

# FAIRFAX HIGH SCHOOL TENNIS

## Team Practices

Team practices are scheduled Mondays through Fridays and periodically on Saturdays beginning Monday, February 27 through the conclusion of the season in June. Practices typically last for one-and-one-half hour and will start on most days at 3:15 PM for the girls and 4:15 PM for the boys. General themes include:

1. Skill development and refinement
2. Defensive point patterns (how to sustain a rally, stay in a point and shot tolerance)
3. Offensive point patterns (how to dictate and control play and how to close out and finish a point)
4. Opportunistic recognition and opportunistic transitional patterns (how to recognize and take advantage of opportunities to transition from a neutral or defensive position to a position of strength)
5. Serve and serve return first-strike capabilities and patterns
6. Percentage play and risk management
7. Playing styles and role playing
8. Dynamic court coverage and footwork

A more detailed synopsis of practice themes and targeted skill development are included in subsequent pages of the handbook.



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## How to be the “ultimate” team player

1. Win Matches – Your number one and most important responsibility is to win matches (or do everything possible to put yourself in a position to win matches).
2. Help teammates win matches – Your number two and second most important responsibility is to support your teammates in their efforts to win matches. To do everything possible to put yourself and your teammates in a position to win matches should be your main overriding focus for everything you do for and with the team.
3. Be positive. Be positive not only to benefit your game but also to benefit the conviction and attitude of the other players on your team.
4. Never give up. It's extremely important for the psyche, morale, and spirit of your team to know that every player is committed to giving 100% each match no matter the score or circumstance.
5. Continuously try to improve. Establish a goal to incrementally get better each time you go on the court and to help your teammates incrementally improve their skills as well.
6. Offer no excuses or cast blame. If every player is positive in attitude, gives 100%, is trying to get better and is truly committed to doing everything possible to win matches, then it really doesn't matter if you or one or more other players has a bad day or loses a match. You're all in it together good or bad.
7. Communicate – A shared vision requires a shared dialogue and open (constructive) communication.
8. Support your coach. Respect the judgment and decisions of your coach. Take advantage of his/her expertise and perspective (particularly as it relates to recognizing your strengths, weaknesses, best matchups, and partner combinations). Also, respect and acknowledge constructive criticism and feedback you receive from teammates.
9. Take nothing personally. In any team situation, there will disappointments and things said and done that may hurt your feelings. Team dynamics are not always clean and easy. Assume the best intentions and stay true to your main objective to win matches and support your teammates in their efforts to win matches.
10. Have fun. Choose to have fun and to make things fun for your teammates. Of course, being actively engaged on the court working hard and trying to get better (collectively as a team) is fun.

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## Training (Practice) Themes

1. Groundstrokes (baseline play)
  - a. Consistency, rhythm, depth, and net clearance – rally ball
  - b. Spin - topspin (how and when to vary) and underspin (how and when to vary)
  - c. Cross court, down-the-line, down-the-line redirection, cross-court angles
  - d. Winners, unforced errors, percentage play and risk management
  - e. Targets and four target zones (deep corners, angles)
  - f. Dominant forehand, dominant backhand, inside-out forehands, and inside-out backhands
  - g. Court coverage (footwork and balance) – left, right, up, back, and recovery
  - h. Court position and shot selection based on court position (behind, on or inside baseline)
  - i. Offense/defense
  - j. Disguise of directional intent and other control variables (e.g., spin)
  - k. High ball/low ball response and control of bounce and projection (carry)
  - l. Pace – response to pace, how to generate pace and how to take pace off the ball
  - m. Timing of contact (ball rising, peaking, or descending) and time of response (less time, more time)
  - n. Point of contact in relation to strike zone (strike zone, above strike zone, below strike zone) and point of contact in relation to court position (behind baseline, inside baseline, forecourt)
  - o. Response to pressure – when ahead, when behind, when tight, playing conditions
  - p. Play patterns – cross court/down-the-line, cross court angle, short/deep, drop shot/lob, passing shots, varying pace, varying spin, high bounce/low bounce
  - q. Shot combinations – groundstrokes combined with volleys, serves...
  - r. Singles/doubles
2. Volleys/overheads (net play)
  - a. Consistency and rhythm
  - b. Drive, block and touch (finesse) volleys
  - c. Depth and angles
  - d. Spin
  - e. Coverage (footwork and balance) – closing patterns, left, right, in and back
  - f. High ball/low ball response
  - g. Court position – hitting from three-quarter court, service line and inside service line
  - h. Response to time (less time/more time)
  - i. Disguise of directional intent and other control variables (e.g. pace)
  - j. Targets and target zones
  - k. Shot combinations – volleys/overheads combined with groundstrokes...
  - l. Play patterns – approach and volley, volley/overhead, serve and volley, passing shot response, lob rundown coverage
  - m. Specialty – lob volleys, drop volleys
  - n. Singles/doubles

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## Training (Practice) Themes (Continued)

3. Serves/serve returns
  - a. Serve
    - (1.) 1<sup>st</sup> serve/2<sup>nd</sup> serve
    - (2.) 1<sup>st</sup> serve percentage, risk management, net clearance and margin of error
    - (3.) Rhythm, service ritual
    - (4.) Utilizing serve to disrupt rhythm and timing of opponent(s)
    - (5.) Targets and target zones
    - (6.) Spin – topspin, slice, flat
    - (7.) Pace – how to generate pace, how to vary pace
    - (8.) Shot combinations and play patterns – serve and stay back and serve and come in (follow serve into net)
    - (9.) Response to pressure - when ahead, when behind, when tight, playing conditions
    - (10.) Singles/doubles
  - b. Serve return
    - (1.) Defensive response - neutralize serve (stay in point)
    - (2.) Offensive response – attack, gain advantage
    - (3.) Targets and target zones – server stays back, server comes in
    - (4.) Handling serve control variables – pace, spin and location
    - (5.) Serve coverage – right, left and at body
    - (6.) How to read server, improve anticipation
    - (7.) Shot combinations and play patterns – serve return and stay back, serve return and come in
    - (8.) Response to pressure - when ahead, when behind, when tight, playing conditions
    - (9.) Singles/doubles
4. Specialty shots (i.e. drop shots, lob volleys, half volleys) and emergency response shots (shots requiring special adjustments of hands and/or feet)
5. Playing styles and role playing
  - a. Aggressive baseline
  - b. Defensive baseline (counterpuncher)
  - c. Attacking style of play (net rushing/serve-and-volley)
  - d. All court play (opportunistic)
6. Tactical options/choices - shot selection responses based on nature and difficulty of oncoming shots and positioning of opponent(s) for singles/doubles
  - a. Neutral position (no advantage/disadvantage)
  - b. Position of strength
  - c. Position of weakness
7. Competition – singles and doubles (with variables, manipulation of score, requirements to hit a specific number and type of shots, number of bounces per point, directional patterns, etc.)

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## Training Themes (Continued)

8. On and off-court tennis-specific fitness conditioning
  - a. Flexibility and range of motion – upper and lower body dynamic and static stretching
  - b. Strength Training - Muscular balance (how it relates to mechanical shoulder alignment), upper extremity strengthening, lower extremity strengthening and core strengthening
  - c. Footwork and court coverage – linear and multi-directional foot speed, foot quickness, lateral, forward, backward, and vertical agility, interval training and plyometrics
  - d. Court stamina and endurance - cardio-fitness conditioning, interval (fatigue) training and plyometrics
9. Psychological (mental) training
  - a. Emotional control, regulation, and intelligence
  - b. Self-awareness and understanding
  - c. Thought control
  - d. Self-talk and body language
  - e. Motivation and intrinsic motivation
  - f. Rituals and routines
  - g. Goal setting – SMART, process versus outcome
  - h. Self-belief, confidence and self esteem
  - i. Concentration and focus
  - j. Work ethic
  - k. Resilience
  - l. Autonomy
  - m. Coping with pressure
  - n. Desire to achieve and succeed
  - o. Accountability
  - p. Court awareness and presence

