

## Essential Skills and Abilities for a Tennis Unit

1. Beginning in and always returning to the ready position (i.e., home) to enable quick movement in any direction necessary
2. The Eastern forehand and backhand grips and the continental grip for the serve and how to change the needed grip quickly while moving to the ball
3. Court footwork (ready position, home court, shuffle steps, crossover, and split stop at the net)
4. Forehand drive and backhand drive
  - Perform the forehand drive critical performance elements when the ball is hit to racket side
  - Perform the backhand critical performance elements when the ball is hit to the nonracket side
  - Reverse pivot to create space between player and ball when the ball is close and the player is unable to move to create distance quickly
  - Move forward, backward, and to either side to return the ball to opponent's side of the court
  - Placement of ball by hitting deep to opponent's baseline, both crosscourt and down the line to keep the opponent in the backcourt, shallow to the forecourt, or to any spot on the court that would be difficult for the opponent to get to return the ball.
  - Receive and return an opponent's serve with a forehand or backhand as needed
  - Place the ball in open space on the court, moving the opponent out of position or balance
5. Forehand and backhand volleys when safely moved to forecourt
  - Hit an approach stroke to safely go to the net
  - Hit a volley to the opponent's court and away from the opponent
  - Move to the right or left to return a shot with a volley
  - Place the volley to the outside baseline corners and the outside service corners
  - Hit a passing shot and an approach stroke

6. Overhand serve
  - The punch serve
  - Perform the overhand critical performance elements when serving a ball across the net into the opponent's service court
  - Consistent and accurate toss
  - Flat serve (Eastern forehand grip)
  - Spin serve (continental grip)
  - Placement of serve within opponent's service court on first or second attempt
  - Hit a hard, fast second serve
  - Hit serves into the back corners of the opponent's service court
7. The lob: forehand and backhand
  - Offensive lob (low, deep trajectory)
  - Defensive lob (high, deep trajectory)
  - Move to hit forehand and backhand lobs
  - Effectively return a lob shot from an opponent
  - Use the lob at the correct time
  - Accurate placement of the lob
8. Stroke combinations
  - Serve, serve-receive, return
  - Approach, net position, return, volley
  - Volley, lob
  - Forehand and backhand: crosscourt and down the line
  - Sustained rally with partner
9. Court strategies (singles and doubles)
  - Return to home base and ready position
  - Make opponent move to get to the ball
  - Up-and-back
  - Side-by-side