



Mini Aces (Grades K–2)

Ages: 5.6–7.6 years

Development Focus (per Summer Smash Method):

- Fundamental forehand & backhand technique
- Timing of swing + ball tracking
- Fundamental movement & coordination
- Cultivating a love for tennis in a positive environment

Week 1 – Racket Familiarization & Hand-Eye Coordination

- **Overarching Objective:** Introduce basic racket handling, ball tracking, and coordination in a fun, low-pressure setting.
- **Key Activities:**
 - **Juggling “Levels 1–3”:** Two-hand toss-bounce-catch → one-hand throw-bounce-catch → two-ball toss-bounce-catch pattern.
 - **Line Game (Friendly):** Identify court lines verbally; students move to lines on coach’s call.
 - **Forehand (FH) Self-Rally Introduction:**
 - Level 1: “Up → bounce → touch on strings”
 - Level 2: “Up → bounce → catch on strings”
 - **FH Starting Position & Swing Demo:** Grip, “balance racket on frame,” “sweep low-to-high.”
 - **“Feed the Animals” FH Game:** Aim into cone circle; “coach loses lives” to build engagement.



Week 2 – Refining Racket Control & “Freeze” Position

- **Overarching Objective:** Reinforce racket control, introduce “freeze” finish, and build comfort with FH self-rallies.

- **Key Activities:**
 - **Review Juggling Levels:** Emphasize one-hand accuracy and two-ball patterns.
 - **Line Game (Lines + Service Box/Alley):** Add “service box” and “doubles alley” vocabulary.
 - **FH Self-Rally Progression:**
 - Level 1: Bounce → catch on strings
 - Level 2: Full FH self-rally (2–3 minutes)
 - **FH “Freeze” Demo & Imitation:** Add “finish far in front of body, strings facing court.”
 - **FH Warm-Up Round (with “Freeze”):** Feed-and-switch into cone targets, emphasizing slow-smooth swing + freeze.
 - **FH “Feed the Animals” (with Freeze):** Must finish in freeze position to earn points.

Week 3 – Introducing Backhand & “Tennis Basketball”

- **Overarching Objective:** Launch backhand (BH) basics, continue FH self-rallies, and add hand-eye coordination via “Tennis Basketball.”

- **Key Activities:**
 - **Tennis Basketball (10 min):** Underhand throws into bin; “Ball → bounce → catch,” then add “finish pointing at or above bin.”
 - **FH & BH Self-Rally:**
 - FH Level 1 (2 min), FH Level 2 (2 min)



- BH Level 1 (“up → bounce → touch”), BH Level 2 (full BH self-rally)
 - **BH Starting Position & Sweep + Freeze Demo:** BH grip, balance racket, sweep low-to-high, finish in BH freeze.
 - **BH Warm-Up Round:** Feed-switch into BH cone targets.
 - **BH “Feed the Animals”:** Points only when BH freeze is correct.

Week 4 – Combining FH & BH Fundamentals & Target Work

- **Overarching Objective:** Blend FH/BH technical reviews, reinforce freeze finishes, and practice two-hand finishes.
- **Key Activities:**
 - **Tennis Basketball (Review + Non-Throwing Hand Cue):** Throw must finish with non-throwing hand pointing backward.
 - **FH/BH Self-Rally (5 min):** Alternate FH/BH; Level 3 flipping between FH/BH for 1 min.
 - **FH Technical Review:**
 - Grip, starting position, sweep + freeze (review)
 - Add “two-hand finish” + “edge on spine” imitation
 - **FH Target Drills (Archery):** Coach-fed FH into targets; must finish with two hands + edge on spine to score.
 - **Water Breaks & Positive Reinforcement:** Encourage fledgling technique and enthusiasm.

Week 5 – Solidifying BH Technique & Hand-Eye Control

- **Overarching Objective:** Bolster BH technical consistency, refine freeze/finish cues, and integrate target games.
- **Key Activities:**



- **Tennis Basketball (Review + Hand Cues):** Non-throwing hand starts pointing at bin; throwing hand finishes \geq bin.
- **FH/BH Self-Rally (5 min):** FH (2 min), BH (2 min), flipping between FH/BH (1 min).
- **BH Technical Review:**
 - BH grip, starting position, sweep + freeze, edge on spine
 - Emphasize finish with two hands + “big nose” (elbow covering nose)
- **BH Target Drills (“Feed the Animals”):** BH feed into targets requiring “big nose” finish; points only if correct.

Week 6 – Introducing “Big Nose” Finish & Dynamic Rallies

- **Overarching Objective:** Solidify both FH/BH freeze finishes with “big nose,” and challenge students with flipping self-rallies.
- **Key Activities:**
 - **Tennis Basketball Variations:** Non-throwing hand ends pointing backward; throwing hand finishes \geq bin.
 - **Self-Rally Progression (6 min):** FH/A, BH/A, flipping FH/BH self-rally.
 - **FH Technical Review (“Big Nose”):** Grip, sweep + freeze, two-hand + edge on spine → finish “big nose.”
 - **FH Target Game (Feed the Animals):** Must incorporate two-hand finish, edge on spine, and “big nose” to score.

Week 7 – Consolidating FH & BH Freeze with “Big Nose” & Introduction to Crocodile Game

- **Overarching Objective:** Ensure mastery of FH/BH freeze finishes (“big nose”), begin combining rallies with fun elimination games.
- **Key Activities:**
 - **Self-Rally (5 min):** FH, BH, flipping FH/BH.



- **FH Technical Review (3 min):** Sweep + freeze, two-hand finish, edge on spine, “big nose.”
- **FH Feed the Animals (10 min):** Must use correct finish cues.
- **BH Technical Review (3 min):** Sweep + freeze, two-hand finish, edge on spine, “big nose.”
- **Crocodile (12 min):** Feed tennis balls to “crocodile” (coach) with BH, then FH, eliminating “arms”/“legs” on misses → builds resilience and adaptability.

Week 8 – Review & Mini-Match Play

- **Overarching Objective:** Reinforce all technical elements (freeze + “big nose”), and apply skills in cooperative “Crocodile” / partner challenges.
- **Key Activities:**
 - **Self-Rally (5 min):** FH/BH flipping.
 - **FH Technical Review & Feed the Animals (10 min).**
 - **BH Technical Review & Feed the Animals (10 min).**
 - **Crocodile (15 min):** Full game as in Week 7, alternating between FH/BH.
 - **Fun “Round Robin” Pair Play (5 min):** Short cooperative rallies across net—acknowledge effort and improvement.

Beyond Week 8 (Weeks 9–14): Focus shifts toward reinforcing rally consistency, introducing basic footwork patterns, and fostering simple match-play in a supportive environment.

Week 9 – Integrated FH/BH Cooperative Rally & Footwork Foundations

- **Overarching Objective:** Transition from isolated technical drills to cooperative FH/BH rallies, emphasizing “ready position” and basic footwork (“happy feet”).
- **Key Activities:**
 - **Warm-Up Juggling Review (3 min):** One-handed toss-bounce-catch.



- **FH/BH Self-Rally (4 min):** Alternating FH → BH rally (25 feeds, emphasis on freeze + “big nose”).
- **“Happy Feet” Footwork Drill (5 min):**
 - Stand in ready; coach calls “left/right/forward/back”; students shuffle “happy feet.”
- **Mini Cooperative Rally Game (12 min):**
 - Pairs stand on service box lines, rally FH/BH across mini court.
 - Goal: 4 consecutive shots → celebrate with “Tennis Cheer.”
- **Footwork & Recovery (6 min):** After each shot: “step back to ready,” “split-step,” “happy feet.”

Week 10 – Freeze Focus & Friendly Rally Challenges

Overarching Objective: Reinforce freeze finishes, improve consistency, and introduce light rally cooperation without pressure.

Key Activities:

- **Warm-Up Juggling (4 min):** Levels 1–3 review; finish with 2-ball toss and catch.
- **Self-Rally Review (6 min):**
 - 2 min FH, 2 min BH, 2 min flipping between.
- **Freeze & “Big Nose” Recap (5 min):**
 - Demonstrate proper finish cues; quick “mirror” exercise where kids copy coach’s form.
- **Feed the Animals – Challenge Version (10 min):**
 - Rotate between FH and BH. Kids aim into cones; bonus point for holding freeze.
- **Partner Rally Introduction (10 min):**
 - Pairs rally across mini net from service box line; coach assists with drop feeds.



- Goal: 3 consecutive shots using FH or BH.
 - **Cool-Down Movement Game (5 min):** “Freeze Dance” using tennis positions.
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Week 11 – Flipping Practice & Target Control Games

Overarching Objective: Strengthen the ability to switch between FH and BH while maintaining control, accuracy, and fun.

Key Activities:

- **“Coach Says” Warm-Up (5 min):**
 - Movement-based game using racket positions: “Coach says freeze,” “coach says big nose,” etc.
 - **Self-Rally Flip Progression (6 min):**
 - Alternate 3 FH + 3 BH; then 1-to-1 flips.
 - **Cone Target Challenge – FH & BH (10 min):**
 - Coach feeds alternating sides; students try to hit into colored cones.
 - Focus: tracking ball and finishing with freeze.
 - **“Friendly Fire” Game (10 min):**
 - Players aim at large targets; if they hit one, their team gets a “cheer point.”
 - Must show correct freeze for point to count.
 - **Mini Rally Contest (10 min):**
 - Pairs rally with coach feeding to start. Count how many they can hit in a row together.
 - Encourage encouragement—each student must compliment their partner.
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Week 12 – Consistency Contest & Rally Games

Overarching Objective: Build consistency with both strokes through repetition and introduce longer rally attempts in teams.

Key Activities:

- **Self-Rally Ladder (5 min):**
 - Players try to beat personal bests (e.g., “last week I got 4 FH rallies, this week I’ll try 5”).

- **Team Rally Relay (10 min):**
 - Teams of 2–3 rotate after 3 hits; goal is to keep the rally going as long as possible.
 - Each team gets a “tennis cheer” for their best round.

- **FH/BH Target Practice (10 min):**
 - Each side of the court marked for FH or BH shots. Students rotate based on cue.
 - Freeze and “big nose” emphasized each time.

- **“Feed the Zoo” Game (10 min):**
 - Kids take turns feeding animals (cone animals, stuffed toys) using FH and BH.
 - Add challenge: feed 1 animal FH, then next BH.

- **Team Crocodile (5 min):**
 - Short version with both FH and BH shots to “save the animals” from the crocodile.

Week 13 – Rally Celebration & Crocodile Tournament

Overarching Objective: Celebrate progress through team rally challenges, accuracy games, and the ever-popular Crocodile.

Key Activities:



- **Self-Rally Showdown (5 min):**
 - Each child does FH → BH → Flip self-rally; coaches cheer for control and finish form.

 - **“Queen/King of the Freeze” (10 min):**
 - Coach feeds balls; players stay in if they freeze properly. Last one standing wins.

 - **Team Accuracy Race (10 min):**
 - Kids try to hit cone targets in pairs; each cone = 1 step forward. First team to the net wins.

 - **Crocodile Championship (10 min):**
 - Classic game with alternating BH/FH shots.
 - Use positive reinforcement (“You froze so well!” “Great tracking!”).

 - **Medieval Times Prep (5 min):**
 - Build excitement: explain Week 14 will be a fun team tournament to show off all their skills!
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Week 14 – Showcase & Mini-Tournament Day

- **Overarching Objective:** Provide a culminating “Showcase” where students demonstrate learned skills in fun, cooperative match settings.

- **Key Activities:**
 - **Skill Stations (15 min total):**
 - **Volley Station:** “Catch” into target boxes.
 - **FH/BH Rally Station:** 5 inside $\frac{3}{4}$ court consecutive rallies
 - **Volley Accuracy Station:** 3 volleys into hula-hoop.
 - **Serve Toss Competition (if ready):** Toss ball → hold, no hit.



- **Awards & Positive Feedback (10 min):**

- **Cool-Down & Farewell (5 min):**
 - Group stretch, extra-high-five “line,” photo opportunities.