

**Real Tennis - Bronze**

**Course Manual**

 

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 Course manuals for the silver and gold awards in real tennis will be published in due course.



*This manual was written by Simon Roundell and Dan Jones of Wellington College and Wellington Real Tennis Club.*

*It was sponsored by the Dedanists’ Foundation.*

**Introduction: How to use this guide**

**The Duke of Edinburgh Award**

The Duke of Edinburgh Award has three levels: Gold, Silver and Bronze. Within the Awards candidates have to perform a ‘volunteering’, a ‘physical’ and a ‘skill’ section for a period of time. If candidates join the programme directly into the Gold or Silver award without having done the Bronze first they will have to do their allocation for slightly longer than stated below:

Bronze 3 months

Silver 3 or 6 months (Candidates have to choose either the volunteering, skill or physical section to major in. If the physical section is the major then it is 6 months, if not then 3)

Gold 6 or 12 months (as above)

*The whole award is geared towards commitment and personal development, working towards personal goals rather than ever (necessarily) achieving excellence.*

**Course Material - Real Tennis, Bronze**

This guide is to help coaches deliver the real tennis Bronze Award under the physical section of the Duke of Edinburgh Award. The Silver and Gold Awards will develop the material in the Bronze Award. The Bronze course is 12 weeks long. The first 3 months of a Silver or Gold course are the same as the Bronze Course. The Progress Chart is in Appendix 4.

Set out below are lesson plans or an explanation for each element. It may be that some elements take longer (2 or 3 hours) than others. It is for the coach to decide depending on the players’ ability and pace of learning. Other elements (8, 9 & 10) are ongoing throughout the course and should be emphasised at any given opportunity. Once a coach feels that a player has attained these elements they can be ticked off on the Progress Chart. Please bear in mind throughout the course that the main objective is that by the end of 3 months players can play and enjoy the game. Actual attainment will depend upon innate ball sense, previous experience of racquet sports and amount of time dedicated to additional practice.

The main structure of each lesson is as follows:

**Starter (10 minutes)**: This purpose is to warm up the players, get them moving in the way they should on court and to familiarise them with the court layout. A coach can use many activities for the Starter and is it recommended to use at least 2. Appendix 1 provides details of some examples. Coaches may have their own or may find that particular starters are better with particular groups.

**Coaching (40 minutes)**: This is where the main instruction of the lesson takes place. Here we have used the IDEA model:

**I**ntroduce Give some context for the shot (eg how often used etc)

**D**emonstrate Shadow the shot in front of the student (both front on and side on)

**E**xplain Go through the shot systematically (as detailed in the lesson plans)

**A**ctivity Teaching the shot with students hitting (as detailed in the lesson plans)

We recommend a 5-minute water break in the middle as and when the coach feels it necessary**. We also recommend using the games suggested in Appendix 2 (Games) throughout the Activities to keep the players engaged.**

**Plenary (10 minutes)**: Players should use what they have learnt in the coaching session in a game environment. Again, many games can be used in the plenary. We recommend only using one game per session. Appendix 2 provides details of some examples. Coaches may have their own or may find that particular games are better with particular groups.

**Important**:

* **Lesson plans are working documents** and just give a guide to coaches. Coaches should tweak them as they see fit for each group and feel free to adapt activities and timings to meet the students’ needs as the lesson develops over the allotted hour.
* **Rules, the layout of the court, chases and tactics should be discussed at every opportunity** throughout the starter, activity and plenary.

**Resources**: Apart from balls and rackets, coaches will need chalk, cones and/or flat mats for creating targets. *It is worth noting that when using targets in the Activity section that 80% of beginner players will do well to get the ball over the net. Therefore, physical targets should be used as an extension for the top 20% of players and not used to set unrealistic objectives for the 80%.*

**Element 1: Introduction and Forehand**

**Starter** (10 Minutes): Coach’s choice.

**Coaching** (40 minutes with a 5 minute break for water): IDEA

**Introduce** the Forehand

**Demonstrate** the Forehand

**Explain**

* The main technique:
* Grip.
* Ready position.
* Preparation, shoulder turn- hips.
* Follow through.
* Contact point.
* Stepping in and balance.
* Understand weight of racket and bounce of ball.
* Angle and length of shot into corner.

**Activity:**

1. **Start with weight on front foot, racket back in ready position.**

1a Coach stands opposite end on second gallery and hand feeds the ball onto racket.

1b The player performs a short solid swing at target area. The ball to be solidly struck but controlled.

1c This is done until you are happy that the player understands the technique and can perform to a satisfactory level. Set targets on floor for a perfect length shot. (*Targets: Cones, flat mats etc very important to have targets. Use markings on floor and walls* *etc*). Get feedback from players and keep points simple, do not overload with too much information. Analysis by paralysis!

2. **Ready position, step in, hit and hold.**

2a Same progression and targets as above.

3 **Ready position, side step, step hit and hold, while performing**. Making sure all above coaching points are in place.

3a Same progression and targets as above.

4. **Single racket feed.**

4a Place players at the back of court Pro feeds straight shot over the net.

4b Same as above but into main wall.

4c Reinforce technical points. Start from ready position, shoulders etc.

5. **Conditioned rally**.

5a Return of serve and rally.

5b Set targets, reinforce positive points and correct one main point. Don’t overload the players!

**Plenary** (10 Minutes): Coach’s choice. Distribute a copy of Appendix 3 (Rules & Court Handout).

**Element 2: Backhand**

**Starter** (10 Minutes): Coach’s choice.

**Coaching** (40 minutes with a 5 minute break for water): IDEA

**Introduce** the Backhand

**Demonstrate** the Backhand

**Explain**

* The main technique:
* Grip.
* Ready position.
* Preparation, shoulder turn- hips.
* Follow through.
* Contact point.
* Stepping in and balance.
* Understand weight of racket and bounce of ball.
* Angle and length of shot into corner.

**Activity:**

**1. Start with weight on front foot, racket back in ready position.**

1a Coach stands opposite end on second gallery and hand feeds the ball onto racket.

1b The player performs a short solid swing at target area. The ball to be solidly struck but controlled.

1c This is done until you are happy that the player understands the technique and can perform to a satisfactory level. Set targets on floor for a perfect length shot. (*Targets: Cones, flat mats etc very important to have targets. Use markings on floor and walls* *etc*). Get feedback from pupil and keep points simple, do not overload with too much information. Analysis by paralysis!

2. **Ready position, step in, hit and hold.**

2a Same progression and targets as above.

3 **Ready position, side step, step hit and hold, while performing**. Making sure all above coaching points are in place.

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4. **Single racket feed.**

4a Place pupil at the back of court Pro feeds straight shot over the net.

4b Same as above but into main wall.

4c Reinforce technical points. Start from ready position, shoulders etc.

5. **Conditioned rally**.

5a Return of serve and rally.

5b Set targets, reinforce positive points and correct one main point. Don’t overload the player!

**Plenary** (10 Minutes): Coach’s choice.

**Element 3: Return of Serve**

**Starter** (10 Minutes): Coach’s choice.

**Coaching** (40 minutes with a 5 minute break for water): IDEA

**Introduce** the Return of Serve

**Demonstrate** the Return of Serve (NOT hitting the backwall)

**Explain**

* The angles and the line to move to the ball.
* Contact point.
* Where to stand.
* Tactics.
* Pupil should know about the basic technique from earlier lessons. Reinforce those points.

**Activity:**

1. Roll ball off side penthouse to understand movement / contact point and hit targets (one shot each – then introduce targets, last person standing etc).

1a. Roll ball off back penthouse (and then as above).

1b. Mix side and back penthouse rolls.

**Demonstrate** the Return of Serve (hitting the backwall)

**Explain**

* Loading weight on back leg.
* Side stepping to commit weight to front foot.

**Activity**:

2 Throw feed straight onto the backwall to understand movement / contact point (one shot each – then introduce targets, last person standing etc).

2a. Throw feed angled onto the side wall and then the backwall (then as above).

2b. Throw feed onto the floor and then the backwall (then as above).

2c. Mix all 3 backwall feeds with targets etc.

3 Coach to serve from service end a mix of side wall/back penthouse/ sidewall backwall serves.

**Plenary** (10 Minutes): Coach’s choice (Recommended: Coach serves at the beginning of each point and then moves to the back of the court).

**Element 4 Serving & Service Rules**

**Starter** (10 Minutes): Coach’s choice.

**Coaching** (40 minutes with a 5 minute break for water): IDEA

**Introduce** the Serve (and basic rules of the Serve)

**Demonstrate** the Serves: Bobble, Sidewall, Underarm Twist, Pique & Railroad (It is recommended to do one serve with the activity before moving onto the next serve)

**Explain for each Serve**

* The angles and the line the ball should follow.
* Contact point.
* Where to stand.
* Grip.
* Tactical advantage of that particular Serve and reinforce Service rules.

**Activity:**

1. For each serve use targets on the roof, wall and floor (eg for the bobble use the basket as a target). 3 or 4 goes each.

1a. Players to hit a serve and then feed a ball off the back penthouse for them to hit into the grill, winning gallery etc.

**Activity Extension: Serve and Return**

* Players into groups at either end (at hazard end under the grille so safe, service group in the backhand area against the dedans so safe).
* One serve, one return. One point for the serve, 2 for a return – first group to 11 points and then switch ends.

**Plenary** (10 Minutes): Coach’s choice.

**Element 5: Playing off the back & side walls**

**Starter** (10 Minutes): Coach’s choice.

**Coaching** (40 minutes with a 5 minute break for water): IDEA

**Introduce** the Backwall Floor shot (2 types: floor backwall and backwall floor)

**Demonstrate** the Backwall Floor shot

**Explain**

* Grip is more open to come down the back of the ball to cut and control the ball.
* Steeper down swing onto ball.
* Movement. Go back with the ball and then push weight onto front foot when making contact. Side step/ heel to heel step to keep body movement in time and pace with ball movement.
* Balance /hold and correct foot forward.
* Contact point.
* Back swing and follow through.
* Explain the path of the ball and how to move parallel to the ball. Push forward into a side step to keep pace with ball.

**Activity:**

1. Hazard End- Roll ball off back penthouse for player to side step and hit. Concentrating on the movement. Balance and contact point. Emphases on correct movement! Mirror movement required with lesson to reinforce the movement required.
2. Straight throw into back wall.
3. You stand by the winning gallery and throw the ball sidewall back wall to represent the side wall serve. Set targets at the service end, forehand corner.
4. Racket feed a straight back wall floor shot.
5. Serve the ball in to represent the same shot as the feed. (i.e side wall serve onto back wall.)
6. Serve back wall floor shot, leading to rally.

**Introduce** the Floor Backwall shot

**Demonstrate** the Floor Backwall shot

**Explain**

* Explain the path of the ball and how to move parallel to the ball. Stepping back to load the right leg to push forward into a side step to keep pace with ball.
* Grip is more open to come down the back of the ball to cut and control the ball.
* Steeper swing required.
* Movement. Side step to keep body movement in time and pace with ball movement.
* Balance, hold and correct foot forward. Correct place to stand.
* Explain the difference between the two shots and how you move with the ball and hit the ball on the descent to ensure clean contact and time on ball.
* Contact point.
* Back swing and follow through.

**Activity:**

1. Pat feed or throw feed the floor backwall feed.
2. Straight floor back wall feed from opposite end. Set floor targets.
3. **Sidewall**: Main wall floor back wall feed. Works best with pupil at service end. Set targets.
4. Racket feed and rally straight angle first then mainwall back wall.
5. Return of serve with floor back wall feed, leading to rally.

**Plenary** (10 Minutes): Coach’s choice.

**Element 6: Volleying**

**Starter** (10 Minutes): Coach’s choice.

**Coaching** (40 minutes with a 5 minute break for water): IDEA

**Introduce** the Volley

**Demonstrate** the Volley

**Explain**

* The main technique:
* Grip.
* Ready position.
* Contact point.
* Stepping in and balance.
* Short backswing and follow through.

**Activity:**

**1. Start in ready position. Forehand Volley**

1a Coach stands Hazard end on second gallery and hand feeds the ball onto racket. Player stands at the service end second gallery.

1b The player performs a short solid swing at target area. The ball to be solidly struck but controlled.

1c This is done until you are happy that the player understands the technique and can perform to a satisfactory level. Set targets on floor for a perfect length shot. (*Targets: Cones, flat mats etc very important to have targets. Use markings on floor and walls* *etc*). Get feedback from pupil and keep points simple, do not overload with too much information. Analysis by paralysis!

2. **Ready position, step in, hit and hold.**

2a Same progression and targets as above. Move the starting position towards the dedans.

2b Continue to move the student back through the chases until they are defending the dedans.

3 Repeat Activity 1 & 2 on the backhand.

4 Repeat activity 1 & 2 with a mix of forehand and backhand volleys.

5. **Conditioned rally**.

5a Return of serve and rally.

5b Set targets, reinforce positive points and correct one main point.

**Plenary** (10 Minutes): Coach’s choice.

**Element 7: Playing to and off the tambour**

**Starter** (10 Minutes): Coach’s choice.

**Coaching** (40 minutes with a 5 minute break for water): IDEA

**Introduce** playing off the tambour

**Demonstrate** playing off the tambour (group players by grille and feed throw off the main wall to demonstrate)

**Explain**

* The main technique:
* Grip.
* Ready position.
* Court position.
* Contact point.
* Stepping in and balance.
* Target area cross-court.

**Activity**

1 Coach to feed throw onto the tambour from Hazard second gallery. Players to hit/chop cross-court. Set targets (galleries/cones/chases).

2 Coach moves to service end (stands at chase door/second gallery). Players not hitting stand at the back wall behind the winning gallery. Racket feed into tambour and players hit cross-court (set targets as above).

3 As above but racket feed into side wall then tambour.

**Extension Activity**

 2 shot progression: Racket feed into tambour then racket feed onto the backwall by the grille for cross-court shot. Set targets as above.

**Plenary** (10 Minutes): Conditioned Game with double points for hitting the tambour and triple points for playing off the tambour.

**Element 8: Scoring a match**

This element is not so much a lesson as an ongoing process. The Rules should be explained throughout the course. During conditioned games students should start to mark on court as they play. Players should also be given the opportunity to mark from the dedans.

It is expected that some players will pick this element up quickly and others will take a little longer. However, by the end of the 3 months, it is expected that all players can mark a match with only a modicum of assistance.

**Element 9: Playing a match**

This element again runs throughout the whole course. The course is designed to work towards this point when players can play a full set. Coaches may want to use a full hour to rotate the players and have some marking to complete both Element 8 and 9.

**Element 10: Match play tactics**

This element also runs throughout the course. As players go through the different elements explanation and repetition of tactics should be ongoing.

The three main basic tactics for beginners are:

1. Dominate the service end

2. When receiving to play for chases

3. Look for killer angles into the corners when playing forehand and backhand shots

**Element 11: Doubles tactics**

Doubles tactics is important. This can be done throughout the course or as a stand-alone lesson.

**Starter** (10 Minutes): Coach’s choice.

**Coaching** (30 minutes with a 5 minute break for water): IDEA

**Introduce** the rules, tactics and court positions for doubles.

**Demonstrate** the court positioning and service rules by showing them on the court.

**Explain**

* **Safety – Beginners should play from the back and not defend chases**

**Activity**

1 Doubles game: alternate server and receiver every point. Coach to stay on court to explain rules and court positioning and safety.

**Plenary** (20 Minutes): Play a full 1 set game.

**Element 12: Playing in a tournament**

There are a host of different tournaments for Duke of Edinburgh participants to enter. Coaches can set up a tournament within the group or players can enter handicap tournaments at the club.

There is also the option for players to enter national tournaments. Below is a suitable list:

2018

Sat & Sun 24th & 25th November. LRTA U21’s Handicap. Radley College. **GIRLS ONLY**.

Sat & Sun 15th & 16th December. British U18s Singles Handicap. Wellington College. **BOYS & GIRLS**.

2019

Sun 24th February. Inter Schools Handicap Doubles. Hardwick, Oratory & Radley. **BOYS & GIRLS**.

**Appendix 1: Starters**

**Race to the Chase**

Using the chases at the Service end: Line the players at the net and call out a chase. First there wins. As players become more familiar with chases as the course develops introduce better than and worse than chases.

**Run the Lengths**

This is a simple egg and spoon race (ball and racket) from the net to the dedans. Can be mixed with race to the chase (above).

**Side step split drill**

Players face each other in pairs a yard and a half apart with one ball. Then perform 2 side steps and a split step and then pass the ball between them. Coaches can introduce using different hands, both hands, bounce etc. The idea is to get them moving as they would on court.

**Appendix 2: Games**

**Super 7s**

* This is a fun game where the pupil has 7 shots and has to beat 7 chases: Door,2nd, last, 6, 4,2, 1. Who is in the Super 7 club?

**Number Game**

* Players are given a number (1 – 6)
* Call out a number and players have to hit the ball in
* 3 lives per person

**Beat the Coach**

* Rally with the coach.
* Important that the non-hitting players are in a safe position

**Last person stands**

* Rally until a player misses a shot. They are then out. Last player still in wins.

**Jail Break**

* Have to hit 6 shots over to stay out of jail
* If they miss then they go to jail and the next person comes in.
* If they get 6 over then they free the pupil from jail.

**Conditioned games**

A conditioned game is adapting the normal rules to emphasise the skill being learnt for a particular element. If a skill is completed in a game the point can be won outright or it instigates an end change or it is worth double points. Coaches should play around with the structure of the scoring system to suit their needs and those of the students.

**Appendix 3: The court and the game of real tennis**

This is a technical and detailed description of the game. Players may refer to it at any time but will need the help of the coaching programme to understand it fully.



The court is divided by the net into two sides. The side from which the game is normally viewed by spectators through the dedans is called the service side. The other is the hazard side. The serve is always delivered from the service side; and the ball is struck to bounce at least once on the hazard side of the penthouse roof and then on the floor within the service court.

Points are won or lost when errors are made (e.g. by hitting the ball into the net or out of the court). They may also be won by striking the ball into the winning openings (i.e. the dedans, grille or winning gallery) or so that it bounces on the floor for the second time between the service line and the end wall at the hazard end. If a ball bounces twice anywhere else on the court or enters any other gallery before a player touches it, a chase is set (said to be laid).

Scoring in Real Tennis is the same as that adopted by lawn tennis (viz 15, 30, 40, deuce, advantage, game;) except in Real Tennis the score of the winner of the point is always called first. The first player to six games wins the set.

When a chase is laid the score does not change, that chase is noted and held in abeyance until the chase is played off. When two chases have been laid, or if there is one chase outstanding and the score is at game point (e.g. one player is at 40 or advantage), the players change ends.

After changing ends, the chase or chases are played off in the order in which they were laid. When chases are played off, the receiving player (or server in the case of a hazard chase) must hit his/her shots so that their second bounce is closer to the back wall than the chase being played. For example if the chase is 6-yards, he/she must play to 5,4,3,2 or 1 yard on the second bounce in order to win the chase and the point. If the ball falls short of 6 yards on the second bounce the chase is said to be lost and the server wins the point.

The lines on the floor are positioned to mark the floor equivalents of gallery chases and to measure the length of the other floor chases in yards from the back wall (e.g. if the second bounce was on the 6-yard line, then chase 6 has been laid). Chases that occur at the hazard end are called hazard chases.

The terms one and two, two and three etc. denote that the ball has landed on its second bounce equidistant between the two chase lines. The terms ‘better than’ and ‘worse than’ are used to give more precision to marking chases (e.g. ‘better than 4 yards’ denotes that the ball has landed on its second bounce nearer to the dedans back wall than the 4 yard line. ‘Worse than 5 yards’ denotes that the ball has landed on its second bounce further up the court than the five yard line).

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name | 1: Forehand | 2: Backhand | 3: Returning Serve | 4: Serve | 5: Back & Side walls | 6: Volley | 7: Tambour | 8: Scoring | 9: Match play | 10: Tactics | 11: Doubles Tactics | 12: Tournament |
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**Duke of Edinburgh Real Tennis Bronze Award**