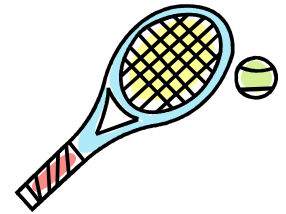




Intramural Tennis Kit

School Tennis Intramurals

(Adapted from USTA Schools Curriculum, 1996, 2000)



WHAT IS MINI TENNIS?

We are all accustomed to sports that have been modified for children. Little league fields are smaller. Grade schools often have eight-foot, instead of ten-foot baskets. Youth soccer is played on a reduced field. Yet we seldom see such a formal adaptation of tennis courts.

Mini Tennis Intramurals puts an emphasis on giving children a chance to really play the game. To play tennis is to serve, return serve, rally, and keep score. By making small courts, you can get 30+ children actually playing tennis on one gym floor. At the same time the smaller courts and modified equipment shifts tennis from a game that is very difficult and often frustrating to one that is immediately accessible and rewarding.

Playing Area:

Gym floors or paved schoolyards are ideal. Mini tennis can also be set up on packed dirt, or even on grass. The best court size for beginner mini tennis is 18 to 20 feet wide and 36 to 44 feet long. Existing markings on floors can be utilized. The lines of a badminton court (20' x 44') fit this perfectly.

Larger courts such as a volleyball court (30 x 60') can be used for intermediate players. A regulation tennis court can be turned into 6 mini courts by hanging a net or rope with streamers through its center lengthwise from fence to fence and using the service lines and baselines as sidelines and the sidelines as baselines (see diagram). Flat rubber lines, chalk or tape can be used for playing surfaces that are not marked.

Balls:

Foam balls are the best choice for indoor or windless outdoor play. Low-compression balls can be used for older and more skilled players on a larger court.

Nets:

Use any lightweight net that can cover an 18- to 20-foot area. A badminton net can be used if a tennis court net is not available. You can also improvise by using a plastic caution tape or rope with streamers. The net should be about 2 feet 6 inches high in the center.

Racquets:

Small racquets work best and are safest for doubles. Racquet length can vary from racquetball size (18 inches) to regular junior racquets (23 - 25 inches). Full-size racquets can be used, although they are not recommended for younger children.

HOW CAN YOU GET MINI TENNIS INTRAMURALS UNDERWAY?

Here's what you need:

1. An indoor or outdoor play area
2. Junior tennis rackets
3. Lightweight nets and portable standards; or makeshift nets or barriers
4. Foam, low-compression, or dead tennis balls

PLAY VERSUS INSTRUCTION

Mini tennis intramurals is designed to be a continuum of tennis in physical education classes. While opportunities for coaching will abound, it is our hope that the focus will be play, and not instruction. Mini tennis brings down the level of difficulty to the extent that almost everyone can get right into the

swing!

THE GAME:

The goal of mini tennis is to simulate full-size tennis. As a result, play can be either singles or doubles. Simplified scoring (for instance, ping pong scoring) is optional. Overhand serves can be used, but underhand serves are perfectly acceptable. Beginners are welcome to bounce and hit the ball on serve. Serves must bounce before a return is made. Once in play, the ball can be hit after one bounce or out of the air. All other rules parallel tennis.

SCORING OPTIONS:

- Numerical scoring can be used (1-2-3-4) with games being first to win four points and sets being first to win four games (2 out of 3 point tie-breaker at 3 games all).
- Ping Pong scoring: Serve five points and switch servers; rotate sides every 10 points; games to 11 or 21 (win by 2).
- Volleyball scoring: Winning side serves each point; first to 15 or 21 (win by two).

SERVING: To speed up play, give players only one serve to get the point started (overhand or underhand). Otherwise, two serves are acceptable.

INTRAMURAL TENNIS FORMATS:

There are numerous successful models for intramural tennis. These range from team play to traditional single-elimination tournaments. We recommend formats that emphasize participation, and that do not require elimination of any students. Here are a few examples that have worked well in other schools:

Team Tennis

Concept: Students are divided into teams. Team size should reflect the facilities, with the goal of creating matches where every player can remain active. (For instance, if you could set up four courts, you might want to create teams of eight players, allowing for continuous doubles action for 16 players whenever two teams meet.) Each intramural session will allow two teams to compete. Schedule of matches allows each team to play each other at least once.

Flexible Team Competition

Concept: To allow for team competition in a situation where the student population changes from day to day.

How to: Divide students into teams and play a series of 11 or 21 point matches, or for a designated time (ten-minute matches). Each team may have, for instance, four doubles squads. At the end of the intramural period points can be totaled to determine the day's winner.

Round Robin Tournament

Concept: Providing students with equal opportunity for competitive singles play in a non-elimination format.

How to: Players are divided into four to five small groups of four to five students. Students will play all other students within that group. This will usually result in records that have a distribution of something like: 3-0, 2-2, 0-3. For the second half of the intramural program, students are once again divided into groups (or flights) based upon their record. This format works best if you can separate the most skilled players during the first session.

