



Racquetball Canada Skills Development Program

DRILLS MANUAL

1 and 2. Execute a self or partner feed forehand or backhand pinch shot:

- In keeping with the drop and hit to self or partner feed progression, repeat pattern of “self feed”, “partner feed”, “multiple feed”, and “continuous feed”
- A feed is a progression from the drop and hit, that adds footwork, movement and ball motion

“Self Feed”

- Start in centre court in an athletic position, begin by softly hitting the ball to the front wall, so that the ball comes back to either the front, middle, or back position
- After letting the ball bounce one time execute the down the line pass shot with two ball bounces before the back wall

Teaching Tip: There is no need to angle the body differently to hit a pinch shot, the only thing that changes is the contact point which is further back in your stance than the contact point as the swing stays exactly the same as any other shot.

“Partner Feed”

- With a coach or partner tap the ball to the individual working on the specific skill and do the drill the same as the “self feed”
- Another variation is for the coach or partner to drop the ball in a desired location. This is an excellent bridge from the drop and hit, to the feed off the front wall

“Multiple Feed”

- As one gets better at a down the line feed, mix things up by trying other speeds and angles to help the individual learn the skill in as many varieties as possible

“Continuous Feed”

- As the individual gets better at the down the line pass, turn it into a game where two partners could continuously hit the same shot back and forth to one another, or one partner continuously feeds and the other executes a down the line pass.

Teaching Tip: Find ways to keep the practice exciting by innovating and combining the pinch shot with other shots. For example, one individual remains at the front of the court and one individual at the back of the court. The individual in the back of the court hits continuous pinches, while the individual in the front of the court retrieves the pinch and hits a down the line, then repeats.



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3. and 4. Execute a Drop and Hit, Forehand or Backhand, Ceiling Ball Shot:

- The target is the ceiling approximately 5 feet back from the front wall, there is usually a row of lights at the appropriate spot as putting tape for a target is not feasible
- After hitting the ceiling, the ball hits the front wall, bounce approximately at the service line and then the second bounce lands as close to the back wall as possible
- Begin by having the individual “throw” a ceiling ball to mimic the proper swing motion and understand the angle they have to hit it at
- When they are ready to hit the ball, drop the ball higher than you would for a pass or kill shot to help execution which creates an overhand swing
- Focus on the depth of the ball in the back court as the ceiling shot is a defensive shot that is meant to take the opponent out of centre court

Teaching Tip: The overhand ceiling ball resembles the technique used to throw a baseball from the outfield or the serve in tennis. It has the same transfer of weight and throwing motion with the racquet. The underhand ceiling shot is hit from waist level or lower and effective when your opponent hits a super shot and you can just get to it, or you are off balance

5. and 6. Execute Continuous, Forehand or Backhand, Ceiling Ball Shot

- Use the drop and hit to build to this skill
- See how many times in a row, from the respective side the individual can execute proper ceiling balls
- If 10 or more is accomplished, with a partner, add movement back and forth to centre between shots
- With a partner, isolate the ceiling ball in that one has to hit a ceiling ball and the other chooses another skill to work on and then switch
- If strong proficiency is accomplished, have the individual hit continuous ceiling balls, with two racquetballs. Start with one ball, hit it, and then bounce the other, then hit the second ball, then the first ball will be returning from the ceiling to be hit again and so on. If done properly, there is a rhythm that is formed.

Teaching Tip: Stay loose, as the ball will sometimes be higher or lower depending on how the previously ceiling ball was hit as the individual will have to react to this and still hit the ceiling ball either over or underhand

Lob Serves (For Lob Serve Diagrams please refer to page 26 of the Competition-Introduction Toolbox)

Teaching Tip: A serve is the one chance you have to have total control over the rally, therefore it is important to be focused and take full advantage of this opportunity. Developing a routine, much like a pitcher in baseball is important to gain consistency and improve focus.



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7. “Straight Lob”

- Pick a target on the front wall that is high enough to get the ball deep into the back corner
- The first bounce should be around the encroachment line. If the player can keep it inside the encroachment line but close to it, this is optimal as it becomes difficult for their opponent to short hop or cut-off
- There are three ideal spots to hit the serve from: left, centre, and right sides of the service box. You can also alter these as needed. It is important for each player to be able to execute serves to both the forehand and backhand from all these positions to have a wide arsenal of serves
- Attempt 10 lob serves from each spot to each side and rank the spots in terms of successful execution. Look to see if there is one spot that is more consistent than the others, and work on the spots that need improvement the most

Teaching Tip: Once the technique is sufficient for the straight lob serve (or any serve), add movement back to center court in the drill to better simulate a game scenario

**8. “Half Lob”**

- Pick a target on the front wall that is shoulder height and flat in angle that gets the ball deep into the back corner
- The first bounce should be around the encroachment line. This will bring the ball into perfect position in the deep part of the court for a difficult return
- There are three ideal spots to hit the serve from: left, centre, and right sides of the service box. You can also alter these as needed. It is important for each player to be able to execute serves to both the forehand and backhand from all these positions to have a wide arsenal of serves
- Attempt 10 half lob serves from each spot to each side and rank the spots in terms of successful execution. Look to see if there is one spot that is more consistent than the others, and work on the spots that need improvement the most

Teaching Tip: Instead of watching the ball get to your opponent after the serve, turn and watch the opponent sooner to be able to anticipate and react to the return



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9. “Kiss or Nick Lob”

- Pick a target on the front wall that is high enough and close enough to the side wall that the ball will be able “nick” the side wall on the wall down towards the floor
- The first point of contact will be on the side wall at about five to seven feet from the back wall. The first bounce is immediately after that within a foot or two. This serve is the most difficult to cut off of all the lob serves, which makes it very effective
- There are three ideal spots to hit the serve from: left, centre, and right sides of the service box. You can also alter these as needed. It is important for each player to be able to execute serves to both the forehand and backhand from all these positions to have a wide arsenal of serves
- Attempt 10 kiss or nick lob serves from each spot to each side and rank the spots in terms of successful execution. Look to see if there is one spot that is more consistent than the others, and work on the spots that need improvement the most
- Place a target, such as some colored tape, on the side wall close to the back wall when practicing the nick lob to reinforce the importance of hitting the side wall while the ball is in the air

Teaching Tip: You know you have hit the perfect kiss or nick lob serve when your opponent cannot cut-off or short hop the ball. This means it is the perfect height and angle and is what we are always striving to achieve with this serve.

10. “Z Lob”

- Pick a target on the front wall that is high enough and close to the side wall that will form a “z” shape in the trajectory of the ball. You want the ball high enough that the first bounce is before the encroachment line and the second bounce is before the back wall. The ball should end up in the back corner high, which makes it difficult to return.
- The first bounce should be around the encroachment line. This will bring the ball into the back corner and the second bounce should be die off the back wall.
- There are three ideal spots to hit the serve from: left, centre, and right sides of the service box. You can also alter these as needed. It is important for each player to be able to execute serves to both the forehand and backhand from all these positions to have a wide arsenal of serves
- Attempt 10 Z lob serves to both sides of the court from the middle position. Attempt 10 Z lob serves from the right side of the service box to the right side of the court and 10 serves from the left hand side of the service box to the left hand side of the court. Look to see if there is one spot that is more consistent than the others, and work on the spots that need improvement the most

Teaching Tip: When hitting the Z Lob it is important that the ball stays on an angle that is between the server and the side wall (note: you do not want the ball going behind you as it crosses the short line).

Teaching Tip: Because of the angle of a lob serve use different targets in different places. For example, a garbage can in the back corner, or a mat on the encroachment line.



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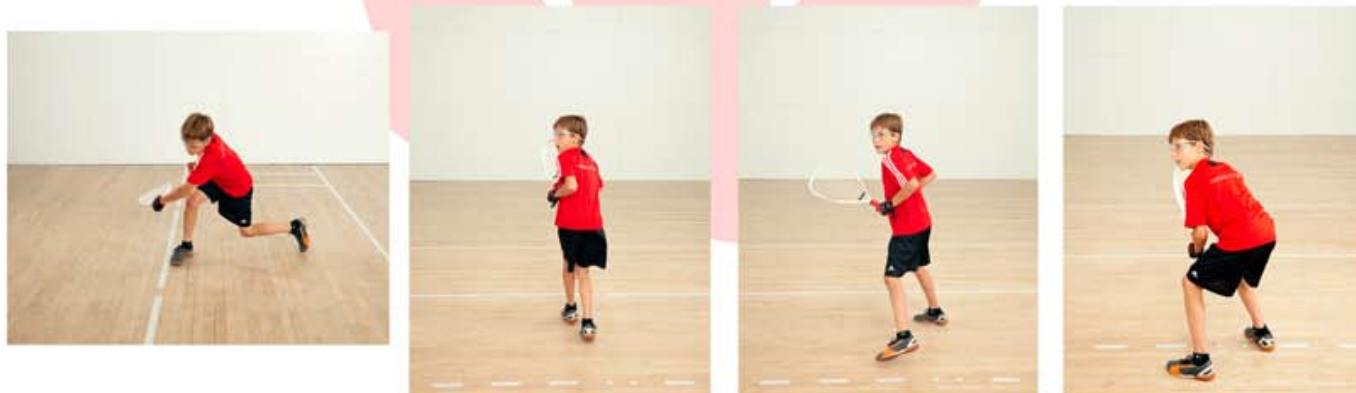
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Drive Serves (For Drive Serve Diagrams please refer to page 25 of the Competition-Introduction Toolbox)

11. "Straight Drive"

- Pick a target on the front wall that is high enough to get the ball over the short line, but low enough to have it bounce twice before the back wall. The target will fluctuate based on your position in the service zone.
- The first bounce should be between the short serve line and the encroachment line
- Aiming for the back corners is very important with the straight drive serve
- There are three ideal spots to hit the serve from: left, centre, and right sides of the service box. You can also alter these as needed. It is important for each player to be able to execute serves to both sides of the court from all these positions to have a wide arsenal of serves
- Attempt 10 straight drive serves from each spot to each side and rank the spots in terms of successful execution. Look to see if there is one spot that is more consistent or easier to hit than the others, and work on the spots that need improvement the most

Teaching Tip: The easiest way to improve the drive serve is to drop and hit and serve with two steps. The important thing to work on after serve execution is optimal, is to practice moving quickly and efficiently to centre court after the serve is hit and the ball crosses the short line.



12. "Z Drive"

- Pick a target on the front wall that is around shoulder height.
- The ball is going to hit the front wall and then the side wall in the air, bounce as close to the opposite side wall as possible, and then bounce as close to the back wall as possible.
- Similar to the Lob Z, there are two ideal spots to hit the serve from: the left and right sides of the service box. It is important for each player to be able to execute serves to both sides of the court from both these positions to have a wide arsenal of serves
- To hit to the left side of the court, stand to the left position of the service zone. To hit to the right side of the court, stand to the right side of the service zone.
- Attempt 10 Z drive serves from the right side service zone to the right side of the court and 10 Z Drive serves from the left side service zone of the court to the left side of the court. Look to see if there is one spot that is more consistent than the others, and work on the spots that need improvement the most

Teaching Tip: Hit the ball high enough on the front wall for it to travel deep into the back court, but not so high that it bounces off the back wall



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13. “Jam Drive”

- Pick a target on the front wall that will allow the serve to hit the front wall and the side wall in the air such that it will bounce twice before the back wall
- The first bounce should be just over the short serve line on the side wall
- Aiming for a serve that comes towards the middle of the court and into the opponent’s body is very important with the jam drive serve
- There are three ideal spots to hit the serve from: left, centre, and right sides of the service box. You can also alter these as needed. It is important for each player to be able to execute serves to both the forehand and backhand from all these positions to have a wide arsenal of serves
- Attempt 10 jam drive serves from each spot to each side and rank the spots in terms of successful execution. Look to see if there is one spot that is more consistent than the others, and work on the spots that need improvement the most
- Be aware when moving back to centre court as the ball might end up on the other side of the court for the receiver and you may need to adjust your defensive position based on that to avoid getting hit by your opponent’s shot and to be ready for successful coverage of your opponent’s shot
- Put a can or some type of target just over the short line, and attempt to hit that target in the air to improve precision and consistency in hitting the jam serve

Teaching Tip: The Jam Serve is very useful in disguising the straight drive serve since it looks very similar but has a very different angle when it reaches the opponent

14 . Serve Return

- The basic drill for this is to simply pick a serve, definitely a lob serve to start, and then have an individual return the serve with a desired shot in mind
- Have the server focus on proper serve execution and not simply trying to feed or set up, the serve returner
- If there is proficiency at returning lob serves try the same thing with drive serves
- To make the drill more challenging make it a three-shot rally. The server will hit a desired serve and the returner will attempt a desired shot, and then the server will attempt to effectively retrieve that shot and execute a desired skill

Teaching Tip: In terms of skill development, there is no need to simulate more than a three shot rally. Work on isolating different shots and serves under the constraints of a three-shot rally to maximize practice time and overall focus

15. Become a Certified Tech A Referee

- There are five levels in the Racquetball Canada officiating certification program. The first step is to be certified as Tech A. This will enable you to referee matches at a sanctioned tournament. A clinic held by a Level 2 or higher referee which covers basic rules and situational analysis will qualify you as Tech A. There is a written exam which must be successfully completed to pass Tech B. By becoming certified as a referee you will help improve your abilities as an official, and an added benefit is your racquetball game is likely to improve as well. The reason why learning to referee will improve your racquetball game is because it expands your understanding of the game from a different perspective than a player

