

Lesson Theme: Intermediate Singles (2)

Objectives: Introduce Strategies for Singles Play

Skill Level: 3.0 / 3.5

Duration: 90 minutes

Equipment Needed: Balls and Cones



Mins	Activity	Details	Teaching Points	Comments
5	Meet & Greet	Welcome, names, housekeeping		This lesson is meant as a follow-up to Intermediate Singles (1)
7	Technical Warm Up	Select activities from the WARM-UP MENU.		Warm-up should include volleys, groundstrokes, serve and return.
10	Play & Observe	Real Singles Points w/o restrictions	<p>Remind players that, just like in doubles pickleball, it is important to return serve and come to the net in singles. Moving forward applies pressure by taking away the opponent's time to react.</p> <p>We also give ourselves the chance to volley, and to use angles we can't use from the back of the court.</p>	This is assuming these players took part in Intermediate Singles (1) in which these teaching points were covered.
3	Collect Balls & H2O			Make it quick!
2	Debrief / Observations	<p>Praise effort and focus.</p> <p>Explain that while you were watching the points as a whole, there were some things that stood out. We will address them in a systematic way.</p>	.	
3	Direct Instruction	What to do with the third shot?	<p>In doubles, it is difficult to hit a clean passing shot since there are two opponents covering the net.</p> <p>In singles, it is much easier and should be the first thought – to drive the third shot past an opponent.</p> <p>A good passing shot is low, fast and away from the opponent. At a minimum,</p>	It is helpful to identify similarities and differences between singles and doubles.

			we should make the net player stretch.	
5	Activity: Play Real Points – with restrictions.	Server must attempt a third shot drive. If they hit a winner, it counts as 3 points.		Returners must still return serve and come to NVL.
2	Debrief	Emphasize the good effort of coming to the net. Comment that while they could sometimes hit good passing shots, this wasn't always the case. We'd like it to be more consistent.		
3	Direct Instruction	Hitting Precise Drives	<p>Passing shots must be low, fast and targeted near a sideline. This means controlling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - vertical paddle angle (height) - swing path (height) - horizontal paddle angle (direction) - paddle speed (speed) 	While winning passing shots happen, the primary goal is to make the net player uncomfortable by stretching them. A winner is a bonus!
6	Activity: Jail Cell	<p>Place two cones at the NVL 4 feet apart. This is the "jail". Player A starts in the jail with Player B at the baseline.</p> <p>Player A bounces the ball and hits a gentle groundstroke to Player B. Player B must try to hit a passing shot that Player A cannot touch. Player A should try to hit the ball but cannot leave their cell.</p> <p>Switch roles after 3 minutes.</p>	<p>The direction the ball travels is directly controlled by the paddle angle at impact.</p> <p>A balanced set-up and good impact point will make controlling the paddle angle easier.</p> <p>Encourage the baseline player to be ready to chase the ball and have a good setup.</p>	<p>Difficulty can be adjusted by making the jail bigger or smaller, as well as making the feed easier or harder.</p> <p>Having many balls on hand is useful for this activity.</p>
2	Debrief & H2O			
7	Activity: Real Points (with Jail Cell)	Play Real Points, but the returner cannot move outside of the jail when the opponent hits a third shot.	Focus on using good drive to avoid the net player.	<p>Use flat markers or tape/chalk to avoid injury. If none is available, put the cones under the net, so players won't step on them.</p> <p>Coach can decide if the net player must <i>always</i> stay within jail, or can move outside after the third shot has been hit and returned.</p>
2	Debrief		It is important to be aggressive on the third shot with the opponent at the net. If not, they are likely to have an easy volley.	

2	Direct Instruction		<p>While it is usually a good idea to return serve and come to the net, sometimes players will stay back.</p> <p>This is usually because they don't believe they can win the rally from the net, and this is an open invitation for us to move forward.</p>	
6	Activity: Third Shot Approach	<p>One cone is set up at $\frac{3}{4}$ court in the middle of each service box:</p> <p>Player A serves. Player B returns the serve but stays back (like a scared opponent might). Player A; must try to hit their third shot, so it passes between one of the cones and the sideline, and then moves to NVL.</p> <p>Switch roles after 4 attempts.</p>	<p>Players should concentrate on controlling the paddle angle in order to control the direction of the third shot.</p> <p>The shot should also be hit low, giving the opponent less time to react.</p> <p>The hitter should still move forward after the third shot, simulating a game.</p>	<p>Make clear to the players you are NOT advocating for staying back after returning – just simulating what some people will do.</p> <p>Targets can be made bigger or smaller to adjust the degree of difficulty.</p> <p>Note: this is a 3 shot drill.</p>
8	The Scared Returner	<p>Play real points but pretend the returner is scared to come to the NVL after their return.</p> <p>When serving, players try to hit high quality approach shots.</p>	<p>Focus on controlling paddle angle to control third shot direction.</p>	<p>Make clear to the players you are NOT advocating for staying back after returning – just simulating what some people will do.</p>
2	Debrief & H2O		<p>Reinforce that when the returner stays back, they are not applying any pressure. So this is a chance for the server to apply some of their own.</p>	
10	Play Real Points	Play Real Singles Points.		<p>While no new teaching points, reinforce the idea of making the net player stretch with the third shot drive.</p>

5	Wrap Up	Summarize key points	When a player comes to the net in singles, there is a good opportunity to drive the ball past them. We have to be aggressive and send low and well-directed balls in order to do this. And if a player doesn't come in off the return, we need to take advantage of the opportunity by making them move and taking control of the net.	Use this wrap up to identify improvement, encourage practice, and promote future lessons or events.
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Instructor Notes: