

## Lesson Theme: Dynamic Dinking

Objectives: Developing Dinking Skills

Skill Level: 3.0 / 3.5

Duration: 90 minutes

Equipment Needed: Balls and Cones/Markers



Mins	Activity	Details	Teaching Points	Comments
5	Meet & Greet	Welcome, names, housekeeping.		This is the time to set a really positive tone.
7	Technical Warm Up	Select activities from the WARM-UP MENU.		Warm-up should include volleys, groundstrokes, serve and return.
10	Play & Observe	Real game with special rule: must attempt third shot drop.	Play to win.	A dink is a response to a slow and low ball (e.g. a drop). Making the rule that a drop must be attempted will increase the chances that you get to observe dinks.
3	Collect Balls & H2O			Make it quick!
2	Debrief / Observations	<p>Praise effort and focus.</p> <p>Explain that while there were times players hit very effective dinks, there were other times that they did not.</p> <p>We are going to work on these to develop our offensive and defensive dinking skills.</p>		
3	Direct Instruction	What is the purpose of a dink?	<p>The primary purpose of a dink is to respond to a low ball without sending a shot that will get you into trouble (i.e. a pop-up).</p> <p>Dinks are primarily about giving the opponent something they cannot do damage with.</p> <p>By forcing the opponent to hit up on the ball (i.e. make contact below the top of the net) you limit their ability to hit hard and keep the ball in play.</p>	<p>When asked "why should we dink?" people will often say things like "to slow down the game". Remind them that it isn't necessarily advantageous to play slower.</p> <p>Dinks are about responding to a low ball with a low ball of your own, trying to avoid a pop-up.</p>

5	Direct Instruction	Keeping dinks low.	<p>It is helpful to imagine a window over the net about 1 paddle high. Good dinks travel through this window.</p> <p>Height is controlled by 3 things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- paddle angle</li> <li>- swing path</li> <li>- ball speed</li> </ul>	<p>Most players will be aware that paddle angle and swing path matters. But they don't often think about ball speed as a factor.</p> <p>All dinks have an arc. The size of the arc is largely about how much ball speed there is.</p>
4	Group Activity: Sending Low Dinks (down the line)	Working in pairs, down the line and on half court from the NVL, players in pairs hit cooperative dinks with forehands and backhands, trying to keep the ball "through the window".	<p>Reinforce controlling paddle angle, swing path and ball speed.</p> <p>A forward impact point will also make it easier to control the paddle.</p>	<p>If players are having success, encourage them to move partners around a little to add challenge.</p> <p>It is acceptable for players to play volley-dinks.</p>
3	Group Activity: Sending Low Dinks (crosscourt)	Same as above but on the diagonal.	<p>Reinforce controlling paddle angle, swing path and ball speed.</p> <p>Reinforce a forward impact point.</p>	<p>If players are having success, encourage them to move partners around to add challenge.</p> <p>Many players will not be recovering after hitting the ball. Do not intervene yet as this is the next teaching point. Focus on hitting low dinks 'through the window'.</p>
2	Direct Instruction: The Need for Recovery		<p>It is important when hitting crosscourt dinks that we <b>recover</b> to the centre of our part of the court (as opposed to camping out near the sideline). Otherwise, the middle of the court is open for opponents.</p> <p>Shuffle steps should be used to recover.</p>	
2	Group Activity: Sending Low Dinks (crosscourt with recovery)	Place a cone under the net 5ft from each sideline. After players hit their crosscourt dink, they must shuffle back, so they are behind the cone.	Shuffle steps allow quick lateral movement over a short distance.	Done well, this is a tiring activity. Quality of dinks will likely diminish because of movement.
2	H2O			
2	Observations	Comment about how much harder it was to control the ball once more movement was involved. But this is what happens in a real game, so we must get better at it.	How well we can play dinks is tied to how well we can move to set up for them.	

4	Activity: Paddle-Free Dinking	This activity works on movement without the distraction of the paddle. Players toss the ball to their partner, allowing it to bounce in front of them (like a dink). The receiving player must shuffle to catch the ball with two hands, in front of their body. Toss the ball back and recover behind the cone.	Shuffle to move to the ball and to recover after sending it back. Catches must happen with two hands, in front of body (simulating an on-balance dink)	Done well, this activity is very tiring. Encourage effort and challenge. Can be done down the line, but is especially valuable crosscourt.
4	Group Activity: Sending Low Dinks (crosscourt with recovery)	With a cone under the net 5ft from each sideline, after players hit their crosscourt dink, they must shuffle back, so they are behind the cone.	Reinforce a balanced set-up and a good recovery.	Focus on using movement to improve ability to send low balls.
6	Play Real Points	Real game with special rule: must attempt third shot drop (this will allow for more opportunities to dink).	Play to win.	Emphasize the importance of movement and effort to keep the dinks low.
2	Debrief & H2O			
2	Direct Instruction	Thinking offensively about dinking.	While dinks are primarily about avoiding trouble, they can also be used to cause it. This is mainly by challenging an opponent's ability to set up well for the ball. We can do this by:  - forcing more movement - reducing reaction time through volleying	Remind players that crosscourt shots move players more.  A good idea to volley-dink whenever possible as this steals time and avoids balls landing at our feet.
2	Direct Instruction	Move opponents around and take away their time.	Control the horizontal paddle angle to move the opponent left and right.  Play a volley-dink when you can.	
6	Group Activity: Hustlers	4 players across the net at the NVL. Team A (on one side of the net) are the hustlers. They must retrieve any ball that Team B sends to them and send it back cooperatively. Team B tries to move team A around by controlling the direction of the ball and using volleys.  Switch after 3 minutes.	Pay attention to the horizontal paddle angle.  Use crosscourt dinks more frequently.  Volley when possible.	This should be a cooperative yet challenging activity.

9	Play Real Points	No special rules but encourage using drops to set up dinking opportunities.	Reinforce key teaching points: - force upward hits - care about setup - moves opponents - use volleys to take time	
5	Wrap Up	Summarize key points		Use this wrap up to identify improvement, encourage practice and promote future lessons or events.

### Instructor Notes: