

4-Square Unit: SW will demonstrate the skills and tactical actions when playing the game of 4-square.

Planning

4-Square is a playground game played with four players in a court with four squares using a strike bounce-strike-bounce pattern. The game is excellent for teaching striking skills, offensive and defensive tactical actions and foot work. **The goal** of the game is for the player to play his/herself to the **Server's Court (Court D)**. The following are the basic rules:

- The **court** size is a maximum of 16' X 16' to a minimum of 12' X 12' divided into four even courts. The amount of space available may dictate the court size.
 - Each court is labeled with a letter, number or any other symbol that works for the individual school situation. The courts will be referred to as **A, B, C, and D**.
 - The server always servers from the **D** court.

[The purpose of underhand returns is to make the game more competitive. Overhands are too difficult for most students to return in a small playing area. It also has the potential for causing injury because of the amount of force generated by and overhand strike.]

- The **serve** is a returnable underhand strike with **both hands**.
 - The fingers must be pointing towards the floor on the serve.
 - The serve is made with an arch – *returnable serve*.
 - The serve is made to court **B**.
 - The server must step out after three to five consecutive serves. This prevents a player from dominating the game. Make this rule consistent.
- **Returning** the ball hit into a player's court **must** be made after **one** bounce.
 - The ball must be allowed to bounce one time before it can be returned.
 - The return can be made to any court.
 - The return must be made with an underhand strike.
 - A player can **step** into another player's court to return a ball but **cannot** return the ball into the court the player steps into.
 - The player must return to his/her court as quickly as possible.
 - **All** lines are out of bounds.
 - The return is an offensive play. It can be hit as hard or soft as the returning player wants. However, it must be underhand with one or two hands.

- The **rotation**:
 - A new player enters in the court **A**. The rotation is from **A**, to **B** to **C** and to **D (Server's Court)**.
 - If a player fails to return a ball legally, the player leaves the game and goes to the back of the line. Players rotate toward court "D".
- **Officiating** the game:
 - The four players playing call the game. If three players call another player out, that player is out.

[There are no do-overs! They must make a decision on the rule infraction. The game will run more smoothly if the students know they must make the call before the game can continue. If do-overs are allowed, the students will be less likely to make a decision. There may be occasions when student(s) do not call a game fairly. Teachers must address this immediately.]

- Teachers may want to try other officiating strategies. Such as,
 - ✓ The next person in line is the official
 - ✓ The players in line vote
 - ✓ Only two of the players playing have to agree on infraction.
- **4-Square** modifications:
 - **2-Square** has two players.
 - **2-Square** is effective for lower grades and lower skilled players
 - The court is a rectangle rather than a square – 4' wide 10' to 12' long.
 - **6-Square** is played with six players in a court divided into six equal squares the same size as a four square court.
- There should be one court for every three to five students.

[This allows for various skill levels to naturally evolve on their own and play with students of their own skill level. This also reduces the number of students waiting in line. Keep the line where students enter far enough back so there is no interference with play.]

Student Performance Rubric

Level Four Consistently:

- ✓ demonstrates an underhand striking patter
- ✓ demonstrates correct footwork to make offensive and defensive plays.
- ✓ demonstrates a quick return to ready position/home base
- ✓ demonstrates they can use tactical actions to gain an advantage
- ✓ demonstrates fair game play

Level Three Usually:

- ✓ demonstrates an underhand striking patter
- ✓ demonstrates correct footwork to make offensive and defensive plays.
- ✓ demonstrates a quick return to ready position/home base
- ✓ demonstrates they can use tactical actions to gain an advantage
- ✓ demonstrates fair game play

Level Two Sometimes:

- ✓ demonstrates an underhand striking patter
- ✓ demonstrates correct footwork to make offensive and defensive plays.
- ✓ demonstrates a quick return to ready position/home base
- ✓ demonstrates they can use tactical actions to gain an advantage
- ✓ demonstrates fair game play
- ✓ plays the game fairly

Level One Seldom:

- ✓ demonstrates an underhand striking patter
- ✓ demonstrates correct footwork to make offensive and defensive plays.
- ✓ demonstrates a quick return to ready position/home base
- ✓ demonstrates they can use tactical actions to gain an advantage
- ✓ demonstrates fair game play

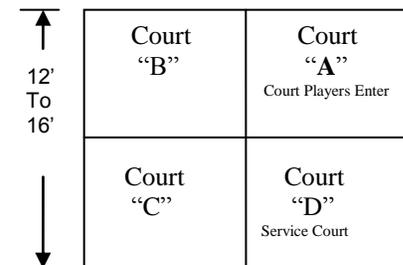
Summative Assessment

Assessment Objective: At least 70% of students will be able to play a 4-Square utilizing offensive and defensive skills and tactical actions.

Students' Expectations: Today I am going to watch you and your partners play 4-Square. (Refer to **The Game** in the planning column for game details.) I want to see how you use the skills and how you apply offensive and defensive tactical actions during game play. You will play three minutes. Get a new ball from the container and continue if the ball gets away from you. Do not start until I say **go**.

Assessment Environment: Provide enough floor space around the court so students will not have interference during play. Use the same ball students used during practice time.

Court Diagram



Assessment Scoring: Download **Motor Task Student Scoring Rubric** located on the website for assessment criteria and recording individual student scores. The assessment begins when the student drops the ball to start the game. The game can be extended or students can play another game if the teacher determines that one or more students could not be fairly scored in the first game.

4-Square Unit: SW demonstrate the skills and tactical actions when playing the game of 4-square.

Task Extension

- Can you keep the ball going against a wall in a strike bounce strike pattern using and underhand striking action?
 - Use a two hand underhand striking action.
 - Use a one hand underhand striking action.
 - Keep the body square to the ball.
 - Use side steps to stay in front of the ball.ⓐ

[The ready like position is critical for students maintain in a 4-Square. It makes it easier for the students to move to stay in position to return strikes. This is important in all practice and playing situations.]

- Can the students keep the ball going with a partner in a strike-bounce-strike-pattern?
- Serve the ball with an arc ...
 - ...to the center of the court.
 - ...deep in the court
 - ...just over the dividing line.ⓐ

[The ball must be served with two hands underhand. The serve must have an arc. The serve cannot be an attack action. Placing serve is done to help set up the next action. The server wants to make the opponent move to return serve.]

- Return serves ...
 - ...deep and fast.
 - ...deep and high.
 - ...short and low.ⓐ

[The student returning the serve wants to make play that force their opponent move to return a ball. The circle ⓐ indicates a tactical action.]

- Can you strike the ball to the back corners of the 2-square court?
- Use a lob strike
- Make a direct strike to the back corner.ⓐ
- Can you strike the ball so in lands just across the dividing line? ⓐ
- Move to return a ball hit...
 - ...to the back corners.
 - ...short and low. ⓐⓑ

[The students want to use attack shots that force their opponent to move to return a shot. They do this to either score/force their opponent to make and easy return shot. This may provide another chance to make an attack shot.]

- Can you keep the ball going in a 4-square court with four partners?
- Serve the ball with an arc to the court across from you.
- Use set up strikes to keep the rally going. ⓐ
- Use attack strikes to gain an advantage.ⓐ
- Play a game of 4-square with your partners. ⓐ

[The students are ready to play 4-Square. The skills and tactics learned in previous task extensions are used in these last five task extensions. Keeping the body square to the ball at all times is critical to play the game successfully. A tactic not addressed in the above task extensions is a fake. Teach the students how make their opponent think they are hitting the ball to one square but hit it to another.]

Task Refinements

Front The Ball

- ✓ Maintain a ready like position
- ✓ Use your feet to stay in front of the ball
- ✓ Keep the ball below the head
- ✓ Strike the ball waist high

- ✓ Serve the ball about chest high
- ✓ Stay in position to return serve
- ✓ Quick strike with passing shot
- ✓ Soft strike for lobs

- ✓ Make head high lob shots
- ✓ Make direct strikes

- ✓ Soft touch for short strikes

- ✓ Move quickly to get in position to return the ball

- ✓ Make returnable strikes
- ✓ Serve the ball about chest high

Moving To Success
 Dan Young, Consultant
 P.O. Box 141
 Gramling, SC 29348
 864-680-8471
 Dan@MovingToSuccess.com
 www.MovingToSuccess.com

Checking for Student Progress

- Motor Task Criteria:
- ✓ uses an underhand striking patten
 - ✓ demonstrates correct footwork to make offensive and defensive plays.
 - ✓ returns to ready position quickly after each play
 - ✓ demonstrates they can use tactical actions to gain an advantage
 - ✓ plays the game fairly

Task Applications

ⓐCan you keep the ball going against the wall with five consecutive underhand strikes? You must use both one and two hand striking actions. Raise your hand when you are able to do this.

ⓑCan you and your partner keep the ball going in a 2-Square like game? Use one and two underhand striking actions. Raise your hand when you are able to do this.

ⓒCan you and your partner play a 2-Square game? Raise your hand when the first person wins three games.

ⓓCan you and your partner play a 4-Square game? Raise your hand when the first person wins three games.

Cognitive

(S2) Can students identify three critical cues for striking with their hands? Students should be able to explain performance elements important to executing the following skills: Open hand, fingers pointing downward, step into the strike and able to vary the force. See additional cues in the refinement column on this page. Teachers can provide their own critical elements or the elements that they may place more emphasis on than others.

Affective

(S5) Do students demonstrate they can work cooperatively with other students to complete a task? Fourth grade is similar to third grade. The main difference is students are working in larger groups. The larger the groups, the more complex it becomes for students to work together. Continue to reinforce the following:

- listening to others
 - taking turns
 - working honestly when keeping scores
 - helping each other improve their performance
- Ask students to explain why it is important to work together. They will give a variety of reasons. The main idea that students must recognize is that *groups/teams that work together are more successful.*

Physical Activity

(S3)Can students identify changes that can be made to increase the level of physical activity in their lives? Students should first identify the kinds of physical activities they do each day. They also need to identify which are moderate and vigorous. Students can make decisions to spend more time being at least moderately active during recess. They can spend more time playing outside with family and friends. The critical idea is to get students to identify things they can do in and outside of school to increase their daily physical activity. It may be helpful for them to first identify the physical activities they are currently participating in each day. When they have done this, they will then need to identify the days of the week they need to add physical activity to their daily schedule.