



RED BALL



TEAM CHALLENGE

THANK YOU!

ON BEHALF OF THE UNITED STATES TENNIS ASSOCIATION, THANK YOU FOR HOSTING A TEAM CHALLENGE!

By supporting this program, you are aligning your goals of shaping the future of the kids you teach every day with the goals of Net Generation and the USTA. Net Generation is a comprehensive development program for kids ages 5 through 18 that will help us grow tennis 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.

Team Challenge is an introduction to competition offering a low-pressure team environment for children of all ages to develop their skills through level-based play without an emphasis on instruction or results.

This manual will help you deliver a fantastic introduction to the sport of tennis to youth all over, which can lead to a lifelong love of tennis from the very first play opportunity.

Thank you for being a part of Net Generation and a provider of the Team Challenge!



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt Barnhart". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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WHAT IS NET GENERATION?

We believe in creating a positive and welcoming environment for all youth players. By focusing on play, building character and championing individual challenges, we empower kids to grow and develop at their own pace.

SKILL LEVELS

It's all about providing players the opportunity to enjoy tennis on their own terms. Net Generation is for kids ages 5-18, and is designed to suit players based on their skill level and developmental readiness. This approach provides coaches the flexibility to modify lessons to better meet the needs of the players and facilitate development, making learning more fun.

PROGRAMS

Whether at a school or after-school program, a community-organized event, team tennis or a coaching session, Net Generation lets players get involved in the game through a variety of programs that cater to their different needs and skill levels.



PLAY IN A COACHING PROGRAM

All of our coaching sessions are run by Safe Play approved USPTA- and PTR-certified, insured coaches, so players can have fun while learning from coaches that have invested in their coaching education.



PLAY IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Community programs are designed to introduce our game to kids (ages 5-18) of all abilities. They will be affordable, inclusive and learn-rally-and-play focused. The easy-to-follow curricula were developed with tools and lessons designed to challenge kids in a fun and social way.



PLAY IN YOUR SCHOOL

We're partnering with schools, local educators and SHAPE America, the leading organization setting national standards for physical education, to introduce tennis into their K-12 curricula. There are also a variety of after-school tennis programs.



PLAY IN COMPETITION

Net Generation also offers the opportunity to play team tennis, adding a healthy dose of competition that can push players to improve their skills while playing with friends.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT MODEL

In 2014, the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC), in partnership with the national governing bodies of sports, created the American Development Model (ADM) to help Americans realize their full athletic potential and utilize sport as a path toward an active and healthy lifestyle. The model uses long-term athlete development and quality coaching concepts to promote sustained physical activity, athlete safety, and age-appropriate development with the aim of creating a positive experience for American athletes across all levels of the sport. An ADM provides a foundational framework on which to build sports experiences for children and puts into practice the best research and applications from leading experts around the world.



DISCOVER, DEVELOP, PLAY

The foundational elements of the USTA's ADM are three-fold, discovering tennis playing skills while having fun, developing your tennis playing skills, and playing tennis your way. The need for youth to discover fun while playing sports has been well documented. Researchers have proven that kids want to have fun while playing a sport, to the point that is the main reason why they play.

Another foundational element is developing playing skills through physical literacy, which is the ability to move with competence and confidence in various physical activities that benefit the whole person's healthy development. Children need varied and expansive physical activity opportunities to help develop physical literacy, including exposure and appropriate instruction.

The third and last foundational element of the USTA's ADM is player centering. The pathways that tennis players take can vary tremendously. We at the USTA through the lens of the ADM challenge all athletes irrespective of their age or ability to find and develop their own journey, a philosophical approach of playing tennis while having fun, developing play skills, and playing your way.

NET GENERATION AS AN AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT MODEL

The guiding principles of Net Generation conform to an American Development Model (ADM) that is positioned as the aligning tool for all of USTA's stakeholders. From skill development to competition perspective, the ADM aims to achieve its objectives of stemming early specialization, developing multi-sport athletes, and increasing physical activity in youth. As the USTA refines its Long-Term Athlete Development plan, the ADM will form a critical component in how the USTA embraces core athlete development principles. The long-term goal is to allow American youth to utilize sport as a path toward an active and healthy lifestyle and to create opportunities to maximize their full potential. These key principles, tailored to the sport of tennis, include:



Universal Access

Make sure playing tennis is safe, accessible, local and affordable



Developmentally Appropriate Coaching and Play

Emphasize movement skills through developmentally appropriate coaching and play.



Support Multi-Sport or Multi-Activity Participation

Build athletes through a multi-sport approach within tennis programming and cross-promotion with other sports and activities



Fun and Player-Centered

Focus on creating a fun, positive, engaging atmosphere within an inclusive team culture rather than wins and losses.



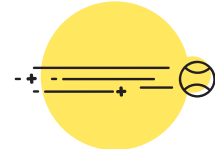
Educate Coaches and Officials

Ensure diverse coaches and officials engaged with all ages and abilities are appropriately trained.



Parent/Player Guidance, Education, Health, and Transparency

Provide parents and players the information needed to guide their tennis development



Clear Development Pathway

Integrate tennis into physical education programs in schools, recreational community programs, and advance into age- and skill-based programs and competitions

WHAT IS A TEAM CHALLENGE?

A Team Challenge is a USTA program designed as an introduction to competition for Net Generation players ages 5-18, focusing on team play, parent information, and character development. The Team Challenge is designed to be delivered either as a single event or as a series of events, with the objective of offering a competitive play experience that highlights teamwork and skill development in a fun, social environment.

The Team Challenge incorporates the ADM 5 C's that are essential in offering a kid-friendly tennis event:



Competence

Technical, tactical, and performance skills



Confidence

Self-belief, resilience, mental fortitude, and a sense of positive self-worth



Character

Respect for the sport and others, integrity, self-discipline, and ethical and moral well-being



Connection

Interpersonal skills and the ability to build and sustain meaningful and positive relationships



Creativity

Provides a unique and imaginative environment that encourages problem-solving and promotes individuality and self-reliance

Competence	Confidence	Character	Connection	Creativity
Play	Level-Based Play	Teamwork	Safe Environment	Free Play
Serve, Rally & Score	Positive	Sportsmanship	Friendships	Fun

RESOURCES TO GET STARTED

This provider manual will give you all the information needed to deliver a Team Challenge for your players. With these tools at your disposal, you will be up and running in no time!

SERVE TENNIS

Explore Serve Tennis, powerful digital tools brought to you by the USTA and made for tennis.

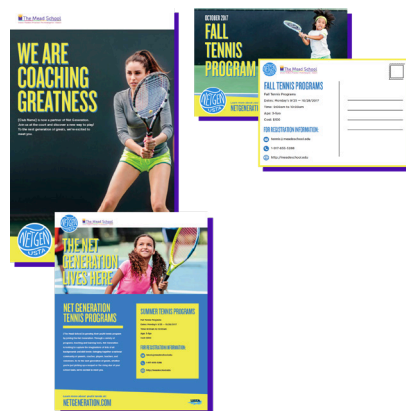
Here you can list your Team Challenge programs, take online payments, register players and more.

Access everything from the Tennis Service Center within your USTA account. Visit [USTA.com/tennisservicecenter](https://www.usta.com/tennisservicecenter)



THE USTA MARKETING GENERATOR

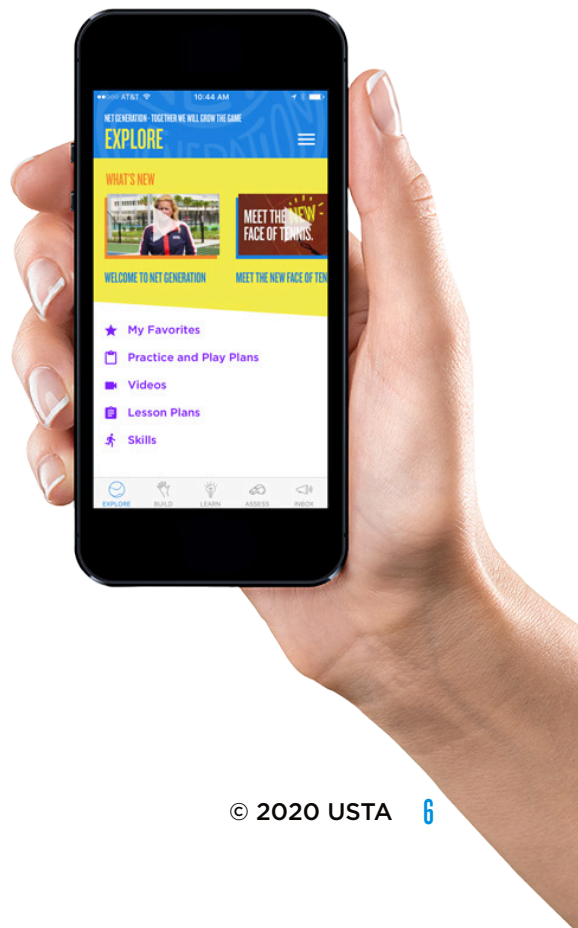
This tool in the Tennis Service Center on [USTA.com](https://www.usta.com) helps you customize your own professionally-designed marketing materials to promote your events. Create posters, flyers, postcards, and more.



MOBILE APP

Net Generation Mobile App: This free tool will give you access to world-class curricula and instructional teaching videos, as well as pre-built Net Generation lesson plans with the option to build your own.

Download the App Today!



PROVIDERS WILL RECEIVE:



- CHALK TO LINE THE COURTS
- CLIPBOARD
- NAME TAGS
- BARRIER TAPE TO MAKE A NET
- CLOTHES PINS TO KEEP SCORE
- PLAYER GIVEAWAYS
- BANNER TO HANG ON THE FENCE
- ORGANIZER WHISTLE
- NET GENERATION HAT (OUR GIFT TO YOU!)



PROGRAM ROLES

Understand the different program roles and responsibilities to run the Team Challenge.

TEAM CHALLENGE PROVIDER

- Registered on Net Generation and Safe Play certified
- Plan, organize and manage the overall Team Challenge event
- Tennis experience recommended

TEAM CHALLENGE ASSISTANT

- Recruited by the Team Challenge Provider
- Tennis knowledge recommended

TEAM CHALLENGE COURT CAPTAIN

- Recruited by the Team Challenge Provider/Assistant
- No tennis experience required
- More information on the next page



PROGRAM ROLES

USTA TEAM CHALLENGE COURT CAPTAIN

The **Court Captain** has the opportunity to help the program provider create a fun and encouraging low-pressure environment that can make a positive difference in a child's life.

The role of the Court Captain is to support and assist the program provider with activities that specifically reinforce athletic skills and character development, cooperative play, and team formation. This provides players the opportunity to enjoy tennis on their own terms, based on their skill level and developmental readiness. This approach allows providers the flexibility to modify lessons to better meet the needs of the players and facilitate development, making play more fun.

The goal of the Team Challenge is to allow for players to experience play in a less regulated environment. If play is not continuous or safe, Court Captains may provide the following assistance to participants:

- **Guidance through all aspects of point and match play (developmentally appropriate for each participant), as defined by the provider:**
 - o Safety - ensuring participants are aware of their spacing, racquet position, and ball retrieval
 - o Rallying - helping participants know how and when a rally begins and ends
 - o Scoring - helping participants understand and keep track of the score
- **Grouping and match play activities**
 - o Structure
 - Reinforcing the organization and length of each drill, game or match
 - Supporting the given learning activities within each lesson plan
 - o Transitions
 - Movement from one activity to another
 - Rotation from one court to another or on a specific court

Please feel free to discuss the role of the Court Captain in-depth with your Team Challenge provider to develop additional knowledge about the role as well as explore educational references to enhance your skills.

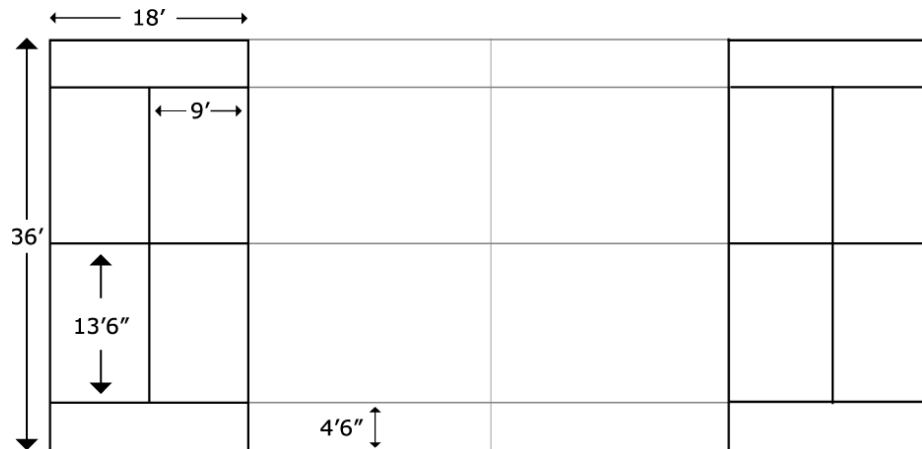
The most successful programs and events include a Court Captain.

By serving in this role, you will contribute to the success of the program by guiding and supporting play while promoting a safe and enjoyable experience for players. Through these efforts, you are setting the stage for players to continue to include tennis as part of an active lifestyle.

Thank you for your commitment to the growth and development of all children participating in this program!

RED BALL COURT SETUP

All Red Ball Team Challenge lessons will be setup on a modified, shortened court. Shorter courts are perfect for younger kids learning the game of tennis, as they make it easier and more fun to play. The dimensions are sized right for kids' age and ability to help them succeed in the game. Four to six red ball courts can be setup on a full-size tennis court:



THE COURT

The court shall be a rectangle that is 36 feet long and 18 feet wide. This size shall be used for singles and doubles.

THE NET

The court shall be divided across the middle by a net suspended by a cord that shall pass over or be attached to two net posts at a height of 33 inches. The net shall be fully extended so that it completely fills the space between the two net posts and must be made of sufficiently small mesh so that a ball cannot pass through it. The height of the net at its center shall be 33 inches.

MARKING THE LINES ON THE COURT

- Create two baselines by drawing lines that are 36 feet apart at the ends of the court. (This places the baselines on top of the doubles sidelines of a 78-foot court.)
- Create two sidelines by drawing lines that are 18 feet apart and perpendicular to the baselines. They are used for singles and doubles. (This places the sidelines on the baseline and service line of a 78 foot court.)
- Create two service lines by drawing lines between the sidelines that are parallel to each baseline and 4 feet 6 inches inside each baseline.
- Create the center service line by starting at one service line and drawing a line parallel to the sidelines that is halfway between the sidelines and that ends at the other service line. (The center service line results in the formation of two service courts on each side of the court.)
- Divide each baseline in half by a 2-inch wide center mark that is drawn inside the baseline and parallel to the sidelines.
- All lines shall be 1.5 inches wide, the same color, and shall clearly contrast with the color of the surface area. If the lines are painted on a 78-foot court, they shall be a different color than the lines on the 78-foot court and shall stop 3 inches from the standard lines.
- All measurements shall be made to the outside of the lines.

PROGRAM SETUP

Understand the different components to set up your Team Challenge.

PARTICIPANT LEVEL REQUIREMENT

- Players are expected to at least drop-hit serve from the service line over the net and sustain a modified rally (trapping, bumping, or hitting) to participate. If players attend and cannot sustain a rally or modified rally, they may participate in the skills portion of the program.

DETERMINE AUDIENCE

- In-House - target audience is players from host facility
- Open - target audience is players from local community

SET THE DATE AND TIME

- Check the calendar for available dates
- Determine how it can boost upcoming or existing programming
- Look for potential conflicts (e.g. other tennis events, sports, activities)
- Confirm facility/court availability

DETERMINE BUDGET

- Potential expenses (e.g. court fees, meal/snack)
- Your expenses will help determine the participation fee
- Look to bundle costs into existing programming

RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS

- Teaching pros, parents, high school players
- Assign roles

GET THE WORD OUT

- Set up online registration on NetGeneration.com
- Post fliers around the community
- Contact local community providers, programs, and organizations
- Work with your local Community Tennis Association
- Send out e-mails, post on social media

DAY OF PROGRAM

- Set up courts
- Identify welcome area
- Print volunteer and parent handouts
- Lay out equipment
- Organize player giveaways
- Coordinate meal/snack

TEAM CHALLENGE SERIES SCHEDULE

The Team Challenge is flexible and designed for providers to deliver either as a single event/day or as a series of lesson plans for up to six events/weeks.

01	02	03	04	05	06
ADM Theme	ADM Theme	ADM Theme	ADM Theme	ADM Theme	ADM Theme
Team Friendships	Team Dynamics	Team Rituals	Quick Transitions	Stick to Plan	Positive Coaching
Free Play	Free Play	Free Play	Free Play	Free Play	Free Play
Athletic Development	Athletic Development	Athletic Development	Athletic Development	Athletic Development	Athletic Development
*Fire Ants	*Tag	*Self-Toss	*Messy Bedroom	*Tunnel Ball	*Freeze Tag
Character Development	Character Development	Character Development	Character Development	Character Development	Character Development
*Teamwork	*Sportsmanship	*Respect	*Listen	*Effort	*Responsibility
Co-op Play	Co-op Play (optional)	Co-op Play (optional)	Co-op Play (optional)	Co-op Play (optional)	Co-op Play (optional)
Form Teams	Form Teams	Form Teams	Form Teams	Form Teams	Form Teams
Team Competition	Team Competition	Team Competition	Team Competition	Team Competition	Team Competition
Parent Meeting					
Wrap Up	Wrap Up	Wrap Up	Wrap Up	Wrap Up	Wrap Up
Meal/Snack	Meal/Snack	Meal/Snack	Meal/Snack	Meal/Snack	Meal/Snack

TEAM CHALLENGE 01

ADM Theme

**TEAM
FRIENDSHIPS**



Action: Team Friendships-Ensure players have name tags and they meet at least 3 other kids.

I. FREE PLAY (15 MINUTES)

- Provider welcomes players as they arrive
- Provider gives name tags to participants
- Provider recruits and assigns volunteer roles
- Assistant determines a general assessment of participants

II. ATHLETIC DEVELOPMENT (5 MINUTES)

FIRE ANTS

Setup

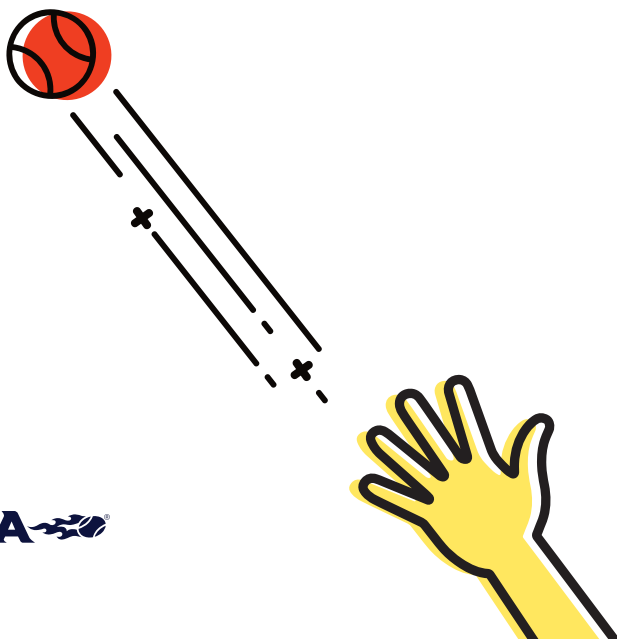
Spread players out around the court and have them stand in ready position

Mission

- When the coach says “go,” players try to stomp as many fire ants as possible in a stationary position
- Stomp as many ants as possible in a set period of time

Level 2: Skip and stomp: Skip around the court and stomp when the coach shouts “fire ants!”

Level 3: Shuffle and stomp: Side-shuffle around the court and stomp when the coach shouts “fire ants!”



III. CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT (3 MINUTES)



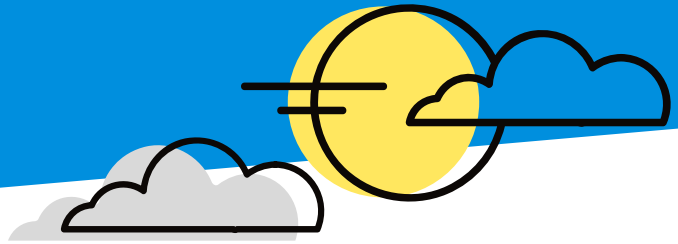
PLEDGE

I will listen to my coach, be nice to my teammates, try my best and HAVE FUN!

WORD OF THE DAY: TEAMWORK

Provider will introduce the character development

- What does it mean to be a team player?
- What are ways that you can be a good teammate?



IV. COOPERATIVE PLAY (15 MINUTES)



- Provider and Assistant will pair the participants
- Participants will start a cooperative rally
- Participants rally and count each ball hit in the court
- Participants will try and beat their rally score during this time period
- Provider and Assistant will make changes based on participants' levels



V. TEAM FORMATION (5 MINUTES)

- Provider and Assistant put participants into groups according to playing level
- Provider asks participants about character development (Teamwork):
 - How did you and your partner show good teamwork?
 - How did working together help you and your partner?
- Parent volunteers help teams come up with team names
- Parent volunteers help coordinate team match play
- Participants who do not meet the minimum play level requirement of being able to hold a modified rally can participate in a stationed activity called “**Self-Toss.**” It would be ideal if they can finish day with a modified rally (rolling, trapping, or bumping).
 - Parent volunteers help to facilitate

Self-Toss Setup

- Each player has a red ball
- Players spread out around space. Use chalk or throw-down lines to create the boundaries

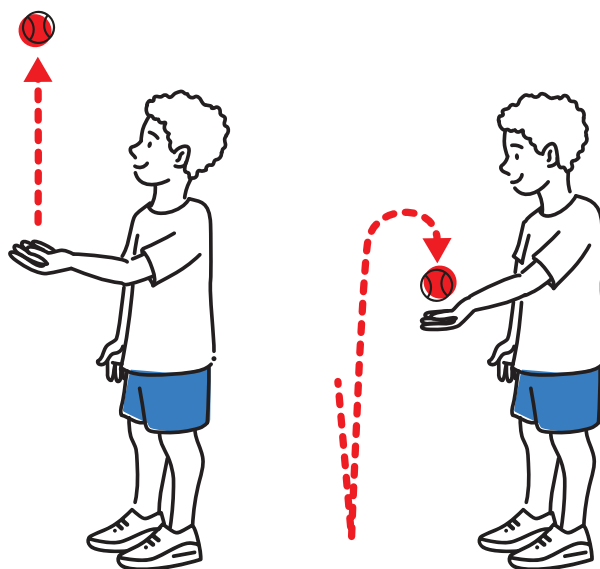
Mission

- Toss ball with one hand (palm up) above head level
- Let bounce and catch with both hands

Challenges

- **One:** Toss higher and catch with both hands
- **Two:** Toss further away and catch with both hands
- **Three:** Toss and catch with one hand

ILLUSTRATION: SELF-TOSS



VI. TEAM COMPETITION (30 MINUTES)



- Provider, Assistant, and Parent Volunteers facilitate match play for players who can at least drop-hit serve from the service line over the net and sustain a modified rally (trapping, bumping, or hitting)
- During the first rotation of play, the provider will conduct a parent meeting. Talking points are provided to help guide you.

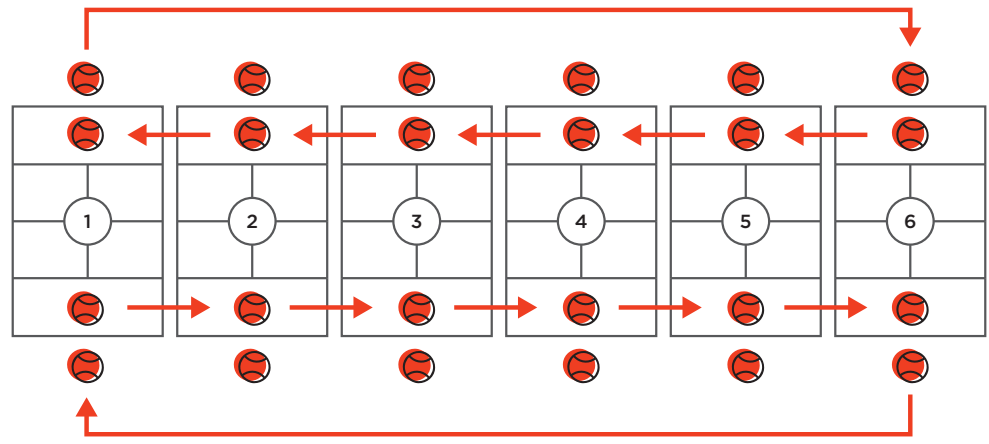
MATCHES ARE TEAM SINGLES

- One or two players from a team can be put on each side of the court, with one player starting the point by stepping inside the court to drop-hit the serve. If there is a second player on their side of the court, they will wait behind the middle of the baseline. After the point ends, the second player will replace the first player. This rotation of play on each side of the court continues after each point is played. If there is only one player on the side of the court, they will play the entire timed match.
 - o Place players on opposite sides of the court
 - o Both players on both sides move one place after the timed match ends
 - o The players on the last court move to the first court on the opposite end
- Playing a match or competition for the first time can be very daunting and even stressful for many beginner players. It is important for the tennis coach to ensure that the beginner players feel comfortable playing points and with that, they are confident with how they can win and lose points.
 - o Point play begins with a drop-hit serve to the opponent
 - o Players may have two chances to serve
 - o Opponents alternate serves every two points
 - o Score is kept in single numbers using a fun scoring method (clothes pins)
 - o At the end of the allotted time, players then rotate
 - o As a reminder, providers will not emphasize scoring by keeping track of the results at the end of a rotation. Players will shake hands, replace their clothes pins, and rotate to their next match.

QUICK TIP

Points being kept with clothes pins to facilitate the players learning how to keep score.

ILLUSTRATION: TEAM SINGLES ROTATION



- Participants may win and lose the points in competition by:
 - Missing the ball
 - Hitting the ball out of the court area
 - Hitting the ball into the net
 - Allowing the ball to bounce twice without returning it
 - Double faulting (i.e. missing both the first and second serves)

ONE MINUTE OF TRANSITION FROM MATCH TO MATCH:

- Team Match #1 - 5 minutes
 - During first rotation, Provider conducts parent meeting
- Team Match #2 - 5 minutes
- Team Match #3 - 5 minutes
- Team Match #4 - 5 minutes
- Team Match #5 - 5 minutes

PARENT MEETING TALKING POINTS



Introductions

- Briefly introduce yourself and other key people helping with the event
- Explain what a Team Challenge is - introduction to competition; attempting to serve, rally and score over a net; modifications are made so players can be successful
- Mention importance of character development and parent education

Character development

- Working as part of a team will strengthen your child's social and emotional skills, help develop communication skills, and improve confidence
- A lot of teamwork comes from making sure your child has children his or her age to socialize and work together with
- Additional value can also be derived from conversations with your child
- As a parent, give positive comments when you see your child, a sibling or a friend promoting cooperating well or working well as a team
- Explain to your child how their action contributed to the overall success of the team
- As you watch a team event, talk about what you see and ask questions about what your child is observing

Benefits of Net Generation

- Tennis now is kid-friendly similar to other youth sports
- Balls are lighter, softer and move slower through the air
- The court is smaller, allowing for better court coverage and giving kids the opportunity to learn an all-court game
- Racquets are shorter and lighter, enabling kids to swing and maneuver the racquet more easily
- Each child's development should be looked at as a process instead of a race to the 78-foot court and the yellow ball
- Your child will develop skills faster, build more confidence, and HAVE MORE FUN
- Tennis is a lifetime sport

Promote other play opportunities

- Leverage the opportunity to promote your upcoming events and programs

VII. WRAP UP (2 MINUTES)

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Provider reviews the play for the day and character development (Teamwork):

- Did teamwork make tennis more enjoyable today?
- Where else can you show teamwork?

Finish with a chant of encouragement and have participants huddle together with hands in the middle

VIII. MEAL/SNACK (OPTIONAL)

