



**USA Racquetball**  
**Instructors Program**  
**Curriculum**  
**and**  
**Study Guide**



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Welcome to the USA Racquetball Instructors Program. This document represents the Instructors Program curriculum and informational study guide. The Master Professionals who have developed this curriculum will never finish perfecting it. It will be an ongoing work of racquetball knowledge, and as the game changes, the curriculum will change.

Answers to questions regarding the USA Racquetball Instructors Program may be found in Appendix A.

For the sake of expediency and ease of study, we have divided the course into **Ten Benchmarks**. These Benchmarks are the core of racquetball knowledge.

The Ten Benchmarks are:

1. Professionalism, Safety, and Liability
2. Forehand
3. Backhand
4. Serves
5. Serve Return
6. Positioning
7. Shot selection
8. Footwork
9. Strategies
10. Teaching skills

- I. In addition to Benchmarks there are levels of excellence and standards. These different levels are designed so anyone who aspires to grow and learn will be provided the opportunities to do so. These levels are defined below. Individuals will meet the criteria listed in each level.

#### **Levels of Excellence Criteria**

**Master Professional:** The USA Racquetball Instructors Program and USA Coaching Development team. Credentials must include national recognition as instructors, USA National team coaching, and Elite camp instruction. Jim Winterton, Fran Davis, and Tom Travers are currently the only Master Professional Instructors.

**Regional Professional:** A Regional Professional is someone who has taught for 20 years or more at a high national level. A Regional Professional has attained a professional instructor status and offers instruction in large group settings. The Regional Professional has also attained a professional or a high open playing status in their career. They must also participate in online educational requirements and mentoring with a Master Professional. This person must also have participated in playing or coaching on a national or international level for at least twenty years.

**Professional Clinician:** The Professional Clinician has attained a Professional Instructor status and offers instruction in large group settings. The Professional Clinician has also attained a professional or a high open playing status in their career. They must also participate in online educational



requirements and mentoring with a Master Professional. This person must also have participated in playing or coaching on a national or international level for at least fifteen years.

The preceding levels are eligible to test for camp or clinic sanctioning.

The following levels are not eligible for camp or clinic sanctioning.

**Professional Instructor:** The Professional Instructor has achieved at least a high open level as a player, has been grandfathered in with the same level of achievement reached in the AmPRO organization, and has become a member of the USA Racquetball Instructors Program. Professional Instructors must have taken the USA Racquetball Instructors Program test and certification, and passed with a score of 90+ on ALL parts of test, and participate in online educational requirements and mentoring with a Master Professional.

**Instructor:** The Instructor has taken the USA Racquetball Instructors Program test and certification and passed with a score of 75-89 on ALL parts of the tests, and is participating in online education and mentoring with a Master Professional.

## II. How the Different Levels Are Used

**Master Professional:** Three people currently hold this level of certification, but as people move through the Instructors Program, more can be added. The Master Professional may mentor, administrate, and work on curriculum development.

**Regional Professional:** The Regional Professional will eventually assist in testing and will conduct clinics as they are trained. If one hopes to become a Master Professional they must first serve as a Regional Professional. This is ideal for someone aspiring to administrate and certify instructors, as well as lead camps, clinics, and lessons.

**Professional Clinician:** Again, this level has strict requirements for learning, and is perfect for one who just wants to do camps and clinics, use the USA Racquetball membership base, and have their camps sanctioned. It is assumed the Professional Clinician will not want to administrate racquetball programs as the Regional Professional will.

**Professional Instructor:** This is the level of instructor who has tested out the highest, 90 + on ALL parts of the tests. They should be an open or pro player, and be capable of instruction within the club setting.

**Instructor:** This level did not test out as a Professional and received 75-89 on ALL parts of the tests and as such, they are certified to teach B-Level players and below.

**Participant:** A Participant took the exam and/or weekend class, but must retake the class as they received a score of 74 and below. They will have all the rights of membership except insurance coverage for any lessons.



## **BENCHMARK I**

### Section A – RISK MANAGEMENT & SPORT SAFETY

#### **What is Safe Sport?**

Athletes perform better and enjoy sport more if they feel safe. Safe Sport seeks to create a healthy, supportive environment for all participants through education, resources, and training.

#### **What is Misconduct?**

The bonds that exist between coaches, institutions, athletes and teammates can sometimes cause confusion about which actions cross the line of sport safety.

Recognizing and addressing misconduct in racquetball requires a team effort involving coaches, athletes, parents, clubs and peer groups, but everyone must be able to recognize the specific actions which qualify as misconduct.

#### **Types of Misconduct**

The high level of participation and engagement in racquetball raises the risk of child sexual abuse. The activities and relationships that help athletes develop and improve may also allow offenders to have direct contact with potential targets.

#### **ZERO TOLERANCE**

Sexual abuse of racquetball students is wrong, unacceptable, and illegal. Abuse is inconsistent with the USA Racquetball mission which encourages participation in all aspects of racquetball. USA Racquetball has adopted the “Participant Welfare Policy” (see Appendix B, p.121) to set forth the efforts it will undertake to promote a safe racquetball environment.

#### **REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES**

Coaches, staff members, instructors and volunteers are required to report suspicions of child abuse, sexual abuse or any inappropriate behavior of a colleague or coworker. All questions or concerns related to inappropriate or suspicious behavior or suspected abuse should be directed to an organization administrator. If members of the sport community believe that sexual interaction between a coach and a child or between children has occurred, they are required to report it immediately.

When a child reports abuse of any kind, it is critical not to judge the victim. It is important to get professionals involved as early as possible.



## **Types of Abuse**

The following types of abuse and their descriptions have been reprinted from the USOC Safe Sport Manual:

- Child Sexual Abuse
- Bullying
- Hazing
- Harassment
- Emotional Misconduct
- Physical Misconduct
- Sexual Misconduct

## **CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE**

### **How to Recognize, Reduce and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse**

#### **What you need to know to protect athletes**

Youth sport programs in the United States are incredibly successful at enriching the lives of athletes and their communities. However, high levels of participation and engagement also increase the risk of child sexual abuse. The same activities and relationships that help athletes develop and progress are also the ones that can allow offenders to have direct contact with their targets. Since the stakes are so high, every member of the sport community must make addressing child sexual abuse a top priority.

#### **Definition**

Child sexual abuse involves any sexual activity with a child where consent is not or cannot be given. This includes sexual contact with a child accomplished by deception, manipulation, force or threat of force, regardless of the age of the participants. It also includes all sexual interactions between an adult and a child regardless of whether there is deception or the child understands the sexual nature of the activity.

#### **Peer-to-Peer Child Sexual Abuse**

Approximately one-third of all child sexual abuse occurs at the hands of other children. Sexual contact between minors can also be abusive. Whether or not a sexual interaction between children constitutes child sexual abuse turns on the existence of an aggressor, the age difference between the children, and/or whether there is an imbalance of power and/or intellectual capabilities.

#### **Examples of Child Sexual Abuse**

- Sexual penetration
- Sexual touching
- Non-contact sexual acts (e.g., verbal acts, sexually suggestive electronic or written communications, exposure or voyeurism)





## **Reporting Child Sexual Abuse**

It's critical for clubs, coaches, staff members, volunteers and parents to report suspicions or allegations of child sexual abuse (including actions between children that may constitute sexual abuse) to the proper officials and appropriate law enforcement authorities.

By working together, we can create safe conditions for sport and protect athletes.

## **BULLYING**

### **How to Recognize, Reduce and Respond to Bullying**

#### **What you need to know to protect athletes**

One of the greatest lessons athletes take away from racquetball is the experience of being on a team where coaches and individuals support one another. Actions that demean or intimidate athletes, either physically or emotionally, can affect performance and team cohesion. Since bullying often occurs among peers, coaches can set an example with a zero-tolerance policy and emphasize teamwork and mutual support. Giving athletes a way to report behavior without fear of reprisal is also important.

#### **Definition**

Bullying is an intentional, persistent and repeated pattern of committing or willfully tolerating physical and non-physical behavior that is intended, or has the reasonable potential, to cause fear, humiliation or physical harm in an attempt to socially exclude, diminish or isolate the targeted athlete(s) as a condition of membership. It includes any act or conduct described as bullying under federal or state law.

#### **Exceptions**

Bullying does not include group or team behavior designed to establish normative team behavior or promote team cohesion. For example, bullying does not include verbal admonitions to encourage team members to train harder and push through a difficult training regimen.

#### **Examples of Bullying**

##### *Physical behavior*

- Hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, choking or slapping an athlete
- Throwing at, or hitting an athlete with, objects such as sporting equipment

##### *Verbal and emotional behavior*

- Teasing, ridiculing, intimidating
- Spreading rumors or making false statements
- Using electronic communications, social media, or other technology to harass, frighten, intimidate or humiliate ("cyber bullying")



## HAZING

### How to Recognize, Reduce and Respond to Hazing

#### What you need to know to protect athletes

Being a team member shouldn't come with additional requirements that get in the way of enjoying sport. Hazing often begins as seemingly benign behavior but can become an issue if allowed to continue. Since hazing often occurs among peers, coaches and staff can send a strong anti-hazing message by creating an environment that encourages individuals to raise concerns or share information. In addition, most states have enacted legislation to discourage hazing and hold those who participate accountable; and these laws can provide additional support for anti-hazing efforts.

#### Definition

Hazing involves coercing, requiring, forcing or willfully tolerating any humiliating, unwelcome or dangerous activity that serves as a condition for joining a group or being socially accepted by a group's members. It includes any act or conduct described as hazing under federal or state law. Activities that fit the definition of hazing are considered to be hazing regardless of an athlete's willingness to cooperate or participate.

#### Exceptions

Hazing does not include group or team activities that are meant to establish normative team behavior or promote team cohesion. Examples include:

- Allowing junior athletes to carry senior athletes' equipment into the locker room after practice
- Encouraging junior athletes to arrive early and set up training equipment
- Giving senior athletes first preference in team assignments, responsibilities, accommodations, facilities or equipment

#### Examples of Hazing

- Requiring, forcing or otherwise requiring the consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Tying, taping or otherwise physically restraining an athlete
- Sexual simulations or sexual acts of any nature
- Sleep deprivation, unnecessary schedule disruption or the withholding of water and/or food
- Social actions (e.g., grossly inappropriate or provocative clothing) or public displays (e.g., public nudity) that are illegal or meant to draw ridicule
- Beating, paddling or other forms of physical assault
- Excessive training requirements that single out individuals on a team



## **HARASSMENT**

### **How to Recognize, Reduce and Respond to Harassment**

#### **What you need to know to protect athletes**

Sport is an incredibly constructive outlet for individuals, in part because athletes are judged solely on their abilities and performance. In this environment, hard work, persistence and improvement are defining characteristics. Harassment based on race, gender or sexual orientation affects team cohesion, performance and an individual's ability to focus on building skills and enjoy competition. As with bullying and hazing, coaches and staff can create a supportive environment for sport by setting a zero-tolerance policy.

#### **Definition**

Harassment is a repeated pattern of physical and/or non-physical behavior intended to cause fear, humiliation or annoyance, offend or degrade, create a hostile environment; or reflect discriminatory bias in an attempt to establish dominance, superiority or power over an individual athlete or group based on gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression or mental or physical disability. It includes any act or conduct described as harassment under federal or state law.

#### **Examples of Harassment**

##### *Physical offenses*

- Hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, choking or slapping an athlete or participant
- Throwing at, or hitting an athlete with objects, including sporting equipment

##### *Non-physical offenses*

- Making negative or disparaging comments about an athlete's sexual orientation, gender expression, disability, religion, skin color or ethnic traits
- Displaying offensive materials, gestures, or symbols
- Withholding or reducing an athlete's playing time based on his or her sexual orientation

## **EMOTIONAL MISCONDUCT**

### **How to Recognize, Reduce and Respond to Emotional Misconduct**

#### **What you need to know to protect athletes**

Sport can help individuals build skills, making them stronger and better able to deal with challenges. The wide range of emotions athletes experience in practice and competition are a normal, healthy component of sport. However, a repeated pattern of behavior by either coaches or teammates that can inflict psychological or emotional harm has no place in sport. By gaining a complete understanding of the actions that qualify as emotional misconduct, participants can be in a stronger position to take action.



## **Definition**

Emotional misconduct involves a pattern of deliberate, non-contact behavior that has the potential to cause emotional or psychological harm to an athlete. Non-contact behavior includes verbal and physical acts, as well as actions that deny attention or support. It also includes any act or conduct (e.g., child abuse and child neglect) described as emotional abuse or misconduct under federal or state law.

## **Exceptions**

Emotional misconduct does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, discipline or improving athletic performance. Nor is constructive criticism about an athlete's performance emotional misconduct.

## **Examples of Emotional Misconduct**

### *Verbal acts*

- Verbally attacking an athlete personally (e.g., calling them worthless, fat or disgusting)
- Repeatedly and excessively yelling at participants in a manner that serves no productive training or motivational purpose

### *Physical acts*

- Throwing sport equipment, water bottles or chairs at, or in the presence of, participants
- Punching walls, windows or other objects

### *Acts that deny attention and support*

- Ignoring an athlete for extended periods of time
- Routinely or arbitrarily excluding participants from practice

## **PHYSICAL MISCONDUCT**

### **How to Recognize, Reduce and Respond to Physical Misconduct**

#### **What you need to know to protect athletes**

Almost all sport involves strenuous physical activity; in practices and competition, athletes regularly push themselves to the point of exhaustion. However, any activity that physically harms an athlete – such as direct contact with coaches or teammates, disciplinary actions, or punishment – is unacceptable. Physical misconduct can extend to seemingly unrelated areas including inadequate recovery times for injuries and diet. Two of the best ways to promote safe conditions are to set clear boundaries and take a team approach to monitoring athletes.

## **Definition**



Physical misconduct involves contact or non-contact behavior that can cause physical harm to an athlete or other sport participants. It also includes any act or conduct described as physical abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g., child abuse, child neglect and assault).

### **Exceptions**

Physical misconduct does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline or improving athlete performance.

### **Examples of Physical Misconduct**

#### *Contact offenses*

- Punching, beating, biting, striking, choking or slapping an athlete
- Intentionally hitting an athlete with objects or sporting equipment
- Providing alcohol to an athlete under the legal drinking age (under U.S. law)
- Providing illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to any athlete
- Encouraging or permitting an athlete to return to play prematurely or without the clearance of a medical professional, following a serious injury (e.g., a concussion)
- Prescribing dieting or other weight-control methods (e.g., weigh-ins, caliper tests) without regard for the nutritional well-being and health of an athlete

#### *Non-contact offenses*

- Isolating an athlete in a confined space (e.g., locking an athlete in a small space)
- Forcing an athlete to assume a painful stance or position for no athletic purpose (e.g., requiring an athlete to kneel on a harmful surface)
- Withholding, recommending against or denying adequate hydration, nutrition, medical attention or sleep

## **SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**

### **How to Recognize, Reduce and Respond to Sexual Misconduct**

#### **What you need to know to protect athletes**

Sport can teach lessons that reach beyond the field of play, but its ability to do so depends on maintaining the bonds of trust, mentorship and mutual respect among teammates. These elements are undermined when sexual misconduct occurs in sport settings. Sexual misconduct includes sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and rape. Every member of the sport community, especially adult staff in positions of authority, can contribute to a sport environment free from sexual misconduct by working together and being informed

#### **Definition**

Sexual misconduct involves any touching or non-touching sexual interaction that is nonconsensual or forced, coerced or manipulated, or perpetrated in an aggressive, harassing, exploitative or threatening manner. It also includes any sexual interaction between an athlete and an individual with evaluative, direct or indirect



authority. Last, any act or conduct described as sexual abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g., sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, rape) qualifies as sexual misconduct.

### **Notes**

- An imbalance of power is always assumed between a coach and an athlete
- Minors cannot consent to sexual activity with an adult; and all sexual interaction between an adult and a minor is strictly prohibited.

### **Examples of Sexual Misconduct**

#### *Touching offenses*

- Fondling an athlete's breasts or buttocks
- Exchange of reward in sport (e.g., team placement, scores, feedback) for sexual favors
- Genital contact
- Sexual relations or intimacies between participants in a position of trust, authority and/or evaluative and supervisory control over athletes or other sport participants

#### *Non-touching offenses*

- Sexually-oriented comments, jokes or innuendo made to or about an athlete, or other sexually harassing behavior
- A coach discussing his or her sex life with an athlete
- A coach asking an athlete about his or her sex life
- A coach requesting or sending a nude or partial-dress photo to an athlete
- Exposing athletes to pornographic material
- Sending athletes sexually-explicit or suggestive electronic or written messages or photos (e.g., "sexting")
- Deliberately exposing an athlete to sexual acts
- Deliberately exposing an athlete to nudity (except in situations where locker rooms and changing areas are shared)
- Sexual harassment; specifically, the sexual solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature

### **Exception**

These guidelines do not apply to a preexisting relationship between two spouses or life partners.

### **Reporting Sexual Misconduct**

It's critical for clubs, coaches, staff members, volunteers and parents to report suspicions or allegations of child sexual abuse, a form of sexual misconduct, to the proper officials and appropriate law enforcement authorities.

By working together, we can create safe conditions for sport and protect athletes.



## **PREVENTIVE MEASURES**

Racquetball instructors and clubs should take all available measures to avoid all forms of child abuse. It's up to you and the parents of the athletes to be vigilant, because sexual abuse, especially, usually occurs in private. Accordingly, the following suggestions seek to reduce the privacy that can make sexual misconduct possible. These suggestions will only work if they have the support of the club owners, parents and other racquetball instructors.

### **Background Checks**

Every club that uses instructors to teach children should perform background checks. If you are in charge of hiring personnel to work with racquetball juniors you should do background checks, and require references, on every applicant.

### **Teaching and Coaching**

Design a teaching lesson and practice "transparency." By this we mean you should invite and encourage parents/guardians to attend and watch classes and practices. Racquetball courts are often enclosed. If possible, try to hold your lessons in courts that have one wall of glass or at least viewing from above. If the instructor receives resistance from the club, remind them of the potential problems of holding a lesson in a closed court. Make sure to encourage students to report to you if they are uncomfortable with how they are being instructed. If you need to "touch" the student, i.e., showing them how to rotate hips, make sure that you ask permission and briefly explain what you will do and why.

### **Chaperones**

If instructing a group of mixed athletes, try to have a male *and* female instructor or chaperone present.

### **Locker Rooms and Lavatories**

Boys and girls should always have separate locker rooms and lavatories. If there is a large group of students, chaperones or instructors should be assigned to keep an eye on each facility.



## USA RACQUETBALL ATHLETE PROTECTION POLICY

### Commitment to Safety

#### Overview

In the event that any coach observes inappropriate behaviors (i.e., policy violations), suspected physical or sexual abuse, or misconduct, it is the personal responsibility of the coach to immediately report his or her observations to an immediate supervisor, a USAR administrator or a member of USAR's Participant Safety Committee.

The coach is committed to creating a safe and positive environment for athletes' physical, emotional and social development and to ensuring that it promotes an environment free of misconduct.

**Coaches should not attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of child physical or sexual abuse allegations as a condition for reporting to appropriate law enforcement authorities.** Instead, it is the responsibility of each coach to immediately report suspicions or allegations of child physical or sexual abuse to an immediate supervisor, USAR administrator or a member of USAR's Participant Safety Committee. Complaints and allegations will be addressed under USAR's Disciplinary Rules and Procedures.

The coach recognizes that the process for training and motivating athletes will vary with each coach and athlete, but it is nevertheless important for everyone involved in sport to support the use of motivational and training methods that avoid misconduct.

#### Application

The Policy applies to

- Staff members and volunteers
- All USAR athletes and participants

Staff members, volunteers, athletes and participants shall refrain from all forms of misconduct, which include:

- Bullying
- Harassment
- Hazing
- Emotional misconduct
- Physical misconduct
- Sexual misconduct, including child sexual abuse





## **ADDITIONAL AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY**

### **Tips for Coaches, Parents and Athletes**

The following information is divided into three areas of responsibility – Coaches, Parents and Athletes. Although each area has unique responsibilities, there are many obligations that carry over between each unit.

#### **Coaches**

Coaches are well-placed to recognize the risks in different settings and interactions.

#### **Parents**

Parents should do their homework: Learn about the coach’s reputation as well as the club’s reputation and its policies and procedures to protect ALL athletes. With the right approach, parents can protect their child while working with clubs and coaches.

#### **Athletes**

Sports can help athletes learn how to work hard, build character, and teach valuable life lessons. Athletes should understand what inappropriate behavior is, and how to report abuse. Athletes should be assured that the whole team (coach, instructor, club, parents) are there to support them and provide a safe environment.

## **TIPS FOR COACHES**

### **Electronic and Mobile Communication**

Sexual misconduct and other types of inappropriate interaction between coaches and athletes require secretive communication, often achieved through electronic devices and digital channels (email, instant messaging, texting and social media). To reduce inappropriate communication, a sport club can promote transparency and ensure multiple adults are involved in all communications.

#### **Tips to Consider**

1. Instruct coaches, staff and administrators to copy parents on all electronic and mobile communications to athletes in middle to late adolescence (14-18 years old); alternately, the parent can approve direct communications between the sport club and the athlete to respect the athlete’s growing independence.
2. To ease communications, set up e-mail groups with parents and texting groups with athletes and make this group communication a norm for your organization. Include parents on all text message groups.



3. Should any member of your sports organization inadvertently send an athlete an electronic or mobile communication without including the parent, acknowledge the oversight to the parents and forward the communication to the parents as soon as possible.
4. Don't hesitate to speak with a parent if your coaches or staff receives any electronic or mobile communication from athletes or other participants that makes them uncomfortable.

## **TIPS FOR COACHES**

### **Locker Rooms and On-Site Private Spaces**

Athletes are particularly vulnerable to bullying, harassment or hazing from other athletes in changing areas due to the general lack of privacy. Similarly, on-site privacy, spaces, such as personal offices, can be the setting for inappropriate adult-athlete contact. The goal is to find a balance between maintaining privacy and monitoring these places to reduce the risk of all forms of athlete misconduct.

### **Tips to Consider**

1. Post copies of any relevant policies in locker rooms and changing areas.
2. Prohibit the use of recording devices of any kind in the locker room and establish an athlete common area in or near the locker room that is distinct from the changing area where phones could be used.
3. If the locker room is a shared facility (such as a city gym), encourage athletes to come dressed for practice competition and shower and change at home.
4. Talk with your athletes about bullying, hazing and harassment at the beginning of each season. Remind them that locker rooms are a high-risk area for bullying, hazing and harassment, which are never appropriate.
5. Encourage team captains to act as another set of eyes in the locker room. This tip may be particularly helpful if the coach of a team is of a different gender than the locker room/private space being used by the athletes.

## **TIPS FOR COACHES**

### **Local Travel**

Local travel involving one-on-one situations between an athlete and an unrelated adult is a high-risk situation. The goal of these guidelines is to prevent athletes from routinely spending time alone with other adults.



## **Tips to Consider**

1. Plan an early team social event so that families from the same neighborhood can meet one another and discuss travel arrangements.
2. Create team directories, neighborhood maps and sign-up sheets to help parents arrange their own carpools.
3. Provide parents with the club's central phone number or coach's cell phone number in case of emergency or delay.
4. Provide the coach with the parents' cell numbers as well as a list of backup contacts for alternate transportation for each athlete in the event that practice ends early.
5. Notify parents and athletes of schedule changes as soon as possible so that they can arrange alternative transportation if needed.
6. Ask parents to notify the organizations when their transportation plan changes, such as when a child rides home with a different teammate.

## **TIPS FOR COACHES**

### **Overnight Travel**

Overnight travel poses specific challenges for organizations, since these trips can create opportunities for athletes to be alone with an adult. During official team travel, it can be difficult to monitor athletes at all times, especially with larger teams. By implementing the right policies and communicating them well, coaches, staff, parents and sport clubs can work to keep athletes safe.

### **Tips to Consider**

1. Schedule overnight travel as far in advance as is practical so that parents can make travel arrangements to attend.
2. Prepare for a trip by making a list of chaperones to accompany traveling athletes.
3. For mixed-gender teams, try to include both male and female adult chaperones if possible.
4. With younger athletes, consider having chaperones stay in a nearby room. Often times, the hotel will block rooms in grouping of three to make this easier.



5. Ask athletes to wear team gear during travel to ease monitoring.
6. Establish a curfew and conduct bed checks with adults visiting rooms in pairs.
7. Schedule time for a team breakfast, team meetings and entertainment outings to maintain a predictable level of interaction with the athletes.
8. Debrief experiences with all athletes and adults to identify and address any problems.

## **TIPS FOR COACHES**

### **Travel for Younger or Less Experienced Athletes**

Misconduct often consists of a series of actions that extend beyond normally accepted behavior. Inexperienced athletes are at risk because they aren't aware of the boundaries and look to a coach or other adult for guidance. Sport clubs can reduce the risk of misconduct by preparing athletes for overnight travel and involving parents in monitoring and prevention.

#### **Tips to Consider**

1. Communicate the rules of travel (such as traveling in groups and multiple chaperones) to athletes.
2. Identify first-time travelers so that chaperones can offer additional monitoring and support to these athletes.
3. Pair first-time travelers with more experienced athletes of a similar age.
4. Provide a full itinerary to families as soon as possible so that the athlete can become familiar with the schedule.
5. Assign rooming/travel groups before travel.
6. Where practical, consider scheduling an early season competition trip that is close enough for families to drive so that they can become familiar with the routines of competitive travel.



## TIPS FOR PARENTS

### Signs and Symptoms of Child Sexual Abuse

Athletes rarely speak up about child sexual abuse. Instead, we often need to rely on other indicators that something might be going on in sport. One indicator of child sexual abuse includes sudden behavioral changes related to the training and competition.

A few possible behavioral changes you might see in your athlete include:

- Losing enthusiasm for sport, even for competition
- Not wanting to practice
- Wanting to avoid contact with a particular individual, such as a coach, assistant coach or athletic trainer
- Having a sudden mood change, such as a violent outburst
- Wanting to change teams, even though his or her friends are on their current team

## TIPS FOR PARENTS

### Grooming Behaviors

We can recognize sexual predators through an observable pattern of behaviors, known as grooming behaviors. Alone, many of these behaviors or similar behaviors may occur without these behaviors being part of a grooming process. While we want to closely examine any behaviors that may constitute grooming, it does not necessarily mean that the individual is a sexual predator. Nonetheless, here are a few things to look for:

- The individual buys expensive gifts for the athlete or provides them with money.
- The individual separates the athlete from his or peers
- The individual treats a particular athlete differently from their teammates, perhaps giving the athlete far more attention than teammates.
- The individual tries to find ways to be alone with the athlete. For example, the individual may offer to take the athlete to and from practice, help them with homework or take them on unsupervised trips outside of the program.
- The individual tells the athlete that they “need” him or her to succeed in sport.
- The individual pushes boundaries in public and doesn’t follow policies. For example, this individual may have athletes sit on their laps in public, even if against club policy.



- The individual manipulates the athlete emotionally, praising them one day and degrading them the next.
- The individual spends an unusual amount of time with the athlete's parents outside of the program, trying to win their trust.
- Your athlete tells you that the coach doesn't want them talking about what they do when they're together.
- The individual attempts to control a particular athlete, on and off the field.

## **TIPS FOR PARENTS**

### **Finding a Good Fit for Your Athlete**

#### **Ten Questions You Can Ask to Find a Good Fit for Your Athlete**

It can be tough to find the right sport organization/club for you and your athlete. To make sure that everyone understands what the sport organization expects from its athletes, parents and other participants, consider asking a few of the following questions before choosing a club.

1. What are the club's goals for its athletes and teams? For example, is the goal for the athletes to have fun? Or does the club train its participants to become competitive or elite athletes?
2. What is the club's coaching philosophy?
3. Does every athlete get to play in games or participate during competition?
4. What kind of time commitment do you ask from your athletes for training?
5. When do athletes train or practice?
6. Are parents allowed to observe practice? If not, why not?
7. When do your teams and/or athletes compete?
8. Where are the competitions held? Are competitions local, or do they require a lot of travel?
9. For away competitions, does the team travel together or are the athletes expected to arrange for their own travel?
10. How does your club expect parents to treat all of the athletes, as well as coaches, staff and volunteers, during practice and competition?



## TIPS FOR PARENTS

### Verify the Plan

#### What to Ask Your Camp

It can be tough to send your young athlete off to camp for the first time. Here are a few questions you might ask to give you a better sense of how the camp approaches participant safety.

1. What kind of supervision do you provide for athletes, based on their age grouping, both during training sessions and off-hours?
2. What kind of supervision do you provide athletes if travel is required to transport athletes between camp housing and the training facility?
3. If this is a mixed-gender camp, how do you arrange the housing for each age group?
4. What are the credentials, background and experience of all coaches and camp staff?
5. What kind of athletic trainers and/or other medical personnel do you have on staff and what hours are they available?
6. What is your process if an athlete needs medical treatment?
7. Do you have camp emergency contacts available 24/7?
8. What is your process for dealing with reports of misconduct?

## TIPS FOR PARENTS

### Verify the Plan

#### What to Ask Your Coach

Your coach is a partner with you in creating safer training environments. To make sure you understand their approach to participant safety, consider asking a few of these basic questions.

1. What is your coaching philosophy?
2. What are your goals for your athletes and/or team?
3. What are your expectations for your athletes and/or teams, e.g., in terms of time commitment or participation in other sports?



4. What coaching education courses have you taken and/or what are your coaching certifications?
5. What kind of training do you have in physical safety, e.g., training/over-training, nutrition and hydration or concussions?
6. What kind of training have you had concerning positive coaching techniques?
7. What is your policy concerning bullying, harassment and hazing and how do you communicate your expectations about how athletes treat one another?
8. Have you had training to help you recognize, reduce and respond to misconduct in sport, including child sexual abuse?
9. How do you handle suspicions or allegations of misconduct, including, sexual abuse?
10. What is your policy for reporting policy violations, misconduct and suspicions and allegations of child sexual abuse?
11. What was your reason for leaving your last club at which you coached?

## **TIPS FOR PARENTS**

### **Verify the Plan**

#### **Ten Questions You Can Ask Your Sport Organization about Participant Safety**

You and your sport organization are partners in athlete safety; everybody is responsible for keeping athletes safe. Below are some questions you can ask your club so that you know what their safety strategy is.

1. Is a copy of your Participant Safety Handbook (or equivalent safety document) available?
2. What are the components of your participant safety strategy?
3. What kind of applicant screening and criminal background checks do you require of adult coaches, staff and volunteers before they work with your club?
4. Is your club a member of USA Racquetball? Why or why not?
5. Are your coaches members of USA Racquetball? Why or why not?
6. Do your coaches and other staff receive training and education about child sexual abuse and other misconduct in sport? If not, why not?





7. What is your club's reporting policy for child sexual abuse and other misconduct?
8. How does your club handle misconduct by adults who provide services for your club?
9. How does your club handle misconduct by its athletes?

## TIPS FOR PARENTS

### How to Communicate with Your Athlete about Child Sexual Abuse and Misconduct in Sport

Youth athletes often don't understand child sexual abuse or how to talk about it – or they don't know how to talk about it with you. Here are a few ways to help your athlete communicate with you if they're experiencing something they might have a hard time expressing to you.

1. **Talk about it.** Talk to your athlete – let them know that sport is supposed to be a place where they have fun, and they should never be uncomfortable. Watch educational materials together to help develop a language around abuse.
2. **Create a “Safe Word.”** When talking to your athlete about abuse in sport, establish an unusual “safe word” that's easy for both of you to remember that they can use to tell you something is wrong.
3. **Establish open communication.** Let your athlete know that they can always tell you if something is wrong – and that you'll always believe them.
4. **Encourage them to “Just tell.”** Let your athlete know that they can tell anyone they're comfortable with – like a friend's parent, a teacher or a coach – if something bad is happening to them and they don't want to say anything to you.
5. **Tell them they can play sport anywhere.** Sometimes, we think the only way an athlete will be successful is if they train with a particular coach or club – and athletes may even be told this by an abuser. It's important for them to know that they can train anywhere and be successful – abuse is NOT a part of being successful in sport.



## ANSWERS FOR ATHLETES

### Thinking about saying something?

#### **I'm scared about what's happened to me and I don't want to say anything. Do I have to tell someone that I'm being sexually abused?**

No. It's up to you if you want to say something about what's happening to you and you get to decide when you're ready to do that. But if you don't say anything, the abuse may not stop. There are many people who are ready to listen, stop the abuse, and help you heal.

#### **I'm afraid no one will believe me when I tell. Should I still tell?**

If you feel like something wrong happened or is happening to you, you should tell your parents or another adult you trust. If those people don't believe you, tell someone else who you trust. It's VERY important to stop the abuse and for you to be heard.

#### **If I tell someone that I'm being sexually abused by my coach, assistant coach or athletic trainer, will I ruin everything for my team?**

No. There are always other coaches or clubs who can help you and your team be successful. And, by being brave enough to tell someone what's happened to you, other athletes on your team may also come forward. So your actions may also directly or indirectly help stop abuse for others.

#### **What happens after I tell?**

The adult you've told should let the right people know about your situation. You may be asked to talk about what happened to the police or other people who can help you and will make sure that the person who abused you won't abuse anyone else.

#### **If I tell about the sexual abuse I've experienced, will I be able to help others?**

Sometimes, when one athlete tells about what's happening or has happened to them, other athletes feel safe to tell too. When one athlete speaks up, it may also help stop the abuser's behavior.

#### **Should I be ashamed about the sexual contact I've had with my coach or another adult?**

No. There's nothing to be ashamed about. YOU haven't done anything wrong – it's the adult who has put you in this situation who should be ashamed.

#### **Is it my fault that I've been sexually abused?**

No. It's not your fault that this has happened to you and you won't be in trouble for it. You should remember that abusers typically use many manipulation techniques (like fear) that are difficult to detect to groom their victims.



## ANSWERS FOR ATHLETES

### Competition

#### **Should a chaperone ever be allowed to sleep in our room?**

If you and your teammates are under 14 years of age, an administrator might assign a chaperone to stay with you in the same room. Generally, a chaperone should be the same gender as you.

#### **Why do coaches and chaperones conduct bed checks?**

Bed checks are a standard way to account for all of the athletes on a trip. For trips that involve athletes of both sexes, ideally the chaperones should visit the rooms in mixed-sex pairs. You should report any unusual behavior and/or issues pertaining to the bed checks immediately to your parents or a sport administrator.

#### **My coach has asked me to wear my team gear while traveling. Why?**

Wearing team colors on out-of-town trips can help the coaches and chaperones keep track of you and your teammates, especially, for example, in a crowded lobby, restaurant or airport.

#### **One of the chaperones keeps inviting me to come into his or her hotel room when no one else is there. Is that okay?**

No. It is safer for everyone if you do not go places alone with an adult who isn't your parent. If for any reason you do find yourself alone in a room with an adult and you know it's against your team or club policy and/or something happens that makes you uncomfortable, tell someone IMMEDIATELY.

#### **My club administrator asked me to come early to set up the event, before anyone else gets there. Is that okay?**

No. An adult should not ask athletes to show up early or stay late to help by themselves. If an adult does make this request, make sure that other teammates or other adults are present.

#### **Why won't my club allow me to use my cell phone in the locker room?**

Since nearly every cell phone today has a camera and most take videos, some clubs don't allow the use of cell phones in locker rooms. This is for everyone's privacy and safety.

#### **If I need to have a private discussion with my coach, where should we do this?**

There are a lot of great public places you can have a one-on-one conversation with your coach. Examples of good places to meet include: an office with windows, a corner on the pool deck, or, if you are traveling, in a hotel lobby. If you have to meet in a closed room, make sure another adult or teammate is present. For everyone's safety you should not have a meeting by yourself with an adult in a private room.

#### **Is it wrong if an adult sends an email or text to me without copying my parents, even if there's nothing inappropriate about the message?**

As a rule, there's nothing an adult should have to say to you that a parent should not be aware of. If this happens, show the message to your parents and have them ask the adult to include them in all correspondence.

#### **What should I do if I see messages about sex between adult and one of my teammates?**

Let your parents or another adult know IMMEDIATELY if you become aware of these communications.



**Is it okay for me to get a ride home with a coach or staff member if I am alone?**

You and your parents should agree who is giving you rides to and from practice or competition. For everyone's safety, you should avoid getting a ride from an adult without other athletes or adults in the vehicle.

**ANSWERS FOR ATHLETES**

**Misconduct**

**If I like my coach or an adult or feel attracted to him or her and I have a sexual interaction with them, is it still considered child sexual abuse?**

Generally, if you are under the age of 18, sexual interactions between an adult and a minor are prohibited. Such sexual interactions can involve a number of things from non-touching activities (talking about sex or exposing you to nudity or showing you pornography) to touching activities (such as fondling, genital contact or sexual intercourse).

**My coach is dating a teammate who is over the age of 18. Is that a problem?**

Sexual relationships between an athlete and an adult in a position of authority – such as a coach or club administrator – aren't part of a healthy sport setting, so as a general rule coaches and players shouldn't date.

**Can it still be sexual misconduct if a coach or adult behavior doesn't actually touch me?**

ANY type of sexually-oriented comments or behavior, even if no touching is involved, is sexual misconduct.

**What should I do if I see or hear about an adult behaving inappropriately with a teammate?**

It's important for you to tell your parents, club administrator or other adult with whom you're comfortable sharing the information about what you've seen or heard.

**Does bullying involve physical contact only?**

No. Bullying can involve con-contact behavior such as teasing, spreading rumors or using cell phones and social media to harass or intimidate.

**If a teammate yells at me during practice or competition to work harder or push longer, does that count as bullying?**

Probably not. Bullying does not include encouragement from team members to train harder or to push through a difficult training regimen.

**What should I do if one of my teammates is pushing another athlete around or calling them names?**

If a teammate is calling someone else names, hurting them or posting mean things about them on Facebook, you can say something to them if you feel comfortable doing so. If not, tell an adult about it as soon as you can. It is never okay for someone to bully you or a teammate or to do other things to exclude someone from the team.

**Does harassment just involve physical acts?**

No. Harassment includes making negative or disparaging comments about an athlete based on his or her sexual orientation, gender expression, disability, religion, skin color, or ethnic traits. Displaying offensive materials, gestures or symbols is also a form of harassment.



**One of my teammates is harassing another athlete because of their religion, but the coach doesn't seem to be paying attention. What should I do?**

Maybe your coach hasn't noticed. If you feel like you can say something to your coach or if you feel like you can step in, go ahead. If not, tell your parents or a club administrator about the incident(s) and let him or her take the appropriate action.

**If I see teammates taking part in hazing, what should I do?**

Step in if you feel comfortable. If not talk to your parents or a club administrator about the incident so that they can take proper action.

**Our team has a tradition of making new athletes streak through the school. Everyone does it and no one gets hurt. Is that hazing?**

Even if everyone seems to be having fun, these types of activities are still considered hazing. Plus, not everyone has the self-awareness or confidence to stand up and say something if they feel uncomfortable. In addition, hazing includes actions that are also illegal (like taking illegal drugs or underage drinking) or are meant to ridicule an athlete (like locking them into the port-a-potty).

## **ANSWERS FOR ATHLETES**

**Not sure if something's okay?**

**Sometimes my coach or another adult sends me weird texts. He or she asks me whether I'm having sex with my boyfriend or girlfriend or other things about sex. Is this normal?**

No. There is no reason for an adult to ask you about your sex life. Depending on the content of the texts, this could be misconduct. If you receive these types of texts, emails or other communications, show these messages to a parent or other trusted adult.

**My coach or another adult at my sport club gives me gifts that I like a ton and takes me to really fun games a lot, just the two of us. He or she has told me not to tell anyone about the gifts – and has told me that if I tell anyone, he or she will stop giving me things. Is this normal?**

Probably not. People who want to hurt athletes by abusing them sexually often use gifts, like sports equipment or tickets to a game, as a way to gain the athlete's trust and to find ways to spend time alone with an athlete without other adults or teammates. If this individual is telling you not to tell anyone about the gifts, you should tell your parent(s) or other trusted adult immediately.

**My coach or another adult makes me feel funny the way they touch me, but I don't really understand why. Is this bad?**

You should NEVER feel funny about the way someone is touching you. If it doesn't feel right, talk to your parent or another trusted adult about what the adult is doing that makes you feel funny. They can help you understand if what's going on is okay.

**My coach says that he/she is the only coach that can help me become a great athlete. Is this true?**

No. There are plenty of well-qualified coaches out there who can work with you to be a great athlete. You don't need to work with a particular coach to succeed.



**My coach tells me that he/she is the only one who can get me an athletic scholarship and that if I tell anyone what we do or if I don't do what he/she wants me to, I won't get the scholarship. Is this true?**

No. There are lots of coaches out there who can help you find an athletic scholarship if your athletic skills are consistent with collegiate competition.

**An adult at my club makes a lot of comments about the way I look – mostly that I'm really sexy and beautiful and he or she would like to see me naked. He or she told me that he/she can say this kind of stuff to me because he/she isn't touching me. Is this true?**

No. Adults should NEVER make sexual comments to or about you – this is a type of sexual misconduct.

**One of the adults at my club says that if I tell anyone about the sexual stuff we do, he or she will tell my parents that I've been drinking alcohol or taking drugs. My parents might believe him/her and they will ground me. What should I do?**

If an adult uses the threat of drugs, alcohol, or other behavior as a way to make you keep a secret – you should tell someone immediately about the sexual abuse. Stopping the sexual abuse is the most important thing.

**I know sport is really hard work and that it is my coach's job to push me to perform better than I think I can. But is it okay for him or her to repeatedly call me names (like "fat cow"), or throw things at me, (even if they don't hit me)?**

No. Calling you names like "fat cow" or throwing things at you don't critique your performance, they attack you as a person. To help you perform better, comments and directions are most useful if they address your skills and performance. Tell a trusted adult if your coach or other adult makes you feel threatened in this way or fearful for your safety.

**My teammate just had a concussion and he/she doesn't want to go back into the game. My coach told my teammate that he/she has to play or he/she will get kicked off the team. Is that okay?**

No. Coaches should never make you or your teammates play if you are injured, especially if you let the coach know that you do not want to go in. Sometimes, you will get injured or hurt while playing, but sport can still be a safe place for you to play as long as someone isn't trying to hurt you. If you feel your coach is asking you to do something beyond what is healthy for you, you should stop.

**My coach doesn't let us drink any water during practice when it's 100 degrees out and we've been practicing for three hours. Is that okay?**

No. Withholding, recommending against or denying adequate water can be considered physically harmful. If this happens, let an adult know as soon as you can.



## SECTION B – INSTRUCTOR (COACH) PROFESSIONALISM

### USAR-IP INSTRUCTOR JOB DESCRIPTION

#### Developing a Job Description

It is important to know what your responsibilities are for your job. If the club does not have a job description for you, create your own, then obtain your immediate supervisor's approval. This is the only way that both parties know exactly what your responsibilities are.

A job description should always include the following:

- Title
- Who the instructor reports to
- Specific job description
- Specific job responsibilities
- Key indicators of success
- Who the instructor supervises
- Job qualifications

#### How to Negotiate Your Job Description

Use the following sample job description ideas for a Racquetball Director/Head Instructor as a model when negotiating your position at your facility. Depending on if you are applying for a part-time or full-time position, add or delete whatever responsibilities you do or don't want to do for your club. Evaluate how much time you are able to offer your facility and choose which responsibilities you feel comfortable taking on. Compensation may be directly related to the number of responsibilities outlined in your job description. Identify whether your position is better suited for independent contractor status or employee status.

#### 1. Learn Who You Report to at the Job

Define a clear order of authority at your place of work. You must know who to report to so that the right people are getting informed about your work performance. Always invite the staff and management of the club to any program you are running. The more involved the staff becomes in your programs, the more support you will get and you will become more valuable in the eyes of management.

#### 2. Specific Responsibilities

##### a. Lessons

- Group lessons – How many are you going to teach during a quarter or year? Define how you will be paid.
- Private lessons – How many lessons will you teach during a quarter or year? Define how you will be paid.



- Introductory lessons – How many introductory lessons will you teach in a month? Define how you will be paid.
  - Junior lessons – How many junior lessons will you offer in a quarter or year? Define how you will be paid.
  - You will have to decide if you want a percentage of sales for your lessons, a straight salary for a position that includes lessons, trade out for a membership, or another method of payment that provides benefits for you and the facility.
- b. Leagues
- Season leagues – How many leagues will you run? Define how you will be paid. Who should pay for advertising and promoting the leagues?
  - Compile the league book and charts, and keep track of league scores.
  - Become the Problem Solver for the leagues. Estimate the amount of time it will take you to handle problems or changes that arise based on the number of people in the leagues.
  - Set up league parties. You will be the party planner for league parties.
  - Negotiate a compensation package based on duties, time spent and prospective income generated.
- c. Juniors
- Set up lesson programs – How many programs will you run, who will run them, how and who will create the advertising and marketing tools for the programs and how much time will each program take to run?
  - Set up special kids' programs – Decide how many special programs you want to run for kids in your club, i.e., Sunday Juniors Play Day, Saturday Morning Sports Day that includes racquetball, a traveling junior league, junior tournaments, etc.
  - You must first decide how many programs you will offer throughout the year and when you will offer them. You must then decide how much time it will take you and possible other support staff to help you run the program. Budget the amount of time it will take you to run the programs and negotiate compensation, based on the time.
- d. Special Events
- Plan and coordinate at least four seasonal events per year (sports outings, golf, skiing, super bowl, etc.).
  - Plan and coordinate at least three inter-club events per year (traveling leagues, tri-sports day, racquetball party, etc.).
  - Decide what kind of programs you would like to run and estimate the amount of time it will take you to complete each event. Add up the total time and negotiate compensation.





- e. Weekly Programs
  - Monitor challenge courts.
  - Monitor Round Robins
  - Develop and supervise new weekly programs.
  - Estimate the amount of time you will be spending at the club to keep track of daily activities. How much time will you spend developing and supervising programs? Calculate the total time required and negotiate compensation.
  
- f. Competitive Play
  - Set up the club's traveling team
  - Provide additional support services for tournament players
    - Team warm-ups
    - Clothing packages
    - Publish results in the newsletter, newspaper and social media
  - Calculate how much time you will invest in your competitive players to keep them involved, and negotiate your compensation.
  
- g. Community Events
  - Create and implement one special community event per year.
  - Establish a speaking engagement or demonstration at the club once a year
  - Offer the opportunity to provide company tournaments, lessons or league programs at the club.
  - Determine the amount of time you will be spending in this area. Decide early what you will do and determine your compensation.
  
- h. Staffing
  - Assist the Program Director (if a separate position) in hiring and training any staff for racquetball programs.
  - Provide adequate information to the current staff about all programs offered by the racquetball department
  - You must decide what support staff you will need depending on which programs you are asked to run. Estimate the amount of hours you will need to properly prepare programs support staff, and determine your compensation.
  
- i. Promotion
  - Promote all racquetball programs: (See "Market Yourself" under USAR-IP INSTRUCTOR GUIDELINES)
  - **Estimate the amount of time you will spend promoting your programs and lessons. Determine your compensation.**



j. Membership Assistance

- Assist the club Membership Directors with questions and answers about racquetball programs and lessons.
- Assist the club membership staff in keeping racquetball memberships up to date.
- Estimate the amount of time you will spend informing the club membership staff about the racquetball programs and lessons that are offered. Determine your compensation.

k. Tournament Play

- Play in as many tournaments as you can throughout the year.
- Make sure you are visible at major racquetball events.
- Your racquetball members will appreciate your commitment.



## USAR-IP INSTRUCTOR GUIDELINES

### Qualities of a USAR-IP Instructor

#### Code of Ethics Policy

All USAR Instructors Program members must abide by the USAR Instructors Program Code of Ethics (Appendix A, p. 119), and again in the USAR Instructors Program Code of Ethics Signature Sheet. Failure to sign and date the Code of Ethics Signature Sheet will result in an immediate termination of your USAR Instructors Program membership privileges and void your certification status within the organization. If you do not abide by all policies listed in the code of Ethics, you could lose your membership privileges or be put on probation by the USAR Instructors Program.

#### Education

USAR Instructors Program members are expected to educate themselves about instruction and their overall knowledge of racquetball to the best of their ability.

- Upgrade your Certification Level as soon as you can to increase your knowledge of the game and programs you will offer and run at your facility to increase your income level.
- Any Certification Clinics run by the USAR Instructors Program that you have not already taken should be attended as soon as possible to increase our income level.
- Read and review articles, books and videotapes pertaining to fitness, mental training and racquetball. Pass along any information you find useful to the USAR Instructors Program office for inclusion in our programs.
- Try to keep updated about administrative issues that affect racquetball. The more you know, the more prepared you will be to respond and adjust accordingly to any situation that may arise.
- If you don't have the answer to a student's racquetball needs, tell the student that you don't know the answer, but will find out and get back to them immediately. The USAR Instructors Program does not guess or mislead students about information they may not know. Students will appreciate your honesty and won't come back later and complain about misleading information.
- Take as many notes as possible about observations in someone's game, new methods of teaching, questions that may arise, and areas you need to improve on. When you review your notes later and work on areas listed, you will begin to grow as an instructor.
- USAR certification education requirements are:
  - Have a current USAR membership
  - Pass the USAR-IP certification course in person or online
  - Be CPR and First Aid certified
  - Be subject to a background check



## Professionalism

As a racquetball instructor, you are a professional. Like any professional in any job area, you should dress and act like a professional. This means dressing in a collared shirt or crew shirt indicating your employer or sponsor, if applicable. The second you put on clothing, you represent your fellow instructors as well as any company or sponsor. This means you should maintain a well-groomed appearance at all times, including being clean shaven and modestly dressed. Showing up for a lesson in beach apparel or with an unshaven look and a baseball cap worn backward is inappropriate.



## Develop Goals

Understand what you are trying to sell at your facility. Develop goals around the areas listed below to help you achieve success:

- Racquetball
- Health, exercise and lifelong fitness
- Making racquetball an activity that becomes a habit
- Private group lessons
- Membership sales
- Pro shop sales
- Successful programs
- Happy members
- Selling yourself as a valuable asset to the club
- Selling your knowledge of the game
- Selling your personality to the management and the members



## Safety Concerns

In addition to professional dress and appearance, you should have safety in mind at all times. Some examples are, but not limited to:

- Ensure the floors are not slippery before you begin your lesson.
- Knock on doors before entering enclosed courts as someone may be inside.
- Make sure racquetballs are not on the floor during hitting drills.
- The instructor and student(s) must wear eye guards at all times while on the court.
- Make sure lanyards are attached to racquets and the wrist of athletes receiving instruction.
- Make sure court doors are properly latched.
- Monitor students as they participate in exercise and instruction.
- Make sure students are medically released for racquetball.
- Constantly think about what could go wrong and take measures to prevent it. Safety is the number one concern of all USA Racquetball Instruction Program Instructors.

## Know Why You Are Teaching

- You enjoy the game of racquetball
- You enjoy being able to help others achieve their fitness goals
- You like working with people
- You are enthusiastic about the game and want to share that with others
- You like making money doing something you love
- You have racquetball goals that you want to achieve for yourself
- You want to share racquetball as a lifetime endeavor

## Market Yourself

You need to know how to successfully market and advertise yourself to members, non-members and management.

Create marketing and advertising tools for upcoming events and programs. *Image is everything.* A judgment will be made about a program based on how professional the tools are that advertise it. If your brochures and handouts are unprofessional, participation will suffer. Below are examples of winning marketing ideas:

- Special offers – Offering specials to new members is a great way to get them started in racquetball. Free introductory lessons, special discounts and free T-shirts/ball caps with lessons, etc. are very effective. Offer specials to non-members as well. You don't care who takes a lesson; you care if you are giving enough lessons to make a living.
- Change programs – Encourage current members to participate in programs that are filled with fun and excitement in order to keep them involved.



- Awareness – Inform the staff and management about programs you are running and invite them to come and get involved.
- Advertising – Advertise in the club so that members know what is going on in the racquetball department and how they can become involved.
- Bulletin board – Make great displays on the bulletin board about upcoming events and lesson packages being offered.
- Make up flyers for programs and lessons, and post the flyers in key locations.
- Publications and social media – Write articles and press releases and create ads for the club newsletter, state association newsletter, national publications, USAR Instructors Program publications, and local newspapers. Use social media like Facebook and Twitter to promote your program. If your club sends out email blasts, make sure your program and updates are included.
- Personal appearances – Make as many personal appearances as possible. Show up at local community and civic events. Become a sponsor of a local event. The more visible you are in the public eye the more successful you will be.



## Benchmark One Assessment

1. Suspicions of child abuse, sexual abuse and inappropriate behavior should be reported by:
  - a. Anyone who observes the behavior
  - b. Only officials involved with the reported activity
  - c. Only the person affected by the reported activity
  - d. None of the above
  
2. Examples of bullying are:
  - a. Sexual touching
  - b. Sleep deprivation
  - c. Spreading rumors
  - d. Paddling
  
3. Children who are molested often do not seek help because:
  - a. They are embarrassed by disclosure
  - b. They think they will be punished by their parents
  - c. They are rejected by their teammates
  - d. They think the authorities will think the instructor (coach) is more important
  - e. All of the above
  
4. All electronic communications sent by coaches to athletes should also be copied to parents.
  - a. True
  - b. False
  
5. The following is NOT a symptom of child sexual abuse:
  - a. Not wanting to attend sports practices
  - b. Sudden mood change
  - c. Increased electronic/mobile communications with friends
  - d. Wanting to change teams
  
6. Which of the following questions would NOT be appropriate for a parent to ask regarding an instructor?
  - a. How do you deal with reports of misconduct?
  - b. What are the credentials and experience of the instructor?
  - c. What salary is the instructor paid?
  - d. What is the process if an athlete needs medical treatment?



7. Athletes who have been sexually abused often exhibit the following:
  - a. Shame and self-blame
  - b. Fear of talking about the situation
  - c. Isolation
  - d. All of the above
  
8. If an instructor/coach and an athlete under 18 have a consensual relationship, the relationship may be deemed appropriate by law.
  - a. True
  - b. False
  
9. As an instructor, you should:
  - a. Never text a student under 18 without copying their parents
  - b. Never tell a student you are the only instructor who can help him or her become a great athlete
  - c. Never make sexual comments or jokes to or about your athletes
  - d. All of the above
  - e. A and C only
  
10. When developing a job description, it is important to:
  - a. Know the responsibilities of the job
  - b. Know whom you report to
  - c. Know the pay scale
  - d. All of the above





## Benchmark 2 – Forehand Stroke Mechanics

### I. The Forehand Stroke

#### A. Grip

1. The Eastern Grip has the **V** between the thumb and forefinger positioned at approximately one o'clock on the racquet handle.



2. The Severe Eastern Grip has the **V** between the thumb and forefinger positioned at two o'clock on the racquet handle.



3. The Continental Grip has the **V** positioned at the top of the racquet handle (12 o'clock).



4. The Western Grip has the **V** positioned at three o'clock with a large amount of wrist turn.



5. A word about the Pinkie Grip – By moving the grip down toward the end of the racquet with the pinkie on the handle, it gives you more control. (Some players feel they have more power and some feel they have more control.) USA Racquetball Instructors Program feels the pinkie should be on the racquet for more control at most levels of play.



6. The Pinkie Off Grip places the little finger off the handle for more power and more wrist action, but you give up a substantial control. This grip is recommended for high-level tournament players only. A great compromise would be to have the pinkie half on and half off the handle offering control and power at the same time.



7. In a choice between the Fist Grip (top) versus the V Grip (bottom), the V grip is recommended because the V Grip has more control with power.





8. Left-handers reverse the above grips. For example, the **V** of the thumb and forefinger in the forehand grips are at ten o'clock, nine o'clock, and eight o'clock for the Eastern, Severe Eastern, and Western Grips. The **V** is at the top for Continental Grips. For the backhand, left-handers will grip with the **V** at the top for the Continental Grip, and at one, two and three o'clock respectively for Eastern, Severe Eastern, and Western Grips.

## B. The Stance

1. The Power Base
  - a. Stand with your feet slightly wider apart than your shoulders (referred to as your power base).
  - b. Body and shoulders should be square to the side wall
  - c. Racquet position should be up with the elbow at shoulder height.
  - d. Drills for the power base include:
    - (1.) Pivot drills without a racquet for body control
    - (2.) Hit and Pose is a drill designed to keep the weight back.
    - (3.) Use of the Reebok Step (another technique to keep weight back)
    - (3.) Knees drill



## 2. The Stance in Detail

The ready position means that you are positioned in your power base and your racquet is raised and ready to strike the ball. As soon as possible, during play the racquet must be up in the ready position. Early Racquet Preparation, or the acronym “ERP”, is crucial to good mechanics. The racquet should be elevated by raising the hitting elbow to the level of the hitting shoulder or as close as possible based on comfort and safety.

## 3. Step

- a. Start with your feet apart (slightly wider than your shoulders). This will allow for the proper step.
- b. Step toward the front wall, not sideways as stepping toward the side wall could lock your hips and cause loss of power. This allows for more balance and a low center of gravity.
- c. Drive into the stroke off the back foot.
- d. Shift weight from back foot to front foot, but do not put too much weight on front foot.
- e. Stepping into the ball is critical for success. It can affect location and force application.

## 4. Swing and Contact Point

- a. The hitting arm and shoulder will rotate, opening up to the front wall. The non-hitting arm is relaxed and balanced and moves out of the way as the hitting shoulder rotates. The hips should rotate in a similar fashion as the arms and shoulders. The back foot will begin to pivot. This posture creates the potential for torque or turning force. Make sure that the eyes are always in contact with the ball. The hitting wrist should be hinged and ready. The racquet face will maintain a position above that for the wrist. This can enhance racquet head speed with the downswing. The racquet face will maintain a position facing the near wall. The shoulders should be as level as possible throughout the swing plane to help with striking the ball flat.
- b. The hitting elbow should lead the forehand stroke motion. The non-hitting shoulder and hip begin a rotation toward the front wall, and the back hip follows.
- c. The elbow continues down to the contact point with the ball while the shoulders remain somewhat level, and the waist maintains a relatively straight alignment. The upper body maintains a position inside the stance to assure balance. The hitting arm remains bent until the point of contact with the ball. At impact the arm is at full extension which translates into power in the shot.
- d. Try to contact the ball with the horizontal plane of the racquet (long axis) parallel to the floor. The ideal contact point is within the area of the center line of the body to the thigh of the front leg, and varies depending upon the shot being taken. (See next page)
- e. The hips and legs maintain a position low to the floor during the swing. Drive the legs and hips through impact to generate maximum power.
- f. The wrist should snap at contact with the ball. It is the last conscious movement before the stroke process begins its completion.
- g. Eyes stay focused on the ball.
- h. There are three basic contact points that generate the three basic offensive shots - the down the line, V cross court, and pinch. Adjusting the location of ball contact is a critical element in determining the direction of the shot.



(1.) Down the Line

A down the line shot will have the racquet strike the ball forward in the stance at an area near the front instep. The racquet should be parallel to the front wall.



(2.) Cross Court

A cross court pass (sending the ball to the opposite far corner) will have the racquet strike the ball in front of the lead foot after the stride. The racquet face will be slightly closed at contact (racquet face forward of the wrist).



### (3.) Side Wall Pinch

A pinch (near side wall) will have the racquet strike the ball deeper in the stance than for the cross court pass and down the line. The racquet face will be slightly open at contact (racquet face behind the wrist).



More advanced players are able to strike the various shot angles at locations which vary within the stance, i.e. Parallel, closed, or open. This is accomplished by varying the wrist relative to the racquet, i.e. if you hold the racquet back and contact the ball behind your wrist, the ball will go right, and if you get to the ball with your racquet in front, the ball will go to the left, assuming you are right handed.



## 5. Follow Through

Follow through is an integral part of the stroke process. It should not compromise power, control, or balance. It will help with injury prevention. If the swing is stopped or decelerated too soon, more pressure is placed on the hitting shoulder and elbow.

With a complete follow through, the racquet frame will face the back wall.

a. In order to follow through correctly, consider the following:

(1.) After contact, the racquet should continue across your body. With proper rotation, your shoulders will end up facing the front wall. At advanced levels the stroke may be shortened at times during rallies.

(2.) The hips will rotate throughout contact as well. Like the shoulders, they will also end up facing the front wall.

Modify forehand mechanics based on the level of play.



## II. Drills for the Forehand Stroke

- A. Knees
- B. Racquet on wall for wrist snap
- C. Reebok step to keep weight back
- D. Stationary drop and hit
- E. Drop, step and hit
- F. Toss, cross, and hit (crossover)



## BENCHMARK 2 ASSESSMENT

1. The steps to hitting a forehand consist of :
  - a. Ready position, hit in power zone, and end in ready position
  - b. Stance, start, and follow-up
  - c. Stance, step, swing, contact point, and follow -through
  - d. Ready position, stationary swing, hitting zone, and return to ready position
  
2. The most important thing a player can do for consistency is:
  - a. Have a western grip
  - b. Have early racquet preparation
  - c. Have the pinky off the racquet handle
  - d. Grip the racquet tightly
  
3. The forehand can best be described as:
  - a. Throwing overhead
  - b. Throwing three-quarter
  - c. Throwing sidearm
  - d. Throwing underhand
  
4. A device that has proven effective for teaching a forehand is the:
  - a. Frisbee
  - b. Rubber ball
  - c. Baseball
  - d. Lacrosse ball
  
5. The path taken by the racquet during a forehand swing is best described as:
  - a. Out and around
  - b. Up and down
  - c. Down and up
  - d. Straight down and straight up
  
6. The contact point for a pinch shot is:
  - a. In front of the hitting zone
  - b. Behind the hitting zone
  - c. Further back in the hitting zone
  - d. At the back foot



7. The follow through on the forehand should be:
  - a. Level and at the point of contact
  - b. High and tight
  - c. High and loose
  - d. Over the ball and high
  
8. It is important on the forehand to bend the back knee because:
  - a. The ball will be lower
  - b. The shot you hit will be lower
  - c. The shot you hit will be higher
  - d. The ball will be higher
  
9. Forearm extension also called “wrist snap” can be taught by:
  - a. Teaching players a slapping motion
  - b. Having players scrape their racquets along the side wall
  - c. Have players throw a racquetball sidearm to the front wall
  - d. All of the above
  
10. The stance is important because:
  - a. To hit a balanced shot, athletes should have their feet wider than their shoulders
  - b. To hit a balanced shot, athletes should have their feet closer together than their shoulders
  - c. To hit a balanced shot athletes should lean back
  - d. To hit a balanced shot athletes should have their shoulders to the front wall



### Benchmark 3 – The Backhand Stroke

#### I. The Backhand Stroke

##### A. Grip

1. The Eastern grip has the **V** between the thumb and forefinger at approximately 11 o'clock on the racquet handle.



2. Severe Eastern has the **V** between the thumb and forefinger at 10 o'clock.



3. The Continental grip place the **V** at the top of the racquet handle at the 12 o'clock position



4. The Western Grip has the **V** between the thumb and forefinger at 9 o'clock.



5. A word about the Pinkie Grip – By moving the grip down toward the end of the racquet with the pinkie on the handle, it gives you more control. (Some players feel they have more power and some feel they have more control.) USA Racquetball Instructors Program feels the pinkie should be on the racquet for more control at most levels of play.



6. The Pinkie Off Grip - This grip is recommended for high level tournament players only. The little finger is off the handle for more power, which may compromise control. . A great compromise would be to have the pinkie half on and half off the handle offering control and power at the same time.





7. Fist Grip vs. V Grip – The V grip, (bottom picture) is recommended over the fist grip, (top picture) because the V grip has more control with power.



Left-handers should reverse all of the above positions. For example, the V of the thumb and forefinger in the backhand grips are at 1 o'clock for the eastern grip, 2 o'clock for the severe eastern grip, and 3 o'clock for the western grip. The V is at the top of the racquet handle for the continental grip.

Note: If you squeeze with your thumb and forefinger you will be gripping too tightly and can lose control. Instead, squeeze only with the bottom three fingers and guide with the index finger and the thumb. This will provide the appropriate amount of pressure. It should be loose enough for comfort, yet not so loose that control is compromised. All fingers and the thumb should be wrapped around the racquet handle. The index finger may serve as a 'trigger' versus a hammer style grip. This can assist with both control and racquet head speed.

## B. Stance

### 1. The Power Base

- a. Stand with your feet apart (slightly wider than your shoulders), the power base.
- b. Body and shoulders should be square to the side wall
- c. Arm position: elbow is chest high and the racquet is shoulder high.
- d. Drills for the power base include:
  - (1.) Pivot drills without a racquet for body control
  - (2.) Hit and Pose is a drill designed to keep the weight back.
  - (3.) Use of the Reebok Step (another technique to keep weight back)
  - (4.) Knees drill





## 2. The Stance in Detail

The ready position means that you are positioned in your power base and your racquet is raised and ready to strike the ball. As soon as possible during play, the racquet should be up in the ready position. Early Racquet Preparation, or the acronym “ERP”, is crucial to good mechanics. The racquet should be elevated by raising the hitting elbow to chest high. The elbow is bent so that the racquet is raised to about shoulder height (based on comfort and safety).

## 3. Step

- a. Start with the feet slightly wider than shoulder distance apart. This will allow one to step into the ball with balance and a low center of gravity.
- b. Step at a slight angle toward the left corner and not the side wall. (Left handed players step toward the right corner.)
- c. Drive into the stroke off the back foot .
- d. Shift your weight, but do not put weight on front foot.
- e. The stride into the ball is critical for success.

## 4. Swing and Contact Point

- a. The hitting arm and shoulder rotates toward the front wall away from the midline of the body. Therefore, the non-hitting arm will follow. The hips should rotate in a similar fashion as the arms and shoulders. The back foot will begin to pivot. This posture creates the potential for torque or turning force. Make sure that the eyes are always in contact with the ball. The hitting wrist should be hinged and ready. The racquet face will maintain a position above the wrist. This can enhance racquet head speed with the downswing. The racquet face will maintain a position facing the near corner. The shoulders should be as level as possible throughout the swing plane to help with striking the ball flat.
- b. The hitting elbow should lead the backhand stroke motion. The non-hitting shoulder and hip begin a rotation toward the front wall, and the back hip follows.
- c. The elbow continues down to the contact point with the ball while the shoulders remain somewhat level, and the waist maintains a relatively straight alignment. The upper body maintains a position inside the stance to assure balance. The hitting arm remains bent until the point of contact with the ball. At impact there is full extension which translates into power in the shot.
- d. Try to contact the ball with the horizontal plane of the racquet (long axis) parallel to the floor. The ideal contact point is off the front foot.
- e. The hips and legs maintain a position low to the floor during the swing. Drive the legs and hips through impact to generate maximum power.
- f. The wrist should snap at contact with the ball. It is the last conscious movement before the stroke process begins its completion.
- g. Eyes stay focused on the ball



h. There are three basic contact points that generate the three basic offensive shots - the down the line, V cross court, and pinch. Adjusting the location of ball contact is a critical element in determining the direction of the shot.

(1.) Down the Line

A down the line shot will have the racquet strike the ball forward in the stance at an area near the front instep. The racquet should be parallel to the front wall.



(2.) Cross Court

A cross court pass (sending the ball to the opposite far corner) will have the racquet strike the ball in front of the lead foot after the stride. The racquet face will be slightly closed at contact with the racquet face forward of the wrist.



### (3.) Side Wall Pinch

A pinch (near side wall) will have the racquet strike the ball deeper in the stance than for the cross court pass and down the line. The racquet face will be slightly open at contact with the racquet face behind the wrist.



More advanced players are able to strike the various shot angles at locations which vary within the stance, i.e. parallel, closed, or open. This is accomplished by varying the wrist relative to the racquet, i.e. if you hold the racquet back and get to the ball with your wrist, the ball will go right, and if you get to the ball with your racquet first, the ball will travel left, assuming you are right handed.

## 5. Follow Through

The follow through is an integral part of the stroke process. It should not compromise power, control, or balance. It will also help with injury prevention. If the swing is stopped or decelerated too soon, more pressure is placed on the hitting shoulder and elbow.

With a complete follow through, the racquet frame will face the back wall.

a. In order to follow through correctly, consider the following:

(1.) After contact, the racquet should continue across your body. With proper rotation your shoulders will end up facing the front wall. At advanced levels the stroke may be shortened, at times, during rallies.

(2.) The hips will rotate throughout contact as well. Like the shoulders, they will also end up facing the front wall.

Modify backhand mechanics based on the level of play.



### BENCHMARK 3 ASSESSMENT

1. Steps for the execution of the backhand swing are:
  - a. Same as the forehand
  - b. Same as the drive serve
  - c. Different than the forehand because of the mechanics
  - d. Different than the forehand because contact points are nowhere near the same
  
2. The backhand mechanics are like:
  - a. Throwing a baseball
  - b. Throwing a football
  - c. Throwing sidearm
  - d. Throwing a Frisbee
  
3. The recommended grip for the backhand is the:
  - a. Eastern grip
  - b. Severe eastern grip
  - c. Modified continental grip
  - d. Severe western grip
  
4. An athlete needs different contact points for the basic shots of:
  - a. Hit a down the line, and ceiling ball
  - b. Hit a splat and a drive
  - c. Hit a down the line, Pass and pinch.
  - d. Hit a down the line, pass, cross court pass and pinch
  
5. One way the backhand differs to the forehand is:
  - a. The grip has to be changed
  - b. The step may be slightly different
  - c. The shoulders need to be rotated at an angle
  - d. A and B only



## Benchmark 4 – Serves

### I. Serves

The serve is the only instance where a player has the ball in hand and total control over how and where the ball is hit. Therefore, the object of the serve is to create a weak return or hit an ace. Variations of the drive serve and the lob serve will be addressed.

#### A. Angle

The serve can be changed by using different angles. Varying the starting position in the service zone is one manner of adjusting the service angle. The zone can be divided into three areas. Center, right or left of center are the areas that give different angles for the serve to the receiver. Using these different angles often is enough to elicit weak returns.

#### B. Height

The serve can be changed by using different heights or elevations. This can be done by different heights of ball drop, or by having a high ball drop and striking the ball at varying heights from the floor off one motion. Show a variety of serves by striking the ball higher or lower on the front wall. It is an opportunity to determine an opponent's weaknesses in striking the ball at given hitting zones.

#### C. Speed

The serve can be changed by using different speeds. Some players get used to only one speed and are able to time returns effectively. A model is a baseball pitcher that works the plate by throwing off-speed pitches. Keeping the receiver guessing and off balance is a requisite for eliciting weak returns and maintaining control of center court. You can often benefit from serve return errors and create weak returns.

### Types of Serves

By changing the serve, the receiver gets a different look at the serve and their timing can be thrown off. Since there are an endless variety of serves and angles, one should not get "change happy" if a few serves are working, but rather think in sequence of serves, so that one serve sets up another.

#### A. Offensive Serves

An offensive serve is a serve designed to result in a three shot rally. Serve, weak serve return, and rally-ending shot, is the desired outcome. The following offensive serves can be changed with various angles, speed, and height:

##### Offensive Serve Mechanics

- a. The ball drop happens simultaneously with the first step or slightly before. All veteran players know they have to have a consistent ball drop. To find the same spot to drop the ball look for a separation in the wood, a blemish on the floor, something to mark the ball drop. Hold the ball with three fingers and the thumb. Do not spin the ball. This will make for a perfect ball drop. Another advanced way to drop the ball is to roll it forward. Some players prefer this drop as it allows them to drop it in a comfortable place as they move forward. A consistent ball drop is the first step in determining the direction and the effectiveness of a serve.





b. The Steps

(1.) One Step

The athlete drops the ball in front and takes one step. This allows a little more deception and power. The one step is recommended for beginners and both the one and two step serves are recommended for beginners and intermediates.



(2.) Two Step

The athlete takes a two step approach. This serve is the most popular by advanced and tournament players. The first step should be a small step and the second step should be forward (toward the front wall) not sideways.

(See illustrations on next page)



### (3.) No Step

The athlete's feet remain stationary and they strike the drive serve. This is usually done from center court as it allows the server to gain center court position. The server is sacrificing deception for accuracy and close proximity to center court. \*(This serve is only used by beginners who have trouble stepping or by advanced players in certain situation).

### (4.) Walking Steps

This serve is used by advanced players only. The server drops the ball away from the body, walks to the ball, and serves. The walking creates a little confusion with the receiver and therefore can be effective.



c. Swing and Contact Point

The drive serve technique is the same as the forehand. The contact points are crucial to executing the different serves. Below are examples of serves right and left contact points.



d. Follow Through

Follow through is an integral part of the stroke process. It should not compromise power, control, or balance. It will help with injury prevention. If the swing is stopped more pressure is placed on the hitting shoulder and elbow.

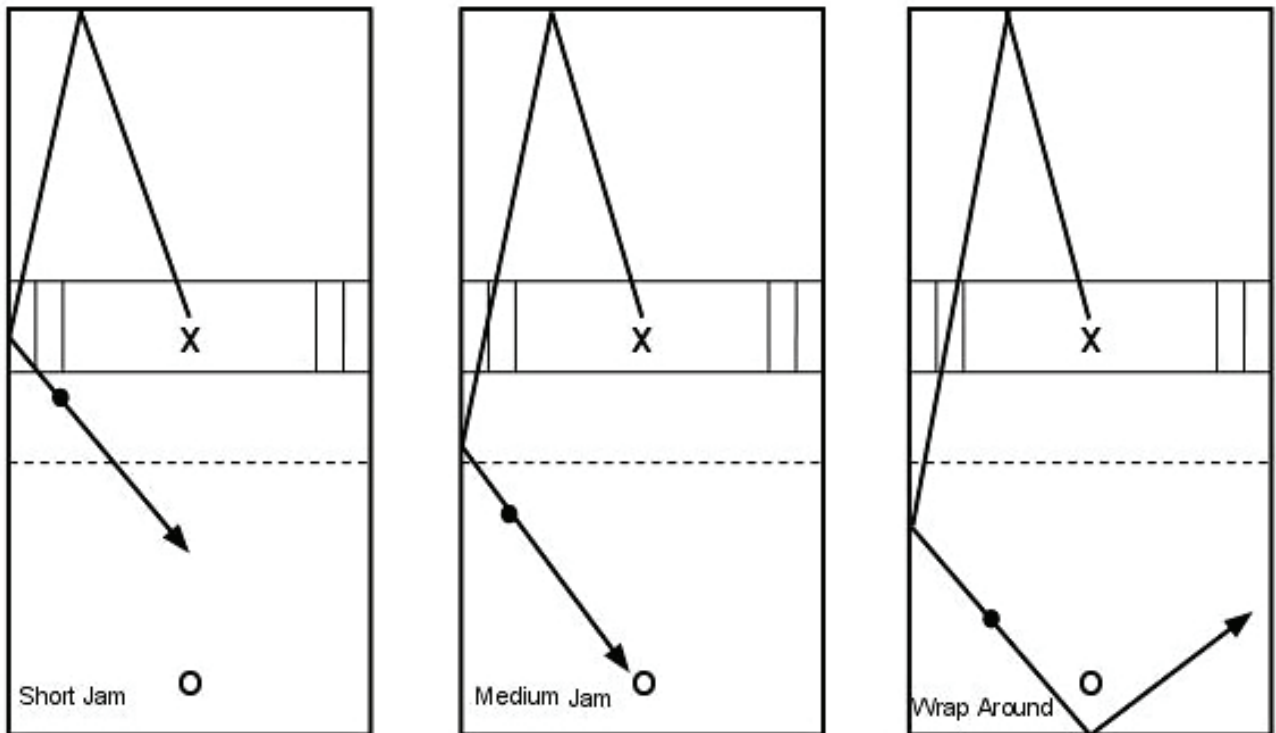


## The Basic Drive Serve

The Drive Serve is a hard, low-zone, aggressive serve that is hit so the ball angles as close as possible into either back corner of the court. It is the most common of the offensive serves, and when executed well, will require the receiver to respond quickly in order to retrieve the ball. This serve is used at all levels from the waist high V angled serve into the corners for beginners, to balls that just clear the short line at extremely high speeds from top level players. Ideally these serves should bounce twice before hitting the back wall. Instructors must be sensitive to the student's experience level. As a student's level elevates, the more subtleties come into play; e.g., ball drop, step, contact point, first bounce location, follow through, and various positions in the service box.

## Jam Serves

A jam serve is a variation of the drive serve. It is designed to vary the angle of the V trajectory from the server into the corners and use the side walls. This forces the ball off the sidewalls into the receiver's body, thus "jamming" the receiver. Three jam serve examples would be the short jam, medium jam, and wrap around.



X = Server, O = Receiver, ● = first bounce, → = 2nd bounce

- Short jam- hits wall over doubles box and lands just over short line
- Medium jam-hits the side wall four feet past the receiving line into an opponent's body
- Wrap around—hits side wall about 6 feet behind receiving line and forces receiver to turn around to track ball

## Z-Serves

The Z-serve is another variation of the drive serve designed to elicit a weak return. It is struck at an angle into the right or left corner, and angles across the receiver's body. Spin created in the front corner and off the second side wall will make the ball run parallel to the back wall in deep court.

By changing the ball drop in or out, and the height of ball drop, one can create a totally different ball response off the same motion.

a.) Ball Drop

If the ball is dropped closer to the body it often creates a "tighter" serve. The ball hits closer to the juncture of the front wall and side wall.

b.) Height

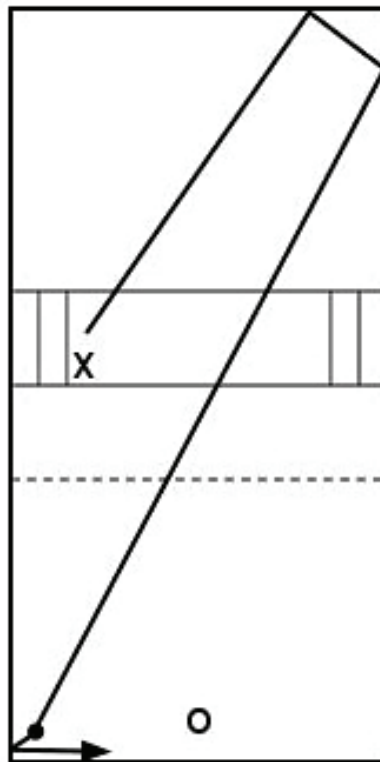
By striking the ball higher or lower in that juncture, a different serve is created.

c.) Manner

Varying the manner in which the ball is struck will produce a variety of results. For instance, the ball can be struck overhead, or three quarters, or even underhanded, thereby giving the Z-serve different characteristics.

d.) Speed

The server can also vary the speed from hard to soft to in between to get weak returns.



## Slice Serves

The slice drive serve is actually not a slice, but a ball struck deep in the server's stance. This has an "inside out" effect when struck downward. This spin moving toward the forehand side often acts like a knuckleball in baseball with erratic bouncing after hitting the floor and sidewall. This serve is very effective at all levels, but popular with senior players as it takes less leg drive and less energy to hit than the conventional drive serve.

## Other Offensive Serves

Overhead Z serves and drive serves

With the advent of outdoor racquetball, many athletes are hitting overhead angle serves. These serves are difficult to judge as the receivers may not be familiar with the angles.

## B. Lob Serves

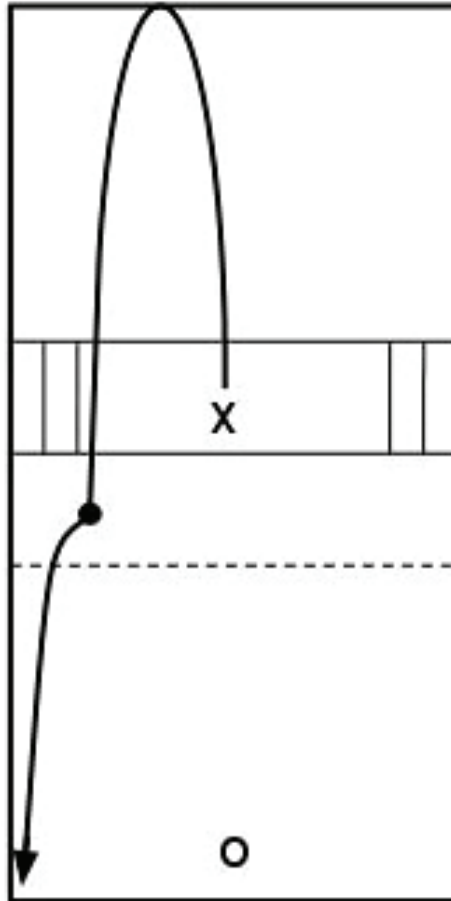
In old nomenclature, a lob serve was called a defensive serve. However, in today's game, the lob serve has become an offensive serve. With the advent of bigger and lighter racquets, players love to cut off lob serves so the old adage that a lob serve will result in a defensive shot is outdated. In today's game a lob can result in an offensive serve at the higher levels of play. For most players at intermediate and beginning levels, the lob serve will result in a defensive return.

- (1.) Manner - Keep the arm fairly straight with a stiff wrist (minimal snap) and use the body to hit the lob. This makes the lob more accurate. When the arm is used more, and the backswing is shallow, a poorer lob serve usually results.
- (2.) Ball Drop - The difference between the ball drop of the drive serve and the lob is the height at which you drop the ball. On the drive serve the athlete would strike the ball below the knee. On the lob serve contact would be made somewhere between the waist and chest. Drop the ball with three fingers and the thumb on the ball. Do not spin the ball. This will make for a more consistent ball drop. An advanced way to drop the ball is to roll it forward. Some players prefer this drop as it allows them to drop it in a comfortable place as they move forward. The bottom line is the ball drop determines direction and the effectiveness of a serve.
- (3.) Step - The lob serve is a one step motion as one is not looking to generate power, but to maintain accuracy. The step is the same as the one step drive serve except the contact point will be higher. The purpose of the lob serve step is to generate hip turn for accuracy.



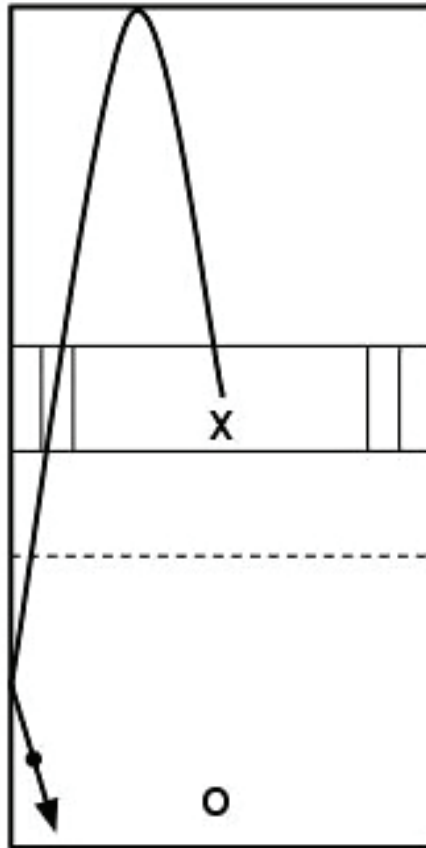
## Types of Lob serves

Half Lob Serve - Probably the most common serve. The idea is for the serve to land halfway between the short line and receiving line in the safety zone. This will result in a chest-high serve to return. Like the drive serve, the object is to have the ball bounce twice into the corner and not come off the back wall.



Garbage Half Lob Serve - This is a variation of the half lob. It is a hit like a half lob only with less height and slightly more pace on the ball. Think of a soft, chest high drive serve.

Lob Nick Serve - This serve is harder to hit because of the accuracy needed to execute. The lob nick hits high on the sidewall first and drops on the floor about 37 feet back. This serve is very difficult to cut off and traps the receiver into the back left corner or right corner.



Half Lob Nick Serve - Different from the lob nick, the  $\frac{1}{2}$  lob nick hits the side wall 30 to 35 feet back and has a little more speed. When struck correctly, the ball comes into the receiver about chest high and jams them.

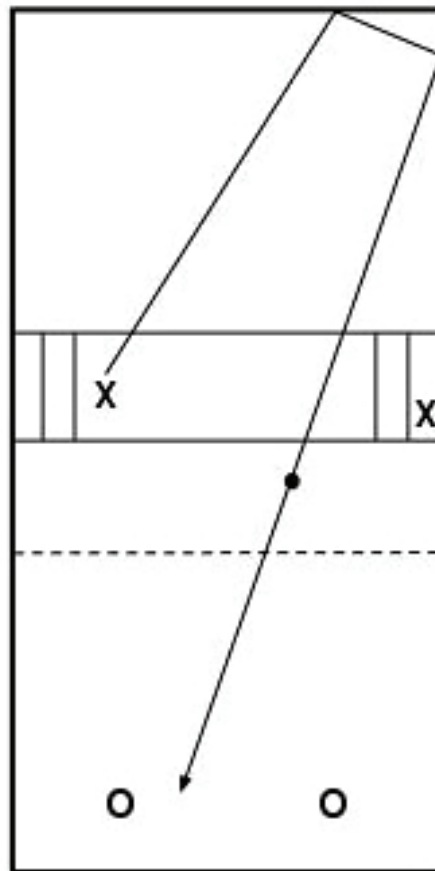
Lob Z Serve - The Lob Z is a combination of Z serve and lob serve. It is designed to strike the front wall, side wall juncture and come back at a tight angle across the receiver's body. When struck correctly, the ball crosses the short line, hits the floor and then the second side wall. This serve should not come off the back wall so it will jam the receiver and be difficult to return.

Other Variations of Lob Serves - Virtually an endless variety of serves can be employed. From down to up, up to down, three quarter, overhead and backhand, lob serves can be hit from all of these angles.

### C Doubles Serves

No description of serves would be complete without examining doubles serves. Each of these serves works in doubles and, of course, many of them work in singles. One word of caution, if you are new to doubles, when possible, the server should serve to the side of the court they are on so their partner does not get boxed in or hit on the service return.

- a. Z to Middle - Most doubles players specialize in singles play. That being said, serves to the middle of the court are very effective. The Z to the middle of the court is one such serve. It is best used against a righty-lefty team as the ball lands in the middle of the court (to the teams' backhands) rather than toward the side wall like a traditional Z serve (which would be to their forehands, which is usually their strength).



X = Serving partners  
O = Receiving partners

- b. Middle Drive - This serve is just as it sounds. It is a drive serve to the middle of the court, best used against a righty-lefty team, although an experienced server may be able to attack a player on the forehand side by shading their backhand with this serve.
- c. Middle Jams or Wrap Around - This is the wrap around jam discussed in the drive serve segment. This serve will attack the middle of the court and can jam the forehand athlete's backhand by attacking it at an angle.
- d. Sidewall Lobs - This is a very popular serve for doubles because it allows the partner to get into good position while the server serves his or her side.
- e. Drive Z Serve - Another good serve for the same reason as the sidewall lob. The server can attack their side, and use a serve used in singles.
- f. Overhead Drive - These serves are very effective in doubles for the same reason they are in singles. The serve features a trajectory not seen often in singles or doubles play.

## II. Drills for Serves

- A. Steps for drive serve drill and shadow swing
  - 1. Place tape on the floor for the steps you will be taking and tape on wall for maximum height.
- B. Tape area for drive serve targets (back corner on the side wall and target for second bounce before the ball gets to the back wall.
- C. Basket or bucket in which one drops the lob nick
- D. Sets of ten drills on serves and keep track of the percentages.

Note: Chapter Illustration key –

X = Server

O = Receiver

Black dot = Ball on first bounce

Arrow = Ball on second bounce





## BENCHMARK 4 ASSESSMENT

1. The drive serve is:
  - a. A serve that most players begin playing with
  - b. A very aggressive serve
  - c. A serve that will be consistent with a good ball drop
  - d. All of the above
  
2. A lob serve :
  - a. Is a defensive serve
  - b. Should be struck very hard
  - c. Used to be called a defensive serve but can be considered an offensive serve
  - d. All of the above
  
3. All serves are most effective when varying:
  - a. Height, speed, angle, racquet string tension
  - b. Height, speed, angle, and manner
  - c. Speed, manner, stance, step
  - d. A and C only
  
4. The Z serve is a serve:
  - a. That is a hybrid of the lob and drive
  - b. That attacks the receiver at an angle off the opposite side-wall
  - c. So easy to hit it should be taught to beginners
  - d. That cannot be hit softly
  
5. The serve is the most important shot in racquetball because:
  - a. It is the only shot the player has extra time to hit
  - b. It will dictate the type of return the receiver can hit
  - c. It will allow only a few options for an effective return
  - d. All of the above
  
6. The lob can be struck:
  - a. In an overhead manner
  - b. In an underhand manner
  - c. In a three-quarters motion
  - d. All of the above
  
7. The modern lob serve at advanced levels:
  - a. Should have deception of some sort
  - b. Does not need to be varied
  - c. Should always be hit very high
  - d. Should be hit with wrist spin



8. A jam serve:
  - a. Should only be hit in doubles
  - b. Will strike a side wall
  - c. Is totally different than a drive serve
  - d. Should never be hit in doubles
  
9. A “wrap-around” is a form of:
  - a. Lob serve
  - b. Z serve
  - c. Jam serve
  - d. Defensive serve
  
10. Doubles serves may be different than singles serves because:
  - a. They may attack the middle of the court, especially vs. a lefty-righty team
  - b. C and d only
  - c. Partners have to look backward
  - d. The server needs depth



## Benchmark 5 – Serve Return

### I. Serve Return

The purpose of the serve return is to move your opponent out of center court into the back court. There are a variety of shots that can accomplish this along with correct footwork for premium results.

#### A. Ready Position for Return of Serve

1. Align directly in the center of the back court
  - a. A general place to line up is one arm and a racquet length from the back wall in the middle of the back court.
  - b. Stay low, bend your knees
  - c. Arch your lower back, and keep the weight on the insides of your feet
  - d. Grip the floor with your toes because this raises heels off the floor
  - e. Keep your hands forward and the racquet in front with a relaxed backhand grip above the waist
  - f. Feet should be slightly wider than shoulder width
2. Return to the Forehand Side
  - a. Split step (a short hop) – open the toe to the side of the serve and cross over with the opposite leg
  - b. Right handed players would take a quick pivot step with the right foot toward the right side wall. Left hander players would pivot on their left foot.
  - c. The left foot comes across in front of your right foot (in a crossover step) as your body turns, your racquet should come up, ready to hit.
  - d. With these quick, two-step movements, you should be able to get to a ball on either side.
  - e. Always remember to follow through when striking the ball as this increases accuracy
  - f. Follow up the return with relocation to center court. (See Benchmark 6 - Positioning)
3. Return of Serve to the Backhand Side
  - a. Split step (short hop) – open the toe to the side of the serve and cross over with the opposite leg
  - b. Right handed players would take a quick pivot step with the left foot toward the left side wall. Left hander players would pivot on their right foot.
  - c. The right foot comes across in front of your left foot (in a crossover step) as your body turns and your racquet comes up, ready to hit.
  - d. With these quick, two step movements, you should be able to get to a ball on either side.
  - e. Always remember to follow through when striking the ball as this increases accuracy
  - f. Follow up the return with relocation to center court. (See Benchmark 6 - Positioning)

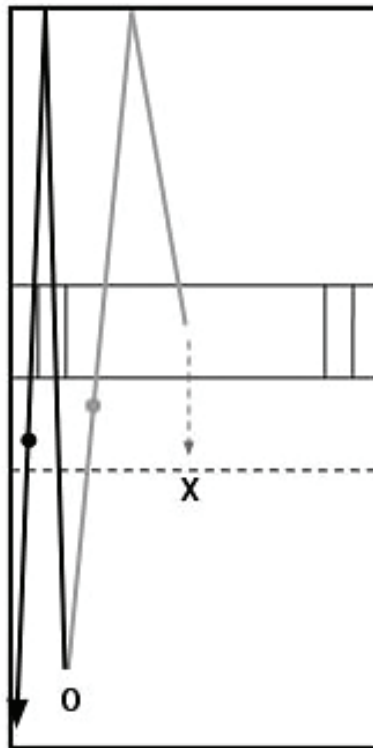


## B. Return of Serve Strategy and Shots

1. Strategy - It is an athlete's goal to maintain center court positioning to control the game. Therefore, primary shots while returning serve are shots that will force your opponent out of center court while letting you move up. Why? You have a much higher percentage of hitting an offensive shot in front court than from the back. In addition, your opponent has to move the length of the court, (from the back-court to the front-court) to retrieve your shot. The highest percentage shots are defensive shots that allow the athlete to gain center court position. At more advanced levels, that thought process often changes as players become more accurate with offensive returns, but players should still think defense when the serve is well hit. Offensive returns are returns designed to gain center court advantage and elicit a weak return from the server. In the following diagrams the server is relocating out of the service box to cover the serve return.

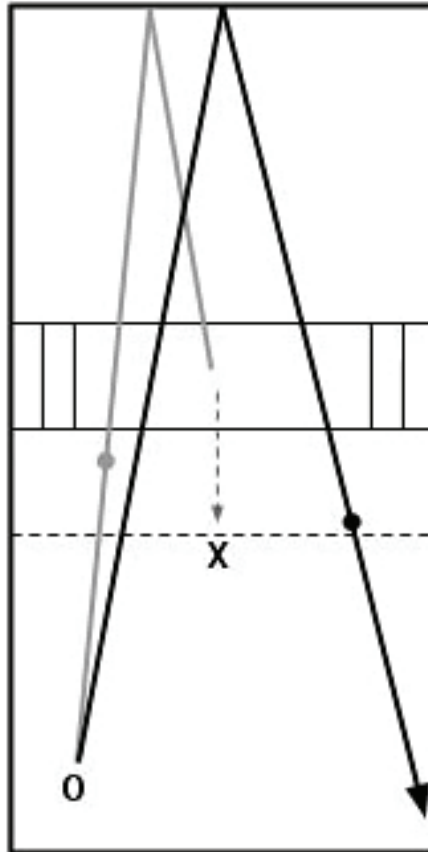
### Offensive Return of Drive Serve

- a. Down the Line Pass – This is the highest percentage offensive shot and the hardest to hit accurately. Strike the ball approximately one foot high above the floor on the front wall and send it down the line close to the side wall. The ball should bounce twice before the back wall not allowing your opponent to play the shot. It can be struck on the forehand or backhand side.



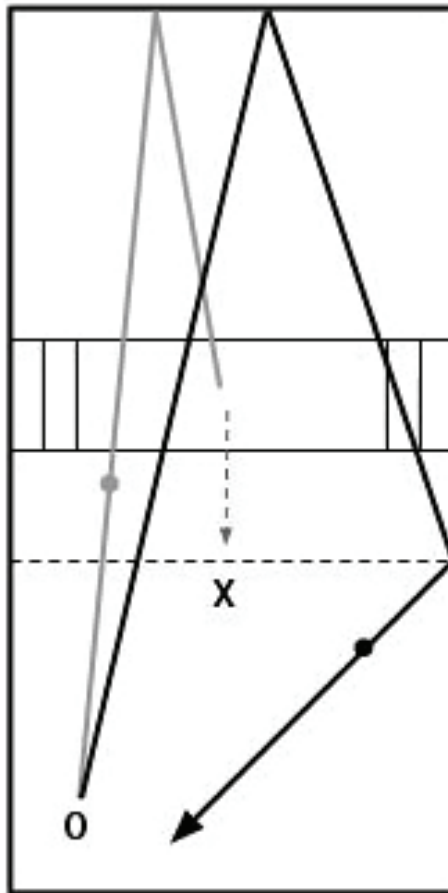
X = opponent during relocation,  
Gray line & ball = drive serve,  
Black line = DTL pass shot

- b. Cross Court Pass – This is the second highest percentage offensive shot and easier to hit than the down the line pass. Strike the ball approximately one foot on the front wall in the center of the court so it angles to the opposite corner from your position in the back court. The ball should bounce twice before the back wall not allowing your opponent hit a shot.



X = opponent during relocation,  
Gray line & ball = drive serve  
Black line = cross court pass shot

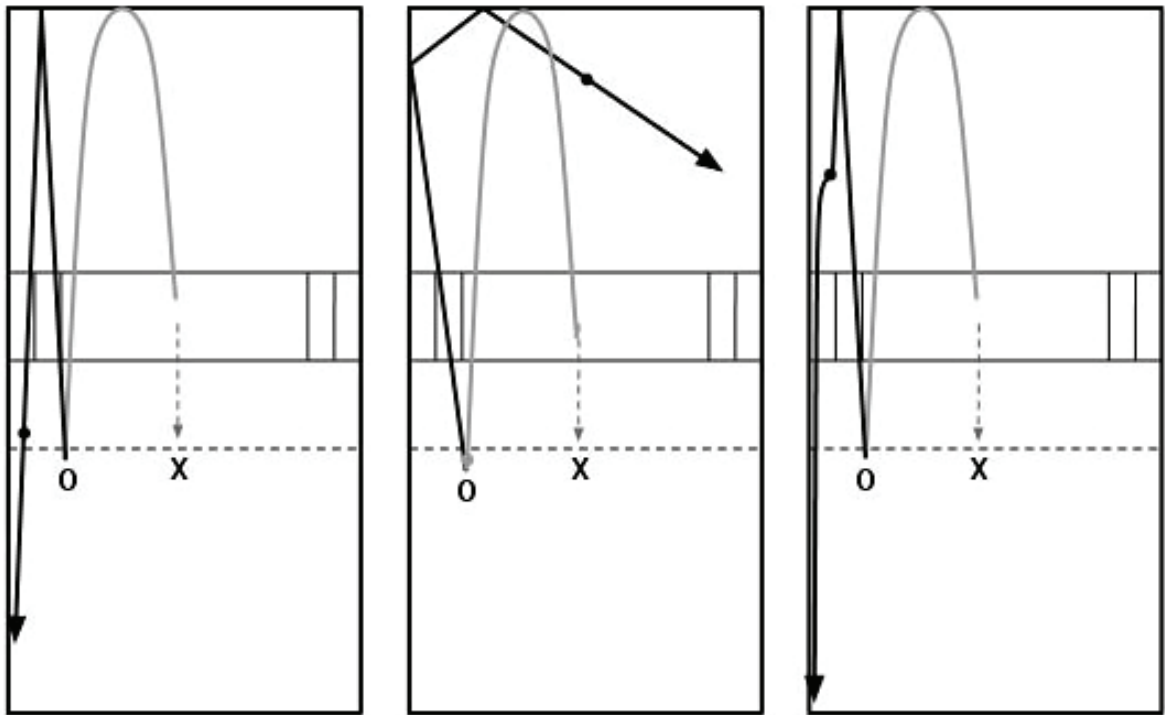
- c. Wide Angle Cross Court Pass- this offensive shot has a very high percentage of success, but is hard to execute accurately. Strike the ball approximately two feet high on the front wall, slightly off center so the ball hits the side wall, ideally at a ten inch height or below, before hitting the floor and then bouncing toward the back wall. This shot should hit the floor twice before reaching the back wall. This shot forces your opponent to move in two directions, laterally and vertically, rather than one.



X = opponent during relocation,  
Gray line & ball = drive serve,  
Black line = wide angle pass shot

## Offensive Return of Lob Serve

- Overhead Pass - Primarily only used on the forehand side off a lob or lob Z. Approach the serve and hit an overhead pass, similar to a serve in tennis. Aim at the center of the court and strike downward. This shot can be hit down the line as well. The overhead DTL is a lower percentage shot because it is harder to keep off the back-wall.
- Cut-Off Return - (A high percentage offensive shot.) This is an offensive shot against a lob or a half lob. Strike the ball in the air (but remember you CANNOT cross the dotted line as that is a safety violation and a point will be awarded to the server) or after it bounces. Hit the ball approximately one foot high on the front wall with a down the line or cross court pass. This is particularly effective because the receiver is very close to the server and the shot takes advantage of the poor center court positioning of the server.



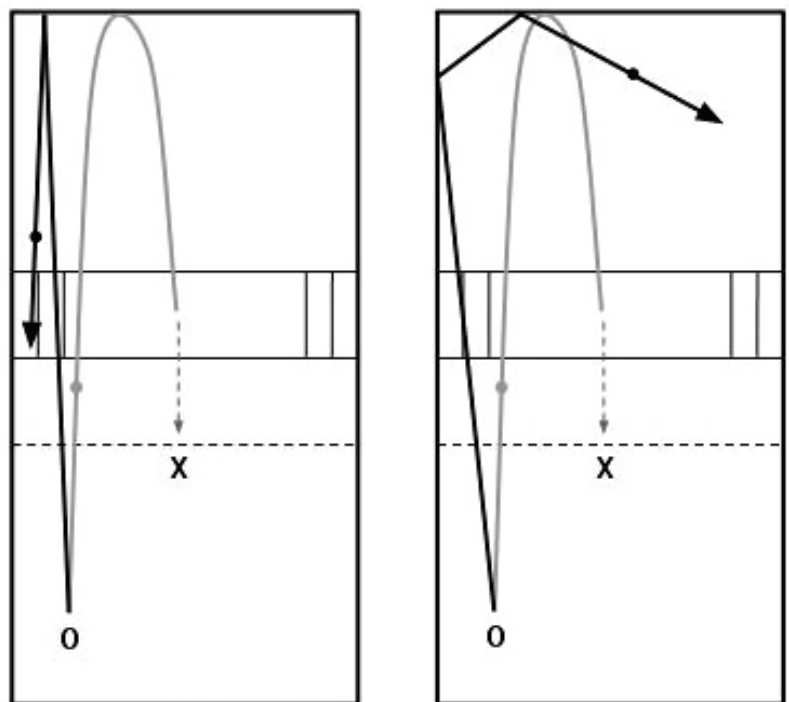
X = opponent during relocation,  
Gray line = lob serve,  
Black line = Lob cut-off to DTL pass

X = opponent during relocation,  
Gray line = lob serve,  
Black line = Lob cut-off,  
short-hop to pinch

X = opponent during relocation, Gray  
line = lob serve,  
Black line = Lob cut-off to ceiling ball

Options for cutoffs include down the line or cross court pass, pinch or splat, and ceiling ball.

- c. Short Hop - This is a lower percentage return because it is harder to execute. It is when the lob serve is stuck just after the ball hits the floor. Because the receiver cannot strike the ball in the air in front of the receiving line, the serve must be struck after it hits the floor (the receiver can enter the receiving zone after the ball hits the floor)
- d. Pass-Kill - A shot that bounces twice before the receiving line. If an opponent is out of position, this shot is a higher percentage version of the kill-shot as defined below.
- e. Kill and Pinch - (lowest percentage shot) this a more difficult shot when used from the back court on return of serve. Strike the ball several inches high on the front wall straight in or pinch close to the corner. The kill-shot bounces twice before the short line and the pinch shot bounces twice in the front court before hitting the second side wall. This shot is used when you have a good set up off the back wall or on a short lob serve.



X = opponent during relocation,  
 Gray line & ball = lob serve,  
 Black line = Lob serve kill return

X = opponent during relocation,  
 Gray line & ball = lob serve,  
 Black line = Lob serve pinch return

- f. Splat - The splat is a variation of the pinch return. It is hit into the side wall at approximately a 135 degree angle in front of the receiver. This causes the ball to lose its shape and react with severe spin off the side wall into the front wall. It is an effective shot into glass walls, especially as the athlete will often lose sight of the ball. It is an advanced shot, and extremely low





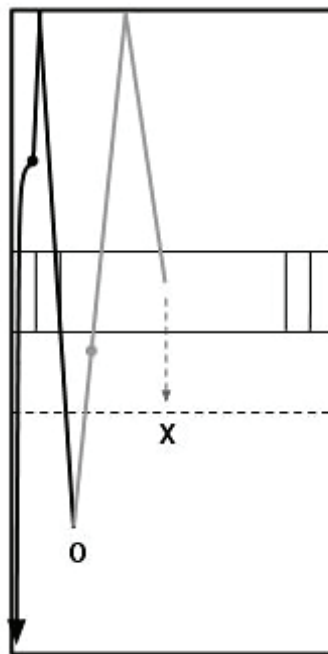
percentage for intermediate athletes as it will rebound into the center of the court if not hit correctly.

- g. Reverse Pinch – This is an extremely low percentage return of serve. This shot hits the opposite or furthest side wall from the hitter, then hits the front wall and bounces twice before the short line.
- h. Chest High Passes - Returns rarely used except at the advanced level and is called a side arm pass. Designed to hit chest high and softly so the receiver has few options other than to hit a ceiling ball or defensive shot. If your opponent becomes impatient and tries to hit an overly aggressive offensive shot, it will often create unforced errors.
- i. Drop Shot Return of Serve - Low percentage but can be effective, even when missed. This shot keeps an opponent off balance.

Note: The score dictates when these shots will be used. It is also a good idea to review the rules as they relate to Return of Serve and the receiving line. Rule 3.11 (a), Receiving Position.

C. Defensive Returns - These returns are designed to get court position.

- 1. Ceiling Shot - (A high percentage defensive shot) this is a shot taken on the return of serve when you are off balance or have to return a very high serve where you cannot effectively hit an offensive shot. Strike the ball so it hits the ceiling first, approximately 5-8 feet behind where the front wall meets the ceiling. The ball should carry into the back court ideally into the crotch of the back wall and floor. The ball should not come off the back wall and force your opponent deep into the court while you take center court position.

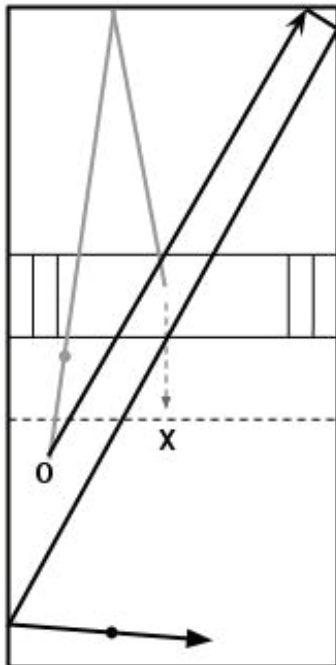


X = opponent during relocation,  
Gray line & ball = serve,  
Black line = serve return to  
ceiling ball

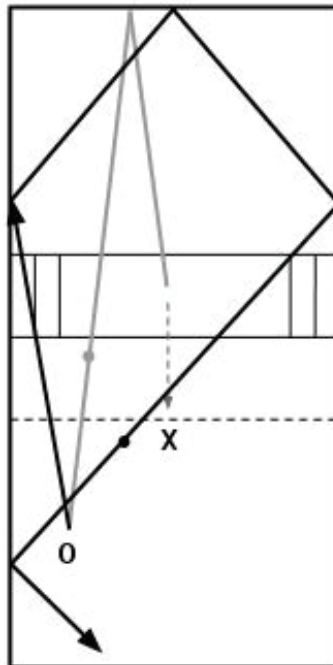


Note:

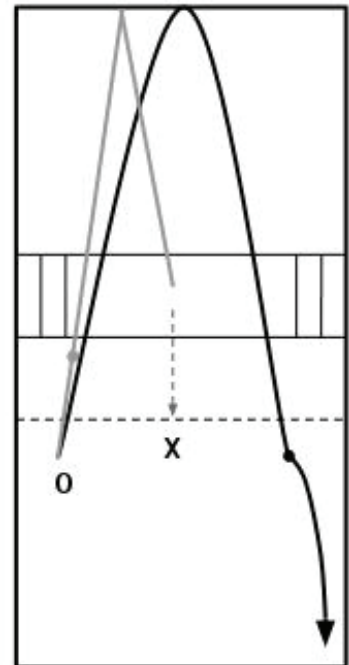
- a. The racquet should stay above the waist.
  - b. After returning the serve the receiver should not relocate all the way to center court if hitting a good ceiling ball, but a “swing and a half” away from your opponent.
2. Z-Ball – (High percentage defensive shot, but very difficult to hit) this shot is usually taken off an opponent’s lob or half lob serve. Strike the ball and hit it high on the front wall toward the corner so it hits the front wall approximately two feet from the ceiling. The ball strikes the side wall, then comes deep in the court, striking the opposite side wall before hitting the floor. This pushes your opponent deep into the court while you take center court position. This shot should not come off the back wall.
  3. Around the Wall Ball – (High percentage defensive shot—but hard to hit) this shot is also taken off an opponent’s lob or half lob serve. Strike the ball and hit it high on the side wall close to the ceiling. The ball will then hit the front wall, then side wall, floor and opposite side wall, thereby pushing your opponent deep into the court while you move into center court position. This shot should not come off the back wall. At more advanced levels, this shot can be easily cut-off in center court.
  4. The Lob - This shot is not used much at advanced levels because it is hard to control. This shot can be effective at moving your opponent back, and it is easy to hit but difficult to hit accurately. Just hit the ball over your opponent’s head in the front court to move them back.



X = opponent during relocation,  
Gray line & ball = serve,  
Black line = serve return to Z-ball



X = opponent during relocation,  
Gray line & ball = serve,  
Black line = serve return to  
around-the-wall ball



X = opponent during relocation,  
Gray line & ball = serve,  
Black line = serve return to lob  
over opponents' head

## II. Drills for Serve Return

### A. Five point games – rally scoring

Example: Drive serve right only. The receiver focuses on returns from the right side, lob left only, and the receiver must focus on cutting or returning from that side only.

### B. Objective Scoring

Example: After the serve, the receiver must hit a clean pass shot cross court or down the line with as few side wall shots as possible. Do not pinch or splat. A pinch or a splat results in a side out or a loss of point.

### C. Ceiling Ball Solo Drill

Hit up to ten good backhand or forehand ceiling balls, and shoot the first weak or short ceiling ball. Keep track of the percentage of good ceiling balls shot.



## BENCHMARK 5 ASSESSMENT

1. Doubles returns are often dictated by:
  - a. The positioning of the opponent on the opposite side of the court
  - b. The tempo of the timing
  - c. The timing of the tempo
  - d. Positioning of the coach outside
  
2. Return of serves can be divided into:
  - a. Offensive and defensive
  - b. Defensive and intrusive
  - c. Offensive only
  - d. Positioning and repositioning
  
3. Depending upon offensive philosophy the two highest percentage offensive serve returns are:
  - a. The down the line and splat returns
  - b. The splat and pinch returns
  - c. The ceiling ball and z ball returns
  - d. The down the line and wide angle cross court returns
  
4. The highest percentage return of serve is the:
  - a. Ceiling ball
  - b. Cross court pass
  - c. Splat shot
  - d. Down the line pass
  
5. The pass-kill shot is a shot that:
  - a. Bounces twice before the service line
  - b. Bounces twice before the back wall
  - c. Bounces twice before the receiving line
  - d. Bounces twice before the doubles box
  
6. A serve return that is a wide-angle pass hits:
  - a. Smoothly down the line on receiver's near side
  - b. The side-wall and floor near the receiving line on the receiver's opposite side of the court
  - c. The side-wall back corner on the receiver's near side
  - d. The front left corner at a sharp angle
  
7. An overhead pass shot may be executed:
  - a. As a return to a lob or lob z to the forehand side
  - b. As a return off a drive serve to the backhand side
  - c. As a return to a drive serve to the forehand side
  - d. B and c only



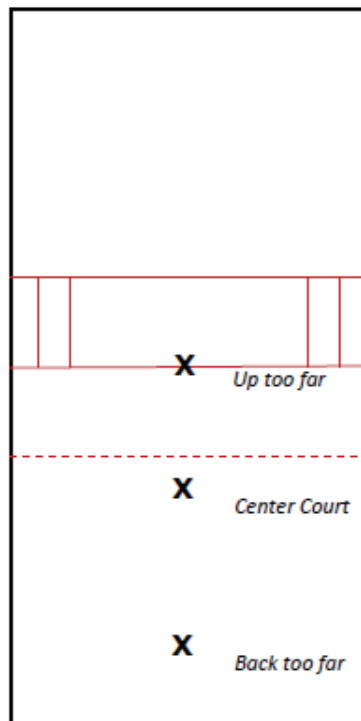
8. The return of serve should be dictated by:
  - a. Score
  - b. Manner of serve
  - c. Position of server
  - d. All of the above
  
9. The best way to think of doubles returns is to:
  - a. Allow the receiver's partner to get in good position
  - b. Attack the middle
  - c. Attack the far side
  - d. Attack the near side
  
10. Return of serve for beginners should include:
  - a. center-court positioning
  - b. side-wall striking
  - c. kill-pass considerations
  - d. splats



## Benchmark 6 – Positioning

- I. Positioning is perhaps one of the most important keys to successful play. It is also a misunderstood skill and the difference between success and failure during match play.
  - A. Basic Positioning During the Rally

The standard of all racquetball is behind the receiving line in the middle of the court. If your club does not have a receiving line, it is located five feet behind the short line. This space is called the receiving area. It is also referred to by different instructors as Zone 3 or Zone 4. For the sake of discussion here, we will call the area behind the receiving line, *center court*. If one positions oneself up closer they are in no man's land, and able to be passed easily. Since a passing shot is easier to hit than a kill shot, you should not be defending against the kill, a lower percentage shot. The athlete should instead defend against the pass shot, a higher percentage shot.



If the player gets further than two feet behind the receiving line in center court, they are giving up the pinch or kill shot. In other words, no matter where the athlete is positioned they are susceptible to a strategy, but you want to cover the higher percentage shot and give up the lower percentage shot. The lower the percentage shot, the kill, will lead to more mistakes like the skip shot and other unforced errors. If the athlete is in center court and properly positioned, they are harder to attack.

## B. Manner of Position

The racquet should be held above the waist. This keeps the athlete in a ready position.



The player should watch the ball at all times so they can anticipate the next shot. Weight should be evenly distributed so the athlete can move in any direction. If the ball is behind the athlete on the left, that athlete should open slightly to that side. Another option is to have your toes pointed to the front wall and peer over your shoulder. The first option has the advantage of the athlete who can move to the ball easily and more balanced. The disadvantage to the first option is that often a player will get too sideways, and is easily passed crosscourt. The second way, with toes toward the front wall has the advantage of not being passed cross court so easily but, by peering over the shoulder and toes toward the front wall, that athlete is not as balanced. Either way is acceptable by the USA Racquetball Instructors Program. (See Benchmark 5 – Ready position, return of serve)

## C. Relocating after serve

When hitting an offensive serve relocating into center court is crucial. After a drive serve, the athlete should try to keep their weight back so they can push with both feet. While viewing the ball, the player should move as fast as possible toward the center court area. It should be noted that on a drive serve it is difficult to get to good center court position, so as deep as possible is the key phrase here. Relocating after a z serve to the backhand side is another tricky movement for players. Instead of turning to face the ball, the athlete should keep their back to the ball, slide left or right depending upon whether that athlete is right handed or left hander, and then pick the ball flight up over their non-hitting shoulder. Relocation off the lob is a matter of hustling back to get deeper than center court. If the lob is not cut off, one should strive to be a swing and a half from the receiver in deep court.

#### D. Positioning During a Rally

During a rally, the player should immediately work to get back to center court after hitting a shot. The more a player can be in center court, the easier it is to get to the next shot. Of course, it is not always easy to get back to center court so the athlete should set their feet to get to the next shot when their opponent shoots. A good racquetball player sort of “slides” around the center court area with a minimum of footsteps, much like a good quarterback slides to evade a pass rush in football. If the ball is in the front court, the athlete can position themselves with toes toward the front wall in the center of the court. That makes the opponent have to execute a perfect shot with the other player in good position. At advanced levels of play, estimated guessing in this situation can work. For example, Player A has a shot along the right wall. Player B can guess if Player A is hitting a pinch, down the line, or cross-court shot. By going directly to that spot, Player B has a 33.3% chance of guessing correctly. Now if Player B knows Player A’s game fairly well, they will know what Player A likes to do in this spot. That increases Player B’s chances to almost 50%. One correct guess and you have Player A under more pressure for the remainder of the match!

If the ball is behind the player in center court, one should open slightly to the side where the ball is. If you can imagine a right-handed player in center court and the ball to the left side deep, that positioning will move to the right as the ball moves to the right in the back court.

In this manner, Player A will not block Player B shooting from the back court and be able to defend the easier shots, the passes.

#### E. Positioning in Deep Court

If a lob is hit to the receiver, the server should try to get as deep behind the receiving line, as possible. The rule of being a swing and a half applies to well-struck ceiling balls. This puts the defensive player in very good position and puts the player striking the ball under more pressure. A common mistake is to move way up to center court off a well-struck ceiling ball. This only results in the athlete having to vacate center court to come back to hit another ceiling ball. In other words, the ceiling ball is almost the only option to a well hit ceiling ball, so why run up and be out of position. Instead, the player is advised to slide over a step and a half toward center so they are in good position to cover the front court if they have to and to hit another defensive shot if they have to.

#### F. Positioning in Doubles

Positioning in doubles is critical for effective play. If you are not positioned well you can get in the way of your partner, thus causing him to alter his shots. You need to be aware of not only your partner, but also your opponents’ position, and especially the flight of the ball. Staying off the side wall keeps the line open for your partner to shoot down the line and wide angle shots. This gives your team time to gain center court position. You and your partner need to work like a well-oiled machine to form the best team possible. We will explore two basic formations played by doubles players, Side by Side (most popular) and Front-Back:





1. The most popular style of playing doubles is side by side. Each player is primarily responsible for covering their own side. Movement is the key in this style. Players can be side by side, or front court, side by side, (service box –ready to kill the ball. In the side by side format when one player moves forward to get the ball, their partner should slide to the center of the court to cover any passes in the back court. The front court needs to be covered as well by the player moving forward.
2. The front-court back-court format is when one player covers the front court most of the time and the player in the back covers all of the back court. The front court player is one who usually does not have to move as much as the back court person. The player in the front needs to have quick hands and has to be aware of the flight of the ball, as well as where the three other players are.

## II. Drills for Positioning

### A. Mini star drills with shadow wings

1. Work on proper foot movements in center court
  - a. Move up to hit a forehand, shadow swing
  - b. Move back to hit a backhand, shadow swing
  - c. Cross over to hit a forehand, shadow swing
  - d. Cross over to hit a backhand, shadow swing
  - e. Move back to hit a backhand, shadow swing
  - f. Move back to hit a forehand, shadow swing
2. After each shot, move back to center court positioning.

### B. Add a lob or drive serve and relocation movements to begin a mini star drill.



## BENCHMARK 6 ASSESSMENT

1. The proper desired position in the front court is in the center of the court with:
  - a. feet planted on the service line
  - b. feet planted on the short line
  - c. feet planted on the receiving line
  - d. feet planted four feet behind receiving line
  
2. The desired positioning stance is:
  - a. feet to the side wall
  - b. feet to the front wall
  - c. one foot slightly open to the ball during the rally
  - d. b and c are recognized as correct by USA Racquetball Instructors
  
3. When a ceiling ball is struck in deep court the defensive athlete should position themselves:
  - a. on the receiving line in the center of the court
  - b. on the short line in the center of the court
  - c. a swing and a half away from the opponent
  - d. approximately ten feet away from their opponent to give them room
  
4. Positioning in doubles is different than singles because:
  - a. positioning is often dictated by where the ball is
  - b. positioning is often dictated by the score
  - c. positioning is often dictated by the other team
  - d. positioning is often dictated by the partner's position
  
5. Proper footwork in center court often looks like:
  - a. a runner's sprint to the finish line
  - b. a quarterback sliding to avoid a pass rush
  - c. a stationary rock
  - d. a dancer executing a leap
  
6. One of the worst positions to be in is:
  - a. at the short line to the right
  - b. at the short line to the left
  - c. at the short line in the center
  - d. all of the above



## Benchmark 7 – Shot Selection

Glossary of shots and definitions for forehand and backhand

### I. Offensive

#### A. Passing Shots

1. Down the line – the ball hits the front wall approximately 18” above the floor on the front wall and continues down the nearest side wall, bouncing twice before hitting the back wall. This shot does not hit the side wall.
2. Cross court V angle - the ball hits the front wall approximately 18” above the floor on the front wall and continues across to the furthest side wall, bouncing twice before hitting the back wall, ideally in the back corner.
3. Cross court wide angle pass – the ball hits the front wall and then the side wall on a fly, ideally at a 10 inch or below height, even with or slightly behind the opponent, and bounces twice before hitting the back wall.
4. Overhead pass
  - a. Cross court – same as #A2 above, except, the ball is struck above the head, in an overhead motion, at a downward angle.
  - b. Down the line - same as #A1 above, except, the ball is struck above the head, in an overhead motion, at a downward angle.

#### B. Kill Shots

1. Kill shot – the ball hits the front wall 6” or lower on the front wall and bounces twice before crossing the short line.
2. Pass-kill shot - Kill shot – the ball hits the front wall 12” or lower on the front wall and bounces twice before crossing the receiving line.

#### C. Pinch Shots

1. Near side pinch and reverse pinch shots – the ball hits the side wall 6” above the floor and continues to the front wall bouncing twice before hitting the opposite side wall before the short line. The pinch is to the nearest-side corner and the reverse pinch is to the opposite corner or furthest corner.
2. Splat shot – with the hitter positioned near the side wall and the ball being within inches of the side wall, the ball is struck hard and driven toward the front wall, hitting the side wall just in front of the hitter and continuing to the front wall. The ball should bounce twice before hitting the opposite side wall before the short line.
3. Boast shot –this shot is struck deep in the hitting zone. The ball hits the side wall nearest to the hitter first and continues to the opposite side wall near the front corner. It will hit the second side wall before the front wall.
4. Overhead pinch shot - same as #C1 above, except, the ball is struck above the head at a downward angle, from the deep court between the receiving line and the back wall
5. Overhead boast shot - same as #C3 above, except, the ball is struck above the head at a downward angle.



#### D. Drop Shots

1. Drop shot – this shot hits the front wall 6” or lower near the corner. The ball then hits the side wall and cracks out. The idea is to take pace off the ball and push it into the front wall.
2. Front court volley – contact with the ball is made in front of the body with little swing and the ball is somewhat “blocked” and the momentum of the offensive attempt is used against the opponent. The difference between #D1 and #D2 is the drop shot takes pace off the offensive attempt and the volley does not attempt to do that, but is struck out in the air, before the first bounce.
3. Shortened swing – usually when in the front court, the ball is cut off out of the air or short-hopped during reflex rallies with little or no swing and directed low on the front wall. #2 and #3 are often the same shot and necessitated in the front court because of the speed of the rallies. A big follow through in the front court can hinder the shot-maker’s ability to get to the next shot.

#### II. Defensive Shots

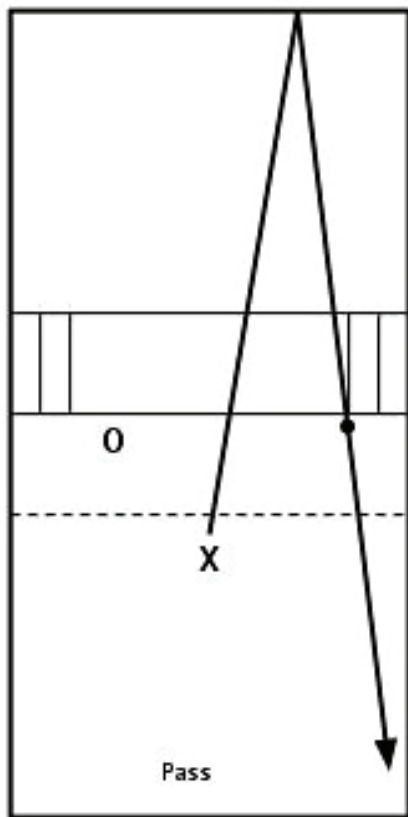
- A. Beginner to advanced-lob return – a ball that hits gently on the front wall about 3/4 of the way up the wall and carries into the back court without coming off the back wall.
- B. Ceiling ball return - the ball strikes the ceiling 5-8 feet in front of the front wall, hits high on the front wall, first bounce lands in the front court, takes a very high bounce and the second bounce dies on or near the back wall.
- C. Around the wall ball - This shot hits all 3 walls on a fly. First, the ball hits high on the side wall above the service box, then high on the front wall, then the other side wall. It then bounces in mid court, rebounds to the opposite side wall, and dies in back court. This shot should not come off the back wall.
- D. Z ball – the ball is hit high into the opposite corner, striking the front wall first, then the side wall, and travels to the opposite (2<sup>nd</sup>) side wall on a fly, and finally slides parallel to the back wall, in deep back court.
- E. Front wall-ceiling ball – this is a ceiling ball that hits the front wall first then the ceiling.

#### III. Shot Selection

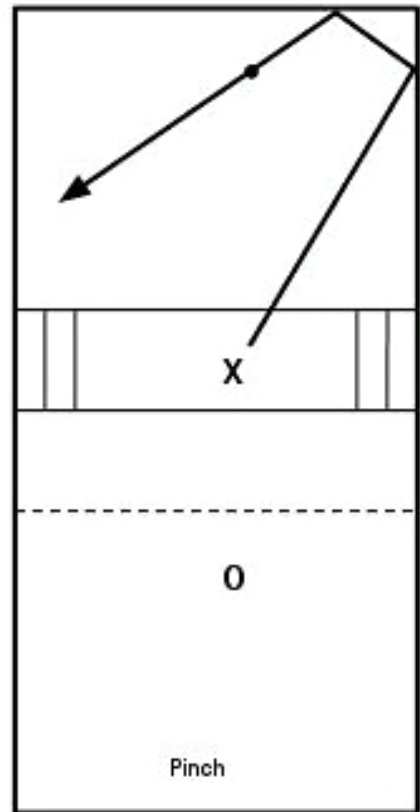
By definition, Shot Selection is the ability of the offensive player to choose and execute the best shot given all the variables of the current situation. Shot selection can be divided into four basic areas. Of course during rallies there are multitudes of positions, but these positions are the most common. Front court is defined as the area at the dotted line or in front. Back court is the area behind the dotted line and back.



A. Situation One – The offensive player, the player taking the shot, is in the back court. The defensive player, the player reacting to the shot, is in the front court. If the ball is in your hitting zone, the offensive player hits a high percentage offensive shot, such as a pass. If the ball is out of the hitting zone the player should hit a defensive shot, such as a ceiling ball.

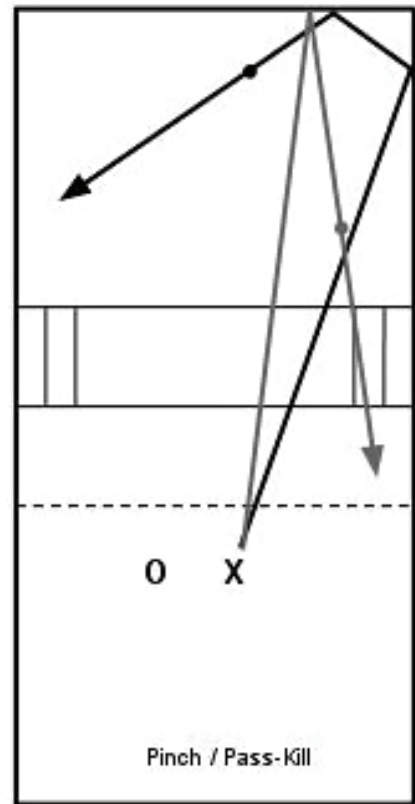
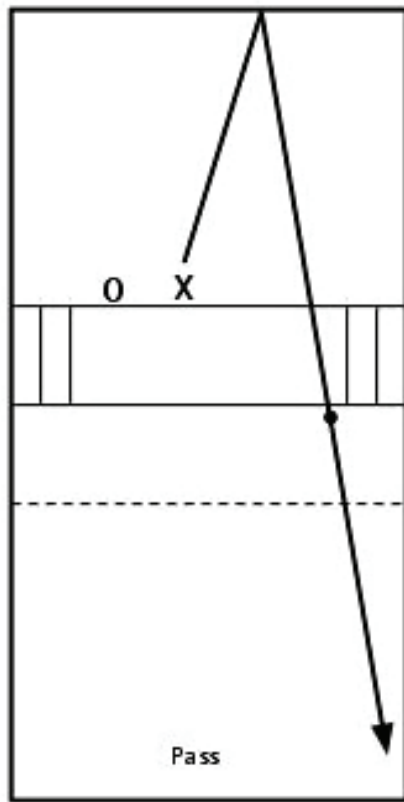


B. Situation Two - The offensive player is in the front court and the defensive player is in the back court. If the ball is in the hitting zone the offensive player should hit a high percentage shot such as a pinch or kill. If the ball is out of the hitting zone the athlete should hit a defensive shot such as a ceiling ball or Z depending upon their level of play.



C. Situation Three – The offensive and defensive players are in the front court so the offensive player should hit a pass if they can set their feet and the ball is in their hitting zone. If not, they should hit a defensive shot.

D. Situation Four – The offensive player and defensive player are in the back court. If the ball is in the hitting zone the athlete will attempt an offensive shot such as a pinch or pass-kill. The passing shot that bounces twice before the receiving line is a high percentage shot, as opposed to a kill shot which bounces twice before the short-line and is therefore a lower percentage shot.



**Key to above diagrams:**

X = Player taking offensive shot

O = Defensive player

Black dot is the first bounce of the ball

Arrow is the second bounce of the ball

Situation #4 shows two shot possibilities – The pinch in black and the pass-kill pass in gray

Simply put, shot selection is hitting a shot that is the most difficult shot for your opponent to return therefore usually resulting in a weak return and a set up for the offensive player. Taking the right shot depends upon a number of factors. Shot selection on return of serve has been discussed in Benchmark 4 and the same factors apply here.

Shot selection rules apply at all levels. However, below are ways of looking at the rules by ability levels.

#### IV. Shot Selection for Beginners

An easy way to explain shot selection to beginners would be to “hit to the open court”. This is a simple way of saying, “Hit it where they aren’t.” The player should hit to the biggest open area. If the player is up, hit to back, player is right, hit to left and so on. This is basic shot selection. For simplicity’s sake beginning shot selection is based on one thing, positioning of the opponent.

#### V. Shot Selection for Intermediate Players

Shot selection for this group adds another variable. That variable is the location of the ball. As beginning shot selection was based only on opponent’s positioning, intermediate shot selection adds the ball placement. If this shot is chest high or above, the player should hit a defensive shot as they do not have an offensive shot. This forces the opponent to move behind the player and puts the percentages in the favor of the person who just hit the defensive shot. Another variable added at this level is footwork. If the player can set their feet, and if the player has a shot below chest height, they should shoot an offensive shot creating a scoring opportunity. If they cannot set their feet and the ball is chest high or above, they should hit a defensive shot.

#### VI. Shot Selection for Advanced Players

Here three more variables are added, speed of an opponent, skill of player shooting, and score. All of these factors are added to the original factors of an opponent’s positioning, placement of the previous shot, and ability to set one’s feet.

The advanced player has more skill so the ball above their chest may be an offensive shot and not a defensive shot. The ability to change from offense to defense, and be effective with the same shot opportunities, makes that player more advanced and harder to defend against. One thing should be added here, the intermediate rule of not attempting an offensive shot with the ball above the chest can be changed at advanced levels. The athlete should have their feet set at all levels of ability.

Another rule that may change is the “hit to the open court” rule. Since advanced players have more speed, often they are baiting opponents to hit to the open part of the court so they can attack effectively. This makes shot selection a contrary science because with this type of player you would hit ‘behind’ them. If the right side of the court is open and the opponent is rushing to get there, hitting behind them to the left will neutralize their speed.



Re-passing from the front court rather than re-killing is another strategy for advanced players. When the advanced player rushes forward to cover the front court, they will be vulnerable to being passed. Another strategy of advanced shot selection is to not hit the same shot off an offensive opportunity twice. This keeps the opponent off-balance. If Player A has a setup on the right wall they should hit down the line at the first opportunity, and hit cross court the second, and maybe splat the third time. This also keeps an opponent off balance. Another factor may be lack of speed. That changes the shot selection to pinching more to pull the slower player forward and opening up the court. Figuring out the weakest movement pattern, i.e. right to left, or left to right, or front to back, or back to front, allows an advantage in shot selection.

One more strategy that works at every level is to watch how your opponent warms up. They usually go to their strongest side first to warm up. That tells the player which side to exploit, especially in tight matches.

Another tip on shot selection is to cut shots off in the front court. In this situation Player B hits a desperation shot into the back wall as the ball is by Player B. Player A should then move up to cut that shot off in the front court. The reason is Player B is behind Player A and out of position. If Player A moves back to hit that shot, Player B will now have time to move into position and Player A has to hit a better shot. The same shot selection rule applies to any shot floating by an athlete's nose during a rally. Those shots need to be cut off so the player can control the rally and keep their opponent out of position.

#### A Word about the Score

There are two schools of thought on this. One school is no matter what the score; one will shoot and not be afraid to lose. Those are usually champions and there are not too many of them. Most people tend to leave a little room for error in tight matches. This makes an opponent beat *you*, rather than the floor. If you look at both ways of thinking it is conservative (leave room for error) vs. aggressive (shoot the ball). It has been this author's experience that conservative wins 80 % of the matches, but aggressive makes up the 20% who become champions! Remember the warm up trick above? That is where you want the ball in tight matches. In other words, make your opponent beat you from their weakest area of the court, not their best.





## VII. Doubles Shot Selection

The shots players take in doubles are more difficult than singles because there are more things to be aware of in the court. There are two opponents and one partner to keep the ball away from, not just one. When making a shot in doubles there are several factors to consider:

- a. Do you have time to turn your feet and rotate your body for a strong shot?
- b. Where are your opponents?
- c. Where is your partner?

Being aware of your surroundings in doubles is most important before taking your shot. For example:

Scenario One: If you and your partner are in the front court you should keep your shot up front since your opponents are in the back court (kill, pinch, or reverse pinch).

Scenario Two: If you and your partner are in the back court your shot selection would be a wide-angle, cross court, or down the line pass shots, or a ceiling shot to move your opponents back.

Scenario Three: If you are in the front court and your opponent is in the front court you would likely hit a jam shot right at them or hit a cross court pass to the opposite side of their partner.

Knowing where everyone is in the court helps your decision making process with your shot selection. It also helps with the safety factor when swinging by knowing where everyone is in the court. Safety is the number one concern, and since there are four players in a confined area, it is important for everyone to be aware of their surroundings.

## VIII. Drills for Shot Selection

- A. Multiple shots, drop and hit
  1. Drop and hit in order: Down the line pass, cross court pass, and splat, pinch
- B. Multiple shot setups
  1. Hit yourself a setup and shoot down the line, or cross court pass. .
- C. Add a partner to position you so the athlete can hit the correct shot.



## BENCHMARK 7 ASSESSMENT

1. Shot selection can be best explained as the process of :
  - a. Hitting into the opponent
  - b. Hitting away from the opponent
  - c. Hitting above the opponent
  - d. Hitting near the opponent
  
2. One situation for shot selection explanation is:
  - a. Offensive player in the front court and defensive player in the back court
  - b. Offensive player in the back court and defensive player in the front court
  - c. Offensive player and defensive player side by side in front or back court
  - d. All of the above
  
3. As players become more advanced hitting where they aren't:
  - a. Is not always effective due to the speed of the athletes
  - b. Is not always effective due to "baiting" for a specific shot
  - c. Is effective because players are not fast enough to cover shots
  - d. A and b only
  
4. An offensive shot is a shot that:
  - a. Is a pass or a kill
  - b. Is a kill, pass, or side wall shot such as a splat or pinch
  - c. Is a shot designed to end the rally
  - d. is a shot off the back wall
  
5. A defensive shot:
  - a. Is a shot designed to get center court position
  - b. Is a shot designed end the rally
  - c. Is a shot off the back wall
  - d. Is like the touchdown pass in football
  
6. Shot selection for beginners can best be described as:
  - a. Hit behind your opponent
  - b. Hit to the open court area
  - c. Hit the sidewall as much as possible
  - d. Work on down the line passes



## Benchmark 8 – Footwork

This piece of the puzzle has always eluded the most experienced instructors. One reason is that it is difficult to separate footwork from positioning, mechanics and the other Benchmarks. For the sake of expediency, be sure to refer to ready position, for return of serve, Benchmark 5. Let's look at some simple rules of footwork by level of play.

### I. Beginners

Beginning racquetball players will hit the ball where it comes to them. Beginners often have difficulty striking the ball at the desired height and they tend to strike the ball out of their hitting zones too often. Beginning footwork usually consists of these things; moving from the service area to center court position, moving from the return of serve position to center court and moving back to center court after a shot. Instruction at this level should focus on those things, plus watching the ball, (of course wearing eye-guards) and getting feet square to the side wall before hitting a shot. By doing those things the beginner is attacking the basic fundamentals of movement. Beginners will strike the ball wherever it ends up in its path toward the player. As the athlete progresses in skills the player will move their feet so they can strike the ball where that player wants to. In other words, either the ball plays you, or you play the ball. For the beginner, emphasizing relocating after serves, watching the ball, and getting their feet pointed at the side wall is key.

The player strikes the ball, and relocates into center court and gets into the ready position. As he goes to cover the return, he is open to the front wall. By getting his feet toward the side wall he is able to be more efficient.

#### A. Summary Skills for the Beginner:

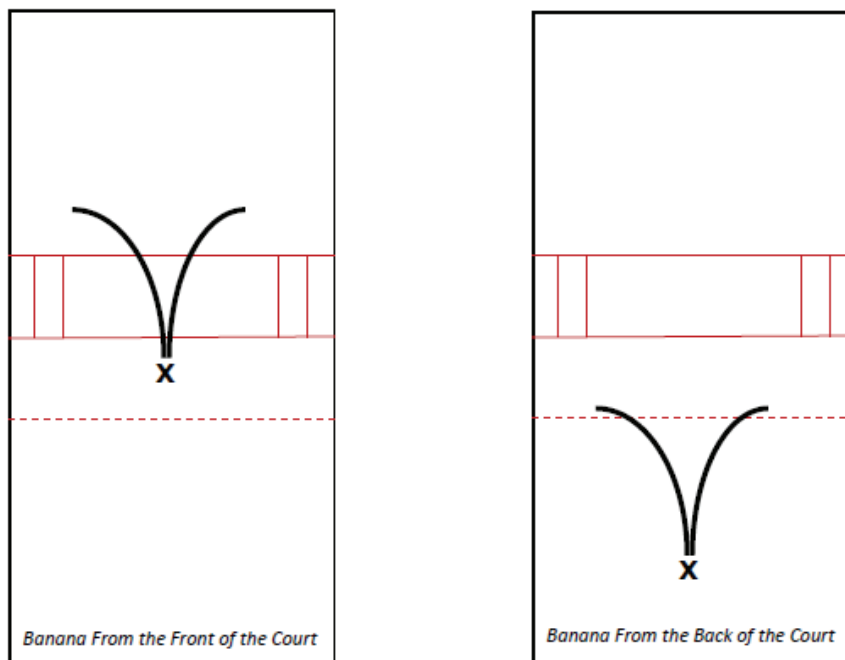
1. Relocation after serve
2. Feet to side wall
3. Watch the ball
4. Move back to center court after the shot

### II. Intermediate Footwork

The intermediate player will begin moving their feet to hit the ball at different heights. In addition to the skills of the beginning player, this player will be able to move toward the back wall and hit lower shots. This player should begin moving two feet at a time rather than one foot at a time. This player should begin developing a spatial relationship with the next shot that ensures maximum power and a semblance of beginning shot selection. The athlete who can drop and hit correctly, should strike the ball in the same spot during a rally in racquetball. This means the athlete will strike the ball in the hitting zone off the front leg. A common mistake is to strike the ball in front of the athlete, especially on the backhand side.



We use the term “banana” to the ball to get to more shots at the desired distance. This trajectory is how the player should attack the next shot. In the front court imagine two bananas with the bend toward the near side wall. When moving to the front court, the athlete takes this trajectory which keeps them away from the ball. This also allows them to be prepared to hit the shot when they get to it. In the back court the bananas are in the same position and the athlete moves along those planes to get to the shot that comes out of the back corner.



This also puts the athlete in good position to hit a shot. Players at this level should also begin moving back to let shots drop lower and moving forward to cut them off. In this way the athlete begins to move their feet and get their bodies under their feet instead of leaning forward to the ball. The intermediate player can start moving back and forward to prepare to strike the ball. Racquet preparation should also be stressed as the athletes move. Jo relocates well, but does not have her racquet up as she moves to the ball.

1. Summary Skills for the Intermediate Athlete
  - a. Relocation after serve
  - b. Feet pointed at the side wall
  - c. Watch the ball
  - d. Move back to center court after the shot
  - e. Banana to the ball in the front and back court
  - f. Stay away from the ball
  - g. Begin moving feet to cut shots off and to move back on shots

### III. Advanced Footwork

At the top levels of play, footwork determines who wins and who loses. Ironically, footwork does not mean speed. Speed and footwork are two different things. Let's define footwork as "controlled speed." Often the speed expert from another sport is in conflict with racquetball athletes because, to them, it appears the athlete stands and scatters. However, there is a reason for this movement. Intuitively racquetball players set their feet at every level before they move. This is a split-step and, like our cousin sport of tennis, necessary to change direction and move to the next shot. At the advanced level this split step allows the athlete to change direction and move effectively. The split step is done by creating a very wide base and having the weight evenly distributed. This happens on return of serve and during rallies when there is time. Another factor of footwork at the advanced level is not over-stepping. When one lunges they take a big step and they become a one-legged athlete with a false step. A false step is a step to nowhere that is necessary to balance oneself. The usual scenario in the backhand corner of the court goes like this: Backhand shot with the feet shallow, followed by a step back with the right leg (if right-handed and left leg if left-handed) and then another step. This gets the athlete back to their original beginning spot. If they take the shot with their weight back and correct backhand mechanics, they will be able to move without the false step.

The false step puts the athlete behind getting to the next shot. Here is also where mechanics come into play. If someone has poor mechanics, they must take a false step to get to the next shot.

One more factor of footwork is the placement of the hips. The athlete can do everything correctly but still lose power and control by moving with their hips open vs. moving with their hips closed. Many advanced players tend to dive to shots. Diving is spectacular, but also not effective. When possible, move to the ball with two feet rather than dive to the ball. Many shots that you dive for, could have been hit by moving with two feet. If diving was the best way to move to a ball, Olympians would dive through the tape, not run through it. At the advanced level, diving to the ball is an art form and if one is going to dive, diving and hitting a ceiling ball is far more effective than diving to kill the ball. Going to the knees to kill a ball at the advanced level is a different skill than diving. For one thing the athlete maintains a proper stance i.e. with two feet under them. This gives them more control. The future player has to stay low and what better way than to move to the knees and then back to the feet? The athlete has to use knees movement sparingly, as they would to use diving sparingly to end rallies. Diving for no reason is as bad as going to the knees to shoot for no reason. When possible, two feet under the athlete's hips is the way to be most effective.

Advanced footwork means using split steps and two feet to track the ball. The player split steps on return of serve. Note that his weight is evenly distributed and he is moving with his feet under him and avoiding lunging steps.



For more in depth information about footwork, see Benchmark 8 – Footwork In-Depth on the USA Racquetball Instructors Program Information network, or in the next clinic available.

1. Summary Skills for the Advanced Athlete
  - a. Relocation after serve
  - b. Feet to side wall
  - c. Watch the ball
  - d. Move back to center court after the shot
  - e. Banana to the ball in the front and back court
  - f. Stay away from the ball
  - g. Move feet to cut shots off and to move back on shots
  - h. Use split step to get wide base and get to next shot
  - i. Keep weight evenly distributed in split step
  - j. Move with two feet rather than lunging steps
  - k. Avoid false steps by practicing proper footwork
  - l. Avoid diving and go to the knees instead

#### IV. Drills for Footwork

- A. Star drill with forward movements only with a shadow swing
  1. Move forward from center court and hit a forehand then move back to center court. Follow this with a forward movement to the backhand.
  2. Star drill to back corners with a shadow swing and move back to center court position.
  3. Complete four-point star drill. Use continuous movement from center court to four corners and complete shadow swing.
  4. Add two more shuffles to the side and cross over. Now it is a six-point star drill with shadow swings.



## BENCHMARK 8 ASSESSMENT

1. Beginners attempting a shot should:
  - a. Get their feet toward the front wall
  - b. Get their feet toward the back right corner
  - c. Get their feet toward the back left corner
  - d. Get their feet toward the side wall
  
2. Intermediate players need to:
  - a. Get to center court
  - b. Get to the front court
  - c. Relocate in front of the service line
  - d. Take a “banana” trajectory when tracking shots off the back wall
  
3. Advanced footwork includes:
  - a. Taking a wide base with weight on the outside of the feet
  - b. Keeping the feet closer than shoulder width apart
  - c. keeping the feet a little wider than shoulder width apart
  - d. Keeping the feet toward the side wall
  
4. Good footwork includes:
  - a. “Balancing up” between shots
  - b. Taking a split step
  - c. Keeping weight on the insides of the feet
  - d. All of the above
  
5. What is not always a principle of good footwork is:
  - a. Stepping toward the side wall for effectiveness
  - b. Staying balanced
  - c. Diving
  - d. A and C only
  
6. At the advanced level athletes should try to eliminate:
  - a. False steps
  - b. Micro steps to adjust to the ball
  - c. Proper racquet prep
  - d. A crossover step
  
7. The term open stance can be described as:
  - a. Shoulders facing the back corner
  - b. Shoulders facing the sidewall
  - c. Shoulders facing the back-wall
  - d. Shoulders facing the front wall





## Benchmark 9 – Strategies

### I. Strategy by Court Coverage Tendencies

#### A. Beginner Level

For beginners, and for that matter, all the way up to advanced, the phrase “deep center court” should apply. This strategy keeps one in better position to re-kill all shots that are left up. Since the beginning level player has a hard time hitting effective kill and passing shots, the defensive athlete should deepen up in center court. Instead of playing behind the receiving line in the middle of the court, the player should be at least two feet behind that spot. This is an excellent strategy for beginners. A good strategy for beginners is to relocate deep and pick off their opponent’s mistakes. Most players, even at advanced levels, cannot kill the ball effectively from the deep court. Be sure to refer to Benchmark 6 – Positioning for more information.

#### B. Intermediate Level Coverage Strategies

A main problem at the intermediate level is the athlete’s forehand and backhand mechanics, resulting in many shots hitting the side wall. A good strategy is to keep serves and shots low and hard at an opponent’s forehand and backhand in the backcourt. This gives shots to the player in the front court. Since the intermediate athlete has difficulty executing shots, they need to play deep behind the receiving line, up to three feet back, depending upon the situation. At intermediate levels of play, a good strategy is to hit one wall, and low and hard. This exploits mechanical problems, which are usually abundant at this level. Stroking and putting drive serves low and hard into the corners is a good strategy, especially toward the opponent’s backhand side.

#### C. Advanced Play Court Coverage

Advanced athletes generally have to play more traditional court coverage since their opponents have a variety of shots. Their opponents can usually hit down the line, cross-court, and pinch from the same place on the court. That said, at this level false reads on court coverage creeps into play. A strategy is to pretend to leave a part of the court open, but go there as the player is hitting, to cover that area. Thus, in effect the athlete can get their opponent to hit the shot they want them to. Another coverage strategy at this level is to scout your opponent carefully and look for areas on the court that they tend to hit only one or two shots from. For example, many athletes only hit down the line from deep left corner so the opponent can deepen up to attack that down the line shot. Finding a one shot tendency at this level is like striking gold, and the smart player will be all over that return. At advanced levels, hitting to the open court should be liberally tempered with hitting against the grain or behind the player. This stops faster players from being able to sprint to shots, and causes them to have to be more balanced and honor the shots to both sides of the court.



## II. Strategy by Body Type

This first crept into the racquetball public's consciousness when Steve Keeley wrote his book, *Complete Racquetball*, published in the 1970s. The USA Racquetball Instructors Program is blatantly paraphrasing him with some of these body types and sprinkling in some of our own experiences.

### A. Jam the Tall Player

Tall players can be frustrating. With one step they are to the side wall because of their long reach. An effective strategy is to jam this player. Hitting serves off the side wall such as jam drive serves and Z serves that come across their body, takes away their leverage. Generally speaking, playing a ceiling game vs. a tall player is trouble because they can hit overheads and get leverage from above. A tall athlete can often be jammed.

### B. Hit away from the Squatty Body

This player is short and has a low center of gravity. If hit into, this player has effective leverage but when hitting away or playing the ceiling game, this player has to reach for the shot. This means their footwork has to be very good. On the ceiling they will not have the leverage vs. a taller player from the back court if they wanted to hit an overhead. The opposite of the tall player, the shorter player should be hit away from.

### C. Make the Slow Player Run

The very slow player who performs at a high level usually does so because they can shoot very well. This player seems to take away rallies by putting the ball away time after time. With this athlete one must hit pinches and splats to pull the slower player forward. That usually opens up the court. In other words, pinch from the back-court more than usual vs. the slow player. After pulling them and out of position, pass them.

### D. Hit behind the Fast Player

The fast player can cover the open court. Therefore, the player should not always hit to the open court, but hit behind the streaking speedster covering the open section of court. This causes the fast player to hit the brakes, and have to retreat to the area just vacated, thus neutralizing their speed. Another effective strategy against fast players is to hit down the lines. This opens the court and since the shortest distance between two points is a straight line, it makes the court bigger.



### III. Strategy by Playing Style

#### A. Lob Serve Specialist

This player is a classic counter puncher. They want the receiver to take the first shot so they can capitalize on left up shots or unforced errors. This player has to be taken out of their comfort zone with a good return of serve. Cutting off lobs is one strategy, while hitting ceiling balls when cutting off the lobs is another. Both take away what the server covets, center court position. At the advanced level attacking well-hit lobs is another strategy. This athlete often plays a vertical game, that is, they play the ceiling to keep their opponent in the deep court. To counter this, try to go horizontal as much as possible by bringing ceiling balls cross court and down the line. Remember though, patience is often necessary to effectively return a good ceiling ball.

#### B. Z Serve Wonder

This player uses a Z serve to attack their opponent's forehand or backhand. Fundamentals are important here. When attacking a Z serve, look to where it lands in the receiving zone. As many as possible have to be cut off. If going to the ceiling, aim for the center of the court, not down a backhand side. The reasoning here is there is more room for error down the middle, and it is over the opponent's head. This gives a bad angle getting to the ball. The Z serve is most effective against people who step over toward the serve. Thus they get boxed in and their hips and legs get locked so they cannot return as effectively. Step toward the Z serve, not to the side wall.

#### C. Strategy against the Dominating Drive Serve

The athlete with the dominating drive serve is difficult because of accuracy and/or deception. The first strategy is to look for a "tell." For example, which way they are leaning, where are they serving from (often unconsciously an athlete subtly changes positioning in the service zone to go left or right), which way they are stepping, where they are dropping the ball, etc. If there is no "tell" one is playing someone very good. In this case a false read might work. Lining up to the right may elicit a serve left and vice versa. If the server is looking to see where the receiver's positioning is, the receiver can dictate where the serve is going by over-positioning right or left. One more strategy is to take time between serves and then not take time. Since the receiver has ten seconds to receive serve by randomly taking those ten seconds, then five, etc. the receiver may take the server out of their comfort zone. Look for the "tell" on serves.

#### D. Strategy against the Slice Serve

This serve is actually an inside out serve (see Benchmark 4 - Serve) so do not move up to receive the serve. Moving forward creates more of an angle and makes the serve difficult to return. This serve gives senior athletes more trouble than open and pro athletes. If the serve is attacked low by the receiver, the serve is not that effective. Cutting off this serve is imperative because the server has to lean into the serve. This makes them vulnerable to offensive cross-court and down the line passes.



#### E. Strategy against the Wallpaper Serve

This serve is called the “wallpaper” because it is so close to the side wall and hard to cut off. There are two tips to returning this serve. First, stay away from the ball so there will be leverage by the returner. The second thing to remember is that if the serve is on the wall deep in the court, it was not on the wall in the front of the receiving zone. Therefore the receiver should attack this serve early, before it gets flush with the side wall. The receiver must attack by the receiving zone to beat this serve.

### IV. Strategy Against Various Mechanics and Shot Selection Variables

#### A. All Backhand No Forehand

This athlete runs around their forehand to hit with their backhand or vice versa. When playing this athlete, hit ceiling balls to their strength and then attack their weak side. This opens the court up. Don't always go to weak side immediately as they are overplaying that side and any error will allow opponent to move around that shot for offensive shot possibilities. Player A knows Player B has a good forehand, but if Player A hits to Player B's backhand side, Player B can get to many shots with his forehand. A good ceiling ball hit to the strong side pulls Player B over to his forehand side, and thus opens the backhand side.

#### B. Twisty Wristy

The twisty wristy player has a pendulum backhand or forehand and they hit down on the ball. This athlete is usually deadly when they can set their feet. By keeping the serves and returns on one wall, and keeping the ball away from center court, this strategy makes the twisty wristy player use their inferior stroke mechanics to hit shots. This usually results in shots in the front court off poor attempts by that player. This player swings down on shots and uses a lot of wrist.

#### C. Step to Side Wall Players

This receiver of serve steps over toward the side wall. They usually strike the ball in front of their body. The strategy here is to hit them soft serves without much air under them, such as garbage serves. This player will not be able to use their legs and hips because they step toward the side wall and their steps are shallow.

#### D. The Athlete Who Pokes the Backhand or Forehand

This athlete usually has their thumb on the backhand or their thumb on top of the racquet for the forehand. They are counter puncher type players who attack hard drive serves and shots very well because they are using their opponent's power. To combat this player, use soft drive serves and passes. When this player has to use their own power to hit shots, they are not very effective.



#### E. The Perfect Stroke Mechanics Athlete

This athlete has been to all the camps and clinics and has perfected their forehand and backhand. The only way to attack this player is to short circuit their wiring. By that we mean constantly changing serves, angles, speeds, starting position and heights. If one watches the pros play, this is exactly what they attempt to do since their opponents have such good mechanics.

A final few words about strategies: The tactics above are but a few that one can employ. There are, of course, many more strategies and game plans an athlete can deploy against an opponent. A good instructor or coach will search for these game plans to help their athletes. Look for the strategies in-depth in Benchmark 9 - Strategies on the USA Racquetball Instructors Program Network.

#### V. Drills for Strategies

- A. Have a trusted colleague watch you play. Ask them to critique your strategies against an opponent. If you can, find an experienced mentor to do the same.



## BENCHMARK 9 ASSESSMENT

1. Strategies can be employed depending upon an opponent's:
  - a. Body type, mechanics, tendencies, and racquet used
  - b. Body type, stroke mechanics, and shot selection
  - c. Body type, stroke mechanics, shot selection, and positioning
  - d. All of the above
  
2. One key mechanical deficiency to look for in an opponent is:
  - a. Not bending at the waist during a forehand or backhand shot
  - b. Taking small steps to get to a shot
  - c. Swinging down on the ball instead of out and around
  - d. A and C only
  
3. A strategy for beginner through pro is :
  - a. Keep the opponent in deep court
  - b. Hit splats as often as possible
  - c. Use the pinch shot effectively
  - d. Try to keep the ball high in center court
  
4. A good beginner strategy is to:
  - a. Hit to the opponent's backhand side
  - b. Hit to an opponent's forehand side
  - c. Hit ceiling balls
  - d. Hit z shots
  
5. A good intermediate strategy is to:
  - a. Hit one wall shots more than two wall shots
  - b. Hit z serves
  - c. Hit lob z serves
  - d. All of the above



## Benchmark 10 - Teaching Skills

### I. Skills to Look At

#### A. Stage Presence

This skill is difficult to assess. You must exude a “presence” to be effective as an instructor. Good voice inflection, posture, and appearance all are important. One does not have to be loud to have a good teaching voice, but one does have to be free of annoying phrases such as “basically”, “um”, “ugh”, “you know what I’m saying”, and other annoying verbal mannerisms.

#### B. Knowledge

Nobody knows everything. Do not try to impress your students with false answers. Just feel free to say, “I am not sure, but that is an excellent question. Let me find out the answer for you.” Also, it is not important that the student know everything the teacher knows, so do not overload the student with information. The average student hears a fraction of what is said anyway. Keep it brief.

#### C. Student’s Goals

A good instructor should start by asking a student to define their goals. This starts the learning process because the work load an instructor has to give depends upon the goals a student sets for themselves. Goal setting is an art form in itself, but to simplify this process, a racquetball goal has to be achievable, have a time frame, and be measurable.

#### D. Responsibility

It is very important the student understand they are responsible for improvement. An instructor can only give them the tools and the drills to improve. The bulk of the rest of it falls with the player taking the lesson. From the beginning they have to understand that without the work, practice, and reinforcement, the lesson is a waste of time and money. What each student has to do to improve is based on their individual goals. (see above)

#### E. Proximity of Instruction

The closeness of the teacher is based on each individual student and their comfort level. Some students like you close and “in their space” and others do not. Therefore, pay close attention to that as it is unprofessional to invade personal space. Another thing that is unprofessional is poor personal hygiene such as bad breath, body odor, or clothes that smell after a workout. Carry toothpaste and deodorant as well as mouthwash in the gym bag when working at the club.

#### F. Voice Clarity

Proper diction and clarity are very important. Instructors who mumble or do not pronounce their words clearly do not teach well. If you have an accent, speak softly or loudly be sure to tell your students and qualify your instruction before-hand. This gives students the freedom to ask the instructor to repeat instructions.



#### G. Information Delivery

Be sure to give the information clearly and in the order the student needs it. Asking a student what they want to work on is fine, but asking them what to do is not fine. The pro is in charge and should act accordingly. Use analogies and examples to get your point across, but be careful you are not telling stories instead of teaching. Make sure you do not talk too much or explaining in too much detail.

#### H. Skill Building

Strive to build on each skill you are teaching. The drop and hit drill progresses to cross over and hit, which progresses to shuffle and hit, which goes to movement to the ball in a set up and hit to the student. Each skill will reinforce the next skill. The skills also continue in a progression so the student can experience success before reaching a level they will be frustrated at.

#### I. Feedback

Getting feedback as the instructional process continues is just as important as the feedback you give the student. First, one should not worry about outcome. Put the student's fears at ease with phrases like, "don't worry about where the shot is going" and "good job", will put a student at ease and diminish their nervousness. This allows for a faster learning curve.

#### K. Clarity of Instruction

Sometimes no matter how hard we try, the students are not getting the information. Ask them to repeat the information. Ask them to demonstrate the information. Ask them to pretend they are back at their home club practicing alone. Then ask them how they would execute each drill you have taught them. The instructor needs this feedback to judge their effectiveness.

#### L. Listen

Listening is a valuable skill. Try listening by asking questions. Our students teach us how to teach if we are receptive to what they are saying. By listening carefully we pick up key phrases and tips that work for the students. If our students use a certain phrase, it may work with someone else.

#### M. Summarizing

No lesson will work as well as the one summarized at the end. Key-points of the lesson, along with reinforcement of the skills taught, make the lesson more effective. This is the point where drills and homework are given to prepare the student for the next lesson.

#### N. Testing for Effectiveness

By asking the student to demonstrate or explain the skill that has been taught, it gives the instructor an idea of how effective they were in teaching that skill. Videotaping is a great tool for testing effectiveness and sharing with students.





## O. A Word About Junior Players

Coaching juniors brings several challenges. First, these are children and even very mature kids are not adults. Therefore, inappropriate comments, adult gossip, relationship talk, and other such topics are off limits. Gently remind kids that you are not their peer, but an adult if conversations drift in those directions. It is not the business of a coach to help with relationship issues, involvement in personal or family life of the athlete. Another reminder is to beware of touching; an innocent hand on the shoulder might be met with concern by any junior player, especially one you do not know. Keep all conversations to instruction as much as possible. If you are coaching a junior athlete who is smaller in stature, a good tip is to kneel so you are eye level with that player. Like all athletes, students of younger ages want to improve and may need help in setting goals. Any schedule with junior athletes must start with their family, spiritual, and scholastic obligations. Never try to trump those demands with racquetball, as you will quickly become an adversary of the parents and the athlete. Another good tip is to back the parents up with help with their child; for example demanding the grades in school are good and family obligations are met. Building a wedge between parents and child may allow short term gains, but in the long run will be counter-productive and unprofessional. Be sure to read the USA Racquetball Instructors Program Code of Conduct for more information.

## II. The Lesson

The Professionals within the USA Racquetball Instructors Program are interested in BOTH the steps and the order. Let's look at segments of the private lesson:

### A. Introduction

This begins with the handshake and name. The handshake should be firm and the pro should use their preferred name. A brief history of the student's objectives and athletic experience is necessary. A medical background is also important. If that student is a member of the instructor's club they will have gone through a medical clearance, but if a member of an outside club, they may have medical issues the pro is unaware of. (See Benchmark 1 – Section VI - Liability)

### B. Demonstration

Assuming the instructor has never seen the student play and is meeting them for the first time, let the student demonstrate their skill. The reasoning here is often the pro only has to "tweak" a shot a little bit. If the pro launches into a detailed discussion of the skill with an advanced demonstration, the student may try to emulate that skill. The result could be something totally unlike what the student was originally doing. Many times the pro only has to make a slight adjustment in the mechanics.



### C. Video Tape

If video is available, this is a great place to use it. This gives the student the insight into their mistakes and gives them immediate feedback. Many video devices on the market today make this easy to accomplish. One such device is Flip Video. It is easy to carry, and easy to use. The feedback is immediate and the pro can even email the video instruction to the client.

### D. Error Detection

The hardest part of instruction is this and it takes years to learn. We have put together a chart (below) of the common mistakes and corrections, but there is no shortcut to learning by teaching. Usually, there will be more than one thing that the student needs to correct, but do not overwhelm them all at once. Let's examine a typical lesson and correction patterns.

#### 1. Lesson Topic: Backhand

Problem: The ball skips, or hits the side wall and sets up their opponents. Lack of power; the ball goes cross court all the time.

#### 2. Lesson Errors: The student has a poor grip, open hipped approach, and no racquet depth in the ready position.

#### 3. Progression of Correction: What is the correct progression? Instructors should start with biggest to least. It is important that each area be addressed first before you move on. Look at the grip first. If the grip needs correcting, the resulting shot will not be effective. The reason is because the grip has changed, the extra wrist movement needed will probably still occur. Questions such as, "How does that feel?", "Can you stroke the ball higher or lower?" are excellent to use. After a few good shots with the new grip, go to closing the hips and executing. After closing the hips, go to beginning the backhand with the proper racquet depth. In this way each area was addressed separately before moving to the next area. Give a few drills to do before the next lesson, and summarize the skills. Make sure you emphasize to the student to work on one element at a time as if they try to work on too many things at once they will get overwhelmed and frustrated.

### E. Progression in Groups

The rules change slightly in group lessons. Bringing the learning process to a screeching halt because one person cannot execute is not acceptable in a group setting. To avoid this put folks in a progression from best to worst as far as estimation of skills. The better students are modeling for the others and reinforcing learning. Learn to use the phrase, "we will have to work on that later" for these more challenged clients. Also, do not allow one or two people to monopolize the group. Tell the group at the beginning, that you will do your best to address everyone's needs, but extra help may be needed if they need to reinforce a skill.



#### F. Dealing with Frustration

It is a fact that many students get frustrated and it shows in many ways. From arguing to anger to silence, the instructor has to read the body language and troubleshoot as the lesson moves along. One tip is to move to skill B if skill A is not being met with success. Remember the backhand lesson above? Let's suppose the grip was not working. Skip that part and go to hip movement before coming back to grip. In this way the lesson moves along, and the student is less frustrated.

#### G. Good Teachers Teach, Great Teachers Inspire

This is one of our favorite sayings and one we employ here at the USA Racquetball Instructors Program. Teaching skills is not enough. Motivating students to improve is paramount. Give positive comments to your students when they are doing well. Little notes such as "Great win in the C division" goes a long way. While it is important to recognize success, it is even more important to recognize improvement during a loss. Here is an example: If you receive an email from someone who lost in a tie-breaker to the eventual winner of a division you want to point out to your student how great they played and remind them that one month ago they would not have been competitive in this division. This athlete needs feedback so they do not become discouraged.



### III. Some Common Symptoms and Lesson Cures

<u>Symptom</u>	<u>Problem/Cure</u>
No power	<p>Make sure the student has hip rotation and their hips are open toward the front wall when done.</p> <p>Make sure they do not have a stiff wrist. It should be relaxed through contact point.</p> <p>Incomplete follow through. The racquet head should point to the back wall and the shoulders and chest facing the front wall when done.</p>
Poor backhand	<p>Early racquet preparation is key. Use the legs and hips, not just the arm. Make sure the arm is at full extension at contact. Keep the racquet flat and level throughout the swing.</p>
Sore elbow outside	<p>Incomplete follow through. DO NOT twist or curl the wrist.</p>
Sore elbow inside	<p>Hitting down on the forehand, twisting wrist so swing is flat and level.</p>
Sore lower back	<p>Bending at waist and stepping sideways, thus using the back instead of the legs to hit the ball.</p>
Sore hitting shoulder	<p>On the forehand, the racquet handle should not be pointing toward floor. Point it to the front wall as it leads through the shot. Racquet is too close to head and no backswing. Should have early racquet preparation, be up, and ready.</p>
Cannot return lob serve	<p>Hitting the ball too close to and in front of the body. Hit at full extension off the lead shoulder, chest to shoulder high.</p>
Cannot short hop lob serves	<p>Player is too close to the ball and is not moving up fast enough. Move quicker and hit with full extension from the ball.</p>
Poor ceiling ball backhand	<p>No backswing and ball contacted in front of body. Get your racquet up sooner, as soon as you cross over and hit off your lead shoulder.</p>
Poor forehand	<p>Hitting the ball too close to the body, not extending with the forearm or poor racquet preparation. Make sure you hit at full extension and you get your racquet up EARLY.</p>
Poor back wall skills	<p>Poor racquet prep, too close to ball, not reading the ball bounce in the proper zones off back wall. Early racquet preparation and watch the height at which the ball hits the front wall and how hard it comes off your opponent's racquet.</p>
Cannot return ball from corners	<p>Too close to ball, turning shoulders into corner, jamming yourself. Get further from the ball and do not turn shoulders all the way into the corner so you DO NOT jam yourself.</p>



#### IV. How to Read Video

##### 1. Position

- Is the athlete in center court as much as possible?
- Is the athlete in ready position with feet stopped and set when the other player is shooting?
- Is the athlete properly positioned without feet sideways?
- In the back-court is the athlete a step and a swing away from their opponent when a good defensive shot is hit?

##### 2. Shots

- Is the athlete taking the right shot? Freeze the action prior to shooting and look to see if the best shot is being taken.
- Is the athlete keeping the ball out of center court?
- Are they hitting the side wall too much? Not enough?
- Are they over-running their backhand or forehand?
- Are they taking shots off the back-wall?
- Are they hitting too many shots into the back wall?

##### 3. Serves

- Are they varying their serves? Are they using too many serves for no reason?
- Did they change the serve when it was working?
- Do they need to improve their drive serve, lob serve, or Z serves?
- Do they use jam serves?
- Are they varying height, speed and angles, when necessary?
- Are they relocating properly after their drive serve, lob serve, or Z serves?
- Do/Can they serve with their backhand? Do they need this skill?
- Do they take their time and use the 10 second rule or do they rush?

##### 4. Footwork

- Are they tracking the ball properly out of the back corners? For Example: Are they doing the banana trajectory to ball?
- Are they staying away from the ball in the mid-court or are they too close?
- Do they take “small adjustment” steps or big steps to set their feet?
- Are they taking huge lunge steps or smaller more efficient steps?
- Are they off balance on one foot when they could be on two feet?



- Do they employ shuffle steps in mid-court?
- Are they using the cross over step so they are square to the side wall or are they hitting square to the front wall?
- Are they getting back to center court after shots?
- Are they balanced when relocating to center court?

#### 5. Stroke Mechanics

- Are they swinging flat or are they swinging on a vertical plane (the pendulum swing) on backhand or forehand?
- Do they have a proper backswing?
- Does their racquet stay above their waist during the rally?
- Do they use their lower body when hitting?
- Do they have the proper separation of lower and upper body when swinging?
- Do they have their hips in the loaded position prior to hitting?
- Is their stance too shallow?
- Are they stepping too far to the side?
- Are they opening their stance when they step?
- Do they have excess motion in their racquet preparation?
- Do they have excess body turn?
- Do they get their shoulders toward the forehand or backhand corner?
- Do they have to twist their wrist to make flat contact?
- Is their wrist and arm too stiff?
- Do they change the grip for forehand and backhand or use the same grip?

#### 6. Return of Serve

- Are they racquets length from the back wall and in the middle?
- Do they cross over or shuffle sideways?
- Do they try to kill the ball from the back court rather than get their opponent out of the middle by using passes and ceiling balls?
- Do they take their time and use the 10 second rule?

#### V. Drills for Teaching Skills

1. Video tape lesson, watch your mannerisms and movements, etc. Criticize yourself and how you could do a better job.
2. Have students you trust critique your presentation, and what you need to do to improve.
3. Have a mentor critique your presentation. Remember, it will be impossible to be perfect!!



## BENCHMARK 10 ASSESSMENT

1. A good instructor will start a private lesson by:
  - a. Explaining the rules
  - b. Explaining the forehand
  - c. Teaching grip
  - d. Asking for health history
  
2. Getting the following information can help instruction:
  - a. Personal history and former occupations
  - b. Political affiliation and former sports played
  - c. Health history and former sports experience
  - d. A and b only
  
3. The basic parts of a lesson are:
  - a. Introduction, skill assessment, demonstration, error detection, correction(s), closure
  - b. Goals, health assessment, occupation
  - c. Introduction, demonstration, correction, closure
  - d. Introduction, goals, health assessment, correction, closure
  
4. When setting up group lessons the pro should:
  - a. Set objectives for each lesson
  - b. Set methodology for each lesson
  - c. Set evaluation procedures for each lesson
  - d. All of the above
  
5. Bad habits in teaching include:
  - a. Using annoying phrases such as “um’ and “basically”
  - b. Close talking, i.e. invading a person’s personal space
  - c. Speaking in a boring monotone
  - d. All of the above
  
6. Error detection takes a long time to perfect because:
  - a. An instructor needs experience to learn methods of explanation
  - b. Racquetball is not an easy game to play
  - c. Racquets are always changing
  - d. The new student is not very experienced



## Appendix

### Appendix A

#### USA Racquetball Instructors Program Code of Ethics Agreement

*The USA Racquetball Instructors Program Code of Ethics is patterned after the United States Olympic Committee's Coaching Ethics Code. This Code of Ethics is intended to describe the highest standards of professional conduct that should be observed by all USA Racquetball Instructors Program members.*

#### A. General Principles

##### 1. Competence

Members strive to maintain the highest standards of excellence in their work. They recognize the boundaries of their particular competencies and the limitations of their expertise. They provide only those services and use only those techniques for which they are qualified through education, training, or experience. In those areas in which recognized professional standards do not yet exist, members exercise careful judgment and take appropriate precautions to protect the welfare of those with whom they work. They maintain knowledge of relevant professional information related to the services they render, and they recognize the need for ongoing education. Members make appropriate use of professional administrative resources.

##### 2. Integrity

Members seek to promote integrity in their use of all USA Racquetball Instructors Program information. Members are honest, fair, and respectful of others. In describing or reporting their qualifications, services, products, or fees, they do not make statements that are false, misleading, or deceptive. Members strive to be aware of their own belief systems, values, and needs, and limitations and the effect of these on their work. To the fullest extent, they attempt to clarify for relevant parties the roles they are performing and to function appropriately in accordance with those roles. Members avoid improper and potentially harmful dual relationships.

##### 3. Professional Responsibility

Members uphold professional standards of conduct, clarify their professional roles and obligations, accept appropriate responsibility for their behavior, and adapt their methods to the needs of different athletes. Members consult with, refer to, or cooperate with other professionals and institutions to the extent needed to serve the best interest of their students, or other professionals and institutions to the extent needed to serve the best interest of their students, or other recipients of their services. Members' moral standards and conduct are personal matters to the same degree as is true for any other person, except when member's conduct may compromise their professional responsibilities or reduce the public's trust in their profession.





4. Respect for Participants and Dignity

Members respect the fundamental rights, dignity, and worth of all participants. Members are aware of cultural, individual, and role differences including those due to age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status. Members try to eliminate the effect of biases in their work based on those factors, and they do not knowingly participate in or conduct unfair discriminatory practices.

5. Concern for Others' Welfare

Members are aware of their professional responsibilities to the community and the society in which they work and live. They apply and make public their knowledge of sport in order to contribute to human welfare. Members try to avoid misuse of their work. Members comply with the law and encourage the development of law and policies that serve the interest of sport. They are encouraged to contribute a portion of their professional time for little or no personal advantage.

All USA Racquetball Instructors Program members are required to sign and date this form and return it to the USA Racquetball Instructors Program office. No application or renewal for membership will be accepted without a properly-executed USA Racquetball Instructors Program Code of Ethics form provided.

**Participant**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

**USA Racquetball Instructors Program Instructors**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix B

### USA Racquetball Participant Welfare Policy

Consistent with the mission of USA Racquetball, the welfare of racquetball participants, especially minors, is of paramount concern. When any member, participant, coach, official, volunteer, or staff member is subjected to abuse, whether physical or sexual, it undermines the mission of USA Racquetball and is inconsistent with the best interests of the sport of player and of the athletes USA Racquetball serves.

***USA Racquetball is committed to promoting a safe environment for its members, participants, coaches, officials, volunteers and staff in all player disciplines.***

While there are limits to what USA Racquetball can do, e.g., at the local level because USA Racquetball does not own, operate or otherwise control gyms or racquetball clubs, USA Racquetball has adopted this policy to set forth the efforts it will undertake to promote a safe player environment, both solely and in partnership with other necessary parties, including member clubs, parents, athlete and the racquetball community.

1. Definition of Abuse. Abuse, including child abuse, is defined in various sources, such as state statutes, case law, sports organization, and professional association codes of conduct and training manuals, corporate and business workplace documents and human rights commission materials. USA Racquetball has not adopted any specific definition of abuse; rather, it has chosen to defer to such general sources and definitions for reference and application, depending upon the circumstances. Nonetheless, in general, the following conduct may be considered abusive:

A. Physical Abuse.

- a. Any physical contact with a participant that intentionally causes or is likely to cause the participant to sustain bodily harm or personal injury, including without limitation, striking, hitting, kicking, biting, shaking, shoving, forcing an athlete to train or compete when

seriously injured or mandating excessive exercise as a form of punishment;

- b. Any physical contact with a participant that intentionally creates or is likely to create a threat of bodily harm or personal injury;
- c. Giving alcohol or inappropriate drugs to a participant; or
- d. Any violation of applicable law involving physical contact, or that is specifically designed to protect minors.

Physical contact that is reasonably intended to coach, teach, or demonstrate a racquetball skill or to prevent or lessen injury does not constitute physical abuse. Infrequent, non-intentional physical contact, particularly contact that arises out of an error or a misjudgment on the part of the player, participant, or coach, does not constitute physical abuse.

B. Sexual Abuse

- a. Rape, incest, fondling, exhibitionism or sexual exploitation;
- b. Any form of sexual contact or inappropriate touching, unwanted physical contact, unwelcome advances or requests for sexual favors;
- c. Any form of wanton or obscene gesturing, lewd remarks or indecent exposure,
- d. Sexual abuse of a minor includes, without limitation:
  - i. Touching a minor participant for the purpose of causing the sexual arousal or gratification of either person or
  - ii. A minor participant touching any person, if the touching occurs at the request of or with the consent of such other person, for the sexual arousal or gratification of either person;
- e. Neither consent of the participant to the sexual abuse or contact, mistake as to the participant's age, nor the fact that the sexual abuse or contact did not take place at or conjunction with a racquetball function is a defense to a complaint of sexual abuse;
- f. Sexual abuse also includes sexual misconduct described in the Code of Ethics, including, but not limited to:



- i. Soliciting or engaging in sexual relations with a minor;
  - ii. Engaging in any behavior that utilizes the influence of a member's position as coach, judge, official or administrator to encourage sexual relations with an athlete or participants; or
  - iii. Engaging in sexual harassment by making unwelcome advances, requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, where such conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment; or
  - iv. Any violation of applicable law involving sexual misconduct or child abuse, or that is specifically designed to protect minors.
2. Legal Reporting Requirements. USA Racquetball will follow applicable law in reporting abusive situations to the proper authorities. If, in USA Racquetball's reasonable and good faith judgment, reporting to the proper authorities is necessary to protect a person from the possibility of further abuse, it may make such report even if not compelled by law to do so.
3. Reporting Suspected Abuse. Any person who reasonably and in good faith believes a member of USA Racquetball has abused another person, whether physical or sexual, such person may notify the USA Racquetball National
- a. Telephone Inquiries. At least one USA Racquetball staff member shall be trained to receive telephone inquiries regarding abuse. The staff members shall:
    - i. Inform the caller that a written and signed complaint must be received for USA Racquetball to initiate its grievance procedures against a member of USA Racquetball and offer to provide a copy of the grievance procedures to the caller;
    - ii. Advise the caller that USA Racquetball may be legally obligated to report the allegations to the proper authorities even if no complaint is filed;
    - iii. Encourage that the victim(s) seek professional help, if appropriate;
    - iv. Complete a Telephone Inquiry Form and submit it to the Executive Office;
      - 1. The Executive Office will determine, with the assistance of legal counsel if necessary, whether USA Racquetball has a legal reporting requirement based upon the inquiry and act accordingly;
      - 2. Telephone Inquiry Form will be filed and indexed by the alleged perpetrator and will become a part of any applicable misconduct/grievance file.
  - 4. Implementation of the Misconduct/Grievance Procedures. At least one USA Racquetball staff member shall be trained in the proper implementation of the member misconduct and grievance procedures contained in the USA Racquetball Bylaws.
    - a. The trained staff member will be designated to implement the procedures for each complaint.
    - b. The designated staff member will determine whether the accused is a member of USA Racquetball:
      - i. If the accused is a member of USA Racquetball, the matter should proceed in accordance with the existing applicable policy;
      - ii. If the accused is not a member of USA Racquetball, the staff member should notify the complaining party of the inability of USA Racquetball to pursue the matter internally, as a courtesy to the complaining party;
    - c. If not already completed, the Executive Office will determine with the assistance of legal counsel if necessary, whether USA Racquetball has a legal reporting requirement based upon the complaint and act accordingly;
    - d. The designated staff member will "shepherd" the complaint through the process set forth in the USA Racquetball Bylaws.
  - 5. Confidentiality. Because of legal reporting requirements, USA Racquetball cannot guarantee confidentiality in misconduct/grievance matters. However, USA Racquetball will treat such matters with as much confidentiality as is possible under the circumstances and with the sensitivity they deserve.
  - 6. Criminal Background Checks of Individual Members: As a condition to being granted the privilege of membership in USA Racquetball, individuals applying for professional membership must submit to a criminal background check which is consistent with USA Racquetball's "Background Screening Policy." Individuals given a "Green Light" consistent with that policy will not be denied the privilege of membership in USA Racquetball, provided all other criteria for the category of membership are met. Individuals given a "Red Light" consistent with the policy may be denied the privilege of membership in USA Racquetball.

USA Racquetball will continually monitor and review the individuals that are subject to criminal background searches, with the primary goal being to safeguard athletes and other participants with proactive measures while conforming to legal norms and industry best practices.



7. Athlete Member Advisement. Upon obtaining membership in USA Racquetball, an enclosure will be mailed with the Athlete Membership Card advising athlete members of his/her role in maintain the athletes' own safety and USA Racquetball' limited role in local player clubs, event and activities.
8. Event Sanctions: AS a condition to being granted a USA Racquetball sanction for an event, the applicant must certify that no persons permanently ineligible for USA Racquetball membership will be associated with the event in any capacity, including, but not limited to, volunteers and meet support personnel.
9. Advertising: AS a condition to being permitted by USA Racquetball to advertise in its publications, on its web site or through other USA Racquetball media, advertisers must certify that no persons permanently ineligible for USA Racquetball membership are or will be associated with the advertiser's racquetball related activities or the position, activity, or event it intends to publicize.
10. Hiring/Training of USA Racquetball Staff/Volunteers.
  - a. USA Racquetball staff members must submit to a criminal background check consistent with USA Racquetball' "Background Screening Policy." Individuals not given a "Green Light" consistent with that policy prior to their employment may not be hired. Individuals not given a "Green Light" on any subsequent criminal background check may be subject to dismissal. USA Racquetball shall also check at least two (2) references for each applicant who, if hired, would regularly work directly with minors.
  - b. All USA Racquetball staff members will be informed about the Child Welfare Policy, which is included as an appendix in the Employee Policies and Procedures Handbook, and made aware of its importance to our members and our organization.
  - c. The members of the USA Racquetball Board of Directors must submit to a criminal background consistent with the Background Screening Policy. Individuals not given a "Green Light" consistent with that policy may be subject to removal.
11. Standards of Behavior. To promote a safe player environment for USA Racquetball' activities and event and to lessen the likelihood that an abusive situation could develop, participants must adhere to the following USA Racquetball Standards of Behavior:
  - a. Avoid Being Alone with a Minor. Racquetball is a sport that lends itself to one-on-one situations between a coach and a player. Avoid being alone with a child or any group of children in a private setting (e.g. locker room, bathroom, office, vehicle or residence), and avoid being alone with a child or any group of children in any place that is inappropriate to the coach-athlete-instructor relationship. When a one-on-one situation is necessary, such as private coaching lessons or conversations, conduct the activity within the view of another adult.
  - b. Physical Contact. Racquetball is a sport that creates opportunities for physical contact between a coach and a player. Physical contact is acceptable when it is reasonably intended to coach, teach, or demonstrate a racquetball skill or to prevent or lessen injury (e.g. spotting, catching). However, care should be taken to ensure that such contact is not invasive or sensitive areas of the body.
  - c. Parental Monitoring. Parents are encouraged to become as active as reasonably possible in monitoring the activity/event.
12. Education of the Racquetball Community. USA Racquetball will provide or cause to be provided education for members of the racquetball community geared towards promoting a safe racquetball environment as follows:
  - a. Through a designated section of its web site with content being updated as necessary;
  - b. Through each of its magazine publications with at least one article per year;
  - c. At each National and Regional Congress through a live presentation available to Congress attendees;
  - d. On line or electronically through the safety/risk management certification or other USA Racquetball University courses;
  - e. Through brochures and /or posters available to members and member clubs;
  - f. At least annually in designed athlete meetings;
  - g. At least annually to designated athletes' parents.
13. Communications. USA Racquetball will consistently communicate:
  - a. Its mission and that physical and sexual abuse are inconsistent with its mission and the best interest of the sport of racquetball and its participants;
  - b. Its commitment to and work towards a safe environment for all racquetball participants.
14. Document Retention. USA Racquetball will permanently retain misconduct/grievance files and materials.
15. Policy Review. This policy shall be reviews at least annually and updated as necessary.



## Appendix C

**Liability Release and Indemnification:** prior to participation, at least one of the participant's parent or legal guardians if the participant is not yet 18 years old must sign this form. Participant's signatures are required if 18 years of age or older and are helpful when age-appropriate.

Name of participant: \_\_\_\_\_ (the player) DOB \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Other Parent/Guardian Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

In consideration of \_\_\_\_\_ (insert racquetball club name) allowing the player to participate in sports activity, class, competition, team, including non-racquetball activities such as dance, cheerleading, swimming, and playground activities (hereinafter referred to as the "Activity"), I, and if I am not yet 18 years old my parent or legal guardians, agree to bound as follows (the term "I" in this release refers to both the player and his or her parents or legal guardians):

- 1. Acknowledgment and Assumption of Risk.** I understand that the Activity involves risks of serious bodily injury, including permanent disability, paralysis, and death, which may be caused by player actions or inactions, those of others participating in the Activity, the conditions in which the activity takes place, the negligence of the "Released Parties" named below, or other causes. I further understand that there may be other risks either not known to me or not readily foreseeable at this time. I fully accept and assume all such risks and all responsibility for losses, cost, and damages that may result from the Activity. I hereby give my approval of and consent to the player's participation in the Activity. I assume all risks and hazards incidental to the Activity and to transportation to and from the Activity.
- 2. Representation of Ability to Participate.** I understand the nature of the Activity, and I represent that the player is qualified, in good health, and in proper physical condition to participate in the Activity. Should I ever believe that any of the above representations have become untrue, or if I should ever believe that the Activity is not safe or is no longer safe for the player, then it will be my responsibility immediately to discontinue the player's participation in the Activity.
- 3. Release.** I hereby release, acquit, covenant not to sue, and forever discharge \_\_\_\_\_ (insert player's club name), its owner, officers, administrators, employees, agents, volunteers, sponsors,



advertisers, coaches and supervisors, and the owners or renters of any facilities within which the Activity is conducted, their respective agents and employees, and all other persons providing facilities or assisting in the conduct of the Activity and in the transportation of participants to and from the Activity (collectively the "Released Parties") of and from any and all actions, causes of action, claims, demands, liability, losses or damages of whatever name or nature, including but not limited to those arising from or in any way related to the negligence of any of the Released Parties, that arise out of or are connected in any way to the player participation in the Activity and the transportation of the above named player to and from the Activity (collectively the "Released Claims").

4. **Indemnification.** I will defend, indemnify and hold harmless the Released Parties from (that is, to reimburse and be responsible for) any loss or damage, including but not limited to costs and reasonable attorney's fees (including the cost of any of the Released Claims.)

**I have read and understood this acknowledgement and assumption of risks, representation of ability to participate, release, indemnification, and custodial parents. I understand that by signing this document, I am giving up substantial rights. I am executing this document voluntarily and with full knowledge of its significance.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Player

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Other Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## Appendix D – Drills and Drill Class Worksheets

### Drills

#### I. Principles of Drilling

##### A. Drill Preparation

Drills should be set up with precise goals in mind for each lesson.

1. The Instructor should always have a lesson plan prepared in advance of each lesson. Things can happen to alter the original lesson plan, but the Instructor must still be prepared.
2. The Instructor should have drills prepared for the student in advance for practicing alone and playing games with their friends. Make sure each drill has a goal that is well defined for the student with number of repetitions, places to hit drills, time limit, and a clearly defined objective for the student. *BE PREPARED*
3. Stick with the same drill until you get positive results from the student. Jumping around from one drill to the next will only frustrate and confuse the student.
4. Once a specific goal has been achieved with a drill, set a higher goal immediately.
5. Remember to always have fun! (Use targets on the wall and floor for drills. The athlete may want to use an ipod or similar device for music to alleviate boredom. Be sure to let the student's take breaks from their practice sessions if their concentration wanders.

##### B. Lesson Plan

Follow a lesson plan.

1. Set a pre-determined number of weeks where the student should be practicing drills. Each session should be approximately 20 – 30 minutes in length. Specific instructions should be given to the student for each practice session.
2. The Instructor should have the student keep notes on their progress. The student should be tracking their progress so goals are reached and the Instructor has feedback from the student's practice sessions.
3. The Instructor should make notes immediately after each lesson. The notes should include what material was covered, what did or didn't work, problem areas, homework given, topics to cover next time, a date and time for the next lesson, and any other information that is pertinent from the lesson.
4. The Instructor should make up handouts to give their students with an overview of the lesson and a place for notes. Let the student make notes from the lesson. A student will not be able to retain all of the information the Instructor gives during a lesson, so help them out. The instructor should help the student write down what homework exercises the Instructor wants the student to complete and any areas the student should be paying extra attention. The student is paying good money for the Instructor's expertise and should be given something to refer to after they leave. If the Instructor doesn't want to make handouts on different topics for their students, then have paper and pencil available so the student can write their own notes and ask the Instructor questions before they leave. Customer Service is a huge part of selling lessons so go the extra mile and watch your business grow and grow!





### C. Basics

Work on the basics first and then add difficulty.

1. Give the student A to Z information about the instruction topic. Be careful not to give too much information to the student or they will become overwhelmed.
2. The Instructor must relate information to the student effectively. ALWAYS REMEMBER – There are several different ways to say the same thing. The Instructor needs to keep trying different ways of saying the same thing until positive results are seen from the student. It doesn't matter how many times an Instructor tells a student to step into the ball if the information isn't getting through to the student. It is the Instructor's responsibility to explain all information thoroughly to every student.
3. It is important not to jump around from one drill to another. The instructor doesn't want to confuse a student by giving them too much information in one lesson. The Instructor wants the student's full attention on one drill at a time. If the Instructor gives the student too much to think about during a lesson, the student will not retain what the Instructor has tried to teach them. The student's level of frustration will rise if they don't see the instant results from drills the Instructor is asking them to complete, so the Instructor should stick with a drill until the student sees positive results.
4. The Instructor needs to remember to set a goal for each drill. Get the student in the habit of making goals and following through on those goals now!

### D. Explain & Demonstrate

The Instructor should be explaining and demonstrating drills properly for the student.

1. An Instructor should always be trying to increase their knowledge about drills. The best way to make sure the Instructor thoroughly understands a drill is to practice and learn the drill for their benefit. While it is preferable that the Instructor be able to explain and demonstrate a drill effectively to every student, if the Instructor can't effectively demonstrate a drill they have asked their student to perform, they should at least be able to use a video resource, or another source such as an expert invited to practice with the students
2. The Instructor should be able to explain how a drill will be successful in fixing a specific problem. If the Instructor doesn't comprehend how a drill works and why they are using a drill, the Instructor may be misleading the student.
3. The Instructor must be able to demonstrate a drill or skill properly to a student. Students get images in their minds about what something should look like from watching their Instructors. Regardless of whether or not the Instructor plays with proper stroke mechanics, the Instructor must demonstrate skills with proper mechanics during a lesson. The Instructor should work on their own proper stroke mechanics if they want to be a successful player as well as Instructor.





## E. Visualization

Drills should be preceded by visualization of the perfect shot.

1. Drills should be preceded by visualization (mental imagery) of the perfect shot and footwork. The Instructor should have the student think about specific focus points during a drill or play session (ball drops, footwork, eyes on the ball, contact point, and stroke mechanics). The student should visualize doing the drill over and over in their mind flawlessly.
2. Help the student key in on important areas to cover in their visualization process. It is important to help define key areas to focus on with the student. Give the student a time limit for visualizing and define the environment that the student should be in to complete the exercises. The Instructor should remember to tell the student that the importance of drilling is the quality – not quantity. The perfection of drills is judged by the accomplishment of the goals. Twenty minutes of good drilling is better than an hour of non-goal hitting.

## II. Instructor Guidelines

### A. Drills by Level

Although the drills on the following pages are recommended for certain skill levels, those guidelines can be altered. It is conceivable that a beginning player who is a good athlete would be able to complete some advanced or intermediate drills. By the same token, an advanced skill level player may not be able to complete some of the conditioning drills and they may need to be modified accordingly.

#### 1. Beginner Drills

Instructors should use extra caution with drills at all levels of play. Instructors should be aware of out of shape players, smokers, and other health problems. Before having any player start a conditioning program, the player should consult with their doctor.

#### 2. Student History

Find out as much history as possible about the student prior to a lesson. This information should include:

- What level of play is the student?
- How long have they been playing racquetball?
- Have they ever taken a lesson or received instruction from someone else?
- Is the lesson going to be one lesson, or a series of lessons?
- Are they looking for improvements in recreational or competitive play?
- Do they have any health or physical problems of which you should be aware?
- How old are they?
- Have they played other sports?
- Why do they feel like they need to take a lesson?
- What does the student feel they need to work on in their game?
- What does the student feel their strengths are weaknesses are
- Will they do drills alone on the court, or will they only play?



### III. Drills

#### Quickness, Footwork, Agility, and Endurance

Note: The term Ready Position or Athletic Position means having your feet spread slightly wider than shoulder width apart and your weight evenly distributed on the balls of the feet. The racquetball racquet should be a waist height or slightly above with a backhand grip. The term Sport Specificity means making drills as sport specific as possible. Sport Specificity for racquetball means six to eight second bursts of activities for skill and footwork training. Give specific guidelines for the student to follow when completing the following drills. Give the student a goal for each drill that includes: time, positions, and number of repetitions. Each drill has a designation:

- Beginner Novice and D player (b)
- Intermediate B & C player (I)
- Advanced A & Open player (a)

Please make a note of this when giving drills to students.

#### A. Conditioning Drills

##### 1. Lateral Movement

- Shuffle: To shuffle means stepping and sliding laterally from one side of the court to the other. When shuffling, both feet should be pushing, don't let the trail foot drag. Make sure both feet push off with each step. Keep your center of gravity low, knees bent, and go as fast as you can back and forth. (b, I, a)
- Shuffle and Touch: The shuffle and touch drill requires shuffling from sidewall to sidewall and touching the floor with your hand once in the middle of the shuffle. (b, I, a)
- Shuffle and Touch Reverse: Begin the shuffle and touch reverse drill at the short line and shuffle to the sidewall, reverse shuffle and go laterally when you get back to the short line. (I, a)
- Shuffle with a Partner (mirror drill): Partner A reacts to partner B who is controlling the shuffling direction. (b, I, a)
- Little Feet: Tap your feet on the ground in an athletic position with your knees bent, a low center of gravity, and your feet shoulder distance apart. Tap your feet as fast as possible and simulate a firing machine gun. (b, I, a)
- Ready Position from Little Feet: The athlete will move from a ready position to a little feet and back to a ready position upon command from a training partner. (I, a)
- Shuffle on Command: Partner A reacts to partner B who is commanding the direction of the shuffle drill. (b, I, a)
- High Knees / Little Feet / Skip: Upon command or clapping of hands, the athlete alternates the three drills (high knees / little/skip). The athlete should lift one knee high and skip with the trail foot for high knees. The athlete should skip from sidewall to sidewall as quickly as possible for the skip drill. (b, I, a)

##### 2. Plyometrics Drills

Plyometrics drills involve powerful muscular contractions in response to the loading of the muscles used. Plyo-quickness drills involve rapid muscular responses.



Use an elevated box with the following drills:

- **Up and Down:** Jump onto a box and down again using both feet to complete the up and down drill. Be sure your whole foot lands on the box. More advanced athletes can complete this exercise using one foot instead of two. (l, a)
- **Side to Side:** The athlete should leap laterally onto the box and leap down to the other side and back again. (l, a)
- **Length of Box:** The athlete should leap laterally and diagonally to the far side of the box, leap onto the ground, and repeat. (l, a)
- **Run on Box:** The athlete should place one foot on the box and one foot on the ground. The athlete should then alternate feet positions in a rapid motion. (l, a)

Try to improve your time. Make the box higher, wider, and longer to increase difficulty. (l, a)

Create a hexagon using tape on the floor. The lines should be between 6 and 16 inches apart, depending on the degree of difficulty needed for the skill level. The following Plyometrics drills should be completed using the hexagon:

- **Forward Jumps:** Jump forward as quickly as possible into each hexagon panel. Continue around the hexagon. (l, a)
- **Backward Jumps:** Jump backward as quickly as possible into each hexagon panel. Continue around the hexagon. (l, a)
- **Lateral Jumps:** Jump laterally in a “skiing” motion over each panel in the hexagon. (l, a)
- **One Foot Jumps:** Complete the forward, backward, and lateral jumps on one foot. (l, a)

Try to improve your time. Increase the difficulty level by making the hexagon panels wider apart. (l, a)

Complete the following drills using the short line and service line in the court:

- **Front & Back Jumps:** Jump over the short line and service line in the court. (b, l, a)
- **Side-To-Side Jumps:** Jump side to side over the short line and back as rapidly as possible. (b, l, a)
- **Shuffle Over and Back:** Jump from the short line to the service line and back again as quickly as possible. On one foot immediately push off towards the other line. (b, l, a)
- **Straddle Together:** Jump diagonally from the short line to the service line and back again. Start at one side of the service zone and continue to the other end. (b, l, a)
- **Single Leg Jumps:** Complete front and back jumps, and side-to-side jumps on one foot. (b, l, a)

### 3. Back Wall to Front Wall Drills

- a. **Shuffle Shuttle:** The athlete shuffles from the service line to the front wall and runs to the short line. The athlete then shuffles from the short line to the front wall and runs to the receiving line. The athlete then shuffles to the front wall and sprints to the back wall to complete one set. (a)
- b. **Shuffle Shuttle with Touch:** This is the same drill as the shuffle; shuttle except the athlete reaches and touches the floor when they get to the respective lines. (a)
- c. **Lines Run & Shuffle:** The athlete should run forward from the front wall to the service line, shuffle laterally at the service line and run to the short line, shuffle along the short line and run to the receiving line, shuffle along the receiving line and sprint to the back wall. Once the athlete gets to the back wall, the process works backwards toward the front wall. (a)



- d. Run with Change of Direction: The athlete runs forward, backward, and sideways depending upon the training partners commands. (a)
- e. Star Drill: The athlete starts out in a ready position in center court. The athlete then moves to the back left corner of the court and skeleton swings a backhand if right handed or a forehand if left handed. The athlete then sprints back to center court and gets in the ready position. The athlete then moves to the front left corner and skeleton swings. The athlete then moves back to center court, gets in a ready position, heads for the back right corner, and skeleton swings. The athlete moves back to center court, gets in a ready position, heads for the front right corner, and skeleton swings. The athlete moves back to center court, gets in a ready position, heads laterally to the right sidewall, and skeleton swings. The athlete moves back to center court, gets in a ready position, heads laterally to the left sidewall, skeleton swings, and returns to center court. This completes the six-point star drill. Two additional points can be added in the middle of the back and front walls to create an eight-point star drill. It is important to move as if you were in a racquetball match to all points. For example, don't turn and run with your back facing the front wall. In a match, you would face the front wall and backpedal simulating a racquetball movement. (b, l, a)
- f. Panel Drill: This drill is similar to the star drill, but the athlete is moving towards panel seams and touching the wall at the seams of the court. (l, a)
- g. Racquetball Aerobics: This drill can be done with a partner or by yourself. This drill simulates a never-ending rally. The player(s) keep the ball in play no matter how many bounces the ball takes. This drill works on aerobic conditioning and footwork as well as hitting skills all at once. (b, l, a)
- h. Ball Drops: A partner holds a ball at shoulder height and drops the ball when they are ready. The other player must run and retrieve the ball before it bounces twice. The farther the player is away from the ball, the harder the drill becomes. Try this drill using different ready positions (straight on and sideways using peripheral vision). (b, l, a)
- i. Get Ups: A player sits with their back to the back wall. Upon command, the player gets to their feet and sprints to the front wall. (b, l, a)

## B. Racquet Control Drills

Consistency, Swing Development, Coordination

NOTE: The term **Ready Position or Athletic Position** means having your feet spread slightly wider than shoulder width apart and your weight evenly distributed on the balls of the feet. The racquet should be at waist height or slightly above with a backhand grip.

The term **Sport Specificity** means making drills as sport specific as possible. Sport Specificity for racquetball means **six to eight second bursts** of activities for skill and footwork training. Give specific guidelines for the student to follow when completing the following drills. Give the student a goal for each drill that includes: time, positions, and number of repetitions.

Each drill has a designation:

- Beginner Novice and D player (b)
- Intermediate B & C player (l)
- Advanced A & Open player (a)

Please make a note of this when giving drills to students.



1. Without a Ball
  - a. Skeleton Swing: Practice swinging forehand and backhand strokes without a ball. (b, l, a)
  - b. Resistance Swing: Have a partner hold onto your racquet as you try to swing the racquet. The partner should let go of the racquet after a few seconds of resistance carefully. (b, l, a)
  - c. Sidewall Line Guides: Strips of tape are placed in the trajectory of kill, passing, and ceiling ball shots. The athlete should skeleton swing along the guidelines. (b, l, a)
  - d. Racquetball Set Ups: Set up your partner with a ball and have them catch the ball, with the same hand they would be swinging the racquet, where they would want to make contact with the ball in an actual rally. This aids a player's judgment and teaches them a proper spatial relationship between them and the ball. (b, l)
  
2. With a Ball
  - a. Air Drills: The athlete should bounce the ball off the racquet in the air and continue bouncing for an extended period. The athlete can shuffle and bounce the ball off the racquet face and alternate forehand and backhand grips for variety. (b, l)
  - b. Air Drill Variations: The athlete can vary the height of the bounce off the racquet face. The player can add variety to this drill by hitting the ball off the sidewall as many times as possible at shoulder height. Use a partner to hit balls in the air back and forth to one another. Have players change directions in circles or running around the court to work on difficulty and added concentration skills. If there are a number of people who can do this drill, set up relay teams and vary the rules for variety. (b, l, a)
  - c. Floor Drills: The athlete should bounce the ball off the racquet face and into the floor like dribbling a basketball. The athlete can shuffle while dribbling the racquetball and alternate forehand and backhand grips for variety. (b, l)
  - d. Floor Drill Variations: The athlete can vary the height of the ball bounce off the floor. The player can vary this drill by hitting the ball off the sidewall as many times as possible at shoulder height or lower. Use a partner to hit balls into the floor back and forth to one another. Have players change directions in circles or running around the court to work on difficulty and added concentration skills. If there are a number of people who can do this drill, set up relay teams and vary the rules for variety. (b, l, a)
  - e. Wall Drills: The athlete can bounce the ball off the sidewall and repeat again to improve control with their forehand or backhand. The player can let the ball bounce onto the floor before returning it or take the ball out of the air for increased difficulty. (b, l, a)
  - f. Partner Tap Drills: The athlete and a partner can hit balls back and forth to one another to return in the air. Both people work on control and hand eye coordination skills. You can make the drill harder by going faster, harder, and increasing or decreasing the distance between the partners. (l, a)
  
3. With a Prop
  - a. Birdie Ball: Two or more players can hit shuttlecocks back and forth to each other for increased control and racquet speed. (b, l, a)
  - b. Frisbee Toss: Two or more players can simulate a backhand stroke by throwing Frisbees back and forth to one another. (b, l, a)
  - c. Target Hitting: Players position targets in certain areas around the court to work on aim and shot control. Players can put targets on the front wall, sidewalls, short lines, or back corners. (b, l, a)



- d. Mat Drills: The player skeleton swings across mats built up to waist height to flatten out their swing. Mats can be lowered to simulate kill shots as players improve. (b, l, a)
- e. Mirror Drills: An athlete can practice stroke mechanics in front of a mirror to visualize proper strokes. (b, l, a)

### C. Basic Hitting Drills

#### Execution of Setups From all Locations

NOTE: The term Ready Position or Athletic Position means having your feet spread slightly wider than shoulder width apart and your weight evenly distributed on the balls of the feet. The racquetball racquet should be a waist height or slightly above with a backhand grip. The term Sport Specificity means making drills as sport specific as possible. Sport Specificity for racquetball means six to eight second bursts of activities for skill and footwork training.

Give specific guidelines for the student to follow when completing the following drills. Give the student a goal for each drill that includes: time, positions, and number of repetitions.

Each drill has a designation:

- Beginner Novice and D player (b)
- Intermediate B & C player (l)
- Advanced A & Open player (a)

Please make a note of this when giving drills to students.

#### 1. Drop and Hit Drills

A player drops and hits the ball from several locations on the court. The player executes forehand and backhand shots using this drill. The player should practice passing, pinching, ceiling, off the back wall, splats, while varying locations. Many varieties of shots can be practiced in this manner. (b, l, a)

#### 2. Toss and Hit Drills

The player tosses the ball to the right and left, steps into the ball, and executes shots using their forehand and backhand. All variations of shots should be practiced in this manner. The player can also toss the ball into the air and hit the ball before it bounces onto the floor. (l, a)

#### 3. Turn and Hit Drills

The player tosses the ball to the right and left. The player should square up to the sidewall, shuffle to the ball, and execute a shot. The player can practice several varieties of shots using the turn and hit drill. (b, l, a)

#### 4. Off the Back Wall Drills

The player tosses the ball into the back wall and strikes the ball as if playing the ball off the back wall. The player should practice all varieties of shots from several positions with their forehand and backhand. (b, l, a)

#### 5. Toss Into the Floor

This drill is the same as the off the back wall drill except the ball is tossed into the floor and hit as it rebounds off the back wall. If the player is allowed to hit the ball after it bounces on the floor, this



drill is for beginner and intermediate players (b, I). If the player has to contact the ball in the air before it hits the floor, the drill is for advanced players. (a)

6. Setup Off the Front Wall

The player hits a shot off the front wall that comes off the back wall for a setup. The player must execute a specific shot off the back wall from the setup. (b, I, a)

7. Setup Off the Front Wall 2

The player hits a shot that gives them a set up off the front wall. The player must execute a specific shot before the ball bounces twice. (b, I, a)

8. Basic Angle Setups

A player hits a setup into the sidewall, off the front wall, and into the sidewall again. This can be a setup shot that hits the front wall and angles off the sidewall. The player must execute a specific shot with the setup before the ball bounces twice. (b, I, a)

D. Offensive Shot Drills

**Pass Shot Drills – Down The Line and Cross Court Drills Complete Alone**

**Kill Shot Drills – Straight In, Pinch, Reverse Pinch, Kill Pass, and Splat Drills Completed Alone**

***Practice passing and kill shots in all of the following drill examples***

NOTE: The term **Ready Position or Athletic Position** means having your feet spread slightly wider than shoulder width apart and your weight evenly distributed on the balls of the feet. The racquet should be a waist height or slightly above with a backhand grip. The term **Sport Specificity** means making drills as sport specific as possible. Sport Specificity for racquetball means **six to eight second bursts** of activities for skill and footwork training.

Give specific guidelines for the student to follow when completing the following drills. Give the student a goal for each drill that includes: time, positions, and number of repetitions.

Each drill has a designation:

- Beginner Novice and D player (b)
- Intermediate B & C player (I)
- Advanced A & Open player (a)

Please make a note of this when giving drills to students.

1. Drills to Be Completed Alone

- Drop And Hit Drill:** A player drops and hits the ball from several locations on the court. This drill should be done with the forehand and backhand and the player should keep track of their results. (b, I, a)
- Toss And Hit Drill:** The player tosses the ball to the right and left, steps into the ball, and executes shots using their forehand and backhand. Pick a specific shot to practice. The player can also toss the ball into the air and hit the ball before it bounces onto the floor. (I, a)
- Off The Back Wall Drill:** The player tosses the ball into the back wall and strikes the ball as if playing the ball off the back wall. The player should pick a specific shot to hit from several positions with their forehand and backhand. (b, I, a)





- d. **Setups Off the Front Wall Drill:** The player hits a shot off the front wall that comes off the back wall for a setup. The player must execute a specific offensive shot off the back wall with the setup. (b, l, a)
  - e. **Basic Angle Drill:** A player hits a setup into the sidewall, off the front wall, and into the sidewall again, or a shot that hits the front wall and angles off the sidewall. The player must execute a specific offensive shot with the setup before the ball bounces twice. (b, l, a)
2. Drills to Be Completed With a Partner
- a. **Court Cross Drill:** Partners practice hitting cross-court shots back and forth to one another. The positions shots can vary from front to deep court. (b, l, a)
  - b. **Return of Shots:** A partner hits a setup shot to you and you return a specific shot. Vary the position you are starting from to return shots to encourage footwork and increased difficulty. Create as much variety as possible with this drill. The shots and position options that can be practiced will keep you busy for a while. (b, l, a)
  3. **Target Hitting:** Players place targets in certain positions around the court to work on aim and control with their shots. Players can put targets on the front wall, sidewalls, short lines, or back corners to work on specific shots. (b, l, a)
  4. **Short Line Quickness Drill:** A player reacts to balls they hit into the front wall in rapid succession from the short line. The player can get closer or farther away from the front wall to increase or decrease difficulty (five-foot line, short line, and front line). (b, l, a)
  5. **Pinch & Re-Pinch Drill:** The player gets into center court and hits a pinch shot into the right corner and immediately moves their feet to get into position to execute a pinch shot into the left corner as the ball rebounds off the sidewall from the original shot. (l, a)
  6. **Three Pinch & Kill Drill:** The player hits three pinches in a row and then a kill shot in succession. (l, a)
  7. **Three Pinch & Pass Drill:** The player hits three pinches in a row and then a pass shot in succession. (l, a)
  8. **Fly Kill / Short Hop Drill:** A partner attempts fly kill and short hop returns off of lob and ½ lob serves. (l, a)
  9. **Short Line Quickness Game:** A player reacts to balls hit into the front wall in rapid succession from the short line by a partner. The partners hit the ball back and forth to each other as quickly as possible. The players can get closer or farther away from the front wall in increase or decrease difficulty (five-foot line, short line, and front line.) (b, l, a)
  10. **Front Wall Kill Drill:** A partner hits a setup shot into the front wall. You try to kill the ball immediately. (b, l, a)

E. Defensive Shot Drills

NOTE: The term **Ready Position or Athletic Position** means having your feet spread slightly wider than shoulder width apart and your weight evenly distributed on the balls of the feet. The racquetball racquet should be a waist height or slightly above with a backhand grip.

The term **Sport Specificity** means making drills as sport specific as possible. Sport Specificity for racquetball means **six to eight second bursts** of activities for skill and footwork training.

Give specific guidelines for the student to follow when completing the following drills. Give the student a goal for each drill that includes time, positions, and number of repetitions.





Each drill has a designation:

- Beginner Novice and D player (b)
- Intermediate B & C player (l)
- Advanced A & Open player (a)

Please make a note of this when giving drills to students.

1. Ceiling Ball Drills To Be Completed Alone
  - a. Drop and Hit Drill: Drop and hit the ball and practice hitting ceiling balls with your forehand and backhand from middle court and along the alleys. As your skill level increases, practice hitting and re-hitting. (b, l, a)
  - b. Rally Drill: Practice hitting ceiling balls in succession without a break. Keep track of how many you hit accurately and track your results. Hit ceiling balls from the same position and then move around to practice control. (b, l, a)
  - c. Down The Line To Cross Court Drill: Practice hitting a down the line ceiling ball and immediately follow that shot up with a crosscourt ceiling ball. Continue this drill as long as you can track your results. (b, l, a)
  - d. Three Ceiling Balls To Offensive Shot Drill: Hit three ceiling balls in a row and then attempt an offensive shot. Complete this drill in succession without a break. Keep track of your results. (l, a)
2. Drills to Be Completed With a Partner
  - a. Rally Drill: Practice hitting ceiling balls back and forth with a partner. Keep track of how many you hit accurately and track your results. Hit ceiling balls from the same position and then move around to practice control. (b, l, a)
  - b. Down the Line To Cross Court Drill: Practice hitting a down the line ceiling ball and have your partner hit a cross-court ceiling ball and then repeat. Continue this drill as long as you can and track your results. Switch the order half way through the practice session. (b, l, a)
  - c. Endurance Drill: One player hits a ceiling ball and runs to touch the short line and gets back into position in time to strike another ceiling ball that is hit by their partner who takes off for the short line and hurries to get back into position for the ceiling ball that their partner hit. (a)
  - d. Triangle Drill: This is a ceiling ball drill completed by three players. Player A hits a ceiling ball and moves into center court. Player B in center court moves to the back left corner and Player C moves from the back left corner to the back right corner to hit a ceiling ball. The ceiling ball is always hit to the right, so the rotation of the three players goes center to left to right. The rotation can be reversed to add variety. (a)
  - e. Corner Drill: This drill is the same as the triangle drill but four people play. One player goes in each corner of the court and rotation can move to the right or left as desired. (a)
3. Around the Wall Drills Completed Alone
  - a. Rally Drill: Drop and hit the ball and execute around the wall shots. As your skill level increases, hit one around the wall shot after another without stopping. (b, l, a)
  - b. Around The Wall Shot To A Ceiling Ball: Execute an around the wall shot and follow it up with a ceiling ball. Keep hitting these shots in succession for continued practice. (b, l, a)
  - c. Around The Wall Shots And Returns: Hit an around the wall shot and execute a variety of offensive shots out of the back corner off the back wall. (b, l, a)



F. Serve and Serve Return Drills

Drive, Z-Serve, Lobs, Angles, Speeds, Heights, Cracks.

Any level of play can complete all of the following drills.

1. Service Drills Completed Alone

a. **Repetition Service Drills**

- **Vary Location / Angle of Serves:** Repeat all services in as many positions as possible in the service zone to create variety.
- **Vary Speed / Height of Serves:** By varying the speed and height of all serves, many more serves are created.

b. **Serve And Relocation Out Of Service Zone:** Practice serving and relocating out of the service zone as often as possible. If you only practice serving, you develop a habit of staying in the box after you serve and become easy to pass during a rally.

c. **Target Service Drills:** Tape cans or place bags on the front wall or floor where a perfect serve would strike the front wall or floor. Having a target can increase service accuracy quickly.

2. Serves & Serve Returns With A Partner

a. **Serve & Serve Return:** Hit a serve and serve return with a partner and stop the rally. Isolate the serve and serve return as much as possible.

b. **Same Serve – All Returns:** The server must hit the same serve and the receiver can hit whatever shot they want for the return. Partners can play a game or have two shot rallies.

c. **All Serves – Same Return:** The server can hit any serve and the receiver must hit the same shot, no matter what. Partners can play a game or have two shot rallies.

d. **All Serves – All Returns:** The server can hit any serve and the receiver can hit any shot. Partners can play a game or have two shot rallies.

e. **Three Shot Game:** Play a game with a partner where there is a serve; serve return, and one additional shot in the rally. After three shots have been hit in a rally, the rally ends.

G. Practice Game Drills

The following is a list of practice games that can be played to improve your game.

1. Short Line Game With Lobs

One player serves a lob serve or other defensive serve from the service zone. The other player begins the rally in the doubles box and has to return the lob serve to start the rally. (a)

2. Serve From Other Locations

One player serves from backcourt so the other player has to return a shot in a rally. Scoring is the same as it would be in a regular game. (b, l, a)

3. One Serve Game

Play a game where you only get one service opportunity instead of two. If you come up short, long, etc., it is a side out. (a)

4. Objective Game

A player can earn extra points for certain shots that are designated before the game starts. For example, my opponent has a poor backhand so we would designate backhand kill shots to be worth two points instead of one. The players can also decide to take points away for errors if they wish. (b, l, a)



5. All Serve / All Return Game  
This game is based on one serve and serve return only. Players will complete two shots each rally and keep score based on the accuracy of the shots. The players can have varied serves and returns, or the same serve and return depending on the goal of the drill. (b, l, a)
6. The 7 / 11 Point Game  
The 7 / 11 point game is handicapped system for players of different ability levels. If an advanced player is playing an intermediate player, the intermediate player gets 4 points in a game to seven or eleven. If the intermediate player wins, the intermediate player only gets 3 points the next game. (b, l, a)
7. Racquetball Aerobics  
This drill can be done with a partner or by yourself. This drill simulates a never-ending rally. The player(s) keep the ball in play no matter how many bounces the ball takes. This drill works on aerobic conditioning and footwork as well as hitting skills. (b, l, a)

#### **IV. Drill Classes**

(See Appendix D: Drill Class Worksheets)

##### **A. Definition of Drill Classes**

Drill classes are lessons, however, they differ in the following ways.

1. Drill classes work on the consistency of a shot by itself within an isolated or game situation.
2. Drill classes are usually offered for more advanced players.
3. Drill classes are for students who can execute a wide variety of shots in their games.
4. Drill classes are for people who have technically sound stroke mechanics.
5. Drill classes usually require instructor approval prior to sign-up.

##### **B. Types of Drill Classes**

1. Group Drill Classes
  - a. Group drill classes are held in four, six, and eight week sessions.
  - b. Group drill classes usually meet once or twice a week.
  - c. Different topics can be assigned for different weeks when advertising classes.
2. Drill Work Classes
  - a. Drill work classes meet once a week.
  - b. Drill work classes are held in four, six, and eight week sessions.
  - c. Students can decide which weeks they would like to attend.  
(Attendance is not required every week.)



3. Drill Clinic
  - a. Drill work classes meet once a month.
  - b. Drill clinic is for any level of play.
  - c. A drill clinic usually covers basic skills.
  - d. A drill clinic is a great way to promote other drill classes and lessons.

C. Content of Drill Classes

What to include in a drill class.

Refer to the drills section in the manual to find drills on each of the following topics that are listed and create your own topics and material that will work for your students. Each drill should include quickness, precision, shot selection, consistency, power, finesse, and proper stroke mechanics.

1. Forehand
  - a. Up front drills.
  - b. Back court drills.
  - c. Off the back wall drills.
  - d. Angle drills.
  - e. Service drills.
  - f. Service return drills.
2. Backhand
  - a. Up front drills.
  - b. Back court drills.
  - c. Off the back wall drills.
  - d. Angle drills.
  - e. Service drills.
  - f. Service return drills.
3. Angle Returns
  - a. All angle drills.
  - b. Vary height and location of shots with angles.
4. Shot Selection & Availability
  - a. Kill shots.
  - b. Pass shots.
  - c. Defensive shots.
  - d. Offensive shots.
5. Serve & Serve Return Drills
  - a. Practice all types of serves.
  - b. Practice all types of returns.
6. Conditioning Drills
7. Positioning & Shot Selection Strategy Drills
8. Game Situation Drills



#### D. Fees for Drill Classes

1. The fee for a drill class session is usually higher than a group lesson.
2. There should be fewer people per class than in a regular group lesson.
3. This class needs a highly qualified instructor due to the specifics with topics and materials covered.
4. If videotaping is an additional service offered in the drill classes, then a higher fee should be required.

#### E. Scheduling Drill Classes

The following topics should be considered when making a game plan for students to follow.

1. Stroke Mechanics
2. Returning Setups
3. Execution of Shots
4. Serves and Serve Returns
5. Offensive & Defensive Shot Selection

NOTE: See Appendix D for drill class worksheets

#### F. Instructor Guidelines for Drill Classes

1. Lesson One – Forehand Only
  - a. Explanation of Class
    - **Introduction of self and students**
    - **Explanation of what a drill class is**
    - **Consistency of shots**
    - **Improves ones present level of play**
    - **Importance of the court work assignments**
    - **Importance of goals**
  - b. Conditioning Drills
    - **Sidewall to sidewall**
      - Shuffle drill.
      - Shuffle and touch drill.
      - Shuffle and swing on command drill.
    - **Timed little feet**
      - 3 sets of 20 seconds each
  - c. Stationary Drills
    - **Skeleton swing**
    - **Swing (hold follow thru 1,2)**
      - Have students swing and hold their follow thru to the count of 2 (make comments).
    - **Forward shuffle – Backward shuffle – Swing**



- Students start facing the sidewall then you give one of the above commands in any order and students follow them.
  - **Resistance swing**
    - Students pair up. A student with a racquet (Student 1) sets up in their back wing position while the other student (Student 2), grasps the top of Student 1's racquet. Student 1 gets in hitting position just prior to hitting pretend ball, Student 2 counts to 10 and resists (holds back) Student 1's racquet.
- d. Stroking Drills
- **Without instructor**
    - Drop and Hit Shots: Have two students hit at a time (one on each side of the court). Students each Drop, Step, and Hit Forehand shot to the front wall. Depending on the number of students, they hit 10 and trade off with other students, or hit 10 from short line, 10 from mid-court, and 10 from backcourt. The idea is to work on the stroke to have students hit the ball straight to the front wall so it comes straight back to them. Make sure to complete the follow thru.
    - Toss and Hit: Same as above drill, but have students toss the ball into the air and contact it prior to hitting the floor. This is excellent for them to have to 'wait' on the ball.
  - **With instructor**
    - Drop and Hit Shots: Instructor (I) will drop the ball for the students and student (S) hits it. If (I) drops the ball from behind the (S) racquet, they are in direct line to see the path of the (S) racquet. Make comments.
    - Turn and Hit: (S) begin by facing the front wall. As (I) drops the ball to hit, (S) turns, steps, and hits the ball to the front wall.
    - Turn And Hit With Shuffle: Same drill as above but (I) tosses the ball so the (S) has to shuffle to it prior to hitting the ball.
- e. Court Work Assignment
- **Drop and hit (3 Sets)**
    - 10 from the short line
    - 10 from mid court
    - 10 from backcourt

Objective: Have the ball come straight back to you.
  - **Turn and hit (3 Sets of 25)**
    - Toss the ball yourself away from you; turn, shuffle, hit and hold follow thru.
    - Objective: have ball come straight back.

## 2. Lesson Two – Backhand Only

- a. Conditioning Drills
- **Sidewall to sidewall**
    - Shuffle drill.
    - Shuffle and touch drill.
    - Shuffle and switch on command drill.
  - **Timed little feet**
    - 3 sets of 20 seconds in place, with change of direction



- b. Stationary Drills
    - ***Skeleton swing***
    - ***Swing (hold follow thru 1, 2)***
    - ***Forward shuffle – Backward shuffle – Swing***
  - c. Stroking Drills
    - ***Without instructor***
      - Drop and Hit Shots
      - Toss and Hit
    - ***With instructor***
      - Drop and Hit Shots
      - Turn and Hit
      - Turn And Hit With Shuffle
  - d. Court Work Assignment
    - ***Drop and hit (3 Sets of 10/10/10)***
    - ***Turn and hit (3 Sets of 25)***
3. Lesson Three – Forehand Only
- a. Conditioning Drills
    - ***Run / Shuffle around perimeter of court***
      - Start in back left corner using this as a starting and ending point, run around the court 3 times and then once around with a shuffle.
    - ***Front wall to back wall***
      - Run front wall to back wall and repeat.
      - Shuffle shuttle.
  - b. Stroking Drills
    - ***Drop and hit with shuffle***
      - (I) or another (S) can toss the ball to the (S1) and have them get into correct position to hit the ball. S1 should start facing the side wall.
    - ***Toss into back wall with shuffle***
      - (I) or (S) can toss the ball into the back wall, let it bounce, shuffle, hit
  - c. Off The Back Wall Drills
    - ***From back court***
      - (I) Hits student a shot off the back wall and (S) returns it.
    - ***From doubles box (on the run)***
      - (S) Starts in the doubles box on the left side of the court. (I) Hits student a shot off the back wall. (S) Runs to the back court, sets up and returns the ball to the front wall (remember, these are practice drills for consistency, so make the set ups returnable).
  - d. Court Work Assignment
    - ***Drop and hit (3 Sets of 25)***
    - ***Throw into the back wall and return (3 sets of 25)***



#### 4. Lesson Four – Backhand Only

##### a. Conditioning Drills

- **Front wall to back wall**
  - Run front wall to back wall and repeat.
  - Shuffle shuttle.
- **Run with change of direction to the back corners**

##### b. Stroking Drills

- **Drop and hit with shuffle**
- **Toss into back wall**

##### c. Off The Back Wall Drills

- **From Back Court**
- **From Doubles Box (on the run)**

##### d. Court Work Assignment

- **Drop and hit (3 Sets of 25)**
- **Throw into the back wall and return (3 sets of 25)**

#### 5. Lesson Five – Forehand Only

##### a. Conditioning Drills

- **Sidewall to sidewall**
  - Shuffle.
  - Little Feet
  - High Knees
  - Skips

##### b. Stroking Drills

- **Toss set up and return**

##### c. Off The Front Wall Drills

- **Set up and return**

Notes: Depending on the number of students, you may chose to use only one court or use two courts. If you use more than one court, please give clear instructions for drills prior to sending them to another court. Add variation. It is important to make the drills meaningful to your students. ‘Why are we doing these drills?’ Probably the most boring set of drills is the Drill Class I, so you need to present this section with enthusiasm, reasons for completing the drills and goals, and what they will achieve in the class.

With more advanced groups, you can have the students do these same drills but instead of always contacting the ball so the path is straight, you add objectives such as direction, height, speed, or hit a particular shot.





Always check to see who did their Court Work Assignments prior to beginning each class and compliment.

Always ask questions for any problems your students may be encountering and make comments.

G. Drill Class I Court Work Assignment Samples  
(Homework Assignment for Drill Class Students)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

It is to your advantage to complete the following court work assignments in between each lesson at least one time. One idea would be to book a court time with another student. Both of you do the court work assignment with the other the first part of the hour and then play when it is completed.

**Lesson One Assignment**

- Drop and hit forehand shots (3 sets of 10/10/10)  
Drop and hit forehand shots from the short line, then mid court, then near the back wall. Make sure to 'wait' on the ball (let it drop) and hold your follow thru. Try and have the return come straight back at you each time.

Set One \_\_\_ 10/10/10

Set Two \_\_\_ 10/10/10

Set Three \_\_\_ 10/10/10

- Turn and hit forehand shots (3 sets of 25)  
Start by facing the front wall, toss the ball off to the forehand side, turn, and hit the ball straight to the front wall then hold your follow thru.

Set One \_\_\_ 25

25 Set Two \_\_\_ 25

5 Set Three \_\_\_ 25

**Lesson Two Assignment**

- Drop and hit backhand shots (3 sets of 10/10/10)

Set One \_\_\_ 10/short line

\_\_\_ 10/mid court

\_\_\_ 10/back court

Set Two \_\_\_ 10/short line

\_\_\_ 10/mid court

\_\_\_ 10/back court

Set Three \_\_\_ 10/short line

\_\_\_ 10/mid court

\_\_\_ 10/back court

- Turn and hit backhand shots (3 sets of 25)

Set One \_\_\_ 25

Set Two \_\_\_ 25

Set Three \_\_\_ 25

**Lesson Three Assignment**

- Drop and hit with shuffle (3 sets of 25)  
Same drill as lesson one turn and hit, but now toss the ball away from you at different speeds, heights, and distances so you have to shuffle prior to hitting it. If you are working with a partner, have the partner toss it.

Set One \_\_\_ 25

Set Two \_\_\_ 25

Set Three \_\_\_ 25

*For variation, you may wish to execute a set shot such as down the line, cross-court, and pinch.*



- Toss into the back wall and return a forehand shot (3 sets of 25)  
Start facing the sidewall. Toss the ball into the back wall with your non-hitting arm, let the ball bounce on the floor, shuffle to correct position and return the shot.

Set One \_\_\_ 25

Set Two \_\_\_ 25

Set Three \_\_\_ 25

*For a variation you may wish to toss the ball easier or harder so you have to move quicker, or you can hit a pre-determined shot such as a pass or kill. You can also try bouncing the ball into the floor first, but make sure the ball is bounced hard enough that you don't always contact it behind you.*

#### **Lesson Four Assignment**

- Drop and hit backhand with shuffle (3 sets of 25)

Set One \_\_\_ 25

Set Two \_\_\_ 25

Set Three \_\_\_ 25

- Throw into the back wall return a backhand shot (3 sets of 25)

Set One \_\_\_ 25

Set Two \_\_\_ 25

Set Three \_\_\_ 25

#### **Lesson Five Assignment**

- Off the front wall set up and return a forehand shot (3 sets of 25)  
Toss the ball with your non-hitting arm to the front wall, set up, and return the ball with your forehand. The difficulty on this drill comes from not being able to toss the ball hard enough, so you may wish to practice just the toss, first.

Set One \_\_\_ 25

Set Two \_\_\_ 25

Set Three \_\_\_ 25

- Set up and return forehand off front wall (3 set of 25)  
Hit yourself the set up to the front wall with an easy shot and then return good forehand shot.

Set One \_\_\_ 25

Set Two \_\_\_ 25

Set Three \_\_\_ 25

You can vary this drill same as #1.

#### **Lesson Six Assignment**

- Off the front wall set up and return a backhand shot (3 sets of 25)

Set One \_\_\_ 25

Set Two \_\_\_ 25

Set Three \_\_\_ 25

- Set up and return back hand off front wall (3 sets of 25)

Set One \_\_\_ 25

Set Two \_\_\_ 25

Set Three \_\_\_ 25

Congratulations on completing your Drill I Court Work Assignments. Don't forget to do the above drills anytime. See You In Drill Class II, III, or IV.



**I. Drill Class I – Emphasis on Stroke Mechanics**

Lesson Material	Drills/Notes	Date Completed
Introductions Explanation of forehand stroke Conditioning drills Stationary drills Stroke mechanics drills		_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Explanation of backhand stroke Conditioning drills Stationary drills Stroke mechanics drills		_____ _____ _____ _____
Forehand stroke Conditioning drills Stroking drills Off the back wall drills		_____ _____ _____ _____
Backhand stroke Conditioning drills Stroking drills Off the back wall drills		_____ _____ _____ _____
Forehand stroke Conditioning drills Stroking drills Off the back wall drills		_____ _____ _____ _____
Backhand stroke Conditioning drills Stroking drills Off the front wall drills Review material & preview Next drill class		_____ _____ _____ _____ _____



## II. Drill Class II – Emphasis on Returning Setups

Lesson Material	Drills/Notes	Date Completed
Introductions Off the back wall shots Forehand drills Backhand drills		_____ _____ _____ _____
Off the front wall shots Forehand drills Backhand drills		_____ _____ _____
Off the back court angle shots Forehand drills Backhand drills		_____ _____ _____
Off of offensive shots Forehand drills Backhand drills		_____ _____ _____
Off of defensive shots Forehand drills Backhand drills		_____ _____ _____
Off of front court angle shots Forehand drills Backhand drills		_____ _____ _____



### III. Drill Class III – Emphasis on Execution of Shots

Lesson Material	Drills/Notes	Date Completed
Passing Shots Forehand drills Up front, back court, and angles		_____ _____ _____
Passing Shots Backhand drills Up front, back court, and angles		_____ _____ _____
Forehand kill shots Straight in Pinch All Locations		_____ _____ _____ _____
Backhand kill shots Straight in Pinch All Locations		_____ _____ _____ _____
Ceiling – around the wall shots Forehand Backhand Endurance drill Rally drill		_____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Games drills Quickness drill Shuffle drill		_____ _____ _____



**IV. Drill Class IV – Emphasis on Serves and Serve Returns**

Lesson Material	Drills/Notes	Date Completed
Serves Offensive serves Target serves Serve and return		<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Serves Lob serves Target serves Serve and return		<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Return of serve Offensive		<hr/> <hr/>
Return of serve Defensive		<hr/> <hr/>
Center court positioning Off Serves		<hr/> <hr/>
Center court positioning Off Serves Off return of serves		<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>



## Appendix E

### USA Racquetball Instructors Program Group Lesson Worksheets

- I. Beginner Group Lesson Plan
- II. Intermediate Group Lesson Plan
- III. Group Lesson Plan and Attendance Sheet
- IV. Court Layout

#### I. Beginner Group Lesson Plan

Estimated Time • Six-Week Duration, One-Hour Classes

LESSON MATERIAL	DRILLS/NOTES	DATE COMPLETED
<b>Week 1</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introductions<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- What to bring &amp; wear</li><li>- Equipment &amp; safety</li></ul></li><li>• Forehand stroke</li><li>• Rally play</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Skeleton swings</li><li>- Drop and hit drill</li><li>- Rally drill</li><li>- Handouts (rulebook and homework assignments)</li></ul>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<b>Week 2</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review forehand stroke</li><li>• Backhand stroke</li><li>• Rules of the game</li><li>• V-serve and return</li><li>• Rally play</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Skeleton swings</li><li>- Drop and hit drill</li><li>- Shuffle drill</li><li>- Serve and catch drill</li><li>- Homework assignments</li></ul>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<b>Week 3</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Off back wall play forehand</li><li>• Drive serve</li><li>• Court positioning</li><li>• Rally play</li><li>• Questions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Shuffle drill</li><li>- Back wall drills</li><li>- Court positioning strategy</li><li>- Serve drill</li><li>- Return drill</li></ul>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>



**Week 4**

- |                               |                              |       |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-------|
| • Off back wall play backhand | - Shuffle drill              | _____ |
| • Lob serve                   | - Back wall drills           | _____ |
| • Rally play                  | - Court positioning strategy | _____ |
| • Review court positioning    | - Serve drill                | _____ |
|                               | - Return drill               | _____ |

**Week 5**

- |                                    |                        |       |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|-------|
| • Review back wall play            | - Shuffle drill        | _____ |
| • Returning angles                 | - Angle drill          | _____ |
| • Basic shots                      | - Ceiling ball drill   | _____ |
| • Ceiling ball forehand & backhand | - Homework assignments | _____ |
| • Questions                        |                        |       |

**Week 6**

- |                             |                   |       |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------|
| • Review basic strokes      | - Shuffle drill   | _____ |
| • Review basic shots        | - Tournament      | _____ |
| • Referee – mini tournament | - Handouts        | _____ |
| • Preview next class        | - Evaluation form | _____ |
| • Sign up sheets ready      | - Questions       | _____ |





## II. Intermediate Group Lesson Plan

Estimated Time • Six-Week Duration, One-Hour Classes

LESSON MATERIAL	DRILLS/NOTES	DATE COMPLETED
<b>WEEK 1</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introductions<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- What to bring &amp; wear</li><li>- Equipment &amp; safety</li></ul></li><li>• Off the back wall play</li><li>• Rally play</li><li>• Review rules</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Shuffle drills</li><li>- Toss and hit off back wall drill</li><li>- Set ups from instructor</li><li>- Handouts (rulebook and homework assignments)</li></ul>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<b>Week 2</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review off the back wall</li><li>• Drive serve and return</li><li>• Serve relocation</li><li>• Rally play</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Shuffle drill</li><li>- Serve drill</li><li>- Serve return drill</li><li>- Serve relocation drill</li><li>- Homework assignments</li></ul>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<b>Week 3</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Drive serve and return</li><li>• Lob serve and return</li><li>• Court positioning</li><li>• Rally play</li><li>• Questions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Little feet drill</li><li>- Lob serve drill</li><li>- Court positioning strategy</li><li>- Serve return drill</li></ul>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<b>Week 4</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review lob serve and return</li><li>• Angle returns</li><li>• Shot selections</li><li>• Recreation games</li><li>• Rally play</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Shuffle drill</li><li>- Angle return drill</li><li>- Shot selection drill</li><li>- Homework assignment</li></ul>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<b>Week 5</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review lob serve and return</li><li>• Intermediate serves</li><li>• Pass shots</li><li>• Pinch and splats</li><li>• Questions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Shuffle drill</li><li>- Pass shot drill</li><li>- Pinch and splat drill</li><li>- Homework assignments</li><li>- Serve and drill</li></ul>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<b>Week 6</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review prior lessons</li><li>• Referee – mini tournament</li><li>• Preview of next class</li><li>• Sign up sheets ready</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Mini tournament</li><li>- Handouts</li><li>- Evaluation form</li><li>- Questions</li></ul>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

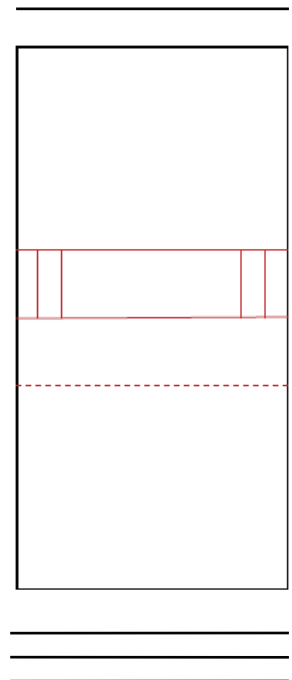
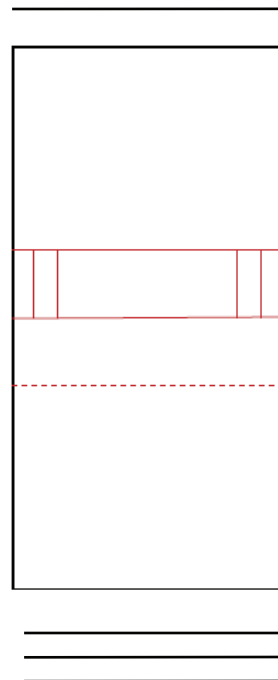
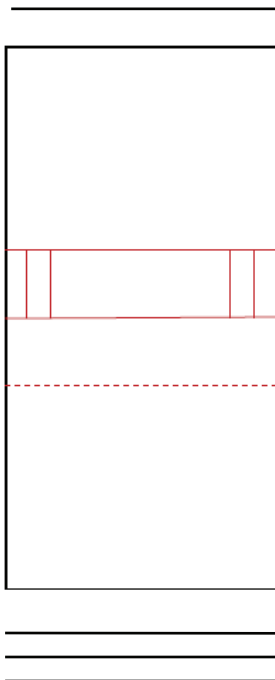
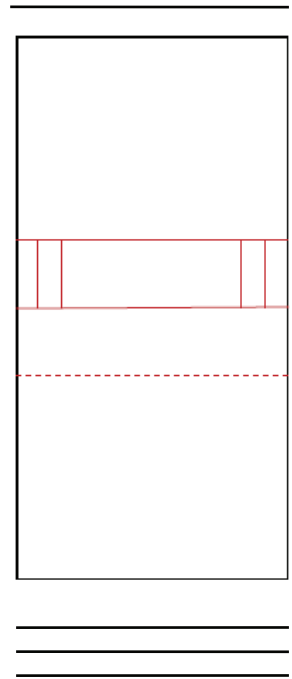
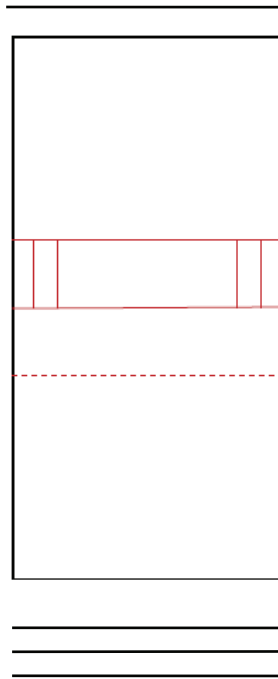
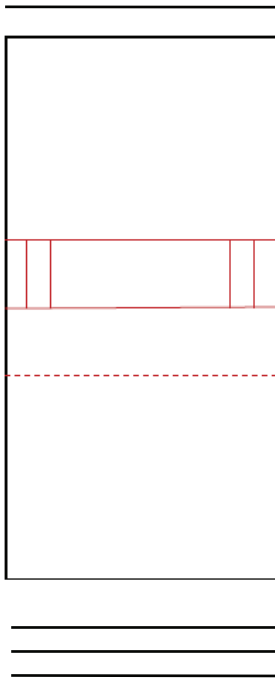




Lesson Three	To Do	Completed
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Lesson Four	To Do	Completed
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Lesson Five	To Do	Completed
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Lesson Six	To Do	Completed
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Lesson Seven	To Do	Completed
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Lesson Eight	To Do	Completed
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		



#### IV. Court Layout







USA Racquetball Instructors Program

Private Lessons Time Chart

TIME	1	2	3	4	5	6	TIME	7	8	9	10	11
6:00 AM							6:00 AM					
7:00 AM							7:00 AM					
8:00 AM							8:00 AM					
9:00 AM							9:00 AM					
10:00 AM							10:00 AM					
11:00 AM							11:00 AM					
12:00 PM							12:00 PM					
1:00 PM							1:00 PM					
2:00 PM							2:00 PM					
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4:00 PM							4:00 PM					
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6:00 PM							6:00 PM					
7:00 PM							7:00 PM					
8:00 PM							8:00 PM					
9:00 PM							9:00 PM					
10:00 PM							10:00 PM					







## Appendix F

### **BASIC FITNESS AND CONDITIONING FOR THE RACQUETBALL PLAYER**

**PRESENTED BY: BILL PHAN, CHRIS EVON – FITNESS SPECIALISTS INC.**

(PHOTOS BY BOB KERN)

The human body is a wonderfully intricate machine and functions best when properly aligned, tuned up, and fueled. Attention should be given to the structural integrity of our bodies. In other words, movement and function occur at their optimal when we move around our center line. If we imagine a skeletal chart you will see a plum line, a weight with a string, indicating gravity neutral. When we stand, sit, or move around our center line or gravity neutral we become efficient at movement putting less wear and tear on misaligned parts and increasing performance.

Vladimar Janda has coined the terms Upper and Lower Cross Syndrome. These syndromes apply to the weakening and tightening of muscles in the upper and lower body which affect their alignment, function, and balance. These muscular imbalances are a result of postural strain from activities such as sitting at a desk using a computer, holding a phone to your ear, sitting commuting on a train or in a car. In addition, stationary cardio equipment, although great for the heart and lungs, works the quads and hip flexors, not the glutes, reinforcing Lower Cross Syndrome. Poor abdominal exercises that work the hip flexors, actually increase the potential for low back pain by weakening the lower abs, not working them. Lastly, how many people stand or sit with good posture?

#### **Postural Reset for the Car: (Appendix F-1)**

Posture and performance are intertwined. This simple exercise will help set the stage for the training that follows. It is important for you to try the “Postural Reset for the Car” and then share it with every student you teach. Sit in your car, scoot your butt back into the seat as far as possible. Elevate your first two ribs, in other words, lift your sternum. Pull your shoulder blades back and down, pull your head back. Think about your head lifting and feeling light, the shoulder blades relax back and down with each exhalation. Now, reach up and readjust your rearview mirror. Next time you get in the car, if you cannot see out the mirror, do not change the mirror, change your posture!

The Postural Reset for the Car gives you a practical way to make your students aware of their body and how to start training for good posture. This is now the way you should sit, stand, train and move!

Introducing your students to functional, safe exercises will not only help them perform better, but will help them prevent injuries. The following chapters will give you the basic knowledge for implementing safe and effective warm up, cool down, and strength exercises as well as speed and agility drills. It is always recommended that you refer clients that have muscle imbalances or weaknesses to seek the advice of a professional trainer.





## Dynamic Warm Up

The purpose of a dynamic warm up is to prepare the body for further exercise or competition by using active or contracted movements. These active movements increase blood flow, create heat in the muscle and joints, and activate the neurological system. Numerous studies have shown that passive stretching (reaching forward to a point of tension and holding the stretch), before working out or competing actually decreases athletic performance and endurance. Passive stretching does not increase blood flow or create heat. Instead, it gets the muscle to relax or shut off, which inhibits the neurological system. It makes more sense to activate and prepare our body for on court activities through the use of an active or dynamic warm up.

### ON COURT EXERCISES: (Appendix F-2)

- Standing:
- Trunk Rotation
  - Torso Lateral Flexion with hands overhead
  - Trunk Lateral Flexion with hands over head
  - DROM Hip Basic Three
  - Waiters Bow
- Standing:
- Forward Press
  - Side Press
  - Alternating L/R, High/Low Press
  - External Rotator Cuff
  - Press to Horizontal Shoulder Adduction with Terminal Flicks
- Lunges:
- Static, single track
  - Static hold, single track
  - Torso Rotation
  - Torso Lateral Flexion
  - Wheel, regular and crossover
- Skill Drills:
- Shuffles
  - Slides
  - Carioca
  - Sprint
  - Back Peddle



### **Benefits of an Active, Dynamic Warm up:**

- Prepares the muscles and joints by increasing blood flow and creating heat
- Enhances coordination and activates the neuromuscular system
- Prepares the mind and the body for a workout or for competition

### **CORE STRENGTH, POSTURE, AND STABILITY**

Developing core strength and stability provides a solid anchor or base for the limbs. Movements that are centered and stable result in increased performance and injury prevention. It is also critical to understand basic posture and how it relates to performance and injury prevention.

### **BASIC POSTURE/STABILITY ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT:**

In your first meeting with your student, take the time to assess their general posture, strength and stability. This will give you valuable information on the type of training to recommend and possible areas of weakness and muscle imbalance.

TEST 1: One leg stand

**PROCEDURE:** Client stands on one leg. Other leg bent at 90 degree angle with knee pointing towards the floor. (This test is best performed in bare feet).

**EVALUATION:** 1. Foot wobbles - player may have weak ankles or possibly excess pronation (foot rolls inward), or supination (high arch). 2. Inability to hold stance for 10 seconds – player may have weak abductors, adductors and glutes. The risk of injury increases substantially when a player cannot balance for at least 10 seconds per leg. Refer your client to a personal trainer.

### **ON COURT EXERCISES: (Appendix F-3)**

Ankle range of motion and strength. (Toe raises, ankle rotations, flex/extend ankles.)

One leg shadow swings

One leg stand ball toss

TEST 2: One leg semi squat

**PROCEDURE:** Client stands on one leg. Other leg is held out straight in front of body a few inches from the floor. (This test is best performed in bare feet).

Client performs a quarter squat.



**EVALUATION:** 1. Player is unable to perform the squat without pain – Player may have overactive quads, tight hip flexors and a tight IT band. 2. Player’s knee wobbles, or buckles in toward the center of their body – Player may have weak abductors and external hip rotators.

The risk of injury increases substantially when a player cannot perform a quarter squat with a stable knee. Refer your client to a personal trainer.

**ON COURT EXERCISES: (Appendix F-4)**

- Wall squats
- Bridge (Single and double leg)
- Outer thigh squat walk
- Hip Hiker
- Hip rotation

**TEST 3: Visual Upper Body Posture Check: (Appendix F3)**

**PROCEDURE:** Client stands with arms down to their side. Observe from the side and from the back.

**EVALUATION:** Observe the clients shoulders. Are they rounded and forward. Look at their head position. Is it too far forward? Proper posture will have the ears in line with the shoulders. Shoulders and shoulder blades should be depressed (down) and retracted (back).

**ON COURT EXERCISES:** Building awareness to postural habits can prevent or eliminate many of the common shoulder problems and injuries. Sitting at a computer, driving, watching TV, all contribute to rounded shoulders and a forward position of the head. This puts a tremendous amount of strain on the shoulders, neck and head. The Postural Reset for the Car (**Appendix F1**) is a very practical tool for building postural awareness, as is standing square and not letting your hips hike or shift when standing. Advise your students to work with a personal trainer familiar with Upper Cross Syndrome to develop strength in the upper back and core muscles.

- Shoulder rotations
- External Rotator Cuff
- Scapular depression and retraction.
- Front pulls.
- Standing rows.



## **BASIC CORE AND STABILITY EXERCISES: (Appendix F-5)**

Incorporating basic core exercises into your lesson plans will help your students generate more power in their shots, and will help them prevent injuries. The following exercises are great as a dynamic warm up or to add variety to your classes. Use with all ages and ability groups!

Trunk Rotation and Lateral Side Bends

Plank in push up position

Double Leg Bridges

Single Leg Bridges

Quadraped Hip Extension

Reverse Torso Curls

One leg racquet swing

Partner roll in plank

Spiderman

Walking ball toss

## **LOWER BODY EXERCISES: (Appendix 5)**

Racquetball uses a tremendous amount of dynamic lower body strength. However just playing racquetball can overdevelop certain muscles while other muscles become weak. These imbalances are known as *Lower Cross Syndrome*. In Lower Cross Syndrome, the quads and hip flexors are over used and become short and tight. The glutes, upper hamstrings, and lower abdominals will become weak and actually “shut off”. This syndrome is exacerbated by poor posture, prolonged sitting, the use of cardio machines, and improper abdominal exercises. Players who complain of low back pain, hip or knee pain should be evaluated for Lower Cross Syndrome by a personal trainer. The following exercises along with the exercises in the speed and agility section will help develop the necessary lower body strength for racquetball, and help prevent Lower Cross Syndrome.

Toe Raises

Walk on toes/heels

Squat Press

Squat Jumps

Singles Track Lunge

Lateral Lunge

Lunge with Trunk Rotation

Double Leg Bridges

Single Leg Bridges

Quad Hip Extension

Inside Foot Slap

Outside Foot Slap

Reverse Torso Curls



## UPPER BODY EXERCISES: (Appendix 6)

The most common injuries in racquetball are general shoulder soreness, impingement, rotator cuff injuries, or “tennis” elbow. All can be caused by improper swinging techniques and/or muscular imbalances.

Muscular imbalances in the upper body are often described as *Upper Cross Syndrome*. In Upper Cross Syndrome, you will see the head in a forward position and the shoulders rounded and pulled forward. The pecs, anterior deltoid, upper traps and levator will be short and tight. The deep neck flexors and the muscles that stabilize the scapula and perform retraction and depression, will be weak. Just as in Lower Cross Syndrome, this is exacerbated by poor posture, overemphasis on strengthening the anterior muscles (bench press), prolonged sitting, and working on a computer for hours at a time. As discussed earlier, introducing proper postural techniques to your students, can save them a lot of problems down the road. Also be sure to refer your student to a personal trainer to identify and train out these imbalances. The following exercises will help develop the necessary upper body strength for racquetball, and help prevent Upper Cross Syndrome.

Shoulder Rotations

Scapula Depression and Retraction

Shoulder Extension

External Rotator Cuff Warm up

W,T,Y with Body Weight.

Finger/Wrist extensions with Body Weight or Rubber band

Quadrapped opposite Arm/Leg Extension

## Speed and Agility: (Appendix F7)

Racquetball is an extremely rapid and agile game relying on a player’s ability to read, react, and in a split second position themselves for the next shot. Many elements add to the success of the player; racquet skills, speed, quickness, agility, balance, stability, vision, coordination, and implementing effective strategies. When everything works together they culminate on court as more accurate shots and more confident play. As a certified instructor, you can train many of these elements. Although this list is by no means all inclusive, these drills were chosen to address as many as possible. Use them in your warm up, or cool down. You can add reaction training by changing direction on a visual or audible cue. You can also make creative adaptations to combine these exercises with your hitting and skill drills.

Fast Feet with Lateral Movement

Over Side Back Side

Ickey Shuffle

Carioca

Shuffle and Slides

S Hop: Stationary/Moving

Split Squat Fast Foot Switch

Walking Ball Toss

One Legged Ball Wall Catch: Add Bounce



## **COOL DOWN AND STRETCHING: (Appendix F8)**

After strenuous exercise it is important to cool down to make sure the blood does not pool in the muscles away from the heart, causing a rapid decrease in heart rate and blood pressure. Dizziness, light headedness, and disorientation can occur when the heart cannot adequately supply the brain. An easy cool down will allow the heart rate and blood pressure to fall more gradually.

If the end of your lesson includes difficult drills, speed and agility work, or game play, be sure to leave some time for a cool down. Allow your students to walk around until their heart rate gradually drops to a comfortable level.

We advocate Dynamic stretching and warm ups before and after activity as most studies are now showing that static stretching (reaching forward to a point of tension and holding the stretch), done before activity will actually shut the muscle off and hurt performance. It has also been proven that static stretching does not help to significantly reduce the risk of injury. Dynamic stretching can also be an integral part of your cool down. When stretching a certain muscle group we advocate a technique known as reciprocal inhibition, which contracts one muscle group causing the opposite muscle to relax. The following are a few key cool down exercises for racquetball players. Pay special attention to opening up the shoulders, glutes and hip flexors.

“The Big Four” Shoulder Exercise

Energy Pull from the Sky

Waiters Bow

Psoas Hip flexor Stretch

Glute stretch

Supine Leg Extension

DROM: Basic Three Balance

Walking Ball Toss

Press to Horizontal Shoulder Adduction with Terminal Flicks

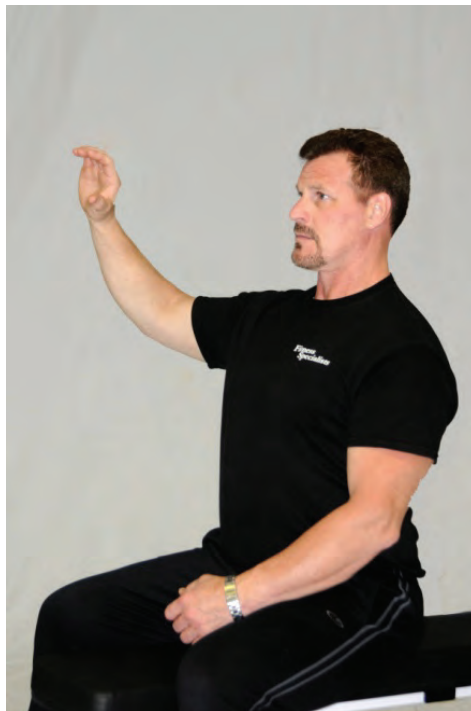
Trunk Rotation / Lateral Flexion



## Appendix F-1: Postural Reset for the Car

### POSTURAL RESET FOR THE CAR

1. When sitting in your car (demonstrate on a bench), scoot your butt back into the seat as far as possible.
2. Elevate your first two ribs by lifting your sternum.
3. Pull your shoulder blades back and down. Pull your head back (if you have a head rest, let your head touch the rest).
4. Think about your head feeling light. Shoulder blades relax back and down with each exhalation.
5. Reach up and readjust your rearview mirror.
6. Next time you get in the car, if you cannot see out the mirror, don't change the mirror, change your position!



## Appendix F-2: Dynamic Warm Up, On Court Exercises



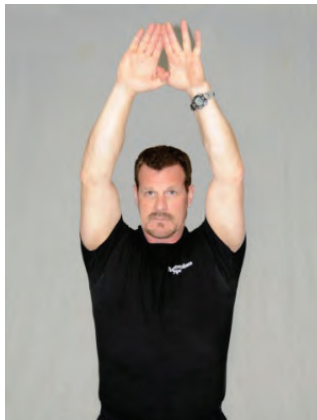
### TRUNK ROTATION

1. Keep hips facing forward.
2. Hands stay in front and close to body.
3. Slowly rotate shoulders right, center, left, center.
4. Brace core, tighten glutes.
5. Shoulders down and back.

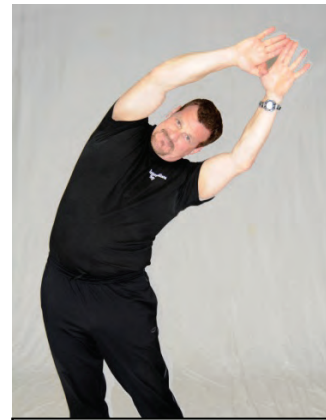
### TRUNK LATERAL FLEXION / TORSO LATERAL FLEXION

1. Keep hips facing forward.
2. Slowly flex to one side.
3. Brace core, tighten glutes.
4. Keep head in between arms.

**NOTE:** TORSO LATERAL FLEXION – Bend at waist only.  
TRUNK LATERAL FLEXION – Bend at waist and push opposite hip to side.



STARTING POSITION



TRUNK LATERAL FLEXION



## HIP DYNAMIC RANGE OF MOTION (DROM)

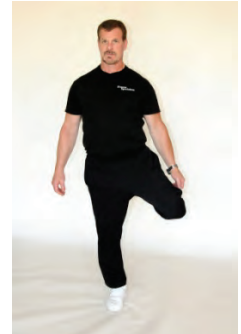
1. Keep hips level throughout the exercise. Stand with shoulders down and back.
2. Stand on one leg.
3. Brace core, tighten glute on standing leg.
4. Raise bent knee forward (hip flexion). Return to start (knee pointing down and next to stable leg). Repeat 3 x's.
5. Push bent knee back (hip extension). Return to start. Repeat 3 x's.
6. Draw leg to side (do not rotate hip and be sure knee points to the floor). Return to start. Repeat 3 x's.
7. Raise bent knee forward. Rotate hip internally and externally by moving lower leg to the outside and inside respectively. Repeat 3 x's.
8. From starting position, rotate hip internally and externally by moving lower leg to the outside and inside respectively. Repeat 3 x's.



**#4 HIP FLEXION**



**#5 HIP EXTENSION**



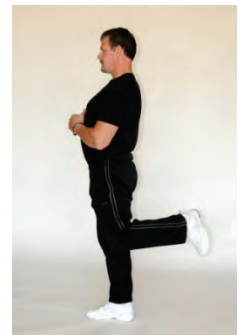
**#6 HIP ABDUCTION**



**#7 INTERNAL HIP ROTATION**



**#7 EXTERNAL HIP ROTATION**



**#8 INTERNAL/EXTERNAL  
HIP ROTATION**

## WAITERS BOW

1. Stand with feet square, hip width apart.
2. Push hips back and bend forward at waist.
3. Knees are straight but not locked. Should feel a slight pull in the hamstrings (back of legs).

### VARIATION: HIP ROLL

1. Put hands on hips. Open hip of extended leg.
2. Return to neutral. Repeat without putting foot down.



## FORWARD PRESS



1. Stand with feet square, hip width apart.
2. Navel to spine. Brace core, glutes tight.
3. Start with hands at chest. Press arms forward.
4. Pull arms back to chest.

**NOTES:** Be sure to stand with good posture. Shoulders down and back. Head in neutral position with ears over shoulders.

## SIDE PRESS



1. Stand with feet square, hip width apart.
2. Navel to spine. Brace core, glutes tight.
3. Start with hands at side just below shoulders. Press arms to side.
4. Pull arms back to side.

**NOTES:** Be sure to stand with good posture. Shoulders down and back. Head in neutral position with ears over shoulders.

## ALTERNATING HIGH LOW PRESS



1. Stand (or kneel). Feet square, hip width apart.
2. Navel to spine. Brace core, keep glutes tight.
3. Reach one hand/arm to floor, other to ceiling. Press both arms back.
4. Return to neutral.

**NOTES:** Be sure to hold good posture. Shoulders down and back. Head in neutral position with ears over shoulders.

## SHOULDER ADDUCTION (FRONT PULLS), TERMINAL FLICKS AND SHOULDER ROTATIONS

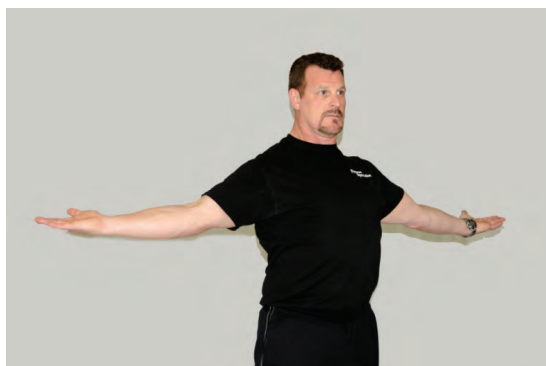
1. Stand with feet square, hip width apart.
2. Brace core, glutes tight.
3. Arms straight and out to side. Pull back and pinch shoulder blades together.
4. Return to start.

### VARIATION 1 – TERMINAL FLICKS

1. Arms slightly back, pull shoulder blades back and together for the last 20 – 30 degrees of motion.

### VARIATION 2 – SHOULDER ROTATION

1. Arms back. Thumbs pointing back. Rotate from shoulders. Small circles progressing to larger circles. Movement should be slow and deliberate.



## EXTERNAL ROTATOR CUFF

1. Stand with feet square, hip width apart.
2. Navel to spine. Brace core. Glutes tight.
3. Shoulders back and down.
4. Elbows at side bent at 90 degrees.
5. Rotate from shoulders. Hands rotate to outside like a gate hinge.
6. Return to start

### VARIATION:

1. Raise elbows to side to shoulder height. Bend elbows 90 degrees with hands forward.
2. Rotate from shoulders. Hands rotate forward and back, so hands are pointing toward ceiling.
3. Keep shoulders down and back.
4. Return to start.



## SINGLE TRACK LUNGE

1. Align feet as if standing on a straight line.
2. Bend both knees 90 degrees.
3. Drive hip of back leg forward.
4. Tighten the glute of back leg to help open up hip flexors.
5. Back straight and tall with shoulders down and back.

### VARIATIONS:

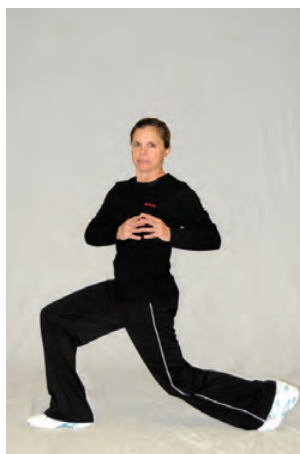
1. Static lunge. Straighten both legs, return to start.
2. Trunk Rotation. Hands in front and tight to body. Rotate torso left, center, and right.
3. Trunk Lateral Flexion. Arms bent and to sides. Flex torso to side alternating right and left.
4. Side reach (not pictured). Rotate torso left. Arms in bent position as above. Reach back with left arm (bent) and bring right arm to position slightly in front of face. Repeat rotation to right and move arms to right side.
5. Draw navel to the spine and brace core throughout exercises.

### WHEEL:

1. **Regular:** Moving in a wheel pattern, lunge dynamically (lunge and step back to neutral). Make sure hips stay in line with body and back foot is square. Start with forward lunge with right foot. Step back. Repeat with lunge to 45 degree angle to right, pivot on back foot, turn hips forward and step back to neutral. Repeat as complete half circle to 90, 135, and 180 degrees. Repeat with left leg forward and complete left side of circle.
2. **Crossover:** Same as Regular except left foot steps forward for right half of wheel and right foot steps forward for left half of wheel.



**STATIC SINGLE  
TRACK LUNGE**



**TORSO ROTATION**



**TORSO LATERAL  
FLEXION**



## SHUFFLES / SLIDES / CARIOCA

### SHUFFLES

1. Ready position. Feet shoulder width apart, knees slightly bent.
2. Good square position. Head up, shoulders back and down.
3. Keeping feet shoulder width apart, quickly side step with weight on toes.

### SLIDES

1. Stand tall. Hips forward.
2. Slide lead foot out, quickly bring feet together (scissors step), executing small jump with legs extended. Land softly and toes and repeat. Move laterally.

### CARIOCA

1. Keep shoulders square to line of movement. Twist hips alternating cross in front, side step, cross behind. Start slowly and increase speed as technique improves.



STARTING SHUFFLE POSTION



CARIOCA

## Appendix F-3: Basic Posture/Stability, On Court Exercises

### ONE LEG SHADOW SWING

1. Stand on one leg. Make sure hips are level at all times.
2. Slowly execute forehand swing, backhand swing and overhead.
3. Perform on each leg.
4. Student is working on balance and stability





## BALL TOSS

**Purpose: To improve balance and eye hand coordination.**

1. Standing on one leg, brace core, squeeze glutes.
2. Instructor or partner tosses ball. Student uses dominant hand to toss, opposite hand to catch.
3. Keep head steady. Use visual eye scan to see ball.

### VARIATIONS

1. Student tosses ball to wall.
2. Bounce ball to partner or wall.
3. Walk forward, backward, and laterally. Toss and catch ball with non-dominant hand only.



**Appendix F-3: Basic Posture/Stability, On Court Exercises (cont.)**

**WALL SQUATS**

1. Stand with back against wall and feet approximately two feet from the wall.
2. Squat down so hips are level with knees.
3. Back and shoulders and head should remain against the wall.
4. Hold for 20 seconds to a minute.



## BRIDGES ON FLOOR

1. Lay face up on floor. Brace arms on floor at sides.
2. Feet flat, knees bent, feet and knees hip width apart.
3. Brace core, squeeze glutes, lift hips.
4. Keep abs tight so as not to over bow back.

### **VARIATION: SINGLE LEG BRIDGE.**

1. Raise one leg long and straight.
2. Be sure hips stay level as bridge up.



## OUTER THIGH SQUAT WALK

1. Good squat position. Head tall. Shoulders down and back.
2. Sit back in squat. Do not let knees move forward in front of toes.
3. Stay in squat position. Step to right with right foot. Step toward right with left foot, but keep distance between feet about hip width apart and as constant as possible. Do not bring feet together.



## HIP HIKER



1. Stand on one leg. Opposite hip flexed at 90 degrees.
2. Internally rotate thigh and hike hip up towards head. Pause and return to neutral.

**SHOULDER ADDUCTION (FRONT PULLS), TERMINAL FLICKS  
AND SHOULDER ROTATIONS**

1. Stand with feet square, hip width apart.
2. Brace core, glutes tight.
3. Arms straight and out to side. Pull back and pinch shoulder blades together.
4. Return to start.

**VARIATION 1 – TERMINAL FLICKS**

1. Arms slightly back, pull shoulder blades back and together for the last 20 – 30 degrees of motion.

**VARIATION 2 – SHOULDER ROTATION**

1. Arms back. Thumbs pointing back. Rotate from shoulders. Small circles progressing to larger circles. Movement should be slow and deliberate.



## SCAPULA RETRACTION AND DEPRESSION

### SCAPULA RETRACTION

1. Stand tall. Brace core.
2. Arms held parallel to floor and straight.
3. Pull arms back by pinching shoulder blades back. Do not bend elbows.
4. Be sure shoulder blades stay down and do not rise up towards ears.

### SCAPULAR DEPRESSION

1. Stand tall. Brace core.
2. Arms held at sides. Pinch shoulder blades back (scapular retraction) and hold them back.
3. Slightly elevate shoulder blades then take them straight down.
4. Make sure shoulder blades do not come forward as you take them down.





## STANDING ROW

1. Stand tall. Brace core.
2. Arms held parallel to floor and straight.
3. Pull arms back by pinching shoulder blades back.
4. Bend elbows as pull your hands close to your chest.
5. Be sure shoulder blades stay down and do not rise up towards ears.





## Appendix F-4, Core and Stability Exercises



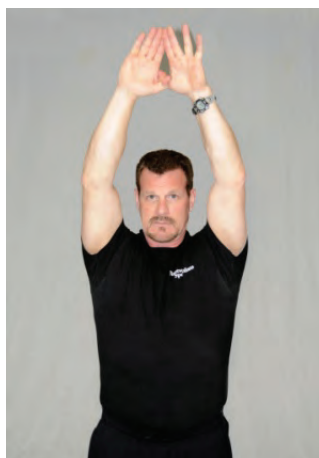
### TRUNK ROTATION

1. Keep hips facing forward.
2. Hands stay in front and close to body.
3. Slowly rotate shoulders right, center, left, center.
4. Brace core, tighten glutes.
5. Shoulders down and back.

### TRUNK LATERAL FLEXION / TORSO LATERAL FLEXION

1. Keep hips facing forward.
2. Slowly flex to one side.
3. Brace core, tighten glutes.
4. Keep head in between arms.

**NOTE:** TORSO LATERAL FLEXION – Bend at waist only.  
TRUNK LATERAL FLEXION – Bend at waist and push opposite hip to side.



STARTING POSITION



TRUNK LATERAL FLEXION

## PLANK IN PUSH UP POSITION

1. Push up position on floor. Navel to spine. Brace the core. Keep glutes tight. Keep head neutral.
2. Hold position. Do not let the core move or bend the back in either direction.

### VARIATION

1. Same as above except support your body on forearms. Keep forearms parallel to each other.
2. Raise one leg 6-12 inches off floor.



## BRIDGES ON FLOOR

1. Lay face up on floor. Brace arms on floor at sides.
2. Feet flat, knees bent, feet and knees hip width apart.
3. Brace core, squeeze glutes, lift hips.
4. Keep abs tight so as not to over bow back.

### **VARIATION: SINGLE LEG BRIDGE.**

1. Raise one leg long and straight.
2. Be sure hips stay level as bridge up.



## QUADRUPED HIP EXTENSION

1. On floor on hands and knees. Pull navel to spine and brace core.
2. One leg reaches back long and straight. Lift toward so parallel with floor. Tighten glutes.
3. Return to start.
4. Do not allow lower back to move as move leg.

### VARIATION

1. Same as above except add opposite arm long and straight. Thumb pointing up.
2. Lift opposite arm/leg. Pause and return.
3. Keep core braced. Do not allow lower back to move.



## REVERSE TORSO CURLS

1. Lay face up on the floor or bench.
2. Gently hold on to an anchor above head.
3. Bend at hips and knees.
4. Pull navel to spine. Roll lower torso up off surface. Draw knees to chest.
5. Roll down slowly to starting position.
6. Be sure not to extend knees or hips. Do not let lower back arch off surface.



## ONE LEG SHADOW SWING

1. Stand on one leg. Make sure hips are level at all times.
2. Slowly execute forehand swing, backhand swing and overhead.
3. Perform on each leg.
4. Student is working on balance and stability





## PARTNER BALL ROLL IN PLANK POSITION

1. Push up position. Navel to spine, brace core, tighten glutes.
2. Roll ball to partner. Partner stops ball and rolls back.
3. Alternate left and right hands.
4. Be sure to brace core. Do not let hips torque.



## SPIDERMAN

1. Start on hands and feet. Torso low to the floor.
2. Navel to spine. Brace core.
3. Arm and leg move in opposites. Right arm reaches forward, left leg moves in. Alternate opposites.
4. Stay low. Keep head neutral



## WALKING BALL TOSS

1. Stand with feet square, hip width apart.
2. Walk forward while tossing the ball with the **non dominant hand**.
3. To watch ball, track with eyes and move from core. Don't tilt head back.





## Appendix F-5: Lower Body Exercises

### SQUATS/ SQUAT PRESS / SQUAT JUMPS

#### **SQUAT – Athletic “ready” position**

1. Feet square, shoulder width apart. Brace core.
2. Sit back with hips (as if you are sitting on a bench), into a squat position. Be sure knees are behind toes.
3. Chest and head are up. Lean forward slightly with a straight back.
4. Return to standing making sure hips are tucked under and glutes are tight.

#### **SQUAT PRESS**

1. Same as above. As stand press and reach arms overhead. As squat, arms come down to center in front of chest.

#### **SQUAT PRESS JUMP**

1. Same as above. As you come up, press arms overhead and jump. Get full extension of arms and legs.
2. Land allowing knees to bend into a soft landing.
3. Land with hips back in good squat position.
4. When in squat position, be sure knees are behind toes.



## SINGLE TRACK LUNGE

1. Align feet as if standing on a straight line.
2. Bend both knees 90 degrees.
3. Drive hip of back leg forward.
4. Tighten the glute of back leg to help open up hip flexors.
5. Back straight and tall with shoulders down and back.

### VARIATIONS:

1. Static lunge. Straighten both legs, return to start.
2. Trunk Rotation. Hands in front and tight to body. Rotate torso left, center, and right.
3. Trunk Lateral Flexion. Arms bent and to sides. Flex torso to side alternating right and left.
4. Side reach (not pictured). Rotate torso left. Arms in bent position as above. Reach back with left arm (bent) and bring right arm to position slightly in front of face. Repeat rotation to right and move arms to right side.
5. Draw navel to the spine and brace core throughout exercises.

### WHEEL:

1. **Regular:** Moving in a wheel pattern, lunge dynamically (lunge and step back to neutral). Make sure hips stay in line with body and back foot is square. Start with forward lunge with right foot. Step back. Repeat with lunge to 45 degree angle to right, pivot on back foot, turn hips forward and step back to neutral. Repeat as complete half circle to 90, 135, and 180 degrees. Repeat with left leg forward and complete left side of circle.
2. **Crossover:** Same as Regular except left foot steps forward for right half of wheel and right foot steps forward for left half of wheel.



**STATIC SINGLE  
TRACK LUNGE**



**TORSO ROTATION**



**TORSO LATERAL  
FLEXION**

## LATERAL LUNGE

1. Stand tall. Navel to spine. Brace core.
2. Step laterally into side lunge.
3. Sit back with hips as get into squat position.
4. Both feet face forward. Be sure bent knee is behind toes.
5. Keep inside leg straight and heel down.
6. Head, neck and shoulders up and out.
7. Alternate right and left legs.



## BRIDGES ON FLOOR

1. Lay face up on floor. Brace arms on floor at sides.
2. Feet flat, knees bent, feet and knees hip width apart.
3. Brace core, squeeze glutes, lift hips.
4. Keep abs tight so as not to over bow back.

### **VARIATION: SINGLE LEG BRIDGE.**

1. Raise one leg long and straight.
2. Be sure hips stay level as bridge up.



## QUADRUPED HIP EXTENSION

1. On floor on hands and knees. Pull navel to spine and brace core.
2. One leg reaches back long and straight. Lift toward so parallel with floor. Tighten glutes.
3. Return to start.
4. Do not allow lower back to move as move leg.

### VARIATION

1. Same as above except add opposite arm long and straight. Thumb pointing up.
2. Lift opposite arm/leg. Pause and return.
3. Keep core braced. Do not allow lower back to move.



## INSIDE/OUTSIDE FOOT SLAP

1. Standing tall. Navel to spine. Brace core.
2. Bring foot up, rotate knee to outside. Touch inside of foot with same hand.
3. Alternate feet. Can do quickly for good warm up.
4. Bring Foot up rotate knee to inside. Touch outside of foot with same hand. Alternate feet.





## REVERSE TORSO CURLS

1. Lay face up on the floor or bench.
2. Gently hold on to an anchor above head.
3. Bend at hips and knees.
4. Pull navel to spine. Roll lower torso up off surface. Draw knees to chest.
5. Roll down slowly to starting position.
6. Be sure not to extend knees or hips. Do not let lower back arch off surface.



## Appendix F-6, Upper Body Exercises

### SHOULDER ADDUCTION (FRONT PULLS), TERMINAL FLICKS AND SHOULDER ROTATIONS

1. Stand with feet square, hip width apart.
2. Brace core, glutes tight.
3. Arms straight and out to side. Pull back and pinch shoulder blades together.
4. Return to start.

#### **VARIATION 1 – TERMINAL FLICKS**

1. Arms slightly back, pull shoulder blades back and together for the last 20 – 30 degrees of motion.

#### **VARIATION 2 – SHOULDER ROTATION**

1. Arms back. Thumbs pointing back. Rotate from shoulders. Small circles progressing to larger circles. Movement should be slow and deliberate.





## SCAPULA RETRACTION AND DEPRESSION

### SCAPULA RETRACTION

5. Stand tall. Brace core.
6. Arms held parallel to floor and straight.
7. Pull arms back by pinching shoulder blades back. Do not bend elbows.
8. Be sure shoulder blades stay down and do not rise up towards ears.

### SCAPULAR DEPRESSION

5. Stand tall. Brace core.
6. Arms held at sides. Pinch shoulder blades back (scapular retraction) and hold them back.
7. Slightly elevate shoulder blades then take them straight down.
8. Make sure shoulder blades do not come forward as you take them down.



## SHOULDER EXTENSION

1. Standing tall, feet hip width apart, arms long and straight.
2. Pull arms slightly behind body by pinching shoulder blades back.
3. Make sure shoulder blades stay down.
4. Pull navel to spine and keep glutes tight.



## EXTERNAL ROTATOR CUFF

1. Stand with feet square, hip width apart.
2. Navel to spine. Brace core. Glutes tight.
3. Shoulders back and down.
4. Elbows at side bent at 90 degrees.
5. Rotate from shoulders. Hands rotate to outside like a gate hinge.
6. Return to start

### VARIATION:

1. Raise elbows to side to shoulder height. Bend elbows 90 degrees with hands forward.
2. Rotate from shoulders. Hands rotate forward and back, so hands are pointing toward ceiling.
3. Keep shoulders down and back.
4. Return to start.



## SHOULDER “WTY” WITH BODY WEIGHT

1. Stand hip width apart, feet square, brace core.
2. Bend so torso is parallel to floor. Bend knees slightly.
3. Pull navel to your spine.

“W”: Arms at sides in a “W” position. Pull arms back by pinching shoulder blades. Let thumbs turn inward so end up pointing towards floor.

“T”: Arms straight to sides in a ‘T’ position. Pull arms back by pinching shoulder blades.

“Y”: Arms at a 45 degree angle to midline in a “Y” position. Thumbs pointing toward ceiling. Pull arms back by pinching shoulder blades.



“W”



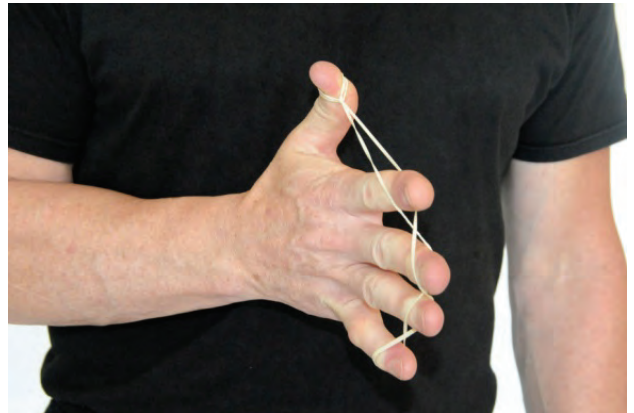
“T”



“Y”

## FINGER/WRIST EXTENSIONS WITH RUBBERBAND

1. Start with rubberband around pinky.
2. Twist and wrap around each finger and thumb.
3. Extend wrist and fingers.



## QUADRUPED HIP EXTENSION

1. On floor on hands and knees. Pull navel to spine and brace core.
2. One leg reaches back long and straight. Lift toward so parallel with floor. Tighten glutes.
3. Return to start.
4. Do not allow lower back to move as move leg.

### VARIATION

1. Same as above except add opposite arm long and straight. Thumb pointing up.
2. Lift opposite arm/leg. Pause and return.
3. Keep core braced. Do not allow lower back to move.





## Appendix F-7, Speed & Agility

### FAST FEET WITH LATERAL MOVEMENT

1. Stand with feet hip width apart. Knees bent. (Athletic stance).
2. Stand facing a line. Quickly step over and back.
3. Move laterally down line.
4. Change direction and change lead foot.

### OVER, SIDE, BACK SIDE

1. Stand with feet hip width apart. Knees bent. (Athletic stance).
2. Stand facing a line. Moving to left, left foot stays on line, right foot steps over, (both feet facing forward), left steps to the side, right steps behind line. "Over, side, back, side".
3. Repeat moving to the right with right foot staying on line.

### ICKEY SHUFFLE

1. Stand with feet hip width apart. Knees bent. (Athletic stance).
2. Stand with line to your right side. Step to the line with right foot. Bring left foot directly next to right foot.
3. Right foot (outside foot), then steps to the outside, left foot (inside foot), advances up line.
4. "In, in, out".
5. Repeat starting with left foot.



## CARIOCA

1. Stand with feet hip width apart. Knees bent. (Athletic stance).
2. Step left foot in front of right foot.
3. Step to the side with right foot.
4. Step behind with left foot.
5. Step to the side with right foot.
6. "Forward, side, back, side".
7. Continue to move in one direction. Hips stay forward, shoulders turn slightly.
8. Change directions.
9. Increase speed as get comfortable with the pattern.





## SHUFFLE / SLIDE

1. Stand with feet hip width apart. Knees bent. (Athletic stance).
2. Shuffle: Knees stay bent, as side skip in one direction. Keep weight off heels and on toes.
3. Slide: Step to side, bring feet together in scissors action, step to side.
4. As increase speed of slide, jump as bring feet together with legs straight.

## "S" HOP

1. Stand with feet hip width apart. Knees bent. (Athletic stance).
2. Start with left foot on line and right foot to outside of line.
3. Body is facing down in the direction of the line.
4. Keep head, neck shoulders all facing down the line.
5. Turn hips so left and right foot are now on the line. Remember to keep head and shoulders facing forward.
6. Keep right foot on line, move left foot to outside of line as turn hips forward.
7. Turn hips again as left foot comes back on line. Hips have turned, but head and shoulders face forward.
8. Move forward down the line in this "S" pattern.

## SPLIT SQUAT FAST FOOT SWITCH

1. Stand with one foot in front of other and slightly to side. Feet should be about 6 inches apart. Knees slightly bent.
2. Jump and switch feet.
3. Increase speed, height or both.
4. Be sure to bend knees and land softly before next jump.



## WALKING BALL TOSS



1. Stand with feet square, hip width apart.
2. Walk forward while tossing the ball with the **non dominant hand**.
3. To watch ball, track with eyes and move from core. Don't tilt head back.

## ONE LEG BALL WALL CATCH

1. Stand on one leg facing wall about two feet from wall.
2. Toss and catch ball against wall.
3. Be sure hips are level throughout drill

### VARIATIONS:

1. Increase distance to wall.
2. Let ball bounce before catch
3. Toss ball to partner. Challenge each other by throwing ball away from partners mid line.

## Appendix F-8, Cool Down & Stretching

### THE "BIG FOUR" SHOULDER EXERCISE

1. Stand with feet square, hip width apart.
2. Brace core, glutes tight.
3. Arms at shoulder height, elbows bent to 90 degrees. Fingers pointing forward.

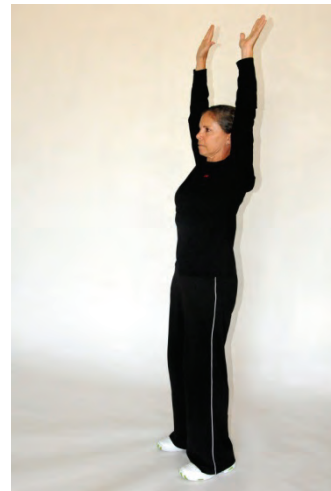
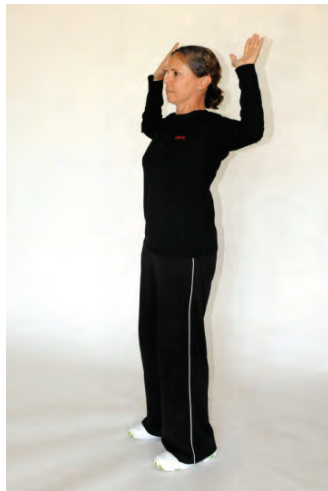
Step 1: Pinch shoulder blades back.

Step 2: Rotate arms so fingers facing up and back.

Step 3: Reach back and up towards finger tips.

Step 4: Reach forward.

Repeat.



## ENERGY PULL FROM SKY

1. Stand with feet square, hip width apart.
2. Brace core, glutes tight.
3. Inhale as reach arms overhead. When inhale, abdomen should go out.
4. Exhale (bring navel to your spine), as push arms down in front of body.
5. Continue to push arms straight down as complete exhale.



## PSOAS HIP FLEXOR STRETCH

1. Kneel on one knee.
2. Push hip of back leg forward. Keep back fairly straight.
3. Tighten glute of back leg to help open hip flexors.
4. Hold for 30 seconds and switch legs.

## WAITERS BOW

1. Stand with feet square, hip width apart.
2. Push hips back and bend forward at waist.
3. Knees are straight but not locked. Should feel a slight pull in the hamstrings (back of legs).

### VARIATION: HIP ROLL

1. Put hands on hips. Open hip of extended leg.
2. Return to neutral. Repeat without putting foot down.



## GLUTE STRETCH

1. Lay on back. Pull one knee toward chest.
2. Stretch arm of bent knee out to side.
3. Put opposite hand on knee and pull toward chest and slightly across body.



## SUPINE LEG EXTENSION

1. Lay face down. Rest head on hands.
2. Bring navel to spine and hold.
3. Tighten both glutes.
4. Raise one leg straight about 6" off floor.
5. Repeat 6x's per leg.
6. Repeat with leg bent 90 degrees.





## HIP DYNAMIC RANGE OF MOTION (DROM)

### INTERNAL/EXTERNAL HIP ROTATION

1. Raise one knee 90 degrees.
2. Keep hips level throughout exercise.
3. Brace core, tighten glute on standing leg.
4. Rotate hip internally by moving lower leg to the outside.
5. Rotate hip externally by moving lower leg to the inside.



**INTERNAL HIP ROTATION**



**EXTERNAL HIP ROTATION**



## WALKING BALL TOSS

1. Stand with feet square, hip width apart.
2. Walk forward while tossing the ball with the **non dominant hand**.
3. To watch ball, track with eyes and move from core. Don't tilt head back.



## SHOULDER ADDUCTION TERMINAL FLICKS AND SHOULDER ROTATIONS

1. Stand with feet square, hip width apart.
2. Brace core, glutes tight.
3. Arms straight and out to side. Pull back and pinch shoulder blades together.
4. Return to start.

### **VARIATION 1 – TERMINAL FLICKS**

1. Arms slightly back, pull shoulder blades back and together for the last 20 – 30 degrees of motion.

### **VARIATION 2 – SHOULDER ROTATION**

1. Arms back. Thumbs pointing back. Rotate from shoulders. Small circles progressing to larger circles. Movement should be slow and deliberate.





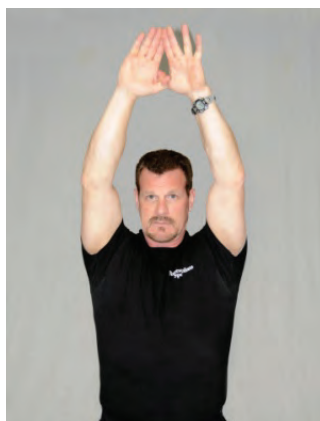
## TRUNK ROTATION

1. Keep hips facing forward.
2. Hands stay in front and close to body.
3. Slowly rotate shoulders right, center, left, center.
4. Brace core, tighten glutes.
5. Shoulders down and back.

## TRUNK LATERAL FLEXION / TORSO LATERAL FLEXION

1. Keep hips facing forward.
2. Slowly flex to one side.
3. Brace core, tighten glutes.
4. Keep head in between arms.

**NOTE:** TORSO LATERAL FLEXION – Bend at waist only.  
TRUNK LATERAL FLEXION – Bend at waist and push opposite hip to side.



**STARTING POSITION**



**TRUNK LATERAL FLEXION**

# USA RACQUETBALL INSTRUCTORS PROGRAM CERTIFICATION TEST

## Part 1 – Lesson Plan, Video Analysis and Practical -Total Points-50

- A. Design Lesson Plan-(15 points)
  - B. Video Analysis of Match Play-(15 points)
  - C. Instructor’s Practical Teaching Test (20 points)
- 
- A. Design an intermediate group lesson plan for a 6-week course (15 points)

LESSON PLAN GRADE: \_\_\_\_\_



## B. Video Analysis of Match Play (15 points)

### How to Read Video and What to Look For!

The USA Racquetball Instructors Program utilizes video study for teaching and coaching. Analyzing your student's video is an excellent teaching tool and can be a source of extra income. In this age of iPhones and iPads obtaining the video is easy. The USA Racquetball Instructors Program also recommends using video programs for further telestration. (See Powerchalk and Sports Video in the preface) We have broken the art of Video analysis into six parts.

1. Strokes- reading the video segment provided, analyze the stroke mechanics of the student. Stop the video-Do they have the correct grip? Are they twisting their wrist? Is the ready position correct? Is the racquet up early and often? Is there proper height and depth in relation to the ready position? Is the power base correct? When hitting a forehand or backhand is the back knee low so the athlete is hitting low? Are they using their body to generate power or are they swinging with their hitting arm primarily? Is the follow through correct or are they stopping their swing? Are they snapping their wrist or are they pushing the ball? Are their contact points correct and are they swinging level? These are all questions relative to correct forehand and backhand technique.
2. Court Position-Stop the video feedback as the opponent hits the ball. Watch your student and ask yourself these questions. Are they watching the ball? Are they behind the receiving line in the middle of the court? Are their legs wide and hips low? Are they in proper position when the ceiling ball is hit; a swing and a half away in deep-court? As the rally continues do they stay active with their feet sliding in center court or are they stationary? Do their feet stay facing forward or do they end up sideways, with feet toward the side wall? Are they reading the shot or guessing where the ball is going? These are things to look for when looking at court position.
3. Shot Selection is the art of hitting it to the open court. Stop the video as your student is taking a shot and ask these questions. Is the shot being executed the correct shot? If not, why? Often poor footwork or preparation will dictate the incorrect shot being taken by an athlete. Is the student hitting the side wall too much? Is the athlete you are teaching able to hit down the line effectively? If the student does not have an offensive shot are they using the ceiling correctly? Remember, the inability to execute the proper shot selection is usually a symptom of poor footwork and/or mechanics and not a cause. Our suggestion is to analyze accordingly.
4. Serving is one of the key areas of executing an effective game plan. Is the student serving the correct serve to their opponent? If so, are they executing correctly? Do they have too much weight forward when hitting a serve? Are they relocating out of the service area correctly? Are they able to push back with both legs when hitting a drive serve or does one leg swing around and take them out of position? When hitting a lob serve do they work hard to relocate deep behind the receiving line or do they "walk" back to center court? Are they getting a swing and a half away from their opponent on the lob serve? Are they striking the ball too high or too low on their serves? Are they hitting the ball too far



forward in their stance, thus rendering themselves ineffective in moving back into proper position? When analyzing serve, these questions will help your student understand serving and relocating.

5. Return of Serve starts with proper position. Are they receiving serve too far forward? Are they too far back? At beginning and intermediate levels a receiver can line up with their feet on the back wall, but as the ability levels change the positioning may have to on return of serve. If one lines up to receive serve too far forward it opens up the the area on both sides of the receiver making it hard to get to the ball. It also renders the receiver useless in returning z serves and jam serves. If one lines up too far back at advanced levels, a good drive serve will defeat this position. These are things to look for as far as position. The manner of receiving serve is extremely important also. Is the receiver bending at the waist, and have to straighten up before moving, thus having to “make a move to make a move”? Is their weight evenly distributed, and are they gripping the floor with their toes? This allows them to get a good jump on the ball. Are they reading and reacting or are they waiting to see where the serve goes? Often an athlete will be too careful and lose precious milliseconds getting to the drive serve. Are they taking a good split step and moving correctly or are they stepping open hipped(hips toward the front wall)? Are they stepping too shallow with their opposite leg and thus contacting the ball in front of their body? Those are some points to teach for return of serve.
  
6. Footwork is best described simply to students. From beginners who simply have to get their feet to the side wall as much as possible to advanced players who have to have their feet set and racquet ready, footwork is the last step in teaching a complete player. Beginning to intermediate players will have inactive feet. The student will set their feet early and try to lean toward the ball. An advanced player will move their feet with little “microsteps” that allow them to be in proper position. It is impossible to separate footwork from all of the above skills, mechanics, positioning, relocation after serving, and returning serve, all dictate correct footwork. The student will benefit from footwork feedback and it will enhance their development in the other areas.



Now Read the Video and Analyze Below!

1. Strokes

2. Court Position

3. Shot Selection

4. Serves and Relocation

5. Return of Serve

6. Footwork



### C. Instructor's Practical Teaching Test (20 points)

#### DIRECTIONS:

Assumption: Circle one desired level of testing)

1. Instructor level testing only—novice, C, B, A
2. Advanced instructor level testing---A, Elite, Open, Pro

Lesson topic: Circle one

Drive serve, z serve, lob nick, backhand lob z, cutting off lob serves, center court positioning, positioning during rallies, shot selection, backhand mechanics, forehand mechanics, tracking shots off the back wall, ceiling game

#### Introduction: (5)

- Personal and professional history (1)
- Physical limitations (1)
- Visual assessment (1)
- Student's objectives (1)
- Introduction of Topic (1)

#### Assessment: (6)

- Student's execution (1)
- Instructor's demonstration (1)
- Error detection (2)
- Corrections (2)

#### Closure: (3)

- Summary- (1)
- Homework-drills--(1)
- Appointment (1)

#### Appearance: (3)

- Sponsor clothing, professional clothing (1)
- Proper footwear (1)
- Eyeguards on duration of lesson (1)

#### Stage Presence: (3)

- Proper voice inflection and volume (1)
- Variation of tone to create interest (1)
- Ability to relax under pressure (1)

INSTRUCTOR'S PRACTICAL TEACHING TEST GRADE: \_\_\_\_\_





## Part 2 - Hitting Setups and Demo Shots-Total Points - New Score 50

### Parameters:

***Passes are defined as striking the wall at or below the three-foot tape on the front wall. Pinches and drive serves have to strike the front wall at or below the same three-foot height. All serves have to be good and fault serves do not count. Z serves have to strike the wall at or below the six-foot tape height and hit the front wall-side wall-floor-opposite sidewall to count.***

The three-foot painters tape on the court is for drive serves and pass attempts. The painters tape down the middle of the court is to divide the court in right and left sides, and the six-foot painters tape on the wall in the corners is for Z serve points to aim toward. Each setup to a student counts four points each and each demo shot counts two points each for a total of 50 points. The drills are divided into setups (to students) and demos (for students). (Please refer to video of hitting test for more clarification.)

Setups for Students—2 pts. each shot--4 points each task--two tries for each task/shot (28).

1. Set up at the short line—1 left, 1 right--4
2. Set up at the receiving line- 1 left, 1 right--4
3. Set up directly off the back wall- 1 left, 1 right--4
4. Set up off the side wall- 1 left , 1 right--4
5. Backhand setups to backhand side of court--4
6. Short ceiling ball setups-1 left , 1 right--4
7. From back court- setups up front- 1 left, 1 right--4

**28 points Part One** \_\_\_\_\_



**Demonstrations of Shots**—1 each task/shot (22)

8. Drive serve – 1 left 1 right--2
9. Half lob serve- 1 left, 1 right --2
10. Drive Z serve- 1 left, 1 right --2
11. Backhand lob Z serve, forehand Lob Z serve-1 each--2
12. Instructor will hit a setup at or around the receiving line and a pinch shot, one forehand pinch and backhand pinch--2
13. Instructor will hit a setup at or around the receiving line and hit a cross court pass, one forehand and one backhand pass.--2
14. Instructor will hit a setup off the backwall and hit a down the line pass, one forehand and one backhand--2
15. Instructor will hit a ceiling ball, two in a row with the backhand stroke from deep court, behind the receiving line and two in a row to the forehand side (pass fail—no half points)--2
16. Instructor will hit an around the wall ball, one to the left side of the court and one to the right.--2
17. Instructor will hit a short ceiling ball to the forehand side and hit an overhead pass to the opposite side of the court. (this should be struck behind the receiving line in deep court)--1



18. Instructor will hit a short ceiling ball to the forehand side and hit an overhead pinch shot to the near side of the court. (this should be struck behind the receiving line in deep court)--1

19. Instructor will hit a drive serve to their backhand from the deep court. It will not be a good drive serve but more like a drive pass. Instructor will then hit a backhand ceiling ball to demonstrate return of drive serve.--1

20. Instructor will hit a lob serve to their backhand from the deep court. It will not be a good lob serve but more like a soft pass shot. Instructor will then hit a backhand ceiling ball to demonstrate return of lob serve.--1

**22 points Part Two \_\_\_\_\_**

**Total points Hitting Exam- 50 points \_\_\_\_\_**



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Unprofessionally dressed instructor model: Shaun Herrera  
All other models depicted within this manual: Jo Shattuck and Anthony Herrera

