

## LESSON 3: TENNIS COMBINE

### Grade-Level Outcomes

#### Primary Outcome

**Lifetime activities:** Refines activity-specific movement skills in 1 or more lifetime activities (outdoor pursuits, individual-performance activities, aquatics, net/wall games or target games). (S1.H1.L2)

#### Embedded Outcome

**Physical activity knowledge:** Applies rates of perceived exertion and pacing. (S3.H3.L2)

### Lesson Objectives

The learner will:

- assess ability in a wide variety of both skill- and fitness-oriented tennis principles.
- analyze performance to improve or modify it.

### Equipment and Materials

- Tennis balls (various densities) and modified balls: 3 to 5 for every 2 students, if available
- Regulation and modified tennis rackets: 1 per student
- Small cones: 12
- Large cones: 3
- Rope: 3 pieces
- Hula-Hoops
- Stopwatch: 1
- Paper and pencils for scoring

### Introduction

*Welcome to the tennis combine. I hope you all took the opportunity to review videos and literature in regard to general combine principles. In short, combines assess your ability to perform a variety of tasks associated with a particular sport. For example, the NFL Draft players congregate at one location and take part in the NFL Scouting Combine. Players in attendance are scored and evaluated by coaches, scouts, general managers, and owners from all 32 NFL teams. The teams use this data to help them determine who they are going to draft and in what order. For our purposes, you will be assessing yourself, with the results serving as guidance to establish our own organizations within our class. Today, we will again warm-up dynamically by performing a variety of tennis-specific movements. Then I am going to describe each of the six events of our combine, which will be done at stations, and hand out an evaluation sheet. The sheets have each event listed, a place for you to put your score, and a scoring range: high school, collegiate, and professional. Be sure to support one another at each station. Does anyone have any questions? Let's start with our dynamic warm-up!*

## Instructional Task: Station 1–Serving

### ■ PRACTICE TASK

Review the serve.

Students take turns attempting 10 service tries from the distance of their choosing, with their goal being 50 percent accuracy on the cones located in the service courts. Serving-side cones are placed just behind the baseline (professional); the next closest cones are placed 3 feet (0.9 m) closer to the net (collegiate); and the next closest cones are placed 3 feet in front of that one (high school). Cones on the receiving side are placed equidistant across each of the two service courts, representing locations of a wide serve, body serve, and T serve.

Students attempt to hit each cone as many times as they wish and will score themselves.

Students have 10 minutes at this station. Students record scores.

## Refinement

Encourage students to find a location where they reach 50 percent accuracy. For example, if they start at the high school service cone and achieve 80 percent accuracy, they should move back to the collegiate cone and serve from there. Conversely, if they reach 20 percent accuracy at the collegiate cone, they should move back to the high school cone.

## Student Choices/Differentiation

- Students may choose which cone they wish to serve from and which cone they will aim for on each attempt.
- Students choose their equipment.
- Task cards are provided at this station detailing proper serving technique.
- A continuous video will play at this station showing the proper execution of the serve for students to review.

## What to Look For

- Students are cooperating and collaborating at the station.
- Students are able to run the station themselves and help each other through the execution of the task.
- Students are hitting the cones with 50 percent accuracy or adjusting their distance.
- Toss is out in front.
- Students are serving with good extension at contact.
- Students are following through into the court.

# Instructional Task: Station 2–Groundstrokes

## ■ PRACTICE TASK

Review the forehand and backhand (one- and two-handed).

Students alternate the forehand and backhand technique by striking a ball off a wall from a comfortable distance. The wall has a square target on it. Students take note of how many controlled strikes (hits of the target) they complete before the rally ends. Students must switch from the forehand to the backhand at least every two hits.

Students assess themselves based on the high school, collegiate, and professional rating system. As a guide, it is recommended that high school players would complete 8 consecutive hits, with collegiate players completing 9 to 11 and professional players completing 12 or more.

Students have 10 minutes at this station.

## Student Choices/Differentiation

- Students may choose a comfortable distance from which to rally.
- A continuous video will play at this station showing the proper execution of both groundstrokes for students to review.

## What to Look For

- Students are cooperating and collaborating at the station.
- Students are able to run the station themselves and help each other through the execution of the task.
- Students are able to cross over their feet and change their grips as they change from forehand to backhand.
- Students are able to execute the strokes with both power and control.

## Instructional Task: Station 3–Lob Shots

### ■ PRACTICE TASK

Review the lob.

In pairs, one student stands on one side of a modified tennis net (piece of rope that stands at the same height as a tennis net—no court needed) awaiting a ball. The partner stands on the opposite side of the rope next to three hoops situated in a triangular shape. Student on the hoop side feeds his partner tennis balls one at a time. Hitter approaches the ball and executes either the forehand or backhand lob shot, attempting to get the ball into the hoops. Students execute five forehand and then five backhand lob shots consecutively, with a goal of 60 percent accuracy before switching with their partners.

Students have 10 minutes at this station. Students record scores.

### Student Choices/Differentiation

- Students choose their equipment.
- Students choose their partners.
- A continuous video will play at this station showing the proper execution of both lob shots for students to review.

### What to Look For

- Students are cooperating and collaborating at the station.
- Students are able to run the station themselves and help each other through the execution of the task.
- Students are able to maintain balance as they change intensity from approach to contact.
- Students are using their legs for lift.
- Students are able to drop the lob deep in the court.

## Instructional Task: Station 4–Rally

### ■ PRACTICE TASK

In pairs, students play a 10-minute simulated tennis game focusing on skill execution, shot placement, and court positioning.

Students have 10 minutes at this station. Students record scores.

After the game, students refer to a checklist poster to assess whether or not they played at a high school, collegiate, or professional level. The checklist asks questions such as “Did you remember to return home after each offensive hit?” and “Did your shots end up in the locations you intended them to?”

### Student Choices/Differentiation

- Students choose their equipment.
- Students choose their partners.

### What to Look For

- Assess students’ overall abilities as tennis players.
- Students are hitting the ball to spaces.
- Students are selecting the appropriate stroke for the situation.
- Students are returning to home position.
- Students are anticipating their partners’ shots.

## Instructional Task: Station 5–Lateral Movement, Change of Direction, Linear Speed

### ■ PRACTICE TASK

Review the importance of lateral movement, change of direction, and short bursts of linear speed in the game of tennis.

Three cones are set up in a straight line. The two outside cones are 5 yards or meters away from the middle cone, making the distance from cone one to cone two 5 yards, cone two to cone three 5 yards, and cone one to cone three 10 yards. Students start at the middle cone (cone two) and on the go command turn in either direction, run to one of the outside cones (e.g., cone one), bend down, and tap it. Then they turn and run to the outside cone on the opposite side (e.g., cone three), bend down, and touch it before running through the middle cone. A classmate starts the stopwatch on the go command and stops it when the student runs back through the middle cone. In this test, students are running 5 yards, turning and running 10 yards, then turning and running 5 more yards, passing the middle cone.

Students run the 5–10–5 as many times as they wish in 10 minutes. Students record their scores. A range of age-appropriate scores is displayed at this station.

### Refinement

Use video to show importance of staying low, planting outside foot at cone and accelerating.

### Student Choices/Differentiation

A continuous video will play at this station showing what a 5–10–5 looks like for students to review.

### What to Look For

- Students are planting the outside foot and sharply turning.
- Students are accelerating after planting the outside foot.
- Students are staying low around the cones.

## Instructional Task: Station 6–Cardiorespiratory Endurance

### ■ PRACTICE TASK

Explain the importance of cardiorespiratory endurance in training, referencing the various intensity levels a player will compete at during the course of a match. Review rating of perceived exertion (RPE) and the importance of pacing.

Students start in the corner of the court where the doubles sideline meets the baseline, facing the opposite corner of the court along the same baseline. On the go signal, students sprint across the baseline, turn and jog along the doubles sideline until they reach the halfway point (where the net meets the sideline), and again start to sprint. Students sprint along the sideline to the far baseline, turn and jog along the baseline until they reach the far corner, where they again turn and sprint to the halfway point of the sideline, then jog to the baseline. Students continue this sprint, jog, sprint, jog pattern for as long as they can. They count the number of laps they were able to complete before they either stopped or the 5 minutes was up.

Students record their lap scores and use the last 5 minutes at this station as a cool-down.

A range of age-appropriate scores is displayed at this station.

**EMBEDDED OUTCOME: S3.H3.I.2.** Place an RPE chart at the station, and have students record their RPE at the end of the 5 minutes.

## **Student Choices/Differentiation**

Students who have a tough time training in intervals may choose to jog for the duration of the activity, and students who need a more intense activity may eliminate a jogging section or jogging altogether.

## **What to Look For**

Note how many students can keep moving for the entire five minutes. This test will help the fitness trainers with planning.

## **Instructional Task: Pre-assessment of Doubles Rules**

### **■ PRACTICE TASK**

Administer a short quiz on doubles rules with Google Forms (or pen and paper).

## **Student Choices/Differentiation**

Allow extra time if needed or assign for homework.

## **What to Look For**

Students are familiar with the rules of doubles play.

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## **Formal and Informal Assessments**

- Station scores
- Doubles rules pre-assessment

## **Closure**

Students pair up and discuss the pros and cons of assessing athletes in a combine, then share with the class.

Class questions after discussion:

- What types of fitness did we assess today? Why are these important in tennis?
- Which of the assessments was hardest for you? Why?

Next time, we'll use all the data we collected today to form our team organizations.

## **Reflection**

- Were the instructions for each station clear?
- Do I need to eliminate or add any stations?
- Was there enough differentiation for all learners to understand the stations?
- Were students fair in their assessments of themselves?
- Review student assessment sheets to see where strengths and weaknesses are and to create organizations.

## **Homework**

Practice the skill you most need to improve based on your results today.

## **Resources**

Siedentop, D., Hastie, P., van der Mars, H. (2011). *Complete guide to sport education*. 2nd ed. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

TeachPE.com: [www.teachpe.com](http://www.teachpe.com)

Tennis Drills and Lesson Plans: [www.tennisdrills.tv](http://www.tennisdrills.tv)

United States Tennis Association: [www.usta.com](http://www.usta.com)

Sport Fitness Advisor: [www.sport-fitness-advisor.com](http://www.sport-fitness-advisor.com)