

YELLOW BALL

COMMUNITY AND COACH'S CURRICULUM

Yellow Ball Practice And Play Plans

YELLOW BALL 2 | YELLOW BALL 1



DEAR COACH,

WELCOME TO NET GENERATION!

On behalf of the USTA, thank you for supporting Net Generation. You are the key to growing the game, and together, we can shape the future of tennis. Net Generation isn't just a new brand—it's a comprehensive platform and development program for kids ages 5 through 18. By creating a singular platform for tennis that we all can rally behind, and through the support the USTA will offer along the way, we believe we can grow participation, instill the love of the game in future generations, and ensure that tennis remains a vibrant sport in our communities for years to come.

As U.S. Fed Cup and U.S. Davis Cup captains, former professional tennis players, and parents, we are Net Generation ambassadors because we believe this new approach will benefit the growth of youth tennis. We believe that no other sport is meeting the needs of today's discerning parents, players, coaches, and community organizations quite like we will with Net Generation.

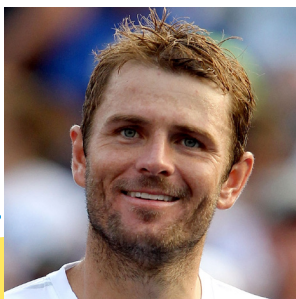
By registering and becoming an active part of Net Generation, you will get access to the very best in coaching curriculum, digital tools and resources that make teaching, coaching, planning and playing easier, and marketing resources and support to enhance your programs' visibility. The USTA created Net Generation with you in mind and we hope to hear from you about what is working, what is not, and what additional materials, curriculum and tools will help you. After all, this is your brand and without your talents as a coach, teacher, and mentor, we cannot inspire kids to get in the game—and stay in it.

This coach's manual is just one item under the Net Generation brand. It's comprehensive, competency-based, collaborative, and packaged conveniently online with additional resources to help you customize your approach to teaching the sport you love.

Again, thank you for being a part of Net Generation! Together, we will shape the future of tennis!

Mardy Fish

U.S. Davis Cup Captain
Net Generation Ambassador



Kathy Rinaldi

U.S. Fed Cup Captain
Net Generation Ambassador



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INTRODUCTION

Thank you for registering with Net Generation. It is great to have you as part of the team where our focus is to have more kids playing tennis more often. Net Generation starts with all of us, and we're here to usher in a new era of tennis in the United States.

Net Generation is the United States Tennis Association (USTA) official youth brand and development program that captures the imagination of parents and children ages 5 through 18. One that taps into the adaptability and creativity children and parents seek when choosing activities.

The following practice and play plans are unique to the USTA and have been developed and designed specifically for you, the coach. In doing so they are:

COMPREHENSIVE

Covers the beginner red ball to the advanced green ball player, and now includes yellow ball.

COMPETENCY BASED

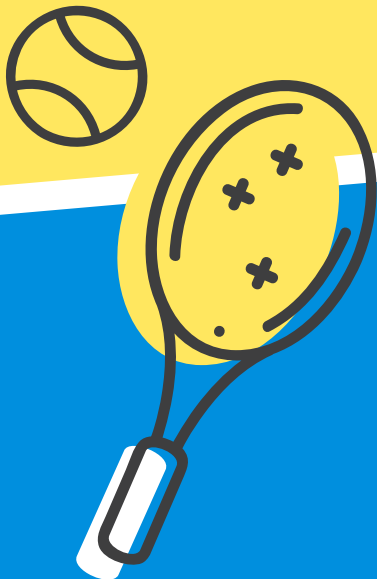
Spells out the skills and knowledge each player should have before moving to the next ball and court size.

COLLABORATIVE

Includes eleven levels developed by the USTA Community Tennis and Player Development divisions, USPTA and PTR, and subject matter experts in the field from the U.S. and abroad.

CONVENIENT

Lets you select the method of delivery that works best for you—printed manual, downloadable PDFs, or coaches app.



Inside this manual you'll find two levels of Practice and Play Plans—Yellow Ball 2 and Yellow Ball 1. Each plan consists of eight chapters. We recommend you use each Practice Plan twice before moving on to the next plan. When you finish all the plans, you can start from the beginning again or move certain players to the next level.

For community coaches, these plans are for players who have successfully moved through red, orange, and green and ready for more challenge. There are a few changes from the community plans.

- Numbering is the opposite, Yellow 2 represents the first level and Yellow 1 is the top level.
- Includes more advanced coaching and teaching tips – use what you can.
- Does not contain game components or free play – add these as needed.

Before you get started, take some time to review the necessary equipment, structure of the plans and descriptions of the activities.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

MEDICINE BALLS

Lightweight medicine balls or junior-size basketball.

YELLOW BALLS

Used on the 78-foot court.

RACQUETS

26-inches or longer for the 78-foot court with yellow ball.

BALL BUCKETS

40 to 60-quart plastic containers or small plastic paint buckets. The large containers can hold playground balls or yellow balls, and the small buckets are ideal when players work in small groups and need a limited supply of balls.

POLY-SPOTS AND THROW-DOWN LINES (TDLs)

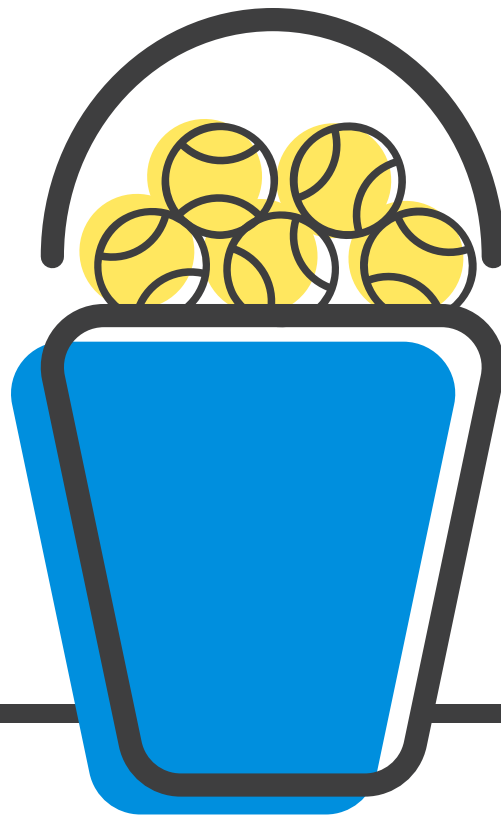
For targets, recovery spots, court lines, group control, etc.

FOOTBALLS

Junior size footballs, one size smaller than regulation.

CONES

9-inch and half-cones.



STRUCTURE OF PRACTICE AND PLAY PLANS

WARMUP

Partner-based activities that focus on control and theme of the day.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Athletic: Covers tennis-specific movement, ABCs (agility, balance, coordination), speed, strength, and advanced tossing/throwing/catching activities.

Tennis: Focuses on developing all five ball controls (direction, height, depth, speed, spin) and all phases of movement.

GAMES

Skills learned from practices will be applied to tactical situations during games.

CHARACTER

Practices have a character theme that can apply to tennis and life.

PLAY ON YOUR OWN

After each lesson, players are assigned specific challenges to practice at home with friends or family, or on the court.



DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES



TYPE

Individual: Independent skill development.

Team: Two or more players.

Cooperative: Pairs or groups focused on improving skills together.

Competitive: Scoring and declaring a winner.

Hand/Racquet-Feed: How the ball is introduced into the activity—can be player or coach.

FOCUS

Specific areas to work on.

SETUP

Location of players, balls, and equipment.

MISSION

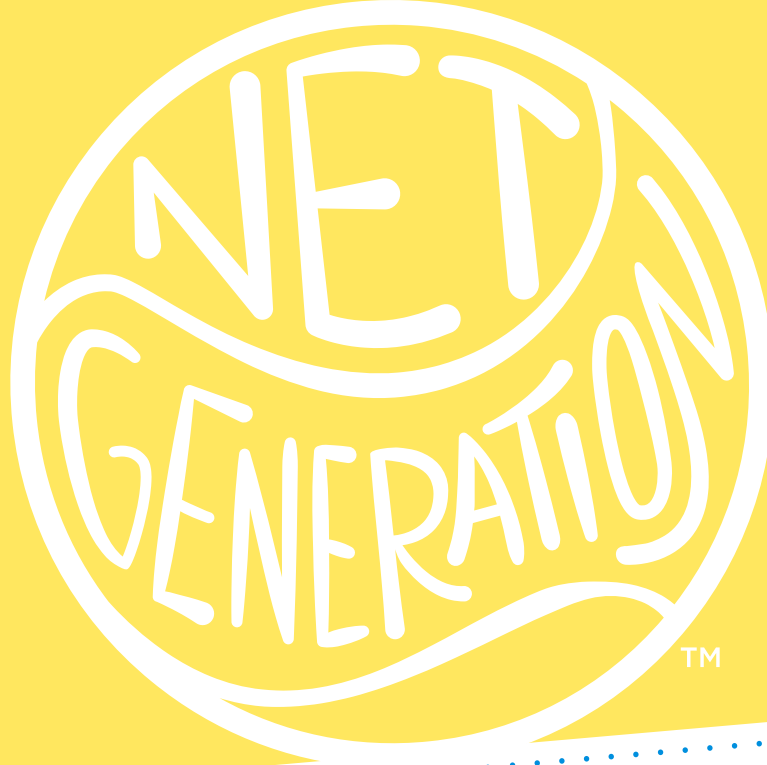
What we want players to do, followed by bullets with specific instructions.

GOAL

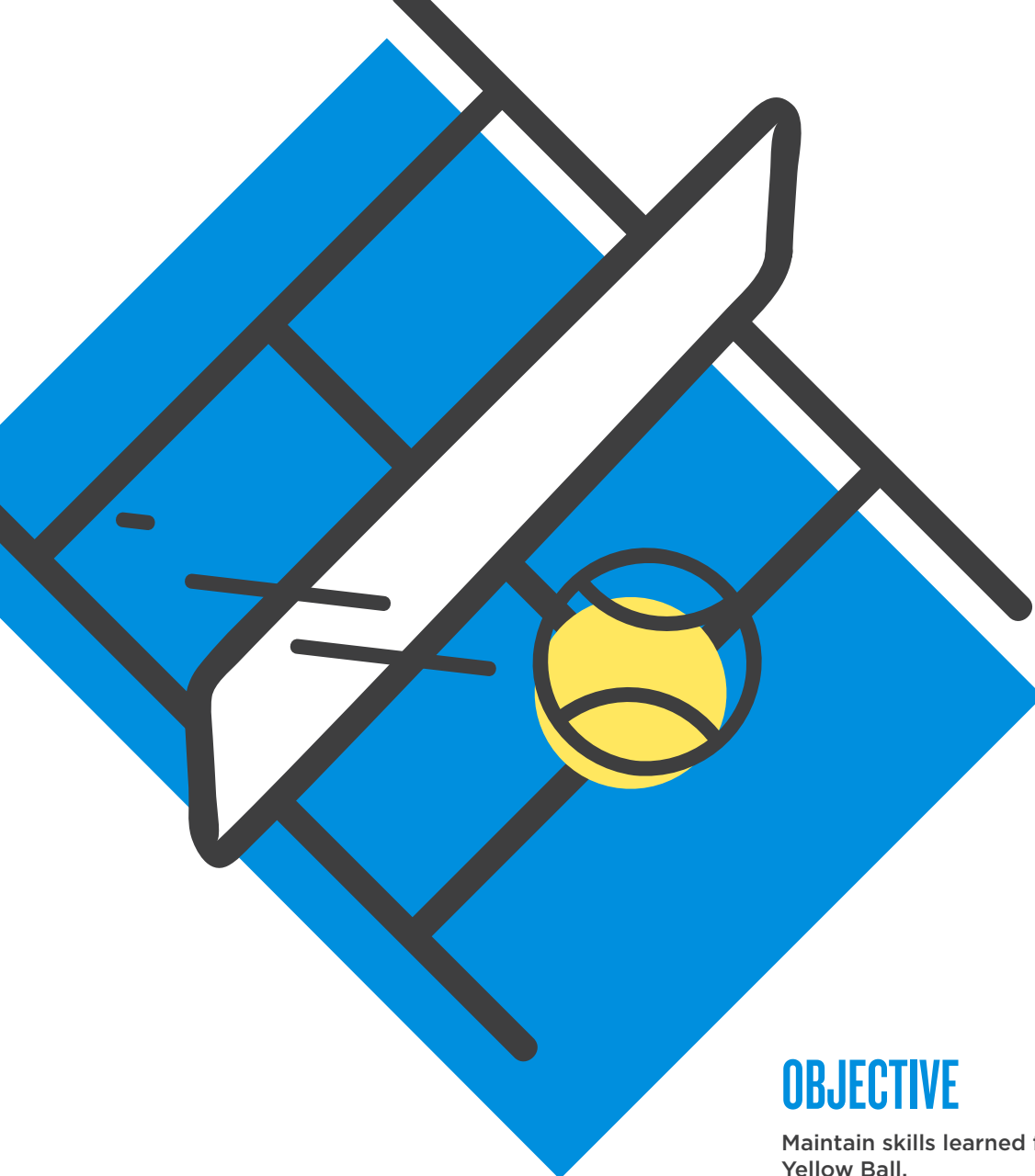
How we want players to execute the activity, generally related to a specific competency.

PROGRESSIONS

Specific steps to increase the difficulty of the skill/activity, to be used in subsequent practices or to handle mixed abilities.



YELLOW BALL 2



OBJECTIVE

Maintain skills learned from Green and adapt to the Yellow Ball.

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

Total: 90 minutes

- Warm-up: 6 - 10 minutes
- Athletic Skills: 15 - 20 minutes
- Tennis Skills: 10 - 12 minutes each (20 - 24 minutes total)
- Games: 15 - 20 minutes each (30 - 40 minutes total)
- Play-on-your-own Review: 3 minutes or less

Note: For all chapters, there will be a cooperative tennis skill that will lead to a game, then another cooperative skill that will lead to a game.



NOTES:

For this level, a dynamic stretch at the beginning and static stretch at the end are important. If properly trained, players can do these outside of the practice session.

PLANS AT A GLANCE



Warmup	Character	Athletic Development	Tennis Skills	Games	Play on Your Own
01 Keep It Deep	Build Up Confidence	Obstacle Course Make 'Em Move	Squeeze Rally Serve Plus One	Budge All Position Doubles	Play with a Friend
02 Whatcha Got?	Mini-Tennis Gratitude	Big Ball Tennis Four-Corner Toss	Control It! First Four	What's it Worth? First Four Live	Rally for Numbers
03 Double Trouble	Mini-Tennis Leadership	Jump Rope Quarterback	Volley Controls Overhead warm-up	Mini-tennis Dubz Lob and Play	Volley to Wall
04 Over And Under	7 Up Courage	Serpentine Shuffle Fence Throws	Slice and Dice Toss/hit/catch: Topspin	Mini-tennis points Crazy Feed	Over and Under
05 Move It	V Groundstrokes Persistence	Copy Cat Make 'Em Move	Four Square Rally V Volley	Four Square Huff and Puff	Move 'Em
06 Over My Head	Mini-tennis Aspire	Crossover Shuffle Three-ball throw	Serve Plus One Hi-Lo	Moonballer Airmail	Lob It
07 Team Up	Mini-tennis Dubz Teamwork	Hi-Lo Toss Relay Races	Up and Back Volley Three-level Serve	Two On One Attack Triples	Play Dubz
08 Let's Play	Mini-Tennis Points Resilience	Ultimate Tennis	Serve Index	Team Defender Up and Down the River Doubles	College Match

KEEP IT DEEP

Equipment: 26-inch racquets and longer, yellow balls, cones, poly-spots, and TDLs.

I. WARMUP

BUILD UP

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Groundstroke consistency.

Setup

- Pair up players, two pairs per court, using half-court.
- Players start on service line.

Mission – Keep ball in play.

- Players rally back and forth using either stroke.
- Coach determines number of shots to rally back and forth (e.g. six).
- Once number is achieved, players increase rally goal by increments of two shots.
- Once successful, move to baseline.

Goal – Increase size and length of swing as you move further back.

Progressions

1. One stroke.
2. Rally crosscourt in a diagonal.
3. Outside stroke only (for righties, forehand on deuce side, backhand on add side).



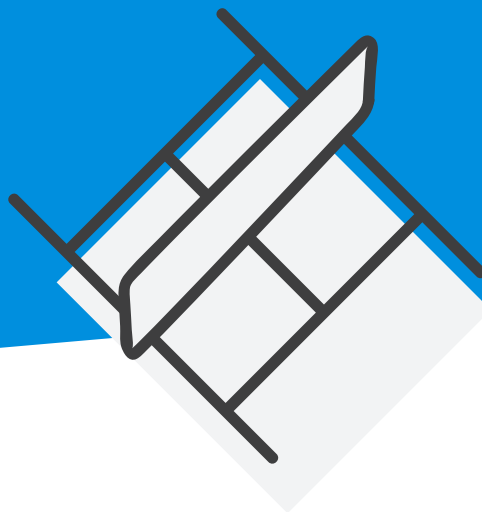
TEACHING TIP

When delivering the character piece, try to be a facilitator instead of a lecturer. Ask questions, such as “What does confidence mean to you?” “How can you become more confident?” This keeps the kids engaged, and gives them ownership.

II. CHARACTER

CONFIDENCE

Believe in yourself and your abilities.



III. ATHLETIC SKILLS

OBSTACLE COURSE

Setup

- Use four cones to create a 20x20-foot square in center of court on each side of net. Keep square a safe distance from net.
- Four to six players per square.

Mission

- Proceed from cone to cone using different movements. Next player goes when previous player reaches second cone.
- After each player has gone twice, change movement.

Progressions

1. Carioca. One round facing in, next facing out.
2. Skip. Change direction at each cone— forward, sideways, backward, sideways.
3. Sprint. Run to cone and stop, balanced on one leg, then run to next cone and stop, balanced on other leg.
4. Circles. Run to each cone and make a complete circle around it. Face same direction as player circles the cone.

MAKE 'EM MOVE

Setup

- Players in pairs, with a ball and TDL.
- No more than three pairs spread out on each side of net.
- Pairs face each other, four to six feet apart.
- One feeds, other catches.
- Catcher uses TDL as “home base.”

Mission

- Make catcher move by tossing balls side to side, high/low, and deep/short. Catch on one bounce.
- Catcher uses right hand on right side, left hand on left.
- Switch roles every minute.
- Need help? Allow players to catch with two hands, move closer.

Progressions

1. Toss higher and catch in air.
2. Increase distance between pairs.

IV. TENNIS SKILLS AND GAMES

SQUEEZE RALLY

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs.

Focus: Direction on groundstrokes.

Setup

- Two pairs per court, using half-court.
- Players start on opposite baselines with two TDLs each.
- Start with doubles line as one boundary and TDLs as other.
- Place TDLs parallel to each other to create a straight line.

Mission - Control rally within court boundaries.

- Start rally with straight-ahead serve and return.
- Rally four balls (two each) in boundary and yell, "Squeeze!". Then move TDLs in one racquet length.
- Continue until boundary is too narrow.

Goal - Extend follow-through to help direct ball into boundaries.

Progressions

1. Increase number of shots required.
2. Any stroke, then one stroke.



TEACHING TIP

Some players may be moving to yellow ball for the first time, others may be playing yellow and have difficulty keeping the ball in play. Remember to still use the green ball as a developmental tool for those who struggle with groundstroke consistency.

BUDGE

Type: Cooperative, players in pairs, and competitive.

Focus: Groundstroke consistency.

Setup

- Need at least six players to be effective.
- Players in pairs rallying on half-court, two pairs per court.

Mission - Keep ball in play.

- Coach assigns different number of balls for each half-court to rally. Points begin with serve.
- An example for six players would be top court must rally 10 straight, middle court must complete eight, and bottom court six.
- Players yell "Budge!" when they reach their rally number.
- If bottom-court players yell "Budge!" first, they trade places with middle-court players.
- If middle-court players are successful before top-court players, they trade places with top-court.
- Make adjustments to number of shots required based on how many players are involved.

Goal - Use a combination of spin, height and speed to improve consistency.

Progressions

1. Hitting past service line counts two.
2. Crosscourt with outside stroke.

SERVE PLUS ONE

Type: Cooperative with partner.

Focus: Serve and return direction and consistency.

Setup

- Two pairs per court, each hitting diagonally across net from each other.
- Start on baseline.

Mission - Execute serve, return and first ball.

- Serve, return, hit one ground stroke and trap ball.
- Returner serves and continues sequence.
- Each player completes four sequences, then switches sides of court (deuce to ad).

Goal - Use continental grip on serve.

Progressions

1. Score a point for each complete sequence – go for a “court record”.
2. Serve to specific half of service box.

ALL POSITION DOUBLES

Type: Competitive, doubles.

Focus: Doubles positioning.

Setup

- Four to six players per court.
- Players begin in a one up/one back doubles formation.

Mission - Learn to play all four positions in doubles.

- Play doubles points and rotate positions one spot at a time.
- With five players, have one player out at net post.
- With six players, have a player out at each net post.

Goal - Move with ball at net, rally crosscourt from baseline.

Progressions

1. Server and returner must stay back.
2. One side can come in on short balls.
3. No lobs, then lobs allowed.



COACHING TIP

Use this time to review different situations that occur in doubles. Wait for situations to develop during a point, then ask players how they responded or could have responded.

V. PLAY ON YOUR OWN

PLAY WITH A FRIEND

Setup

- Call a friend to practice.

Progressions

1. Rally groundstrokes for numbers.
2. Create fun games.