

Tennis Foundation

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Charity Number 298175
Registered Company Number 2138124

ORGANISATION & FEEDING
Year 7 and 8 Lesson Plans



ORGANISATION

INTRODUCTION

One of the keys for a successful tennis lesson is effective organisation of large or odd numbers.

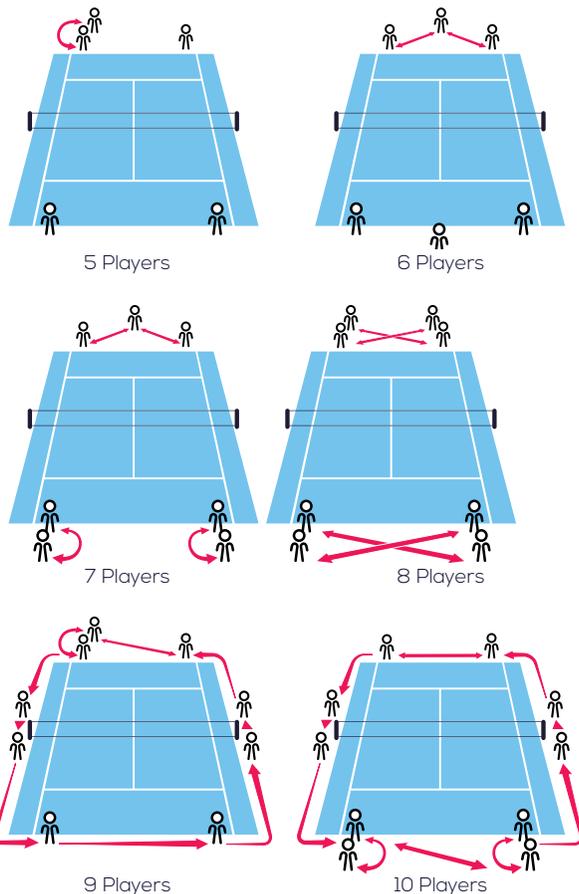
Here are some considerations and suggestions to assist teachers in setting up practices.

1. How to organise and rotate the group.
2. How to deal with odd numbers.
3. Which end to have the hitters.
4. How to handle left-handed players.
5. How to set up circuits.

1. HOW TO ORGANISE AND ROTATE THE GROUP

Below are some ways of organising and rotating players on court.

- Consider the use of scoring to aid rotations – swap after x number of points/shots etc.
- To avoid playing the same person each time, if there is an even number of players at each end, ask one end to stay on for two points and the other end swaps after every point.



2. SPLITTING GROUPS AND DEALING WITH ODD NUMBERS

When you have a group with an odd number ensure the “odd one out” is given an activity until it is their turn:

- Collecting.
- Buddy coaching.
- Measuring performance.
- Keeping score.

3. WHICH END TO HAVE THE HITTERS?

If you are working on a skill or specific area you should have the players focusing on that skill all at the same end of the court. It will allow you to be more effective with your feedback as you will not have to cover both ends of the court. It is also safer to have all the pupils that are hitting at one end and all the pupils that are feeding at the other end. This will ensure that all the balls are being hit in the same direction.

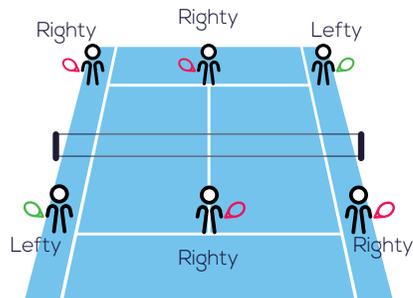


4. HOW TO ORGANISE LEFT HANDED PLAYERS

Considerations when dealing with left-handed pupils, include:

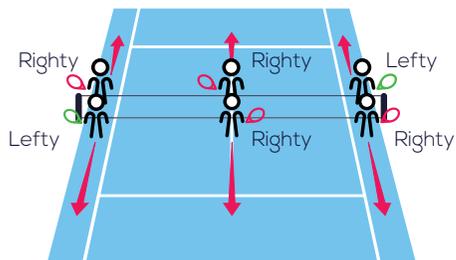
- **Safety:** a “righty” and “lefty” positioned side by side can cause problems as their rackets can easily collide.
- **Positioning:** the teacher will need to advise the left-handed player where to stand in the group.

The following diagrams show how to position players in the above circumstances.



Lefties position: forehands only

Have students align racket faces, and then back up to determine starting position when exchanging forehands with a partner.



Feeding:

Another challenge with lefties occurs when either the student or teacher is feeding more than one player (with players rotating). When it is their turn to hit, have left-handed players signal the feeder to alter the feed direction by waving their racket to the appropriate side for the feed or by using a verbal cue, such as their name. However, remember that if you are taking a drill that is focusing on forehands and then on backhands, the lefty will just focus on backhands first.

Demonstrations:

When demonstrating to a group of right and left handers, make sure you demonstrate on both sides of the court to put the shot into context for both. You will also have to change your explanation for left handers and if you can, show them a shadow demo of what they should be looking to achieve.

5. HOW TO SET UP CIRCUITS

Circuits are used to enhance activity when dealing with large groups. They work best when there is limited space and/or tennis equipment.

A group in a sports hall would be a good situation for a circuit. The teacher should establish work stations (i.e. four to six stations), assign a different drill or activity to each station, and then assign a group to each station. Each group stays at its station for an allotted time before being instructed to move to the next station.

Here is what to consider when organising circuits:

- Keep the drills simple (to limit the time devoted to explanations and demonstrations).
- Keep the drills at each station within the same family of skills (to ensure understanding and save explanation time).
- Keep the set-up of stations simple and obvious (an explanation should not even be required).
- Use equipment such as cones, wall, ropes, hoops and targets, etc., to help make the drill self-explanatory.
- Explain clearly the station boundaries and rotation system.
- Enforce definitive starts and ends (you may want to use a whistle).

FEEDING

INTRODUCTION

Feeding refers to ball delivery, in a controlled environment, to teach or train a skill. This factsheet provides guidance for teachers on the different types and progressions of feeding.

Feeds can come from:

1. Self
2. A Partner
3. A Coach/teacher

Progressions of feeding are as follows:

- Hand feed
- Racket feed
- Rally feed



1. SELF FEED

Feeding the ball to yourself to practice a shot.

Hand feed:

- **Dropped** - the player drops the ball next to themselves and hits it after the bounce for practicing groundstrokes.
- **Placed** - the player places the ball in the air and hits it before the bounce for practicing serves.
- **Thrown** - the player throws the ball away from themselves, moves to the ball and hits after the bounce. This can be used to practice wider groundstrokes and short balls.

2. PARTNER FEED

Feeding the ball to a partner to allow them to practice a shot, or a series of shots.

Hand feed:

- **Dropped** - the partner drops the ball next to the player, who hits it after a bounce.
- **Thrown** - the partner throws the ball to a specific area for the player, for them to move to and hit either before or after the bounce.

Racket feed:

- As for the throw feed the partner can feed using their racket.

Live ball feed:

- Players will rally with each other to set up drill or specific playing situations. i.e. one player at the net rallying with their partner on the baseline.

3. COACH/TEACHER FEED

Feeding the ball to the player(s) to allow them to practice a shot, a series of shots or play a game

Hand feed:

- Coach/teacher hand feeds to players, as per the self feed guidance.

Throw feed:

- Coach/teacher throw feeds to players, as per the partner feed guidance.

Racket feed:

- Likely to be feeding from a basket of balls – see tips on page 13 for high-quality basket feeding.

Rally feed:

- Rather than individual feeds from a basket of balls – coach/teacher rallies with player as part of a drill/exercise.



TIPS FOR HIGH QUALITY BASKET FEEDING:

- Place the basket on your non-hitting side to easily access more balls.
- Stand on the leg of the basket to stop it being knocked over.
- Take three balls at a time and feed them, without a bounce, at the correct tempo (see feeding considerations).
- Gear the height and speed of feeds to the student's ability.
- Your feed should be a shortened swing.
- Keep your eyes on the players (for safety and proper feedback).
- Position yourself at a safe and, whenever possible, realistic location.



FEEDING CONSIDERATIONS:

Quality:

Studies done in Germany indicate that developing a skill requires 130-180 repetitions. For a closed skill (where no decisions are needed by the player), execute the same feed. For an open skill (where the player has to make a decision about, for example, the ball coming to their forehand or backhand), vary two or more types of feeds in relation to the topic.

Frequency:

To learn through trial and error, players should receive at least two feeds in a row. Then you can increase the number of feeds, provided no physical or mental fatigue sets-in.

FEEDING CONSIDERATIONS:**Tempo:**

The time you leave between the first feed and subsequent feeds is important. If a player is just beginning to learn a new skill they will need more time between the feeds, as they progress the time between feeds should decrease until it mimics the tempo of a rally. As a guide, if you are basket feeding from the baseline, you should feed the next ball as the incoming bounces to mimic rally tempo.

Speed:

How hard you feed the ball is also important. The speed of the ball needs to be appropriate to the level of the player. For beginners, the feed will be softer and give them more time, as they increase their skill level, the speed of the feed can increase to limit their time - just as an opponent would do in a game.

Spin:

The amount and type of spin you put on the ball is important. For beginners, you should feed with no spin. As the players improve, the feed you give should mimic the spin an opponent would give them on the particular shot you are working on.

Height:

The height you give the feed over the net will be important because it will give the player more or less time. It will also make them move forwards or backwards. The feed should again mimic the shot they will receive in a rally.

Direction:

The direction you feed the ball to the player is also important. If they are developing a cross-court forehand, the ball should come back to them from cross-court, as would happen in a rally.

