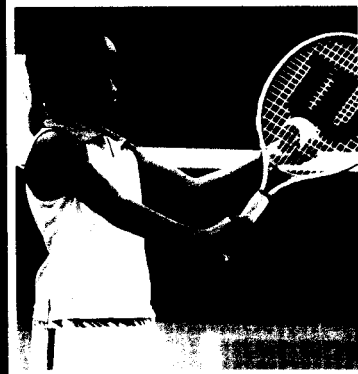


# LEARN TO RALLY AND PLAY

Practice Plans and Tips for Coaching Kids Ages 5-17

Third Edition



Features the QuickStart Tennis play format



UNITED STATES TENNIS ASSOCIATION

## Chapter 5: Practice Sessions (Ages 5-6)

This chapter contains eight progressive practice sessions for children ages 5-6 playing on a 36-foot or smaller court and with 17- to 21-inch racquets and foam or oversized low compression balls. (By progressive, we don't mean that these lessons are ahead of their time; it means that each practice session sets the stage for the next.)

The goal of these practices is to help children learn how to use their racquets and judge the flight and path of the ball using fun activities. The ultimate goal is to have these children enjoy the experience of hitting balls back and forth.

Initially, with the 5- to 6-year-old age group, this will begin with floor tennis, leading to passing and throwing tennis. These activities will develop a child's ability to send and receive a ball before being able to rally a ball over a net or low barrier.

Also included in each practice is a list of equipment that is used for that session. Practices for this age group should last no longer than 45 minutes.

The practice session for 5- to 6-year-olds will contain the following:

1. Theme of the day
2. Movement Activities
3. Skill development
4. A take-home tennis activity

*Note: Each practice session contains a tip for coaches written by Gary Avischious, an expert on coaching youth sports. Gary has done extensive study on how to make practices fun and how to motivate kids, as well as developing creativity in your practices and even what to say and what not to say to young players. If your practices are fun and challenging, your kids will want to come back to practices, and they will get better if they continue to come to your practices.*

## Practices at a Glance: Ages 5-6

This one-page guide outlines the eight practice sessions that follow. It serves as a handy reference for what is covered in more detail during each practice

### **Practice 1**

Movement Activities  
Skills

Take Home Tennis

### **Controlling the Ball and Racquet**

Flamingo, The Bird, Frog Hops, Racquet Quickness  
Roll with Hands, Koosh Ball Pass, Tunnel Ball, Rolly Polly,  
Alligator River

Koosh Ball Pass

### **Practice 2**

Movement Activities  
Skills

Take Home Tennis

### **Sending and Receiving**

Simon Sez, Red Light-Green Light, Team Tag, Cannon Ball  
Catch Me if You Can, Underhand Throw and Catch, One  
Bounce-Two Bounce, Tennis Hockey

One Bounce-Two Bounce

### **Practice 3**

Movement Activities  
Skills

Take Home Tennis

### **Sending and Receiving with Direction**

Funny Bones, Ball Drop, Sharks in a Tank, Dodge Ball  
Lollipops, Throw Ball, Dirty Harry

Throw Ball

### **Practice 4**

Movement Activities

Skills

Take Home Tennis

### **Sending and Receiving with the Racquet**

Lobster Trap, Team Lily Pad, Through the Tunnel,  
Crash Test, Side Show

Tennis Shoot Out, Home Base

Lobster Trap

### **Practice 5**

Movement Activities

Skills

Take Home Tennis

### **Sending and Receiving with Racquet on the Backhand**

Train Crash, Applause, Racquet Splat, Bungee Jump, Clear  
the Court

Tennis Hockey, Alligator River

Applause

### **Practice 6**

Movement Activities  
Skills

Take Home Tennis

### **Rally Skills**

Statues, Call My Name, Slamma Jamma

Jacks, Partner Jacks, Rally Me, Survivor

Rally: Player and Adult

### **Practice 7**

Movement Activities  
Skills

Take Home Tennis

### **Rally Skills with a Partner**

Follow the Leader, Partner Toss and Catch, Inch Worm

Partner Rally Jacks, Splat, Mini Rally, Tag Team Singles

Mini Rally

### **Practice 8**

Take Home Tennis

### **Play Day**

Mini Rally

## Practice 1

**Theme:** Controlling the ball and racquet

**Equipment:** 17- to 21-inch racquets, foam or oversized low compression balls, Koosh balls or beanbags, large balls such as playground balls or beach balls

*Note: For more information on equipment—including a definition of terms and possible substitutes—see Chapter 1.*

### Gary's Youth Coaching Tip

Kids don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.

### Movement Activities

**Flamingo.** Have the children move around the court like an animal the coach chooses. When the coach shouts out "Flamingo," the players stop the animal imitation and balance on one foot with their arms out and eyes looking straight ahead. Repeat several times, choosing a different animal to imitate. You can even let the children make the animal noise.

**The Bird.** Have the children move around the court with the coach, but this time imitating one of three different types of birds that the coach will call out—either a hummingbird with arms moving short and quick, a robin with medium length and medium speed arm movements, or an eagle with long and slow arm movements.

**Frog Hops.** Jump from a crouching position along the ground, landing quietly on the balls of the feet and with both feet together.

**Racquet Quickness.** Two players (or player and coach) stand facing one another, each standing a racquet on the tip of the frame with the handle pointing up. At the count of three, the players will switch places and catch the other player's racquet without letting it drop. After several successful trials, move the children back a half-step at a time and see how far they can go without letting the racquets drop.

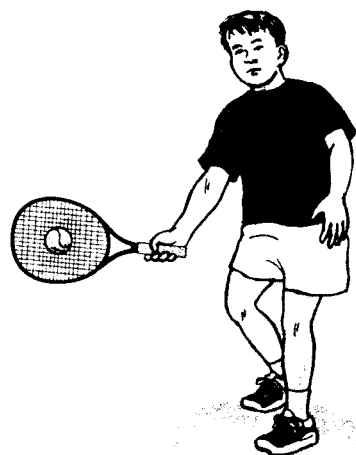
### Skills

**Roll with Hands.** Using a playground ball or beach ball, have the children stand 4 to 5 feet apart and have them roll the ball back and forth to their partner or coach. Have them catch the rolling ball with two hands directly in front of their body.

**Koosh Ball Pass.** Use one Koosh ball or beanbag for each pair. Have the players begin by standing close together with their racquets, passing the Koosh ball back and forth from one racquet to the other. After several successful trials, have them move back so they have to use a gentle toss to get the Koosh ball from one racquet to the other. Add a challenge by tossing the Koosh ball low, high and even adding a creative catch, such as standing on one leg, between the legs, just above the ground, on one knee, etc. Let the kids be creative with their catch.

**Tunnel Ball.** Two players stand across from each other about 4 or 5 feet apart with one foam ball per pair. One player rolls the ball to her partner, who moves so the ball will roll through her legs without touching her feet. Every time the players are successful, they score a point.

**Rolly Polly.** The players stand across from each other on either side of the doubles alley. Players have a racquet and should position themselves sideways to the ball as they might be positioned for a forehand (see illustration)—with the edge of the racquet on the ground behind the ball and the strings touching the ball. Using the racquet, the player with the ball rolls it to his partner, who stops the ball with his foot and rolls it back. After five successful attempts, the two players roll the ball—and stop it—with the racquet before rolling the ball back.



The Forehand

**Alligator River.** The players line up across from each other on either side of the doubles alley, with their racquets and one ball for each pair. The coach or one of the players is the “alligator” and is going to walk down the “river” (i.e., the alley). As the coach walks down the alley, the players roll the ball to their partner, trying to hit the alligator.

### Take Home Tennis

**Koosh Ball Pass.** Have parents, older siblings, friends, relatives, etc., pass a Koosh ball back and forth with the player. As the player gains success, have her move back and toss the Koosh ball and catch it on the strings. See if the player can move back two or three steps. Have her toss the ball low and high, and be creative in how the ball is caught on the strings.

## Practice 2

**Theme:** Sending and receiving

**Equipment:** 17- to 21-inch racquets, foam or oversized low compression balls, large balls such as playground balls or beach balls, cones, poly spots or donuts

### Gary's Youth Coaching Tip

Don't show kids "the right way" so they can be as good as you. Allow them to discover and experiment so they can be better than you!

### Movement Activities

**Simon Sez - Lines of the Court.** Use this activity to learn the areas and lines of the court. The coach calls out a line or area of the court and a movement. For example: "Hop on one foot, skip, tip-toe, little mouse steps, monster steps, etc." After all players have gone to their line or part of the court, the coach goes to the correct area so everyone learns the correct line or area.

**Red Light - Green Light.** Players line up side by side, facing the coach who is a distance away. Players have a racquet with a ball, beanbag or Koosh ball balanced on the strings. The coach calls out either "green light" or "red light." On green light, the players can move toward the coach. When red light is called, they must stop. If the players are caught moving when red light is called, if the ball falls off the racquet or if they touch the ball, they must go back to the starting line. The first player to reach the coach wins.

**Team Tag.** Divide players into two groups. Use the area between the baseline and the service line. Call the name of one player who will attempt to tag as many players as he can in 30 seconds. If a player moves out of the defined playing area or if they get tagged, they are out. After 30 seconds, all players are back in and the coach calls out a new name.

**Cannon Ball.** The coach uses a large ball, either a playground ball or a beach ball, and tosses it high in the air and calls out a player's name. The player attempts to catch the ball after it bounces, counting how many times it bounces before it is caught. This continues until all the players have been called. This can also be done with partners, with one player tossing the ball up and the other partner catching it.

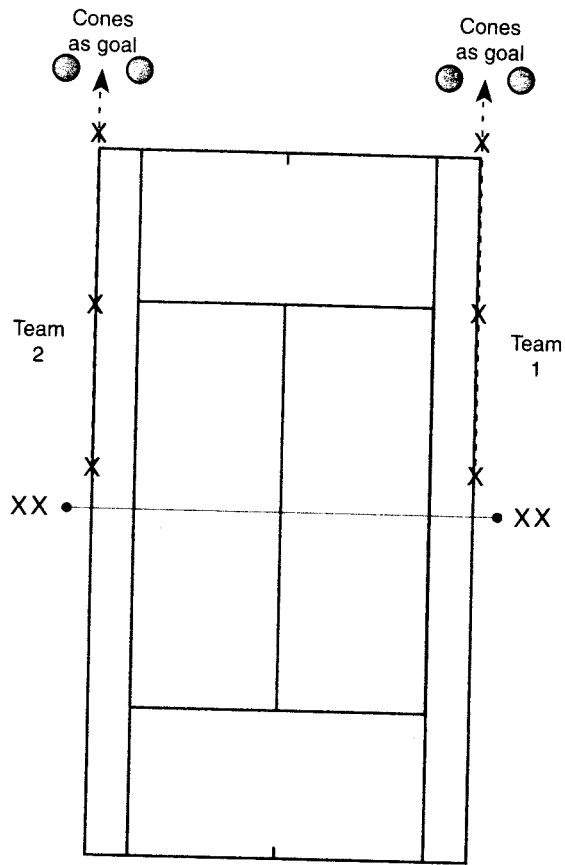
### Skills

**Catch Me If You Can (self toss and catch).** Each player has a ball and tosses it in the air at least head high, lets it bounce on the court and catches it.

**Underhand Throw and Catch (add clapping).** Show children how to toss the ball underhand, standing with both feet facing the target and stepping forward with the opposite foot (left foot if they are right-handed) and swinging their arm at their side. Place a target for the ball about two-thirds of the distance to the partner so the player has an aiming point. Have the catcher clap when the ball bounces before catching. You can have them add multiple claps if they elect to catch the ball after two or three bounces.

**One Bounce - Two Bounce.** One player tosses the ball underhand over the net and calls out "One" or "Two." The other player must allow the ball to bounce that number of times before catching it and tossing it back, also calling out a number. Start with playground balls and progress to one player trapping the ball with the racquet, and then eventually hitting the ball on either one or two bounces.

**Tennis Hockey.** Players form two teams and stand across from each other on the doubles sidelines and place two cones as goals about 3 feet beyond the end of the line. Keeping the ball close to their racquets, the children tap the ball along the line (have them name the line) trying to keep the ball on the line. When they get to the end, they must try to score a goal for their team by hitting the ball between the two cones.



**Tennis Hockey**

 **Take Home Tennis**

**One Bounce - Two Bounce.** The adult or older partner tosses a playground ball up in the air and calls out "One," "Two," "Three" or even "Zero." The player must allow the ball to bounce that number of times before catching it and tossing it back to the adult. Begin with a playground ball and progress to a foam ball with the child trapping the ball on the strings of his racquet.

## Practice 3

**Theme:** Sending and receiving with direction

**Equipment:** 17- to 21-inch racquets, foam and oversized low compression balls, poly spots/donuts, playground balls

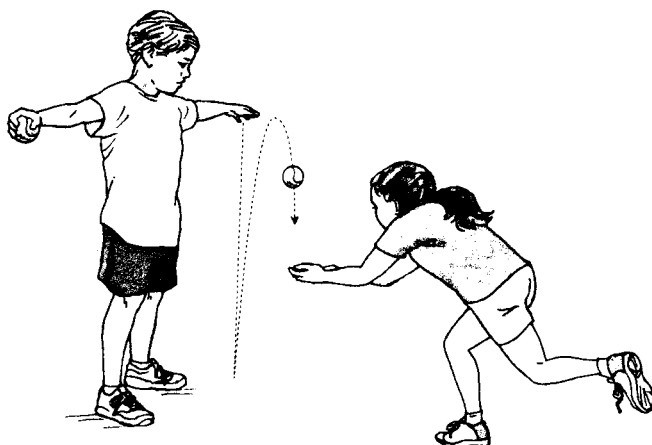
### Gary's Youth Coaching Tip

It is not well executed forehands and backhands that get a child hooked on tennis. It is movement, fun and play that captures a child's heart—and it happens to occur on a tennis court.

### Movement Activities

**Funny Bones.** To get kids moving, balancing and learning the lines of the court, have them move to the lines called out by the coach and balance on the line with the instructed number of body parts. The coach will give two commands: One will be for the line, and the second will be for the number of body parts to put on the line. For example, the coach could say "Skip to the baseline and balance on three body parts" (as in two feet and one hand), or "March to the center service line and balance on two body parts, but you can only use one foot."

**Ball Drop.** In pairs or with a coach, one player has a ball in both hands with arms extended at shoulder height. The player drops one ball and the partner runs and catches the ball after one bounce. Move slightly back after each successful drop and catch.



Ball Drop

**Sharks in a Tank.** Define the play area, such as the entire backcourt (between the service line and the baseline) or one service court, depending on the size of the group. The coach calls out the name of the child and that child becomes the "shark" and attempts to tag as many players as possible. When a player is tagged, he steps out of the boundaries, does two jumping jacks and then rejoins the game. It is a good idea to control the movement—calling out "fast walk," "skip" or "march"—to prevent anyone from getting hurt while running. The coach changes the identity of the shark frequently.

**Dodge Ball.** Players with racquets form a circle. One player is selected to be in the middle of the circle without her racquet. Players attempt to roll a foam ball across the circle and tap the player in the middle with the ball, who is dodging the rolling ball. Make this game move even quicker by using two or even three balls.

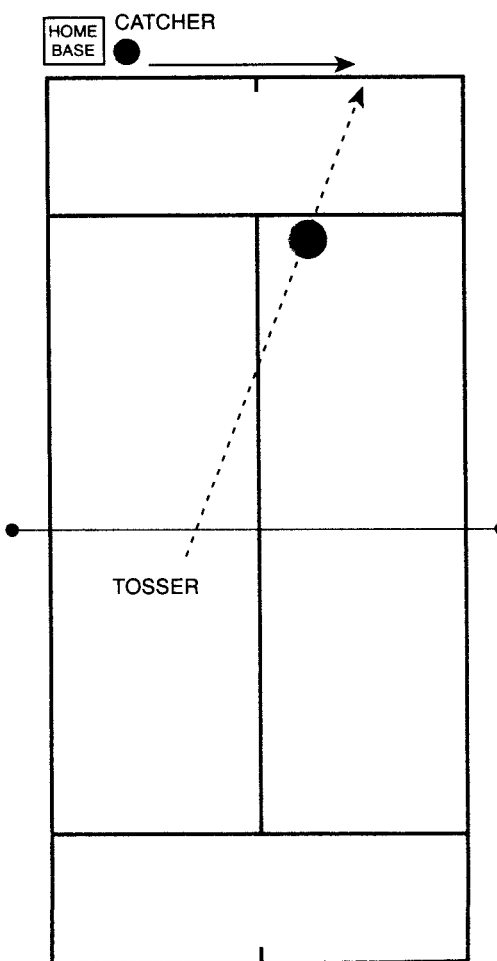
## Skills

**Lollipops - Roll or Toss to a Color.** Two players, each with a racquet, stand 5 to 6 feet from each other with two spots of different colors in front of them. One of the players calls out a color of one of the spots and rolls the ball to that spot. The partner moves to stop and pick up the ball, calls out a color and rolls the ball back to that spot. Start this game with a rolling ball, progress to a tossed ball and finally incorporate rolling the ball with a racquet.

**Throw Ball.** Using a playground ball and a 36-foot court, children play tennis by throwing the ball over the net with two hands and catching it on the opposite side. You can permit multiple bounces but all other rules of tennis apply. By using two hands you can encourage rotation and getting sideways. Players learn to see empty spaces and can play over a net with relatively little skill while learning to move the opponent and learning the tactic of hitting to the open court.

**Dirty Harry.** Each player has a partner. One player is positioned off to one side of the court (tossers) while the other player (catcher) is starting on her "home base." Home base is just inside the singles side line of the 36-foot court. The tosser makes an underhand toss diagonally to a large target area (working on crosscourt). The "catcher" has to move out to catch the ball. Allow players three bounces, then two bounces, then one bounce before catching the ball. The "catcher" then does an underhand toss back to the tosser before returning to "home base." Address side shuffle on the recovery. The tosser can only toss the next ball once the catcher has returned to home base.

Each time the catcher successfully catches the ball and the tosser tosses the ball in the target area, they get one point. Use either scoring flip cards or cones to keep track of the score. The coach announces the number of points the players need to achieve. Players who are struggling may be challenged to score fewer points than more skilled



**Dirty Harry**

players. As they progress, the team can be challenged to get seven points. Stay within the seven-point goal, as this will help them learn the match play scoring system for QuickStart Tennis. When a team reaches their designated points, they yell “Dirty Harry” and they are the winners. All players rotate roles after a team has a “Dirty Harry.”

*Note: A large target area is essential to ensure success by all.*

*Variation: The tosser tosses the ball underhand to a large target area straight ahead (working down the line).*

*Variation 2: The tosser tosses from the other side of the court.*

## Take Home Tennis

**Throw Ball.** Have the child and an adult rally with a playground ball by throwing and catching over a line/net in the driveway or any other flat surface. You can allow multiple bounces and let the child move closer to the line/net for better success.

## Practice 4

**Theme:** Sending and receiving with the racquet

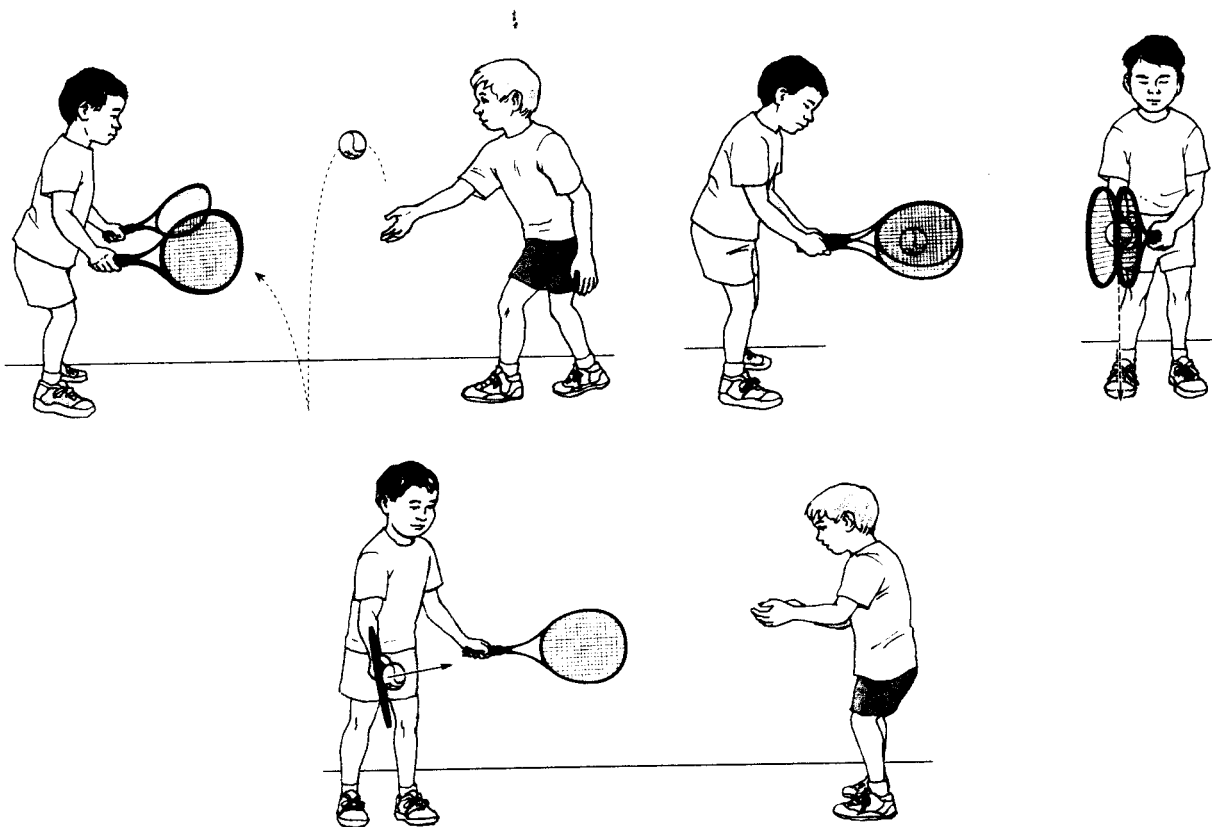
**Equipment:** 17- to 21-inch racquets, foam and oversized low compression balls, poly spots/donuts, playground balls, cones

### Gary's Youth Coaching Tip

Who are you becoming because of tennis? It's not your win/loss record that is important. In the game of life, the bigger picture is more important than the details.

### Movement Activities

**Lobster Trap.** This activity is done in pairs. The players stand 8 to 10 feet apart, with one player holding two racquets, one in each hand, and the partner with one ball. The player with the ball (the tosser) makes an easy underhand toss and the player with the racquets (the lobster) catches the ball after the bounce by trapping the ball between both racquets. After trapping the ball, the player drops the ball from the racquets and hits the ball back to the tosser. Encourage the "lobster" to trap the ball at the side of his body so it is easy to make the drop and hit from a sideways position. Change tossers and "lobsters" after five tosses.



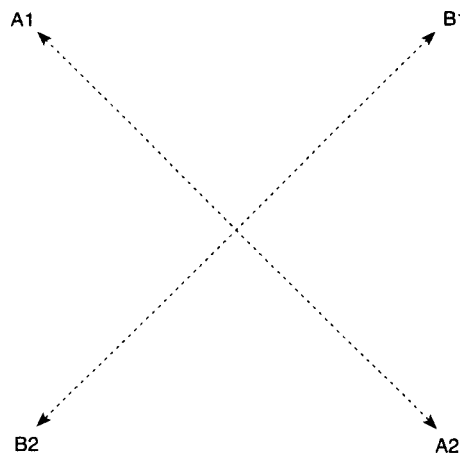
Lobster Trap

**Team Lily Pad.** Players work as a team to get from one side of the court to the other (the swamp). To cross the swamp, one player must step only on the “lily pads” (poly spots or donuts). Each team has two poly spots and one player places one “lily pad” in front, where the other player can hop to or step on. The partner picks up the vacated “lily pad” and moves it in front so the partner can move forward by stepping or hopping to the next “lily pad.” This continues until one team makes it across the swamp. At this point, the players change roles and one person moves the lily pads while the other steps or hops to the open lily pad in front until she makes it back across the swamp.

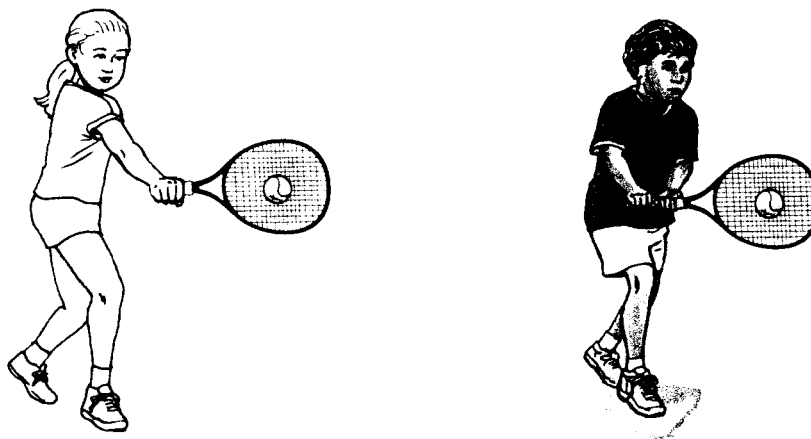
**Through the Tunnel.** Players line up right behind each other, with their legs wider than shoulder width apart. The last player in line, or the coach, rolls the ball between the legs of the other players. After the player rolls the ball, she runs to the front of the line and tries to stop the ball before it passes her. Continue this format until the team reaches a designated area, such as one of the lines of the court.

**Crash Test.** This activity uses four players, each with a racquet and one foam ball per pair. Partners stand diagonally opposite each other with one ball, and the other pair is also diagonally opposite with one ball. When the coach calls out, “Go,” the players roll the ball with their racquets to their partner opposite them, so two balls are going at the same time. If the two balls collide in the middle, the players yell out, “Crash.”

**Side Show.** Players are in pairs, throwing a playground ball with both hands across their body to a partner on the other side of the net. The throw should resemble that action of the forehand and backhand (see illustration) ground stroke.



**Crash Test**



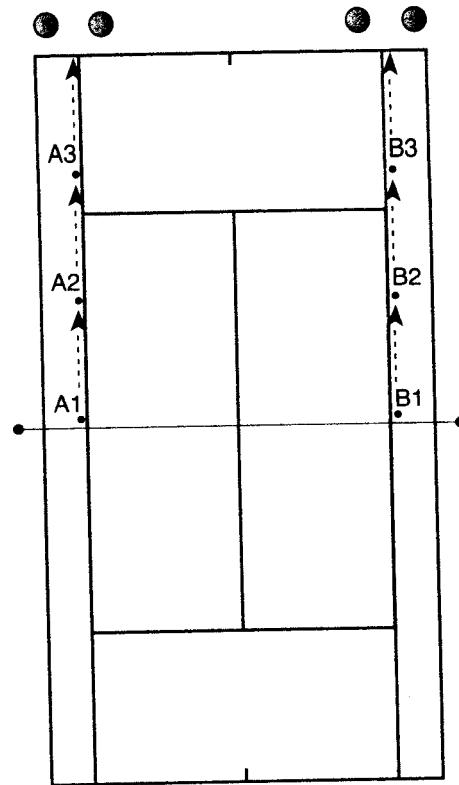
**One-Handed Backhand, Two-Handed Backhand**

## Skills

**Tennis Shoot Out.** Players are divided into two teams. Spots are spread out along each singles sideline of the 78-foot court, and two cones forming a goal are placed behind the baseline. Make sure the goals are large enough to ensure success. Players from each team stand on a spot so they form a line along the singles sideline.

The ball starts with the player at the net, who rolls the ball with his racquet to the next player, who stops it and rolls the ball to the next player until it gets to the last player, who shoots the ball between the cones with her racquet. The first team to get the designated number of balls between the cones wins the game.

**Home Base.** Players are hitting or tossing a ball to each other over the net. A spot is placed in the center of the baseline as the "recovery spot." Every time a ball is tossed or hit, the player goes for the ball, traps it on his strings and hits or throws the ball to the other side of the net and recovers to his spot. The players are working cooperatively to score five points—a successful hit or toss, the trap, return and recovery.



Tennis Shoot Out

## Take Home Tennis

**Lobster Trap.** The adult has one foam ball and the child has two racquets, one in each hand. The adult makes an easy underhand toss to the child, who traps the ball between both racquets after the bounce. After the trap, the child turns to the side, drops the ball from the racquets and hits a forehand to the adult. See page 34 for illustration.

## Practice 5

**Theme:** Sending and receiving with racquet on the backhand.

**Equipment:** 17- to 21-inch racquets, foam balls, oversized low compression balls, cones

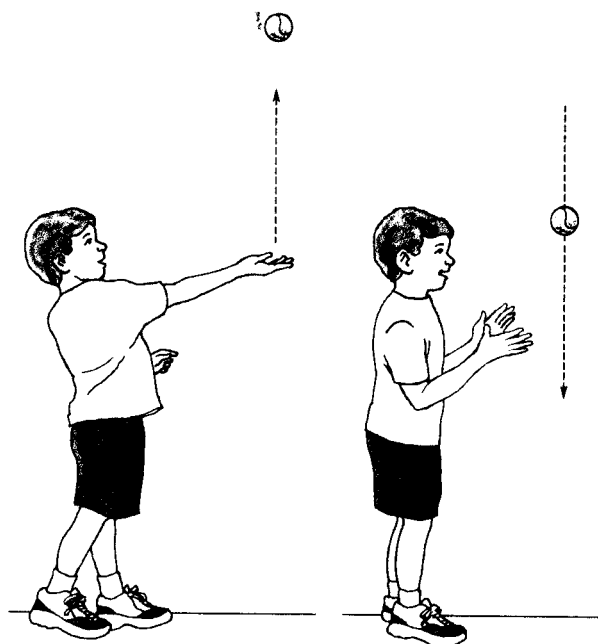
### Gary's Youth Coaching Tip

You can't scream, yell, demean or humiliate a child into loving tennis. What are you going to do TODAY to help them fall in love with it?

### Movement Activities

**Train Crash (use backhand side of racquet).** Two players stand on either side of the doubles alley, each with a ball. Players roll the balls back and forth with their racquet, using the backhand side without the two balls hitting. As they get more successful they can move back a step.

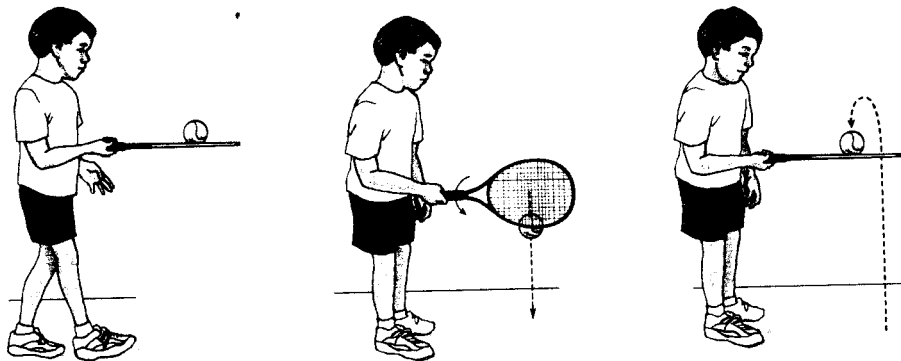
**Applause.** All players have a ball in their own space. Each will toss the ball up, clap and catch after the bounce. To increase the difficulty, have them clap twice before catching, then three times, then as many times as they can before the ball bounces twice.



**Applause**

**Racquet Splat.** Two players with one ball are facing each other. Place a racquet between the two players who are standing 8 to 10 feet apart. Each player will make an underhand toss attempting to hit the racquet face. Each time the ball hits the face of the racquet, the team scores one point. Make this a cooperative game so each team is trying to score as many points as possible in the allotted time. Keep the time frame short, such as 30 seconds, and switch partners frequently.

**Bungee Jump.** Each player has a ball that is balanced on the strings. The players move around the court balancing the ball. When the coach calls out, "Bungee Jump," the players let the ball drop off the racquet, let it bounce and then catch the ball back on the racquet. They may have to use their hands to trap the ball on the strings, but with practice they can just use the racquet face. Once the ball is on the strings, the player continues to move until the coach calls, "Bungee Jump," again.



**Bungee Jump**

**Clear the Court.** Divide players into two teams and put them on either side of the net. Dump out as many foam balls as you have on both sides of the court. When the coach calls out, "Clear the Court," players pick up balls and throw them over the net to the other side of the court. Let them continue to catch or pick up balls and throw them over to the other side for a minute to see what side of the court has the fewest balls.

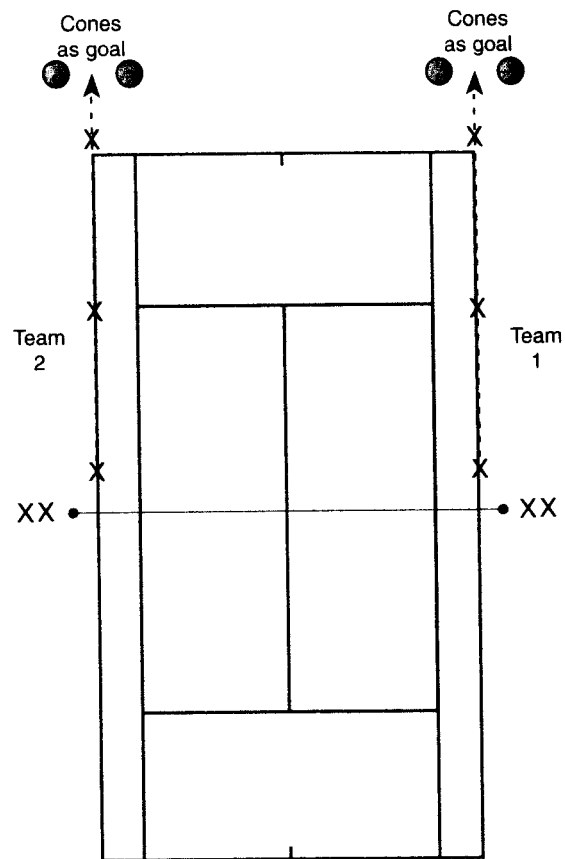
## Skills

**Tennis Hockey – Use Backhand Side of the Racquet.** Place children in groups along a line starting by the net. Place two cones as a goal about 4 feet beyond the baseline. Keeping the ball close to the racquet on the backhand side, the children tap the ball along the line while trying to keep the ball on the line. When they get to the baseline, they try to score a goal by hitting the ball between the two cones.

**Alligator River – Use Backhand Side of the Racquet.** The players line up on either side of the doubles alley, each with a racquet and with one ball for each pair. The coach or one of the players is the “alligator” and is going to walk down the “river” – the alley. As the coach walks down the alley, the players roll the ball to their partner trying to hit the alligator’s feet.

## Take Home Tennis

**Applause.** Use a foam or playground ball. The adult tosses the ball up and the child claps and catches the ball after the bounce. Do the same with two claps and three claps before the catch. See if the coach and player can clap between the toss and catch without a bounce. Can you do two claps before the bounce? Three claps?



**Tennis Hockey — Backhand**

## Practice 6

**Theme:** Rally Skills

**Equipment:** 17- to 21-inch racquets, foam and oversized low compression balls, throw down lines, poly spots or donuts

### Gary's Youth Coaching Tip

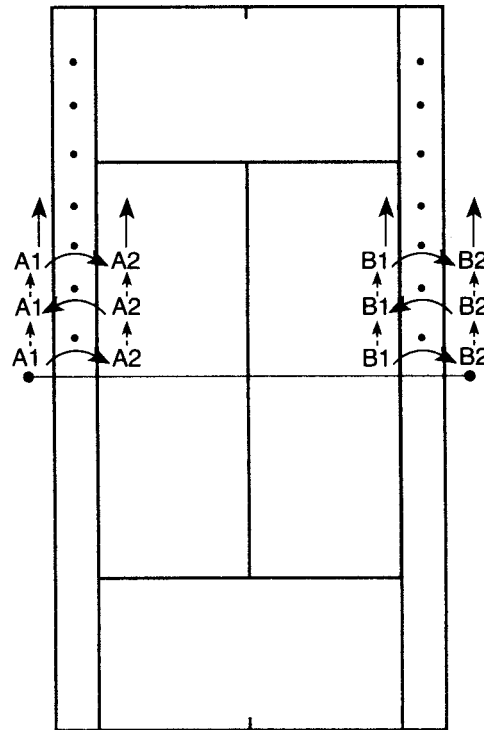
"I don't get excited about talent. I get excited about unconditional effort and I'm looking for it every time I'm with you." —Dr. Jim Loehr

### Movement Activities

**Statues.** Children jog around the court until the coach calls out, "Freeze." Children have to stop very quickly and hold their balance.

**Call My Name.** Children are in pairs, one partner with a ball and the other with her back to her partner. The partner with the ball tosses it up and calls out the partner's name. The partner has to turn around and catch the ball after one bounce.

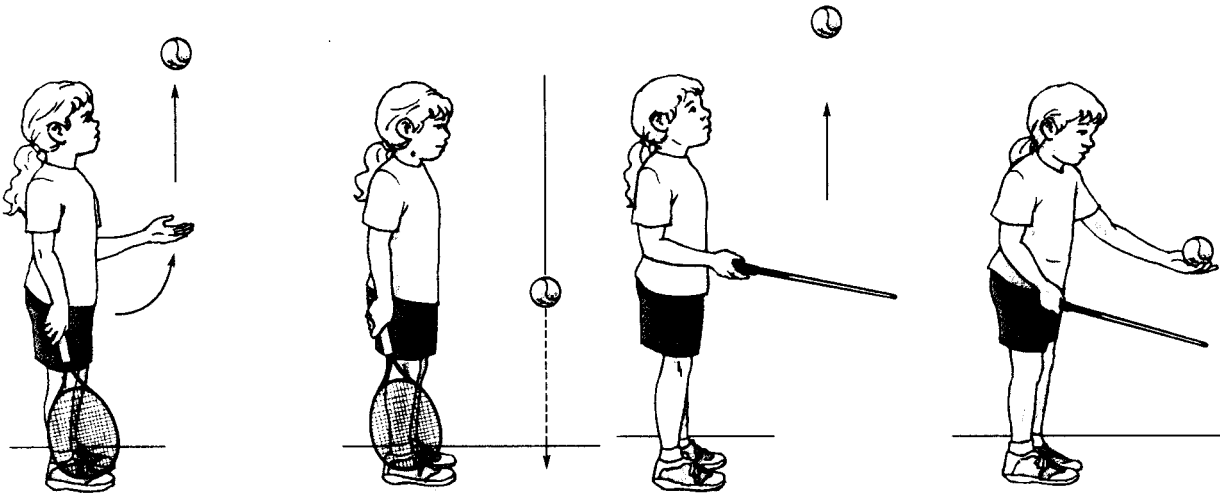
**Slamma Jamma.** Place throw down lines or poly spots/donuts every 5-6 feet inside the doubles alley. Players stand on either side of the doubles alley facing each other. Players side shuffle up and down the court tossing a ball underhand to a partner. The ball must bounce between the players before the partner can catch it. The goal is to move from the net to the baseline without dropping the catch. Every time a player drops the ball, the team quickly goes back to the nearest throw down line or spot before continuing on.



Slamma Jamma

## Skills

**Jacks.** The player tosses the ball up and lets it bounce, bumps it up with the racquet one time and catches it—"onesies." The player then attempts to tap it up twice—"twosies"—and so on until they reach "fivesies"—or five in a row.



Jacks

**Partner Jacks.** Same as above except the ball is caught by a partner on each tap-up.

**Rally Me.** Within the service box, the player tosses the ball, lets it bounce off the court and bumps it up with the racquet, lets it bounce and taps it up again. This can be done while moving around the service box.

**Survivor.** Players line up on one side of the net (the island), and drop and hit a ball over the net—or, if need be, hit from a toss made by the coach. If the ball goes over the net, the player stays on the island and goes to the end of the line.

If the player misses, he is off the island and goes across the net, where he will try to catch a ball. If he catches the ball in the air, everyone on that side (the off-the-island side) gets to return to the island. If the ball is caught after one or two bounces, only that player goes back to the island. The last player left who successfully hits the ball over the net, into the court and that is not caught is the survivor.

## Take Home Tennis

**Rally: Player and Adult.** Player rallies with an adult on any flat surface with a foam or oversized low compression ball. Alternate hitting up after one bounce and trying to keep the ball from going outside a defined area, such as an area in the driveway, sidewalk or playground.

## Practice 7

**Theme:** Rally Skills with a partner

**Equipment:** 17- to 21-inch racquets, foam or oversized low compression balls, beanbags or Koosh balls

### Gary's Youth Coaching Tip

Effort trumps everything, including talent.



### Movement Activities

**Follow the Leader.** Have children follow the coach around the court and imitate the movement of the leader, such as run, hop, swinging arms, monster walk, march, shuffle sideways, skip, etc. The coach can substitute a player to serve as the leader.

**Partner Toss and Catch.** Place two players in a service court with one ball. The player with the ball will toss it up at least head-level height so it lands anywhere in the service box. The other player must move and catch it after one or two bounces, then toss it so the first player must run and catch it. See how many successful toss and catches each team can make. Change partners frequently.

**Inch Worm.** Players line up shoulder to shoulder in a straight line, with their racquets held out in front with the strings facing up. The last player in the line has a beanbag or Koosh ball. That player passes it from his racquet to the next player in line and then runs behind the line of players to the front of the line. As each player passes and moves to the front of the line, the line will move forward to the opposite end of the court.

## Skills

**Partner Rally Jacks.** Partners alternate hits going from one hit each, “onesies,” up to five hits each, “fivesies.”

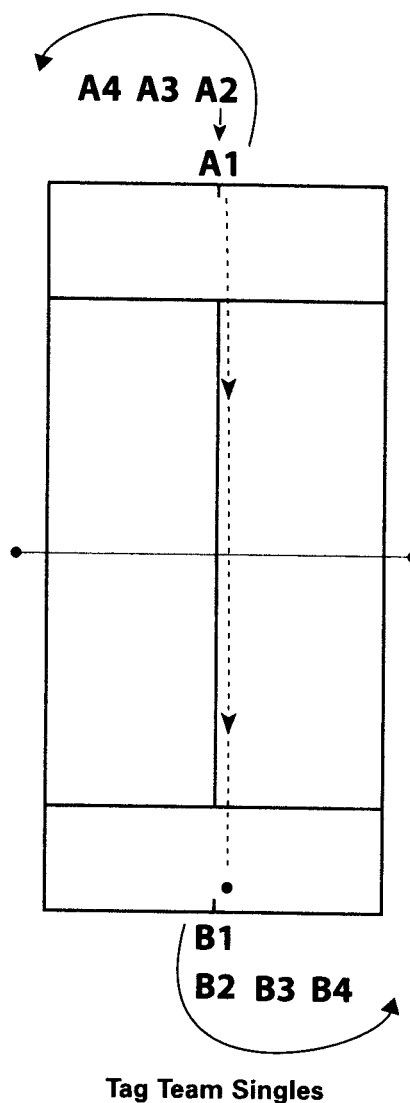
**Splat.** Two players each with a racquet and a ball pyramid made of four balls (three for the base and one on top). One player drops and taps the ball up at about head-level height, trying to hit the ball pyramid to make it “splat.” When the balls are hit, the player scores a point.

**Mini Rally.** Partners work together and rally over a line or low obstacle that serves as the net. They stand close to the obstacle and gently rally balls over the line or obstacle using the forehand. To start the rally, have players start close and sideways to each other, match up racquet faces and take two steps back.

**Tag Team Singles.** There are a few variations to this cooperative game where players in two lines on opposite sides of the net hit and move to the end of the line while keeping the ball in play. The rally begins with the first hit being a drop hit by the first player in line or by an underhand toss from the coach. This game is perfect for coaches and helpers to play as part of the team. They should get in line and participate just like the kids, hopefully adding consistent and accurate hits when they play.

## Take Home Tennis

**Mini Rally.** Player mini rallies with an adult over a line or low obstacle such as a racquet bag or any low barrier made by items from the house or garage. Use a foam or oversized low compression ball.



## Practice 8

**Theme:** Play Day – Tennis Olympics

**Equipment:** 17- to 21-inch racquets; selected from practices above

### Gary's Youth Coaching Tip

Praise effort, not ability and performance. Don't praise the first-serve percentage; praise the work it took to get that.

### Movement Activities

This is a fun day and the activities can be just for fun or competitive, especially if the kids are placed on teams. Stations are set up around the court and players start at an assigned station and perform the activity. When the time is up, they move to the next station. All of the activities have been done somewhere in the first seven practice sessions.

Here are some samples of simple activities for the stations around the court:

- Self rally
- Rally with a partner
- Splat
- Inch Worm
- Throw ball
- Tag Team Singles
- Any other activity that the players enjoy

### Take Home Tennis

**Mini Rally Over a Line.** Player mini rallies with an adult over a line or low obstacle such as a racquet bag or any low barrier made by items from the house or garage. Use a foam or oversized low compression ball.