

# P.E. CURRICULUM

**SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

Accredited PE Assessment Drills

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# INTRODUCTION

**The purpose of this resource is to assist teachers in understanding the core competencies for assessing tennis as part of accredited PE courses.**

The suite of practices have been designed to support teachers in assessing tennis and to allow students to demonstrate the key skills required for assessment. This resource has been cross referenced against the assessment criteria for all the exam boards currently available in England, Wales and Scotland (2020).

There are 8 fundamental competencies for assessment across the varying Examination Boards:

- 1 GROUNDSTROKES**
- 2 DROP SHOTS**
- 3 VOLLEYS**
- 4 SMASH**
- 5 LOB**
- 6 SERVE**
- 7 RETURN OF SERVE**
- 8 TACTICS**

Within this resource an overview of each competency is given, including the key components to identify when assessing. For each competency, 3 different drills are suggested to demonstrate the skill in progressively complex situations:

- 1 SKILL IN ISOLATION**
- 2 ADAPTED PRACTICE**
- 3 APPLIED PRACTICE**



## INTRODUCTION (CONTINUED)

Assessors can select which drills are performed in order to give student(s) the best opportunity to demonstrate their ability during assessment. The resource is laid out in the order that a typical match warm up would be performed, however the order of an assessment is flexible and should be determined by the teacher. Practices are set up with students working in pairs; a coach or teacher can replace one of the students in the drill, in the case of an individual student being assessed or if standards vary greatly between students. When feeding, students can use a hand feed, racket feed or rally. It is important that the student being assessed in the drill is given the best situation to showcase the skill and their ability to perform it, therefore the type of feed may change based on the requirements of the drill, the receiver's ability and the ability of the feeder. Warm ups have been included within the resource by way of best practice.



**It is important that the student being assessed in the drill is given the best situation to showcase the skill and their ability to perform it.**

**For each drill there is an accompanying video demonstrating the practice.**

Videos also show different levels to support assessors in identifying the key skills during the drills; with special thanks to Glenmoor and Winton Academies, Bournemouth. Videos of each shot in isolation can also be found on the schools website showing the ideal technique.



# OVERVIEW OF TENNIS

This section provides an overview of the fundamental elements of tennis for assessors to be aware of.

## Ball Characteristics

The intended shot, the technique and successful execution, will all impact the characteristics of the ball. There are 5 ball characteristics that can be altered:

1. Height
2. Direction
3. Distance
4. Speed
5. Spin

The ball characteristics are determined by the racket in 3 ways:

- Path of racket
- Angle of the racket head
- Speed of racket

The technical development framework introduced in the curriculum lesson plans, continues into the GCSE framework, with additional tactics added, demonstrating the impact on the 3 phrases:

## PREPARE, HIT AND RECOVER.






# 1. WARM UP

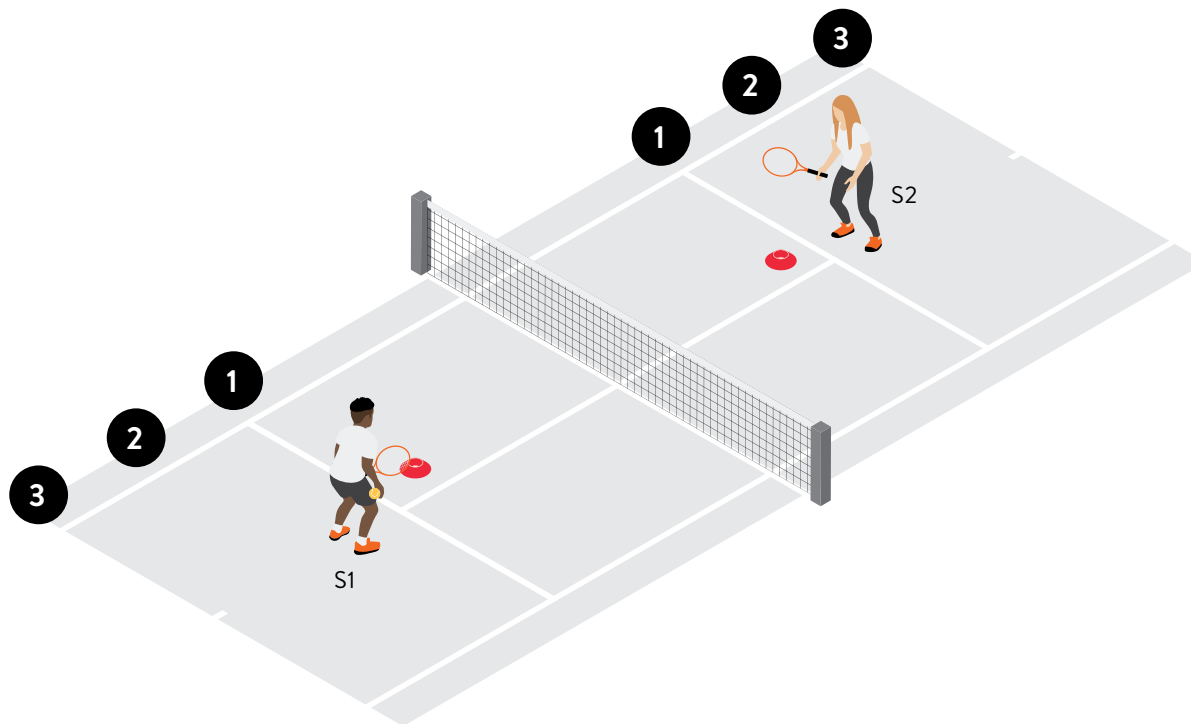
## Cone Off

### How to Play:

- Students work in pairs
  - Students start on the service line
  - Both students have a cone and place it 1m in front of themselves
  - Start rallying with the aim to hit the cone in front of their partner
  - Once a cone has been hit, or after 2 mins, move back to  $\frac{3}{4}$  length tennis court, place cones down and repeat
  - Once cone has been hit, or after 2 mins, move back to the baseline and repeat
- > **Change the time given to hit the cone at each position**
- > **Specify forehands or backhands only**

### Equipment:

-  Tennis balls
-  Tennis rackets
-  Cones



# 2. WARM UP

## Forward and Back

### How to Play:

- Students work in pairs
- Students start on the service line

#### Option 1: One student performs the movement



- Student 1 feeds the ball over the net into the service box and moves towards the net into a volleying position
- Student 2 lets the ball bounce and hits it back, remaining on the service line
- Student 1 volleys the ball back to Student 2
- Student 1 then moves back to the service line

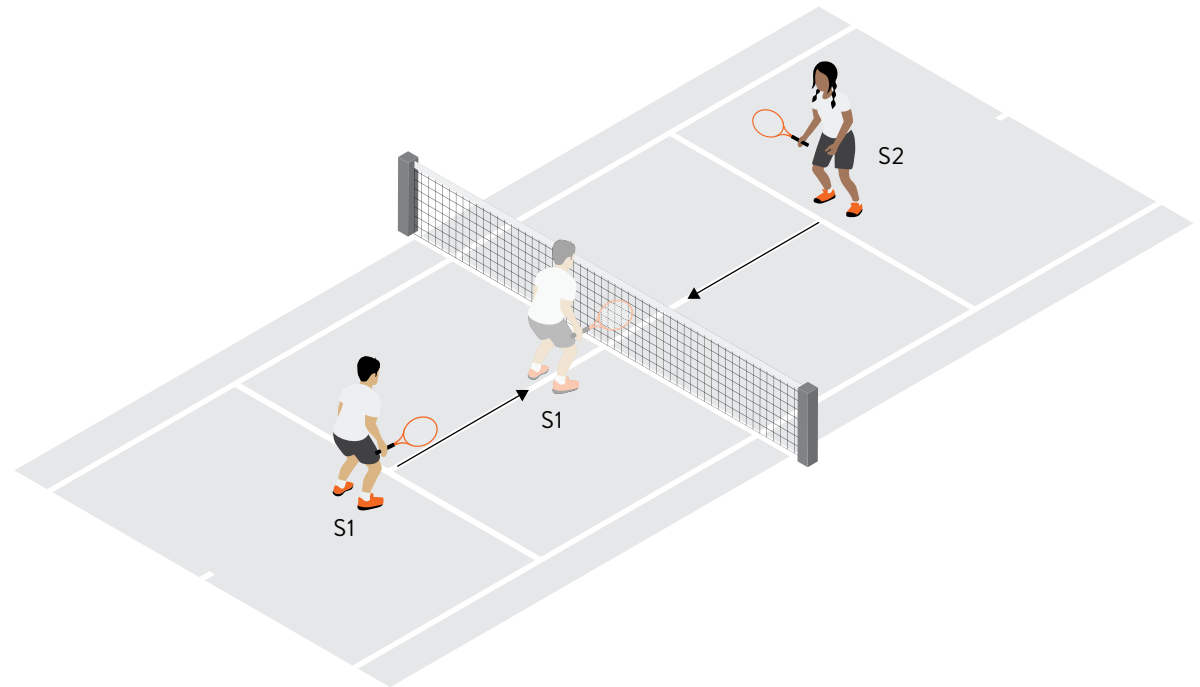
#### Option 2: Both students perform the movement

- Student 1 feeds the ball over the net into the service box and moves towards the net into a volleying position
- Student 2 lets the ball bounce and hits it back, then moves towards the net into a volleying position
- Student 1 volleys the ball to Student 2 and moves back to the service line
- Student 2 volleys the ball to Student 1 and moves back to the service line
- Students stop the ball and repeat the sequence, or can continue the sequence without stopping

> Specify forehands or backhands only

### Equipment:

-  Tennis balls
-  Tennis rackets



# 3. WARM UP

## Matchplay Warm Up

### How to Play:

- Students work in pairs to complete a 7 minute match play warm up



### Singles

- Students start rallying in the service boxes, both forehands and backhands (1 min)
- Students move to the baseline and rally forehands and backhands (1 min)
- Student 1 moves to the volley position and hits volleys and smashes; Student 2 hits groundstrokes from the baseline (1 min)
- Student 1 hits groundstrokes from the baseline and Student 2 hits volleys and smashes (1 min)
- Students warm up both first and second serves diagonally (1 min)
- Student 1 serves while Student 2 practices return of serve (1 min)
- Student 2 serves while Student 1 practices return of serve (1 min)

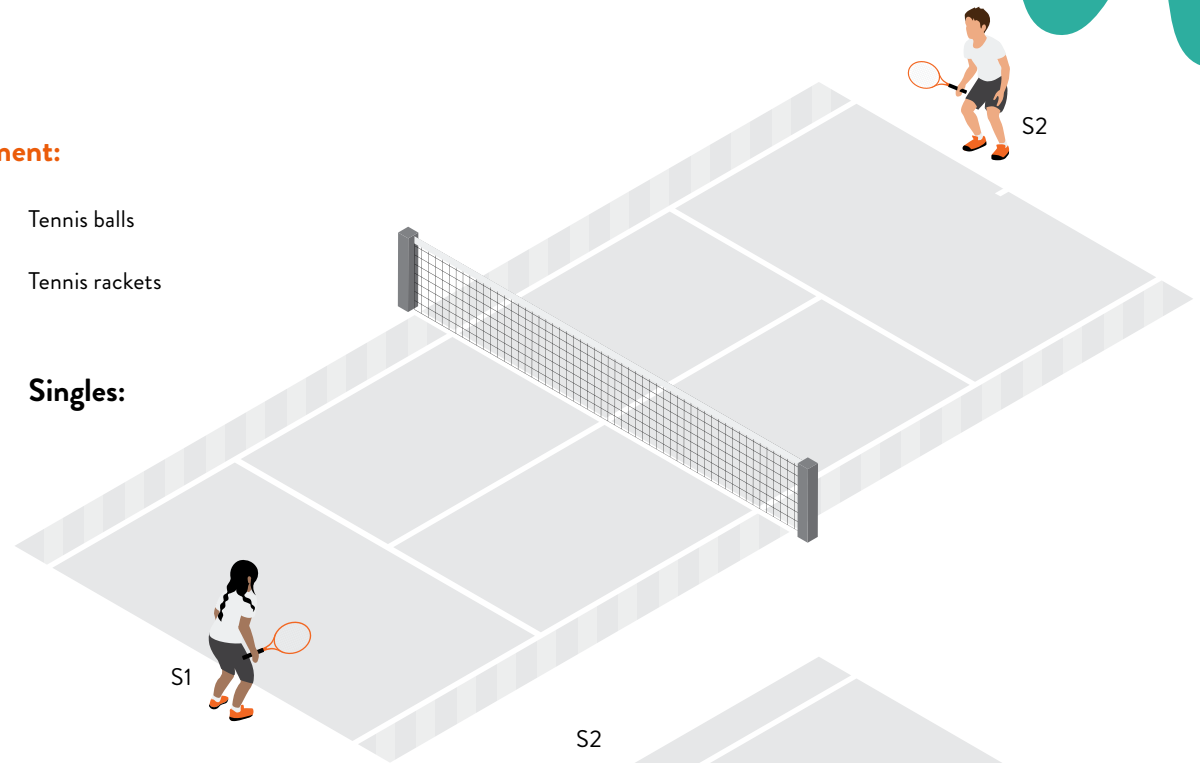
### Doubles

- As above but hitting in the half court

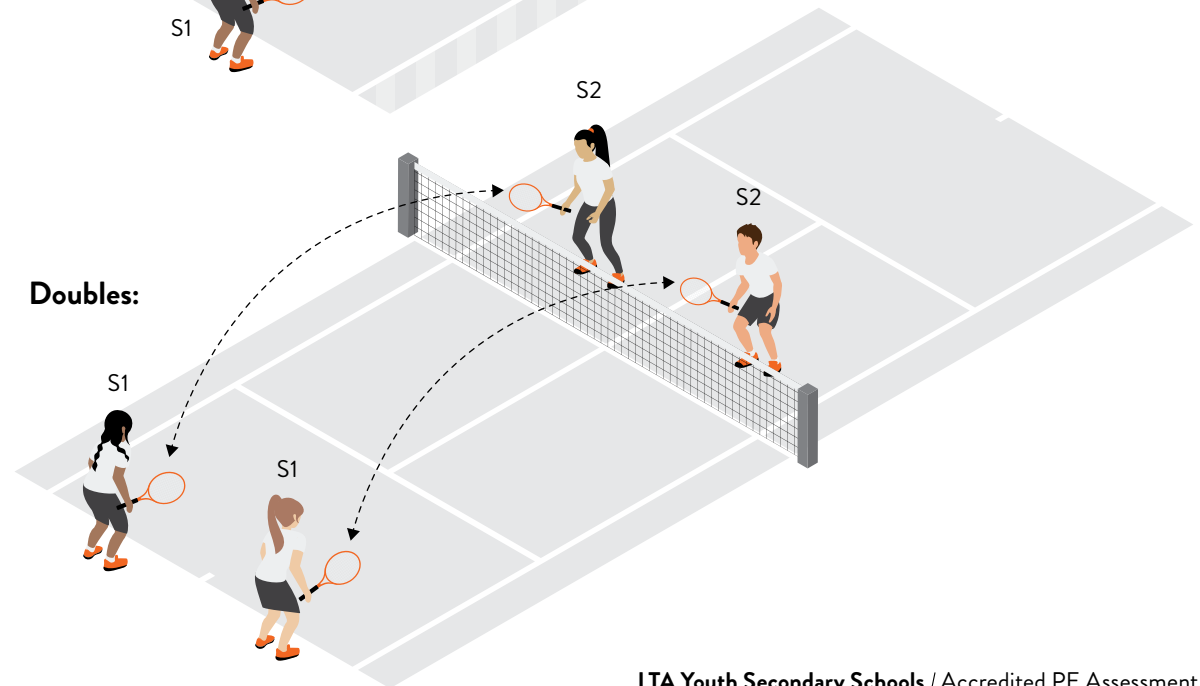
### Equipment:

-  Tennis balls
-  Tennis rackets

### Singles:



### Doubles:





# GROUNDSTROKES

Groundstrokes are played from the baseline, using either the forehand or backhand side.

Every part of the body is used within the chain to hit the the ball successfully.

Backhands are hit with the player using either 1 hand (single backhand) or 2 hands (double handed backhand).

For wheelchair tennis, the ball may bounce twice prior to hitting.

Groundstrokes can be hit flat, with topspin, or with slice. The racket path varies for the different spins:

- **Flat** – a horizontal swing path “through” the ball
- **Topspin** – the racket path is low to high and the strings brush up the back of the ball causing the ball to spin forwards and accelerate
- **Slice** - the racket path is high to low, producing backspin on the ball

Players will have a personal style on how they play, including a preferred stance when hitting the ball and which spin they prefer to play. They should be able to adapt these if required based on the incoming ball, their opponent and the stage of the point.

# GROUNDSTROKE GRIPS

Players will alter their grip depending on which spin they want to put on the ball



## **TOPSPIN FOREHAND:**

Semi western or full western grip



## **SLICE FOREHAND:**

Continental grip



## **DOUBLE HANDED BACKHAND:**

Place dominant hand at the bottom of the handle in a continental grip, and the non-dominant hand is placed above it (ideally touching), in a semi-western grip



## **SINGLE HANDED BACKHAND:**

Eastern grip for the dominant hand with the non-dominant hand guiding the racket back in the take back and then being released in the forward motion prior to contact



# GROUNDSTROKES

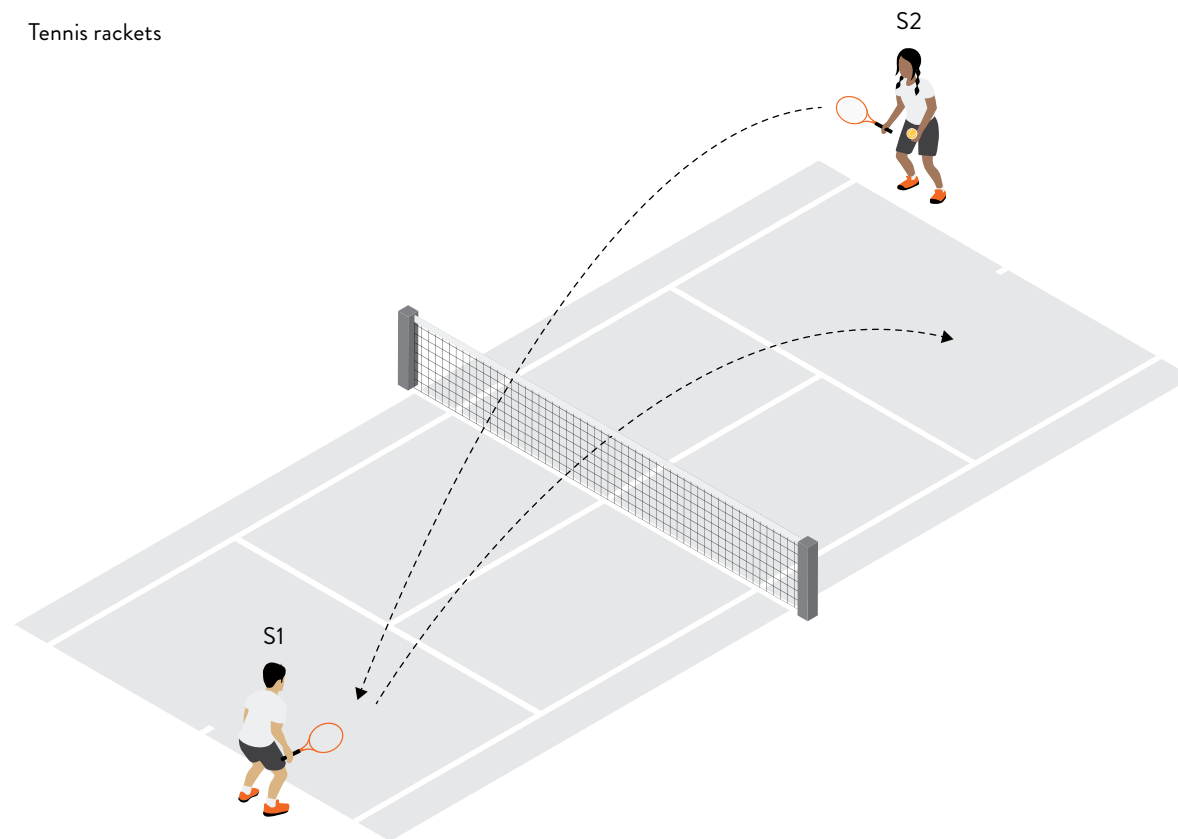
## Skill in Isolation

### How to Play:

- Students work in pairs
  - Full singles court
  - Student 1 starts at the baseline in the centre
  - Student 2 starts just inside the baseline on the deuce side
  - Student 2 racket feeds the ball cross court aiming for the ball to bounce just past the service line
  - Student 1 hits a forehand down the line
  - Repeat several times
  - Student 1 then hits forehands cross court
  - Repeat several times
  - Student 2 feeds from the advantage side
  - Student 1 hits backhands down the line and then cross court
- > **Specify the spin that Student 1 puts on the ball**
- > **Targets or target zones can be placed for the student to hit into, therefore working on depth in the drill**

### Equipment:

-  Tennis balls
-  Tennis rackets



### KEY POINTS FOR ASSESSMENT:

- Student can demonstrate the core skills in isolation
- Student can consistently repeat the core skill and demonstrate accuracy and control
- Student can demonstrate the appropriate physical fitness to hit the ball



# GROUNDSTROKES

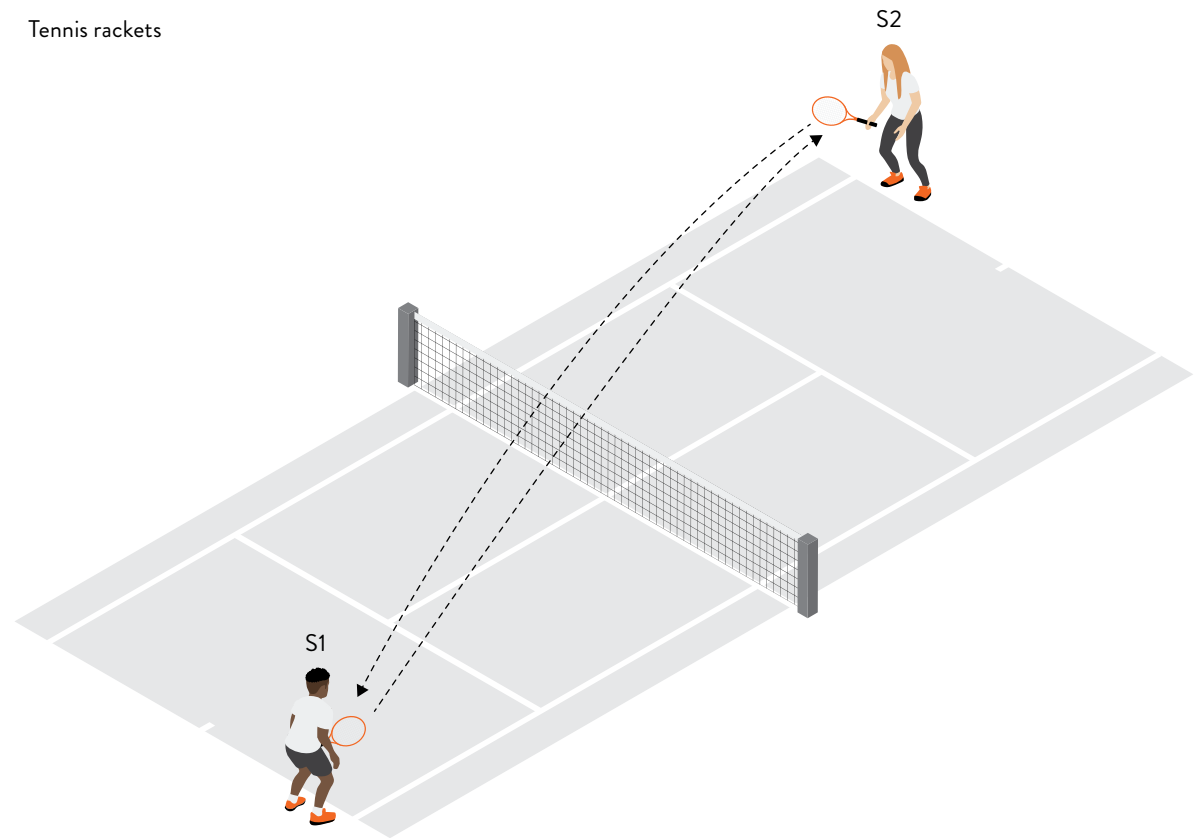
## Adapted Practice

### How to Play:

- Students work in pairs
  - Full singles court
  - Students start at the baseline
  - Students rally, working at 75% power, looking to maintain the depth of the ball and consistency
  - Hit forehands only down the line
  - Hit forehands only cross court
  - Hit backhands only down the line
  - Hit backhands only cross court
  - Hit forehands only aiming to keep the ball in the tramlines – tramlines are used to create a smaller zone, so needs more accuracy to complete
  - Hit backhands only aiming to keep the ball in the tramlines
- > **Specify the spin that students put on the ball**
- > **Add a target or target zone for the student to hit into**

### Equipment:

-  Tennis balls
-  Tennis rackets



### KEY POINTS FOR ASSESSMENT:

- Demonstrates a good level of skills with control and accuracy within a conditioned situation
- Performs a series of forehands or backhands in a continuous rally

# GROUNDSTROKES

## Applied Practice

### How to Play:

- Students work in pairs
- Full singles court
- Students start at the baseline
- Alternate feeding

### Option 1



- Students rally cross court forehand to forehand
- Student 1 can choose to hit their forehand down the line and the point then becomes live
- Switch after a set time or number of rallies and Student 2 can now choose to make the point live by hitting the ball down the line
- Repeat rallying cross court backhand to backhand

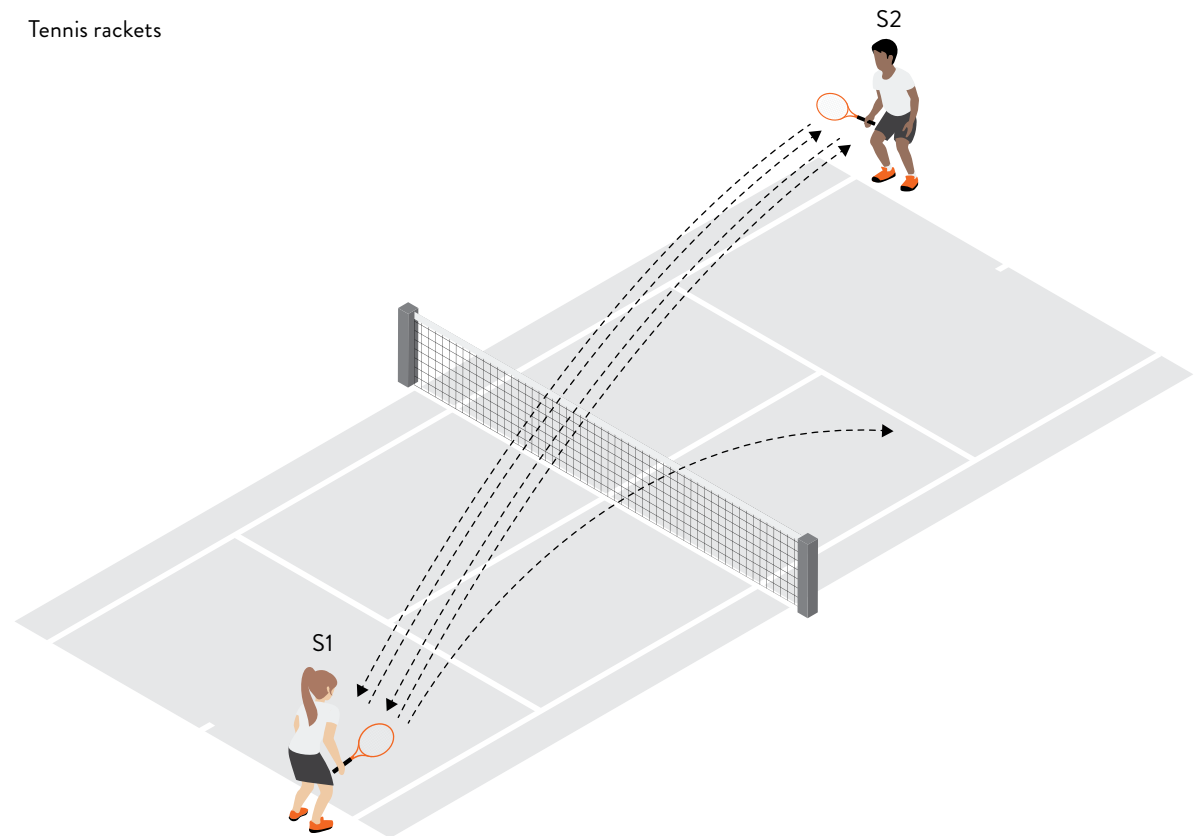
### Option 2

- Students rally crosscourt forehand to forehand
- The point becomes live when either student changes the direction of the ball and hits it down the line
- Repeat rallying cross court backhand to backhand

- > Specify the spin that students put on the ball
- > Specify a target zone for depth for the students to hit into

### Equipment:

-  Tennis balls
-  Tennis rackets



### KEY POINTS FOR ASSESSMENT:

- Demonstrates awareness of and responds to the strengths, weaknesses and actions of the other player
- Understands tactically the aim of the drill
- Makes effective adaptations to the changes within the competitive drill
- Effective decision making

# THE DROP SHOT

**The drop shot is executed to 'drop' the ball close to the net, so the ball lands short in the court.**

It is most commonly used when the opponent is positioning themselves deep behind the baseline, therefore putting the ball into space.

The shot is executed using a continental grip, shortening the backswing (if the ball falls short of the net, then the backswing may be too short), opening the racket face and swinging under the ball.




# DROP SHOT

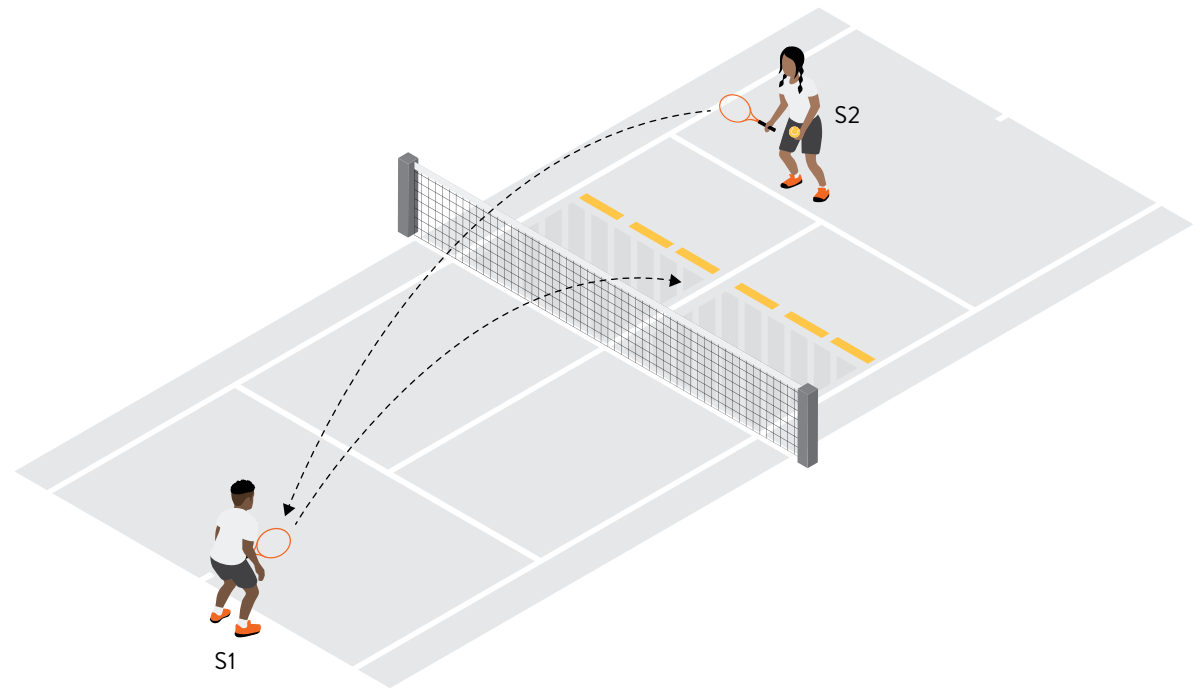
## Skill in Isolation

### How to Play:

- Students work in pairs
- Mark a zone close to the net (approx. 1m deep)
- Full singles court or half court singles
- Student 1 starts on the baseline
- Student 2 starts on the service line
- Student 2 feeds the ball to Student 1 which lands approx. 1m inside the baseline.
- Student 1 aims to hit a drop shot so it lands in the marked zoned area at the front of the court
- Student 2 feeds 10 balls; count the number of times that the drop shot lands in the zone

### Equipment:

-  Tennis balls
-  Tennis rackets
-  Throw down lines



### KEY POINTS FOR ASSESSMENT:

- Student can demonstrate the core skills in isolation
- Student can consistently repeat the core skill and demonstrate accuracy and control




# DROP SHOT

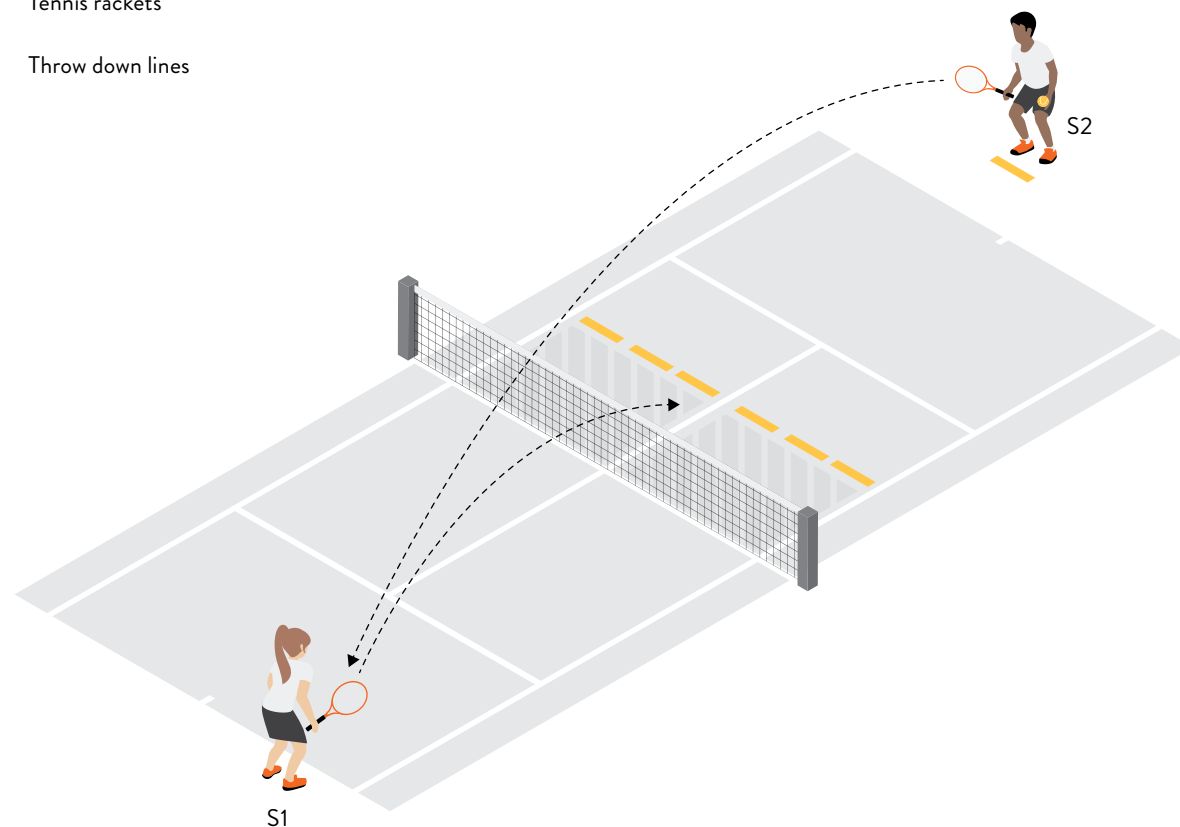
## Adapted Practice

### How to Play:

- Students work in pairs
- Mark a zone close to the net (approx. 1m deep)
- Full singles court or half court singles
- Student 1 starts on the baseline
- Student 2 starts approx. 1m behind the baseline (throw down line placed as marker)
- Student 2 feeds the ball in underarm to land past the service line
- Student 1 aims to hit a drop shot into the zoned area with the intention for student 2 to be unable to reach it
- Student 2 starts moving forward once Student 1 has hit the ball and not before

### Equipment:

-  Tennis balls
-  Tennis rackets
-  Throw down lines



### KEY POINTS FOR ASSESSMENT:

- Demonstrates a good level of skills with control and accuracy within a conditioned situation
- Performs the drop shot and applies appropriate tactical response






# DROP SHOT

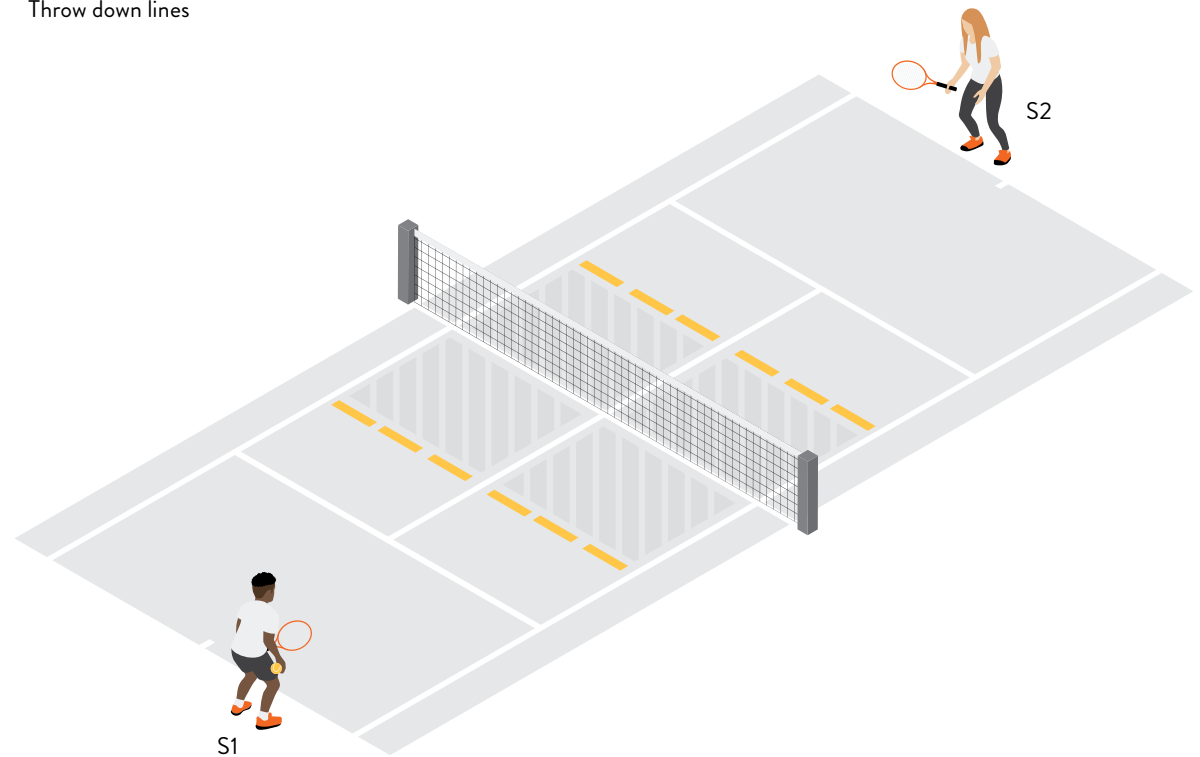
## Applied Practice

### How to Play:

- Students work in pairs
- Mark a zone close to the net (approx. 1m deep) on both sides
- Full singles court or half court singles
- Students start at the baseline
- Student 1 feeds the ball underarm to land past the service line
- Students play the point out
- Students should choose when to hit a drop shot into the zoned area based on their opponent's position on court
- 1 point is awarded if a student wins the point without executing a drop shot
- 3 points are awarded to a student if they hit a drop shot and it lands in the marked zone but the opponent gets to the ball before the second bounce, and the student who hit the drop shot loses the point
- 5 points are awarded if a student hits a drop shot and it lands in the marked zone and is a winning shot
- Play first to 20

### Equipment:

-  Tennis balls
-  Tennis rackets
-  Throw down lines



### KEY POINTS FOR ASSESSMENT:

- Demonstrates awareness of and responds to the strengths, weaknesses and actions of the other player
- Understands tactically the aim of the drill
- Makes effective adaptations to the changes within the competitive drill
- Effective decision making

# VOLLEYS

**Volleys are executed at the net, normally when a player selects to move into an attacking net position as they have gained control in the point. The player will be looking to build or finish the point with the volley.**

Occasionally the player comes into the net as the result of their opponent playing a drop shot and bringing the player to the net.

The volley technique may be described as a 'punch', due to the limited movement of the racket as the shot is executed. The volley ideally should be played slightly in front of the body to the side of the shoes, with the player moving forward in a balanced approach to contact the incoming ball.

**A continental grip** should be used for both the forehand and backhand volley, as there is limited time to change grips. The backhand volley may be executed with 1 or 2 hands on the grip.

# VOLLEYS

## Skill in Isolation

### How to Play:

- Students work in pairs
- Full singles court or half court singles
- Student 1 starts in a volley position
- Student 2 starts on the baseline
- Student 2 racket feeds the ball to Student 1
- Student 1 hits a volley

### Option 1

- Student 2 continues to feed in the next ball

### Option 2

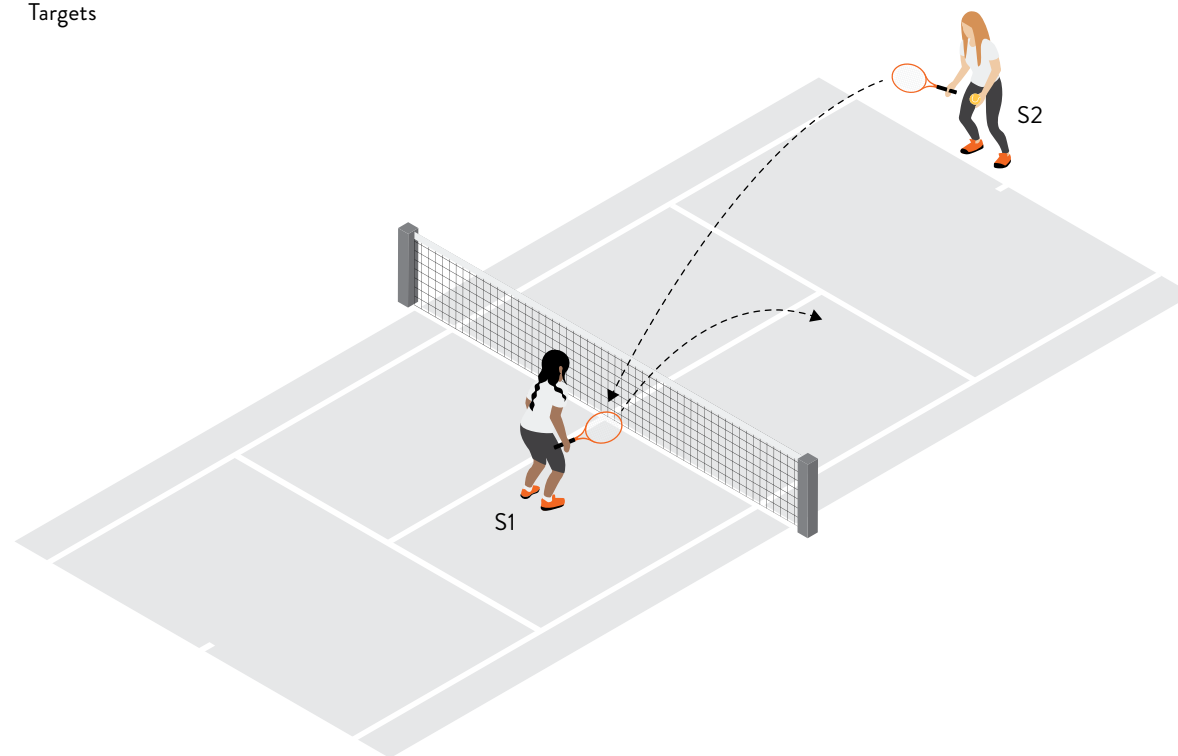
- Place targets for Student 1 to aim at

### Option 3

- Student 2 rally feeds the ball for Student 1 to volley
  - Student 1 aims to control the volley back to Student 2 to continue the rally
- > **Feed to the forehand and backhand side in isolation or to either side**
- > **Add a target or target zone for the volley to be hit into**

### Equipment:

-  Tennis balls
-  Tennis rackets
-  Targets



### KEY POINTS FOR ASSESSMENT:

- Student can demonstrate the core skills in isolation
- Student can consistently repeat the core skill and demonstrate accuracy and control

# VOLLEYS

## Adapted Practice

### How to Play:

- Students work in pairs
- Full singles court or half court singles
- Student 1 starts on the service line
- Student 2 starts on the baseline
- Student 1 feeds the ball to Student 2 and moves into a volley position
- Student 2 hits the ball back to Student 1
- Student 1 hits a volley

### Option 1

- Reset to the start of the drill after the volley is hit

### Option 2

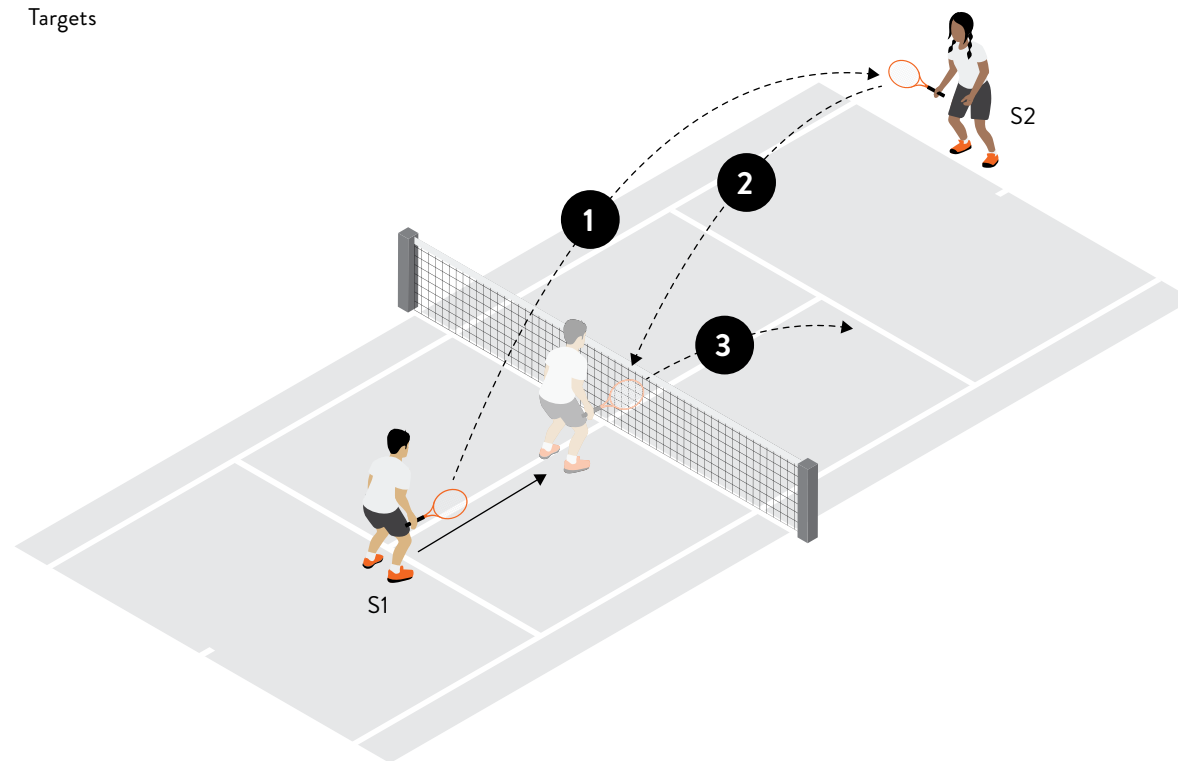
- Place targets for Student 1 to aim the volley at

### Option 3

- Students continue the rally with Student 1 volleying
- > **Feed to the forehand and backhand side in isolation or to either side**
- > **Add a target or target zone for the volley to be hit into**

### Equipment:

-  Tennis balls
-  Tennis rackets
-  Targets



### KEY POINTS FOR ASSESSMENT:

- Demonstrates a good level of skills with control and accuracy within a conditioned situation
- After an approach shot applies appropriate tactical response to move forward to hit the volley

# VOLLEYS

## Applied Practice

### How to Play:

- Students work in pairs
- Students start at the baseline
- Either student feeds the ball into play
- After the feed the point is live
- Students play from the baseline
- If the ball lands in the service box the student has to hit an approach shot and follow it into a volleying position and continues to play the point from the net

### Option 1

- Play half court singles allowing for more success for the volley
- No Lobs allowed

### Option 2

- Full singles court
- No lobs allowed



### Option 3

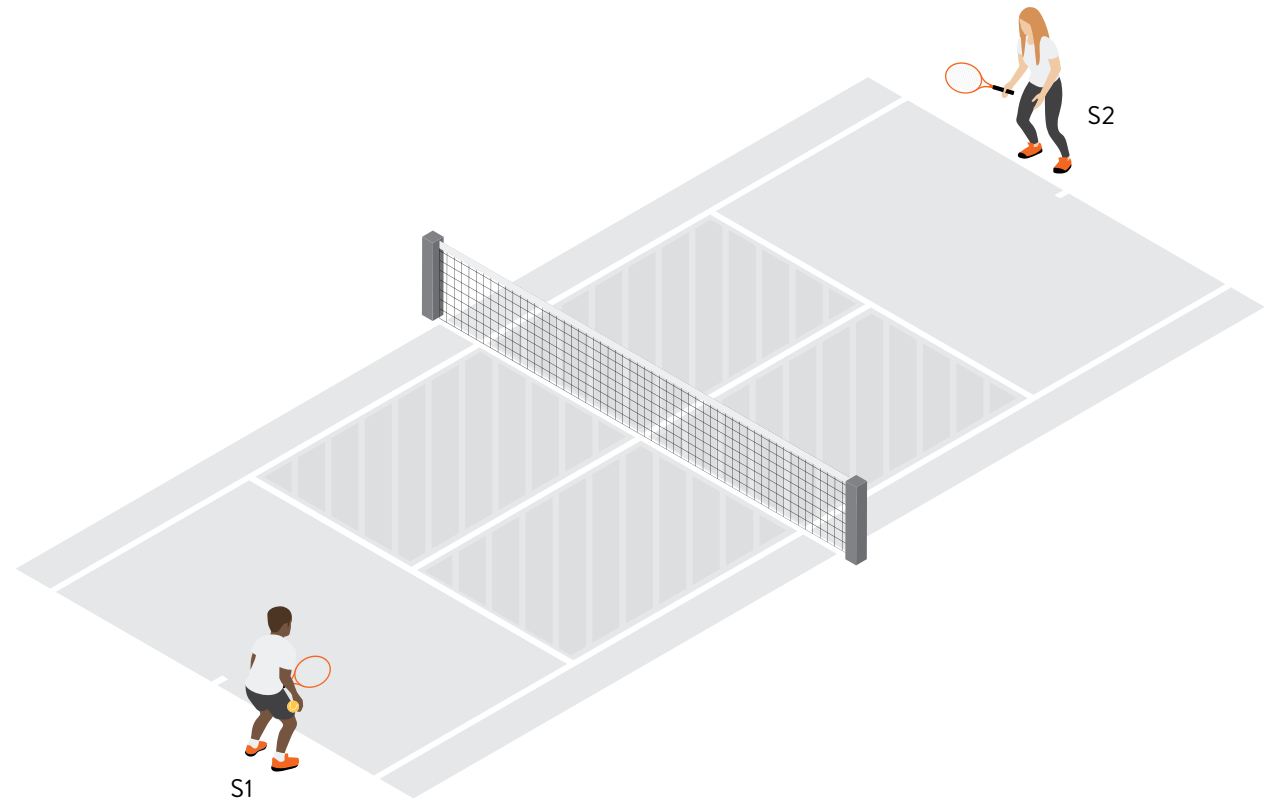
- Full singles court
- Lobs allowed

### KEY POINTS FOR ASSESSMENT:

- Demonstrates awareness of and responds to the strengths, weaknesses and actions of the other player
- Understands tactically the aim of the drill
- Makes effective adaptations to the changes within the competitive drill
- Effective decision making

### Equipment:

-  Tennis balls
-  Tennis rackets



# THE SMASH

**The majority of the time, the smash is a shot which is executed at the net, normally following the opponent playing a lob which falls short and can be readily taken with a smash.**

The overhead smash involves hitting the ball above the head, and hitting down with force.

The smash is the same technique as the serve action. Reading the ball and turning the body into a sideways position is key to tracking the ball and moving into the correct position to hit. Tracking the ball in the air with the non-dominant hand allows balance and focus.

**The continental grip** is used for the smash, as per the serve and volleys.

# SMASH

## Skill in Isolation

### How to Play:

- Students work in pairs
- Full singles court or half court singles
- Student 1 starts in a volley position at the net
- Student 2 starts on the baseline
- Student 2 feeds a high ball
- Student 1 smashes the ball



### Option 1

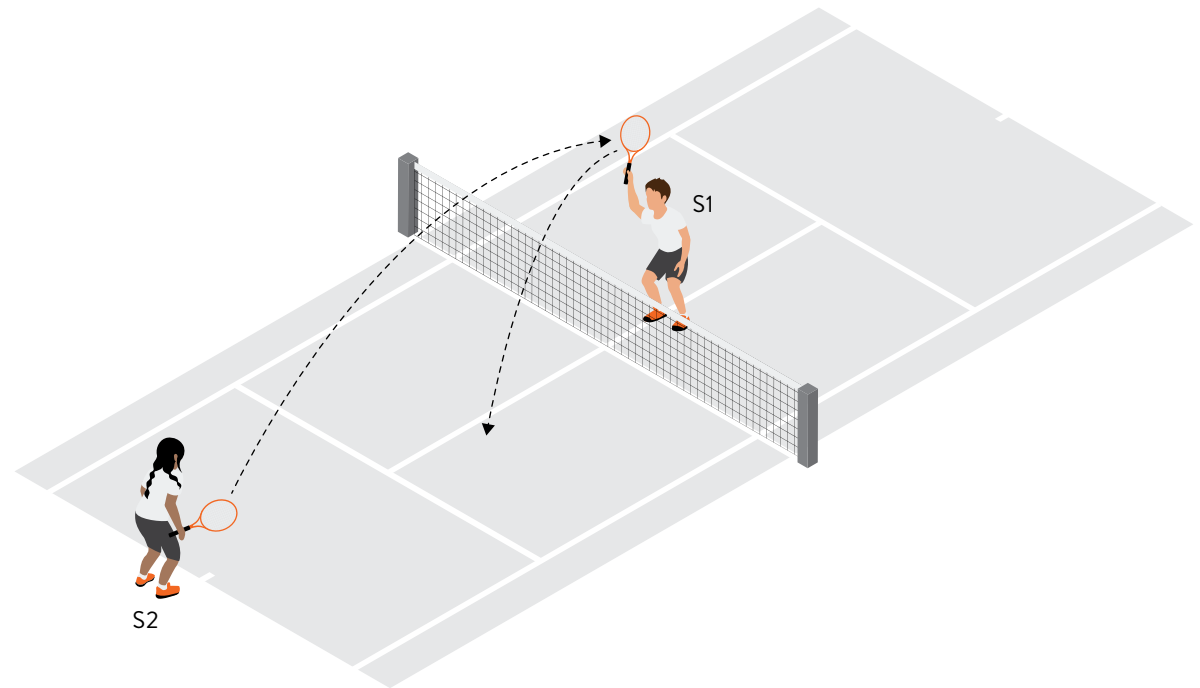
- Hit 10 smashes and count how many are successful

### Option 2

- Place targets for Student 1 to aim the smash at

### Equipment:

-  Tennis balls
-  Tennis rackets



### KEY POINTS FOR ASSESSMENT:

- Student can demonstrate the core skills in isolation
- Student can consistently repeat the core skill and demonstrate accuracy and control
- The student is in the correct court position to execute the smash



# SMASH

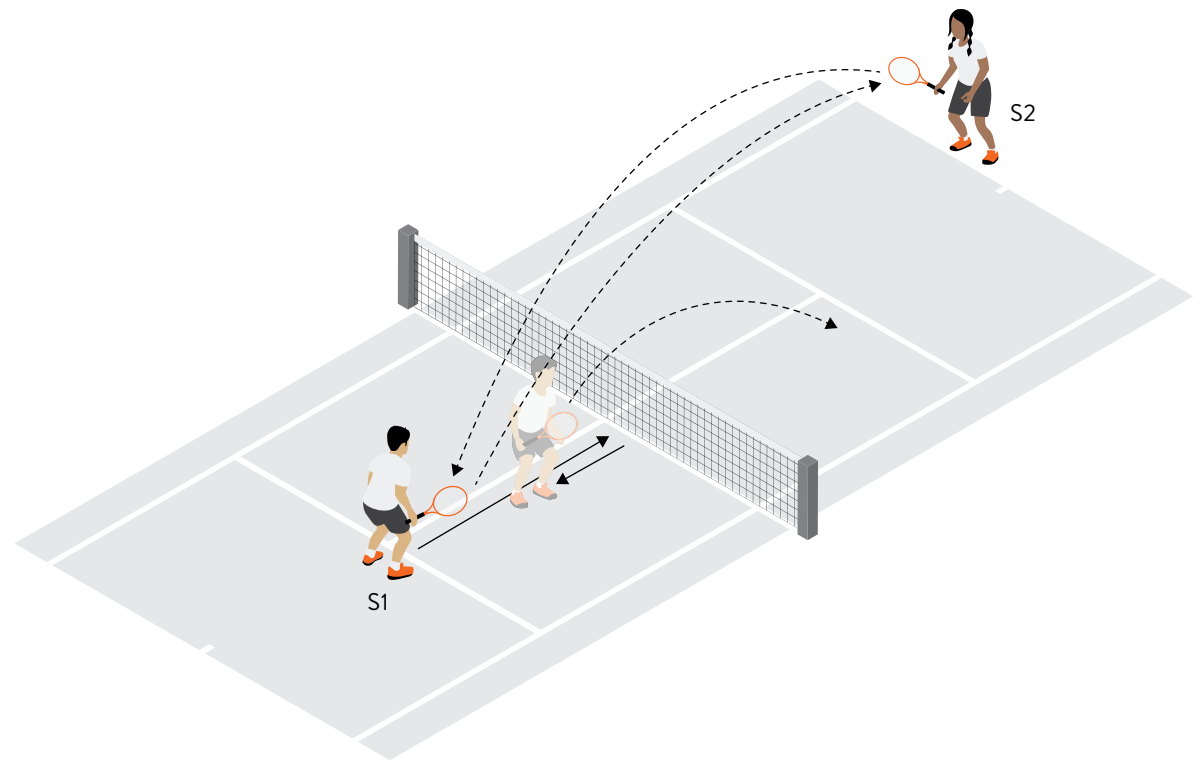
## Adapted Practice

### How to Play:

- Students work in pairs
- Full singles court or half court singles
- Student 1 starts on the service line
- Student 2 starts on the baseline
- Student 1 feeds the ball to land past the service line
- Student 1 then moves forward to touch the net with their racket and immediately starts to move backwards in a side on position
- Student 2 hits the ball high for Student 1 to smash
- Student 1 smashes the ball

### Equipment:

-  Tennis balls
-  Tennis rackets



### KEY POINTS FOR ASSESSMENT:

- Demonstrates a good level of skills with control and accuracy within a conditioned situation
- Applies the appropriate tactical response to be ready after the smash has been struck for the next shot



# SMASH

## Applied Practice

### How to Play:

- Students work in pairs
- Full singles court or half court singles
- Student 1 starts on the service line
- Student 2 starts on the baseline



### Option 1

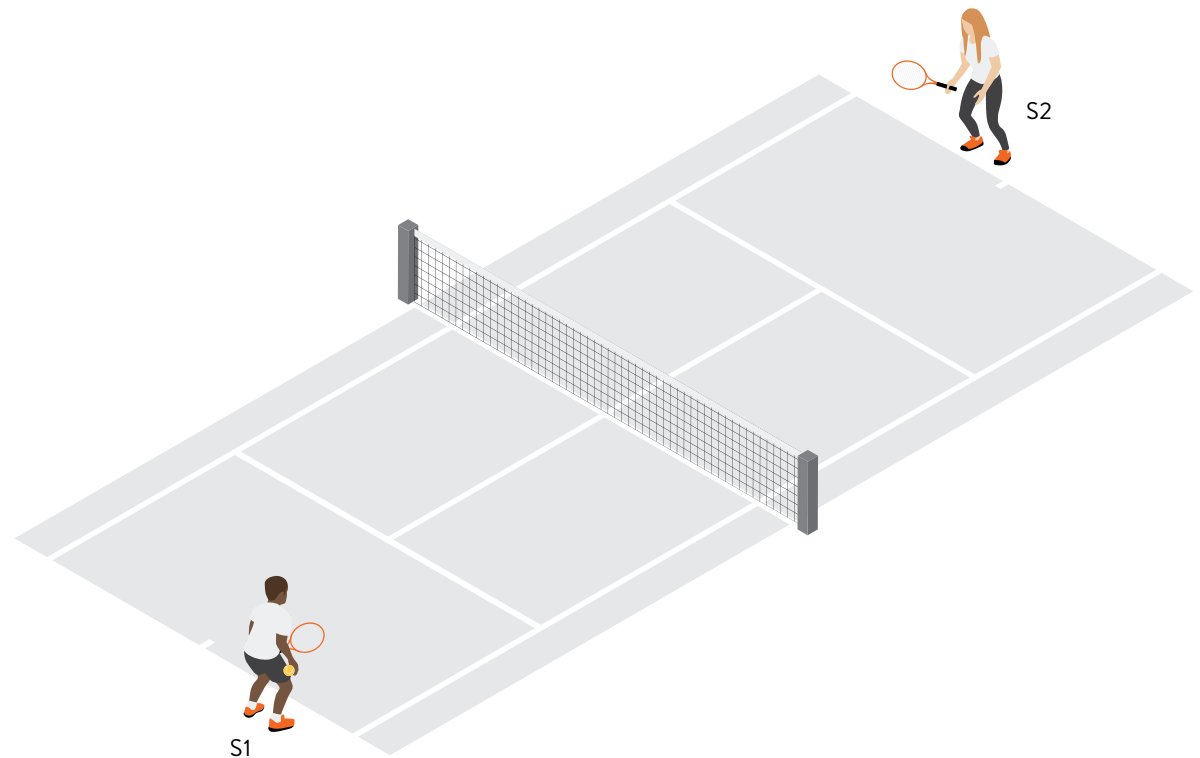
- Student 1 feeds the ball
- Student 2 hits the ball high
- Student 1 smashes the ball and the point is then live

### Option 2

- Student 2 feeds a high ball and the point is live

### Equipment:

-  Tennis balls
-  Tennis rackets



### KEY POINTS FOR ASSESSMENT:

- Demonstrates awareness of and responds to the strengths, weaknesses and actions of the other player
- Understands tactically the aim of the drill
- Makes effective adaptations to the changes within the competitive drill
- Effective decision making

# LOB

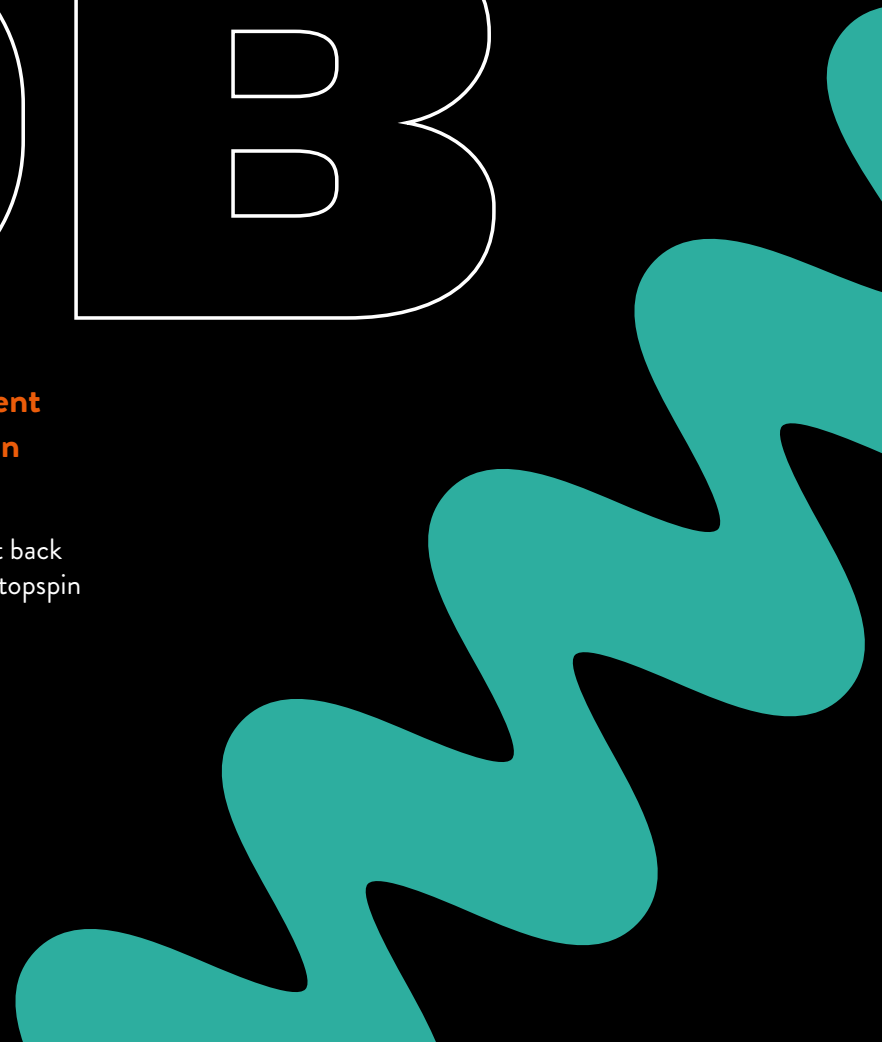
## THE

**Lobs are primarily used as a defensive shot when an opponent is at or approaching the net; occasionally they are used as an offensive tactic in doubles play against a serve volleyer.**

A defensive lob is usually hit flat and high as a “block” to push the opponent back and to give more time for the player to recover. An attacking lob is hit with topspin and will accelerate away from the player chasing it.

To hit a topspin lob, the racket is started in a very low position swinging to a high position to lift the ball higher over the net than a regular groundstroke.

To hit a defensive lob, there is a short backswing and an open racket face, the weight is transferred forward on contact, so the ball moves upwards and towards the back of the court.



# LOBS

## Skill in Isolation

### How to Play:

- Students work in pairs
- Full singles court or half court singles
- Mark a zone at the back of the court approx. 1m in from the baseline
- Student 1 starts just behind the service line
- Student 2 starts on the baseline

### Option 1




- Student 2 drop feeds and hits a lob over Student 1 into the zoned area
- Student 1 should stand with their racket stretched up
- Student 1 can move laterally to try and hit the ball, but can not move backwards

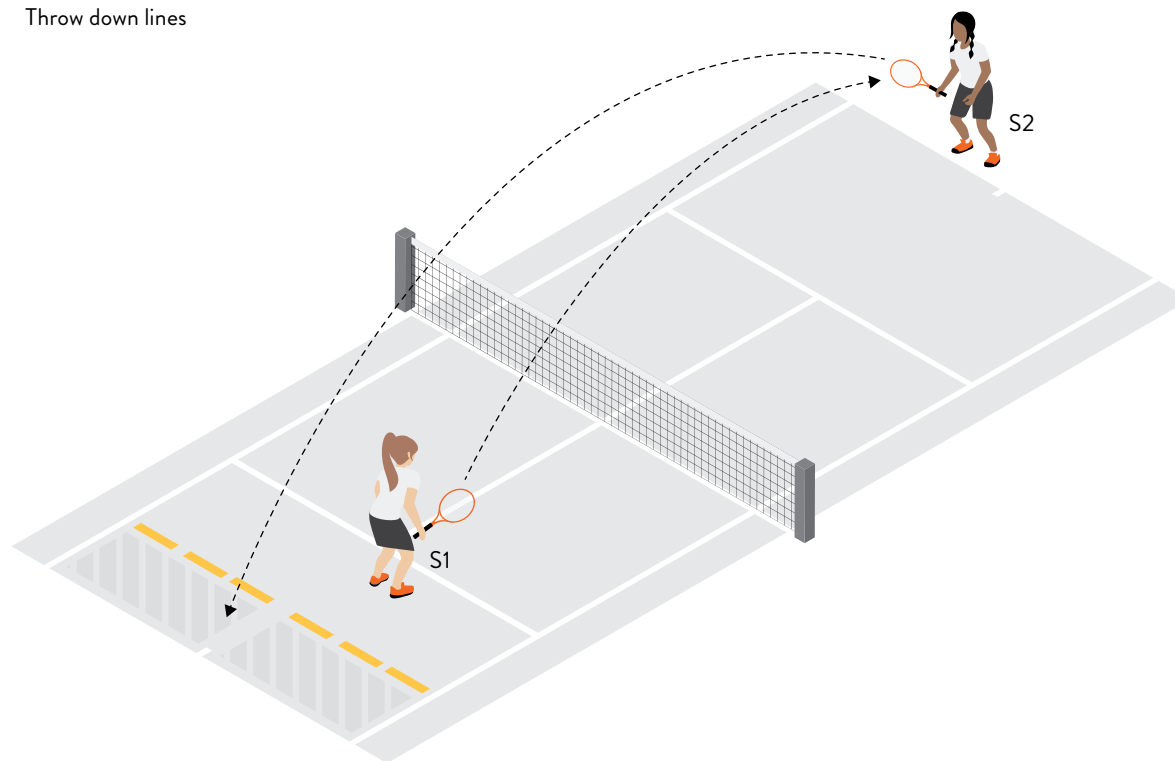
### Option 2

- Student 1 feeds the ball to Student 2
- Student 2 hits a lob
- Student 1 can move laterally to try and hit the ball, but can not move backwards

> **Demonstrate both forehand and backhand lobs**

### Equipment:

-  Tennis balls
-  Tennis rackets
-  Throw down lines



### KEY POINTS FOR ASSESSMENT:

- Student can demonstrate the core skills in isolation
- Student can consistently repeat the core skill and demonstrate accuracy and control




# LOBS

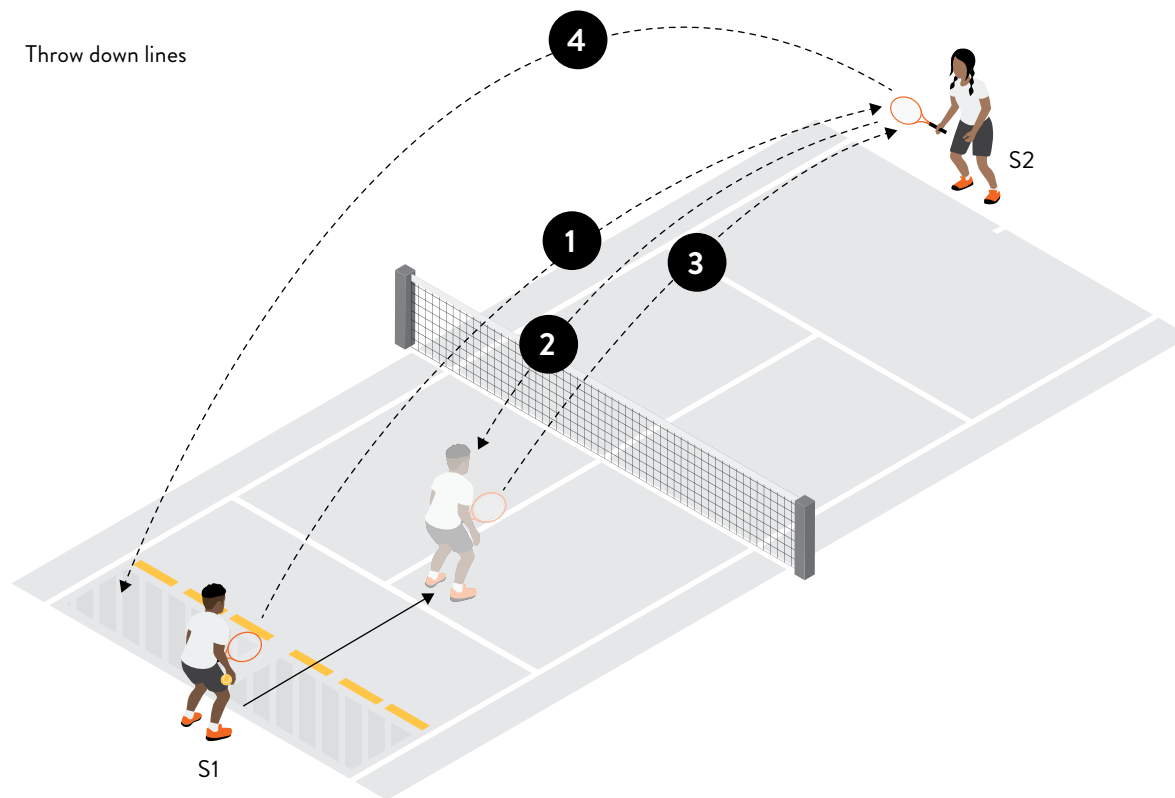
## Adapted Practice

### How to Play:

- Students work in pairs
- Full singles court or half court singles
- Mark a zone at the back of the court approx. 1m in from the baseline
- Student 1 starts on the baseline behind the zoned area
- Student 2 starts on the baseline
- Student 1 feeds the ball to Student 2
- Student 2 hits the ball short
- Student 1 moves forward to hit an approach shot and follows it into a volleying position
- Student 2 hits a lob aiming for the zoned area

### Equipment:

-  Tennis balls
-  Tennis rackets
-  Throw down lines



### KEY POINTS FOR ASSESSMENT:

- Demonstrates a good level of skills with control and accuracy within a conditioned situation
- Student is aware of the tactical appropriateness when executing the lob

# LOBS

## Applied Practice

### How to Play:

- Students work in pairs
- Full singles court or half court singles
- Mark a zone at the back of the court approx. 1m in from the baseline
- Student 1 starts on the baseline behind the zoned area
- Student 2 starts on the baseline




### Option 1

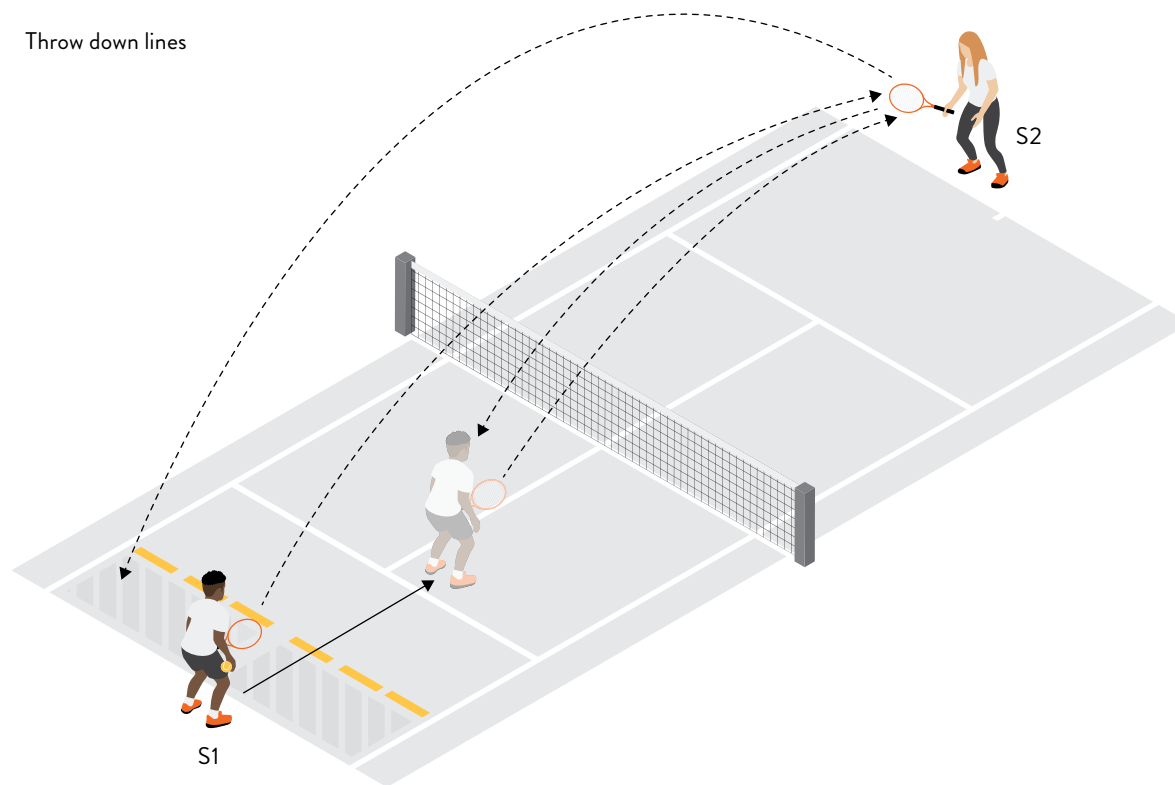
- Student 1 feeds the ball to Student 2
- Student 2 hits the ball short
- Student 1 moves forward to hit an approach shot and follows it into a volleying position
- Student 2 hits a lob and the point becomes live

### Option 2

- Student 2 can hit a lob or a passing shot
- If Student 2 wins the point using a passing shot or Student 1 makes a mistake, they score 1 point. If Student 2 wins the point with a lob they score 3 points.

### Equipment:

-  Tennis balls
-  Tennis rackets
-  Throw down lines



### KEY POINTS FOR ASSESSMENT:

- Demonstrates awareness of and responds to the strengths, weaknesses and actions of the other player
- Understands tactically the aim of the drill
- Makes effective adaptations to the changes within the competitive drill
- Effective decision making

# INTRODUCING THE SERVE

Players have 2 serves per point: a first serve and if this is unsuccessful, a second serve.

The serve is the only shot in tennis that the player has complete control of.

There are generally 3 types of serve a player will try to execute:

- **Flat serve** – the strings are flat to the ball at contact and therefore this serve has the most power.
- **Slice serve** – the racket brushes along the outside of the ball putting side spin on the ball. When the ball bounces it should continue to spin.
- **Topspin serve** (sometimes referred to as a kick serve) – the racket brushes up the back of the ball and creates a high net clearance with a dip in the flight into the service box, with heavy topspin on the ball. This results in the ball kicking up at the opponent after the bounce.

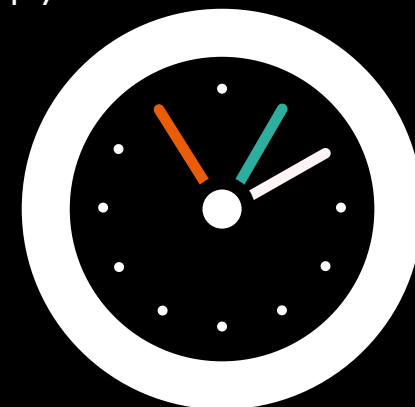
The toss of the ball in the serve action will help determine and aid the execution of the different types of serve.

Please see the diagram for the suggested ball toss for a right handed player to deliver each type of serve e.g. for a slice serve the ball is thrown up and further to the right than for a flat serve. It would be the opposite for left handed players. Advanced players will use the continental grip for all types of serve.

It is standard practice that the first serve is executed faster or at a more acute angle than the second serve, as the server has a second opportunity if they make an error on the first attempt.

**Clock face analogy for the ball toss of a right-handed player:**

- 11 o'clock = Top Spin Serve
- 1 o'clock = Flat Serve
- 2 o'clock = Slice Serve






# SERVE

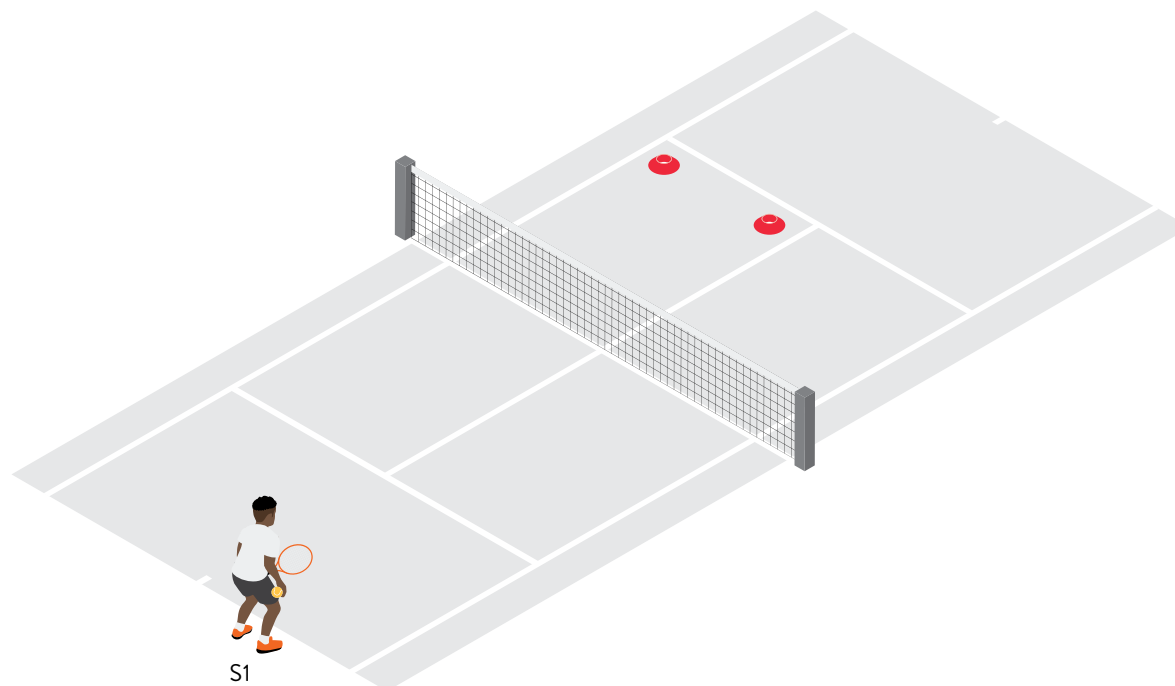
## Skill in Isolation

### How to Play:

- Students work individually
- Place targets in the service box: 1 down the centre line and 1 out wide (in the corners but not too close to the lines)
- Students serve from the baseline aiming at the targets demonstrating the ability to change the placement of the serve – practice serving down the line and out wide
- Demonstrate a flat serve increasing in power with a flat serve progressing from 75% to 100% power. Student should place the ball toss at 1 o'clock, slightly in front of the body.
- Demonstrate a slice serve – Student should practice placing the ball toss at 2 o'clock and brushing the outside edge of the ball on contact to hit a slice serve
- Demonstrate a topspin serve – Student should practice placing the ball toss at 11 o'clock and brush up the ball on contact to hit topspin on the ball
- Perform on both the deuce and advantage side of the court

### Equipment:

-  Tennis balls
-  Tennis rackets
-  Targets (cones)



### KEY POINTS FOR ASSESSMENT:

- Student can demonstrate the core skill of an overarm serve
- Student can demonstrate core skills consistently with a good standard of accuracy, control and fluency
- Student can demonstrate the variety of serves, the ability to change pace and direction

# SERVE

## Adapted Practice

### How to Play:

- Students work individually
- Split the service box into 3 channels length ways
- Perform on both the deuce and advantage side of the court

### Option 1




- Students identify which channel they are aiming for before hitting a serve (flat, slice or topspin)

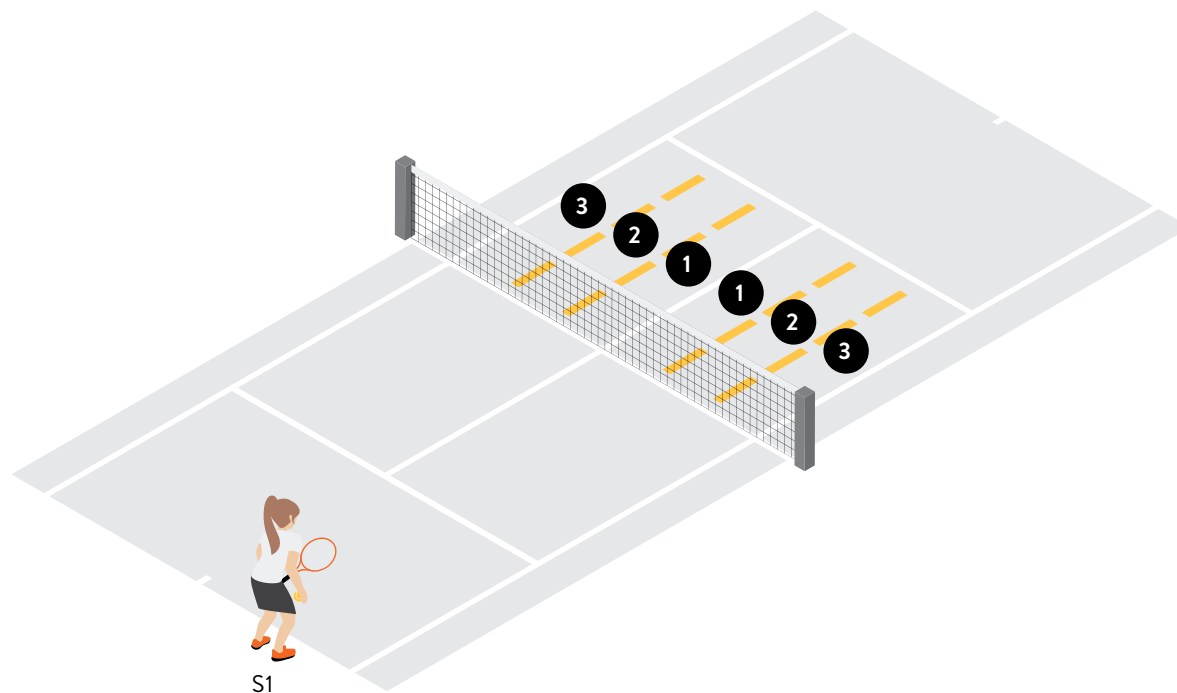
### Option 2

- Partner or teacher calls out the channel to aim at as the student tosses the ball up

> **Include a returner in the drill**

### Equipment:

-  Tennis balls
-  Tennis rackets
-  Throw down lines



### KEY POINTS FOR ASSESSMENT:

- Student can demonstrate the serve under the pressure of the command of a tactical zone requirement
- Student can consistently and with accuracy execute the serve into the zone required
- Student can demonstrate the level of physical fitness and psychological control to perform effectively some of the time






# SERVE

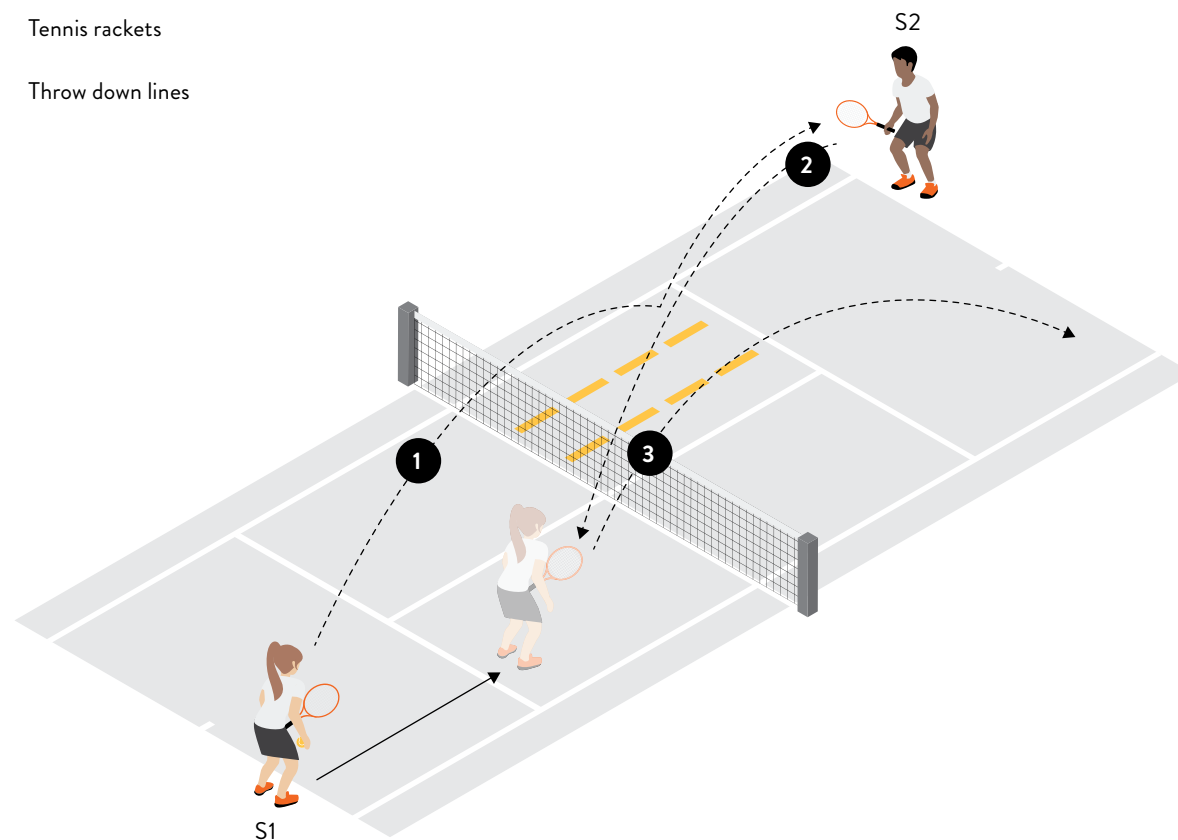
## Applied Practice

### How to Play:

- Students work in pairs
- Divide the service box into 3 channels length ways
- Student 1 is the server and Student 2 is the returner
- Student 1 decides which channel they are aiming to hit the serve in and which type of serve to hit
- Student 2 returns the serve
- Student 1 hits the next shot into the open court
- After the third shot students play the point out
- Perform on both the deuce and advantage side of the court

### Equipment:

-  Tennis balls
-  Tennis rackets
-  Throw down lines



### KEY POINTS FOR ASSESSMENT:

- Student demonstrates all core skills for the activity under competitive pressure in authentic performance situations
- Advanced skills are demonstrated and performed with some level of consistency and a good standard of accuracy, control and fluency
- Demonstrates appropriate levels of physical fitness and psychological control to perform effectively
- Effective decision making. Student understands when and why to play the type of serve in relation to tactical advantage.

# RETURN OF THE SERVE

**The return of serve is a critical shot in tennis and should be practiced often and in a deliberate manner.**

Students should practice returning different types of serve.

To return a fast first serve, it is common practice to block the ball back into the court. To block the ball, there is little backswing, the racket angle is slightly closed and there is limited follow through.

Tactically, returning the ball deep and into the middle of the court gives the returner more time to recover, and reduces the time for the server to recover and reduces the angle they can play on the next shot.

When returning a second serve, the student should be actively moving forward and looking to play the return aggressively (in placement or speed of shot) to place the server under pressure.



# RETURN OF SERVE

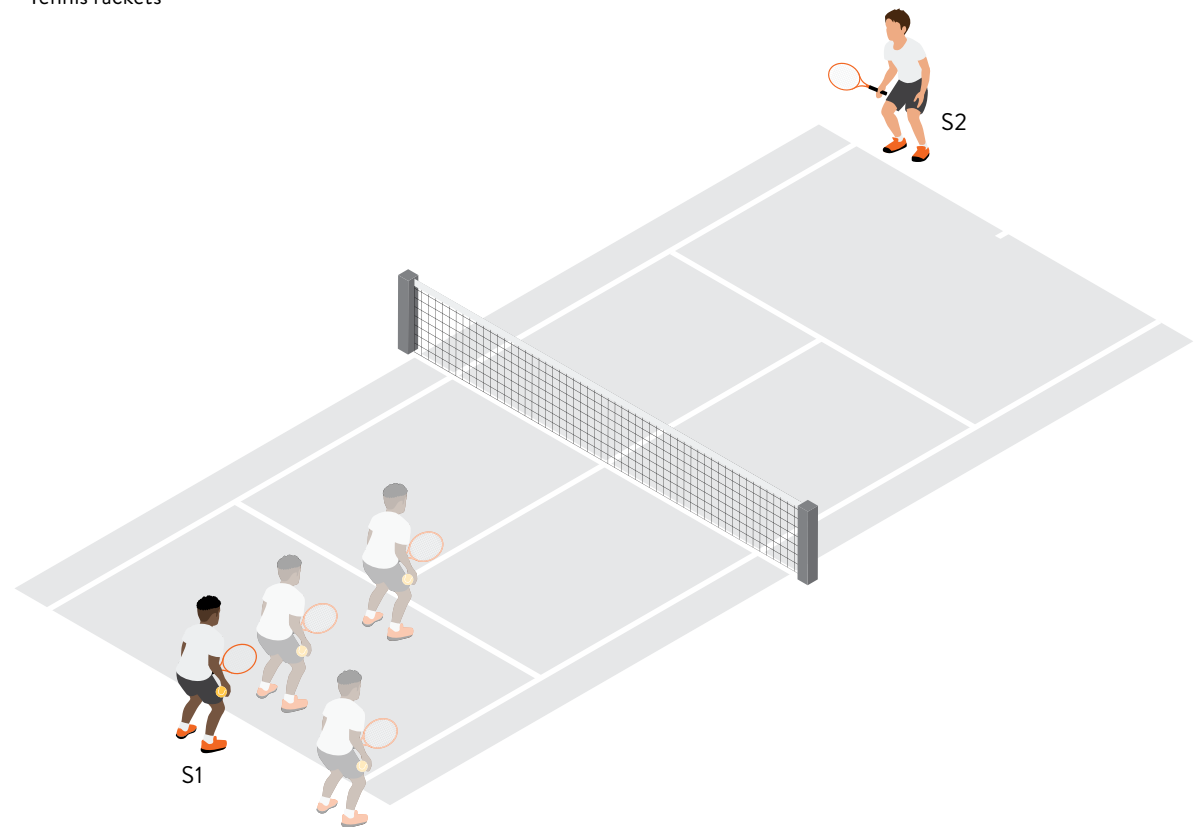
## Skill in Isolation

### How to Play:

- Students work in pairs
- Full singles court
- Student 2 is the returner and starts just behind the baseline in the deuce court
- Student 1 is the server
- Student 1 varies the serve by:
  - Changing starting positions along the baseline in the deuce court
  - Moving up the court to serve (still serving into the service box) to put the returner under pressure
  - Placing different spin on the serve
- Student 2 returns the serve
- Perform on both the deuce and advantage side of the court

### Equipment:

-  Tennis balls
-  Tennis rackets



### KEY POINTS FOR ASSESSMENT:

- Student can demonstrate the core skills in isolation
- Student can consistently repeat the core skill and demonstrate accuracy and control

# RETURN OF SERVE




## Adapted Practice

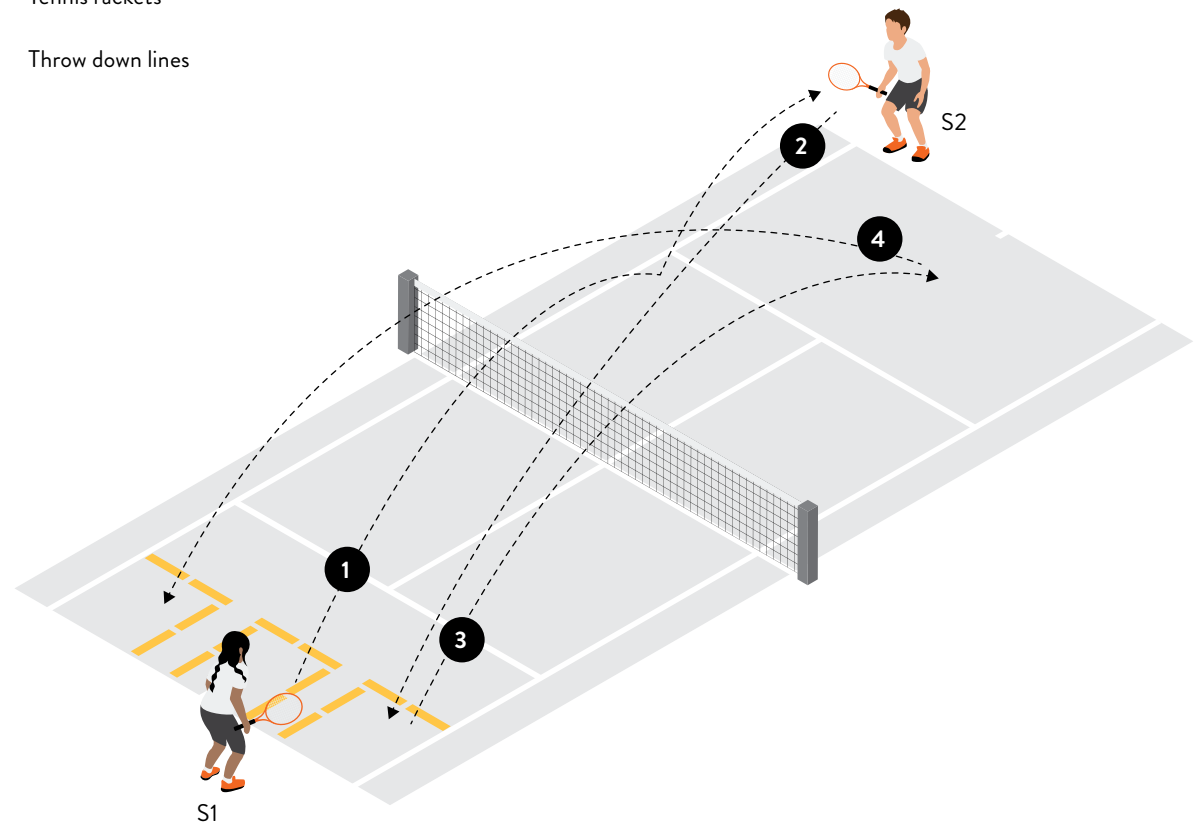
### How to Play:

- Students work in pairs
- Full singles court
- Three target zones are marked at the back of the court: 1 in the right corner, 1 in the centre, and 1 in the left corner
- Student 1 is the server at the end with the target zones
- Student 2 is the returner
- Student 1 serves from the deuce court
- Student 2 returns the serve aiming for a zoned area
- Student 1 hits the 3rd shot
- Student 2 hits the 4th shot
- Perform on both the deuce and advantage side of the court

### > Specify the type of serve hit

### Equipment:

-  Tennis balls
-  Tennis rackets
-  Throw down lines



### KEY POINTS FOR ASSESSMENT:

- Demonstrates a good level of skills with control and accuracy within a conditioned situation
- Student is aware of the tactical appropriateness when executing the return of serve



# RETURN OF SERVE

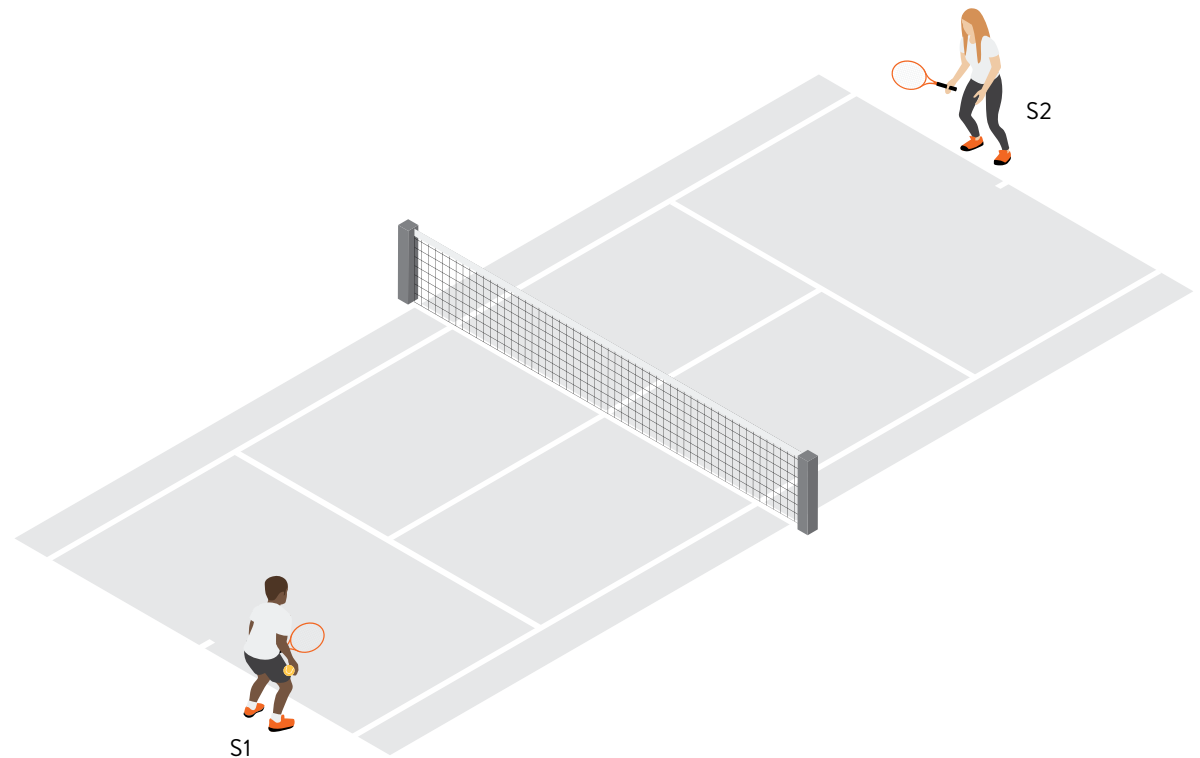
## Applied Practice

### How to Play:

- Students work in pairs
  - Full singles court
  - Student 1 is the server
  - Student 2 is the returner
  - Students play first to 10 points
  - Alternate between the deuce and advantage court
  - If the returner wins the point they score 2 points
  - If the server wins the point they only score 1 point
- > Specify the type of serve e.g. second serves only

### Equipment:

-  Tennis balls
-  Tennis rackets



### KEY POINTS FOR ASSESSMENT:

- Demonstrates awareness of and responds to the strengths, weaknesses and actions of the other player
- Understands tactically the aim of the drill
- Makes effective adaptations to the changes within the competitive drill
- Effective decision making

# TACTICS IN SINGLES AND DOUBLES

In essence tennis is about outplaying the opponent and there are 3 ways to win a point:

1. Hit a winner
2. Force the opponent to make an error
3. The opponent hits an unforced error

## Game Situations

As players advance it is important that the Game Situations are discussed and understood. They refer specifically to the position the ball is being received from and where the ball is being sent, allowing for technique to be taught within the tactical situation. The Game Situations are very similar for Singles and Doubles and the situation will determine which shots are played and to some extent the tactics used.

There are 5 main game situations within competitive play:

- Both players at the back of the court
- When serving
- When receiving
- When approaching or at the net (and your opponent is at the back of the court)
- When opponent is approaching or at the net (and you are at the back of the court)

In addition, for doubles:

- Both players at the net

# TACTICS

There are 5 basic tactics in tennis and these have been introduced throughout the LTA Youth Schools Primary and Secondary PE curriculum lesson plans.

In order of complexity, the 5 tactics are:

## 1: CONSISTENCY

The fundamental tactic in tennis is consistency i.e. getting the ball over and in without making an error.

## 2: CREATING / CONTROLLING SPACE

By creating space on the court it opens up the opportunity to place the ball where the opponent is unable to reach and return the ball. On the flip side it is important to recover back to a central court position after hitting the ball in order to be in a good position to return the next ball.

## 3: CONTROLLING TIME

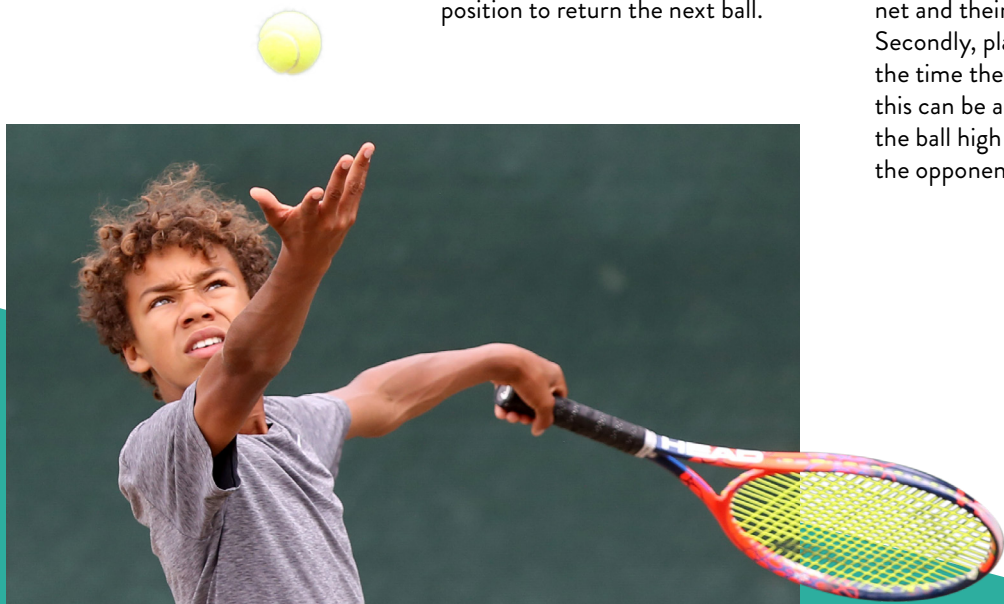
Players can control time in two ways. Firstly, players can decrease the time their opponent has to react and return the ball. For example by hitting the ball harder and flatter so it travels faster, or by approaching the net to play a volley (moving closer to the net and their opponent's court). Secondly, players can increase the time they have to recover; this can be achieved by hitting the ball high and / or deep into the opponent's court.

## 4: PLAYING TO YOUR STRENGTHS

The first step towards playing to strengths is actually identifying them. A player's strengths could be technical, tactical, mental or physical elements. For example a player may consider their forehand a strength and therefore, when given the opportunity, will move around a ball that is coming to their backhand side in order to play a forehand. Alternatively a player may see their physical fitness as a strength and therefore they would intend to keep the ball in play for longer.

## 5: PLAYING TO YOUR OPPONENTS' WEAKNESSES

As with playing to your strengths, the first step to playing to your opponent's weaknesses is identifying them. Players' potential weaknesses fall under the same categories: technical, tactical, mental or physical. For example, if an opponent has a weak volley, dropping the ball short to bring them into the net and a volleying position will expose this. Or in doubles, if the opposition have poor communication, a player may place the ball down the middle; both or neither opponent may then try to hit the ball. Players will often use the warm up to identify opponents' weaknesses.



## Examples of combining tactics with game situations for Singles and Doubles

	Both players at the back of the court	When serving	When returning	When approaching the net	When opponent is approaching the net	When both players in the team are at the net (doubles only)
<b>1: CONSISTENCY</b>	Rallying forehands crosscourt, aiming to hit the ball so it bounces between the service line and the baseline.	Hitting a serve which is 75% the speed, with the intention to get the ball in the service box.	Returning the serve with depth with a high clearance over the net.	Approaching the net on a ball which is neutral in power and is placed in the centre back third of the court, not too close to the baseline.	Hitting the ball back towards the incoming player, to allow the player to make the volley reducing the risk of angles being created by the volleyer.	Being in essence a volley wall – hitting volleys back to the opponents, trading groundstroke for volley.
<b>2: CREATING / CONTROLLING SPACE</b>	Rallying the ball crosscourt, create an angle which moves opponent off the side of the court, therefore creating the space to change direction and hit the ball down the line.	Hitting a slice serve to move the opponent out of the court to create space.	Hitting the return of serve down the line, resulting in server having to move to hit the 3rd ball.	Hitting the ball down the centre of the court, which reduces the angle the opponent can hit when attempting a passing shot.	Hitting the ball low to the approaching players feet, expecting the volleyer to lift the ball.	One of the players hits a ball wide into the tramline, allowing their partner to look to intercept the next shot.
<b>3: CONTROLLING TIME</b>	Hitting the ball back following an aggressive shot with height on the ball.	Hitting a second serve with topspin towards opponent's backhand, which results in the ball kicking up high, forcing the opponent to move back to strike the ball.	Returning a second serve with aggression deep, towards the serving position, resulting in server not having time to move and prepare for the next shot.	Hitting the ball with slice (keeping it low) and central (providing no angles).	Hitting the ball to the opponents' hip position to make the approaching player play a tough first volley off an aggressive low shot, taking preparation time away.	Maintaining court position and block the volleys back deep into court.
<b>4: PLAYING TO YOUR STRENGTHS</b>	Hitting a fast aggressive forehand into space.	Hitting a fast flat first serve with the intention to serve an ace.	Attacking the second serve, playing it into space.	Hitting the ball into space, forcing the opponent to block the ball back, taking the pace off the ball, providing an easier volley.	Hitting a drop shot to bring opponent to net, followed by a topspin lob.	Forcing the opponents to hit the ball up into the air, to allow an aggressive volley into space, or smash.
<b>5: PLAYING TO YOUR OPPONENTS' WEAKNESSES</b>	During a rally, constantly hitting the ball deep into the weak side of the opponent (commonly the backhand side), forcing an error or a short ball to attack.	Serving a flat, fast first serve into space or into the body of the opponent.	Returning the ball deep on to the weak side of the player (commonly the backhand side).	Approaching the net on a sliced approach into the opponents' backhand, resulting in the player having to hit the ball up and provide an easy volley.	Dropping the ball short, bringing the player to the net, if they have a weak volley or don't like the net position.	Hitting the ball towards the weaker player of the pair, or forcing one of the players out of court position.



# DOUBLES COURT POSITIONING

The court positioning for doubles will depend on the game situation.

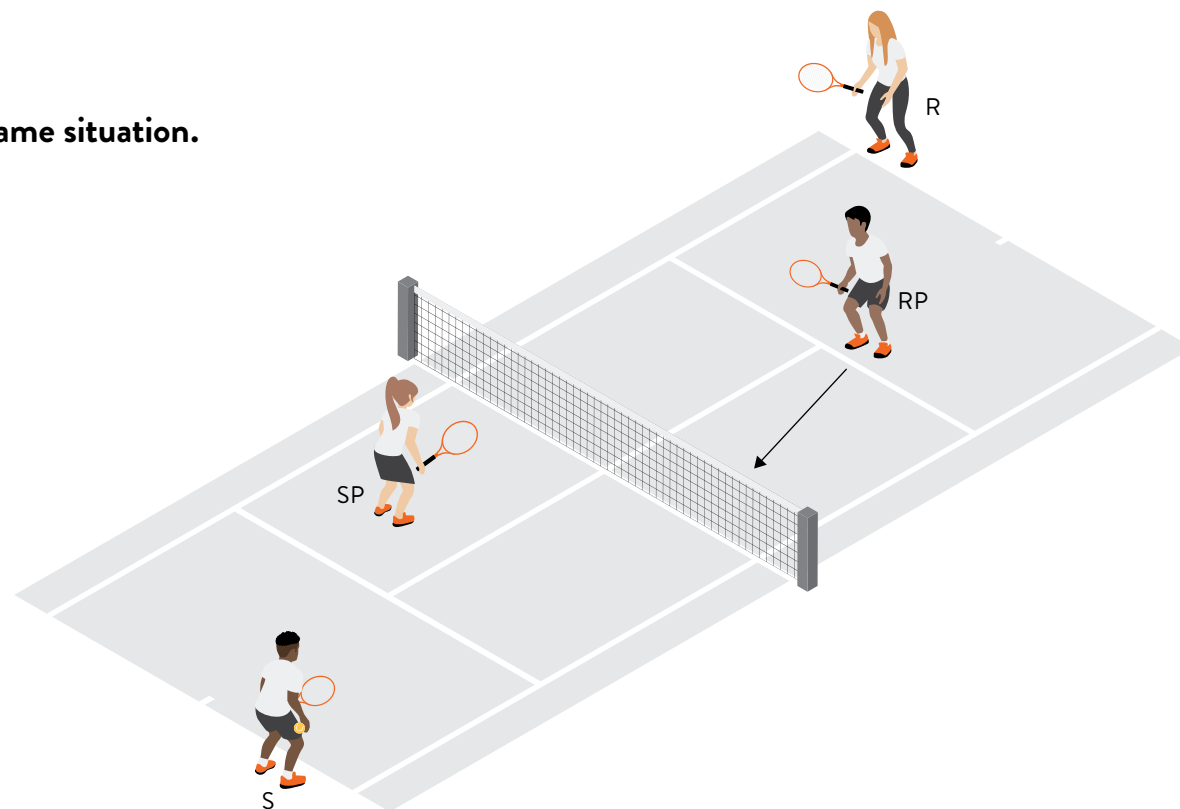
## WHEN SERVING:

The server must stand at the back behind the baseline.  
The server's partner starts at the net in a volleying position.

## WHEN RETURNING:

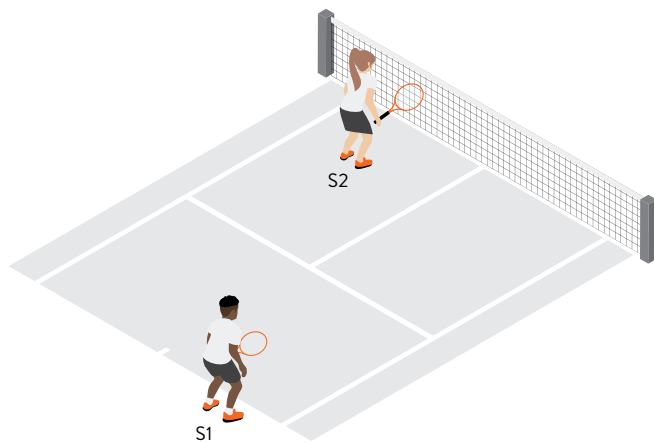
The returner starts at the back ready to receive the serve.  
The returner's partner starts on the service line, and moves into the net once the ball travels past the server's partner at the net.

When serving or returning pairs can start with both players at the back of the court. This is considered a defensive formation.

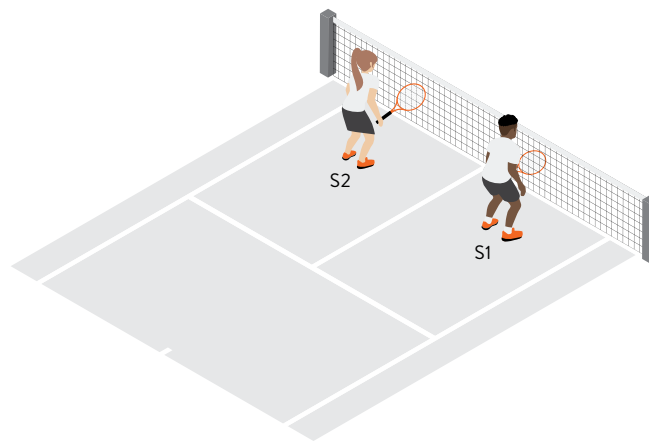


# DOUBLES COURT POSITIONING

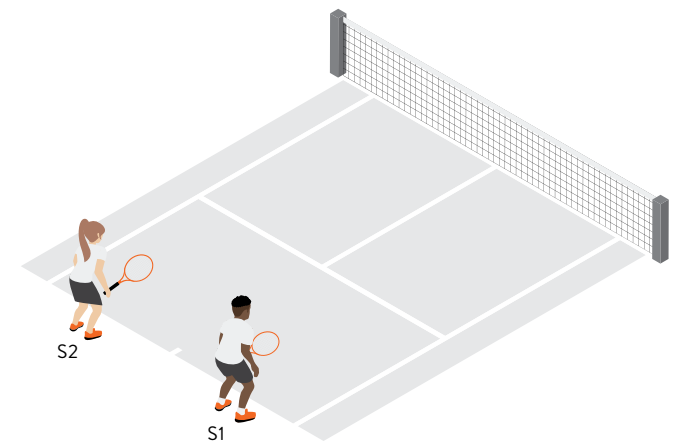
During the point, after the serve and return, the game situations are:



A pair may continue with one player at the net and one player at the back of the court.



A pair move so that both players are at the net. This is an attacking formation. It is possible that all 4 players may be at the net during the point.



A pair may move so that both players are at the back of the court. This is a defensive formation.

During a point, a pair may have moved into all 3 game situations, depending on the shots played and their opponents' court positioning.

# APPENDIX

# TACTICAL INTENTIONS

**Advanced players who have been coached may use tactical intentions and the language associated with these.**

Players should have a tactical intention (i.e. what they are hoping to achieve) every time they strike the ball, which will impact on the movement, preparation, execution and where they recover to on the court after hitting the ball. The tactical intention may also be affected by the score; for example when serving in a tie-break 1-6 down, the intention of server may be different than if they are serving and up 6-1 in the tie-break. The tactical intention will depend on the situation in each individual point, and the intention may change several times during a point.

This appendix outlines the terms used and provides a brief description:

- **Trading:**  
Rallying with their opponent on equal terms where no one has the advantage
- **Building:**  
Creating an opportunity
- **Finishing:**  
Finishing the point
- **Neutralising:**  
Neutralising their opponents' advantage
- **Staying in the point:**  
Playing defensively with the sole intention of getting the ball back in play
- **Turning the point around:**  
Momentum changes from defending to having the advantage and controlling the point



FOR  
**PROGRESS**

**LTA**

The National Tennis Centre  
100 Priory Lane, Roehampton  
London SW15 5JQ