

# GREEN BALL

## COACH'S CURRICULUM

Green Ball Practice And Play Plans

GREEN BALL 02 / GREEN BALL 01

# DEAR COACH,

## WELCOME TO NET GENERATION!

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

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

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

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

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

### **Jim Courier**

U.S. Davis Cup Captain  
Net Generation Ambassador



### **Kathy Rinaldi**

U.S. Fed Cup Captain  
Net Generation Ambassador



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# INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

## COMPREHENSIVE

Covers the beginner Red Ball to the advanced Green Ball player.

## COMPETENCY BASED

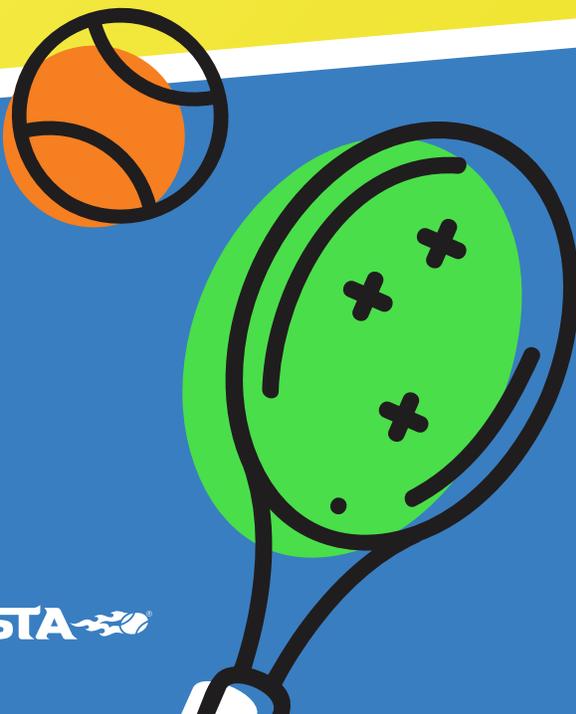
Spells out the skills and knowledge each player should have before moving to the next ball and court size.

## COLLABORATIVE

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

## CONVENIENT

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

An illustration of a tennis racket with a green head and a black frame, positioned diagonally. To its left is an orange tennis ball with black lines. The background is a blue gradient.

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

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

# EQUIPMENT NEEDED

## MEDICINE BALLS

Lightweight medicine balls or junior-size basketball.

## GREEN BALLS

Used on the 78-foot court. Must be yellow with a green dot.

## RACQUETS

25 inches and larger for the 78-foot court with green ball.

## BALL BUCKETS

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

## POLY-SPOTS AND THROW-DOWN LINES (TDLs)

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

## HULA HOOPS

Available at most big-box stores.

## CONES

9-inch and half-cones.



# STRUCTURE OF PRACTICE AND PLAY PLANS

## WARMUP

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

## SKILL DEVELOPMENT

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

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

## GAMES

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

## CHARACTER

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

## PLAY AT HOME

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



# DESCRIPTIONS OF ACTIVITIES



## TYPE

**Individual:** Independent skill development.

**Team:** Two or more players.

**Cooperative:** Pairs or groups focused on improving skills together.

**Competitive:** Scoring and declaring a winner.

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

## FOCUS

Specific areas to work on.

## SETUP

Location of players, balls and equipment.

## MISSION

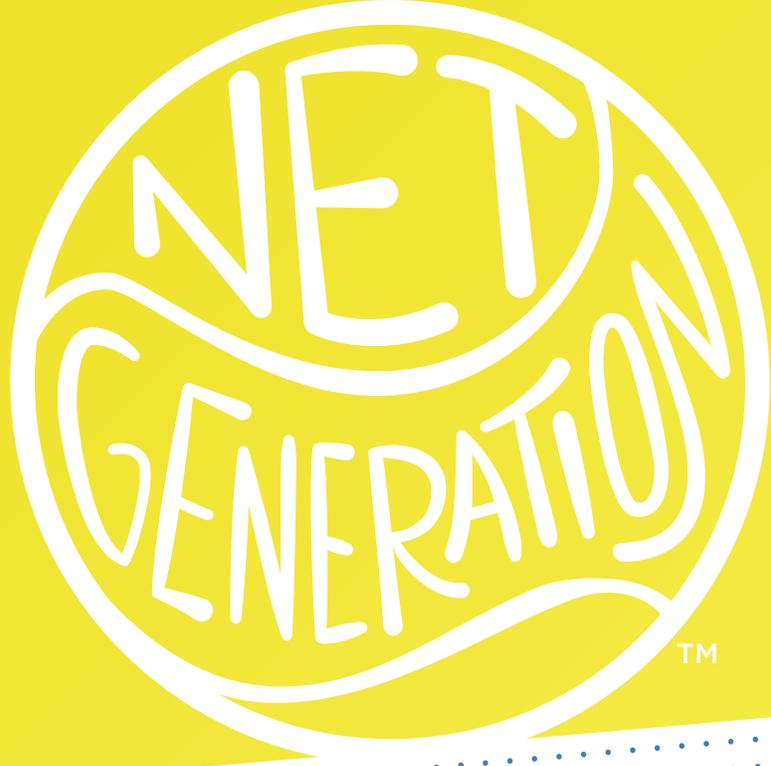
What we want players to do, followed by bullets with specific instructions.

## GOAL

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

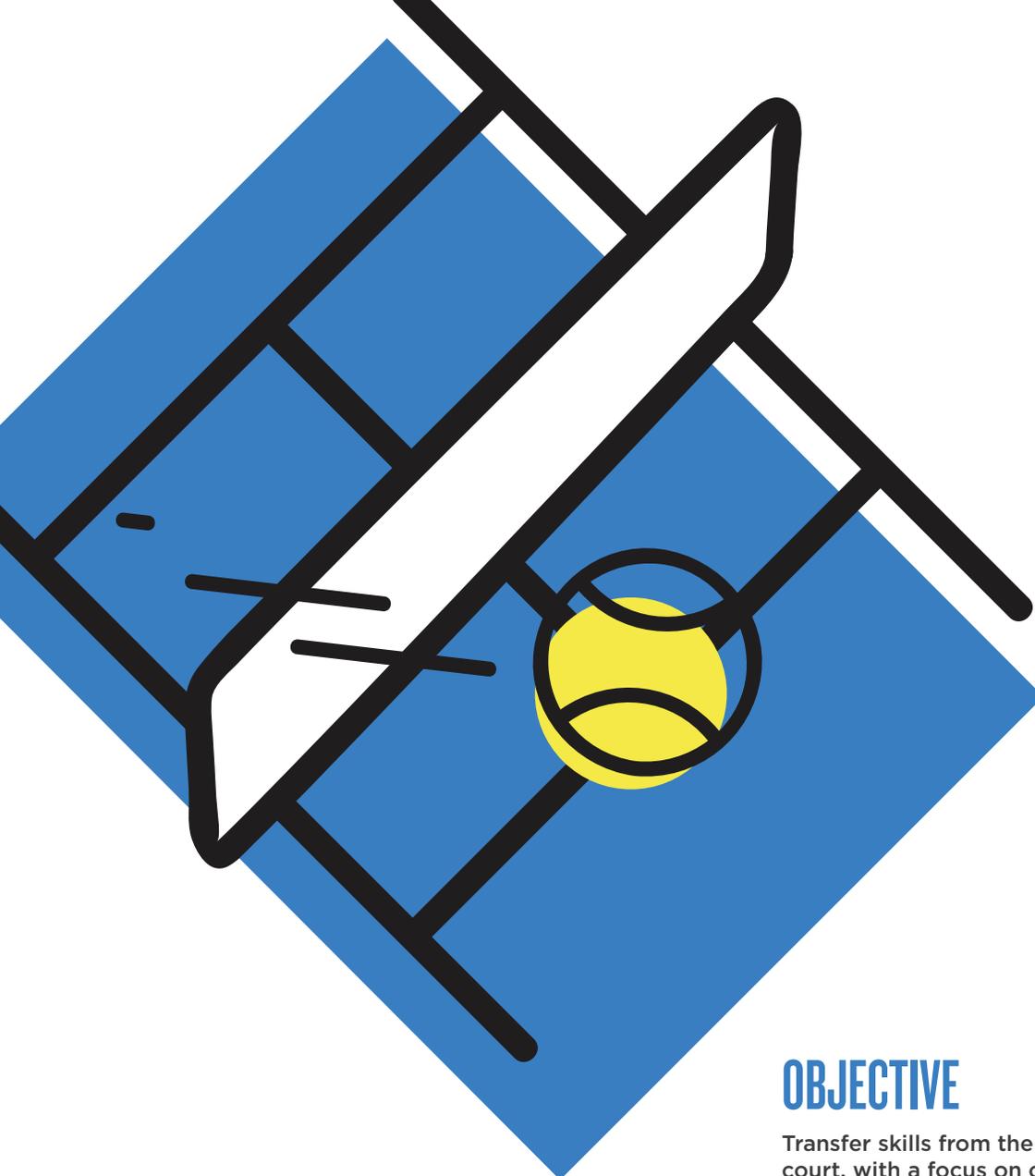
## PROGRESSIONS

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



# GREEN BALL 02





## NOTES:

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

## OBJECTIVE

Transfer skills from the 60-foot court to the 78-foot court, with a focus on court coverage.

## SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

### Total: 90 minutes

- Warmup: 6 - 8 minutes
- Character: 3 minutes or less
- Skills (athletic and tennis): 30 - 35 minutes
- Games: 25 - 30 minutes
- Play-on-Your-Own Review: 3 minutes or less

## PLANS AT A GLANCE



Warmup	Character	Athletic Skills	Tennis Skills	Games	Play on Your Own
<b>01</b> Going Green	Mini-Tennis Independence	Skips Knee Tag Four-Corner Toss	Call the Bounce X Drill	Up and Down the River Crazy Feed	Depth Games
<b>02</b> Open Up the Court	Mini-Tennis Angles Play fair	Skate and Volley Compass Jumps Make 'Em Move	Alley Rally	Sideline Defend and Recover	Angle the Angler
<b>03</b> Put It In Neutral	Mini-Tennis Points Independence	4x4 Tag Jump Rope All-Fours Catch	Tempo Drill Alley Rally	Team Up and Down the River	Use Your Slice
<b>04</b> Attack and Defend	Mini-Tennis Effort	Skate and Hit Two-Cone Jump Hi-Lo Toss	Tempo Drill Depth Drill	Absorb and Rip Team Defender	Serve & Volley/Chip & Charge
<b>05</b> Serve to Spots	Mini-Tennis Points Independence	Copy Cat Agility Ladder Three-Level Throw	Drag Serve Serve Index	Return the Cannon Point Play	Drag Serve
<b>06</b> Make the Pass	Figure 8 Independence	Obstacle Course Crossover Shuffle Make 'Em Move	Call the Bounce Make the Pass	Triples Point Play	Trick Shots
<b>07</b> Return to Sender	Over and Under Effort	Red Light/Green Light Knee Tag	Pinch	Serve Pyramids Two-on-One Attack	Step Up
<b>08</b> Game On!	Trick Shots Effort	Player's Choice	Five-Minute Warmup	Defend and Recover Team Defender	Start a Journal

# GOING GREEN

**Equipment:** 25 to 27-inch racquets; green balls; cones, poly-spots, and TDLs.

## I. WARMUP

### MINI-TENNIS

**Type:** Cooperative, players in pairs.

**Focus:** Groundstroke direction.

**Setup**

- Two pairs per court, using half-court.
- All players on service line.
- Hit into service box and alley.

**Mission**—Crosscourt groundstroke patterns.

- Pairs rally crosscourt with outside stroke only.
- After two minutes, switch sides of court.

**Goal**—Take advantage of extra width.

**Progressions**

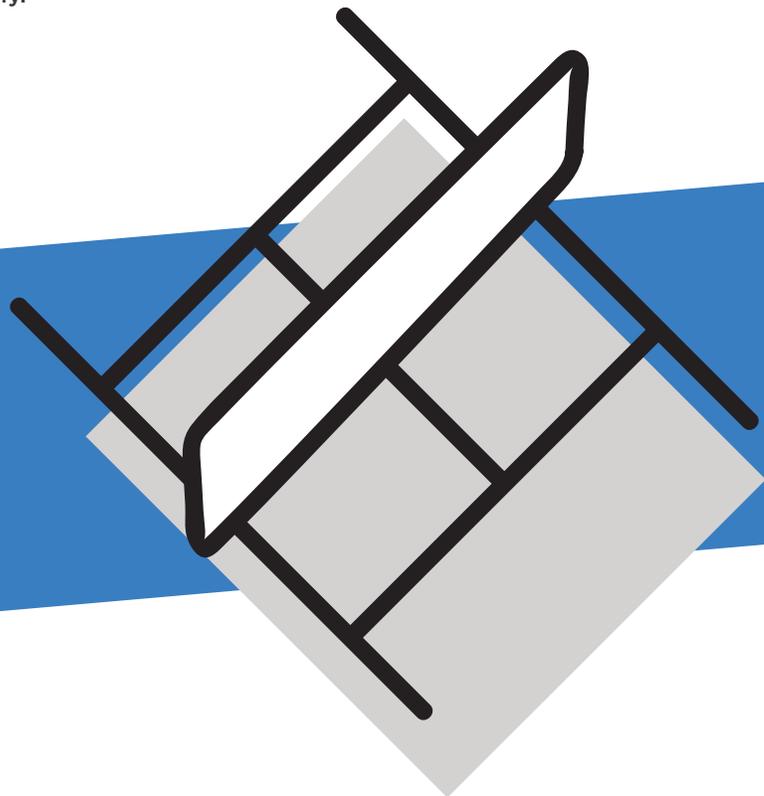
1. Rally into service-box corners.
2. Rally with more angle into alleys.

## II. CHARACTER

### INDEPENDENCE

Show commitment by scheduling your own practice time outside of lessons.

## III. ATHLETIC SKILLS



## SKIPS

### Setup

- Up to four players on each side of net, spread out along baselines.
- Place cones or TDLs in front of net so players know when to stop.

### Mission

- Warm up with basic skip to net and back.
- Next, call out specific types of skips to net and back. Perform two rounds and move on to progressions.

### Progressions

1. Skips with arm circles, changing direction of arms on each round.
2. Loud skips, soft skips, medium skips. Note: Ask players how loud skip felt how soft skip felt.
3. Micro skips (low to ground).
4. High-knee skips to net and back, trying to stay in the air as long as possible.
5. Skips for distance.

## KNEE TAG

### Setup

- Players in pairs, no more than four on each side of net.
- Pairs face each other in athletic stance two to three feet apart.

### Mission

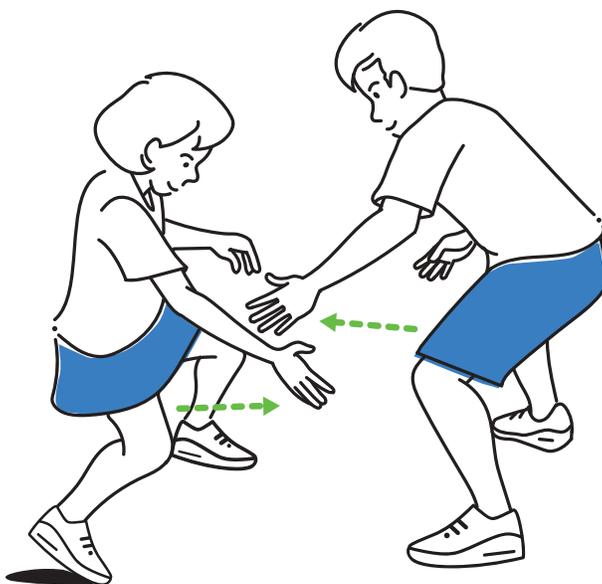
- Attempt to tag opponent's knee while avoiding being tagged.
- Stay on your feet at all times.
- Can't use hands to block tag.

- After 60 seconds, player with most touches wins. Rotate opponents each game or play two out of three.
- Emphasize moving feet and staying in an athletic stance during play.

### Progressions

1. Set playing boundaries, then experiment by changing court size.
2. Use only one hand.

### ILLUSTRATION: KNEE TAG



## FOUR-CORNER TOSS

### Setup

- Players in pairs, no more than four pairs on each side of net.
- Pairs stand about four feet apart facing each other, with four green balls.

### Mission

- Toss ball with right hand to partner, who catches in the air with left hand.
- Partner then passes ball from left hand to right before tossing back to player's left hand.
- Toss ball to side of body.
- Once successful, add movement, going from sideline to sideline and back while tossing.

### Progressions

1. Toss two balls, continuing to toss with right hand, catch in left, and pass ball from left hand to right. Do in a stationary position, then add movement.
2. Toss three balls—first stationary, then add movement.
3. Toss four balls—first stationary, then with movement.

## IV. TENNIS SKILLS

### CALL THE BOUNCE

**Type:** Cooperative, players in pairs.

**Focus:** Ball recognition.

### Setup

- Two or three pairs per court, using half-court.
- All players spread out on baseline.

**Mission**—Call out where ball will land.

- Rally straight ahead with partner.
- As ball comes back, call out “up” “back” or “stay” then move to that spot to return shot.
- Follow a really short “up” ball to net, finish rally and move back.

**Goal**—Call location and move to ball as it crosses net.

### Progressions

1. Rally crosscourt.
2. Any stroke, one stroke, alternate strokes.

## X DRILL

**Type:** Hand feed, players in groups of three.

**Focus:** Diagonal movement for groundstrokes.

### Setup

- One group of three per court, one feeder and two hitters.
- One hitter is in center of baseline, other hitter is behind at safe distance.
- Feeder is in middle of court between baseline and service line on same side as hitters.
- Feeder has a supply of balls.
- Targets in deep and short corners of court on other side.

**Mission**—Roll deep ball and angle midcourt ball.

- Feeder tosses high and deep to one side; hitter backs up and returns high and deep crosscourt with heavy topspin and recovers to middle.
- Second feed is high and short to opposite side; hitter plays short angle and recovers.
- Repeat to opposite sides.
- Complete two sequences and switch hitters. After each hitter has gone, change the feeder.
- Can do with four and have one player picking up.

**Goal**—Move in diagonals up and back using appropriate stances.

### Progressions

1. Hand-feed, then racquet-feed from other side of net.
2. Coach feeds to increase tempo and difficulty.



### TEACHING TIP

Moving from the 60 to the 78-foot court means lots of extra space. Most players' overall skill level will drop, and that should be expected. The most important thing to work on, initially, is court coverage.

## UP AND DOWN THE RIVER

**Type:** Competitive, one on one.

**Focus:** Groundstroke depth and consistency.

**Setup**

- Two pairs per court, using half-court. Boundaries are middle to doubles line.
- Use TDLs to split court from service line to baseline.

**Mission**—Stay consistent while keeping ball deep.

- Start points after serve and return.
- Both players must let ball bounce.
- Play to four points, then volley cooperatively until last court finishes.
- After all courts finish, winner moves up half a court; loser moves down.

**Goal**—Use height, spin, and speed to keep ball deep.

**Progressions**

1. Start points straight ahead with one stroke.
2. Play crosscourt with outside stroke only.

**ILLUSTRATION: UP AND DOWN THE RIVER**

