



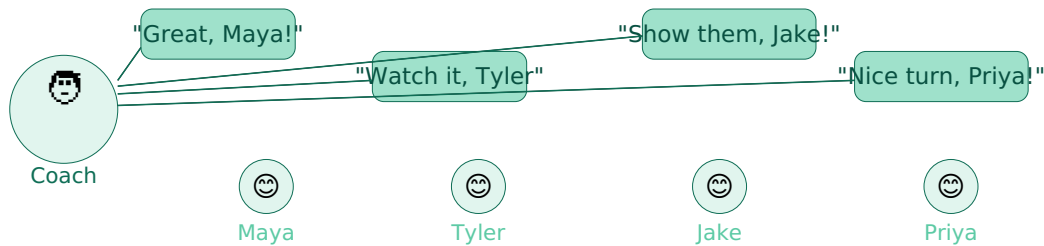
Dennis Van der Meer's Blueprint

Your complete guide to coaching junior tennis at summer camp



Know your students before you teach

Names are your most powerful coaching tool



Learn every camper's name on Day 1 — make it a game if you have to. Then use names all lesson long. When a child hears their name, they know they are *seen*, not just part of a crowd. For 5-year-olds especially, hearing their name from a coach feels like a superpower.



Safety and authority come first

State the rules once — then hold them every single day

- 🚫 **No student moves or picks up a ball** until you say so. Establish this on minute one.
- 🚫 **All players behind the baseline** when others are hitting.
- 🗣️ **One voice gives instructions** — yours. Say it clearly, say it once.
- 🧹 **Balls are cleared from the court** before any drill begins.

Children feel safer — and behave better — when they know the boundaries are real. Consistent rules also free your mind to focus on coaching rather than managing chaos.



Teach with two voices: group and private

Praise publicly — correct privately

🔊 Group voice

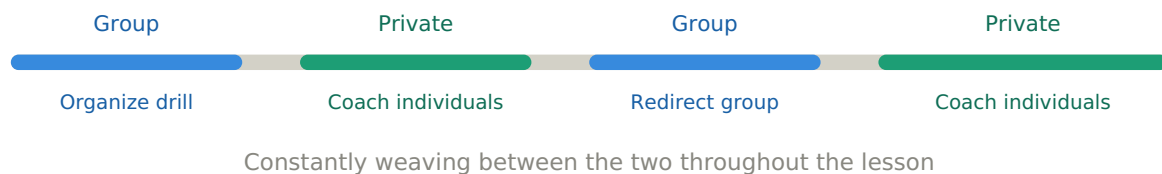
Clear, projected, carries across the court. Use it to start and stop drills, give safety instructions, and make universal corrections.

"Okay everyone, balls stop — watch this!"

🗣️ Private voice

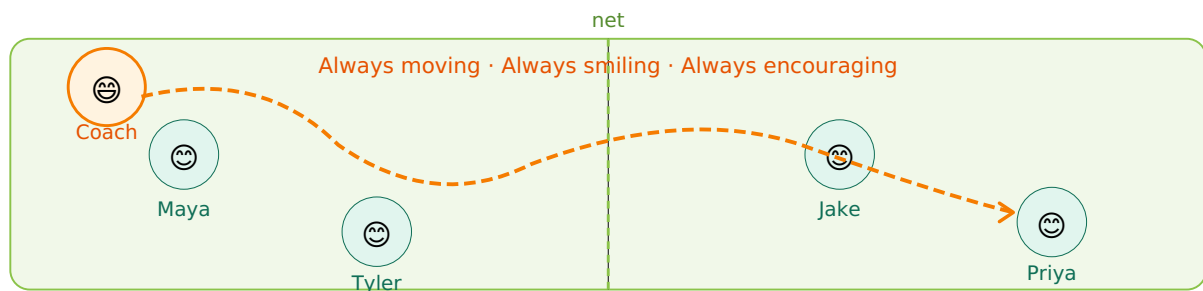
Conversational, close, almost a whisper. Public correction embarrasses — private coaching opens kids up.

"Hey Sofia, just between us — try turning your shoulder a little earlier."



The coach is always moving — never standing still

Your energy and attitude set the tone for every child on court



Plant your feet and you lose the group. A moving coach signals to every child that they might be next — it keeps everyone switched on and engaged.

Your smile is a coaching tool. Children mirror the adult in front of them. Walk on court with energy and warmth and they will give it straight back to you.

Never fold your arms, check your phone, or lean on the fence. Every second you are visible, you are teaching — through your posture, your expression, and your movement.

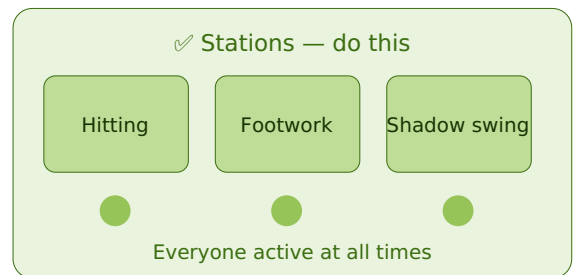
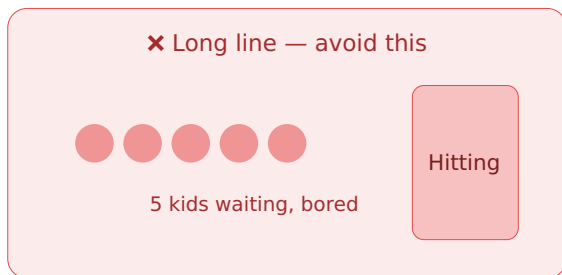
Cover the whole court. Move from baseline to net, side to side. If you only stand at one end, half the group feels invisible.

The moment a coach goes still, the energy drains out of the session. Stay in motion, keep smiling, and your players will match you step for step.



Hate the line — keep everyone moving

A child standing still is a child not improving

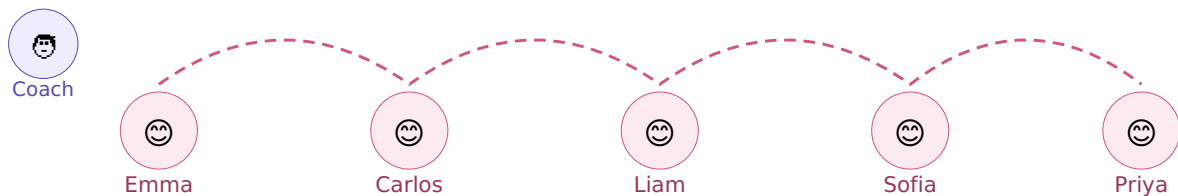


Set up stations, rotate small groups, and use both sides of the court. When children know exactly what to do and the drill runs itself, you are free to move through the group and teach individuals.



Give every student a private moment

Every child should feel like they had a private lesson



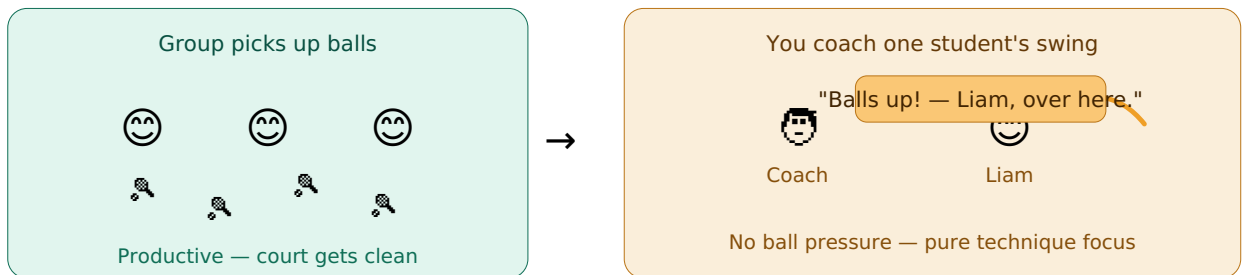
Moving continuously — each student gets their private moment

While the drill runs, you move — never planted in one spot. Stop beside one student, drop into your private voice, give one tip, watch one or two swings, and move on. Use names to keep the group self-managing while you coach individuals: "Keep going everyone — Carlos, you're next — I'll be right there, Priya."



Ball pick-up is your best coaching moment

Resist the instinct to collect balls — coach instead

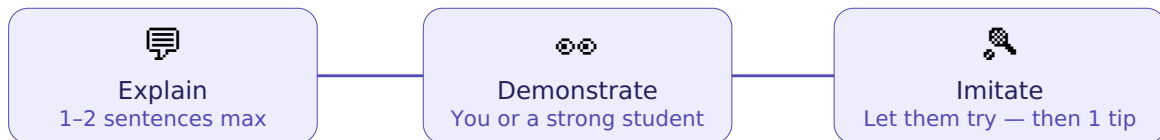


When balls scatter across the court, say "Balls up, everyone!" in your group voice, then pull one student aside. Use that 60–90 seconds with no ball pressure to fix a grip, do shadow swings, or work on footwork. Rotate who you pull aside each time — over a lesson, four or five students get that dedicated private moment.



Explain → Demonstrate → Imitate

Van der Meer's core teaching sequence



One piece of private feedback, using the student's name, after they try

A 6-year-old does not need a biomechanical breakdown. They need to see it and swing. A 13-year-old can handle a little more detail, but still wants to hit the ball more than they want to listen. After they try, give one piece of feedback per student — privately, using their name.



Understand your age groups

Adapt the game to the child, not the child to the game



Ages 5-7

Learning through movement and play. Keep explanations under 15 seconds. Red ball, mini court. If they're laughing, you're winning.



Ages 8-11

Real stroke technique in short doses. They can follow multi-step instructions and keep score. Orange and green ball progressions work well.



Ages 12-14

Tactical concepts, constructive correction, real competition. Treat them with maturity and they'll work hard for you.

RED

Ages 5-7 · Mini court

ORANGE

Ages 8-10 · 3/4 court

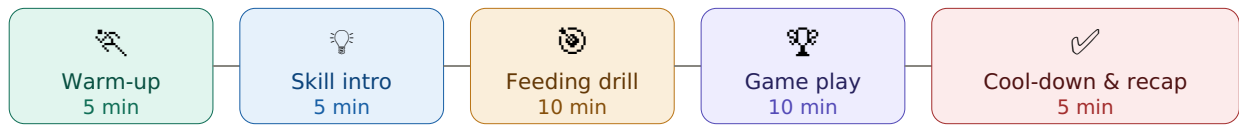
GREEN

Ages 11-14 · Full court



Structure every lesson the same way

Consistent architecture builds trust and focus



1

Warm-up

Movement, fun, get them loose. Tag games, shadowing, balloon rallies.

2

Skill introduction

One stroke or concept only. Brief explanation, then demonstrate. One concept per lesson.

3

Feeding drill

Controlled repetition through hand or basket feeding. You control the ball, they build the pattern.

4

Game or point play

Apply the skill under light pressure. Keep score, add targets, make it competitive.

5

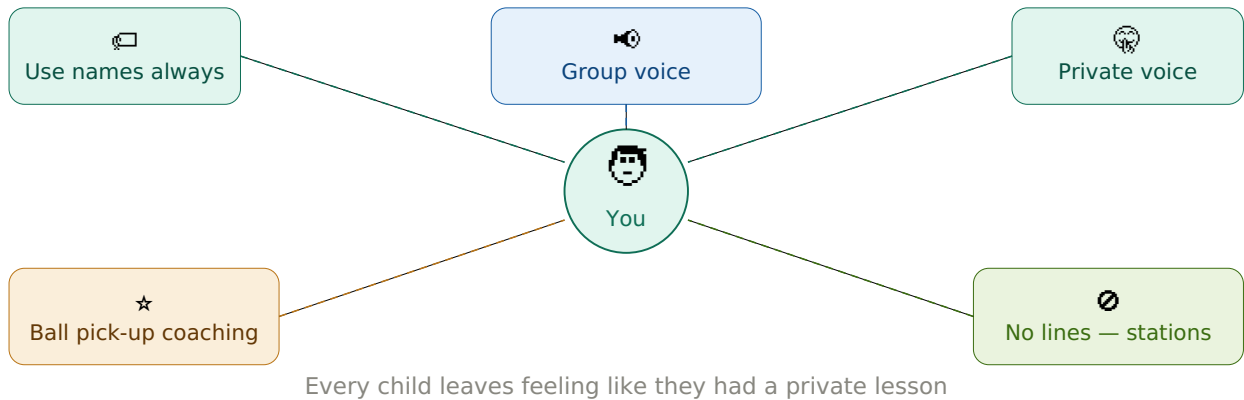
Cool-down and recap

One key takeaway. End on a high. Every child should leave wanting to come back.



The Van der Meer picture — all together

What a perfect lesson looks and sounds like



You arrive knowing every name. You greet each child as they walk on. A brisk warm-up in your group voice, then a 90-second demo. The feeding drill starts and you immediately begin moving — dropping into a private whisper with each child: "Good, Emma, now step into it." When balls scatter, you call "Balls up!" and pull one student: "Liam, over here." Ninety seconds of pure swing work — no ball pressure, just technique. Then you do it all again.

By the end of the lesson, every child heard their name said warmly by a coach who clearly knew who they were. They leave wanting to come back. That is the Van der Meer standard — and at 16, the fact that you're thinking about *how* to teach before stepping on court means you're already well on your way.