

Square Games

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2017 Share the Wealth

These playground games have been around for a long time. Today's session will describe some twists to the classic 4-square that allow a teacher to introduce different skills and concepts that can be taught through simple games. Students will use these skills/tactics later in many net/wall games including tennis, badminton, Pickleball and more.

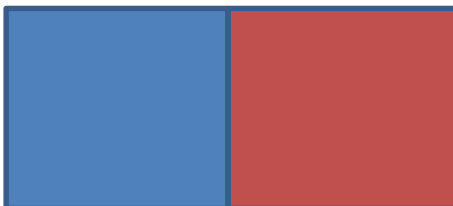
The first concept to present is sending an object away (striking) Without skills it is difficult to grasp tactics.

1. Drop ball and send accurately to partner.
 - a. Add variety with equipment.
 - b. Add variety in practice by changing levels, directions, force, one/two-handed striking, etc
 - c. Move to continuous striking when students have success with isolated skills.

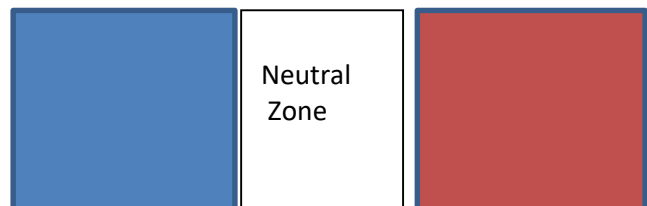
2-Square

Equipment: Squares defined by floor tape or cones. Playground balls of different sizes, and possibly large light dollar-store toy balls. Paddles, foam tennis balls, badminton racquets and shuttles.

Set-up: Set up two-square boundaries and later "speedminton" courts. Speedminton courts look like 2 rectangles separated by a "neutral zone" which eliminates the need for a net.



2-square



Speedminton

How to Play: Size of courts will be dependent on skill level of players, type of equipment, or level of challenge. Middle and high school students will appreciate the choice of establishing their own boundaries.

1. Singles
 - a. Hand striking
 - b. Paddle striking
 - c. Foot striking?
2. Doubles
 - a. Hand striking
 - b. Paddle striking
 - c. Foot striking?
 - d.

Rules: These may change based on the intent of your lesson.

1. Ball must bounce before striking.
2. Serve will always be from court 4 to court 2.
3. ALL lines are considered “out” of bounds, even the inner ones.
4. No “catch/throw”, the ball must rebound off a body part.
5. One or 2-hand strike is legal.

Tactical concepts:** This is “WHY” we practice. Solid fundamental skills open attention for tactics.

1. **Maintain a rally** – keep the ball in play using fundamental skills.
2. **Set up and attack** – move your opponent around to create space. This takes skill practice for accuracy.
3. **Defend space** – there are better and worse positions to be in on a court, and the “best” position is dynamic – changing with the position of an opponent, the placement of the ball, and the options for a hitter.

**I like to let students play for a while, then ask questions that lead to tactical concepts.

4-Square – Adding another dimension to the game

Equipment: Same

Set-up: Small and large 4-square courts for singles and doubles.

How to Play: Size of courts will be dependent on skill level of players or level of challenge.

1. Singles
2. Doubles

Modification of rules to add challenge:

1. Ball may be volleyed.
2. Ball may be “set” to partner in same square before being sent to another square.
3. Soccer skills rather than hand striking.
4. Striking downward with force to win points.