

Unit 1: Being a Team Player

INTRODUCTION

In this first unit, participants learn about being a team player. To begin forming and strengthening the team, activities focus on introductions and on the value of participating fully in all activities. The basic structure and content of the First Serve program is also reviewed when the Playbooks are distributed.

First, participants learn each other's names and a little bit about each other. On-court activities help them remember the names, while acquiring tennis skills. Next, they learn to make a good first impression by introducing themselves properly, a basic communication and social skill they can use both on and off the court. The instructor demonstrates the right and wrong way to introduce oneself, and, in the process, participants discover body language is often more important than what they actually say. Participants learn and practice the steps to follow when meeting someone new—facing the other person, standing tall, smiling, maintaining eye contact, offering a firm handshake, and speaking clearly.

Participants also learn the benefits of participating fully in all activities at First Serve—they can have more fun, make new friends, and learn tennis skills faster if they show up, ask questions, volunteer answers, pay attention, help others, and, in general, make themselves a valuable part of the team.

First Serve Playbooks are distributed and the instructor briefly describes the Game Level, what life skills are, the particular life skills participants will acquire in the Game Level, and the rewards they can expect when they complete this level.

Learning Objectives

After completing this unit, participants should be able to:

- State the names of tennis staff and others on the team
- Speak briefly about themselves in front of the team
- Demonstrate how to properly introduce themselves
- Understand the benefits of participating fully in activities
- Identify requirements and benefits of the First Serve program
- Define life skills and how they can help on and off the court

1.3 PARTICIPATING WITH THE TEAM

Materials:	Racket & balls
Setup:	Group discussion, then divided into two groups on court
Time:	45 minutes

Lesson Opening (5 minutes)

1. **Review introducing yourself.** Ask a few participants to introduce themselves properly. Next, explain to the group that proper introductions and meeting others is an important skill for a team player. Mention today they are going to focus on another important skill for team players. You want them to try to guess the skill following an activity.

Activity 1: Team Ball Pat Contest (20 minutes)

1. **Ball pat activity.** Work inside or outside, with one tennis ball, to demonstrate the difference between participating and just watching a simple game.
 - **Step 1:** Create one small team of 6 or 8 and have the rest of the class watch this team.
 - **Step 2:** Ask the team to stand in a circle.
 - **Step 3:** Explain that you want them to keep the ball in motion by “patting” it to another person, as if their hand were a little racket. If the ball hits the ground, play for that round is over. Encourage the team to work together to create a successful strategy that works. Their goal is to beat the existing record for the number of hits or “pats”, which is __X__ (X = whatever you think would be a challenging number for the group you are working with). If the ball touches the ground, they can start over and try again to break the record.

Have the team keep trying several times until the others watching start to get bored or disinterested.
 - **Step 4:** When the kids watching start complaining they are missing the fun, or they want to try the game, stop the play and ask them how they feel. They should verbalize they feel left out or they want to participate.
 - **Step 5:** Close the activity by forming several teams and having them all try to break the record in a specific time limit: three minutes for example.
2. **Introduce the idea of full participation.** Explain they will get the most out of their time at First Serve, and have the most fun, if they fully participate in all the activities. Also, remind them team players try all activities and work with their teammates to make them fun.
3. **Define the term full participation.** Ask participants what participation means and what full participation looks like as they play tennis or engage in other activities. What types of behaviors might people show if they are fully participating? Examples might include:

Showing up for each lesson
Speaking up

Continuing to try, not giving up
Volunteering answers
Asking questions
Helping others
Listening to the instructor
Paying attention
Doing your best
Following instructions
Volunteering to do tasks around the facility
Picking up balls on the court
Getting to know the other kids

4. **Ask them what they gain by participating.** Ask them what they think the benefits might be of participating—of doing the types of things they just listed, showing up, asking questions, etc. What could they get out of it? Some of the answers might include:

You learn more
Make faster progress in learning to play tennis
Have more fun
Make more friends
If you're busy, you won't be bored
You get more exercise
The time goes faster

Transition by indicating they will engage in another activity to demonstrate the value of full participation.

Activity 2: Team Tennis Game (15 minutes)

1. **On-court tennis game (Jail, King of the Court, etc).** Separate the class into two groups to demonstrate the difference between participating with the team or just watching on the court.
 - **Step 1:** Divide the class into two groups—“Team Players” and “Watchers”.
 - **Step 2:** Lead the Team Players in a tennis game, while the Watchers stands on the sidelines.
 - **Step 3:** Ask the Watchers to verbalize how they feel when they are just watching on the sideline. Tell them they must actively show and tell everyone—**out loud** how much they want to participate.
 - **Step 4:** Now switch groups and let the second group play, while the first group watches. Remind them they must actively show and tell everyone—**out loud** how much they want to participate.
 - **Step 5:** After a few rotations, review again the benefits of participating with the team rather than just watching from the sidelines.

Lesson Closing (5 minutes)

1. **Review full participation at First Serve.** After the activities, go back to the topic of participation at First Serve. Ask participants how they are currently participating in activities. Get them to volunteer answers, such as:

I show up at all the lessons

I volunteer to try things first

I help carry the rackets and balls out to the court

I help pick up balls on the court

I bring/do my homework

I get to know the other kids

2. **Ask how they can improve their participation.** Then ask them if there is anything more they could do to participate more fully in the activities. If they can name a few more things, ask them if they are willing to commit to those things.