



*An implementation manual for Team
Tennis organizers and deliverers*



Live the moment



Foreword

The purpose of this manual is to provide Rogers Community Team Tennis organizers all the necessary information to run a successful Rogers Community Team Tennis program. This program is an integral part of Tennis Canada's mission of growing the game and as well ensuring the love of tennis is instilled at a young age.

Acknowledgements

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Rogers Community Team Tennis Manual

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VISION / OVERVIEW

1A. What is a Rogers Community Team Tennis?

Rogers Community Team Tennis (RCTT) is a tennis program that provides participants with the opportunity to combine practice and play, with a focus on skill development through match play. Games are played using the Kid's Tennis format, which includes appropriate equipment (based on age and skill level) with corresponding court sizes.

Red Ball, ½ Court (recommended ages 6-8)

Orange Ball, ¾ Court (recommended ages 8-10)

Green Ball, Full Court (recommended ages 10-12)

Green or Regular Ball, Full Court (recommended ages 12-16)

Players are placed on teams in a manner that ensures teams are of similar strength and the format ensures that players play matches against others of similar ability. Scores are kept and the results are counted towards a team's overall score to ensure that every participant's efforts are rewarded.

[Click here to view a Rogers Community Team Tennis Introduction Video.](#)

1B. Why is Rogers Community Team Tennis different from traditional lesson programs?

Rogers Community Team Tennis operates much like a recreational house league, and fills the gap between lessons and tournament competition. It serves the greater number of kids who like to play tennis recreationally, but in a competitive environment. This is structured similar to hockey or soccer leagues, where there are playoffs at the end of the season, which gives purpose to the Rogers Community Team Tennis program.

This Rogers Community Team Tennis concept provides the participant the opportunity to play right away and be part of a team. Rogers Community Team Tennis introduces tennis as a game, where playing as part of a team is the main focus. Children learn as they play and have fun while improving. As soon as they can start the point with a feed, they can play. This can be accomplished in the first few weeks of the season before official match play begins. Once match play begins the practice portion of each day of the Rogers Community Team Tennis program provides children with basic tips on how to improve their game for match play.

Even though points will be short and technique will not be refined yet, kids will have more fun if they are playing and scoring points for their team. Over time the points will become longer and the technique will develop. Through team play children will be hooked on tennis and will often be motivated to further develop their skills and seek additional training.

1C. What are the benefits?

From an organizer perspective:

Rogers Community Team Tennis can be easily integrated into the existing junior tennis programs of many clubs or as an independent program at community centres or gyms.

Rogers Community Team Tennis can be structured on a financial model similar to standard junior programs. Operating costs are covered by registration with the potential for profits.

Rogers Community Team Tennis can accommodate a large number of participants with a wide range of skill levels. This is because players of similar ability are grouped together to play on the same court level, just like other sports (hockey and soccer). It is also one of the best programs to keep children engaged in the sport for life. Players can progress from Red Ball, ½ Court through to Regular Ball, Full Court, while having fun, learning and developing core tennis skills.

It is also great from a teenager's perspective as teens tend to drop out of sport at this stage. The Rogers Community Team Tennis structure offers teens a team format that is more social in nature which will help retain their interest in tennis.

From a parent perspective:

Parents want to see if (1) their kids are playing tennis with their friends and other kids; (2) their kids are having fun; (3) their kids are improving; (4) their kids are gaining confidence; (5) and for some, if their kids have competitive potential in the sport. Rogers Community Team Tennis is an ideal program to accomplish all of the above objectives. As players progress from Red Ball, ½ Court through to Regular Ball, Full Court, parents can watch their children visibly improve. This structured progression from one skill/court level (player pathway) puts tennis in equal footing with other sports like hockey and soccer, in which there is a clear progression from one level to the next.

From a kid's perspective:

From a kid's perspective, they can join a team with their friend. The friendly, learning-based team environment of Rogers Community Team Tennis fosters self-improvement and promotes teamwork. If a kid enjoys it, he or she will encourage his or her parents to sign-up season after season. Research confirms that kids prefer this Rogers Community Team Tennis format over the traditional approach of taking lessons.



GETTING READY

2A. Find a facility

Rogers Community Team Tennis can be run in tennis clubs (indoor and outdoor), public tennis courts, community centres, school gyms, any sports venues. Specific factors to consider when looking for a facility are:

- Check how much space is needed and if there is room for future expansion. As a general rule of thumb, each court size can accommodate 4 players, and Red Ball, ½ Court Rogers Community Team Tennis will require less space than Full Court Rogers Community Team Tennis. For example, one full tennis court (the approximate size of a gym) with 4 mini-nets can run red ball, ½ court Rogers Community Team Tennis program with 16 players, while 4 tennis courts are required to run a full court Rogers Community Team Tennis program for 16 kids.
- Check if multiple time slots are available.
- Determine the best time to run Rogers Community Team Tennis - time when participants, organizers and volunteers are available. Check facility availability. Recommendation: Avoid the time that other hockey or soccer leagues are running in your area.
- Determine the rental cost or court fee for the duration of the Rogers Community Team Tennis program.

2B. Identify Key Personnel - Roles and Responsibilities

Large Rogers Community Team Tennis programs have four distinct key roles and responsibilities described below:

The convener:

The convener is the backbone of the Rogers Community Team Tennis program and oversees the program from beginning to end. Ideally, the convener should have connections to one or more feeder organizations (other programs that will feed into Rogers Community Team Tennis) for player recruitment purposes. A convener is an organizer, has excellent communication skills, and is passionate about increasing youth participation in tennis. Compensation should reflect the time spent and the success of the Rogers Community Team Tennis program.

Convener responsibilities include:

- Liaising with club management, tennis directors, program leaders and the community stakeholders to map out the Rogers Community Team Tennis program logistics and details.
- Creating the program description.
- Marketing the program, ensuring that all the spots are filled and overseeing registration.
- Responding promptly to enquiries and maintaining an up-to-date participant database.
- Recruiting parent coaches and volunteers.
- Attending every session to ensure the Rogers Community Team Tennis program progresses smoothly.
- Working with the head coach to ensure that the children are having fun and that player skill development is progressing smoothly. In some cases, the convener can also be the Head Coach if he/she possesses the skill set.
- Posting score standings.
- Communicating with parents on a regular basis, and dealing with any specific issues that arise.
- Sourcing and organizing team shirts and medals.
- Organizing the Rogers Community Team Tennis awards ceremony and celebration party.

The head coach:

The head coach ensures that the program operates smoothly and that the children are having fun. If the children have fun, they will return every season. The head coach should ideally be a certified Tennis Professional. The head coach is positive, energetic and has excellent interpersonal skills. Compensation should reflect the hours spent on court teaching.

Head coach responsibilities include:

- Conducting a training session for parent coaches and volunteers. These individuals are a major part of the organization and they help with Rogers Community Team Tennis management.
- Conducting a skill assessment session and arranging teams based on skill rating to ensure that the teams are balanced.
- Ongoing assessment of levels to ensure competitive matches via adjustment of team player order.
- Creating and executing the weekly lesson plan.
- Communicating with parent coaches and volunteers on a weekly basis.
- Running warm-ups and practice demonstrations.
- Keeping parent coaches and volunteers motivated, and guiding them to ensure effective practice time for maximal skill development of the players.
- Guiding and motivating children so that they can excel in tennis.
- Conducting the awards ceremony along with the convener.

Parent/Team coaches:

Parent coaches are team leaders who help nurture a team and its players. Parents have the opportunity to engage in their own child's development. Typically, a team will have one parent coach assigned. In a situation where you have eight players per team (32-player league) you may choose to assign two parent coaches per team. In certain cases, it is also possible to have one parent and one non-parent volunteer (e.g. a high school volunteer) to manage a team. A parent coach should ideally have basic knowledge of tennis, and to be willing to receive some ongoing training from the head coach. Parent coaches are positive, energetic and care about helping other kids. A parent coach is a volunteer and is not compensated.

Parent/Team coach responsibilities include:

- Providing guidance, team leadership and direction and most importantly creating a fun, inclusive and welcoming environment.
- Assisting their team with the practice portion of a session, and providing basic technical assistance for players.
- Motivating and encouraging players in match play. Helping direct the players to the correct positions on the court and good behaviour.
- Helping with court set-up and cleanup.

Scorekeepers:

Scorekeepers are volunteers who monitor the scores during match play. They also act as an umpire to supervise players and address issues such as line calls. Having scorekeepers in large Rogers Community Team Tennis programs is crucial as it help the kids to concentrate on playing the game and foster a positive fair play environment. Scores results are important information that helps parent coaches to manage their team by identifying the strength and weakness of their team. A good place to find scorekeepers is in high schools, where students are looking for volunteer hours or kids from the club's junior development program. Scorekeepers should be responsible, punctual, committed to the program and good with kids.

Responsibilities include:

- Keeping accurate score.
- Instructing players about the play format.
- Addressing issues such as line calls.
- Helping court set-up and cleanup.
- Assisting parent coaches with practice sessions, if needed.

2C. Determine Rogers Community Team Tennis Structure

Rogers Community Team Tennis Divisions:

Rogers Community Team Tennis is made up of four distinct divisions, which are based on age and ability. These four divisions are:

Red Ball, ½ Court (recommended ages 6-8)

Orange Ball, ¾ Court (recommended ages 8-10)

Green Ball, Full Court (recommended ages 10-12)

Green or Regular Ball, Full Court (recommended ages 12-16)

The ultimate goal for long term success of a Rogers Community Team Tennis program is to have a program that includes all four of these divisions, as it will provide a clear pathway from the age of six through teen years and thus allow a child the opportunity to stay involved with tennis throughout their childhood. However, most likely you will need to build this four division league over time.

The decision as to which division you will begin with will be mainly based on two factors:

1. The number of players that you are confident can be recruited
2. The number of courts and/or gym space that are available

Recommendation:

All things being equal, it is suggested that you start with a Red Ball, ½ Court division first as it requires the least amount of space. More importantly, as the kids in the Red Ball, ½ Court division become bigger, older and more skilled, it is logical to create an Orange Ball, ¾ Court division the following year. Organizers will gain valuable experience from the first Red Ball, ½ Court division before attempting multi-divisions.

2D. Rogers Community Team Tennis Logistics and Considerations

The following information will provide all of the requirements to start a RCTT program.

1. Number of participants, court set-up and ball type
2. Duration
3. Equipment, other resources and awards ceremony
4. Program cost
5. Program description

1. Number of Participants and Court Set-Up

The minimum number of participants to run any division of a Rogers Community Team Tennis program is 16 players for the following reasons:

- It will ensure credibility as a RCTT program implies that there are several teams and participants.
- It will allow players to play a variety of opponents, instead of playing the same players each week.
- It will allow for easy substitution in the case of absent players.

This minimum requirement of 16 players allows for 4 teams of 4 players each. The divisions can then be expanded up to 24, which includes 4 teams of 6 players and then 32, which includes 4 teams of 8 players. This incremental increase of eight players will allow two players to be added per team for each of the four teams.

The format of the competition pairs players together based on their skill level. In a four player team (16 player division), the top two players (#1 and #2) would play on the top court and the next two players (#3 and #4), third and fourth best would play on the second court. In a six player team (24 player division), the fifth and sixth best players (#5 and #6) would play on the third court and finally in an eight player team (32 player division), the seventh and eighth best (#7 and #8) players would play on the fourth court.

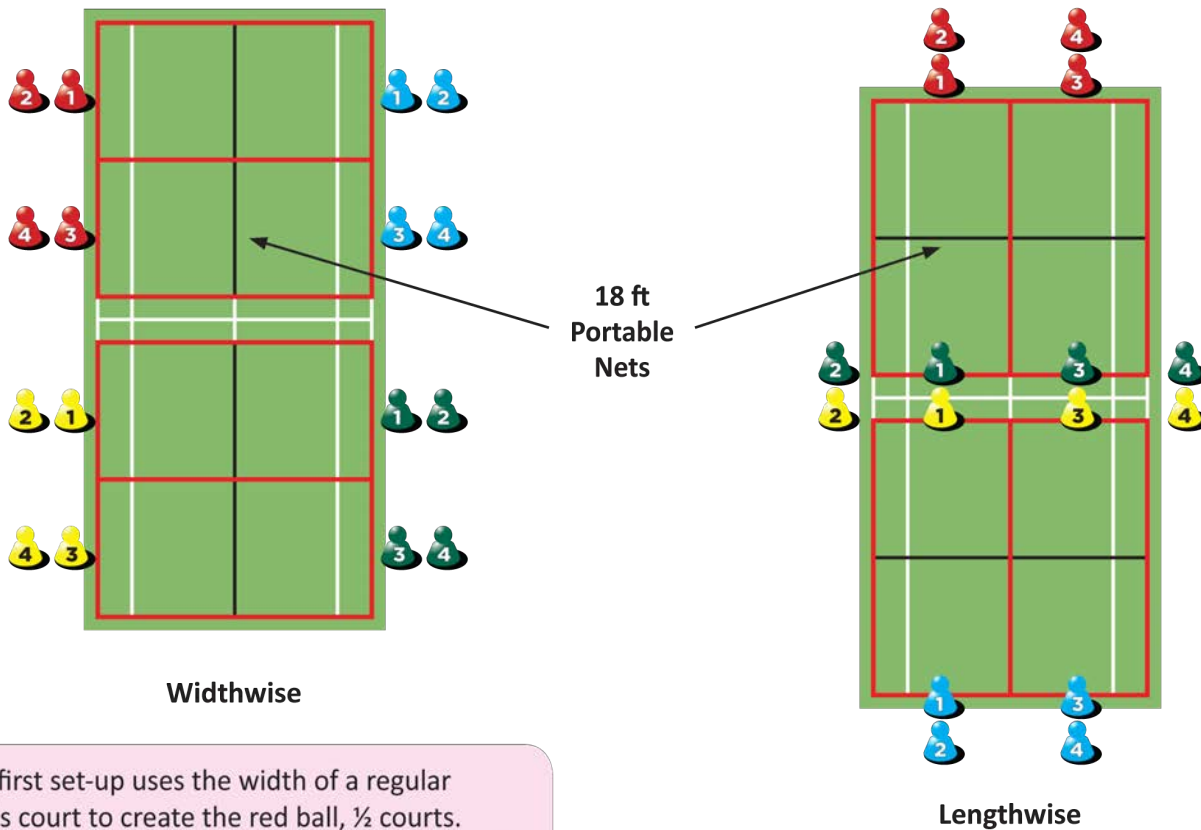
The following are the standard 16 player court set-ups and ball types for the 4 divisions:

NOTE: RED BALL, ½ COURT SET-UP (RECOMMENDED AGES 6-8)

[Click here to view the Rogers Community Team Tennis Court Set-Up Video.](#)



The red ball, ½ court division uses the red ball. The red ball, ½ court set-up can be done in two ways on a tennis court.



The first set-up uses the width of a regular tennis court to create the red ball, ½ courts. This is the ideal set-up as there are a number of natural lines that can be used to create the red ball, ½ courts. It provides more space and this set-up can also be easily expanded to 6 courts. The challenge with this format is that since the ball is travelling width-wise, more balls could end up in the adjacent court.

The second set-up uses the length of a regular tennis court to create the red ball, ½ courts. This is a good option if there is a real concern with balls travelling to the adjacent court, as per above.

Remarks:

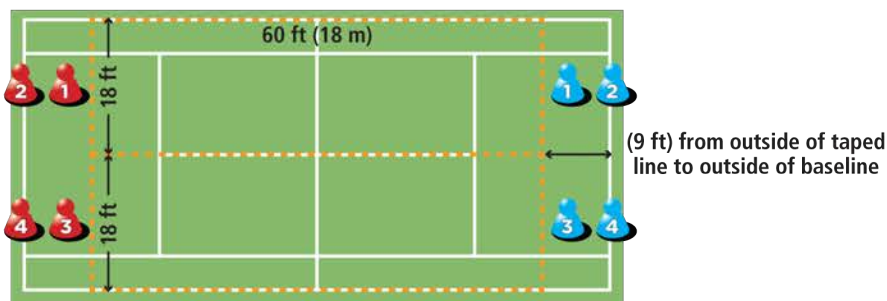
- The red ball, ½ court division can easily be implemented in a gym. Most gyms can fit 4 red ball, ½ courts side-by-side and thus can easily accommodate a 16 player league.
- There are two types of red balls that can be used. The first is the felt ball which is like a regular tennis ball only larger and softer. This is best used on tennis courts. The alternative foam ball is best used in gyms as it is safer and does not skid on the smooth gym floor.

ORANGE BALL, $\frac{3}{4}$ COURT COMPETITION SET-UP

The orange ball, $\frac{3}{4}$ court division uses the orange ball. An orange ball, $\frac{3}{4}$ court set-up has two versions.

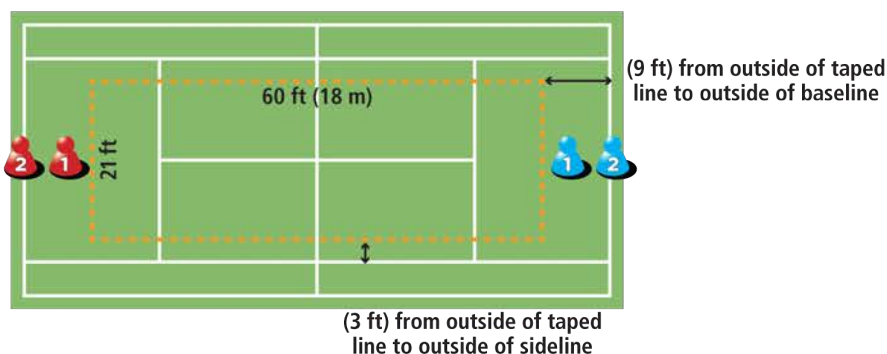
NOTE: The baseline of a $\frac{3}{4}$ court is created $\frac{1}{2}$ way between the regular court service line and baseline as shown below. The sidelines are created by using the regular court doubles sidelines as follows:

Modified Orange Competition Set-up



NOTE: The sidelines are created by marking off 3 feet inside the regular court singles sidelines as follows:

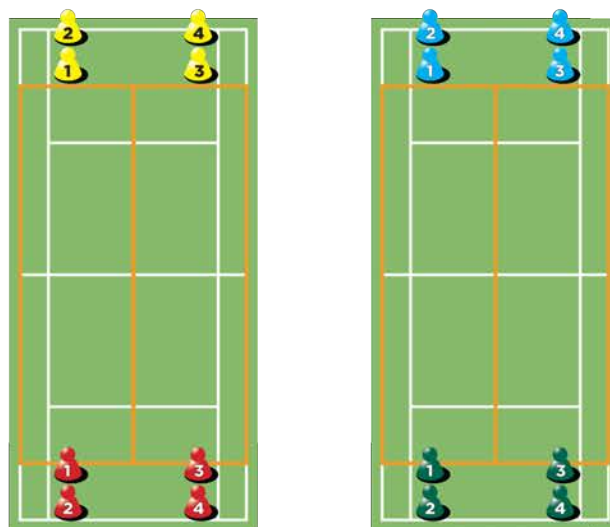
Regulation Orange Competition Set-up



NOTE: A net lowering device, which lowers the net to 80 cm (31.5 in) is encouraged for the $\frac{3}{4}$ regulation orange court set-up.

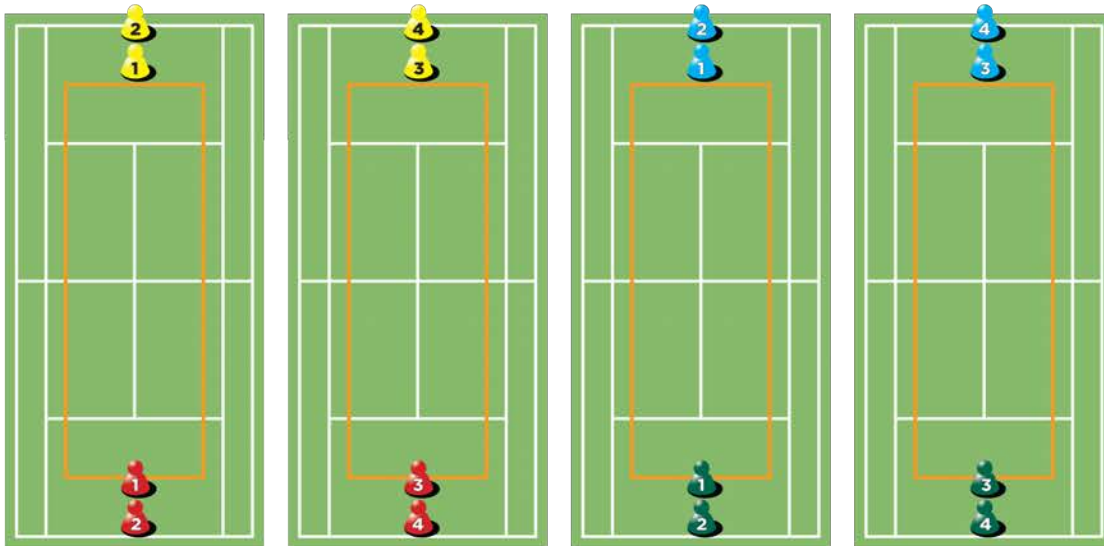
ORANGE BALL, $\frac{3}{4}$ COURT SET-UP (RECOMMENDED AGES 8-10) MODIFIED AND REGULATION

The first version uses a regular tennis court and is able to accommodate two modified orange ball, $\frac{3}{4}$ courts side-by-side and uses the doubles line as the outside border. This version allows 4 players per modified orange ball, $\frac{3}{4}$ court or 8 total players per regular tennis court (for a 16 player division two regular tennis courts are required).



Modified Orange

The second version uses a regular tennis court and is able to accommodate one regulation orange ball, $\frac{3}{4}$ court. This version allows 4 players per regulation orange ball, $\frac{3}{4}$ court (for a 16 player division four regular tennis courts are required).



Regulation Orange

Remarks:

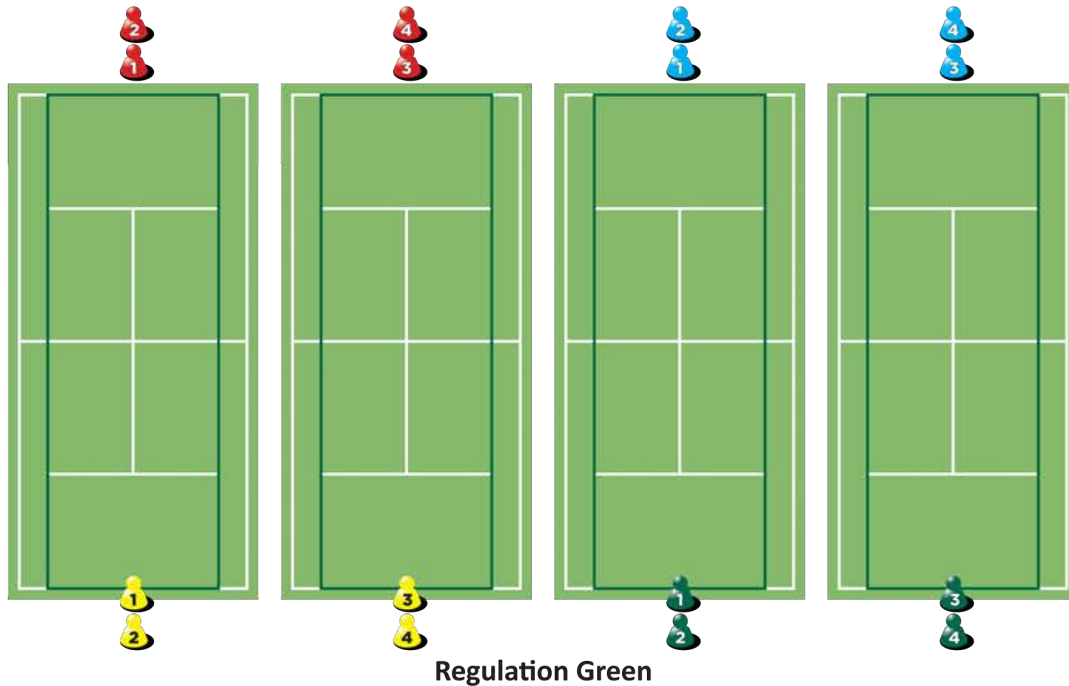
- Players coming from the red ball, $\frac{1}{2}$ court and/or those beginner players starting at orange ball, $\frac{3}{4}$ court will have an easier time using the modified orange ball, $\frac{3}{4}$ court as there is less space to cover.
- If the bulk of the players have already participated in an orange ball, modified $\frac{3}{4}$ court season a natural progression would be for the next season for the same division to use a regulation orange ball, $\frac{3}{4}$ court (this assumes that four courts are available rather than two). This will provide players with the opportunity to now cover more court area, serve cross-court into the service box and experience more angles of play.
- The number of courts you have available may also influence the decision to use either the modified or regulation orange ball, $\frac{3}{4}$ court. A 16 player division using a modified orange ball, $\frac{3}{4}$ court will require two regular tennis courts and using a regulation orange ball, $\frac{3}{4}$ court will require four regular tennis courts.

FULL COURT SET-UP FOR GREEN OR REGULAR BALL (REGULAR AND MODIFIED)

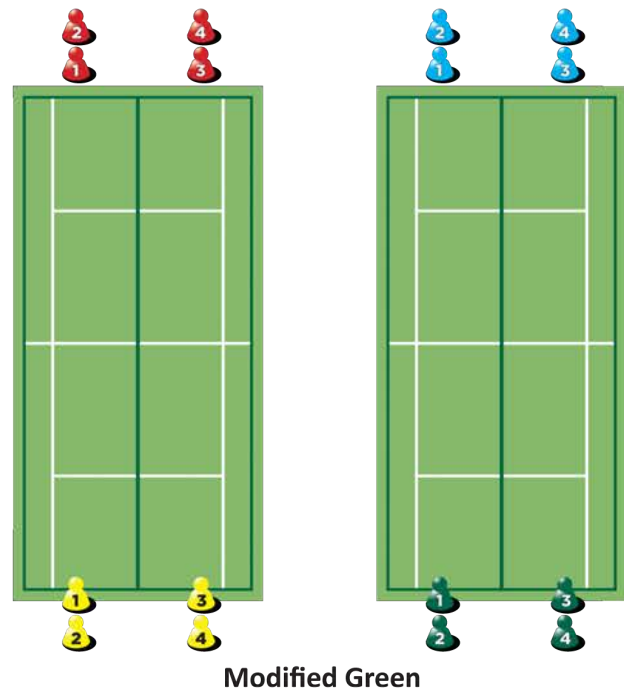
The full court (full length tennis court) has two divisions. The 10-12 age group uses the green ball which is slightly softer than a regular tennis ball. The teen division (12-16) can use a regular tennis ball, but can also use the green ball depending on their skill level.

A full court set-up has two versions.

The first version, which is ideal, uses a regular tennis court. This version allows 4 players per court (for a 16 player division four regular tennis courts are required).



The second version uses a regular tennis court split into two width-wise. This version allows 4 players per modified court or 8 total players per regular tennis court (for a 16 player division two regular tennis courts are required).



2. Duration/Timing of the Rogers Community Team Tennis

Rogers Community Team Tennis can be run for 8 to 11 weeks (this is flexible). An 11-week Rogers Community Team Tennis program would include:

- Weeks 1-3: skill assessment, learning the Rogers Community Team Tennis format and creating teams
- Weeks 4-9: regular season play, where each team will play each other twice
- Weeks 10-11: playoffs and awards ceremony

An 8-week Rogers Community Team Tennis program would include:

- Weeks 1-3: skill assessment, learning the Rogers Community Team Tennis format and creating teams
- Weeks 4-6: regular season play, where each team will play each other once
- Weeks 7-8: playoffs and awards ceremony

Any Rogers Community Team Tennis program shorter than 8 weeks will not be sufficient (assuming one session per week). There is flexibility to run the Rogers Community Team Tennis over a shorter timeframe i.e., by having two sessions a week for 6 weeks. Thus, you will follow the same format, but during a shorter period.

Timing of the Rogers Community Team Tennis:

- Rogers Community Team Tennis programs should ideally be offered by season: i.e., Fall (Oct-Dec); Winter (Jan-Mar); Spring (April-June) and Summer (July-August)
- The advantages of having Rogers Community Team Tennis offered by season include:
 - Players who are interested can participate in tennis year-round.
 - Each new Rogers Community Team Tennis session will give a chance for new players to join and for returning players to have new competitors.
 - It provides flexibility for parents who have their children participate in other activities.
 - It also gives those players, who have improved their skills enough, the opportunity to move up to the next division (i.e., red ball, ½ court to orange ball, ¾ court division).

NOTE: It is discouraged to run a Rogers Community Team Tennis program over 11 weeks that runs through multiple seasons as it will often prevent parents to commit their children.

Duration of each session:

- Ideally the duration of each session is 1.5 hours as it will provide a half hour for practice and one hour for match play.
- If court time is limited, the duration of each session could be reduced (i.e., 60 or 75 minutes) or if court time is readily available, you may consider lengthening the time frame of each to 2 hours especially for the older age divisions.

3. Equipment, Other Resources and Awards Ceremony

Equipment Requirement for each division:

Red Ball, ½ Court	Red balls (felt or foam), portable mini-nets, masking tape, 19" - 23" racquets (if they are supplied by the organizers)
Orange Ball, ¾ Court (recommended ages 8-10)	Orange balls, yellow temporary court lines (for baselines and sidelines), masking tape, 23" - 25" racquets (if they are supplied by the organizers), portable mini-nets (if in gym).
Full Court (there can be two distinct divisions: ages 10-12 and teens 12-16)	Green dot balls for both the 10-12 + teen divisions (12-16) Note: regular balls could also be substituted for the green dots for the teen division.

Remarks:

- The amount of equipment required depends on the size of your Rogers Community Team Tennis program.
- Most equipment will last multiple seasons.

Team shirts, medals and the awards ceremony are essential aspects of Rogers Community Team Tennis and enhances the overall experience for participants. Arrangements will need to be made to order the following:

Team Shirts

- It is important to create a team atmosphere. Having colour-coded team shirts help players identify with their team and contribute to team spirit.

NOTE: Rogers Community Team Tennis organizers should have extra shirts on hand in case a child forgets his/her team shirt. Medals

- Medals are a form of achievement recognition, whether for participation or being a finalist or champion team.
- If possible, give all participants a medal at the end of the session to recognize their efforts.
- Identify each medal with a season date (e.g. Winter 2018 Rogers Community Team Tennis) and the type of accomplishment (e.g., participation award, finalist, or champion).

Awards Ceremony

- At the end of your play-offs, it is important that an awards ceremony is organized to recognize all the players which will include a pizza party to celebrate the conclusion of the Rogers Community Team Tennis program.

4. Determine the program cost

Once all the details for your Rogers Community Team Tennis program have been determined, a budget can be created which will ultimately determine how much you charge each participant. The following is an example.

Assumptions:

1. 16 players for a Red Ball, ½ Court division.
2. One tennis court is used.
3. 11-week program, 1.5 hours per week (total is 16.5 hours).
4. All the equipment is already available at the facility at no extra cost to the organizers.
5. The convenor will spend equal on and off court time with their organizational responsibilities.



Budget: The budget below outlines a 11 week Rogers Community Team Tennis program with 16 kids.

Items	Per week or per unit cost	Cost	Total Cost
Court Fee	\$25 x 1.5 hr/week = \$37.50	\$37.5 x 11 weeks	\$ 412.50
Convener	\$30 x 3 hr/week = \$90	\$90 x 11 weeks	\$ 990.00
Head coach	\$30 x 1.5 hr/week = \$45	\$45 x 11 weeks	\$ 495.00
Team shirt	\$5 per shirt	\$5 x 16 kids	\$ 80.00
Coach shirt	\$6 per shirt	\$6 x 4 coaches	\$ 24.00
Medals	\$5 per medal	\$5 x 16 kids	\$ 80.00
Pizza, marketing, and miscellaneous	\$10 per kid	\$10 x 16 kids	\$ 160.00
Fund for equipment			\$ 100.00
TOTAL COST:			\$2,341.50

Cost per player = \$2,341.50 ÷ 16 = approx. \$147.00

Remarks:

- The registration fee charged should ensure at least a breakeven program, thus being self-sustainable. Otherwise it will put pressure on the organizers to find sponsorship money to sustain the program.
- The program cost per hour based on approx. \$147 for 16.5 hours equals $\$147/16.5 = \8.90 , which is affordable and competitive with other recreational sports, such as soccer, hockey and baseball. This will help ensure that Rogers Community Team Tennis is affordable and that minimum registration numbers are attainable.
- If a profit is the goal or if there are additional administration fees adjust the registration fee accordingly.
- If the head coach and convener is the same person (ideal situation) the cost of a head coach can be eliminated from the above budget. This will result in a lower cost per play (registration fee) or a profit.

5. Create a program description (to be used in the marketing material)

A program description is important to prepare. In creating the program description, thought must be given for all the major components of the league (2D) and what is being offered.

A clear and concise program description is important to effectively communicate the details of the Rogers Community Team Tennis program to parents. An appealing program description (with artwork and benefits included) helps market Rogers Community Team Tennis and ultimately leads to improved registration.

Aside from the program content, the following information should be included in the description:

- Rogers Community Team Tennis location
- The type of Rogers Community Team Tennis program(s) offered and its recommended age group(s)
- Date and time
- Special features offered, e.g. team shirts, medals and celebration parties
- Minimum and maximum participants
- Where to register
- Program cost
- A contact name, email and phone number

It is also a good idea to include an advertisement to recruit parent coaches in the program description.

FILLING YOUR PROGRAM

3A. Determining the Registration Method

Set a minimum and maximum number of players for registration.

Have an efficient registration system in place. It may make sense to use either your club registration or a community centre registration system. It is also important to have a waiting list in the registration system if, for whatever reason, someone decides to drop out and to maintain a list for the next Rogers Community Team Tennis program.

Once a program description is created, it can be used to help attract potential participants; however, the key to success is to **proactively recruit and market Rogers Community Team Tennis in order to fill your registration.**

3B. Finding Players

Feeder Organizations:

It is critical for organizers to think in terms of where the players will be coming from before the Rogers Community Team Tennis program is set up. For long-term success, a clear feeder system should be identified and nurtured. Feeder organizations could be community tennis clubs, schools or community centres used to regularly recruit players. No matter what type of feeders, the convener should have strong ties with one or more of these organizations to ensure an ongoing supply of players.

Here are some of the key strategies you may consider:

- **Word of Mouth**
Running a high quality Rogers Community Team Tennis program is the most important thing. This will ensure the bulk of the players are returning season after season, which will ensure player retention. Word of mouth is the most authentic and cost-effective method to use to market your league.
- **Email Distribution**
Email distribution is an inexpensive way to reach a wide audience. Well before the next season starts, email Rogers Community Team Tennis information to all previous participants, those who were on the waiting list, those who inquired about your program, and all potential participants from feeder organizations. When emailing your program information, include the program description. Use attractive subject titles such as “Keep your kids in the game this fall!” Monitor the registration once the first batch of emails is sent out. Send a second batch of emails if registration is not filling up quickly. Your goal is to fill up the spots as soon as possible.
- **Social Media: Twitter and Facebook**
Social media is a powerful marketing tool. Post your program description on these web sites. Post comments. Word of mouth and referral is a powerful form of marketing.
- Post your Rogers Community Team Tennis information on Kijiji or in other forums.
- Put an ad on the feeder organization’s website. Place a Google advertisement.
- Create an attractive and colourful poster flyer. Post it at the community centres, tennis clubs and feeder organizations.

ROGERS COMMUNITY TEAM TENNIS IMPLEMENTATION

4A. Training for Parent Coaches and Scorekeepers

Once the participation numbers are finalized, the convener, along with the head coach, should make sure that a sufficient number of volunteer parent coaches and scorekeepers are recruited. In general, one scorekeeper is required per court and one parent coach is required per team.

A training session should be conducted by the head coach a week or two before the league starts. The purpose of the training is to ensure all the volunteers:

- understand the purpose and structure of Rogers Community Team Tennis
- are familiar with court set-up, playing format and scoring system
- know their role and responsibilities
- understand the practice content

Welcome Email:

A welcome email to parents should be sent by the convener prior to starting the Rogers Community Team Tennis program. This email will provide an overview of Rogers Community Team Tennis.

4B. Skills Assessment to Create Balanced Teams

Forming balanced teams is the head coach's responsibility and is a **critical factor for Rogers Community Team Tennis success**. The head coach should spend one to three weeks conducting a skills assessment, scrimmaging and team rebalancing. See 4E, Week-by-Week Outline for specific details.

Below are two examples of skill assessment approaches that can be used to evaluate the player's level and ultimately make balanced teams.

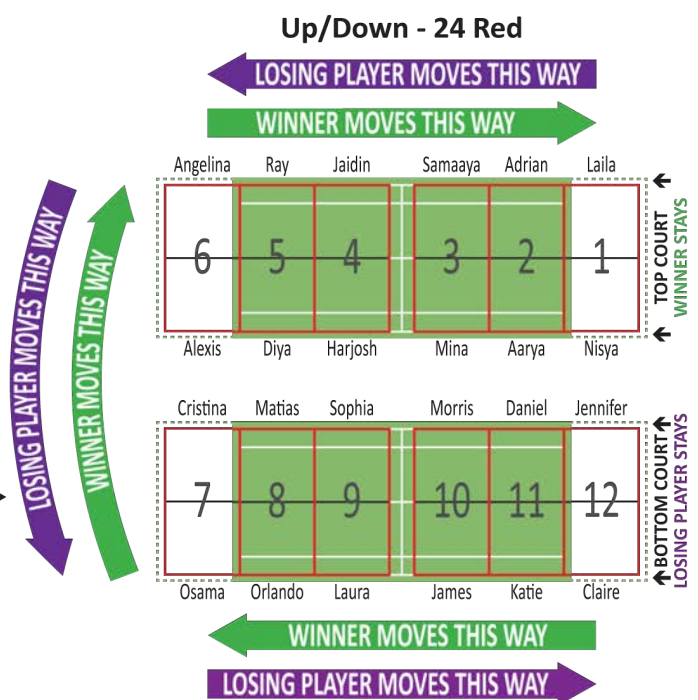
Up/Down Court (or Ups and Downs)

Up/Down Court is a commonly used and accurate way of assessing skill level. For it to be used, you will require enough court space to run it. For example: for the red ball, ½ court, a maximum of 12 players can play on one regular tennis court.

Below is an example of how to run an Up/Down Court Skills Assessment for 24 kids on Red Ball, ½ Court. Resources required are:

- 2 tennis courts
- 12 mini-nets
- Tape and lines to mark court boundary
- 12 clipboards and 12 total helpers (parent coaches and scorekeeper volunteers)

12 mini-courts will be set up with 2 players playing each other in a time-based match (e.g., 5-7 mins per round). At the end of each round, the winner will move up one court and the losing player moves down one court.



By the end of the session(s), skill level in the group will be fairly clear. Volunteers on each court will help keep score and move the players to the correct location.

King or Queen of the Court

If space is an issue, the King or Queen of the Court skills assessment can be used. This assessment is run using the same number of courts as required for Rogers Community Team Tennis. Depending on the size of the division, up to four players play a game of King or Queen of the Court on each court area. One player is designated as the king or queen while the rest are designated as challengers. Each challenger will play two points against the King/Queen, and if he/she wins both points, he/she will become the new king/queen. For the purpose of the assessment, each point counts.

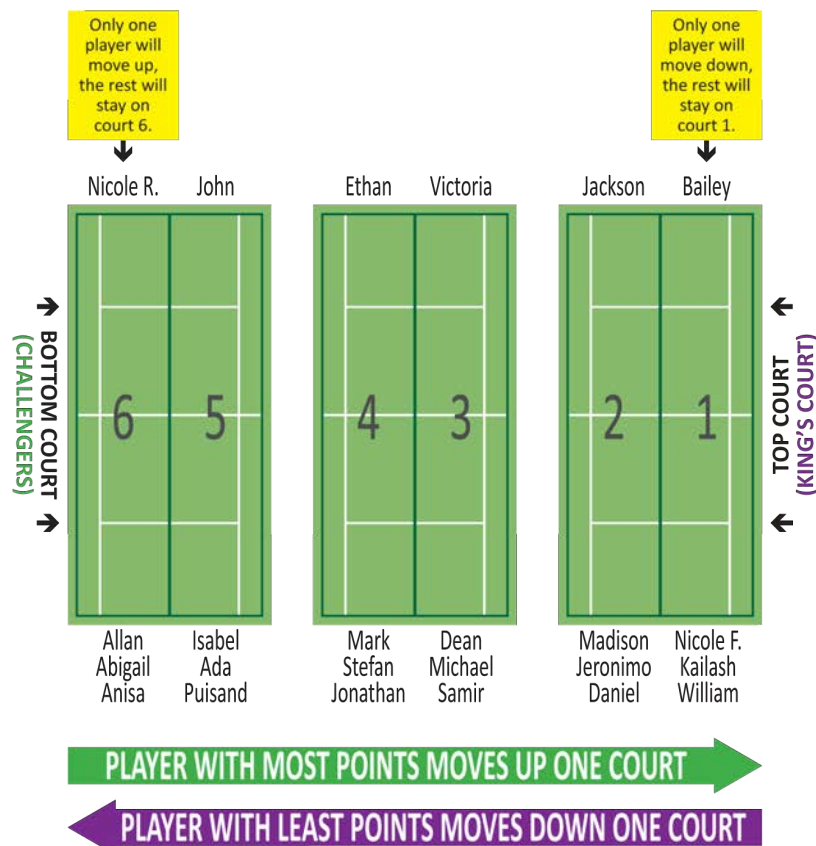
At the end of a timed round (e.g., 7-10 minutes), the player with the most points will move up one court and the player with the least points will move down one court.

Example:

24 kids are on Orange Ball, modified $\frac{3}{4}$ court. The resources required are:

- 3 tennis courts (6 modified $\frac{3}{4}$ courts)
- 3 sets of rubber lines to mark the baseline of the $\frac{3}{4}$ court
- Tape to mark off court boundaries
- 6 score clipboards and 6 scorekeepers

King / Queen of the Court - 24



By the end of the session(s), skill level in the group will be fairly clear. Volunteers on each court will help keep score and move the players to the correct location. Each court is best monitored by a scorekeeper who can help keep score and move the players to the correct location.

4C. Creating the Teams

After skill assessments are completed, the head coach should rank the players according to skill level and create balanced teams.

Example: With a Rogers Community Team Tennis program of 24 players, there will be four teams of six players each.

Steps:

1. In order to have fair teams each team will have one player from each of the 6 levels (tiers). The levels (tiers) are created by identifying the top four players that go into tier No. 1. The next best four players go into tier No.2 and so on until you have created 6 tiers of four players.

Level	Players	Remarks
Tier 1	1a, 1b, 1c, 1d	These are the 4 best players. They are of similar ability.
Tier 2	2a, 2b, 2c, 2d	These are second best 4 players. They are of similar ability.
Tier 3	3a, 3b, 3c, 3d	These are third best 4 players. They are of similar ability.
Tier 4	4a, 4b, 4c, 4d	These are fourth best 4 players. They are of similar ability.
Tier 5	5a, 5b, 5c, 5d	These are fifth best 4 players. They are of similar ability.
Tier 6	6a, 6b, 6c, 6d	These are the 4 weakest players. They are of similar ability.

2. By placing one player from each tier each, balanced teams will be created.

Team	1st Court (Tier 1 & 2)	2nd Court (Tier 3 & 4)	3rd Court (Tier 5 & 6)
Red (a)	1a, 2a	3a, 4a	5a, 6a
Blue (b)	1b, 2b	3b, 4b	5b, 6b
Green (c)	1c, 2c	3c, 4c	5c, 6c
Yellow (d)	1d, 2d	3d, 4d	5d, 6d

NOTE: A 16-player Rogers Community Team Tennis program will have 4 players per team and two court levels, and a 32-player Rogers Community Team Tennis program will have 8 players per team and will have four court levels.

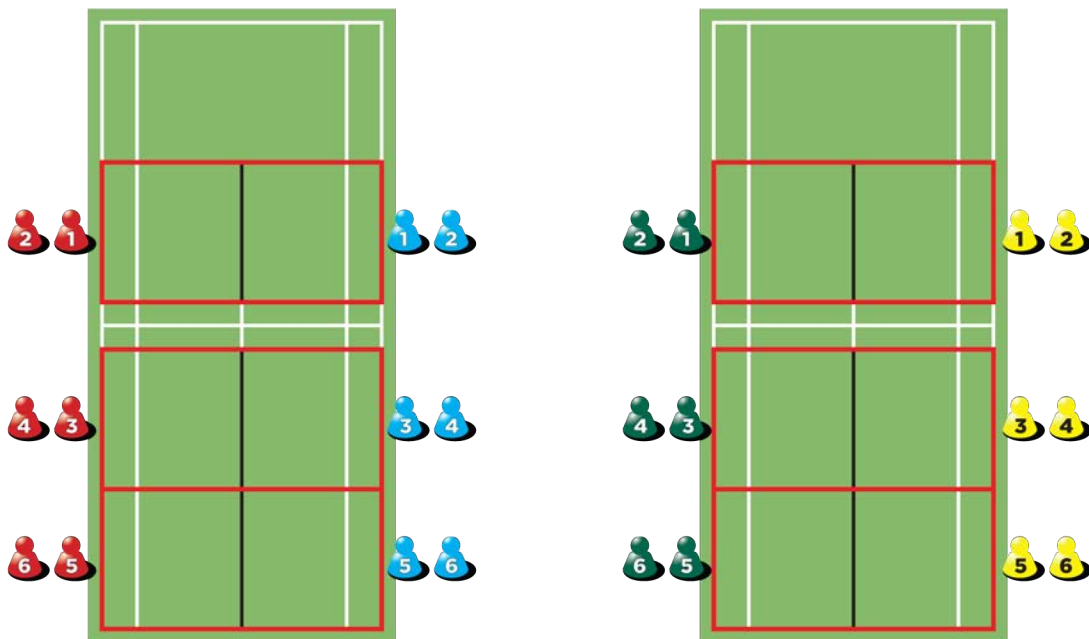


4D. Format of Match Play

It is important to have a standardized and structured playing format throughout the entire Rogers Community Team Tennis season so that participants and volunteers will know what to expect each week. Each week two teams will face each other. Each match is scored, not by using the traditional tennis scoring (15, 30, 40, ad, etc...) but a simple 1 point for every point won (1, 2, 3, 4, etc...). Each match result will contribute to the overall score of their team, in other words regardless if a player(s)/team wins or loses their point total in each match will be tallied to determine the overall winner of the dual match. For example: the red team could have 104 points and the blue 100 points, thus the winner would be the red team. This will consist of three rounds of 15-20 min timed matches:

1. Match 1: Singles - the players from the same tier compete against each other (i.e., 1 red vs. 1 blue, and 2 red vs. 2 blue). There are two matches going on at the same time on each court. Each match will play 4 points (each player serving two points each) and then switch with the other match that is taking place on that court who will play 4 points and this rotation will continue for the duration of the time.
2. Match 2: Singles - the players from different tiers compete against each other (i.e., 1 red vs. 2 blue, and 2 red vs. 1 blue). Same format as match 1 above.
3. Match 3: Alternate Hit Doubles - players who played in matches 1 and 2 above will now pair up with their teammate and play alternate hit doubles (i.e., 1 red and 2 red vs. 1 blue and 2 blue). Each team serves two points (each player from the team serving one point each). The receiver returns it, then the server's partner must hit it next, followed by the receiver's partner and so on. This alternate hit sequence continues throughout the rally and if a player hits it out of turn (hits two times in a row), the team loses the point.

[Click here to view the Rogers Community Team Tennis Match Play Formats Video.](#)



Widthwise - 2 Courts

Sample for 24 player Rogers Community Team Tennis, Red Court

MATCH SCHEDULE FOR A 24 PLAYER ROGERS COMMUNITY TEAM TENNIS PROGRAM

	MATCH 1			MATCH 2			MATCH 3		
	Crt 1	Crt 2	Crt 3	Crt 1	Crt 2	Crt 3	Crt 1	Crt 2	Crt 3
Red vs. Blue	1R v 1B	3R v 3B	5R v 5B	1R v 2B	3R v 4B	5R v 6B	1R & 2R v 1B & 2B	3R & 4R v 3B & 4B	5R & 6R v 5B & 6B
	2R v 2B	4R v 4B	6R v 6B	2R v 1B	4R v 3B	6R v 5B			
Green vs. Yellow	1G v 1Y	3G v 3Y	5G v 5Y	1G v 2Y	3G v 4Y	5G v 6Y	1G & 2G v 1Y & 2Y	3G & 4G v 3Y & 4Y	5G & 6G v 5Y & 6Y
	2G v 2Y	4G v 4Y	6G v 6Y	2G v 1Y	4G v 3Y	6G v 5Y			

NOTE: The schedule above will be adjusted as follows for 16 and 32 player Rogers Community Team Tennis programs. In a 16-player Rogers Community Team Tennis program there will only be matches on court 1 & 2 and for a 32-player Rogers Community Team Tennis program there will be matches on a 4th court.

Remarks:

- The goal of this format is to ensure that the stronger players don't play weaker players.
- If a player on a team is absent, the remaining player will play every point in each of the three matches.
- The alternate hit doubles is a more versatile format compared to regular doubles as it easily accommodates absent players.
- As the Rogers Community Team Tennis program progresses, some players will likely improve more than others and will be able to play in a higher tier. In this case a team's line up should be adjusted by the head coach.

4E. Week-by-Week Outline

The following is an example of an 11-week program:

Week #1	Assessment of playing levels for the purpose of establishing balanced teams using King/Queen of the Court and/or Up/Down. Initial dividing of players into tiers (see 4C).
Week #2	Reassessment of playing levels and introduction of playing format. Using the tiers created in week #1 assign each tier of 4 players to their respective court i.e.: top four players on court #1, second tier players on court #2, third tier players court #3 etc... Readjust players as required. Make initial draft of teams with the utmost care to create balanced teams.
Week #3	Practicing (see section #5) and Scrimmaging with their coach and team. During match play use the regular three-match format (see 4D) with shortened time for matches so that time is allotted for each team to play a second team. This session will be used for final re-balancing of teams, if necessary.
Weeks #4-9	Regular Season. Handout team shirts at the start of week #4. Rogers Community Team Tennis begins in week 4, each team will play against each other a total of two times over the next six weeks.
Week #10	The Play-Offs Begin. The No.1 ranked team will play against the No. 4 ranked team and the No. 2 ranked team will play against the No. 3 ranked team in the semi-finals.
Week # 11	Play-off Finals. Between - the two winning teams of week 10 along with a consolation match between the two losing teams. This will be followed by the awards ceremony (each participant will get a medal) and pizza (see 4G).

4F. Tracking Results

As in any league competition, it is important to track and post results, as it will help create a fun competitive environment as teams compete to finish first.

4G. Play-Offs and Awards Ceremony

The play-offs are the highlight of the Rogers Community Team Tennis program and determine the overall champion team. In the semifinal play-offs (second last week of the program), the team that finishes first will play against the 4th placed team and the 2nd and 3rd place team will play against each other. In the finals, the winning teams will play for the championship and the losing teams will play for 3rd and 4th place.

The match play format during the play-offs is the same as the regular season format.

The awards ceremony will take place immediately following the championship play-off matches. It is important to recognize all the players for their participation and improvement over the course of the league. Additional awards may be given to the most improved player, sportsmanship, etc. As well the awards ceremony will allow you to recognize your volunteers for their tremendous contributions to Rogers Community Team Tennis. The head coach will ask each parent coach to write words of encouragement about their players ahead of time. These encouraging words will be conveyed when giving out the medals.

The awards ceremony will conclude with a pizza party to celebrate the end of the Rogers Community Team Tennis program.



