

## LESSON 1: FOREHAND AND BACKHAND STRIKING

### Grade-Level Outcomes

#### Primary Outcomes

**Forehand & backhand:** Demonstrates the mature form of the forehand and backhand strokes with a short-handled implement in net games such as paddle ball, pickleball or short-handled racket tennis. (S1.M14.6)

**Weight transfer:** Transfers weight with correct timing for the striking pattern. (S1.M15.6)

#### Embedded Outcome

**Social interaction:** Demonstrates respect for self by asking for help and helping others in various physical activities. (S5.M6.8)

### Lesson Objectives

The learner will:

- learn the basic pickleball grips: backhand, continental, and eastern forehand.
- recall the critical elements of the forehand and backhand and implement the elements during the practice tasks.
- demonstrate correct forehand technique with the paddle.
- demonstrate correct backhand technique with the paddle.
- transfer weight to effectively generate force during the striking pattern.

### Equipment and Materials

- Enough paddles for every student
- 2 balls per grid
- Enough grid space to perform the practice tasks
- Nets if they are used during the practice task

### Introduction

*Today, we will begin our module on pickleball, which is played with a short-handled implement. How many of you have played tennis or badminton before? You will find pickleball similar but also different. Be sure to listen, ask questions, and apply the correct rules and techniques while playing pickleball. The skills that you will learn include serving and returning the ball by using the forehand and backhand. Today, you will learn how to serve by watching videos and with peer help, teacher guidance, and self-evaluation.*

Show the class a video clip of a game of pickleball.

## Instructional Task: Grips and Pre-test

### ■ PRACTICE TASK

Demonstrate and have students practice (without striking a ball) the continental and eastern forehand grips as well as the backhand grip.

#### Extensions

- In grids of two, students toss the ball to each other, allowing them to explore the forehand and backhand grips.
- While students are exploring the grips, do a quick pre-test on the forearm and backhand pickleball strike.

**Guiding questions for students:**

- Which grip is more comfortable to you?
- What are the critical elements of each grip?

**Student Choices/Differentiation**

- Students may toss the ball from a variety of trajectories.
- Students may use a net or not.
- Students may watch videos or review handouts if they need extra guidance.

**What to Look For**

- Students are using the correct hand position.
- Students are using the correct critical elements when performing the skills, while mimicking as well as exploring.
- Pre-assessment: Use a product skills test (award scores to students hitting the ball to different sections of the court) or a process skills test (how well they perform the critical elements).

## **Instructional Task:**

### **Students Practice the Forehand and Backhand**

**■ PRACTICE TASK**

In grids of two, students toss the ball to each other, allowing them to explore the forehand.

Call out a command. Students practice the task five times and then switch so that their partners can perform the same command. Call out another command.

Partners must cooperate by making good tosses. Partners should encourage each other.

**First:** Toss the ball to the middle section of your partner's forearm side for five hits.

Same task with backhand.

**Second:** Toss the ball so that your partner has to take a quick step to the forearm side to hit the ball.

Same task with backhand (step toward backhand side).

**Third:** Toss the ball so that your partner has to take a quick step forward and hit a forehand shot.

Same task with backhand.

**Fourth:** Toss the ball so that your partner has to take a quick step back while still hitting a forehand stroke.

Same task with backhand.

**Extension**

*We now will move into a more game-like, or uncontrolled, setting. The partner tossing should now toss the ball using any of the previous commands. Make sure that you still are tossing at the midsection and still are using only the forehand or backhand stroke. Switch after five tosses.*

Repeat this extension until many have had success.

**Refinement**

Observe the weight transfer during the stroke. Reinforce that the weight should shift from the back foot to the front foot by the time the paddle contacts the ball.

**Guiding questions for students:**

- Ask students to review the cues and explain what they are doing well and what they need to adjust.
- Which is more difficult to strike: forehand or backhand? Why?
- Did anyone swing and miss the ball? (Remind students to bend their knees and really watch the ball.)

---

**EMBEDDED OUTCOME: S5.M6.8.** Encourage students to have respect and improve themselves by asking for help from others while learning the forearm and backhand strikes in pickleball.

---

## Extension

Students can work on adding topspin and backspin while performing the forehand strike.

## Student Choices/Differentiation

- Students may toss the ball from a variety of trajectories.
- Students may use a net or not.
- Students may choose partners.

## What to Look For

- From ready position, students turn sideways to the target while bringing the racket back.
- Students step toward the target, striking the ball off the forward foot.
- Students follow through with racket to opposite side.
- Students create topspin by angling the paddle face slightly closed and moving it from low to high.
- Students create backspin by angling the paddle face slightly open and moving it from high to low.

---

## Formal and Informal Assessments

Pre-assessment: process or product skills test

## Closure

- With the class, discuss what you observed while students practiced the forehand.
- What are the critical elements of the grips?
- What are the critical elements of the forearm? Backhand?
- What does weight transfer have to do with pickleball?
- Who can tell me how to create backspin and topspin?

## Reflection

- How are students performing the forehand and backhand? Which elements are they struggling with?
- Were students using their time wisely today?
- Did students ask for help and respect others today?

## Homework

*Practice the forehand and backhand strokes at home. Try to focus on transferring weight and swinging the arm without turning the wrist.*

## Resources

Curtis, J. (1998). *Pickle-ball for player & teacher*. Boston: Brooks/Cole Cengage Learning.

Dougherty, N.J. (Ed.) (2010). *Physical activity & sport for the secondary school student*. 6th ed. Reston, VA: National Association for Sport and Physical Education.

Pickleball Channel: [www.pickleballchannel.com](http://www.pickleballchannel.com)

Internet keyword search: “forehand and backhand striking in pickleball”