

UC San Diego learns how to “Shrink the Window”

Soccer Tennis for warm up before practice begins.

Using the service boxes on either side of the court, play doubles tiebreakers with a ball soccer style: using your feet, head and body to get the ball over the net. Start with two bounces per side, and then progressively move to one bounce. Great for the coordination and very fun.

Dynamic Track Warm Up

This warm up involves skipping, jogging, backpeddalling, and sidestepping around the court with various arm movements designed to fully warm the body.

Arm Bands

UC San Diego has become a big believer in a rotator cuff warm up using plastic tubing. We have seen the incidence of arm injury drastically reduced from the use of the tubing over the past few years.

Long Warm up

Warm up all shots with strong emphasis on consistency and ball height over the net.

Quick Volley

We have two players begin on the service line on each side of the net and one player or coach feed balls from mid ¾ court. As soon as a ball is fed, the players play the point. Play a game for three or four minutes and rotate. A game the players love and one that really gets their competitive spirits going.

One at Net, one Feeding at Baseline

Here we position one player right on top of the net where we would play them in this formation, and the other player is at the baseline where you would think a return is usually struck. The player at the baseline feeds the ball very fast at the netman who then hits to one of three targets. The deep target back to the feeder is for very difficult returns. The T is for returns of average difficulty and the short angle target for the easy returns. This drill is fast paced, working on the netman's ability to read and react to the return that is struck. One important note. The netman must split step before each feed. This is very important for their development. This is also a great drill to work out some of the fear that some players feel when at the net and the returner hits the ball right at them.

Serve, Return and Volley

In this drill we have the Server working on hitting targets with either a first or second serve. The returner may hit the ball crosscourt to a target zone, or down the line to a target zone. The netman attempts to get every return hit, no matter whether the return is struck crosscourt or down the line. This drill is great for the first two shots in doubles, but is mostly important for the netman to learn anticipation, movement and volley skills.

Play Doubles emphasizing the importance of synchronizing the formation used with the mentality needed to play it well.

Most drills are designed to get your players to do something better than they already do it, but you must always get your players in the match situation and reassure them when they do the right thing but fail to get the result that they desire. I believe that you must repeat and repeat and repeat until they believe it! Good luck!

Bethel University, St. Paul, MN

The one month fall season starts with a few days getting strokes grooved, then moves to line up playoffs, which begin fresh each season. We then work on forming doubles pairings and finally do some scrimmaging with local schools. On practice days we work with individuals and small groups on their choice of strokes, while other players do the same with each other. I like the idea of players helping each other practice. We try to start practice with some dynamic stretching and cool down with some static stretching. The October thru January off season is spent doing a planned physical workout and hitting as much as class schedule permits. We encourage this to be a team building time with good leadership from the captains. The coaches are not allowed to lead during this time.

Conference season practice has been 1 1/2 hours per team, including set up and take down of nets in our four court multiuse facility. This is a typical practice, but may be varied.

10 min. physical warm up (dynamic stretching, footwork, sprints, jumps, stretching)

15 min. strokes warm up

10 min. serve / return

40 - 50 min. I.C. (intensive care) We have two coaches who each work with a small group, drilling them on what one player at a time wants to work on. After half the time is up we rotate. The two non coached groups play various games while waiting for their I.C. time.

5 min. footwork / sprints

10 min. double / singles competition or group competitive games

Most of our matches are on Friday and Saturday, so often Monday and Tuesday practices are fix it and firm it practices, and Wednesday and Thursday practices have more time for competitive play

Vanderbilt University Women

Topic	Varies
Practice Time	1:40 - 2:40 Hours

We like to run what we call "tighten and loosen" practices. Our players must be able to hit or have certain fundamentals in certain situations. We like to work on and teach racket skills and spin and height skills. We'll use drills such as:

- Mini-tennis
- 2 verses 1
- Corner drill

3, 6, and 12 (Two players will hit and one player will hit 5 shots 3 feet above the net and then the next 5 shots 6 feet above the net and then the next 5 shots 12 feet above the net)

Comments: Our players will also participate in a weight and conditioning program. We use a ladder program for footwork and a lot of dumbbells in our weight program.

University of Minnesota Men

We have many different types of practices, most of which I vary due to what each player's needs are. In general I like to start off with a game or drill within each player's strengths. Then I will try to incorporate something to go over the player's weaknesses. Serves and returns are always a staple of our practice. I try to vary the way we practice serves and returns. For example, some days we'll just practice them at the pace of each guy openly and not have any parameters to follow. Other days we'll make it competitive against a teammate, and some days we'll incorporate it into running. Then we always have some sort of point playing, whether it be doubles or singles.

Virginia Commonwealth University Men (Raj's old school)

Topic	Varies
Practice Time	1 - 2 Hours (We run shorter more intense practice sessions)
15 Minutes	Warm-up
15-20 Minutes	Practice all shots
30 Minutes	Singles drills and singles match play
30 Minutes	Doubles drills and doubles match play

Comments: Our practices are usually structured from past match performances. We will look at faults from previous matches and work on solutions.

Duke University Men

Topic	Crosscourt Progressions for Groundstrokes and Volleys
Practice Time	90 minutes
20 Minutes	Warm-up and stretch
6 Minutes	Crosscourts (3 minutes each way)
4 Minutes	Figure 8 (2 minutes each way)
10 Minutes	Options (5 minutes each way, one player can only hit crosscourt while the other player can hit anywhere. This drill helps players learn when to hit down the line.)
10 Minutes	1 up verses 1 back cross-courts (2.5 minutes each way)
6 Minutes	Mid-court and move in volleys (3 minutes each way)

20-30 minutes Match situations and points

Comments: This is one of our more structured practice sessions. By timing everything the players know how long they're expected to perform the drill and they usually go all out and their motivation stays high. We will also take some short breaks and a cool down period. Some of our other practices are less structured.

Duke University Women

Topic	Offense/Defense (Doubles)
Practice Time	2 Hours
15 Minutes	Warm-up with jogging and stretching
15 Minutes	Warm-up shots from mini-tennis to serves
10 Minutes	Baseline drills (we always start our women's practices with a few baseline drills because the girls want to feel like they're groundstrokes are in a groove)
20 Minutes	Crosscourts (Alternate between just one shot and having to hit both shots, this works on recovering and hitting the inside out ball which they see a lot in doubles. We will also do this hitting down the middle)
20 Minutes	Offense/Defense (One player protects a corner of the court and the other player plays inside the other baseline and tries to hit through that corner. Five minutes in each corner)
10 Minutes	Crosscourt volleys moving in from no-person's land
10 Minutes	Reflex volleys from the "T"
20 minutes	Doubles

Comments:

In this session we are also stressing movement and concentration. We are in our 6th week of practice and the players are expected to execute - no excuses!

We also spend an additional 45 minutes to an hour off court with conditioning/fitness. This year we are trying something new with training in soft sand once a week

East Carolina University Men

Topic	Doubles
Practice Time	2 Hours
20 Minutes	Warm-up (Our basic warm-up includes jogging around 3 courts, side stepping, heel kicks, high knees, etc. as well as 5 minutes of jump roping and then stretching)
30 Minutes	Practice all shots
20 Minutes	100 ball volley drill (Players hit a total of 100 volleys, cross-court, down the line)
20 Minutes	Serve and return drills and playing situations
20 Minutes	Doubles play with emphasis on tactics

Comments:

With our doubles practice sessions we usually emphasize being aggressive and developing momentum. So if our players are up a break we want them to play even more aggressive. Our players will also spend an additional hour on conditioning/fitness.

Elon University

Our practice philosophy depends a lot on the time of the year. For example in the Fall our main concern is to set the line-up and possibly to add one new shot for each player. We will have challenge matches and tournament play.

In the preseason our main concern is for the players to get in shape.

During the season players must perform to maintain their position on the team. We try to balance our practices with our match schedule. If we have three matches in one week we may not practice or hold optional practices. The key is to have your players keep the attitude of "I want to play".

University of Florida Women

Topic	Doubles
Practice Time	2 Hours
15-20 Minutes	Warm-up (Our basic warm-up includes jogging, active stretching and band exercises for the shoulders and arms)
15-25 Minutes	Practice all shots
60-90 Minutes	Playing Courts (2) and a Drill Court (1) with players rotating as a team

Comments:

With our doubles practice sessions we usually emphasize learning and practicing from playing situations. It's hard to simulate in a drill situation the timing and on what shot you want the players to move or poach. It works best in the true conditions of actual match play.

Our players will also spend an additional 30-45 minutes on conditioning/fitness off court and usually on a more friendly service like the grass.

Notre Dame Men

Topic	Varies (Some of our players may only play doubles so their focus is going to be a little different than someone who just plays singles or vice versa)
Practice Time	2-2 1/2 Hours (In season practices are shorter)
15 Minutes	Warm-up (Our basic warm-up includes jogging, movement exercises and stretching)
15-20 Minutes	Practice all shots
60 Minutes	Transitions Drills Offensive Transition Approach and pass Mid-court volley and pass Defensive Transition Inside out slice backhand verses closing backhand volley

Comments:

Our players go through the warm-up so they are ready to practice at the slated time. Our practices will vary depending on the time of the year and on what we are trying to accomplish.