

CUSTOM TENNIS DRILL MANUAL

Split Step Coach



The **Split Step Coach (SSC)** can be used with an infinite number of 'Patterns of Play' which means that a coach is not limited to those shown below. The 'Patterns of Play' are shown as Variations of the particular drill and have been configured so that the coach and player can quickly get into a training program. The following drills do not represent all the variations that can be incorporated into the different CUSTOM Tennis drills; the coach should be able to take these 'Patterns of Play' and modify them to fit the particular player or situation that the coach wants to emphasize and only the SSC timings will dictate the limits on the variations. The 8 different SSC drills (shown in **RED**) are made up of various combinations of shots and the drills can be used when training players for the Return of Serve, Serving, Ground Strokes, Transitions, and Net Play. Level 3 shots have been calibrated with actual data taken from professional tennis players and the other Levels have been adjusted to allow coaches to teach all levels of players.

The CUSTOM SSC Drills have 3 LEVELS of difficulty and each Level is progressively more difficult:

Level 1 Drills (slower tempo within & between shots) i.e. the 'move to ball' time and the 'recovery' time

- Use the RED LED Split Step lights
- Use the top and bottom YELLOW LEDs
- Use the right and left YELLOW LEDs in a linear fashion

Level 2 Drills (faster tempo within & between shots)

- Use the RED LED Split Step lights
- Use the top and bottom YELLOW LEDs
- Use the right & left YELLOW LEDs in a linear fashion

Level 3 Drills (fastest tempo within & between shots)

- Use the RED LED Split Step lights
- Use the top and bottom YELLOW LEDs
- Use the right, left or none of the YELLOW LEDs in a RANDOM fashion
- Use combinations of YELLOW LEDs to simulate different locations of opponent's ball

1. Drill #1 (RS,GS,GS,GS,GS,GS,GS,GS,GS)

The player is executing these 9 shots and the Split Step Coach (SSC) or 'opponent' is providing the Serve for the player to perform a Return of Serve (RS) and 8 Ground Stroke (GS) balls. The Yellow LEDs will alternate to indicate the direction of the incoming ball, in what we call a linear fashion (i.e. left then right then left etc).

- a. Variation #1 - Have the player concentrate on the timing for the split step and not go thru the swing motion. The coach/student can judge the HOP with the beep from SSC without looking at the LEDs.
- b. Variation #2 - Then have the player concentrate on landing on one or the other foot and then move several feet to each side, alternate sides. Feedback to player can help with the timing, being sure to land on one foot and driving from that foot as the leading leg begins to load for when it touches the ground and becomes the driving force.
- c. Variation #3 - Now begin the process of adding the swing of the racket moving in only one direction and later adding both directions (i.e. start with forehands then go to backhands after say 10 swings). Feedback to player can now include finding the proper hitting position and the timing contact of the imaginary ball. The coach/student can judge the HIT (contact point of the swing) with the beep from SSC and thus provide feedback.
- d. Variation #4 - At this point in the learning process, the Level 1 player will have been exposed to: 1) Timing the HOP, 2) Landing on 1 foot, 3) Moving in either direction from that 1 footed landing, 4) Learning how long it takes to prepare for the HIT and 5) how long it takes for the racket swing to contact. Smoothness in movement may still require more training; a feeling of 'being in the ZONE' or 'dancing' around the court seems to occur when the SSC & human bond finally occur.

- e. Variation #5 - Once variations '1 thru 4' skills have been introduced the coach might introduce the concept of moving into the court, as in a short ball, and then having the player 'center up' back at the baseline for the next shot.
- f. Variation #6 - We can now add a run around the BackHand (BH) to hit a ForeHand (FH) Ground Stroke (GS) and may want to add a run around the FH to hit a BH GS (if for no other reason than to improve footwork).
- g. Variation #7 - We could hit 2 baseline shots followed by a short GS run around the BH to hit a FH.
- h. Variation #8 - Service motions can be integrated with all drills whenever the coach presses and holds the Remote Push Button (RPB); the SSC will go into an 'Armed Mode' and flash the 4 Yellow LEDs in a continuous mode. As the player starts his service motion (with a racket and real ball) the coach will release the RPB button when the player's racket gets to the contact point in the serve motion. The drill will then begin with timing that is comparable to having an opponent return the served ball.
- i. Variation #9 - We could have a contest with the players and see who could traverse the most distance to the left of right and still perform the HOP and HIT properly (the coach could be the judge).
- j. Variations #10 - The coach can now construct more complex 'patterns of play' that dictate hitting the imaginary balls to certain zones on the opponents side of the court; movements after the hit can be indicated based on the coaches desires for the particular 'pattern of play' they are wanting to teach. Many patterns of play are possible, but the fundamentals of the variations should be monitored for 'perfect' execution.

- k. Here are some example 'patterns of play' for Drill #1.
1. This Ground Stroke (GS) 'pattern of play' might be used against an opponent with a weak BackHand (BH): Hit the Return of Serve (RS) and all 8 Ground Strokes (GS) to the BackHand (BH) side of your opponent using a Flat Drive (FD)
 - a. repeat the drill using Top Spin (TS)
 - b. repeat the drill using Under Spin (US)
 - c. repeat the drill using Side Spin(s) (SS)
 - d. repeat the drill alternating between the 3 types of spin (FD,TS,S)
 - e. repeat the drill using an Open Stance (OS)
 - f. repeat the drill using an Semi Open Stance (SOS)
 - g. repeat the drill using an Square Stance (SS)
 - h. repeat the drill using an Closed Stance (CS)
 - i. repeat the drill using alternating among the 4 stances OS,SOS,SS,CS
 - j. repeat the drill using a mix of spins and stances and discuss with your coach which shot/stance might be used in various circumstances
 - k. repeat the drill assuming your opponent hits a Short Ball (SB) then a Deep Ball (DB) or some combination, for example 1 SB and 2 DB
 2. This GS 'pattern of play' might be used against a player with an erratic FH: Hit the RS to FH and the remaining 8 GS to the FH using a Flat Drive (FD).
 - a. repeat the drill steps 'a' thru 'k' shown above

3. This GS pattern of play might be used against a player who runs around their BH: Hit the RS to the BH, assume a weak response & hit wide to the FH, hit a 2nd ball back to the FH side then hit to the BH, repeat the pattern using a Flat Drive (FD).
 - a. repeat the drill steps 'a' thru 'k' shown above

2. Drill #2 (RS, AS, V, V, V, V, V, V)

The player is executing these shots and the Split Step Coach (SSC) or opponent is providing a Return of Serve (RS), Approach Shot (AP) and Volleys (V) with alternating the direction of the incoming ball in what we call a linear fashion (left, right, left, right, etc). The skills of Drill #1 will be assumed for these variations, but new skills required for the AS and V will be emphasized in the first few starting variations before we get into Patterns of Play.

- a. Variation #1 - The Drill involves an AS which allows a transition after the RS where-in the player moves from the baseline to an area around the service line. The coach should watch for the proper HOP on the RS and then make sure the player does not move toward the net until after the 2nd HOP when the lower YELLOW LED turns ON indicating to the player that they are to move in and execute an Approach Shot.
- b. Variation #2 - Once the player begins to move towards the net for the short ball (i.e. AS) the coach should watch for the proper footwork and timing of the HIT. This may be difficult for the beginner to time and move thru the HIT with the proper footwork and timing. SSC will automatically vary the 'depth' of the AS by changing the time for the vertical RED LEDs to sequence upward, which in turn forces the player to HIT at different depths from the net.

- c. Variation #3 - As the player moves into the court they must 'center' for the opponent's next shot, which is dependent on where the player hits their AS. They must also prepare by loading their legs, and then time the HOP to be ready to execute a Volley (V). The speed of the DOWN and UP sequence for Volleys will be shorter (as in real match play) than for GS because the player is closer to the net. The coach should verify that the HOP and HIT for the Volley are properly executed.
- d. Variation #4 - At this point in the learning process the Level 1 player will have been exposed to these new movements 1) Moving forward for an approach shot, 2) preparing for the Volley shot, 3) executing a properly hit Volley.
- e. Variation #5 - Service motions can be integrated with all drills whenever the coach presses and holds the Remote Push Button (RPB); the SSC will go into an 'Armed Mode' and flash the 4 Yellow LEDs in a continuous mode. As the player starts his service motion (with a racket and real/imaginary ball) the coach will release the RPB button when the player's racket gets to the contact point in the serve motion. The drill will then begin with timing that is comparable to having an opponent return the served ball.
- f. Variation #6 - We could have a contest with the players and see who could move the greatest distance during the 'lead in' time for the AS and the greatest distance after hitting the AS, BUT still performing properly timed HOP and HIT (the coach could be the judge).
- g. Variation #7 - The coach can now construct more complex 'patterns of play' that dictate hitting the imaginary balls to certain zones on the opponents side of the court; movements after the hit can be indicated based on the coaches desires for the particular 'pattern of play' they are wanting to teach. Many patterns of play are possible, but the fundamentals of the variations should be monitored for 'perfect' execution. Here are some example 'patterns of play' for Drill #2.

1. This 'pattern of play' might be used in doubles: Hit the Return of Serve (RS) crosscourt and wait for a short ball, approach still hitting all balls crosscourt, then begin the Volleys hitting one ball down the middle and the next to the side line 'T' using a Flat Drive (FD) on all shots.
 - a. repeat the drill using Top Spin (TS) on the RS, AS, V
 - b. repeat the drill using Under Spin (US) on the RS, AS, V
 - c. repeat the drill using Side Spin(s) (SS) on AS
 - d. repeat the drill alternating between the 3 types of spin (FD,TS,S)
 - e. repeat the drill using an Open Stance (OS) on RS
 - f. repeat the drill using an Semi Open Stance (SOS) on RS
 - g. repeat the drill using an Square Stance (SS) on RS
 - h. repeat the drill using an Closed Stance (CS) on V
 - i. repeat the drill using alternating among the 4 stances OS,SOS,SS,CS on RS
 - j. repeat the drill using a mix of spins and stances and discuss with your coach which shot/stance might be used in various circumstances
2. This 'pattern of play' could start with a LOB off the RS: Hit the RS over the head of the net person and move into the court and Volley the 2nd imaginary ball to the open court, then alternate Volleys crosscourt by hitting down the middle and then to the sideline 'T'.
 - a. repeat the drill steps 'a' thru 'j' shown above
3. This 'pattern of play' could start with a player serving a ball (coach would arm the SSC and then release at contact of ball) and your partner doing a 'poach' on the opponent's RS. The server could then come into the court and cover the next shot from the opponents.

Players could let SSC determine which of the two players would take the next balls; for instance if the Yellow LED on the left came ON then the player in the ADD court would take the Volley and visa versa.

- a. repeat the drill steps 'a' thru 'j' shown above

Drill # 3 (RS,AS,V,V, V,V, OH,OH,OH, OH)

- ii. Variation #1 -
- iii. Variation #2 -
- iv. Variation #3 -
- v. Variation #4 -
- vi. Variation #5 -

3. Drill #4 (RS,GS,GS,GS,AS,V,V)

- i. Variation #1 -
- ii. Variation #2 -
- iii. Variation #3 -
- iv. Variation #4 -
- v. Variation #5 -

4. Drill #5 (RS,GS,AS,V,V,OH)

- i. Variation #1 -
- ii. Variation #2 -
- iii. Variation #3 -
- iv. Variation #4 -
- v. Variation #5 -

5. Drill #6 (RS,GS,GS,GS,DS,V,V,V,OH)

- i. Variation #1 -
- ii. Variation #2 -
- iii. Variation #3 -
- iv. Variation #4 -
- v. Variation #5 -

6. Drill #7 (RS,GS,AS,V,V,OH,OH)

- i. Variation #1 -
- ii. Variation #2 -
- iii. Variation #3 -
- iv. Variation #4 -
- v. Variation #5 -

7. Drill #8 (RS,AS,V,V,OH, OH, V, V)

- i. Variation #1 -
- ii. Variation #2 -
- iii. Variation #3 -
- iv. Variation #4 -
- v. Variation #5 -