

# Minor League Tennis (6-8 yrs)

## Practice and League Play Overview

### Week 1 and 2 Practice and Preparing for League Play

- Grips, Ball Roll, Ball Balance
- Self Rally, Drop and Pop to Catch
- Throw and Catch with Partner
- Throw and Hit with Partner
- Self Rally with Partner
- League Play Scoring and Rules

### Week 3 and 4 Practice and Scrimmage Play

- Overhand Throw
- Drop and Pop Juggle
- Doubles Match with Throwing
- League Scrimmage

### Week 5 and 6 Practice and League Play

- Throw to Volley
- Rally with Partner - Forehand
- League Match Play

### Week 7 and 8 Practice and League Play

- Return of Serve
- Serve, Block and Catch
- Rally with Partner - Backhand
- League Match Play

### Week 9, 10 and 11 Practice and League Play

- Hit and Recover
- Up and Back Groundstrokes
- Beat your Coach
- League Match Play and Play Offs!

# **Week 1 and 2 Practice and Preparing for League Play**

- 1. Building Team Spirit**
- 2. Exploring Various Grips**
- 3. Ball Roll**
- 4. Ball Balance**
- 5. Self Rally Progression**
- 6. Drop and Pop**
- 7. Throw and Catch with Partner**
- 8. Throw and Hit with Partner**
- 9. Self Rally with Partner**
- 10. League Play Scoring and Rules**

# Week 1 and 2 Practice and Preparing for League Play

## Drill 1: Building Team Spirit!

**Activity:** Ages 6-8      **Duration:** 2-3 min at each break

**First:** Regroup the entire team with volunteer coaches in a huddle formation

**Second:** Ask the team to put their hands in the centre and on three yell out team name

**Third:** Over time, each player can lead the cheer. Cheers should be done during breaks, before and after matches

**Skills:** Team spirit, leadership and team support skills.

**Teaching Tips:** Encourage students to be energetic and excited - coaches should lead by example



# Week 1 and 2 Practice and Preparing for League Play

## Drill 2: Exploring Various Grips

**Activity:** Ages 6-8      **Duration:** 2-3 min

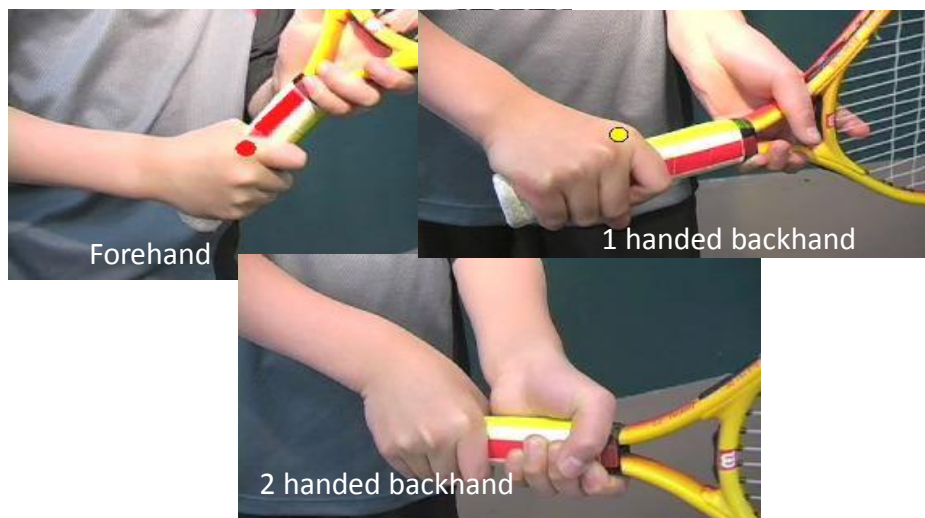
**First:** Demonstrate a continental grip for all beginners to use on both the forehand and backhand sides.

**Second:** Now use both hands to demonstrate a two-handed backhand grip.

**Third:** Advanced players can use the grips shown below once they have mastered the continental grip.

**Skills:** Handling racquets and using racquets.

**Teaching Tips:** Encourage students to always hold racquet at the correct gripping position.



# Week 1 and 2 Practice and Preparing for League Play

## Drill 3: Ball Roll

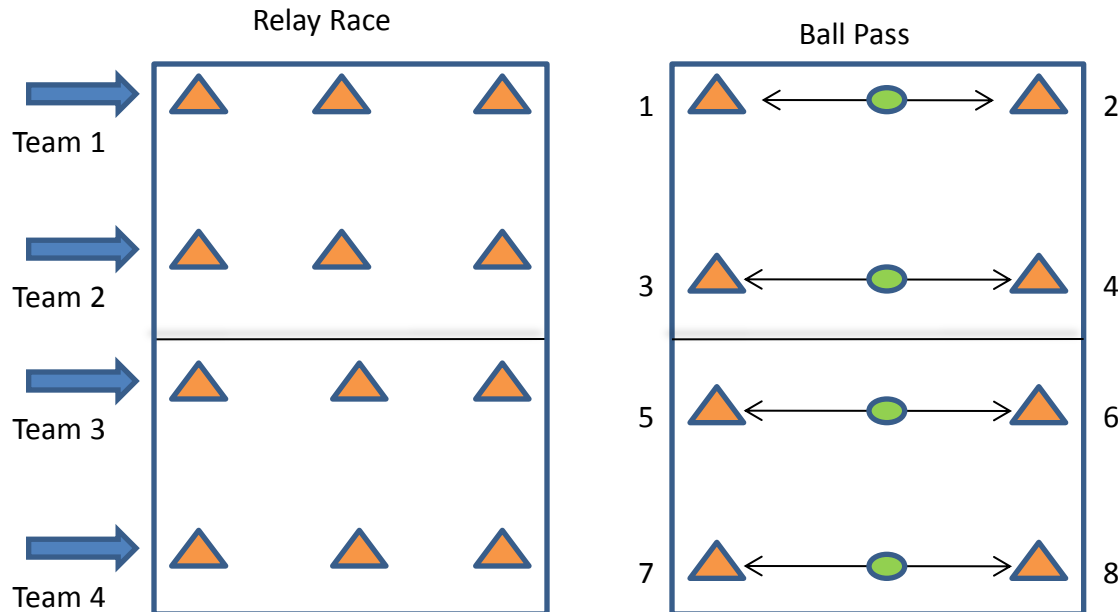
**Activity:** Ages 6-8     **Duration:** 5-10 min

**Relay Race:** Kids rolls ball on the ground with racquet around a cone. Teams of 4 for each court.

**Ball Pass:** Have kids stand next to designated cones and role the ball back and forth with partner. Practice with forehand and backhand rotation grips.

**Skills:** Running, passing, dodging, sending and receiving the ball.

**Teaching Tips:** Have participants use the right grip and turn sideways to pass the ball.



# Week 1 and 2 Practice and Preparing for League Play

## Drill 4: Ball Balance

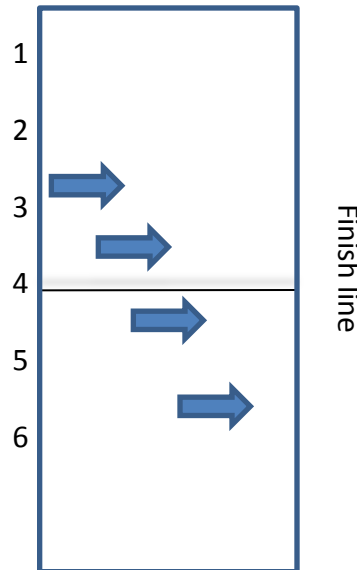
**Activity:** Ages 6-8     **Duration:** 3-5 minutes

**Balance:** Place ball on racquet strings and hold with stable wrist position for 10 counts.

**Balance Game:** Players line up on one sideline. On “go “ players walk across the court towards the finish line, if the coach says “freeze” players have to stop without losing the ball. If the player drops the ball they have to start over.

**Skills:** Balance, racquet control, dodging and hopping (can be added).

**Teaching Tip :** Encourage players to use the proper grip and do both forehand and backhand. Try to hold racquet to side of body.



# Week 1 and 2 Practice and Preparing for League Play

## Drill 5: Self Rally Progression

**Activity:** Ages 6-8     **Duration:** 5-10 minutes

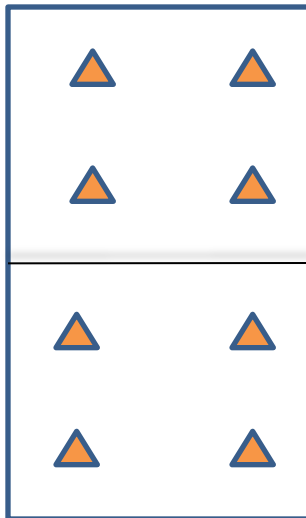
**First:** Player bounces the ball downwards with racquet.

**Second:** Player drops the ball with hand and catches with racquet after bounce.

**Third:** Player bounces the ball upward allowing it to bounce in between hits.

**Skills:** Dribble, catching, and sending objects.

**Teaching Tip:** Designate an area for each player with a spot or cone for safety. Make sure players maintain the proper grip.



# Week 1 and 2 Practice and Preparing for League Play

## Drill 6: Drop and Pop

**Activity:** Ages 6-8     **Duration:** 5-7 min

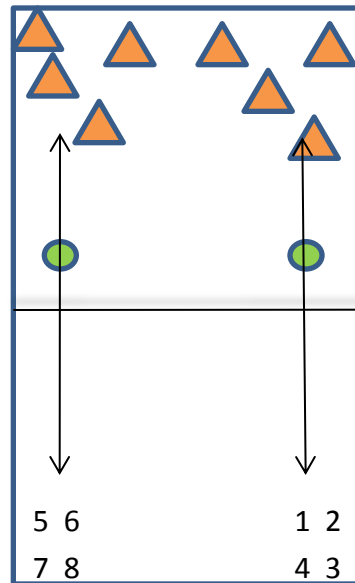
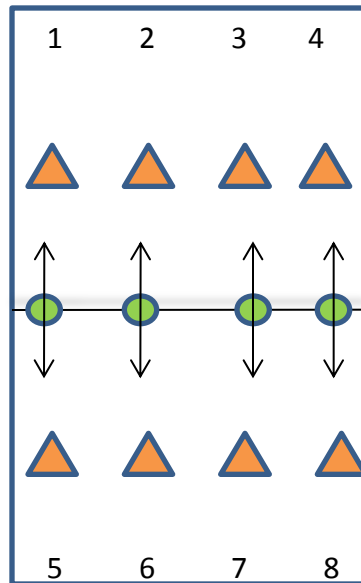
**First:** The player drops the ball (bounce) and hits it over the net.

**Second:** The player drops and hits to a partner.

**Third:** The player drops the ball and aims for a target on the other side of the net.

**Skills:** Dribble ,catch.

**Teaching Tips:** Fundamentals are key here, make sure they turn sideways to hit, they have the right grip and their contact point is in front of their body.





# Week 1 and 2 Practice and Preparing for League Play

## Drill 7: Throw and Catch with Partner

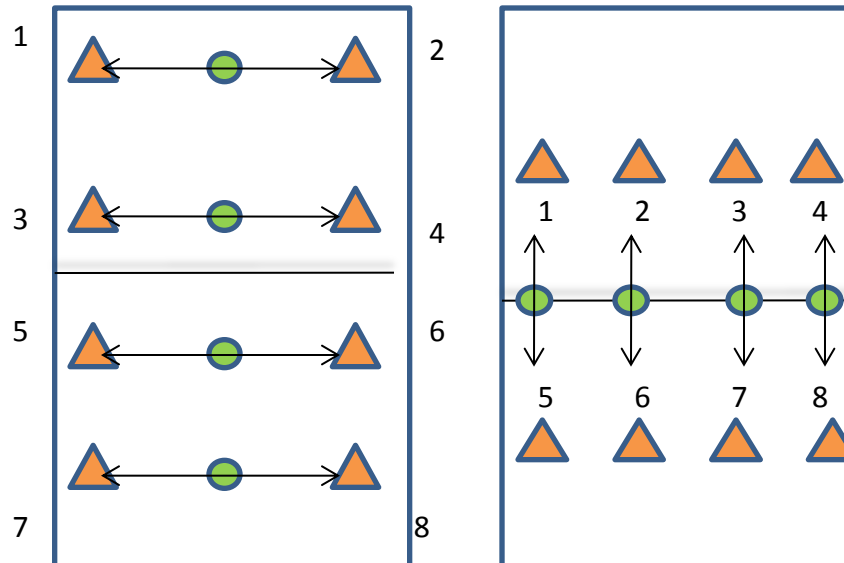
**Activity:** Ages 6-8     **Duration:** 3-5 min

**First:** Have each player throw the ball up into the air and catch it after one bounce. Then players line up across from each other and toss the ball gently to each other.

**Second:** Have each player throw the ball underhand to their partner across the net. Use targets on the ground so that players score points

**Skills:** Throw (underhand) and catch.

**Teaching Tips:** Put a target in the middle of the floor and have the child aim for the target so the ball bounces to partner.



# Week 1 and 2 Practice and Preparing for League Play

## Drill 8: Throw and Hit with Partner

**Activity:** Ages 6-8     **Duration:** 5-7 min

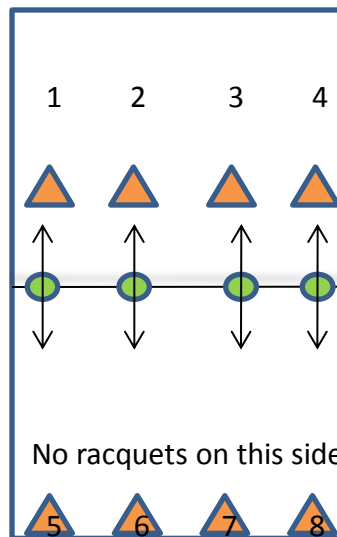
**First:** One player feeds the ball with an underhand throw to their partner who hits it back over the net. The feeding partner must try to catch the ball after one bounce.

**Second:** If the players are successful, have them back up and now try to catch the ball in the air.

**Third:** Now do this drill with backhands.

**Skills:** Throw, catch, sidearm striking, groundstroke.

**Teaching Tips:** Ensure that the players are throwing the ball softly and underhand to their partners to promote success.



# Week 1 and 2 Practice and Preparing for League Play

## Drill 9: Self Rally with Partner

**Activity:** Ages 6-8     **Duration:** 5-10 min

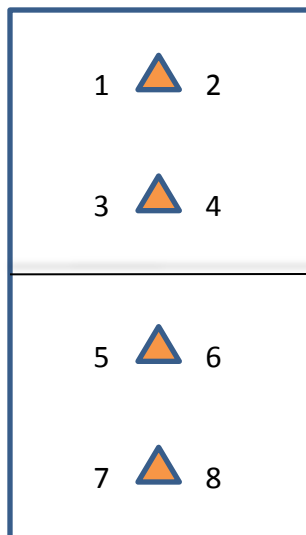
**First:** Begin with self rally drill 4 in Lesson 1.

**Second:** With a partner, player A will hit the ball upwards landing it on a spot then player B will hit the ball upwards. Players continue to alternate shots.

**Third:** As players advance in control they can start further apart.

**Skills:** Sidearm strike.

**Teaching Tips:** Make sure players are using the right grip and make sure they are hitting upwards to the target, not at their partner.



# Week 1 and 2 Practice and Preparing for League Play

## Drill 10: League Play Scoring and Rules

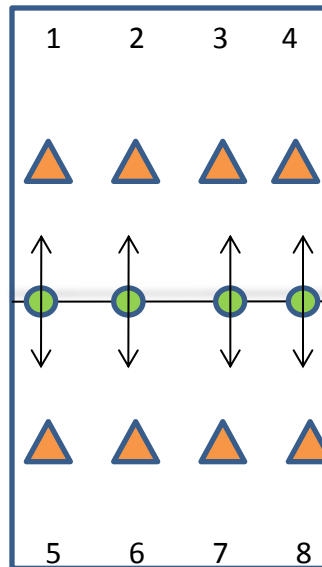
**Activity:** Ages 6-8      **Duration:** 5-7 min

**First:** Players walk along the court boundaries and are giving an understanding of what is in and out.

**Second:** Players work in pairs, one player “drops and pops” the ball over the net, the other player calls in or out. If the ball is “in” player one gets a point if it is “out” player two gets the point. Players change roles after 10 points.

**Skills:** Scoring, sidearm strike

**Teaching Tips:** Make sure the players scoring are being loud and clear. They should communicate with the other player to make sure they both have the same score.



## **Week 3 and 4 Practice and Preparing for League Play**

- 1. Overhand Throw**
- 2. Drop and Pop with Juggle**
- 3. Doubles Match with Throwing**
- 4. League Play Scrimmage!**

# Week 3 and 4 Practice and Preparing for League Play

## Drill 1: Overhead throw

**Activity:** Ages 6-8     **Duration:** 3-5 min

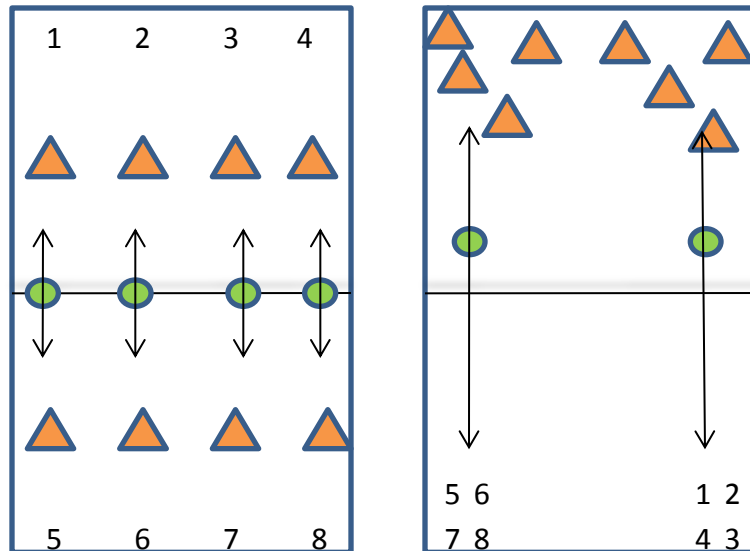
**First:** Each player throws to a partner on the other side of the net.

**Second:** Players stand behind a cone and partner tries to knock it over to score a point.

**Third:** Two teams compete to knock over cones.

**Skills:** *Overhand* throw ,catch.

**Teaching Tips:** Ensure players use proper throwing technique as this will translate into a good service motion for tennis.



# Week 3 and 4 Practice and Preparing for League Play

## Drill 2: Drop and Pop with Juggle

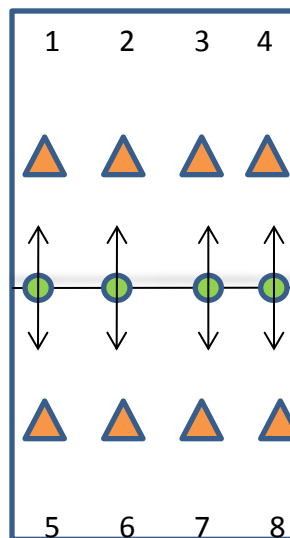
**Activity:** Ages 6-8      **Duration:** 5-7 min

**First:** The player drops the ball (bounce) and hits it over the net. To their partner. The partner blocks the ball with racquet, catches and then returns it with a “drop and pop”.

**Second:** Players can then progress to blocking it with their racquet, juggling it a couple of times and then returning it without catching it in their hand.

**Skills:** Dribble ,catch.

**Teaching Tips:** Fundamentals are key here, make sure they turn sideways to hit, they have the right grip and their contact point is in front of their body.



# Week 3 and 4 Practice and Preparing for League Play

## Drill 3: Doubles Match with Throwing

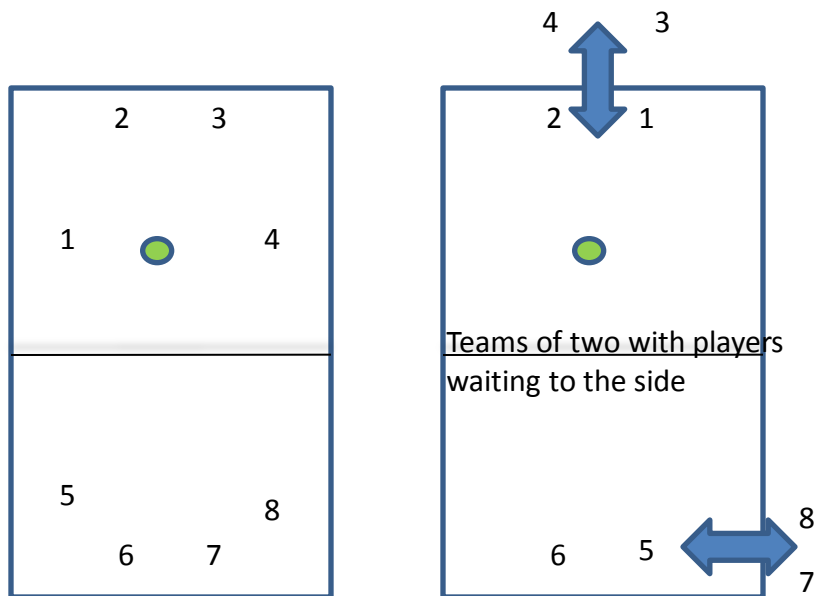
**Activity:** Ages 6-8     **Duration:** 5-7 min

**First:** Put players into two teams of four. One player starts the point with an underhand throw. The opposing team has to catch the ball before two bounces and then returns it.

**Second:** Divide each court into teams of two. Team 1 will play against 2 and team 3 will play against 4. One match plays one point and then the second match plays one point.

**Skills:** Throwing, catching, dodging and tennis tactics.

**Teaching Tips:** Adjust the rules of the game to the level of the players. Encourage players to throw to open areas.





# Week 3 and 4 Practice and Preparing for League Play

## Drill 4: League Scrimmage!

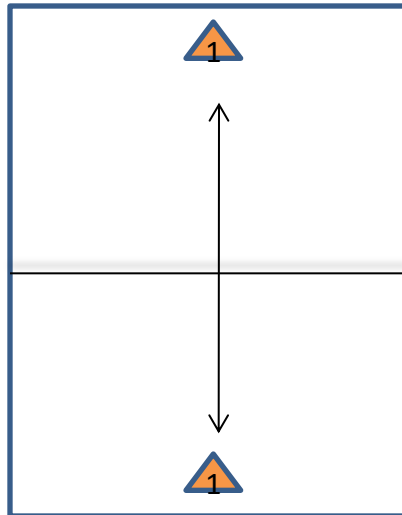
**Activity:** Ages 6-8     **Duration:** 20-30 min

**First:** Divide players so that each player is playing someone of similar level within their team.

**Second:** Each match alternates every 4-5 minutes.

**Skills:** Sidearm strike, groundstroke and match play.

**Teaching Tips:** Encourage fair play, ensure they are familiar with the rules and boundaries. Each player should call out the score after every point and shake hands at the end of the match.



# **Week 5 and 6 Practice and League Play**

- 1. Throw to Volley**
- 2. Rally with Partner - Forehand**
- 3. League Match Play!**

# Week 5 and 6 Practice and League Play

## Drill 1: Throw to Volley

**Activity:** Ages 6-8     **Duration:** 5-7 min

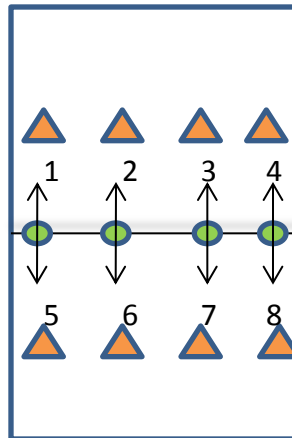
**First:** One player feeds the ball with an underhand throw in the air to their partner who blocks it back over the net. Hitting player should be close to the net and attempt to block the ball before it bounces.

**Second:** Now do the same with on the backhand side.

**Third:** Now the feeder can alternate sides.

**Skills:** Throw, sidearm striking, groundstroke.

**Teaching Tips:** Ensure that the players are throwing the ball softly and underhand to their partners to promote success. Volleying players should have a continental grip.



# Week 5 and 6 Practice and League Play

## Drill 2: Rally with Partner - Forehand

**Activity:** Ages 6-8     **Duration:** 5-7 min

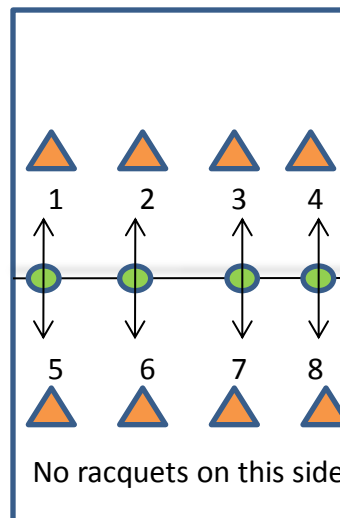
**First:** Begin with drill 3 in week 3 and 4 Practice Plan (see page 15).

**Second:** Players stand across the net from one another. Start close together to encourage soft hits.

**Third:** As they progress they can move further back from the net.

**Skills:** Sidearm striking, groundstroke.

**Teaching Tips:** Encourage the players to hit softly by counting how many they can rally with their partner. Give them a target.



# Week 5 and 6 Practice and League Play

## Drill 3: League Match Play!

**Activity:** Ages 6-8     **Duration:** 30 min +

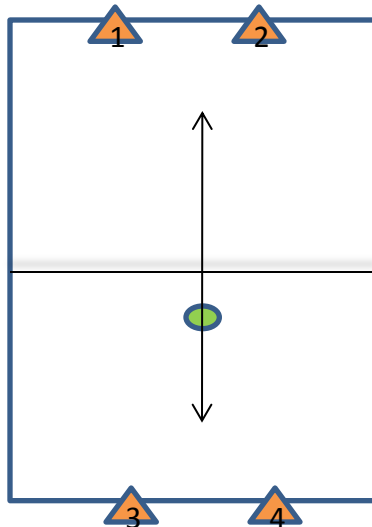
**First:** Volunteer coach assembles their team

**Second:** League convener and head coach will begin official league play using the score sheet found in section 8

**Third:** Rotations will occur on regular intervals as per scoring and rules section.

**Skills:** Sidearm strike, groundstroke and match play.

**Teaching Tips:** Encourage fair play, ensure they are familiar with the rules and boundaries. Each player should call out the score after every point and shake hands at the end of the match.



# **Week 7 and 8 Practice and League Play**

- 1. Return of Serve**
- 2. Serve, Block and Catch**
- 3. Rally with Partner - Backhand**
- 4. League Match Play!**

# Week 7 and 8 Practice and League Play

## Drill 1: Return of Serve

**Activity:** Ages 6-8     **Duration:** 5-7 min

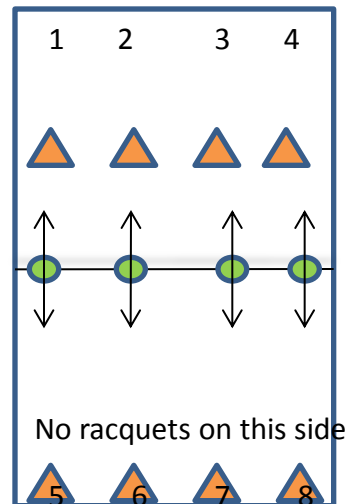
**First:** Begin with overhand throw drill 1 in Lesson 3.

**Second:** One player throws the ball overhand to partner who tries to return it. Teams get points for successful returns

**Third:** The throwing player now must catch the return to score a point.

**Skills:** Overhand throw, catch, serving.

**Teaching Tips:** Encourage cooperative throwing to be successful, give them a target in front of their partner to aim at.



# Week 7 and 8 Practice and League Play

## Drill 2: Serve, Block and Catch

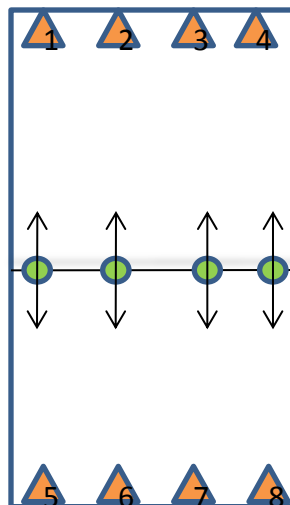
**Activity:** Grades 2-3      **Duration:** 5-7 min

**First:** One partner serves the ball overhead while the partner (across the net) catches the ball and returns the ball with a serve.

**Second:** The receiving partner now blocks the ball with their racquet and tries to catch it with their free hand.

**Skills:** Overhand throw, catch, serving.

**Teaching Tips:** Start the servers close to the net and as they get better, encourage them to back up to the baseline.





# Week 7 and 8 Practice and League Play

## Drill 3: Rally with Partner - Backhand

**Activity:** Ages 6-8     **Duration:** 5-7 min

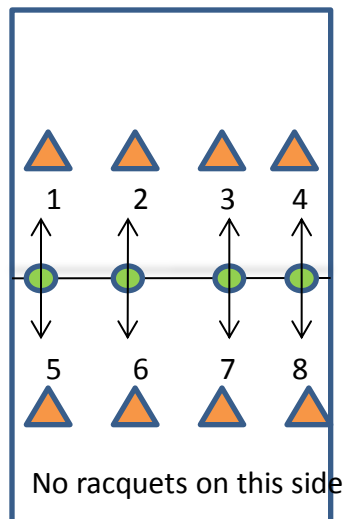
**First:** Begin with drill #3 in lesson 2.

**Second:** Now have players stand across the net from one another. They should start close together to encourage soft hits. Players must use backhands only.

**Third:** As they progress they can move further back from the net.

**Skills:** Sidearm striking, groundstroke.

**Teaching Tips:** Encourage the players to hit softly by counting how many they can rally with their partner. Give them a target to hit to.



# Week 7 and 8 Practice and League Play

## Drill 4: League Match Play!

**Activity:** Ages 6-8     **Duration:** 30 min +

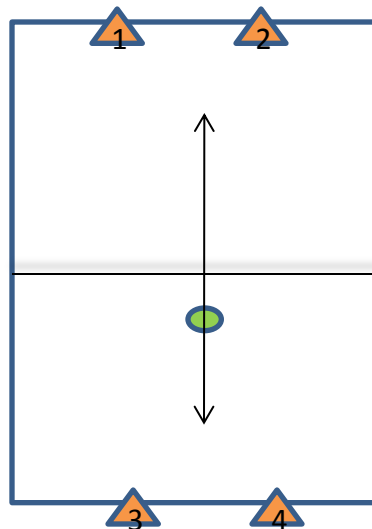
**First:** Volunteer coach assembles their team

**Second:** League convener and head coach will begin official league play using the score sheet found in section 8

**Third:** Rotations will occur on regular intervals as per scoring and rules section.

**Skills:** Sidearm strike, groundstroke and match play.

**Teaching Tips:** Encourage fair play, ensure they are familiar with the rules and boundaries. Each player should call out the score after every point and shake hands at the end of the match.



# **Week 9,10, 11 Practice and League Play**

- 1. Hit and Recover**
- 2. Up and Back Ground-strokes**
- 3. Beat Your Coach**
- 4. League Matches and Play Offs!**

# Week 9,10, 11 Practice and League Play

## Drill 1: Hit and Recover

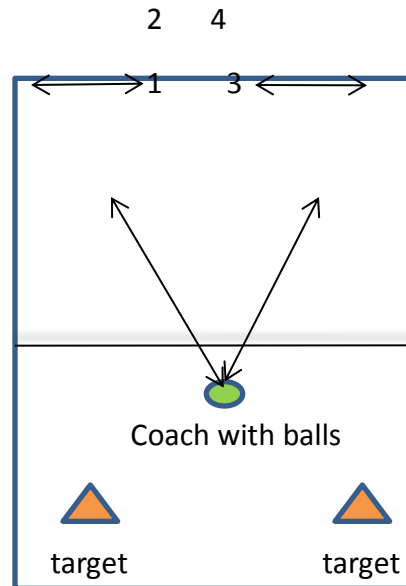
**Activity:** Ages 6-8     **Duration:** 5-10 min

**First:** Players make two lines at the baseline. The coach feeds balls wide to each player. The player hit two balls each recovering to the middle between shots.

**Second:** After the second recovery, players go to the back of the opposite line and the next two players go.

**Skills:** Sidearm striking, tracking the ball and lateral movement.

**Teaching Tips:** Ensure that waiting players are safely off to the side or behind the court. Give players a target to aim for and keep score.



# Week 9,10, 11 Practice and League Play

## Drill 2: Up and Back Groundstrokes

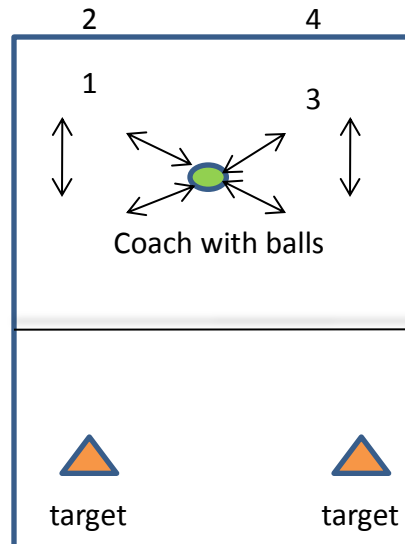
**Activity:** Ages 6-8     **Duration:** 5-10 min

**First:** Players make two lines at the baseline. One line will hit forehands and the next backhands.

**Second:** The coach hand-feeds balls just in front and then just behind the players. The player hit four balls each and then move to the opposite line.

**Skills:** Sidearm striking, tracking the ball and forward and back movement.

**Teaching Tips:** Ensure that waiting players are safely off to the side or behind the court. Be careful not to get hit, keep players hitting down the line at the targets for safety.



# Week 9,10, 11 Practice and League Play

## Drill 3: Beat Your Coach

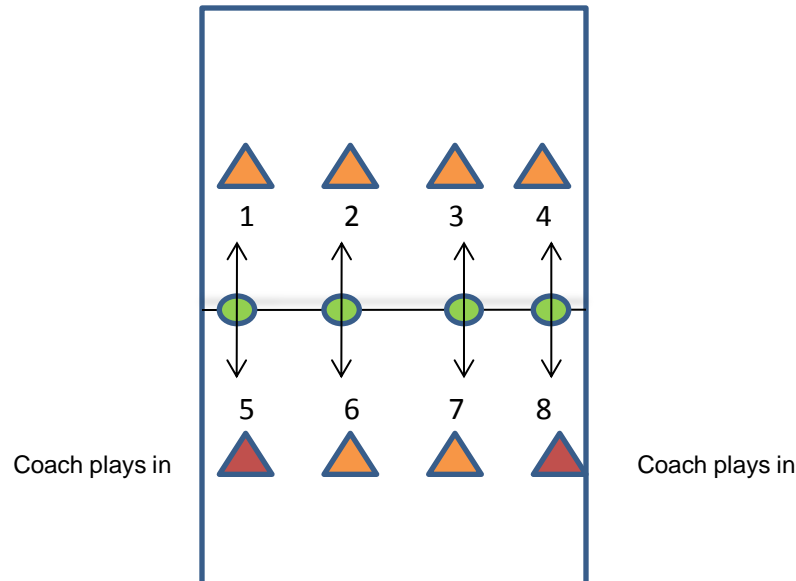
**Activity:** Ages 6-8     **Duration:** 5-10 min

**First:** Volunteer coaches will play in with kids – a point is scored for every 5 rallies in a row.

**Second:** Rotations will occur every 60 seconds.

**Skills:** Sidearm striking, groundstroke and match play.

**Teaching Tips:** Encourage teamwork and fair play.



# Week 9,10, 11 Practice and League Play

## Drill 4: League Match Play and Play Offs!

**Activity:** Ages 6-8     **Duration:** 30 min +

**First:** Volunteer coach assembles their team

**Second:** League convener and head coach will begin official league play using the score sheet found in section 8. The final week(s) will include play offs and team championship play.

**Third:** Rotations will occur on regular intervals as per scoring and rules section.

**Skills:** Sidearm strike, groundstroke and match play.

**Teaching Tips:** Encourage fair play, ensure they are familiar with the rules and boundaries. Each player should call out the score after every point and shake hands at the end of the match.

