

HINTS FOR COACHING BEGINNER TEAMS

1. De-emphasize winning. Children learning the game should not feel any pressure to win. Consider a first season strictly a learning experience and make sure your players and parents understand this.
2. After the match, praise and encourage the children for their accomplishments, even if they may seem minor. ("You reacted better to the ball this time.")
3. Limit warm-up strictly to 5 minutes. Frequently, young children have no idea how to warm up and need to be taught to warm up groundstrokes, volleys, and serves.
4. Employ the "retirement" rule in situations where a match has gone on too long and the children are exhausted. Under this rule, the side "retiring" gets to keep any games they have won up to that point, which the opponent is credited with the "win." Mark the scorecard "retirement", along with the score. It is permissible for both sides to jointly retire where all the children are too tired to continue to play and all agree to stop the match. In this case, both teams keep any games won to that point, but neither team is credited with the "win."
5. Encourage the children to learn how to score their matches. Have them spend some time at practice in actual game situations. Watch tennis on television or play tennis video games to learn how to keep score.
6. If a player tosses a ball to serve and then swings and misses, this is considered a service fault. A player can toss the ball, decide it is a "bad toss", and not swing. However, if he or she swings and misses, it is a fault.
- 7. Monitors or coaches may be used on the Beginner teams ONLY.**
8. If the children become confused about a score, the monitor should help them recreate the game and agree on a score.
9. A monitor must be knowledgeable regarding the rules of tennis.
10. Monitors should stop monitoring around the 4th match. Children should learn independence even though they may make mistakes.
11. If a player consistently calls balls out that are good, you may stop the match after that point and remind the players that a ball on a line or in the alley in doubles is always good. Do not single out an individual for correction-bring all players to the net and remind them as a group.
12. If the score is called wrong consistently, remind the children how to score, but do not tell them the score.
13. Remember that eye/hand coordination and tracking can be issues for children. Frequently, they do not see the ball correctly and may be making unintentionally bad calls. If both players seem satisfied that the calls are correct, then do not interject your opinion into the match.
14. If the players come to a situation where they cannot agree on the score, they must try to reconstruct the points. Encourage the children to review points played up to a time when they can agree.