

Curves

Games, Drills, and Exercises for Fun and Improvement

by Joe Dinoffer

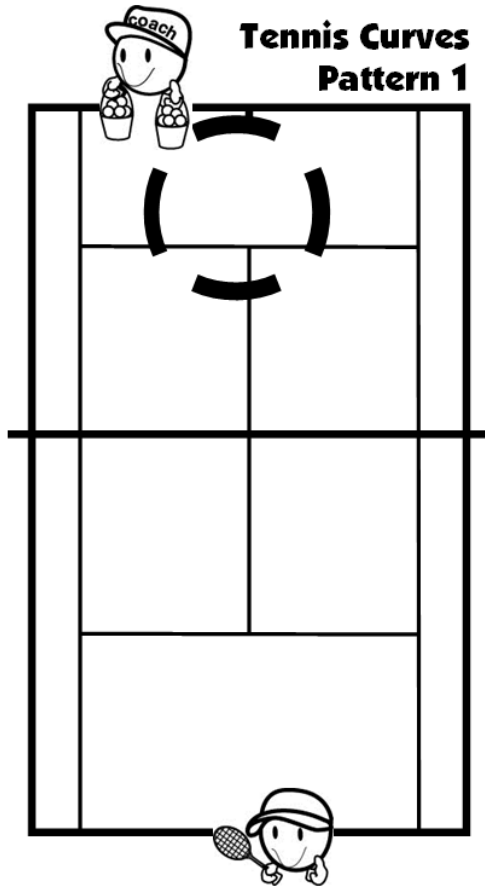
President, OnCourt OffCourt, Ltd.

About the Author

Joe Dinoffer has had an extensive "world class" career in the tennis industry, and has conducted clinics and exhibitions in over 50 countries, personally logging over 30,000 hours of instruction in English, Spanish, and German. He is a Master Professional in both the PTR and USPTA, a distinction awarded to only a select few in the tennis industry. Joe also received the prestigious 2006 USPTA Tennis Industry Excellence Award and was also selected as the 2012 USPTA Texas Pro of the Year.

Joe is the author and editor of 7 books and 22 DVDs. He writes regularly for several leading tennis magazines, and also has had numerous tips airing on the Tennis Channel. As a member of the Head/Penn Advisory Staff and National Speakers Bureau, Joe has been a frequent speaker at national and international tennis conferences, having conducted over 250 workshops since 1995.

#1 Out of the Middle



SINGLES DRILLS: This "Black Hole" pattern helps players identify important court areas.

Variation #1: With random feeds, balls in the "Black Hole" lose points; outside win points.

Purpose: Keep the ball out of the middle.

Variation #2: Coach calls out as balls are fed "middle" or "outside" and points are played out.

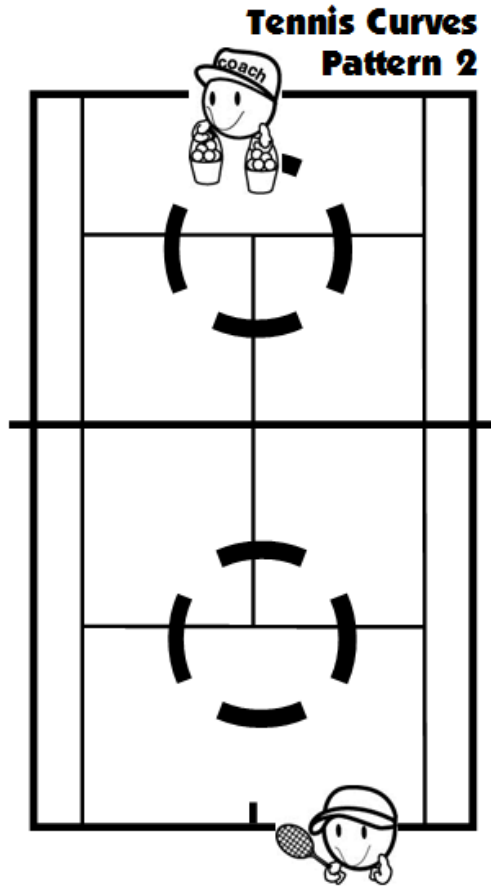
Purpose: Helps players clearly see the consequence of hitting in the middle.

Variation #3: Player calls out before hit, "middle" or "outside." Score two points when target is hit and one point for all others landing in the court.

Purpose: Helps players decide and plan when to loop balls down the middle to neutralize points.

Tips: Adjust "Black Hole" size to player levels. For beginners, make the "Black Hole" very small so they don't feel intimidated.

#2 Beat the Coach



SINGLES DRILLS: These drills help players identify and target the six main areas of the court.

Variation #1: The coach feeds balls and first works forehands with three crosscourt targets and then backhands with the other three. Players should learn which balls are appropriate for which shots and to hit short when they are closer to the net and never from behind the baseline. Have them call out which zone they are aiming for before hitting each shot.

Purpose: To develop directional and therefore tactical and strategic control.

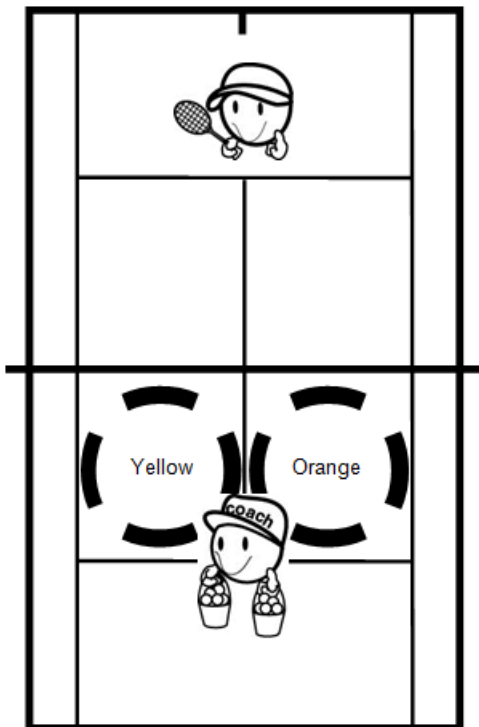
Variation #2: With random feeds, the player calls out the intended target before striking the ball.

Purpose: To create focus on target areas.

Tips: Encourage players to hit most balls crosscourt.

#3 Beginning Directions

**Tennis Curves
Pattern 3**



MINI-TENNIS DRILLS: This color-coded drilling pattern guides beginners to identify directions.

Variation #1: Coach gives blocked feeds to the forehand or backhand side and the player hits all balls crosscourt, calling out which color is being aimed at. Score points to add a challenge.

Purpose: Identifying and controlling directions.

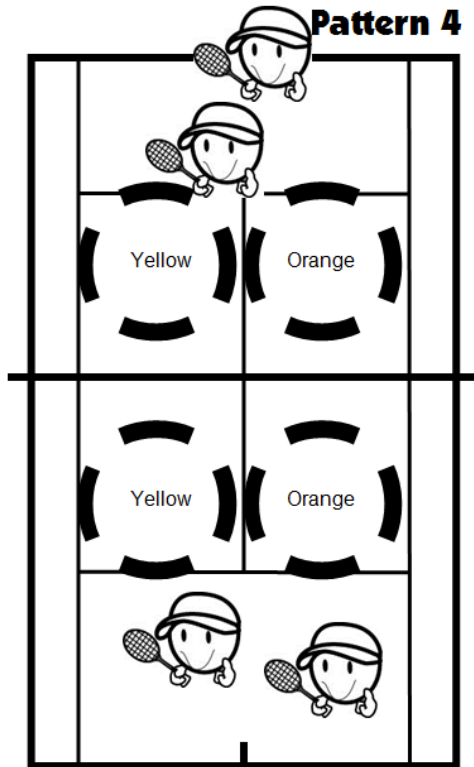
Variation #2: Coach begins to guide the player to hit mostly crosscourt in a random feed situation. Balls are fed to different places and the student hits only crosscourt, calling out the color of the crosscourt target before striking the ball.

Purpose: Starting players off hitting most balls crosscourt pays off later on. The colors add fun.

Tips: Another variation is to call out the color they are to hit for them. The later the call, the more challenging the shot. This promotes disguise.

#4 Directions and Decisions

**Tennis Curves
Pattern 4**



MINI-TENNIS DRILLS: Two or four players drill in service boxes, directing balls to large color circles.

Variation #1: Players each cover their own service square, but can hit anywhere. They have to call out which color they are aiming for before they hit. No hard hitting and balls must bounce.

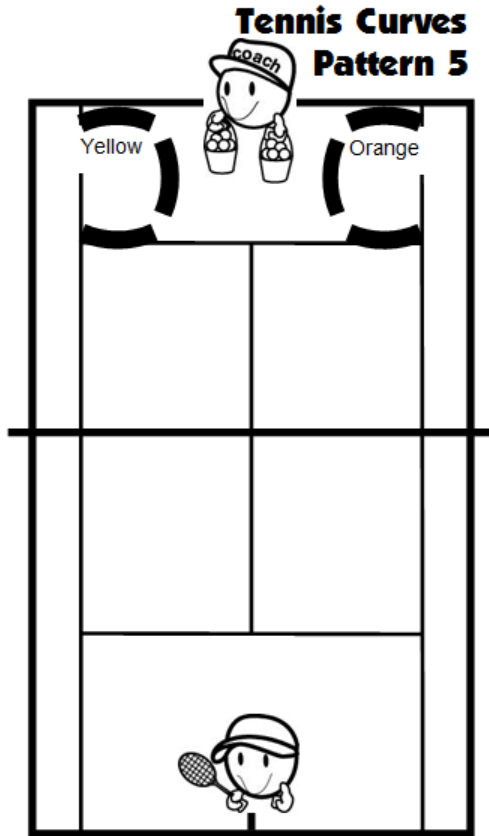
Purpose: To develop decision and direction skills.

Variation #2: Players alternate hits, covering both boxes. This time they must call out loud only where they think the ball is coming. Have both players on each side call the color out loud. This pushes each of them to anticipate more quickly.

Purpose: Helps players learn to anticipate incoming ball direction as early as possible.

Tips: Make sure players remain active. If needed, when four players are alternating hits on each side of the net, have each run back and touch the baseline after each hit.

#5 Deep Corners with Feeding



SINGLES DRILLS: Coach feeds (or use ball machine) and player hits into deep corner targets.

Variation #1: Coach feeds randomly and player can only hit forehand groundstrokes, aiming for one color target, then the other.

Purpose: To develop the forehand as a weapon.

Variation #2: Coach calls out target colors as balls are fed (earlier for beginners).

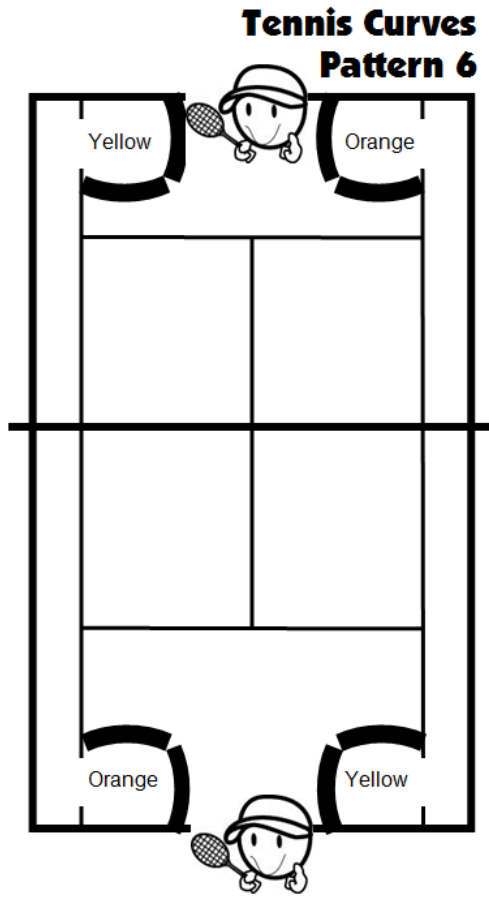
Purpose: Develops disguise and preparation.

Variation #3: Player calls out intended target before hit. Score three points when target is hit and minus one point for missing. Play until athlete reaches a goal of 10 or 20 points.

Purpose: Helps players decide and execute.

Tips: Adjust target size to player levels. Colors make drilling more fun and less intimidating. Other variations can include backhand groundstrokes.

#6 Deep Waters



SINGLES DRILLS: Two players start with serve or bounce-hit to drill using two deep target areas.

Variation #1: Play points scoring three points when ball lands in deep corners.

Purpose: To reward hitting target zones.

Variation #2: Same as above with players calling out color of intended target as they hit.

Purpose: Helps players make early decisions and have a purpose behind every shot.

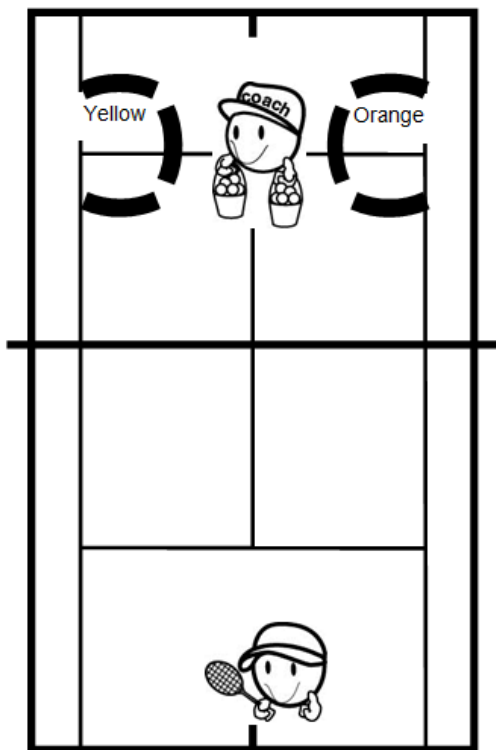
Variation #3: Same as above but starting with a bounce-hit and players are only allowed one backhand per point.

Purpose: Helps players hit more forehands and keep it away from the forehand of their opponent.

Tips: Other variations include players calling out a color if they think the incoming ball will land in that zone. Award bonus points when they succeed.

#7 Side-T Angles

Tennis Curves Pattern 7



SINGLES DRILLS: Aim for side-T targets for both passing shots and pulling players out of position.

Variation #1: Coach gives repetitive feeds for player to practice hitting the side-T on both sides.

Purpose: To develop confidence and focus.

Variation #2: Coach hits balls at various angles to teach which are more appropriate for the "T."

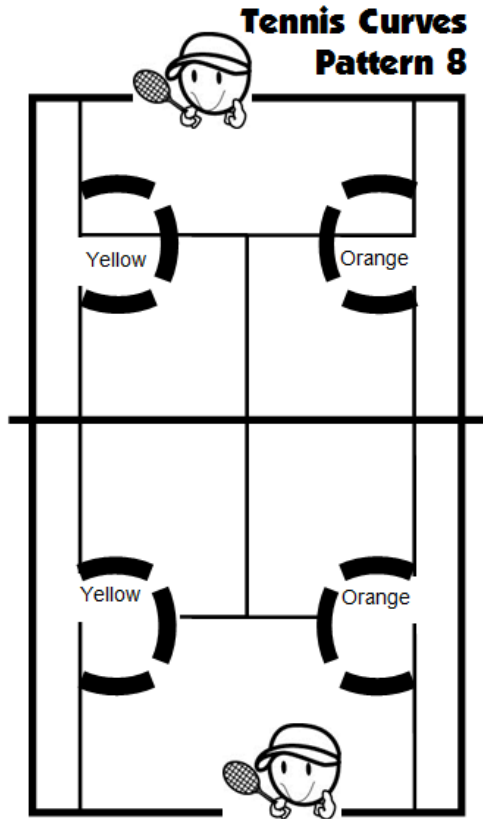
Purpose: Helps players clearly see when aiming for the side-T is higher percentage.

Variation #3: Have players aim down the line for the "T" as well, since down the line passing shots are most effective when they are low over the net.

Purpose: Helps players control and not overhit passing shots on both sides.

Tips: Adjust side-T targets to player levels, and demonstrate how the distance to the "T" is considerably less than on deep groundstrokes.

#8 Swing Them Wide



SINGLES DRILLS: Two players compete with focus on hitting the side-T's.

Variation #1: Play starts with bounce-hit and any ball that lands in side-T scores three points. In case a player comes to the net, side-T passing shots count for three points as well.

Purpose: To reward hitting the side-T.

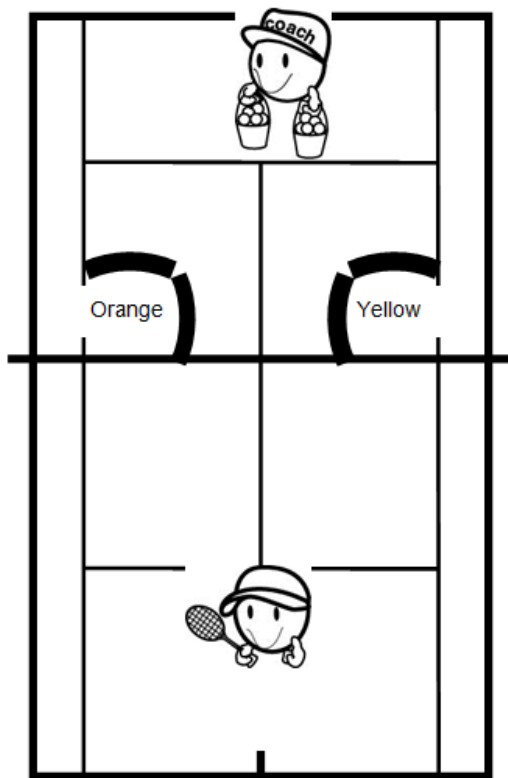
Variation #2: In addition to three points for hitting the side-T target, award two points when one player forces his/her opponent to step outside the singles sideline. This is accomplished easily when hitting crosscourt angles.

Purpose: Helps players clearly see the benefits of swinging the opponent wide off the court.

Tips: If needed, help players shorten their backswing to more effectively control the ball on attempts to hit the side-T.

#9 Drop Shots with Feeding

Tennis Curves Pattern 9



SINGLES DRILLS: Coach feeds and player works on developing soft hands for dropshots.

Variation #1: Coach gives blocked feeds to forehands and backhands. Player calls out towards which color target he or she is aiming. If needed have players perform a tap-bounce-hit to gain softer hand skills.

Purpose: To decide direction early and direct dropshots with control.

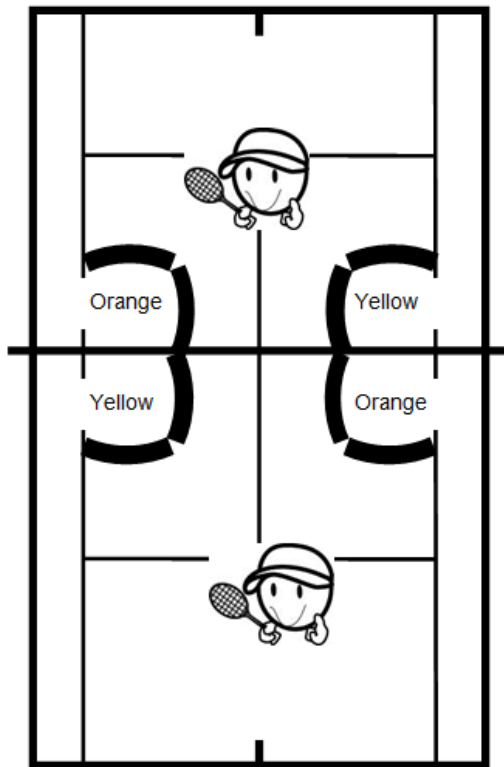
Variation #2: Coach feeds randomly and calls out target colors as feeds cross the net. The timing of the call should be earlier for beginners and later for more advanced players.

Purpose: Helps players better disguise their shots and develop earlier preparation skills.

Tips: Adjust target size and feed depth to player levels. Deep feeds result in harder dropshots.

#10 Drop Shot Games

Tennis Curves Pattern 10



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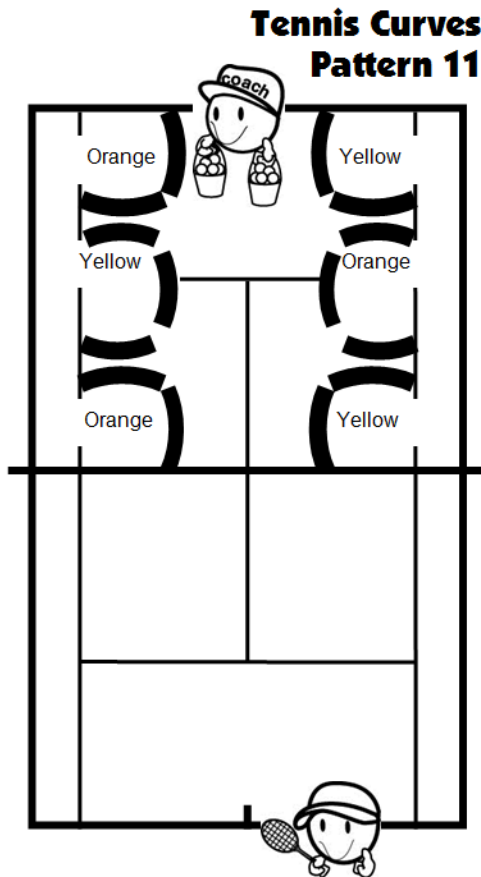
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#11 Six Principle Target Areas



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Tips: Encourage players to hit most balls crosscourt.