

## 9-10 Intermediate

**Saturday 1:30pm, Sunday 12pm, Tuesday 6pm, Wednesday 5:30pm**

9-10 Intermediate players have generally played 6-12 months and have proven that they are willing and capable of running to every ball and swinging with a full follow through. They are generally capable of keeping 2-3 consecutive shots in play from the 60-foot baseline. The Intermediate level is where we'll challenge them by increasing the pace and physicality of their points so they understand the athleticism required in tennis. At this point, conceptually we want them to learn how to direct the ball more accurately and begin to make decisions on where they are aiming on the court. We will also introduce the idea of moving forward to net and hitting volleys and overheads. Finally, we want to generate their interest in beginning to compete in the USTA U10 progression of tournaments.

### **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
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- **Mini Tennis Warmup - 10 Minutes**
    - Mini Groundstrokes - 5 minutes
      - Slow, full swings with follow through
      - Ball bouncing halfway between service line and net
    - Mini Volleys - 5 minutes
      - Players standing halfway between net and service line
      - Open racquet faces
      - Players should be moving to contact ball on side of body
    - 1-2 partner competitions for each progression with exercises for non-winners\

**Weeks 1 & 2 - Groundstrokes** - 9-10 Intermediate players are capable of getting 2-3 consecutive shots in play from the 60-foot baseline, however this is usually at a slow pace both regarding their movement and swing speed. As they progress at the Intermediate level we want them to begin to move and swing faster as they build their athletic competencies in the sport. We also want them to begin understanding the tactics of playing from the baseline. They should start recognizing where they want to hit the ball and be able to direct 1-2 shots in a row to a half of the court. 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 - 10 Minutes**
- **Dead Ball Drills - 30 Minutes**
  - **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 or slightly open and wrist should be firm at contact. 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**
    - 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 as a team. Pick a number between 6-10 that’s realistic but challenging.
          - Anywhere in a row
          - Crosscourt plus or minus one
          - Down the line plus or minus one
          - Players must follow through to receive a point
    - 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 as a team. Pick a number between 6-10 that’s realistic but challenging
          - Anywhere in a row
          - Crosscourt plus or minus one
          - Down the line plus or minus one
          - Players must follow through to receive a point
    - 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 in a row
          - Crosscourt plus or minus one
          - Down the line plus or minus one
          - Deuce side plus or minus one

- Ad side plus or minus one
  - Players must follow through to receive a point
- Serves (10 minutes)
  - 3 sets of five serves in a row
    - Deuce side
    - Ad side
    - Alternating sides
  - **These should predominantly be second serves**
- **Games - 40 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
  - 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

**Weeks 3 & 4 - 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. These lessons will teach them the fundamentals of a basic full-motion serve. They'll also practice their consistency and accuracy hitting to halves of the box. Games will provide them opportunities to test the effectiveness of both first and second serves using the concepts they've practiced.

- **Mini Tennis Warmup - 10 Minutes**
- **Dead Ball Drills - 40 Minutes**
  - 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 in a row
          - Crosscourt plus or minus one
          - Down the line plus or minus one
          - Deuce side plus or minus one
          - Ad side plus or minus one
          - Players must follow through to receive a point
  - **Serves (Theme) - 30 Minutes**



**Weeks 5 & 6 - Approach Shots, Volleys, and Overheads** - With the smaller size of the Orange Ball court, moving forward to net is an easy and effective way to win more points quickly. At their age and experience however, most players in 9-10 Intermediate are unfamiliar with the concept of hitting volleys until we introduce it to them in lessons. The drills in these lessons will teach them how to move forward with an approach shot, where to stand when at the net, and how to hit volleys and overheads with proper technique and control over their body. Games will allow them to recognize how much offensive pressure they create by playing in the front half of the court.

- **Mini Tennis Warmup - 10 Minutes**
- **Dead Ball Drills - 40 Minutes**
  - **Volleys & Overheads (Theme) - 20 Minutes**
    - **Focal Points**
      - 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 forward 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.
      - 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**
      - 1 line of players starting inside the service line
      - Single-rhythm feeding - one random volley per player - feed the ball so it dips slightly before reaching the player. This will force them to move forward through contact. Try to keep this moving quickly so they are constantly running, whether it's to the ball or to the back of the line
      - 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 in a row
        - Crosscourt plus or minus one
        - Down the line plus or minus one
    - **Overheads**
      - 1 line of players starting inside the service line
      - Single-rhythm feeding - one overhead per player - feed the ball slightly to their left or right so they need to track and move to the ball before hitting.
      - 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 in a row
        - Crosscourt plus or minus one

- Down the line plus or minus one
  - Players must follow through to opposite hip to receive a point
- **Volley & Overhead**
  - 1 line of players starting inside the service line
  - Single-rhythm feeding - one random volley and one overhead per player - feed the volley so it dips slightly before reaching the player. Feed the overhead so they have to move slightly to their left or right before hitting
  - 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 in a row
    - Crosscourt plus or minus one
    - Down the line plus or minus one
    - Players must follow through to opposite hip on overhead to receive a point
- **Approach Shots (Theme) - 10 Minutes**
  - **Focal Points**
    - Players must be able to recognize when they should be moving forward to net. As they see the ball bouncing inside the service line they should be thinking about hitting an approach shot and moving forward.
    - Movement - Players should be running forward as they hit the ball so they can create power easier and get to "Home Base" quicker after hitting.
    - Spacing - Especially at a younger age, as players move forward they have a tendency to run directly toward the ball first. This leads to them lacking the space to hit and often forces them to stop their forward momentum and begin moving sideways to create a contact zone. It's important that players turn sideways and prepare their racquet before moving forward so they establish their contact zone early and can feel confident running through their shot.
    - Positioning - After hitting their approach shot, players should be trying to get to "Home Base" as quickly as possible. As they move forward, it's also important they get their racquet into a ready position so they're prepared to volley afterward.
  - **Approach Shot & Volley**
    - 1 line of players starting inside the service line
    - Single-rhythm feeding - one random approach shot and one random volley per player - feed the approach shot so the ball lands a racquet length inside the service line and forces players to move diagonally forward to it. Make sure players begin to recover to the middle of "Home Base" before feeding a volley
    - 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 in a row
      - Deuce side plus or minus one
      - Ad side plus or minus one
      - Players must follow through to opposite shoulder on approach shot to receive a point
- Serves (10 minutes)





- Approach Shot Game
  - Champion and Challenger teams both begin in middle of baseline
  - Pro feeds short ball to Champion team to hit approach shot
    - Champion team should recover to “Home Base” at the net after their approach shot
    - The Champion who is not hitting should be moving forward while their partner hits the approach shot and should get to “Home Base” first
  - Champion team must hit all balls in the air **except for approach shots**
  - Both teams must call each ball as “Mine” or “Yours” or they are out automatically