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Excerpt ...

**INTRODUCTION TO RACQUETBALL 101
Teaching Guide Week #1
SAFETY!**

INSTRUCTOR REQUIREMENTS PRE-CLINIC

Full understanding of:

- 1) The course outline and the teaching methods to be used.
- 2) The retention materials and their role in reinforcing the lectures, demonstrations, and actual play simulation included in this clinic.
- 3) Passing a pre-clinic exam by the author or his representative

Author's note:

If you want to be a fine instructor start by remembering what it's like to be in your student's shoes, clinic session after session or lesson after lesson. In regard to beginners, can you remember the first day you entered a court? Your pupils are placing themselves and their trust in you. You are about to share with them in a new adventure. If you realize the impact of their trust, and accept the responsibility your faculty has placed on you to educate and train these new players, you're on your way to success. If you are well prepared for each class and remember how new what you are teaching is to your pupils, this sensitivity will add to your potential for success. Understanding the importance of your role and teaching accordingly becomes the key to success, and you will be well on your way to being a truly "PROfessional" racquetball instructor.

A simple fact and a reminder:

This clinic is easy to give and, if done well, its specific goals will be attained.

The Goals:

First and foremost the graduates of this class will be safe players. Players who know how to avoid injury, and can help others avoid it as well.

Secondly, your goal is to produce students who are well versed in the terminology of the game, and who are capable of playing complete games following the solid basics of play that you are going to teach them.

My goal in writing this guide was to make it as easy as possible for you to give a developmental program of the highest caliber. A program that should be followed in whole. If you do so the success it has proven will add to your success. Use pieces and parts of it and it will follow that you will only receive pieces and parts of its proven success.

**INTRODUCTION TO RACQUETBALL 101
Student Retention Material Week #1
SAFETY FIRST!**

Welcome to the exciting and action-packed world of racquetball! Whether you're only planning to take this first six weeks of racquetball instruction, or plan to continue on into Introduction to Racquetball 102 and 103, the first six lessons will give you a complete working knowledge of the game of racquetball.

SAFETY (IN RACQUETBALL) IS PRIORITY ONE!

While racquetball is a great deal of fun to play, as in all active sports, elements of danger exist. However, if you follow the safety procedures taught in this first lesson, you'll be able to maximize your enjoyment while reducing any danger to near zero. This leads us to the simple concept of remembering that...

YOUR BODY IS NUMBER ONE!

Because racquetball is a high speed sport, you won't be able to count on your opponents to keep you safe while you play, only you can keep yourself safe. Luckily this isn't difficult to do, and I've written these retention materials to provide you with an additional tool with which to enhance and reinforce that which you'll be learning in class.

There are two types of safety in racquetball ...

- PASSIVE SAFETY -
- and
- ACTIVE SAFETY -

Passive safety pertains to those procedures to follow in preparing to play, and active safety to those once play begins.

- PASSIVE SAFETY -

L THE COURT DOOR: A racquetball court door is very heavy and is hung on special hinges which guarantee that it fits tightly when it closes. I doubt that anyone would want to be struck by a court door! Avoiding this is quite easy, as a matter of fact, as easy as learning A-B-C...

- A) If you approach a court, **and the door is open, NEVER** walk right into the court! Take a moment to make sure that you're not going to collide with a player who might be about to exit the court, or is just closing the door.

HINT: It's best to use the door handle and carefully open the door all the way before you enter any court.

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Excerpt from page 11 of 16 from the teaching guide for the first week of ITR101 ... Active Safety is being taught in simple to follow steps ...

Now it's the pupil's turn. As he steps forward into the service box, make any gross adjustments to the way he is holding his racquet. Explain that in the next class session he will learn correct swing but that now safety is PRIORITY ONE! As he steps forward to prepare to hit the first ball, you should move to back court and range yourself correctly to the back wall to intercept his shot (see Teaching Guide for Week #5.) From back court, you can observe his motion, and correct any mistakes he may make. It is time to have him start sideways and step forward to hit the ball after it bounces once on the floor. He should then face the front wall while watching the ball ALL the way into your hand. **YOU AREN'T GOING TO HIT THE BALL, OR EVEN START A SWING IN STEP ONE**, so be sure that he keeps his shoulders square to the front wall and follows the ball with the center of his field of vision until he can't turn his neck further. He should then follow the ball into your hand glancing out of the corner of his eyes. Because you aren't going to hit the ball, don't have him look back at the front wall, be sure he follows the ball correctly. Remember, a student is very leery of following the ball behind himself. Stress that you only going to catch the ball during the first three steps. In this nonthreatening manner, he will grow confident in being able to judge how to follow the ball properly. Point out that because you are not going to swing that he should watch the ball all the way into your hand, never turning his head away. The most common errors at this stage in the process are:

- A) Forgetting To Turn Sideways After Hitting The Ball: When students make this error, you should remember that this game is very new to them. Even if they repeat the error, help ease them "over the hump." "Rome wasn't built in a day" and many of your students may be slow to remember this crucial first point. No matter how many times it takes, have a student repeat their step one before you allow them to proceed.
- B) Stepping Through The Shot With The Trailing Foot: This error **MUST** be stopped NOW! If necessary, walk forward and demonstrate the actual footwork, and have the student practice this with you and alone **BEFORE** he hits another ball. Show that this step can compromise balance AND takes them away from Center Court!
- C) Pulling Back (rotating to face forward) **BEFORE THE SWING STARTS OR DURING THE SWING**: Tell your student that he is on offense all the time until the ball disappears off of his racquet. Tell him that if he is too worried about where he has to move to after hitting the ball (defense) that he allows this to interfere with his control over the ball, which limits his offense. You can point out that even recreational players like to have more than one or two shots in a rally. If a player limits his offense, he defeats the purpose of his recreation, a fun workout! Players with competitive goals will readily acknowledge the fact that they don't want to limit their own offense.
- D) Watching the Ball Improperly:
- 1) If a student forgets to watch the ball: Ask them if they remembered that you aren't going to hit the ball. Then ask them if they know that you aren't going to hit it, that they can't be hurt by it! Have them repeat the procedure until they watch the ball into your hand correctly.

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INTRODUCTION TO RACQUETBALL 101 Student Retention Material Week #2 RULES, PROTOCOL & SWING

I. The Rules:

Luckily, the rules of play are quite simple; however, trying to remember them as a beginner can be a challenge during actual play. Therefore, as you learn the rules, keep yourself safe by remembering that:

BEGINNERS ARE GOING TO MAKE MISTAKES!

Peripheral Awareness Revisited (for just a minute!)

I've seen beginners lose track of whose turn it is to hit the ball, forget what the score is, and make a myriad of other mistakes. These mistakes can cause as little as a bit of embarrassment or result in serious injury. Luckily, having learned proper court safety in the first class, you know how to avoid danger by following the rule of Peripheral Awareness.

Back to the Rules ...

The process of learning to apply the rules of the game while maintaining court safety takes time. The best way to accomplish this is by playing games. And, the more you play, the more fun you'll have. Communicating with your opponents, from your phone calls to arrange games, to the actual trials and tribulations of learning, is very important. By talking with your classmates and other players, you can turn your own learning into a sharing experience. Also, please don't forget my warning, that if you invite someone to play, and they are unable to slow the pace to a speed at which you feel safe, that you excuse yourself from the court. If this happens comes and see me and tell me what happened. I'll do everything in my power to match you up with other players with whom you'll feel more comfortable.

II. Protocol:

During class, I gave you a series of tips in regard to what to say and how to act during a game. Remember not only to be careful while playing, but also to be courteous. Friendly players help their opponents to learn the rules, and therefore, friendly players enjoy a greater variety of players with whom to play.

Example: Calling a serve good or bad is a great deal easier for the server than for the returner of serve. So, if you're serving, help make the calls during play! (Not only will this help your opponents to learn how to judge service faults, but you'll also be keeping yourself safer.)

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Excerpt from page 4 of 14 from the teaching guide for the second week of ITR101 ... The discussion of "Score Pressure" ends here and you start explaining the game...

Certainly, it's hard enough to try to get to the ball, and to do all the things necessary to hit it correctly without having to be concerned about the SCORE. You can help your beginners to be at ease while playing so that they'll enjoy their new sport more and want to continue to learn if you help them to defeat those mental switches players tend to throw when the SCORE is suddenly so important. Keep in mind the majority of beginners everywhere in the world today aren't ever going to become as fine a player as you are, so remember to help them have fun while they play, by starting now to shed the negative effect of tension or pressure that may ruin their chances of fully enjoying racquetball.

Note: I often point out that the score can only indicate one of two things:

- 1) they're getting better
- 2) they're not improving as fast as another player

Kid them ... How could you possibly get worse?

Remind them that they have control over that which the score will foretell, and that there is no way to keep it from indicating one of these two. Beginners often feel that every day is an "OFF DAY." But with your encouragement they'll be playing and practicing enough to increase their court knowledge. Convince them that as long as they practice and play, they can only improve! If they are playing the same day after day, they will know that they need to practice more, and if they are getting better, they can rejoice and play and practice even more! They can easily be caught up in the wonder of feeling themselves improving, and there's nothing wrong with that!

IMPORTANT WHILE TEACHING THE NEXT SECTION:

Remember to carefully watch the expressions on your students faces as you speak. If there are any puzzled looks, be sure to clarify any rule you are discussing. You may assume that many of your students aren't going to expose the reasons for their puzzlement without your prompting. Looks of puzzlement can be caused by many reasons, there can be problems as simple as your voice not carrying well within the walls of the court, or external noises filtering into your teaching court making it hard for your words to be heard. Problems can also surface involving their misinterpretation or comprehension of the meaning of your terminology. Be sure to take the time and make sure that your students are understanding you. You are the key to their understanding all the things that will become the foundation of their game.

THE RULES OF THE GAME

NOTE:

The following demonstration should flow smoothly section to section. Please take the time to practice your delivery so that you are a professional. Your visual representation of the rules with ease and confidence will enhance your student's comprehension. I suggest that you practice your "speech" on an old student, staff member, or a fellow instructor several times before going in front of a "live" audience. Remember how well you present this material is VERY important! Your presentation should not only inform, but als ...

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Page 2 of Student Retention Material for week #3

learning to judge distances and intercepts! If you practice letting the ball go past you and let it reflect off of the back wall before you hit it, you'll become better at moving to and hitting a "back wall ball" during actual play!

HINT: You can improve even faster if after your solo drill if you practice with another student. One player should be working on hitting the ball properly after a back wall contact, and the other can learn which shots are going to reflect off of the back wall. After a while, you can become quite good at playing either role. Repetition is the key to learning to use the back wall to your advantage.

WARNING!

There is a shot which is becoming **alarmingly more popular** among racquetball players. This dangerous shot is the one in which a ball is hit towards the back wall in order to get it back to the front wall. Typically, two types of players use this shot: Advanced players who have good reason to use this shot, and ill-informed players who use it without a good reason. Luckily, you've been shown and told why not to hit a ball in this direction. You know that if you miss-hit this shot that there is no time in to avoid the ball if it flies back at your body. (Remember, if you hit a ball this way, you could suffer permanent body injuries!)

Note: If you see an advanced player using this shot, you'll notice that it is only used as a "last ditch" effort to get a ball into play. It is a shot which is usually hit reflexively, and one that is rarely hit with a great degree of accuracy (except by the elite of the game the pros). As a matter of fact, given any other option, any advanced player (even a pro) would much prefer to hit a ball towards the front wall ... not into the back wall.

CONCLUSION:

The proper use of the back wall is very important in racquetball, which is why an entire class was devoted to not just learning to use it, but understanding how to use it to your advantage! As a matter of fact, if I were watching any two players warm up for a match, and if I was a betting person, I'd bet that the player who practices using the back wall correctly when he's warming up, will use it more effectively in play. Therefore, I'd put my money on this player as the one to win the match.

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Excerpt from page 9 of 16 from the teaching guide for the third week of ITR101 ... the backwall covered in detail this week ...

the ball." This is only the first step in the four step process of getting your pupils in "rhythm" with the ball's motion to optimize their ability to play the ball off of the back wall.

STEP TWO:

Starting with the student who went first in the last section, instruct him to stand in the center of the rear half of the court. Explain that he should be standing sideways facing his forehand wall with his racquet up and ready. Continue, telling him that instead of the simple rock and hit, that now he is going to have to get his feet moving. Tell your class that during this step, the biggest mistake they will make is if they move to the ball just in time to hit it. I use the phraseology that moving to the ball early as compared to moving to it just in time separates the great athletes from good ones. I usually diverge to a baseball analogy to explain this concept. -- I ask the class to imagine an outfielder running to intercept a line drive. I point out that in a game if the player times his interception just in time, he looks like a hero because the play looks impressive. It takes little urging to ask the class to sympathize with that player's coach who is nervous and turning grey because many times heroic appearing plays are just grandstanding. Ask the class to think about the great fielders they've seen. "Don't they just seem to be there waiting for the ball most of the time?" I ask. I explain that those great players anticipate the interception point and run there quickly. They are great players because they know that they can make last second adjustments in their positioning, because they moved into position early and "bought" that extra margin for safety. They are great because they know how to reduce their margin for error through good footwork.

After explaining this, I usually state that I only teach great athletes!" I stress that they learn to move quickly into position as early as possible to hit the ball, and that this doesn't mean to run at the ball and end up hitting it poorly because they couldn't swing correctly. I now show the class and the waiting student exactly what is expected.

Facing the side wall away from the class, I move from near the student waiting to go first. I have my racquet ready and I move back towards the back wall. I tell the class that I'm not running at the ball or to the ball, but towards my natural range to hit it. I note that I have moved towards the back wall to this place as quickly as I can. I then move laterally towards the front wall as though I were moving with an imaginary ball. I actually hold a ball slightly ahead of myself at arm length to illustrate this positioning. I repeat this sequence only this time I toss a ball at the back wall as I move. This gentle toss should hit about eight to ten feet up the back wall and bounce at least eight to ten feet forwards into the court. I move outwards with this ball, making sure that my body is behind the ball (in the direction of the back wall) and that I am "away" from it, moving parallel to it at the proper distance to allow myself to step towards it to hit it with a proper swing. Instead of hitting this tossed ball, I again catch it, pointing out that the point of contact would have been in front of my body relative to the front wall.

I comment to the class that although ...

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INTRODUCTION TO RACQUETBALL 101 Student Retention Material Week #4 THE SHOTS AND HOW TO HIT THEM

There are two types of shots used in the game of Racquetball:

Offensive shots which should be used when a player has the time to properly position himself so that he can a controlled shot. These shots may either win the point outright, or simply maneuver an opponent into an awkward position causing him to make a mistake.

THE GAME OF RACQUETBALL IS A GAME OF ERRORS!

If he makes an error, you can move into position for your next shot and then perhaps win the point easily.

Defensive shots are ones you will hit when you can't generate an effective offensive shot, or you need to "buy" time to gain a good defensive position for the court.

LET YOUR OPPONENT MAKE THE MISTAKES!

These two basic categories can be further broken down:

OFFENSIVE SHOTS PASSING AND COMBINATION

I. PASSING SHOTS

Passing shots are shots which are hit to force your opponent out of his defensive position near the middle of the court either to one side or the other and preferably to force him to move into deep back court to return the ball.

A. STRAIGHT IN PASS

This is the "Winnings" shot in Racquetball. It is a passing shot which travels down one side of the court without crossing its imagined center line. The best straight in passes are hit along the wall, or so that they contact the side wall where your opponent would reach out to hit the ball. Like all other good offensive shots, passing shots should NOT contact the back wall; they should bounce twice before reaching it!

B. VEE PASS (or cross-court pass)

The second type of passing shot is the "Vee" Pass. This shot received its name because as it crosses the center line of the court, and if observed ...

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Excerpt from page 5 of 8 from the teaching guide for the fourth week of ITR101 ... the names of the shots and how to hit them ...

5) Now drop a ball, again allowing yourself extra bounces in which to verbalize about the angle of your hips to their intended target. Then hit an easy Vee pass.

6) Tell your class that you are now going to have them hit these two shots.

7) Separate the class into left and right handed players, placing them in order along the forehand wall of one group. It doesn't matter which group goes first, only that you reduce the number of times that the class has to move back and forth.

8) Have a student prepare to return serve. Give them a hint into next week's lesson by indicating that they should stand one arm and racquets length from the center of the back wall, and then turn to face the front wall as though they were on a turntable. Tell them that this position is very important for two reasons, reasons that they will find out about next class session.

9) I advise that you take one more minute and remind your class that they should move laterally to the ball you hit, not run forwards to hit it. Point out that running forward may seem a good idea, but doing so reduces their chances of getting properly prepared to hit the desired shot.

10) Show the class what you want them to do, set yourself up to return, and indicate the turn sideways to the forehand side wall and the parallel set of the hips to the wall. Step towards a mock ball, having moved your racquet quickly to up and ready, and indicate a swing at this imagined ball.

11) Remind them that you are going to be in front of them, and that the class observing will "see" if they are going to hit the ball properly down the line as a straight-in pass or if they are going to hit a ball at an angle, in which case you can tell them that you're going to be ducking or running for your life.

12) Now have the first in line move to the back court and get ready to return, and you move to the service and get ready to hit them a slow semi-drive serve.

13) Hit the serve, apply P.A. to keep your self safe, but watch for common errors as they move towards the ball.

The most common errors are:

A) Forgetting one of the big three: Move your feet, get your racquet ready, and watch the ball. Any of these will reduce the effectiveness of the shot. These are the errors to trap NOW! The rest of the class should even be given a chance to identify these errors. Don't embarrass the student, only point out that they are, even in error, helping themselves to understand the game, as well as helping the rest ...

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Introduction to Racquetball 101 Student Guide VISUAL AIDS +

Sample ... next thumbnail



