

Tactics First Squash Training Session Template

© Tim Bacon 2007

tbacon@smith.edu or www.scienceofcoachingsquash.wordpress.com

1. Choose a tactical theme or context - or pose a tactical problem to be solved:

(examples: a) "you have forced your opponent to boast to the front", or b) "your opponent has trapped you in the back and is on the "T" volleying all your shots")

2. Develop and start the training session with a "conditioned game" which forces the players to deal with the tactical context or problem:

(examples: a) start a game with the server boasting from the back and the returner on the "T", or b) the server serves from mid-court with a drive that comes of the back and tries to stay on the "T" by volleying - the returner can drive hard or lob from the back.

3. After 5-10 minutes stop and *briefly* ask the players questions (open or guiding if necessary) to a) determine the best tactical options in the game and b) evaluate the effectiveness of their technique (shots, movement, etc.):

(examples: a) did you win more points by dropping or driving the boast? Was it better to drop straight or cross? which are better - your forehand or backhand drops in the front? or, b) was it easier for your opponent to volley the hard drives or lobs? Which shot gave you most time to take the "T" in front? Are you straight or cross-court lobs better?

4. If necessary, develop and use "closed" drills to work on technique for about 20 min. (about 250 repetitions) using this model: i) drill skill 1; ii) drill skill 2; iii) alternate skills; iv) randomize skills. During drilling question the athletes about and reinforce good decisions and tactics as well as technique:

(example: a) i) backhand drop off boast in front; ii) backhand cross-court drive of boast in front; iii) alternate; iv) give player choice).

5. Return to original game, reinforcing technique and tactics primarily through short questioning and reminders. Finish with a game with

no conditions to see if the players can integrate the new knowledge.