PLAY PRACTICE DRILLS FOR KIDS
The concept of “play practice” has been introduced over a decade ago with the objective of playing a modified version of a game, so that players can improve certain aspects of their game in a playing environment (Launder, 2001). Play practice has essentially three main objectives: 1) shaping play, 2) focusing play and 3) enhancing play. The first objective, shaping play, consists of modifying the rules of the game (e.g., provide bonus points for certain shots or targets, use of play restrictions such as forcing players to use certain type of shots, etc.). The second objective is focusing play where the modified version of the game has the objective of focusing on a certain tactic or part of the game (e.g., use only backhand shots, need to use a third shot drop shot, etc.). The third objective of play practice is enhancing play which means that by playing a modified version of the game, players will ultimately improve a certain aspect of the game without necessarily being fully aware of it. This approach can replace practicing repetitious drills which are sometime required to improve certain techniques (e.g., drop shots). Drills are important; however, in open play it is some difficult to convince other players of such importance. This is when play practice can become a good technique to satisfy both those who would like to drill vs. those who do not.
Example 1: Here is an example where players would like to improve their third shot drop shot and dinking abilities. The modified version of the game would look this this. Players would serve and return the serve, as played in a normal game; however, the third shot has to be a drop shot into the kitchen (non-volley zone area; NVZ) or at least an attempt. If the third shot lands in the kitchen, then the serving team automatic gets a point, and the play continues; however, all other subsequent shots need to be in the
kitchen (practicing the dinking game!). If the third shot is not in the kitchen (although the serving team has made an attempt), the play continues where subsequent shots need to be in the kitchen (again, practicing the dinking game!). In this case, no bonus point is made by the serving team. Essentially, beyond the forth shot, the court is reduced to the NVZ area (exceptions are made for around-the-post shots which could land anywhere on the court).

Example 2: The second example consists of only two players wishing to practice doubles play techniques (rather than playing singles). In this example, players can serve and return the serve as they would normally in doubles; however, the third shot needs to be a drop shot into the NVZ area. If the third shot lands into the NVZ area, then this player makes a point; otherwise it becomes a side-out and the opposing player gets to serve. In this version, players would play a normal game to 11 points while practicing techniques required in doubles play.

Pickleball Plus +

Reference: