

Introduction

This series of lesson plans is intended to provide you with a useful resource you can use with your players. While we have tried to make it as detailed as possible, you should feel free to make adjustments as you see fit: really like a particular drill? Extend it! Think your players need more time playing a particular game? Switch teams and do it again!

Think of these documents like you would recipes – use them as a starting point and follow them as closely as you care to.

Here are a few other things to consider as you use these lesson plans:

- **These plans are based on 90-minute sessions.** If your lessons are longer, you can lengthen the time allocated to the different activities. If your lessons are shorter, you'll need to abbreviate some aspects of the lesson, or perhaps save them for another time.
- **These plans are adjustable.** Pretty much any drill or game can be made easier or harder while maintaining the original look and feel. If you need an activity to be more challenging, consider making the target smaller or the goal more demanding (e.g. make six hits *in a row* to a target rather than just six hits *total*). If you need to make things easier, make the feed slower or remove some of the movement required. All of these activities can be used across a wide range of skill levels.
- **Connecting tactics and technique.** None of these activities exist in a vacuum – they are all intended to help people play better pickleball. If you're the coach, be sure to help your players understand not only what they are doing, but how it will help them to play the game better. Making a clear tactical connection will improve buy-in from your players.
- **Examples of the activities.** While we tried to make the descriptions clear and easy-to-follow, a picture is worth a thousand words. You can see examples of many of the activities on the page you downloaded the document from.

One last thing to remember: while great drills and games can help make a lesson more fun, nothing is as impactful as the person leading the group. The instructor is the one who sets the tone and leads by example, and it is important that they take this responsibility seriously. So go out there, have a great time and teach your heart out! Hopefully these lesson plans can help you with that work.

Mark Renneson

Pickleball Coaching International

Warm-Up Menu

You'll notice that at the start of each lesson plan, time is allocated for *technical warm up*. We have included a few different activities below that you can choose from. We wanted to give you a range of options so that you can keep your lessons fresh and fun, but also make sure that if your players really love certain activities, you can keep using them. We recommend selecting at least one activity from each of the sections below so that your players are ready to go.

Please note: you should always consider the skill and athletic ability of your players when deciding which activities to ask them to perform.

Dinking

- **Cooperative Dinking** (down-the-line).
- **Cooperative Dinking** (crosscourt).
- **Dink and Shuffle**. After a player hits a dink, they must shuffle and touch either the sideline or centreline with their foot (whichever is farther).
- **Figure 8 Dinks**. One player hits down-the-line, the other always hits crosscourt. This is usually done on half a court but could be full court too.
- **Dink and Flick**. Cooperative dinking. One player speeds things up with a flick which is handled and then a dinking rally resumes.
- **Two Ball Dinking**. Cooperative dinks with two balls at once.

Volleys (both up)

- **Reflex Volleys**. Continuous volleys (down-the-line).
- **Reflex Volleys**. Continuous volleys (crosscourt).
- **Figure 8 Volleys**. One player hits down-the-line, the other always hits crosscourt. This should be done on half a court.
- **Alphabet Volleys**. Try to volley A-Z without missing.
- **Double-Touch Volleys**. Use the first touch to absorb the ball, the second touch to send it. A great way to develop *soft hands*!

Groundstrokes to Volleys (one up, one back)

- **Standard GS-Volley**. A cooperative exchange where the volleyer tries to keep the ball under control and near the baseline.
- **Explode the Pyramid**. A cone is set at $\frac{3}{4}$ court. The baseliner plays groundstrokes, the volleyer tries to hit the cone with their volley. Baseliner must let it bounce.
- **Low Groundies**. Groundstroker plays balls (drops and drives) with the goal of the volleyer to make contact below their shoulders.
- **Drop It Down**. Groundstroker plays drops with the goal of forcing upward contact.
- **Lob and Smash**. Baseliner plays lobs. Net player plays controlled smashes.

Serve and Return

- **Serve, Return Plus One.** Three consecutive shots.
- **Get It Deep (Serve).** Place a cone at $\frac{3}{4}$ court. The server tries to land their serve between the cone and the baseline.
- **Get It Deep (Return).** Place a cone at $\frac{3}{4}$ court. Serve is hit and the returner tries to land their return between the cone and the baseline.
- **Call Your Shot.** Returner tells the server where to aim (FH or BH). Server hits the serve trying to get the ball to the appropriate side.

