

SPORTS ACTION MACHINE

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SAM™ TRAINING DRILLS

Rule number 1 = Get the ball over the net,
Rule number 2 = Keep the ball within the lines,
Rule number 3 = Smash 'em hard.

The tennis court consists of a rectangular box with lines marked for specific reasons.

These lines determine whether the ball is in or out. We all know where they are and what they do, but what we don't do is learn how to use them to our advantage.

After working in the sporting and tennis industry for many years and coming into the sport from a boxing and martial arts background, it was easy to see what players and coaches are doing wrong. I will refer to the two sports to give prime examples of how the two cross over to share similar traits. The two sports are both single person sports or individual sports exempting doubles tennis. The two require exceptional hand and eye co-ordination and great footwork, not to mention fitness.

For the boxer, his lines remain in the square ring normally measuring 5 x 5 meters, his major tools are his jab (the forehand) and the right cross (the backhand). The tennis player's ring measures larger than the boxer which means his or her foot speed must be quicker to provide coverage. The boxer can not afford to have poor footwork as this can hinder his movement and may block him into the corner. As the tennis

player moves on court, he or she will move to favour their best hand... normally the forehand as this is the hand that tennis players train with the most. Our boxer friend, can not afford to just use the left hand jab to win a bout, he will need to call on the use of the right hand to change the combination, set up for a multi punch combo and to avoid the opponent's jab.

Our tennis player on the other hand hits 2 to 3 hundred more forehands per training session giving the forehand a definite advantage. This also hinders his backhand, which in turn can cost the tennis player major points over the entire tennis game. The best way to avoid this is to train to use each punch/stroke and train as if the backhand was a normal part of your tennis game, not just a shot you play.

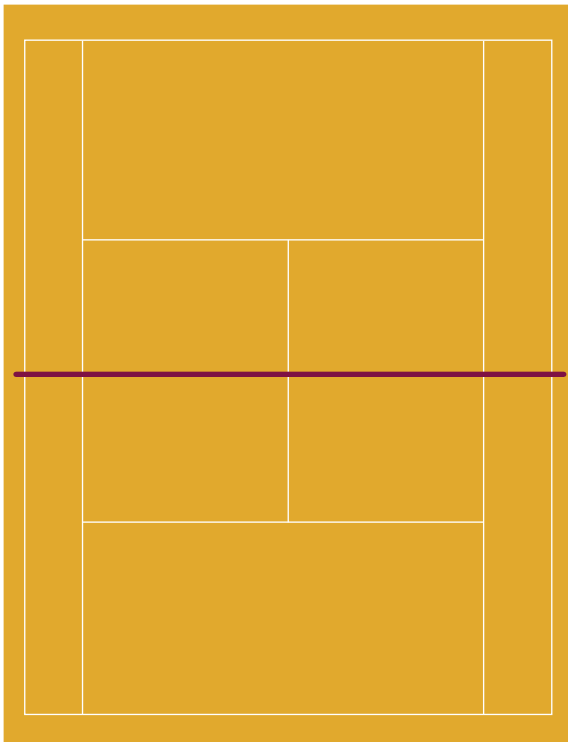
The fastest and the best way to train for perfect strokes is with the use of a ball machine. Ball machine training will help develop many skills such as hand and eye co-ordination, stroke perfection, muscle memory, visualization skills, confidence, stamina, endurance, fitness and focus, just to name a few. Ball machine training can date back to the late 1960's early 70's with the development of ball machines. Professional tennis players realised the importance of ball machine training and have been utilising the power of our BIG SAM™ robot ball machine for years.

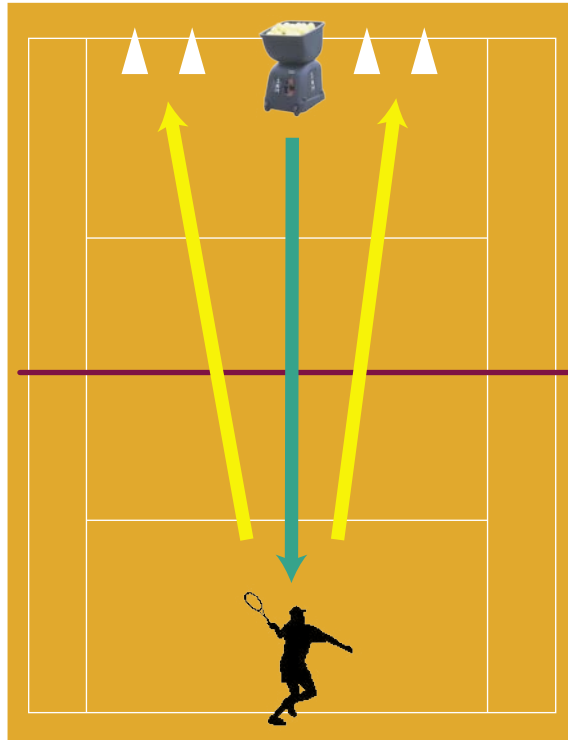
Today's tennis game has changed being a lot faster and played at the baseline with heavy topspin. But the game should not just be practice for baseline play, to excel in tennis every aspect of the game must be perfect, every shot should be faultless, and game play and thought should be clear and decisive. Have you ever watch a game of tennis on TV and wondered why are they rallying backwards and forward... is this a test of strength, a test of who will fault. This is like a boxer standing toe to toe allowing each other a punch to see who will stand in the end. In tennis, this isn't to bad as it can provide some entertainment to a degree, but for the poor boxer punches hurt, so game play is very important. Footwork, and movement is extremely important as the aim is to punch and not get punched.

From a young age, I have studied martial arts, but this doesn't make me a master at it, along with attending classes 2-3 times a week for an hour, most of my training was done at home practicing for hours upon hours, getting faster and faster and developing perfect technics. In America a tennis player is told to beg, borrow or steal a ball machine (stealing is crime and should not be contemplated) and must train a minimum of 4 x one hour sessions a week and that's just the minimum requirement. This is why America produces such great talent. Its fair to say that a most countries don't have the population like America, but why is there a difference between the best tennis player in America and the best tennis player from another country? Australia for its size has good talent, I agree but since Rod Laver has there really be a great talent? There are a lot of good tennis players, but great tennis players are harder to find. With the game getting faster and faster the need for stroke perfection is essential for anyone contemplating a successful tennis career.

A good tool for any player is a good coach. But don't let your coach stop you from perfecting your game. There is no way your game can develop 2-3 hours a week while being coached. Coaching is essential but it's the homework you do that wins the game. Training with a ball machine will build you the skills that can't be built with the few hours spent with your coach. Your coach will not give you a 300 ball rally allowing you to build on your stamina, endurance, stroke perfection, eye co-ordination and game smarts. It has been proven that constant repetition training builds strength, speed, physical fitness and timing, all essential for any sportsman or woman.

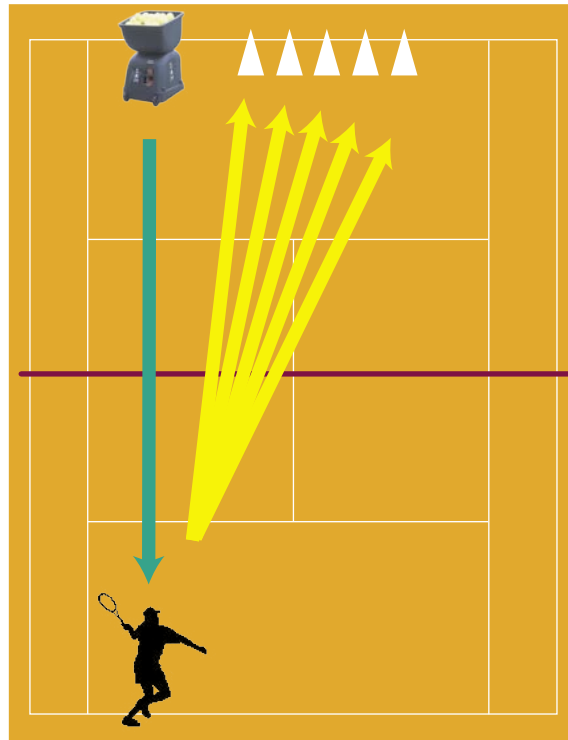
Outside your normal coaching hours, the ball machine will deliver perfect shots, allowing you to further train and develop your strokes. With each stroke come perfection and confidence. Here are a few training drills to speed up your training.





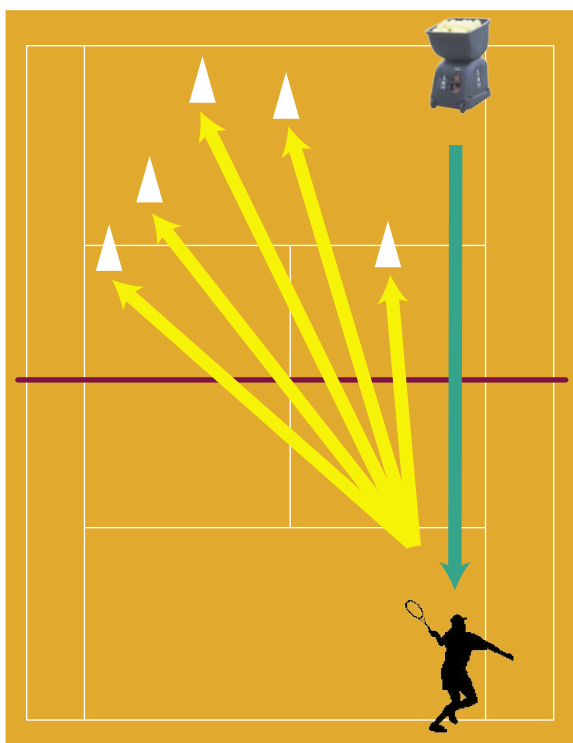
DRILL 1 – LEFT RIGHT COMBO

Place the SAM™ ball machine in the centre of the court. Set the ball machine to fire straight down the centre at a steady pace. Most of the SAM™ ball machines will hold 250+ balls so you can get the most from your training session with little interruptions of reloading the ball machine. With the help of visual aids such as SAM™ Target Cones hats marked in orange in our diagram, place 2 SAM™ Target Cones on either sides of the machine as indicated in the diagram. Then hit the first ball in between the left set of cones and the second ball to the right set of cones and repeat until all balls have been emptied out of the ball machine. This is the left - right combo, this teaches us timing and placement. You can easily adjust speed and feed rate on your SAM™ ball machine to your level of comfort. Try playing around with the speed and feed rate to vary the ball delivery. This is a basic drill but a good one to start off with and a great drill to warm up to. Always remember to warm up correctly to avoid injury and take care in stroke movement trying to correct any incorrect footwork and racquet handling.

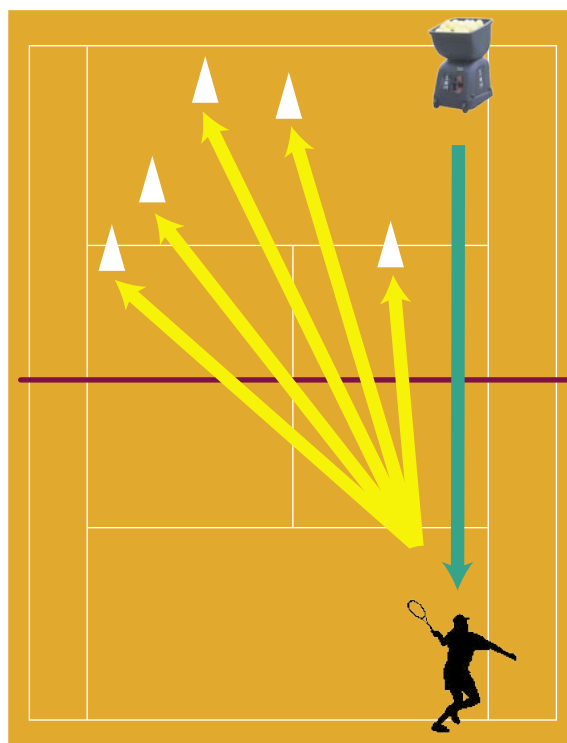


DRILL 2 – DOWN THE LINE - MAXIMUM ANGLE

Down the line drills are an important drill for learning placement of the ball. Start off by placing the SAM™ ball machine on the top left (as shown on diagram 2) firing tennis balls straight down the line. Once your SAM™ ball machine is in place, spread 5 SAM™ Target Cones along the baseline. Once set up is complete return a ball to each of the SAM™ Target Cones. This will teach you to return with a controlled motion and aid muscle memory. To spice things up a little, you may wish to scatter the numbered SAM™ Target Cones around in no particular order, this will help in further motion control and also aid in placement confidence of receiving in a straight line and placing and returning on maximum angle.



PART 2



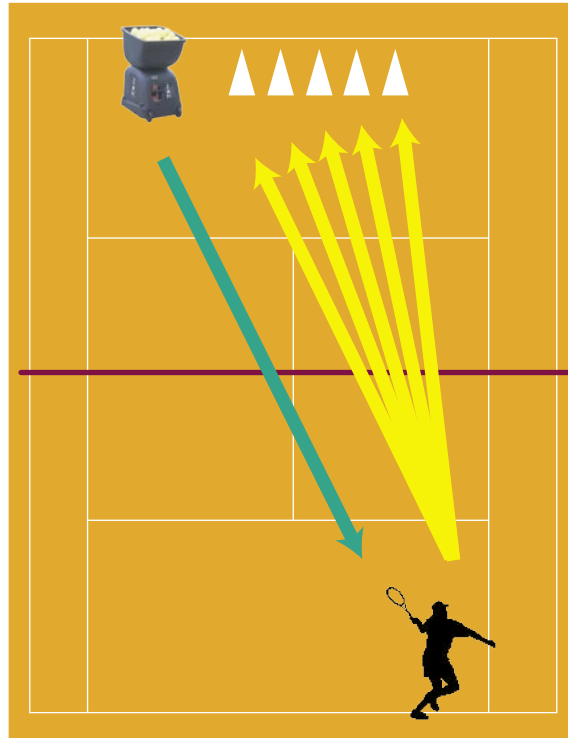
PART 3

Part 2

Alternate and place the SAM™ ball machine on the right hand side to learn to receive straight down the right hand side of the court and return on maximum angle as shown in this diagram.

Part 3

Using a scattered pattern, place the SAM™ Target Cones around the court. Then hit each ball as if it was a winning return. To work on your footwork, sidestep to either side alternating from forehand to back hand. The possibility of scattering the SAM™ Target Cones are limited to your imagination. The more variations you adopt the more creative your shots can be.



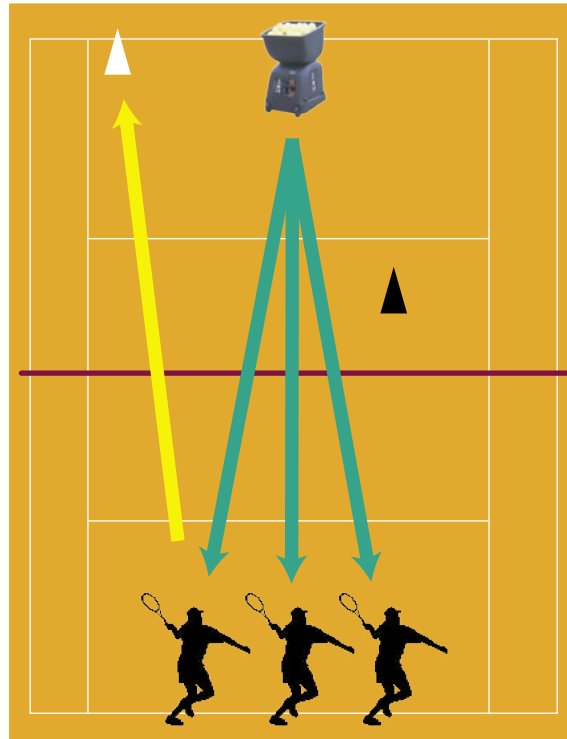
Drill 3 - Cross Cut

Place the SAM™ ball machine on the left side angled to cut diagonally across court. Then place numbered SAM™ Target Cones across the court as targets once again changing the SAM™ Target Cones for alternative placement training. Keep in mind that there are many combinations that the hats can be placed in to receive the return balls.

The cross cut drill is designed to have you receiving balls on maximum angle and returning on down the line or to any position across the base line. Once again place the SAM™ Target Cones in order and then scatter them across for variance in drill exercise. You may even want to set your SAM™ ball machine with some top or back spin.

This is a great drill for training as most players tend to hit the ball straight back to their opponent as this is the easiest stroke play back, due to it being returned in a straight line with minimum to no angle change off the racquet.

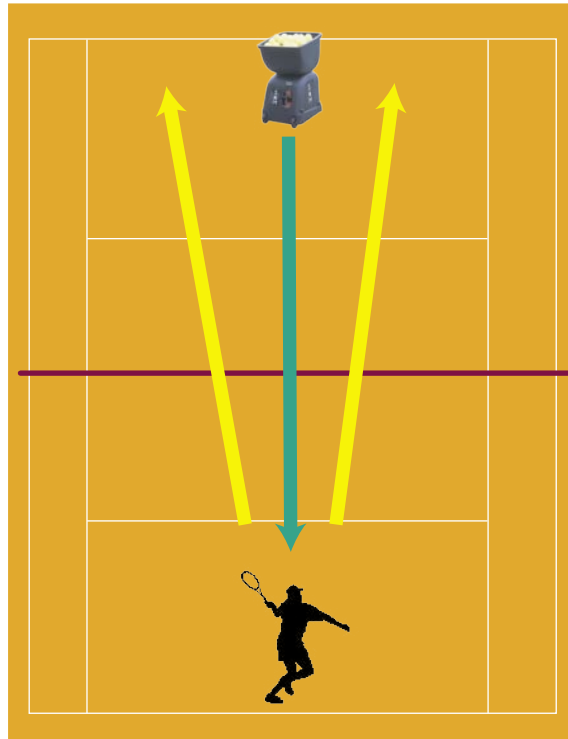
After completing this drill, move the SAM™ ball machine to the right side and fire tennis balls to your backhand. This along with the previous drill are designed to perfect your strokes, raise confidence levels and gaining hand and eye co-ordination on different angles.



Oscillation Drills

Set your SAM™ ball machine to oscillate in the centre of the court, while placing one SAM™ Target Cone either on the left or the right of the court. Try retuning all the balls to this SAM™ Target Cone using both forehand and backhand. Don't be afraid to alter the speed and feed setting on your SAM™ ball machine. As you get better, try changing the SAM™ Target Cones for a smaller target and then removing the target all together... this changes your target area and ones skill can be honed down to a perfect shot.

Another drill variation is to move the SAM™ Target Cones forward to near the net as marked with the blue SAM™ Target Cone and volley.



Lob Drills

Set your SAM™ ball machine with its elevation control fully upright.

Adjust your speed and feed rate accordingly for lob training. Once you have your SAM™ ball machine at the desired settings, practice your standing smashes. To further train your lob returns take 3-4 steps forward, as the ball fires from the machine run backwards to hit the ball. This will aid in game like situation. You may even want to practice running forward to your lob.

To get a even better game like lob try using the SAM™ lob enhancer.

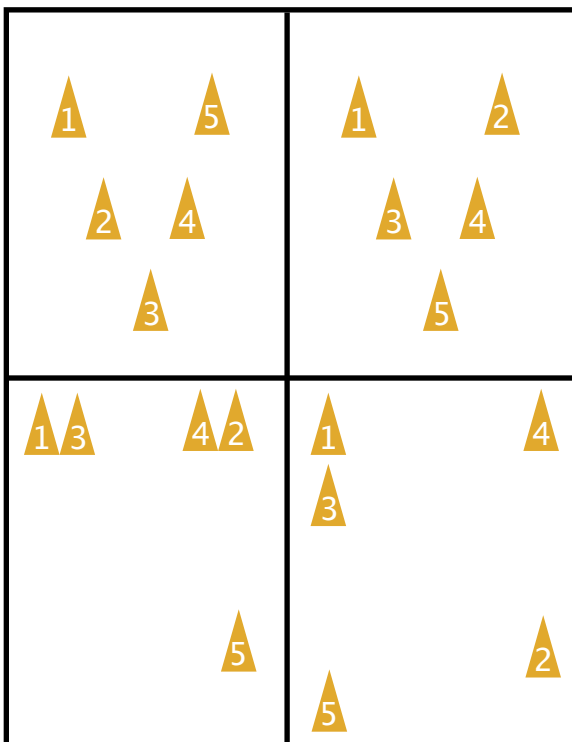
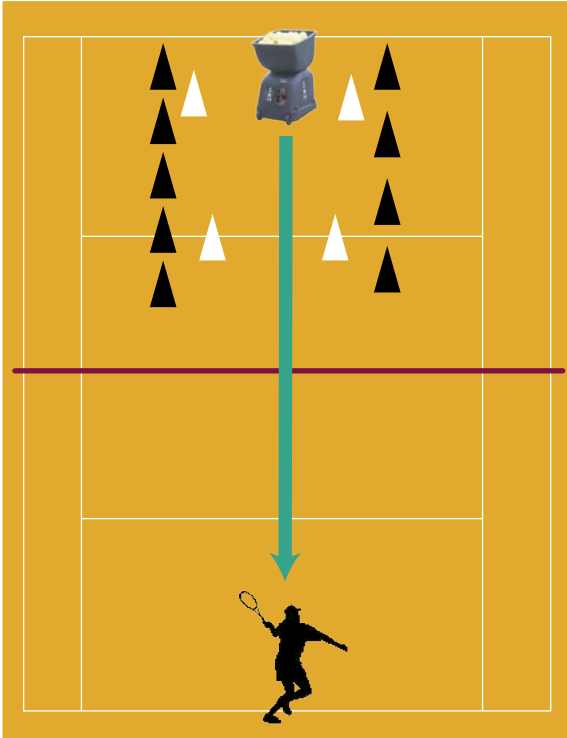
(Lob Enhancer can be purchased from your local SAM™ Authorised Dealer to give you a more enhanced true game like lobs)

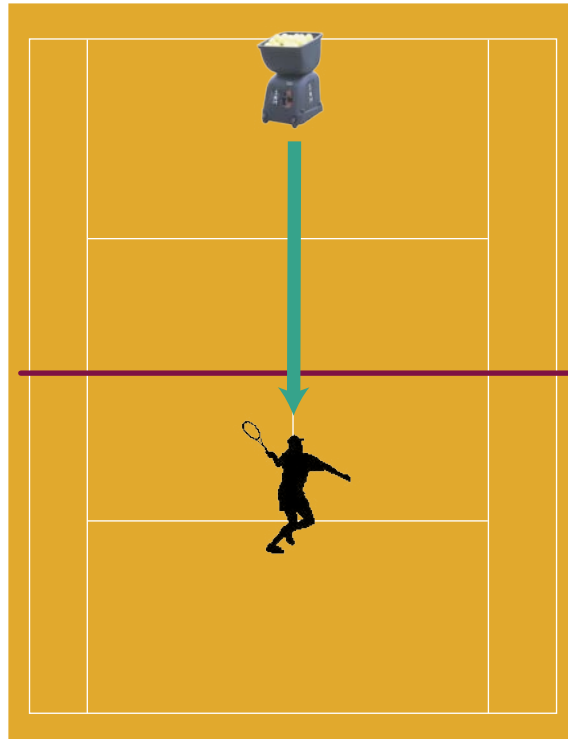
The more you vary a practice/training situation the more likely you are to dominate the court come game day.

Scatted return training

The idea behind this training drill is to teach you control in returning at different points on the court. You can perform the training either on the spot in a fixed position or you may wish to set the SAM™ ball machine on oscillation to sweep the court giving you a chance to work your feet. Start with returning the ball to the top left SAM™ Target Cone, followed by the second SAM™ Target Cone located near the service line, then the SAM™ Target Cone in the front and so on. Once you have completed the sequence return the balls in the opposite order to vary the exercise.

Another variation to the scatted return training is to scatter the SAM™ Target Cones down the line on either sides of the court. Standing near the net, volley the balls back to the witches hats in any order. This will give you greater control at the net... and remember you can move the SAM™ ball machine to fire from any position on the court to give you a variance of angles. The more you expose yourself the better

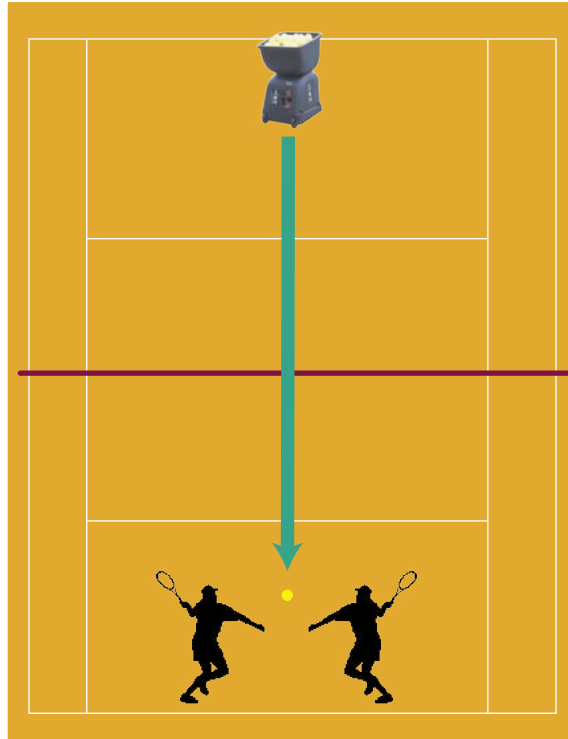




Net training

Training at the net is exciting as it's fast paced and full of fun. Set your SAM™ ball machine to a nice speed for this exercise. Now adjust the elevation to allow the balls to pass between your chest and your head. Place 2 or more SAM™ Target Cones on the court as your targets. Apply a fast feed rate and stand close to the net. With the ball coming you at a high feed rate, work on your racquet control and technic. To vary this drill, you can

relocate the SAM™ ball machine closer or on an angle or move the witch's SAM™ Target Cones to varying positions. These are just some of the many drills that you can perform on your SAM™ ball machine. Don't limit yourself to the same drills. Change at least one aspect of the routine and it will always be fun. Don't limit yourself, keep pushing yourself and you'll be on your way to a great tennis career. Always remember to take caution around your SAM™ ball machines. Ball machines are fun as well as a great development tool and you should always be careful not to walk in the direct line of fire.

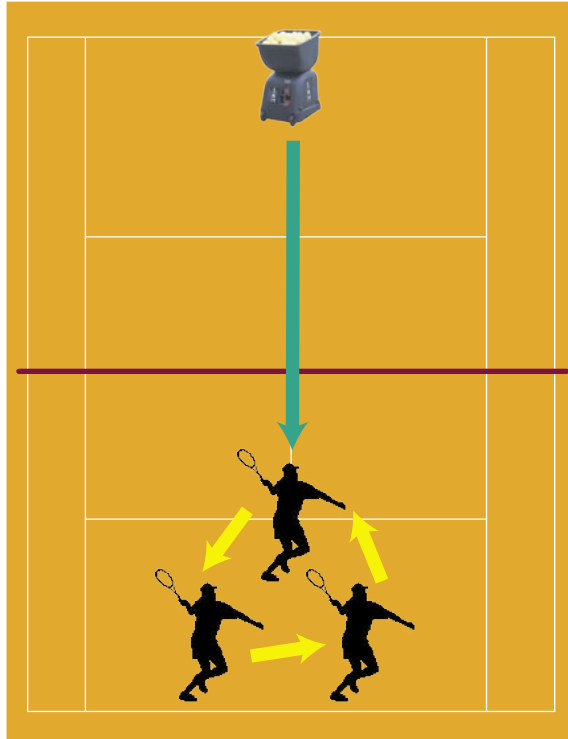


Two or more person drills

Training with a SAM™ ball machine is more fun in pairs.

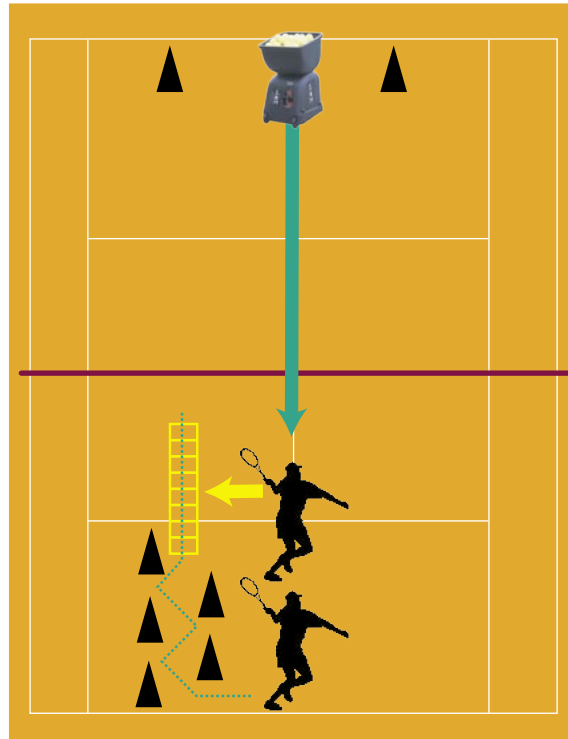
If you are part of a doubles team training with a SAM™ ball machine has just gotten better. All of the above drills can be adopted to compliment 2 person drills. Set the SAM™ ball machine in the centre of the court, firing directly down the line. Now set the feed rate slightly higher to allow the 2 person drill to flow smoother with less downtime. Standing beside each other, one player receives on the forehand while the other receives on the backhand.

This is a fast paced drill packed with fun. It will increase footwork as you learn to step into the oncoming ball. After 10 shots each change sides and swap, to give yourself and your partner a chance to work the opposite stroke. It's a fast paced drill so keep the speed and pace high for a great workout, remembering that you can place the machine on any angle to vary depth, incoming angle, speed and height.



3 Person drills

In a 3 or more person situation the same drills can be effective. You will need to set the SAM™ ball machine to a desired speed to suit everyone's game level. After setting the speed, number each person to form a line. This line is the order of which they will receive the ball. After the first person has received his/her ball, they will move to the back of the line giving the next person a clear shot at the ball. A good path to follow is an anti clockwise path as most people are right handed.



4 to 6 Person drills

A four to six person drill can easily be accommodated for with your SAM™ ball machine with the addition of speed ladders and extra SAM™ Target Cones to create an obstacle course. Set the SAM™ ball machine to a medium to fast ball speed with a faster feed rate to allow for a smooth and quick player movement. Allow the first person to hit 3 balls, (one from the baseline, one from mid court and one from the net) then move to the speed ladder. Once the player has passed the speed ladder, they must negotiate past the SAM™ Target Cones by sidestepping past them. This will give a more stimulating challenge and allow students to focus more as they must negotiate more than one thing at a time. You may wish to place another set of challenging obstacles on the right side of the court and ask your students to alternate as they pass the hitting stage of the course. Setting a variety of challenging courses will keep your students mentally stimulated and sharp as they hone their skills while all the time having fun. The obstacles are once again limited by your imagination, the more creative you are the better the results as students are exposed to extreme challenges while developing their skills, confidence and physical ability and be ready to take on more challenging opponents.

Remember: Game day is easy as all the hard work was done during training.