

High School Coach Tennis Lesson Template

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.

TabV-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.

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#/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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SUGGESTED TOPICS OF LIFE LESSONS:

1. **The Huddle:**
2. Champions approach to practice & competition
3. Getting better every day
4. Confidence-how to find it
5. Credit Card vs Debit Card
6. Defensive Driving
7. Helping Out Around the Home (before being asked)
8. Time Management-Juggling School
9. Athletics and a Social Life
10. Facebook & the Internet
11. How to be a Good Teammate
12. Goals & Goal Setting
13. Mentoring
14. Reputation & Character
15. Your Contributions to Home, School , Community, & Team
16. How to Win...How to Lose...Gracefully
17. Do You Learn from Your Mistakes?
18. **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.
19. **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.
20. **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:

1. **On court Movement:** jog, lateral slides, karaoke, high knee skips, lunges, zig zags, butt kicks, backward bounds, etc
2. **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;
3. **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.
4. **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).

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5. **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).
6. **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.
7. **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.
8. **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:

1. **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.
2. **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.
3. **Doubles Positioning**-split formation; both back; both up at net.
4. **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.

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5. **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.
6. **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.
7. **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.
8. **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.
9. **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.
10. **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.

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11. Other topics are:

12. Serve and Return
13. Drop Shots and Touch
14. Individual Shots from Serve to Finishing Shot
15. Being Consistent Doesn't Mean You Are a Pusher
16. The Score Matters
17. Pre Match Preparation and Post Match Lessons to Learn
18. DNO-Defense, Neutral, Offense and Knowing When to Employ Each
19. Second Serve-The Most Important Shot in Tennis
20. Points Won (and Lost) on Second Serves
21. Changing Strategies in a Match
22. Different Tactics but the Same Strategy
23. The Moon Ball and Sneak In

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24. Competition:

1. **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.
2. **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.
3. **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.
4. **Second Serve Importance**-Play tie breaks using only one serve instead of two.
5. **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.
6. **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.
7. **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.
8. **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.

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9. **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:

1. **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.

2. **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.

3. **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.

4. **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.

5. **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.

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6. **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.