

USAR-IP NEWS



Coaching Beginner and Advanced Students

As a certified instructor, you will most likely be instructing beginner-type students but you may also be asked to help more advanced students.

This issue of the USAR-IP newsletter will look at what we consider to be the 10 fundamentals every beginning student should know as well as outlining some basic advanced training methods.

NOVEMBER^P, 2017

Pg. 1-A New Course for All Instructors

Pg. 2 Key Fundamentals all Instructors should teach

Pg12-A Coaches/Instructors Code of Conduct



NEW COURSE – STRETCHING – HOW, WHEN AND WHY!!

A comprehensive course created especially for racquetball players. Includes illustrations of all the major racquetball injuries, causes of the injury, treatment for the injuries, and training and stretching techniques to prevent the injuries.

This is information that all instructors/coaches should know to help their students prevent and treat the common racquetball injuries that almost all players will endure sometime in their career. Under courses and tests in your profile.

KEY FUNDAMENTALS ALL INSTRUCTORS SHOULD TEACH

How to grip the forehand and backhand

How to serve

How to relocate after the serve

How to move to center court after shots

How to return serve

How to get feet to sidewall on forehand side

Hitting the ball to the corners

Swing out and around

Sell the sport

Have fun

I --THE GRIP

Forehand

1. The Eastern Grip has the V between the thumb and forefinger positioned at approximately one o'clock on the racquet handle.



There are many different types of grips. We feel when dealing with NEW students you should start with the basic grip as shown above. As the student advances, you may adjust the grip as needed.

Advanced students are different. Many have used a grip for years. A small adjustment may help in certain cases but many times just allowing the student to keep the grip will be more beneficial. Paola Longoria, the best women's professional player, has a very unorthodox grip. Fran Davis her coach realized this was a grip that worked for Paola, and did very little to change the grip. Fran decided that working on strategy and mental preparation would be more beneficial than changing an already successful grip.

BACKHAND

A. Grip

1. The Eastern grip has the V between the thumb and forefinger at approximately 11 o'clock on the racquet handle.



For a description of the basic grips go to the USAP-IP instructor manual.

II- THE SERVE

The mechanics (drive serve):

- a) Ball drop- happens simultaneously with the first step or slightly before.
 1. To maintain consistency, drop the ball in the same spot each time (each service location will have a separate spot)
 2. Drop the ball with three fingers and the thumb on the ball.
 3. Do not spin the ball (may evolve to this as you advance), as consistent ball ids the first step in determining the direction and the effectiveness of the serve.
- b) The steps-
 1. One step-The athlete drops the ball in front and steps. The one step is recommended for beginners.



2. Two step-The athlete takes a two-step approach. This is most popular with intermediate and advanced players. The first step is a small step and the second step should be forward (not sideways).



c. Swing and Contact Point

The drive serve technique is the same as the forehand. The contact points are crucial to executing the different serves. Below are examples of serves right and left contact points. Contact the ball below your knee so it stays low.



serve to right



serve to left

c) Follow Through

Follow through is an integral part of the stroke process. It should not compromise power, control or balance. It will help with injury prevention. If the swing is stopped more pressure is placed on the hitting shoulder and elbow.



Practice
like you've
never won.

Perform
like you've
never lost.

III – RELOCATE AFTER THE SERVE

After hitting the serve relocating to center court is crucial so you are ready to move in ANY direction to return your opponents shot.

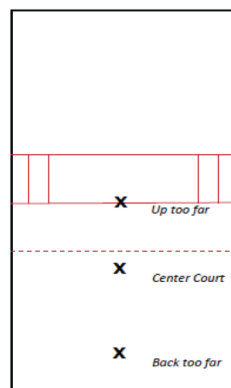
1. After a drive serve –The athlete should try to keep their weight back so they can push with both feet. While viewing the ball, the player should move as quickly as possible to center court. It should be noted that after a drive serve it is difficult to get all the way back to center court, so the key here is to move as fast as possible to the area near center court. Instead of turning to face the ball, the athlete should keep their back to the ball, slide left or right depending upon whether that athlete is right handed or left hander, and then pick the ball flight up over their non-hitting shoulder.



- 2 After a lob serve – the server should hustle back to get deeper than center court. If the serve is not cut-off the serve should strive to be a swing and a half away from their opponent (in deep court).

IV-- POSITIONING DURING A RALLY

During a rally, the player should immediately work to get back to center court after hitting a shot. The more a player can be in center court, the easier it is to get to the next shot. Of course, it is not always easy to get back to center court so the athlete should set their feet to get to the next shot when the opponent shoots. A good racquetball player sort of “slides” around the center court area with a minimum of footsteps, much like a good quarterback slides to evade a pass rush in football. If the ball is in the front court, the athlete can position themselves with toes toward the front wall in the center of the court. Good center court position forces the opponent to the perfect shot.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON COURT POSITIONING SEE THE USAR-IP MANUAL

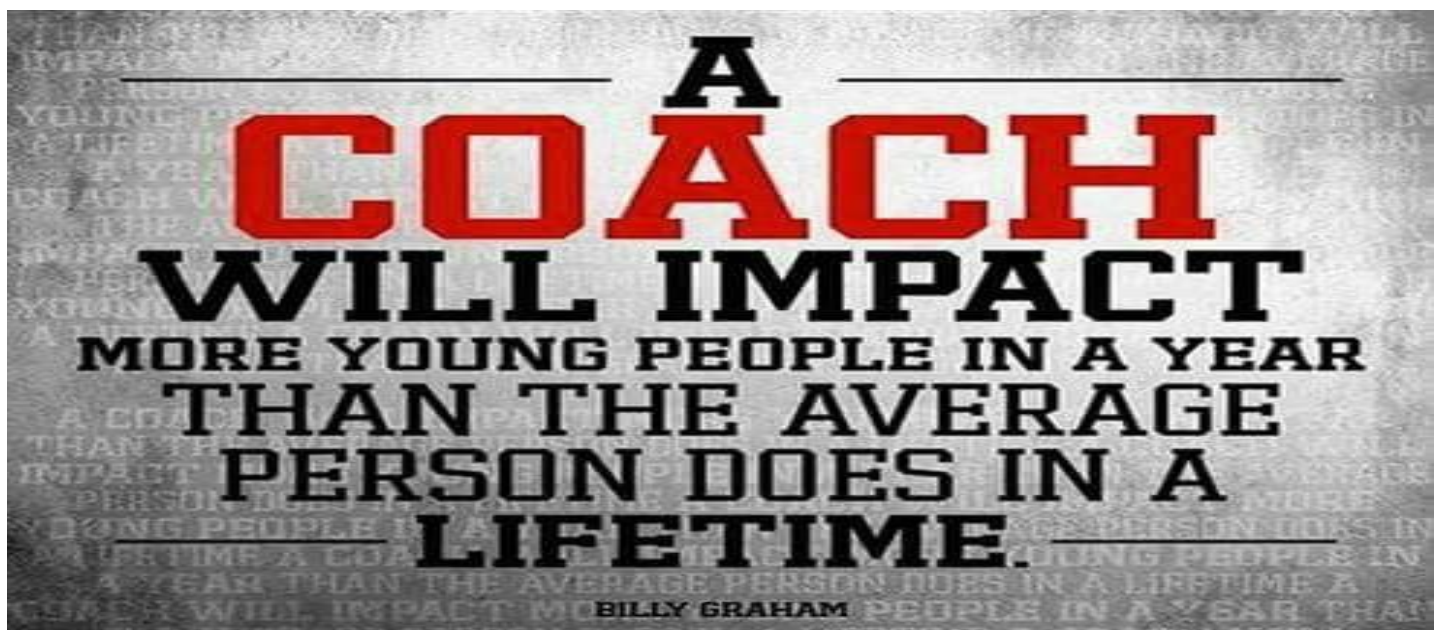
V- -HOW TO RETURN SERVE

1. Serve Return

The purpose of the serve return is to move your opponent out of center court into the back court. There are a variety of shots that can accomplish this along with correct footwork for premium results?

A. Ready Position for Return of Serve

1. Align directly in the center of the back court
 - a. A general place to line up is one arm and a racquet length from the back wall in the middle of the back court.
 - b. Stay low, bend your
 - c. Arch your lower back, and keep the weight on the insides of your feet
 - d. Grip the floor with your toes because this raises heels off the floor
 - e. Keep your hands forward and the racquet in front with a relaxed backhand grip above the waist
 - f. Feet should be slightly wider than shoulder width
2. Return to the Forehand Side
 - a. Split step (a short hop) – open the toe to the side of the serve and cross over with the opposite leg
 - b. Right handed players would take a quick pivot step with the right foot toward the right side wall. Left hander players would pivot on their left foot.
 - c. The left foot comes across in front of your right foot (in a crossover step) as your body turns, your racquet should come up, ready to hit.
 - d. With these quick, two-step movements, you should be able to get to a ball on either side.
 - e. Always remember to follow through when striking the ball as this increases accuracy
 - f. Follow up the return with relocation to center court. (See Benchmark 6 - Positioning)
3. Return of Serve to the Backhand Side
 - a. Split step (short hop) – open the toe to the side of the serve and cross over with the opposite leg
 - b. Right handed players would take a quick pivot step with the left foot toward the left side wall. Left hander players would pivot on their right foot.
 - c. The right foot comes across in front of your left foot (in a crossover step) as your body turns and your racquet comes up, ready to hit.
 - d. With these quick, two step movements, you should be able to get to a ball on either side.
 - e. Always remember to follow through when striking the ball as this increases accuracy
 - f. Follow up the return with relocation to center court. (See Benchmark 6 - Positioning)



VI – SWING OUT AND AROUND

Don't swing down, swing out and around

Teaching students the concept of out and around can be difficult but once students understand the concept it works.

You take a hula hoop from the dollar store and lay it on the floor. Put the athlete in the middle and explain the trajectory of the swing. Then take that hula hoop and hold it upright. Show the student that path is the path that most players take.

Next, bring some mats into the court and stack them so they are thigh to waist high. Have the student begin swinging the racquet across the mats. When they hit the mat, they are going up and down and when they do not hit the mats they have a correct swing.

Another drill is the knees drill. This is an old football and baseball coach's drill. They have pitchers and quarterbacks get on their knees and throw. Why? It makes these athletes use their bodies not their arms. But we get a bonus in racquetball. We must keep our racquet flat or we hit the floor.

The next issue is how to get players to stay away from the ball. I hit shots to the corner and tell them "stay away from the ball!"!

I show them moving at the ball cuts distance and creates a jamming effect while staying away from the ball gives an athlete leverage.

The use of cones and visual aids can enhance staying away from the ball too. Have the athletes move correctly to the cones before you hit shots to them.

These drills will enhance footwork and create some happy league warriors at **your club!**

VII – GET FEET TO THE SIDEWALL

"How do I hit the ball back to the front wall?", is the question I get quite frequently from beginners.

I hit a ball to them softly and watch them hit the ball back. At this stage I do not correct but I observe. If the new player is moving correctly I ask if they have ever played baseball or softball. Those sports translate directly to racquetball.

After serving and relocating it is a question of getting the feet toward the side wall. With the feet to the side wall the athlete has leverage to get the ball back to the front wall.

Demonstrating and showing students how feet toward the front wall will not cut it, will increase the learning curve. Simple drop and hit drills with basic movement to the ball and getting feet to the side wall on both sides of the court will make the game more fun and the student more proficient.

Cues:

Feet to the side wall

Belly button to the side wall

Racquet up fast; real fast!

Hit and get; don't hit and sit!

Feet to the side wall and your players will have a ball!

VIII—HITTING THE BALL TO THE CORNERS

Teaching getting the ball into the corners must be covered with beginners. If not, they will be moving into the ball and getting hit as both they and the ball will be in the center of the court. I have seen many ways of teaching this, including a numbering system. I do not like the numbering system but many of my students do so I use it sparingly. My system is a little different.

Numbering:

The following is the assumption you are a right hander. If not, you of course are serving to the right, not the left side of the court.

If you are standing at position 1 you would hit the wall at $\frac{1}{2}$ to go left or 1 and $\frac{1}{2}$ if you are going right. Some people love this.

Use the Waist:

I teach it by drawing an imaginary line from the player's waist to the front wall. If a beginner can come close to hitting that spot and the ball will travel toward the left corner.

If a right hander wants to serve the ball into the right corner they should put their left hand toward the right wall. Draw a line to the front wall and aim there. (I know this is not perfect but trust me, it works!)

A left hander would be serving to the left corner using this geographical marker.

After the corners, comes the relocation to center court. Hit and get is my favorite thing with players at all levels and often it is hit and sit rather than hit and get!

Most beginners can get used to serving and moving within a matter of minutes.

Try the numbering or the visual cues for beginners or if you have something better, please share!

IX—AN INSTRUCTORS JOB IS TO SELL THE SPORT!!!

When you walk into a racquetball club the question usually goes like this if you are being tracked for usage.

“Are you playing racquetball or are you working out?”

Consider that question carefully. Are you going to work to burn your calories or are you going to play to burn them?

Racquetball is fitness and a fitness activity. Here are five ways to engage racquetball as fitness in your club.

1. Instructor's league. Invite the trainers in to play and give them free lessons. Creating excitement among the men and women of training will bring players to the courts from the fitness area.
2. Create a two-way street. We all know to get better at racquetball you must be in better physical condition. Send the league warriors to the trainers!
3. Create fitness/racquetball classes. Thirty minutes of physical exercises with a trainer and 30 minutes of racquetball exercises makes a team approach to racquetball and fitness.
4. Encourage the junior players to come to the courts while mom and dad work out. If the kids are 7 or older, why have them do day care when they can play small ball with nerf balls? Our top pros today started as little kids in a court while their dads or moms played!
5. Do not let the fitness people over-run the front desk area with fitness. Put up racquetball articles and educate the public of the benefits of racquetball.

I know there are more than five the above is a start! Be creative and engage the fitness population so they play instead of Work!

X--HAVE FUN!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Our sport of racquetball is fun. We know that but do customers? Think about two different beginning lessons.

Lesson one Sam Super Teach goes over every nuance of the forehand and backhand. Sam wants to dazzle the newbie with all sorts of technical information. The talking goes for ten minutes before Bertha beginner even hits the ball.

Lesson two Samantha Super Teach begins hitting with the student immediately. If she sees a student who cannot hit the ball she takes her time with that student. If the student is still challenged she gets a nerf ball and they play small ball in the front court. Rules of small ball here

Lesson one Sam Super Teach demonstrates the splat shot.

Lesson two Samantha Super Teach shows students how to rally but hitting the ball to the students so they do not have to move.

Lesson one Sam Super Teach starts with serve after talking 15 minutes.

Lesson two Samantha Super Teach starts with safety and gets a history of the student's past sports experiences. She also checks carefully to make sure there are no physical limitations

Think back to your first time on the court. I cannot speak for you but I fell in love with the game and could not wait to play. Why? It was fun.

Put that F word back into your lessons!



The "Keys to Teaching" article was created by Master Professional Instructors Jim Winterton and Fran Davis .

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WORLD'S #1 SELLING BRAND.

To Us, The Ball Matters™



"I love the Pro Penn Green ball. The fast crisp action off my racquet helped me win GOLD Medals at the 2015 Pan American Games and 2016 World Championships. No other brand compares to Penn!"

Paola Longoria

"All the Pro's on the IRT know that the Pro Penn HD ball is second to none. With today's lightweight racquets this is the only ball to play with. Its lightweight design and softer feel offers players of all levels the most comfortable experience on the court, even with shots exploding over 180 mph!"

Rocky Carson

pennracquet.com

THE INSTRUCTORS CODE OF CONDUCT

1. The coach/ instructor will take responsibility for the athletes' well-being and development while under their instruction /coaching.
2. The coach/instructor will accept that they serve as role models, and as such, their actions must live up to their words.
3. The coach/instructor will exemplify ethical behaviors, including honesty, integrity, fair play and sportsmanship. These are life-long lessons that take precedence over any emphasis on winning.
4. The coach /instructor will recognize the power and influence of their position with respect to athletes. Therefore coaches/instructors are careful to avoid and refrain from exhibiting behaviors that could develop into interpersonal relationships, or even create the perception of intimacy with athletes.
5. Coaches refrain from direct physical contact with players. The coach will ask permission from the student before touching shoulders etc. while illustrating certain mechanical techniques.
6. The coach/instructor will prohibit the use of alcohol, tobacco and any illegal or recreational drug.
7. The coach/instructor will practice safe training and condition techniques that are current as well as exhibit sound injury and risk management practices.
8. The coach/instructor will be knowledgeable (certified) in basic first aid and injury prevention.
9. The coach/instructor will place the athletes needs and interests above their own.
10. The coach/instructor will understand that the player's well-being has priority over winning.

**A NEGATIVE MIND
WILL NEVER GIVE YOU A POSITIVE LIFE**

OUR COACH

LEADS BY EXAMPLE

DEDICATED & DETERMINED

TEACHES TEAMWORK

MOTIVATES ^{AND} LISTENS

BUILDS CHARACTER

CHALLENGES ^{AND} DEVELOPS

COMMITTED TO OUR TEAM

Our BIGGEST Fan