

Building a Championship Culture in Team Tennis



OUTLINE

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What is culture?

Culture is:

“A way of life of a group of people - the behaviors, beliefs, values, and symbols that they accept generally without thinking about them.”

Chicken Sandwiches

Chik Fil A

Popeyes

What do you want your culture to be?

How will you cut through the noise (distractions)

Say early and often what you want the kids to remember

Attitude is everything

Attitude is contagious

Always Remember

The life you are living and the example you are setting become the lessons that you truly are teaching.

Most of this is common sense

John Furlow - love of the game

What Separates one team from another?

It's fun to be good - It's fun to do the extra work

It's what the good teams do

"The Battle is Won Before it is Fought" Sun Tzu-The Art of War

Branding

Dictionary definition - process involved in creating a unique name and image for a product in the consumer's mind, mainly through advertising

Tennis Team Definition - creating a unique presence and image in the eyes of your local community (parents, city, student body, players from other teams, our team members, etc...) using social media, uniforms, signage, news media, and win/loss results

What are you doing over there/is it something you put in the water?







Branding

Look and Feel a certain way

College standard

Nike

Player posters

What image do you want to give off?



Tryouts - Lineups - Practices - Challenge Matches

Tryouts

Pre-rank based on ***objective and subjective*** measures - previous year line-up, UTR, state rankings, summer results (your eye test from previous year)

Winners group/Losers group (don't call it that)

Winners play winners - losers play losers, create a middle group of 2-0, 0-2, 1-1

Inevitably, 2-0 and better will make team, 0-2 will mostly not, and 1-1 will become the bubble group, keep the number you want and have your closest ones to making it play for final spots

Trystan example

Friendswood Practices

Autonomous warm-up (kids follow a pattern for first 5 to 15 minutes)

Dingles

Drill games

Fast and furious

Loud/Laughter almost every day

Challenge matches

Meritocracy

It pays to be a winner

Line-ups determined by challenge match results

Challenge match days not always fun

Challenge ladder leads to “fairness” factor

Friendswood practices

Winners benefit - losers pay cost - always play for something

Within 1 rule (ball don't lie)

1 bounce rule

Competition is good for business

Defending

Serve/Return

Overheads

Themes for the Team

Select the thoughts you want your team to focus on

Instill your values here



Themes for team

Family

Grit/hustle

Hustle Karma

Joe Dimaggio

Competitive

Loyalty

Decision making



Word of the Year

2017 Purpose

2018 Arrete

2019 Process

Summer Tennis / Communication / Fundraising

We have a pre-season (parents and new members) meeting in May to welcome all incoming tennis players (before summer begins)

We have another early season meeting (parents) in August/September to introduce team rules/concepts and also to introduce our booster club expectations/opportunities

Most people are willing to help if they know how they can and it's a reasonable expectation

Summer Tennis

Pre-season meeting in May

Set your expectations

Summer Tournaments

Weight room

Drills/Lessons

1 on 1's

McReavy

Open Courts versus 1 on 1's

Advantages/Disadvantages of each

GIGO (G for garbage or G for greatness)

Team Goals

Specific for your team

USC goals each year (Peter Smith)

Friendswood goals for each year

Herm Edwards

Summer Tennis - Fundraising

3 Tools -

Big fundraiser (every two summers)

Booster club (concession stand volunteers)

Advertising signs

Advertising Signage



Investing the money

Nike uniforms (same logo and color scheme for all levels)

Travel

Food

Court improvements as needed

Booster Club Rep

Relationship with vendors

Supplies - nets, wind screens, grips - Keep them fresh/new!

Travel

Rules need to be clear

No substitute

Camaraderie

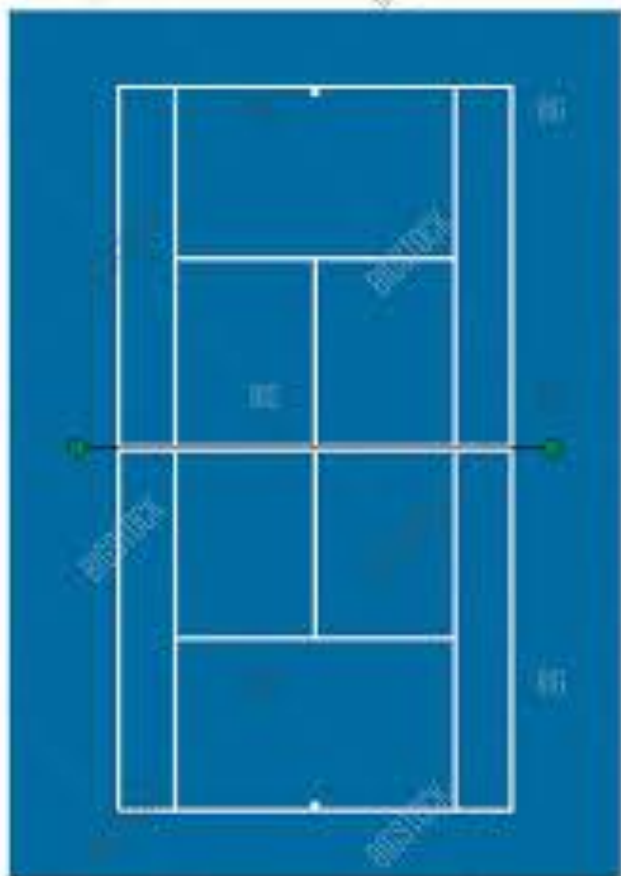
Showing off for new audience



Tennis Tactics and Strategy

Geometry of a Tennis Court

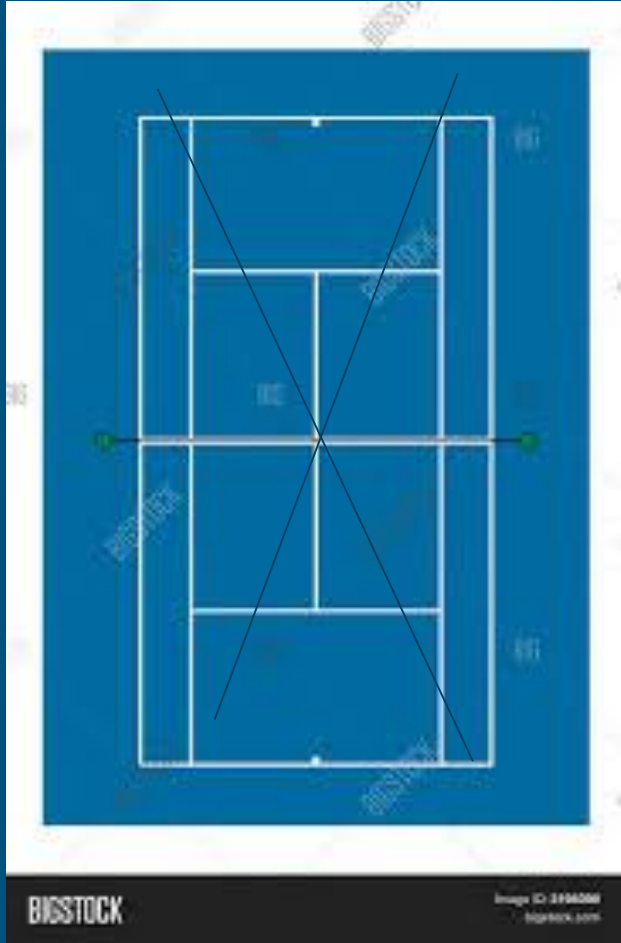
What shapes do you see when you look at a tennis court?



Geometry of tennis court

Most people see rectangles and squares

I see X's and triangles (implied)

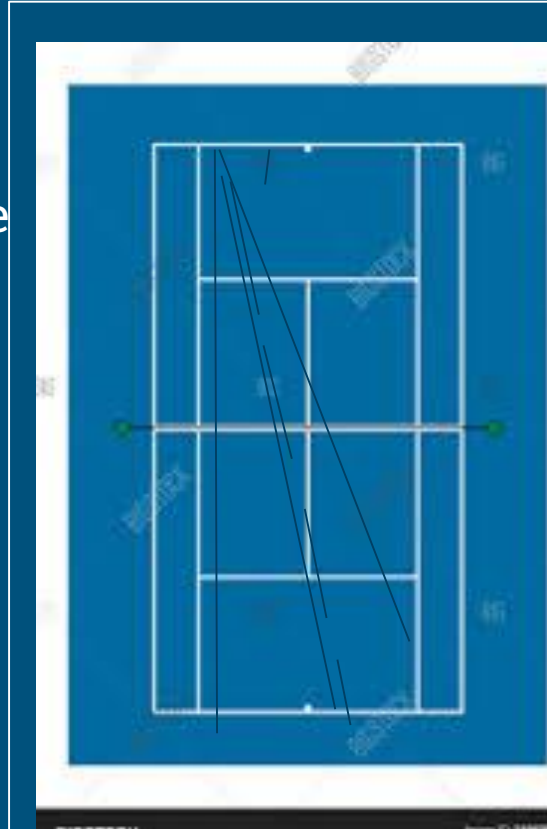


Singles angles



Bisect the opponent angle

CSC



Doubles

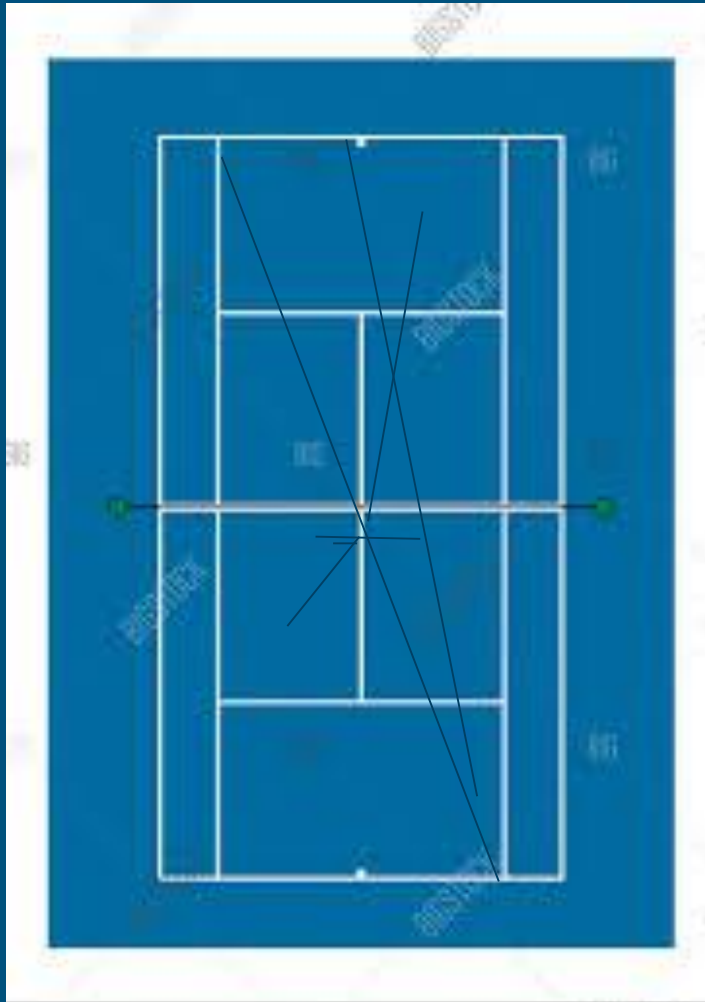


Control middle

Poach

I formation

Fake poach



I Formations

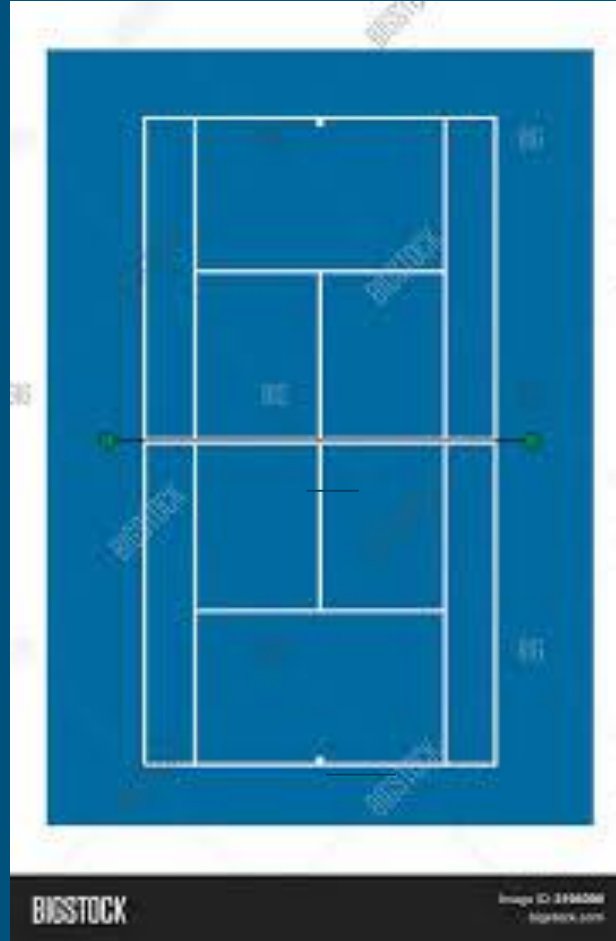
Servers partner is along

Center line

We have 3 variations

All include switching

Players must talk/signal



I formation

Server's partner in middle

Will shift to one side or other

Requires a low position



Palmer I Formation

Slight disguise / less squat

Not quite all the way to the center line

Server stands a bit wider

Switch both ways - communicate!



Aussie I Formation

Takes away crosscourt

Less disguise

Server usually covers down the line

Switch still part of the strategy



How to counter a team that does all of these

Lob net player

Serve and volley to take away their second chances

Attack net player with aggressive down the line returns

2 Back on return side (still move in once point starts)

Players must remain on same page

Players who move together

Talk together

Play better together



Positive team contact is vital

Friendswood vs. Oak Ridge



Doubles communication - every point

Before, during, and after points



Practice drills needed to make these all possible

Return cross court at a target (add poacher with a target)

Return down the line at a target (net player defending)

Overhead/Defend overhead contests (2 vs 2)

Overhead/pass shot option contests

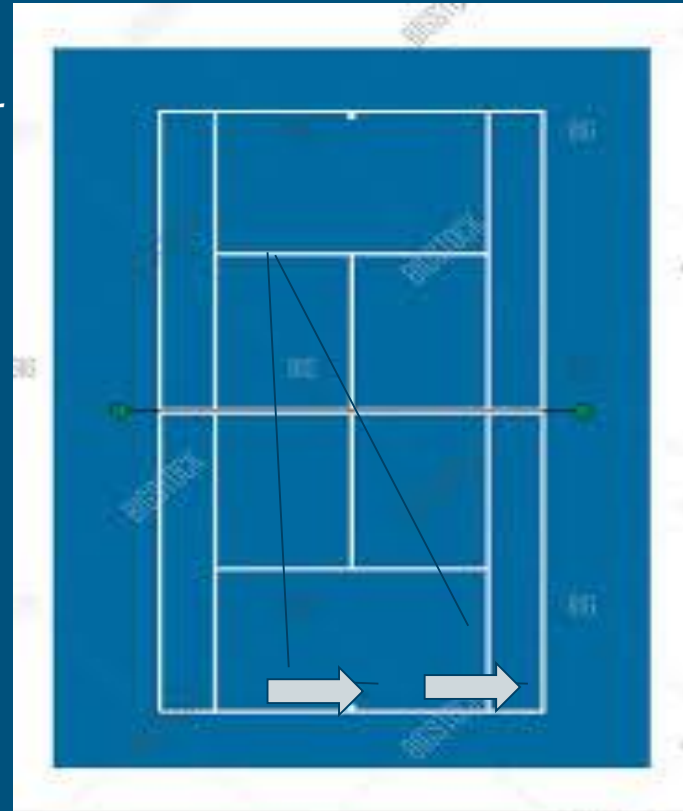
Overhead/Short Ball Defense

We cover middle of court with one player

We cover angle with a player

We leave line open (toughest shot)

Watch pro doubles



Communication



Communication within a practice

Keep drills simple (if it takes longer than 30 seconds to explain, it will be a problem)

Use water breaks and middle of practice to communicate team business (bus will leave at 6:30 Friday morning) - it's common for someone to miss beginning or end of a practice, but almost everyone is present in heart of practice

Keep team business to 1 to 2 minutes

Practice - running and weight room

We run more in summer and fall, and less in spring

We go to weight room all school year (2X a week)

Spring - missing days means make-up work for classes (Tuesday is short day for us-every Spring Tuesday)

Running - mostly 40 yards, 100's, 200's, and some 400's to 1 mile runs (stairs)

We use mile to measure objectively, but most of our work is shorter

Grade Checks

I can see who is failing quite easily

It takes more time to see all grades, but seems to have better effect. (I use both methods at different times).

FISD rules

UIL rules

During a match

Know the score

Make positive noise

Team cheer (takes a while to grow this each new school year)

Echo calls

End of match-team

Debrief - start season with me evaluating team noise, doubles movement, and what is next on our schedule

Once we get into season - Players evaluate the team, and I can add (seldom have to once we do this a few times) and update what is coming next

Decision making is emphasized

After a win/loss-individual

I give kids a break if they lose - don't have to talk right away if they are upset.

After a win, if there is something to share, I may say it right away.

Remember, losses in tennis feel personal, and ego needs a minute to recover.

Communication

Verbal - sell your message, repeat

Team schedule - get it out early on web site or paper copy

Team calendar - include tryouts, challenge matches, team matches, uniform for day

Rank One- how our school personnel keep up with us (and photographer)

Remind

Communication

Press and Social Media

Tag parents/principal, superintendent (word goes out to more people)

All press and social media posts are positive

Steve Moore-A&M Corpus Christi



Communicate with whole group

Sneaky Pete QR/MM

Some players need positive affirmation HK

Some respond to a direct challenge JG

Team Rules/Accountability

We have very few written down rules, but lots of expectations

Punctuality

Embarrassing team

Uniform

Bus rules and Seniority

On the bus, on the way to a match it's supposed to be quiet

On the way home, it can be as loud as they want, if we won.

Seniority - new kids get ice/water, pick up stray balls

Key - only have to do this once in a high school career (part of earning your way into the family)

Coaches' Doghouse

Point penalty/warning system during match

Minor offenses - run it out of them (or pushups, burpees, sleds, be creative)

Major offenses - evaluate how badly you want to keep them around

If it's time to cut the cord (Nuclear Option), get assistant coaches on board, Principal, and AD in the loop

Sydney example

Kent example

Coaches' Doghouse continued

A player simply isn't trying as hard -

Tennis seems more personal - losses seem like self-esteem attacks

Loud praise/quiet corrections

Few pieces of advice

I trust you! I believe in you!

What are you doing? What is your opponent doing? (find the end of the string and pull on it)

On court-keep it simple and short

On court - make a kid smile

One direction is far easier to execute than 10 complicated ones

Advice

Learn from other coaches - young and old

Learn from other coaches - strong and weak (wisdom is learning from someone else's mistakes)

Smile often



Advice

Invest time with your team - an hour spent at Whataburger will pay off many times over throughout the years



Advice

Spend time with your team - it's how they know you really care



Advice

Go to TTCA convention - try to bring back 1 or 2 small improvements

Do NOT try to copy 100% of anyone else - YOU DO YOU

Paraphrase great teachers - Peter Smith, Steve Moore

Trust your gut instincts

Find a good sounding board (assistant coach, coach from another team, or coach from another sport)

Advice

Always be true to yourself

Trust yourself, even though every day won't always be a great day

When you have a bad day (or week or month) try to go back to basics and remember that you are working with kids and basically being paid to play a game with them on a daily basis - enjoy that work

Think like a Champion

Imagine the best case scenario for how you want your kids to play/act, and start working towards that end - keep the ship steered in that direction every day

If I had to summarize this all

One word?

What word would you use?