score as if they’re playing a match.
        - 1 point is 15, 2 is 30, 3 is 40, and 4 is Game
      - The score limit is first player to win 2 Games
      - Players have “Pressure Point” situations
        - The first time a Champion reaches 40 they are in a “Pressure Point”
          - If the Champion loses this point they return to 0 (Love)



- Ad-Deuce
- Groundstrokes - 10 Minutes
  - Running Groundstrokes
    - 1 line of players starting at baseline in the middle
    - Single-rhythm feeding - Players will hit one shot running wide - Mix up forehands and backhands
      - Must reach a certain number of balls in play in a row as a team. Pick a number between 6-10 that's realistic but challenging
        - Anywhere
        - Crosscourt
        - Down the line
        - Deuce side
        - Ad side
  - Running Backhand Slices
    - 1 line of players starting at baseline in Deuce corner
    - Single-rhythm feeding - Players will hit one backhand slice running wide to the Ad side
- Serves - 10 Minutes
  - 3 sets of five serves in a row
    - Deuce side
    - Ad side
    - Alternating sides
    - **These should predominantly be second serves**
  - Accuracy - 4 sets of five serves
    - Use cones to divide each service box in half
    - Players must make a set of 5 serves to each half of each box
      - Not 5 in a row
      - 5 serves plus or minus
        - +1 if they hit to the correct half of the box
        - No change if they hit to the incorrect half of the box
        - -1 if they hit a serve out
- Returns -10 Minutes
  - Second Serve Returns
    - Two lines of players, one on each half, starting in the correct return position - "Home Base" with their outside foot behind the singles sideline.
    - Double-rhythm feeding - Pro will hit slow second serves to both returners. As the pro feeds, they should be saying "Step, Split" as they toss then hit the ball to help players execute footwork with correct timing. Returners will hit two shots before going out and switching lines.
    - These returns should be treated like approach shots. Players should have forward momentum through contact and should be standing at least a racquet length inside the baseline when hitting the ball.
    - As players begin to feel more confident and make more balls, encourage them to swing 10% faster to create more power.
    - Must reach a certain number of balls in play in a row as a team. Pick a number between 6-10 that's realistic but challenging.
      - Anywhere
      - Ad Side



- Lob Retrieve Game
  - Champion team begins with both players touching net with racquets
  - Challenger team begins at baseline
  - Both teams must call every ball on their side as “Mine” or “Yours” or lose the point automatically
  - Coach feeds lob over Champion team
    - Champion team must call lob with “Mine, stay” or “Yours, switch”
  - Both teams should be figuring out where to move after lob is retrieved
    - If Champions can hit an overhead they should be looking to stay at net
    - If Champions call a switch they will most likely need to retreat to baseline
      - Challengers should begin to recognize this and look for opportunities to move forward, even possibly before the Champions retrieve the lob
- Doubles Approach Shot Game
  - Champion and Challenger teams both begin in middle of baseline
  - Both teams must call every ball on their side as “Mine” or “Yours” or lose the point automatically
  - Pro feeds one of two options to champion:
    - Short ball for approach shot
    - Floater for high volley
    - Champion must hit the first ball cross-court to begin point.
  - Champion must hit all balls in the air **except for approach shots**
- Running Backhand Game
  - Champion begins in Deuce corner
  - Pro feeds ball to Ad side for Champion to hit a running backhand
  - Challenger begins in center of baseline
  - First backhand crosscourt
    - Champion’s first ball must land crosscourt or it’s out
    - Challenger must hit backhand on their first ball or they are out