

Lesson Theme: Third Shot Drop

Objectives: Learn to hit effective drops

Skill Level: 3.0 / 3.5

Duration: 90 Minutes

Equipment Needed: Balls and Cones/Markers



Mins	Activity	Details	Teaching Points	Comments
5	Meet & Greet	Welcome, names, housekeeping		
7	Technical Warm Up	Select activities from the WARM-UP MENU.		Warm-up should include volleys, groundstrokes, serve and return.
10	Play & Observe	Real Game w/o restrictions (see comments).		In instances where players use very few drops, you may need to introduce a rule that drops must be attempted. Otherwise, you will not be able to observe their drops.
3	Collect Balls & H2O			Make it short!
5	Debrief / Observations	<p>Praise effort and focus.</p> <p>Mention that your particular interest was what happened when players attempted third shot drops against opponents at the net.</p>	<p>Drops can play an important role in avoiding trouble/neutralizing opponents.</p> <p>Effective drops are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) in playb) force an upward hit <p>Our drops were not always consistent/effective</p>	<p>Many players misunderstand why drops are important. They will talk about giving time to come to the net, for example.</p> <p>Make it clear that these low and slow balls are about limiting opponent options, since they force upward contact.</p> <p>It is less about causing trouble and more about avoiding it.</p>

5	Direct Instruction	<p>Drop = Slow Drive.</p> <p>We can think of a drop as being a slow drive. Like a drive, the ball passes</p>	<p>Many drops sit up too high because they are hit with too much speed.</p>	<p>The target should always be forcing an upward hit from the opponent.</p>
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		through a 'window' no more than 1.5 paddle heights over the net. If it is slow enough, gravity will bring the ball down before the opponent makes contact.	A good way to reduce ball speed but still have a relaxed swing is to have very little backswing. Think of starting the paddle almost at the point of contact and then having a forward acceleration.	Do not use other targets like landing the ball in the NVZ or worrying about the apex of the arc. Both of these goals can be accomplished yet still result in a poor drop. Focus on what the drop does to the opponent (e.g. hit up)
15	Drop & Drop Progression (FH/BH)	<p>Step 1: Player A (from baseline) tosses the ball, lets it bounce, and then plays a very slow ball "through the window". Player B (also at baseline) stops the ball and does the same.</p> <p>Step 2: Player A sends a slow, arcing ball to Player B (similar to a return of serve) and then runs to the net. Player B lets the ball bounce and plays a drop. Player A (now at the NVL) stops the ball and indicates whether they would be forced to make contact below the top of the net (e.g. have to hit up).</p> <p>Step 3: Player A hits an easy serve, Player B hits an easy return and comes to NVL. Player A hits a drop which is caught/stopped by Player B. Player B then serves, A returns, and B drops.</p>	Reinforce: - window is the target - think of slow drives - short backswing to control speed	<p>These steps should be done down the line and crosscourt.</p> <p>This 'window' is the target they are aiming for.</p> <p>Each step should be done until it appears the players are having a good amount of success ~ 70%</p> <p>Instead of demonstrating all three steps in the progression, demonstrate a single step and have players do the activity. Then demonstrate the next step and have them do that progression.</p> <p>Have a short discussion about the benefits of dropping crosscourt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lower net - More room to work with.
10	Play Real Points with restrictions	Real game, but third shot must be an attempted drop.	Reinforce key teaching points (e.g. playing slow balls through the window)	Net players should not be "nice" and let drops be successful. They should attempt to get the ball when high, just like in a real game.
5	Debrief / Observations	<p>Good use of drops. Height and speed control is improving.</p> <p>Don't be discouraged if drops are still inconsistent. They are hard to hit and have significant consequences if executed poorly.</p>		<p>Note that crosscourt drops seemed more likely to be successful, and that is because of the lower net and extra room.</p> <p>You can mention most pros play most drops crosscourt for this reason.</p>

7	Continuous Rally: Drop to Volley	Practice hitting good drops with player at the net.	An early, balanced set-up will increase likelihood of	
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		One player drops from baseline and other player sends the ball back from the NVL as a non-stop exchange. Switch after 3 minutes.	controlling height and speed.	
13	Play Real Points	Real game but third shot must be an attempted drop.	Reinforce key teaching points: hitting slow drives through the window; setting up early and on balance.	
5	Wrap Up	Summarize key points	Drops can be useful as forcing opponents to hit up limits their ability to hit hard and keep the ball in play.	Use this wrap up to identify improvement, encourage practice and promote future lessons or events.

Instructor Notes: