

## WALL-BALL, Graham Prior

GETTING SCHOOLCHILDREN INTERESTED IN SQUASH MEANS GOING TO SCHOOLS AND INTRODUCING THEM TO SOME BASIC CONCEPTS OF THE GAME. AS SCHOOLS WON'T HAVE COURTS YOU WILL NEED TO FIND A SUITABLE WALL. HENCE WALL-BALL.

WHAT I HAVE FOUND IS THAT WHEN GOING TO SCHOOLS ONE GETS A RANGE OF AGES AND ABILITIES AMONGST THE CHILDREN COMING TO HAVE A LOOK.

USUALLY DO A VERY BASIC INITIAL ASSESSMENT SO THAT CHILDREN CAN BE PLACED IN A GROUP WITH SIMILAR SKILLS i.e. SKILLS BASED RATHER THAN AGE BASED:

- ROLLING BALL AROUND RACQUET.
- BOUNCING GENTLY FH & BH, THEN BOTH.
- CATCHING TENNIS BALLS TWO HANDS, ONE HAND, OFF THE WALL.
- CATCHING TENNIS BALLS WHILE MOVING.

FOR VERY YOUNG CHILDREN THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES COULD BE USED:

- CATCHING/STRIKING BALLOONS WITH THEIR HAND.
- ROLLING BALLS, STARTING WITH LARGE ONES AND THEN VARYING THE SIZES.
- STRIKING BALLOONS WITH A TABLE TENNIS BAT/ROLLED UP NEWSPAPER.
- ROLLING A BALL ALONG THE GROUND WITH A BAT/RACQUET.
- KICKING A BALL WITH BOTH FEET.
- CATCHING A VARIETY OF BALLS.
- THROWING BALLS INTO A CONTAINER/AT A TARGET.
- YOU THROW A BALL, THEY RETRIEVE IT ASAP, OVER VERY SHORT DISTANCES.

### **INTRODUCTORY EXERCISES.**

- THROWING THE BALL UP AND CATCHING IT.
- THROWING THE BALL UP AND CATCHING IT WHILST WALKING/RUNNING/SKIPPING/HOPPING/WALKING BACKWARDS.
- VARIETY OF BOUNCE AND CATCH IN PAIRS 2 HANDS, 1 HAND, NON DOMINANT, SITTING, KNEELING, STANDING.
- BOUNCE BALL USING RACQUET AROUND OBJECTS (OBSTACLE COURSE), WALKING THEN RUNNING.

- BOUNCE BALL UP AND CATCH IT ON THE RACQUET. START WITH LITTLE BOUNCES AND INCREASE THE HEIGHT GRADUALLY.
- CLAP AND CATCH.
- TURN AROUND AND CATCH.
- DO THE ABOVE WALKING/RUNNING.

### **BASIC EXERCISES.**

THESE EXERCISES CAN BE INTRODUCED USING A TENNIS BALL (OR ANY OTHER BOUNCY BALL) BEFORE GRADUATING TO A RACQUET AND SQUASH BALL.

- IN PAIRS HIT THE BALL GENTLY ACROSS/STRAIGHT TO ONE ANOTHER. SEE HOW MANY YOU CAN DO WITHOUT LOSING CONTROL (DECREASE/INCREASE DISTANCE TO MAKE THE EXERCISE EASIER/MORE DIFFICULT).
- AS ABOVE WITH MORE PACE (AS PLAYERS BECOME MORE ADEPT).
- USE 2 BALLS, PASS BACK AND FORTH WITH BALLS GOING IN OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS. ADD DIFFICULTY BY LOBBING TENNIS BALLS TO BE CAUGHT IN NON DOMINANT HAND, WHILST PASSING.
- TRASH CAN – HIT A BALL INTO A TRASH CAN. HIT A BALL INTO A TRASH CAN OFF THE WALL (INCREASE/DECREASE DISTANCE FOR DIFFICULTY/EASE).
- WHILST BOUNCING A BALL ON THE RACQUET PICK UP ANOTHER BALL FROM A TOWER/PERSON'S HAND, AND THEN REPLACE IT.

### **GAMES.**

- NAME GAME: A GROUP OF 5/6 PLAYERS START FACING THE WALL. PERSON WITH BALL HITS AGAINST THE FRONT WALL AND CALLS A NUMBER. THAT PLAYER THEN HITS THE BALL AGAINST THE WALL WHILST CALLING OUT ANOTHER NUMBER AND SO ON. INITIALLY THE IDEA IS TO KEEP THE RALLY GOING. AS PLAYERS IMPROVE IT CAN BE TURNED INTO A COMPETITIVE SITUATION I.E. MAKING IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE DESIGNATED PERSON TO RETRIEVE.
- CIRCLE VOLLEY – IN A GROUP KEEP THE BALL IN THE AIR, BH, FH, BOTH.
- PIGGY IN THE MIDDLE. CAN PIGGY INTERCEPT A CROSSCOURT SHOT. KEEP THE RALLY GOING, IN A DESIGNATED AREA.
- RACQUET RELAY. EACH GROUP OF 4/6/8 STAND ONE BEHIND THE OTHER. FROM THE START LINE THE FIRST PLAYER RUNS AND BOUNCE DRIBBLES THE BALL AROUND A MARKER NEAR THE WALL, AND BACK TO THE START LINE. STOP AND BOUNCE HIT THE BALL TO THE NEXT PLAYER IN LINE

- IN GROUPS, FIRST PLAYER STARTS WITH BALL BALANCING ON RACQUET. S/HE RUNS TO THE WALL WHILST BOUNCING THE BALL ON THE RACQUET (AT LEAST 3X), HITS THE BALL TWICE AGAINST THE WALL (BOUNCE OR VOLLEY) THEN CATCHES THE BALL ON THE RACQUET AND RUNS BACK TO START LINE WHERE THE BALL IS TRANSFERRED TO THE NEXT PLAYER'S RACQUET WITHOUT USING HANDS.
- CHAIN DRIVE. PLAYERS IN A LINE KEEP A BOUNCE HIT DRIVE GOING, ONE AFTER THE OTHER. THEN DO THE SAME WITH A VOLLEY CHAIN DRIVE. NOW LIMIT THE GROUP TO 2 OR 3 RACQUETS ONLY AND MAKE IT INTO A COMPETITIVE RELAY.
- GROUP OF PLAYERS STAND IN A LINE ADJACENT TO ONE ANOTHER FACING THE WALL. THE IDEA IS TO MOVE THE BALL FROM ONE END TO THE OTHER, USING FH ONE WAY AND BH THE OTHER. BOUNCE AND HIT TO BEGIN WITH AND THEN VOLLEY. ONCE PEOPLE HAVE THE HANG OF IT, MAKE IT INTO A COMPETITIVE SITUATION.

#### **FEEDERS, HITTERS, COLLECTORS.**

- **BASIC DRIVE, VOLLEY, DROP AND LOB**
- **ONE SIDE, ALTERNATE SIDES (EXTRA FEEDERS AND COLLECTORS) RETURNING TO THE T ZONE**
- **FH DROPS TO BH DRIVES AND VICE VERSA**
- **2 DRIVES 1 DROP**
- **ALLEY GAME, USING CONES TO DESIGNATE THE WALL**