

“Learning to Play, Playing to Learn”

Team Practice Games Samples Handout

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Shaping Game Play in Net/Court Games

The goal of “Shaping Play Practices” is to design activities that a) offers maximum participation levels, b) mirror the actual game, and c) readily transfer to the parent game

In general, techniques (i.e., how the ball/shuttlecock is controlled/directed) and tactical moves (e.g., getting back to base position, shot placement, decision-making) are practiced in unison

If class time is given to primarily technique-only practice, the activity should be arranged so there are specific goals/challenges

Sample ways of shaping game play

- 1. Rules are modified**
- 2. Altering the size and shape of the playing area (e.g., shorter-wide; narrower-longer courts)**
- 3. Restricting players movement/actions (e.g., one player is restricted to back third of the court)**
- 4. Differential scoring (e.g., winners scored using a particular stroke [e.g., drop shot] are worth extra points)**
- 5. Equipment is modified (e.g., lower/raise net somewhat; no net; type of ball)**
- 6. Time limitations (i.e., timed games)**
- 7. Techniques are practiced in game contexts vs. decontextualized drills**

Personal Best Technique Challenges

Players' challenge:

- Keep a cooperative rally going as long as you can.
- Count each touch as a point.
- Use any stroke (i.e., forehand & backhand ground strokes and/or volleys).
- ***ALWAYS restart if ball goes in the net or out-of-bounds.***

Reminders:

- Keep focus on trying to beat your previous best rally!
- Work together with your partner!
- These are good warm-up activities!
- Don't worry about others' scores!

Advanced Challenge variations:

- Keep cooperative rally going using only one stroke (e.g., only the backhand or only the volley).
- Keep it going using only alternating strokes (e.g., switching forehand & backhand ground strokes only).

Personal Best Technique Challenges

What technique is the focus?

- ❖ Forehand ground stroke?
- ❖ Backhand ground stroke?
- ❖ Volleys?
- ❖ Others?

What technical aspects are you watching for?

- ❖ Footwork?
- ❖ Stroke preparation?
- ❖ Swing
- ❖ Return to ready position?

Teacher or Team Coach:

- Look to see the players are focused on the challenge that you assigned.
- Which team members are having more difficulty?
- Check to see what is (not) working well.
- **Let them know!** 😊
- Ask him/her what might be done differently to use more effective shots.
- Be sure to give feedback on what is going well!

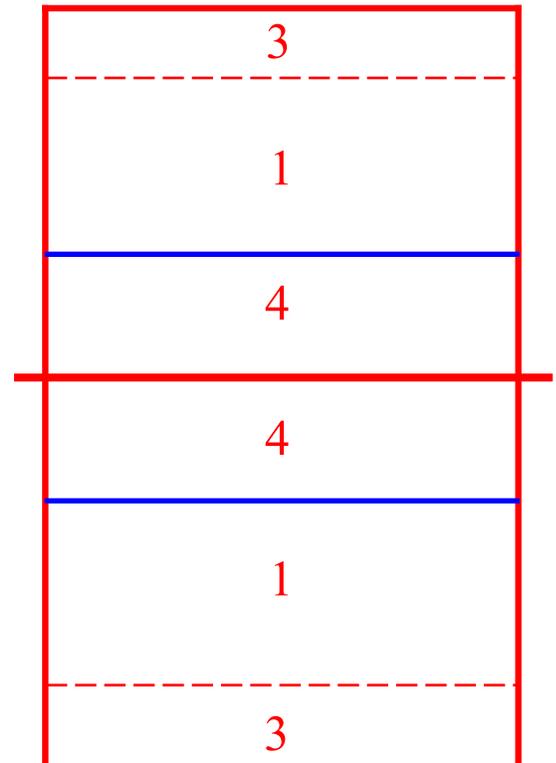
Possible question to ask:

- What might you try to do to help your teammate be able to hit a good return shot to keep the rally going?
- As they gain experience, can they challenge themselves by hitting the ball as close to the net as possible?

Practice Game: Bonus Ball

Players, remembers:

- Winners are valued based on the points marked on the court.
- Call out the score before each serve!
- Serves touching the net are legal.
- Serve must go past the ***blue front service line***.
- Rally scoring.
- Balls on outside line are in.
- Winners on interior (dotted) lines get lower point values of the two.
- Game goes to 10 or are timed.



Advanced Game Variation:

The teacher may change the point value of the front and back court.

Practice Game: Bonus Ball

What tactical problem is the focus?

- ❖ ***Offensive*** – Creating space – move opponent out of position? Set up an attack shot?
- ❖ ***Defensive*** – Defend your court space? Maintain/return to base position?

What tactical moves are emphasized?

- ❖ ***Offensive*** – Decision-making (i.e., When to use the assigned stroke? Ball placement?; Remembering to return to Base?)
- ❖ ***Defensive*** – Decision making (i.e., Where to move, covering the entire court“). Maintain/return to base pos.?
- ❖ ***Both*** – Seeing your opponents’ moves; Anticipate their possible next action.

Possible questions to ask:

- What do you need to do to get your opponent to the back court? Or the front court?
- When would be a better time is to try and score in the 3 box? What about 4 box?
- How can you increase your chances of having good shots at the areas w. higher bonus values?
- When might the 1 box be the best option?

Teacher or Team Coach:

- Look to see if/how players are trying to move their opponent out of position.
- What might you ask players regarding shot selection?
- Check to see what is (not) working well.
- **Let them know!** 😊

If/when using time-outs:

- Ask him/her what might be done differently to use more effective shots.
- Be sure to give feedback on what is going well!

Practice Game: Bonus Ball II

Players, remember:

- Rally scoring.
- Balls hit out-of-bounds or in the net result in 1 point for opponent.
- Winners are valued according to the points marked on the right.
- *Call out the score before each serve!*
- Serve must go past the *blue solid service line*.
- Serves touching the net are legal.
- Rally scoring.
- Balls on outside line are in.
- Winners on interior (dotted) lines get the higher point values of the two.

4	3	4
2	1	2
4	3	4
4	3	4
2	1	2
4	3	4



Practice Game: Bonus Ball II

What tactical problem is the focus?

- ❖ ***Offensive*** – Getting opponent out of position? Setting up attack shot?
- ❖ ***Defensive*** – Maintain court coverage – defending space?

What tactical moves are emphasized?

- ❖ ***Offensive*** – Decision-making (i.e., shot selection, ball placement)?
Anticipation?
- ❖ ***Defensive*** – Decision making (i.e., where to move, covering the entire court“). Return to base position?
- ❖ ***Both*** – Seeing your opponent actions; Anticipate their possible next action.

Possible questions to ask:

- How can you increase your chances of having good shots at the areas w. higher bonus values?
- When might you be better off NOT going for the 3 and/or 4 boxes?
- Which bonus areas are easier to defend? Harder? Why?
- When might be a good time to aim for sides? What about 3's & 4's?

Teacher or Team Coach:

- Look to see if/how players try to move their opponent out of position.
- What might you ask players regarding shot placement?
- Check to see what is (not) working well.
- **Let them know!** 😊

If/when using time-outs:

- Ask him/her what might be done differently to use more effective shots.
- Be sure to give feedback on what is going well! 😊

Practice Game: Bingo Ball

Players, remember:

(Extension of Bonus Pickle Ball II)

- Players play to score in/win all ‘zones.’
- Zones are won by a) hitting an outright winner into a ‘zone’ or b) being the first player to get to five points – if this occurs the player gets to choose a zone.
- The winning player is the one who gets all nine zones first.
- Zones can only be won once and zones cannot be traded.
- Serves must go past the dotted **blue** line.

If you are not certain about which box was hit, . . . ”Do over/Replay the point”! 😊

7	8	9
4	5	6
1	2	3
3	2	1
6	5	4
9	8	7

Remember the following:

- Serves touching the net are legal.
- Rally scoring.
- Balls on outside line are in.
- Winners on interior (dotted) lines get lower point values of the two.

Practice Game: Bingo Ball

What tactical problem is the focus?

- ❖ ***Offensive*** – Creating space to get a zone? Setting up an attack shot?
- ❖ ***Defensive*** – Defend zones not yet scored on?

What tactical moves are emphasized?

- ❖ ***Offensive*** – Decision-making (i.e., shot selection, ball placement)?
Anticipation?
- ❖ ***Defensive*** – Decision making (i.e., where to move, covering the entire court“). Return to base position?
- ❖ ***Both*** – Seeing your opponents’ moves; Anticipate their possible next action.

Possible questions to ask:

- Which zone is easiest to defend?
Hardest? Why?
- Which zones will be easier for winners? Why?
- When might be a good time to aim for the zones nearest the net? What about the 7 or 9 box?
- What might you do to try and gain zones you do not have, when you begin to accumulate others?
- Think what might be an effective way to score in each box.
- To score the 5 box, what do you have to do first?

Teacher or Team Coach:

- Look to see if/how players try to move their opponent out of position.
- What might you ask players regarding shot selection?
- Check to see what is (not) working well.
- **Let them know!** 😊

If/when using time-outs:

- Ask him/her what might be done differently to use more effective shots.
- Be sure to give feedback on what is going well!

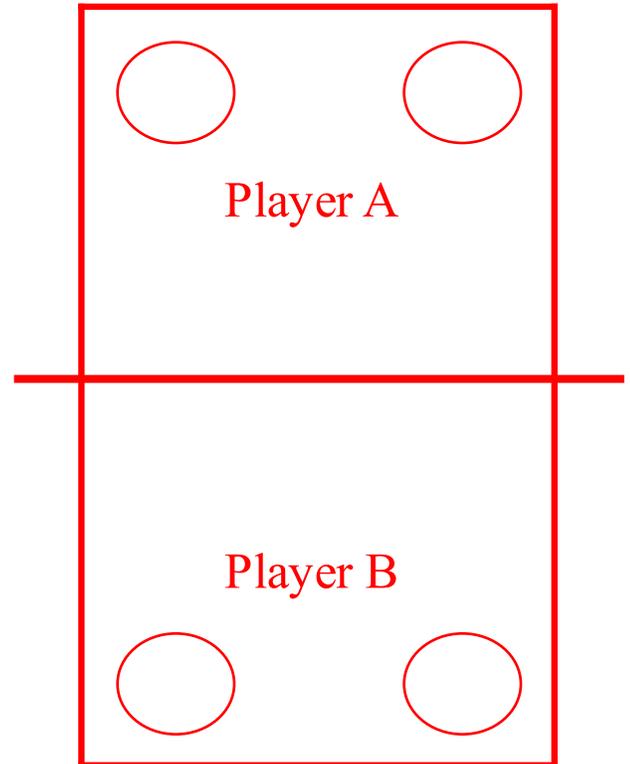
Practice Game: Target Ball

Players, remember:

- Regular scoring.
- Games go to 5 (or are timed).
- Call out the score before each serve.
- Lines are “in.” Winners on circle target lines get the bonus value.

PLUS

- Winners hit in opponent’s targets result in 2 bonus pts.
- Teacher may modify size and location of circle targets.



Advanced Game

Variation:

Only winners in the circular targets count.



Practice Game: Target Ball

What tactical problem is the focus?

- ❖ ***Offensive*** – Creating space – move opponent out of position? Set up an attack shot? Anticipation?
- ❖ ***Defensive*** – Defend your court space? Maintain/return to base pos.?

What tactical moves are emphasized?

- ❖ ***Offensive*** – Decision-making (i.e., When to go for the circle target? Ball placement?; Remembering to return to Base?)
- ❖ ***Defensive*** – Decision making (i.e., Where to move, covering the entire court“). Maintain/return to base pos.?
- ❖ ***Both*** – Seeing your opponents’ moves; Anticipate their possible next action.

Possible questions to ask:

- What might you do to increase your chances of hitting a target?
- When would it be better to try and score deep or short? What shot might be effective then?
- How can you decrease your opponents chances of hitting your bonus targets?
- What tactical moves might help you gaining an advantage? How? Why?

Teacher or Team Coach:

- Look to see if/how players are trying to move their opponent out of position.
- What might you ask players regarding court positioning?
- Check to see what is (not) working well.
- **Let them know!** 😊

If/when using time-outs:

- Ask him/her what might be done differently to use more effective shots.
- Be sure to give feedback on what is going well!

Practice Game: Cross court vs. down-the-line Ball

Players, remember:

- Regular rally scoring.
- Games go to 5 or 10 (or are timed).
- ***Call out score before each serve!***
- Lines are “in.”

PLUS

- You can score 2 pts. By hitting a winner using the assigned stroke.



Advanced Game Variation:

Scoring can only occur by using the assigned strokes.

Practice Game: Cross-court vs. down-the-line Ball

What tactical problem is the focus?

- ❖ ***Offensive*** – Creating space – move opponent out of position? Set up an attack shot?
- ❖ ***Defensive*** – Defend your court space? Maintain/return to base pos.?

What tactical moves are emphasized?

- ❖ ***Offensive*** – Decision-making (i.e., When to use the assigned stroke? Ball placement?; Shot selection? Anticipation?)
- ❖ ***Defensive*** – Decision making (i.e., Where to move, covering the entire court“). Remembering to return to Base?)
- ❖ ***Both*** – Seeing your opponents’ moves; Anticipate their possible next action.

Possible questions to ask:

- When would be a good time to use the assigned stroke for a winner? Why?
- When would it not be a good time? Why?
- What might you do to keep the opposing player from using his/her assigned stroke?
- What do you notice about the opponent’s shot selection & shot placement?

Teacher or Team Coach:

- Look to see if/how players try to move their opponent out of position.
- What might you ask players regarding shot selection?
- Check to see what is (not) working well.
- **Let them know!** 😊

If/when using time-outs:

- Ask him/her what might be done differently to use more effective shots.
- Be sure to give feedback on what is going well!

***Practice Game:
Non-volley Zone Ball***

Players, remember:

- Regular scoring.
- Games go to 5 or 8 (or are timed).
- Ball on line are “in.”
- Serves touching net are “legal.”

PLUS

Winners scored in the non-volley zone = 2 bonus pts.

Advanced Game Variation:

Scoring occurs only by hitting non-volley zone winners .



Practice Game: Non-volley Zone Ball***What tactical problem is the focus?***

- ❖ ***Offensive*** – Creating space – move opponent out of position? Set up an attack shot?
- ❖ ***Defensive*** – Defend your court space? Maintain/return to base pos.?

What tactical moves are emphasized?

- ❖ ***Offensive*** – Decision-making (i.e., When to use the assigned stroke? Ball placement?; Remembering to return to Base?)
- ❖ ***Defensive*** – Decision making (i.e., Where to move, covering the entire court“). Maintain/return to base pos.?
- ❖ ***Both*** – Seeing your opponents’ moves; Anticipate their possible next action.

Possible questions to ask:

- What do you need to do to effectively use the non-volley zone as the target for (bonus) pts.?
- When might you take advantage of that zone?
- Where does your opponent have to be?
- How can you get your opponent out of position?
- When might be a good time to go for the non-volley winner?

Teacher or Team Coach:

- Look to see if/how players are trying to move their opponent out of position.
- What might you ask players about shot selection?
- Check to see what is (not) working well.
- **Let them know!** 😊

If/when using time-outs:

- Ask him/her what might be done differently to use more effective shots.
- Be sure to give feedback on what is going well!

Practice Game: Moat Game

Players, remember:

- Call out the score before each serve!
- In this game there is no NO NET!
- Regular rally scoring.
PLUS
- Balls hit in the moat = 1 point for the opponent.
- Balls on the line are “in.”
- Games go to 8 or are timed.
- The teacher may change the width
of the Moat. . .

Player A

Moat Area

Player B

Game Variation:

The teacher may vary the width of the moat.

Practice Game: Moat Game

What tactical problem is the focus?

- ❖ ***Offensive*** – Creating space – move opponent out of position? Set up an attack shot?
- ❖ ***Defensive*** – Defend your court space? Maintain/return to base pos.?

What tactical moves are emphasized?

- ❖ ***Offensive*** – Decision-making (i.e., When to use the assigned stroke? Ball placement?; Remembering to return to Base?)
- ❖ ***Defensive*** – Decision making (i.e., Where to move, covering the entire court“). Maintain/return to base pos.?
- ❖ ***Both*** – Seeing your opponents’ moves; Anticipate their possible next action.

Possible questions to ask:

- How can you get your opponent to the right or left side of the court?
- When would it be better to try and score deep? What shot might be effective then?
- How does the fact that there is NO NET affect the types of shot that you can play?
- How can you decrease your opponents chances of hitting a winning shot?
- What tactic might you apply in this game and why?

Teacher or Team Coach:

- Look to see if/how players are trying to move their opponent out of position.
- What might you ask players regarding court positioning?
- Check to see what is (not) working well.
- **Let them know!** 😊

If/when using time-outs:

- Ask him/her what might be done differently to use more effective shots.
- Be sure to give feedback on what is going well!

Volley Bonus Game

Players, remember:

- Regular scoring.
- Serves touching the net are legal.
- Balls on outside line are in.
- Volley winners = 2 bonus points.

Advanced Game Variation:

Players can only score points using Volleys.



Practice Game: Volley Bonus Game

What tactical problem is the focus?

- ❖ ***Offensive*** – Creating space – move opponent out of position? Set up an attack shot?
- ❖ ***Defensive*** – Defend your court space? Maintain/return to base pos.?

What tactical moves are emphasized?

- ❖ ***Offensive*** – Decision-making (i.e., When to use the assigned stroke? Ball placement?; Remembering to return to Base?)
- ❖ ***Defensive*** – Decision making (i.e., Where to move, covering the entire court“). Maintain/return to base pos.?
- ❖ ***Both*** – Seeing your opponents’ moves; Anticipate their possible next action.

Possible questions to ask:

- When is a good time to go to the edge of the non-volley zone to try and hit a volley for a winner?
- What types of shots should you play to increase your chances of being the player who gets to volley first?
- When might it be the wrong time to volley at all? Or volley for a winner?

Teacher or Team Coach:

- Look to see if/how players are trying to move their opponent out of position.
- What might you ask players regarding court positioning?
- Check to see what is (not) working well.
- **Let them know!** 😊

If/when using time-outs:

- Ask him/her what might be done differently to use more effective shots.
- Be sure to give feedback on what is going well!