

# SERVE, RALLY, SCORE: FROM THE FIRST LESSON

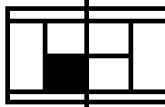
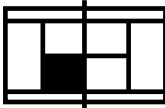
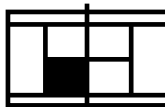
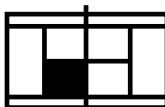
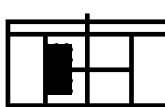
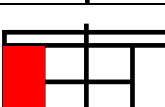


Hrvoje Zmajic (ITF/Tennis Europe)



## WAYS FOR STARTER PLAYERS TO PLAY THE GAME

Starter players will start enjoying the game when they can develop a consistent rally. The ability to control and direct the ball are crucial to the enjoyment of tennis. By using these progressive ways to serve, rally and score; coaches enable players to play the game from the first lesson. The consistency and control developed during the rally, first requires the skill of being able to both serve and return with some degree of accuracy. The 'Serving and Returning' progressions help players to build those skills. Finally, the progressions provided for the Net game provide an early introduction to the perception, reaction and movement skills required to have an all-round game.

### SUMMARY OF ALL THE PROGRESSIVE GAME SITUATIONS

Progressive Game Situations for SERVING AND RETURNING	Progressive Game Situations for BASELINE GAME	Progressive Game Situations for NET GAME	Recommended court	Recommended ball
Sending ball by rolling	Floor tennis	Catching the ball before bounce (no obstacle)		Red ball (sponge or felt)
Sending ball with under arm throw	Underarm throwing and catching the ball	Catching the ball in the air With hand(s) over obstacle		Red ball (sponge or felt)
Delivering ball with over arm throw	Self rally in the service box	Intercepting the ball		Red ball (sponge or felt)
Starting rally with underarm throw	Rallying with partner in the service box	Keeping the ball in the air in pairs (in 1 service box)		Red ball (sponge or felt)
Starting rally with underarm serve and accurate return	Rallying with partner over obstacle	Directing the ball		Red ball
Starting rally with over arm serve and consistent return	Moving the opponent in: <b>RED COURT</b>	Closing the net		Red ball
Starting rally with over arm serve in the service box and returning with high percentage shot	<b>ORANGE COURT</b>	Approaching the net by using approach shot		Orange ball
Starting rally with serve, return and gain advantage with second shot	<b>GREEN COURT</b>	Creating opportunity to approach the net		Green ball

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## BASELINE GAME SITUATIONS

Progressive game situations for baseline game	Cooperative exercise	Competitive exercise	Tactical checkpoint	Technical checkpoint
<b>Rolling the ball between the players</b>	Rolling the ball between the players	Playing across 1 service box, players roll to try to get the ball to cross a 3m goal line at the back of each end of the court. When achieved, player earns 1 point. Players must stop the ball with the racket and roll from where they stop the ball. Winner is the player who wins 5 points.	Accuracy - Directing the ball to space Moving the opponent	Tracking the ball Contact point in front of the body Racket face control
<b>Underarm throwing and catching the ball</b>	Underarm throwing and catching the ball	2 players inside one service box. Players must throw the ball upwards, throwing into space to prevent the opponent catching before the ball bounces twice. Play first to 5 points	Accuracy - Directing the ball to space Moving the opponent	Receiving skills - perception of the first and second flight Rhythm – smooth movement in underarm throwing motion Follow through in underarm throwing motion
<b>Self rally in service box</b>	Self rally without mistake	Who can do the most sets of 5 shot rallies in the time allocated?	Consistency	Racket face control Contact point in front and aside of the body Grip – that allows consistent hitting Smooth racket movement „down-up“ Follow through
<b>Rallying with partner in the service box</b>	Partner rally in the service box (with the target in the middle of the box)	Play a match, first to 3 points with alternate 'serves' After hitting 3 shots in the target players get 1 point. No volleys are permitted.	Consistency and accuracy to win points	Same as the above and Footwork – keeping the ball between player and target Balanced hitting position
<b>Rallying with partner over obstacle</b>	Partner rally in targets over obstacle, with increased distance	For every 6 shots without mistake a pair receives 1 point. Which pair will achieve most points in 2 minutes?	Consistency and accuracy to win points	Racket face control Contact point in front and aside of the body Grip – that allows consistent rallying Follow through – up forward
<b>Moving the opponent in red court</b>	Partner rally in target area over the mini tennis net in the red court	Play a match, first to 5 points with alternate 'serves'(1 <sup>st</sup> overarm serve and 2 <sup>nd</sup> overarm throw). Player can hit max 2 consecutive shots in 1 half of the court. No volleys are permitted.	Consistency Moving the opponent Court positioning to prevent opponent winning points	In addition to the above: Rhythm – smooth transition from back to forward swing
<b>Moving the opponent in orange court</b>	1 or 2 bounce rally (player has a choice to let the ball bounce twice for short balls)	Play a match in orange court first to 3 points. One player serves (1 <sup>st</sup> – overarm serve and 2 <sup>nd</sup> underarm serve). Once per point the ball can bounce twice! 2 players are playing 1 point each against a player on the other side. Players rotate after each match.	Consistency Moving the opponent Court positioning to prevent opponent winning points Using your strengths	Same as the above Early preparation – unit turn Racket acceleration for topspin
<b>Moving the opponent in the green court</b>	Maintaining the rally with the ball bouncing between service and base line	Play a match, first to 5 points on half court with alternative serves. Players have 3 serves, 1 <sup>st</sup> overarm serve, 2 <sup>nd</sup> overarm throwing and 3 <sup>rd</sup> underarm serve.	Consistency Moving the opponent Court positioning to prevent opponent winning points Using your strengths Exploring opponent's weaknesses	Same as the above

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## SERVE AND RETURN GAME SITUATIONS

Progressive Game Situations for serving and returning	Cooperative exercise	Competitive exercise	Tactical checkpoints for Serving and Returning	Technical checkpoints for Serving and Returning
<b>Sending ball by rolling</b>	Same as for discovering baseline game with bonus point for rolling in the target area	Player delivers 3 balls in 3 different targets. 1 point for every correct shot. Winner is first to 10 points.	Starting the rally by consistently aiming for a target area	Returning Receiving skills – tracking the ball Alert ready position
<b>Sending ball with under arm throw</b>	Same as for discovering baseline game, with a bonus point if the ball bounces in target area	Player should return the ball in the same direction from where it comes from. Every correct shot gets 1 point. Winner is first to 10 points.	Starting the rally by consistently aiming for a target area	Serving Starting position and balance in under arm throwing motion Follow through  Returning Receiving skills – first & second flight Alert ready position
<b>To deliver ball with over arm throw</b>	Throwing the ball at the wall and catching it after it bounces	One player throws the ball at the wall and the other one should catch it after the bounce inside a target area and throw again.	Starting the rally by consistently aiming for a target area Accuracy	Serving Rhythm in over arm throwing motion Tossing accuracy for under arm serve  Returning Split step
<b>Starting rally with under arm throw and accurate return</b>	Server delivers 4 balls with underarm throw to forehand and backhand side of the returner who tries to hit returns into the target.	Server delivers 5 serves to either forehand or backhand side of the returner who should return into the target area. Every correct serve or return is 1 point. First to reach 7 points. Server change after 5 serves.	To start the rally with accuracy	Serving Starting position and balance in under arm throwing motion Follow through  Returning Receiving skills – first & second flight
<b>Starting rally with underarm serve and accurate return</b>	Server delivers 2 balls with underarm serve to forehand and backhand side of the returner who tries to hit returns in the target	Server delivers 5 serves to either forehand or backhand side of the returner who should return into the target area. Every correct serve and return is 1 point. First to reach 7 points. Server change after 5 serves.	To start the rally with accuracy and consistency	Serving Tossing accuracy for under arm serve Follow thru  Returning Ready position and Split step
<b>Starting rally with over arm serve and consistent return</b>	Player gets 1 point for starting the rally with a first, over arm serve and additional point for winning the rally	Player is staying in the middle of two red courts and starts the point with serving in either left or right court in which the point will be played out.	Controlling direction and depth with serve and consistency with return	Serving Coordination of both hands during backswing (short backswing) Racket face control Grip – eastern or continental  Returning Split step and reaction speed
<b>Starting rally with over arm serve in service box and returning with high percentage shot</b>	Servers change after 5 serves. Server should hit deep in service box and the returner returns between service line and orange court base line.	Servers change after 4 serves. Server should hit deep in the service box. Returner returns down the middle and the server looks for open court and plays out the point. First to 11 points wins.	Developing basic tactics for serving Serve and hit deep Serve and hit in open court  Returning deep and stay in the rally Returning crosscourt and hit in open court	Serving Rhythm of serving with “full backswing”  Returning Backswing – unit turn
<b>Starting rally with serve / return and gain advantage with second shot</b>	Servers change after 5 serves. Server should hit deep in the service box. The returner has free return in ¾ of the court width. Server should hit the second shot with his forehand.	Servers change after 4 serves. After serve & return both players play only forehand on ¾ of the court. First to 11 points wins	By using over arm serve, players further develop basic tactics and use the serve as a “weapon”  Creating advantage on weak 2 <sup>nd</sup> serve by using offensive return & player’s “best shot	Serving  Returning Moving forward Moving around the ball

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## NET GAME SITUATIONS

Progressive Game Situations for net game	Cooperative exercise	Competitive exercise	Tactical checkpoints for net game	Technical checkpoints for net game
<b>Catching the ball before bounce (no obstacle)</b>	One player tosses the ball vertically for partner to catch before the bounce	One player tosses the ball vertically to either side and opponent should catch it before the bounce. First to three catches.	Consistency	Receiving skills – to catch the ball before bouncing Low ready position and Hands positioned in front of the body
<b>Catching the ball in the air over obstacle with hand(s)</b>	One player should throw the ball from 2-3m distance and the other catches it before the bounce	2 or 3 players throw in total 10 balls one after the other into the net player's target area (waist to shoulder height). Net player is counts the number of catches.	Court positioning (in the situation when players are throwing the balls from different directions).	Receiving skills – to meet the ball in the air in front of the body "Mentally" ready position Hands positioned in front of the body at the chest height
<b>Intercepting the ball</b>	With an under arm throw, the player tries to hit areas called by coach. Another player tries to prevent the ball from passing them.	With under arm throw one player tries to pass another player who acts as the goalkeeper. 1 pass is 1 point for thrower and 2 intercepted balls is 1 point for goalkeeper.	Consistency Positioning	Contact point in front of the body Racket face control Footwork to the ball and Balance at the moment of contact
<b>Keeping the ball in the air in pairs with rackets (in 1 service box)</b>	One player is passing the ball to the other after hitting once in the air	Player hits the ball up, sends the ball away from the other player who does the same. Players don't let the ball bounce.	Consistency Positioning Hitting away from the opponent	Receiving skills - hitting the ball in air - reaction to a cue Contact point in front and aside Balanced hitting position
<b>Directing the ball</b>	One player throws four balls, 2 to forehand and 2 to backhand and the net player returns but should not hit two consecutive balls in the same half of the court	One player varies the hand feed; the net player should not hit more than 2 consecutive balls to the same half of the court. First to 5 points wins.	Accuracy Offensive attitude Moving the opponent	Racket movement from high to low Grip – continental to eastern Footwork to the ball Racket face control
<b>Closing the net</b>	Player starts the rally by tossing the ball and hitting the volley; moving forward and hitting second volley to the target area	Player starts the rally by tossing the ball and hitting the volley; moving forward and playing out the point. First to 5 points wins.	Net positioning Finishing the point	Forward movement Timing of the last step toward the ball Balance Receiving skills – recognising lob Footwork backwards for smash
<b>Approaching the net by using approach shot</b>	Player starts to move forward when the ball is tossed; performing split step at the partner's (coach's) contact and moves toward the ball to hit 1 <sup>st</sup> deep and 2 <sup>nd</sup> short cross	Player drops the ball; hitting approach shot and moves forward to play out the point. First to 5 points wins.	Court positioning Basic net game tactics: Hitting in open court Finish with short cross High percentage volleys	Split step timing & balance Firm grip in contact point Adequate backswing Receiving skills – recognising lob Footwork backwards for smash
<b>Creating opportunity to approach the net</b>	Players rallying deep down the middle of the court. The player who is able to hit the ball inside the base line is allowed to approach the net.	Players rally deep balls down the middle. After hitting 2 deep balls in the row player is allowed to hit away from the opponent and approach the net. Player gets 3 points if they win the point at the net. Winner is first player to reach 11 points.	Decision making - when to approach - where to approach	Split step timing & balance Firm grip in contact point Adequate backswing