

## Lesson Theme: Third Shot Decision-Making

Objectives: Learn to make good choices

Skill Level: 3.0 / 3.5

Duration: 90 Minutes

Equipment Needed: Balls and Cones/Markers



Mins	Activity	Details	Teaching Points	Comments
5	Meet & Greet	Welcome, names, housekeeping		
7	Technical Warm Up	Select activities from the WARM-UP MENU.		Warm-up should include volleys, groundstrokes, serve and return.
10	Play & Observe	Real Game w/o restrictions (see comments).		Encourage players to use drops and drives if you see only one shot being used.
3	Collect Balls & H2O			Make it short!
5	Debrief / Observations	Praise effort and focus.  Mention that your particular interest was in the decisions (drop or drive) players made when hitting third shots.	Both drops and drives have a place in pickleball. It is important to understand when to use each.	

5	Direct Instruction	Drives are often about causing trouble by reducing reaction time to play a volley.  Drops are mostly about avoiding trouble when the opportunity to cause it is absent.	If the return of serve is short, a drive is often a good idea since our opponents are close and vulnerable.  If the return allows us to move to $\frac{3}{4}$ court or closer, we should drive. If not, we should drop.	
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15	Depth Recognition	<p>Step 1: Player A (from baseline) tosses the ball, lets it bounce, and then plays a fairly slow ball down the line toward player B. Player B (also at baseline) must identify if they should drop or drive depending on the depth of the shot. If so short they can move to <math>\frac{3}{4}</math> court, they should call "drive" and drive the ball. If not, they should call "drop" and hit a drop.</p> <p>Switch roles after 3 attempts.</p> <p>Step 2: Player A serves down the line, player B hits a return. Again, if the return is short Player A calls "drive" and drives the ball. If the return is not short, they call "drop" and hit a drop.</p> <p>Switch roles after 3 attempts.</p>	<p>Reinforce: - shot selection is based on return depth</p>	<p>The decision should be made based on where the player is hitting from, not where the ball lands. Encourage players to move up quickly to increase offensive opportunities.</p> <p>For teaching points related to drops and drives, please see other lesson plans on these topics.</p>
10	Play Real Points with restrictions	Real game, but third shot must be based on return of serve depth.	Reinforce key teaching points (e.g. short returns lead to drives, deep returns lead to drops)	Keep the focus on the decision-making. Even if they miss the shot, praise players if they made the right choice.
5	Debrief / Observations	Good effort with decision-making.		Acknowledge that short balls that are very <i>low</i> may be risky to drive.

4	Direct Instruction	While drives are often used to cause trouble, sometimes they are used when it is tough to be very precise and drops are high-risk.	<p>When returns are VERY deep, a drive can also be a safer play than a drop.</p> <p>If the return pushes us behind the baseline, drives are often good neutralizing shots with less risk than drops.</p>	
5	Depth Recognition	<p>Player A serves down-the-line to Player B. If the return is so deep that Player A is making contact <u>from behind the baseline</u>, they call "drive" and drive the third shot. If they are between the baseline and the cone at <math>\frac{3}{4}</math> court they call "drop" and if inside <math>\frac{3}{4}</math> they call "drive".</p> <p>Switch roles after 3 attempts.</p>	The earlier we can identify whether the ball warrants a drop or a drive, the easier it is to hit it well.	This is challenging for players and some may feel "overloaded". Steps may need to be taken to make the decision-making process easier (e.g. more obvious feeds).
11	Play Real Points	Real game. Players use their new decision-making skills to make smart choices.	Reinforce key teaching points: shot selection is based on court position at contact.	



5	Wrap Up	Summarize key points	Drops and drives both have a role to play. Making choices based on our positioning increases our chances for success..	Use this wrap up to identify improvement, encourage practice and promote future lessons or events.
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### Instructor Notes:

