



Matchplay Drills for Beginners

Assessing Player Readiness

The following is for Beginners who have been successful in Individual Skills and are ready to transition to matchplay. Athletes learn to combine strokes with movement. Athletes tend to need a slower ball and a smaller defined space. Common mistakes are over hitting, poor footwork, lack of court coverage, little preparation, and double service faults.

Suggested lesson activities

A. Warm-up

- ♦ **3 ball line run**
 - ♦ Place 1 ball at the net in the ad alley, 1 ball at the net at the center line and 1 ball at the net in the deuce alley.
 - ♦ Players form a single line at the baseline in the ad alley. Each player has 1 ball, 1st player runs toward the net with their ball, bends down and replaces ball at the net. Then runs backwards to the service line, shuffles to the center line, runs up and exchanges balls, runs backwards back to the service line, shuffles over to deuce alley, runs up and exchanges ball the runs backwards to the baseline and shuffles across to go to the end of the line.
 - ♦ The 2nd player goes when the 1st player shuffles toward the center line.
- ♦ **Shuffle Watch**
 - ♦ Players form a single file line, facing the net and the 1st person is 3 feet from the net.
 - ♦ The coach stands on the opposite side of the net. The coach points to either of the alleys. The players must shuffle in that direction until the coach points to other alley. The time between changing directions shortens. Athletes must keep their eyes on the coach at all time and their shoulders square to the net.
- ♦ **Run and Shuffle**

2 cones for each player. Set one for each player on the deuce single sideline and one on the ad single side line.

 - ♦ Players form a single file line, facing the net and the 1st person is 3 feet from the net. On signal, players run to the Deuce-Single sideline, touch the cone with their left hand and shuffle back to center.
 - ♦ Players then run toward the Ad-Alley, touch the cone with right hand, then shuffle back to the center.
- ♦ **Agility – Racquet quickness**
 - ♦ Two players stand facing one another, each standing a racquet on the tip of the frame with the handle pointing up. At the count of three, the players will switch place and catch the other player's racquet without letting it drop. After several successful trials, move the children back a half step at a time and see how far they can go without letting the racquets drop.
- ♦ **Cone Topples**

12 – 6" cones spread all over court. ½ are upright and the other ½ are on their side.

 - ♦ Players form two teams. Each team has a specific job. 1st job is to tip over the cone that is upright with their hand. 2nd job is to set the cones upright. Play for 1 minute and see which team has the most. Then switch jobs.



B. Sending/Receiving/Rally/ Movement

- ♦ Koosh ball pass

Use one Koosh ball or beanbag for each pair. Have the players begin by standing close together with their racquets, passing the Koosh ball back and forth from one racquet to another. After several successful trials, have them move back so they use a gentle toss to get the Koosh ball from one racquet to the other. Add a challenge by tossing the Koosh ball low, high, and even adding a creative catch, such as standing on one leg, between the legs, just above the ground, on one knee, etc.

- ♦ Koosh ball step back

This is similar to the above activity but kids move one step apart each time they toss and catch the Koosh ball. See how far apart the players can get without dropping the Koosh ball.

- ♦ Rally Me

Toss ball up, let bounce in ring, tap up, let bounce in ring, and repeat for 1 minute First use – Palm up tap, then palm down tap and finally alternate palm up /palm down.

- ♦ Partner Rally

Same as Rally Me but partners alternate tapping up after bounce in target ring. Count to see how many they can do in 1 minute.

- ♦ Toss and Tap – Players stand 6-8' part.

One player tosses the ball to the other player who traps the ball against the racquet strings (1 bounce). The tosser tries to move their partner up and back and side to side. (When trapping, the racquet butt cap should be pressed up against the waist near the belt buckle and the ball should be caught (trapped) against the strings with non-dominant hand. The trapper rolls the ball back to the tosser.

- ♦ Toss, Hit and Catch

Players are 8-10 feet apart. One player tosses a ball underhand so it bounces once. The partner hits the ball with a forehand groundstroke back to the tossing partner who catches the ball and tosses it back. See how many times you can toss, hit and catch without a miss.

- ♦ 1st round – forehand ground stroke
- ♦ 2nd round – backhand ground stroke
- ♦ 3rd round – forehand volley
- ♦ 4th round – backhand volley

- ♦ Feed and Trap

Players are 8-10 feet apart Players take turns drop- hitting to each other and trapping the ball on their strings with their hand.

- ♦ Feed-hit-Trap

Player A feeds (drop hits) the ball to Player B. Player B hits the ball back to Player A (groundstroke or volley) Player A traps the ball on the strings and repeats the sequence.

- ♦ Toss and Trap

Player stands with non-dominant shoulder to fence, court curtain or wall. With ball in non-dominant hand, palm up, player tosses the ball up and tries to trap it with racquet strings.



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- ♦ **Serve and Trap**

Player serves to wall target and tries to trap the rebound with the racquet strings and non-dominate hand.

- ♦ **Serve, Return and Trap**

Player A serves to Player B, Player B returns to Player A; Player A traps the ball on the strings with hand. Then serves again. After 2 serves, switch.

- ♦ **Wall Rally**

Players attempt to rally the ball against a wall and set a personal best for longest rally. Players can be required to alternate hitting forehands and backhands. Note: Targets can be taped against the wall for players to aim toward. Players can also work together and alternate hits.

- ♦ **Rally poker**

1 person closet to coach runs and gets a card they must rally that number in a row over the net. Once done they can get another card. After 3 minutes make best poke hand.

- ♦ 1st round – forehand,
- ♦ 2nd round – backhand
- ♦ 3rd round alternate

- ♦ **Tag singles**

Players form 2 single file lines across the net from each other. The first person in each line starts on the service line and the others stand behind a safe distance. The player hits the ball and rotates to end of their line.

- ♦ 1st round – hit straight ahead both service boxes.
- ♦ 2nd round- hit straight ahead both service boxes using forehand only.
- ♦ 3rd round – hit straight ahead both service boxes using backhand only.
- ♦ 4th round – hit straight ahead both service boxes alternating forehand and backhand.
- ♦ 5th round – diagonal (Deuce service box to deuce service box) and continue.
- ♦ 6th round – diagonal (Ad service box to ad service box) and continue.

- ♦ **Round the World**

Players form 2 single file lines across the net from each other. The first person in each line starts on the service line and the others stand behind a safe distance. The player hits the ball and runs to their right, around the net and goes to the end of the opposite line. See how many consecutive hits can be done.

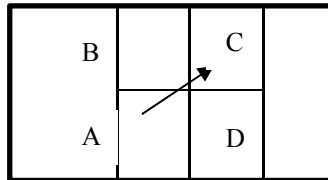
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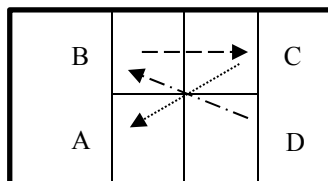


C. Lead Up Games – Red foam ball and 42' court (service boxes only)

- ♦ Throw It – Doubles – Players A, B and Players C, D
 - ♦ Players stand behind service line facing their opponents on opposite service line.
 - ♦ Player A begins and has 2 attempts to throw the ball overhand over the net to the diagonal service box. (Deuce to deuce) *If both attempts fail, Player B is next to throw and throws to Player D.*



- ♦ Player C catches it after 1 bounce and throws it overhand over the net. The ball must bounce in either service box.
 - ♦ Play continues until a mistake is made and point is awarded to the winner.
 - ♦ Player B next to serve. Player B serves to Player D and play continues as before.
 - ♦ Player C serves the 3rd point and Player D the 4th point.
 - ♦ Play continues until one team has 4 points.
- ♦ Figure 8 Rally
 - ♦ Four players practice keeping one ball in play following a figure 8 pattern. After each successful four shot rally, player rotates.



D. Tournament Warm-up:

Each match has a 5 minute warm-up period. After the official has flipped the coin to decide server/receiver, players warm up on the side they will begin play on.

- ♦ Rally straight ahead – 2 minute
- ♦ Practice volleys -1 minute (one at net-one service line and switch positions after 30 seconds)
- ♦ Practice serves 2 minutes
 - ♦ Use two balls.
 - ♦ Serve 2 and receiver catches each one.
 - ♦ Receiver becomes the server and serves 2 back

Coaching Tips

- ❑ Build up athletes' stamina for competition. Matches can last from 15 minutes to 90 minutes.
- ❑ Encourage them to drink plenty of water, choose nutritious food and develop an exercise plan.