

# ORANGE BALL

## COACH'S CURRICULUM

Orange Ball Practice And Play Plans

ORANGE BALL 03 / ORANGE BALL 02 / ORANGE 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



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	4
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## ORANGE BALL 3

1. Keep It Deep	11
2. What's Your Record?	17
3. Hit On The Run	24
4. Over And Under	30
5. Move It!	37
6. Party At The Net	44
7. Over My Head	50
8. Let's Play!	56

## ORANGE BALL 2

1. Put The Ball Where I Want	63
2. Higher And Faster	71
3. Slice And Dice 'Em!	76
4. Attack!	84
5. Stay-Defend-Go	89
6. Ridiculous Return	96
7. I Love Doubles	100
8. Let's Play!	104

## ORANGE BALL 1

1. Put The Ball Where I Want	111
2. Shape It!	117
3. Who's The Boss?	122
4. Serve Plus One	129
5. Watch Me Volley	134
6. Speed Check	141
7. Air Attack	148
8. What's Your Game?	155

# 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.

Inside this manual you'll find three levels of Practice and Play Plans—Orange Ball 3, Orange Ball 2 and Orange 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.

## ORANGE BALLS

Lower-compression felt ball used on the 60-foot court. Can be multicolored or yellow with orange dot.

## RACQUETS

25 inches and smaller for 60-foot court with orange 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

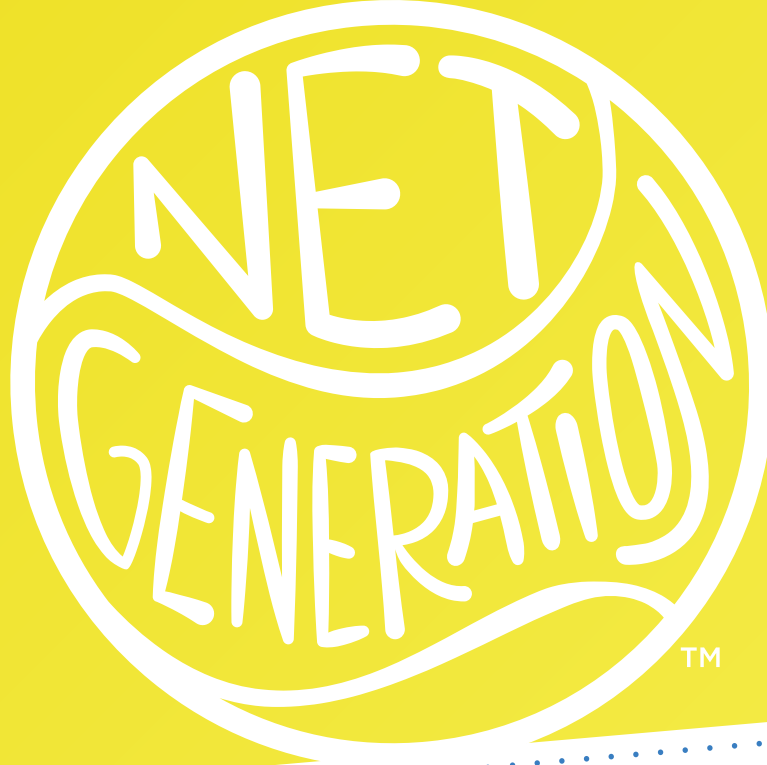
WHAT we want players to do, followed by bullets with specific instructions.

## GOAL

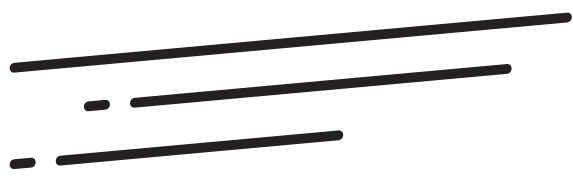
HOW we want players to execute the activity, generally related to a specific competency.

## PROGRESSIONS

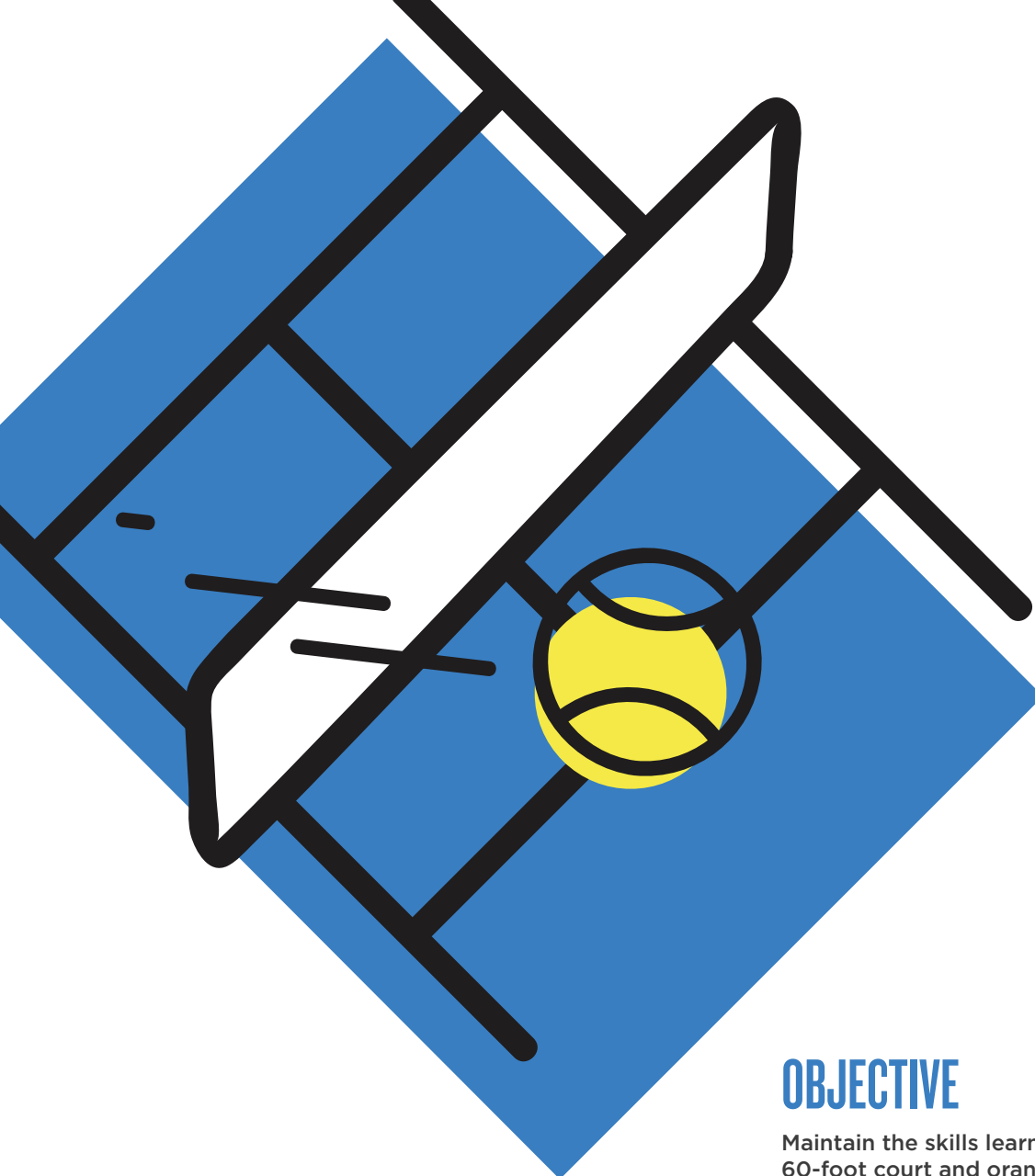
Specific steps to increase the difficulty of the skill/activity, to be used in subsequent practices or to handle mixed abilities.



# ORANGE BALL 03







## NOTES:

If practice is 60 minutes, add a short dynamic “warm up” or have players come early.

If practice is longer than 60 minutes, add a dynamic warmup and more point play at the end.

## OBJECTIVE

Maintain the skills learned in Red and adapt to the 60-foot court and orange ball.

## SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

### Total: 60 minutes

- Warmup: 6 - 8 minutes
- Character: 3 minutes or less
- Skills (athletic and tennis): 25 - 30 minutes
- Games: 15 - 20 minutes
- Play at Home: 3 minutes or less

## PLANS AT A GLANCE



	Warmup	Character	Athletic Skills Development	Tennis Skills Development	Games	Play at Home
<b>01</b> <b>Keep it Deep</b>	Grade School	Effort	Obstacle Course Jump to the Line Make 'Em Move	Squeeze Rally	Serve Plus One Budge	Alternate Wall Rally
<b>02</b> <b>What's Your Record?</b>	Mini-Tennis	Positivity	Jump Rope to Skip Loops Big-Ball Toss Four-Corner Toss	Control It! Four-Ball Challenge	What's It Worth?	Rally for Numbers
<b>03</b> <b>Hit on the Run</b>	Mini-Tennis	Teamwork	Positional Starts One-Leg Toss Quarterback	Toss/Hit/Catch	Defend and Recover	Pick a Pro
<b>04</b> <b>Over and Under</b>	7 Up	Teamwork	Copycat Get Tall/Get Small Fence Throws	Slice and Dice Toss/Hit/Catch: Topspin	Crazy Feed	Over and Under
<b>05</b> <b>Move It!</b>	Quicksand	Positivity	Jump Rope to Skip Loops Serpentine Shuffle Ball Drops (Crossing Midline)	Court Shapes	Four-Square Black Hole	Two and Two
<b>06</b> <b>Party at the Net</b>	Slice and Dice	Teamwork	Red Light/Green Light Runs Vertical Jumps Make 'em Move	Up-and-Back Volley First Four	Charge! Doubles	Volley to Wall
<b>07</b> <b>Over My Head</b>	Figure 8 Volley	Responsibility	Obstacle Course Figure 8 Cone Weaves Three-Ball Throw	Hi-Lo	Moonballer	Volley with a Friend
<b>08</b> <b>Let's Play!</b>	Up-and-Back Volley	Responsibility	Big-Ball Tennis	Four-Ball Challenge	Budge Crazy Feed All-Positions Doubles	Bring a Friend

# KEEP IT DEEP

**Equipment:** Blended lines or TDLs for 60-foot court; 23 to 25-inch racquets; orange balls; cones, poly-spots and TDLs.

## I. WARMUP

### GRADE SCHOOL

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

**Focus:** Groundstroke consistency.

**Setup**

- Two pairs per court, using half-court.
- Both players start in middle of service box.

**Mission**—Rally and work your way to baseline.

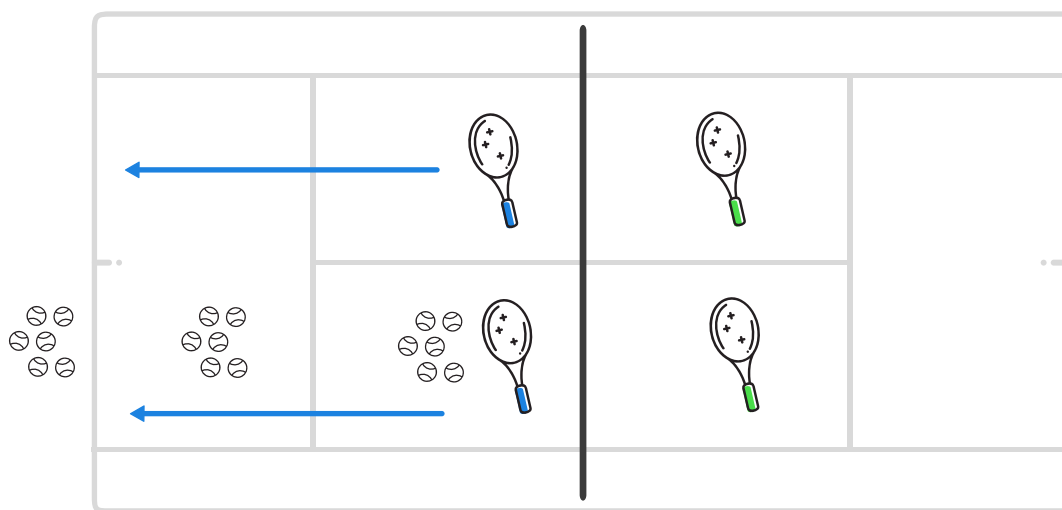
- Rally back and forth. Hit one each and move to first grade.
- Once in first grade, rally two shots each and move to second grade.
- Continue until you reach sixth grade, then move to start over from service line, then baseline.

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

**Progressions**

1. One stroke.
2. Ball must bounce past service line to count.

### ILLUSTRATION: GRADE SCHOOL



## II. CHARACTER

### EFFORT

- Enjoy playing and giving your best.
- Rate your own effort.



## III. ATHLETIC SKILLS

### OBSTACLE COURSE

#### Setup

- Use four cones to create an 18x18-foot square in center of court on each side of net. Keep square a safe distance from net.
- Four to six players per square.

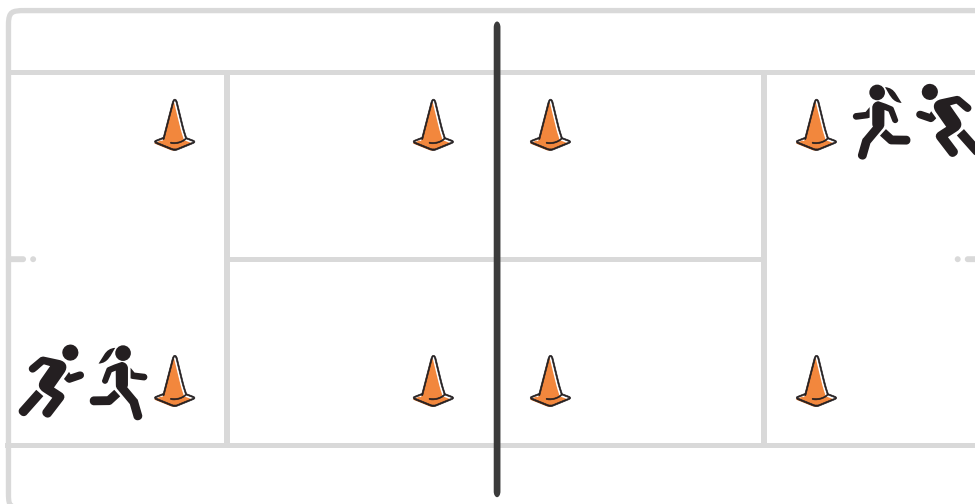
#### Mission

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

#### Progressions

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

### ILLUSTRATION: OBSTACLE COURSE



## JUMP TO THE LINE

### Setup

- Stand two to three steps behind baseline or sideline.

### Mission

- On coach's command, jump as close to line as possible.
- Emphasize low, athletic stance before jump and on landing.

### Progressions

1. Jump to line with toes as close as possible.
2. Jump over line with heels as close as possible.
3. Jump sideways close to line.
4. Jump sideways over line.
5. Jump backward.

## MAKE 'EM MOVE

### Setup

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

### Mission

- Make catcher move by tossing balls side to side, high/low, and deep/short. Catch on one bounce.
- Catcher uses right hand on right side, left hand on left.
- Once successful, toss balls slightly above catcher's head. Catch one-handed in the air.
- Switch roles every minute.
- Need help? Move closer.

### Progressions

1. For high ball, catch with opposite foot and hand.
2. Increase distance between pairs.

# IV. TENNIS SKILLS



## SQUEEZE RALLY

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

**Focus:** Direction on groundstrokes.

### Setup

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

**Mission**—Control rally within court boundaries.

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

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

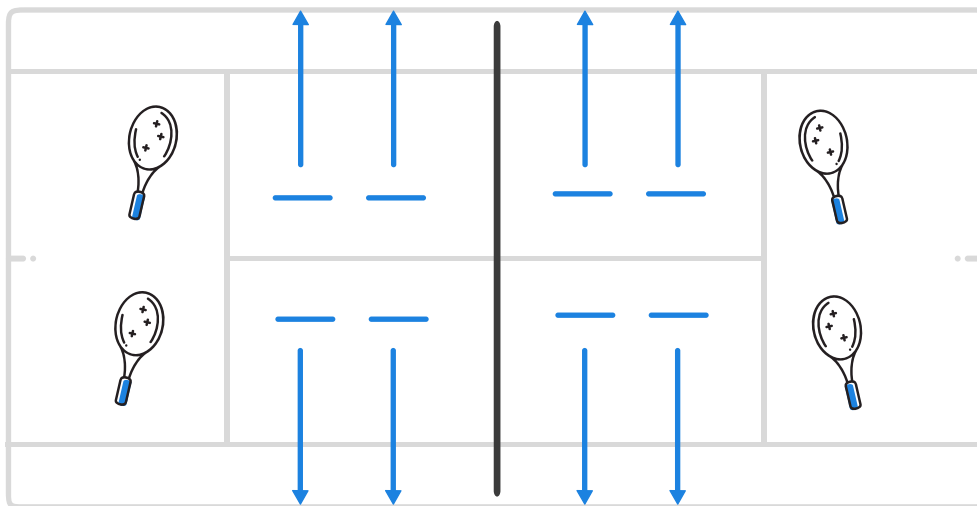
### Progressions

1. Increase number of shots required.
2. Any stroke, then one stroke.
3. Move back to baseline.

### TEACHING TIP

When players move from 36- to 60-foot court, avoid changing both the ball and the racquet at the same time. Starting with an orange ball on the service line of the 60-foot court is a great way to begin. Then bring them back to the baseline and change their racquets when they become more comfortable.

### ILLUSTRATION: SQUEEZE RALLY



## SERVE PLUS ONE

**Type:** Cooperative with partner.

**Focus:** Serve and return direction and consistency.

### Setup

- Two pairs per court, each hitting diagonally across net from each other.
- Players start on service line.

**Mission**—Execute serve, return, and first ball.

- Serve, return, hit one ground stroke, and trap ball.
- Returner serves and continues sequence.
- Each player completes four sequences, then switches sides of court (deuce to ad).
- After a complete rotation, play as a game. Pair scores a point for each three-ball sequence, and a bonus point if server hits first groundstroke past service line.

**Goal**—Use continental grip on serve with feet in proper position.

### Progressions

1. Start on baseline.
2. Serve to specific half of service box.

## BUDGE

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

**Focus:** Groundstroke consistency.

### Setup

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

**Mission**—Keep ball in play.

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

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

### Progressions

1. Use single stroke.
2. Crosscourt with outside stroke.

# IV. PLAY AT HOME

## ALTERNATE WALL RALLY

### Setup

Play with foam ball against garage door or solid wall.

### Progressions

- Serve overhand to wall, hit one groundstroke and then other. Continue to alternate.
- Serve to left, then right side of wall and then alternate shots.
- Serve to wall and rally with a friend.

