



UNITS 12 & 7

Tennis Skills, Techniques and Tactics

2019 SPECIFICATION:

Unit 12: Practical Sports Application

2016 SPECIFICATION:

Unit 7: Practical Sports Performance



TECHNIQUE FOR SHOTS IN TENNIS



PREPARE

1. Ready

- Shoes wider than shoulders
- Weight forward in an athletic ready position
- Hands and racket central
- Eyes focused

3. Reset

- Adapt to the incoming ball with the body and racket in preparation to hit

5. Contact

- Strings point towards the target

HIT

STROKE	CONTENT	RACKET PATH
Serve	Above the head at a 12 o'clock position	Overarm throwing action
Forearm	To the side and in front of the shoes	Low to high
Backhand	To the side and in front of the shoes	Low to high
Volleys	In front and to the side of the shoes	Tap / touch (no swing)
Smash	Above the head at a 12 o'clock position	Overarm throwing action

RECOVER

6. Reposition

- Move back to a central position



ATTACKING & DEFENSIVE SKILLS PRACTICES

GROUNDSTROKES

Aiming for space

How to Play:

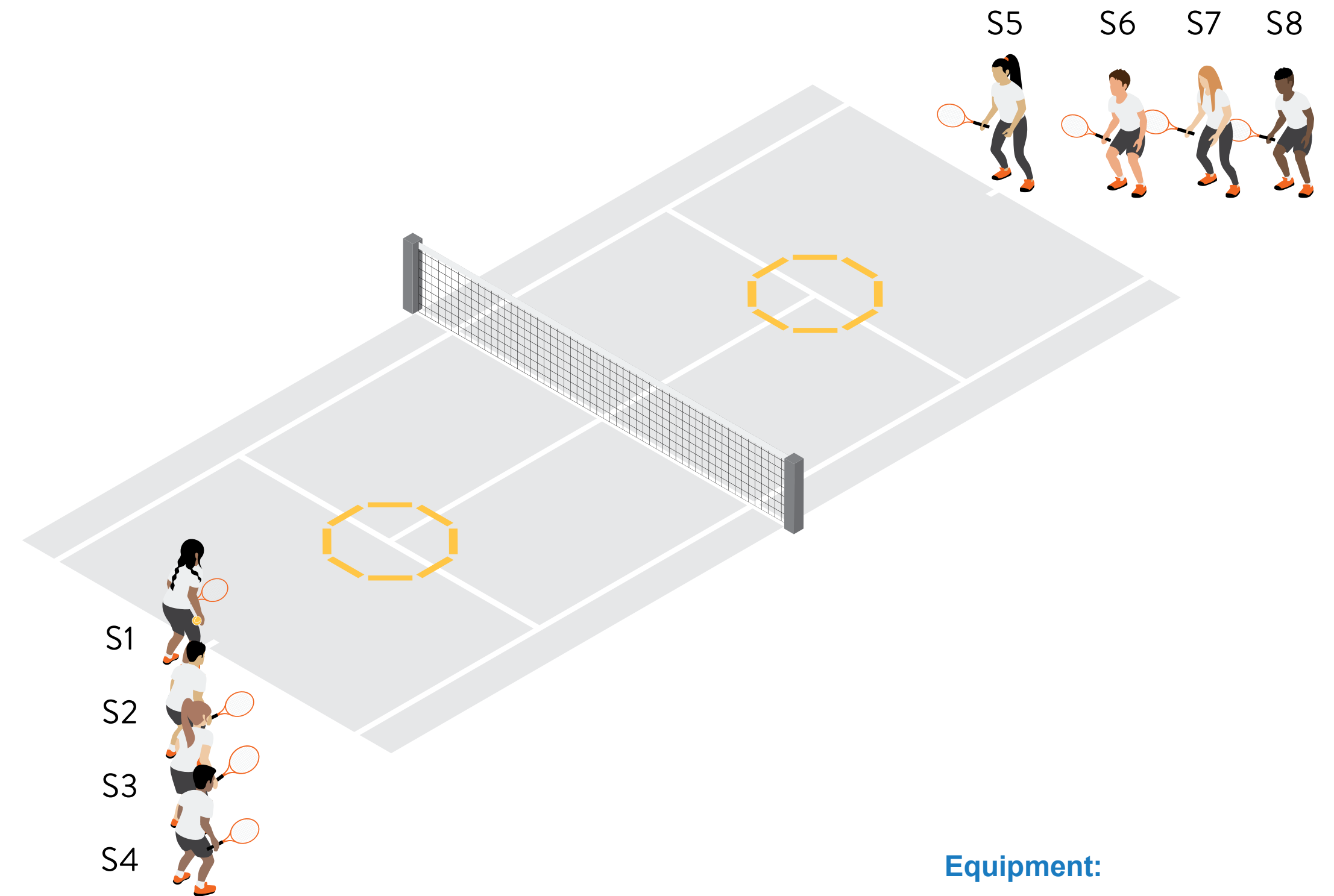
- Students play in teams of 4 against another team. Each team needs a racket each, throw down lines and 1 ball.
- Place the throw down lines in the centre of the court around the service line to mark a “Black Hole”
- Teams start on opposite baselines
- Student 1 feeds the ball into play then moves to the back of their team
- Students take it in turns to hit the ball and recover to the back of their team
- Teams play out the point avoiding the Black Hole
- If a team hit the ball into the black hole, they automatically lose the point
- Keep the score

Progression:




- Increase the size of the black hole
- Limit the type of shot to forehands or backhands only
- Start each point with an overarm serve which must land in the service box

TEACHING POINTS:

- Start in the ready position
- Adapt the body and racket to the incoming ball
- Set up to hit before the incoming ball bounces
- Contact to the side and in front of the shoes
- Racket path – low to high
- Increase the depth of the ball by increasing the length of the racket swing and aiming higher over the net



Equipment:

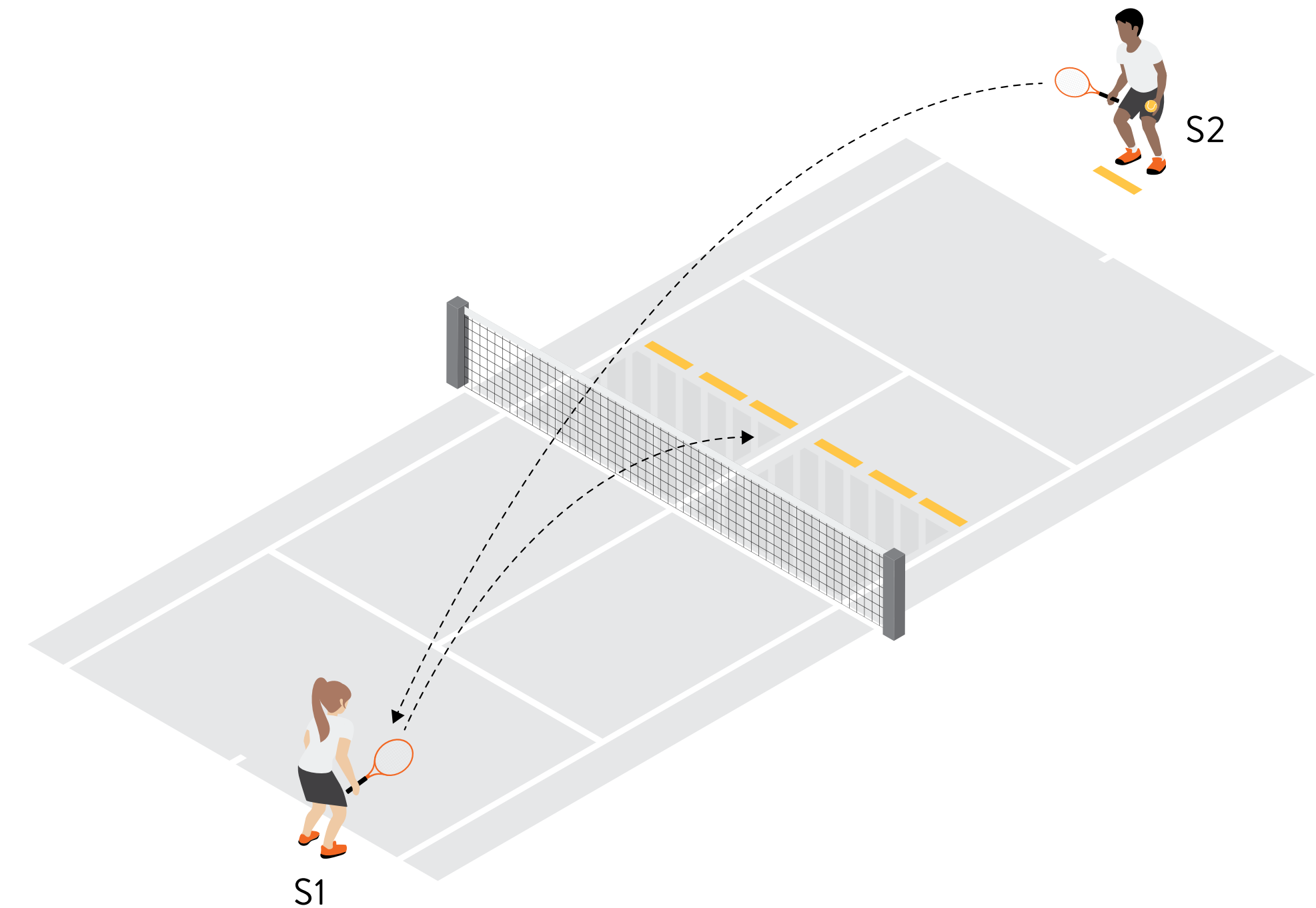
-  Tennis balls
-  Tennis rackets
-  Throw down lines

ATTACKING & DEFENSIVE SKILLS PRACTICES

DROP SHOT

How to Play:




- Students work in pairs
- Mark a zone close to the net (approx. 1m deep)
- Full singles court or half court singles
- Student 1 starts on the baseline
- Student 2 starts approx. 1m behind the baseline (throw down line placed as marker)
- Student 2 feeds the ball in underarm to land past the service line
- Student 1 aims to hit a drop shot into the zoned area with the intention for student 2 to be unable to reach it
- Student 2 starts moving forward once Student 1 has hit the ball and not before



TEACHING POINTS:

- Contact to the side and in front of the shoes
- Racket Path - high to low, to slice the ball and create backspin
- Slow the speed of the racket swing

Equipment:

-  Tennis balls
-  Tennis rackets
-  Throw down lines

ATTACKING & DEFENSIVE SKILLS PRACTICES

LIVE

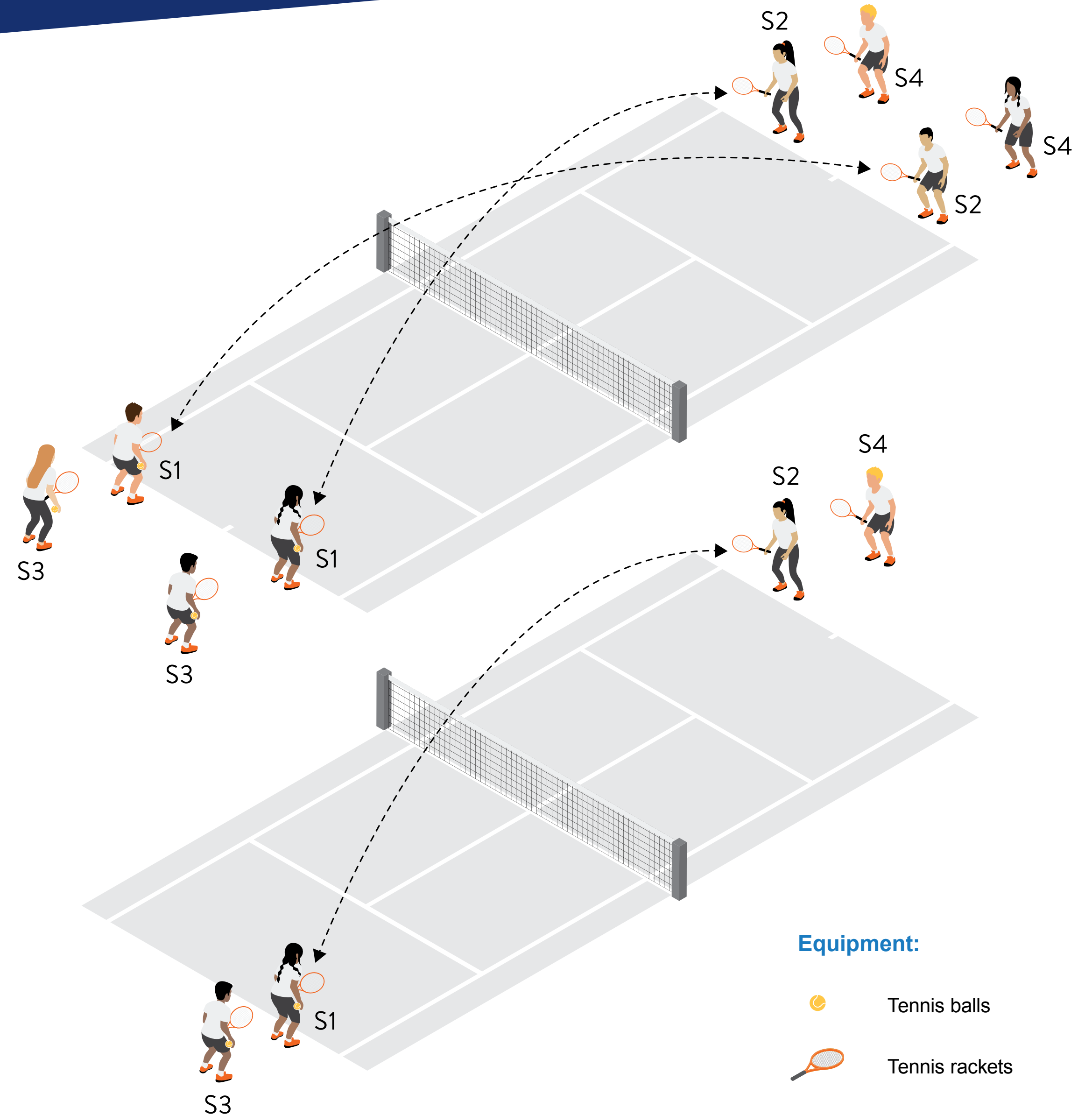
How to Play:

- Students work in 4s with a racket each and 1 ball
- Students play half court singles diagonally
- Students 1 and 2 start on court; Students 3 and 4 start as umpires
- Student 1 starts behind the baseline and overarm serves the ball into the diagonal service box
- Student 2 hits the return and they play the point out
- The server is the caller and can call "LIVE" at any stage during the point
- The server should call "LIVE" when they feel they have the advantage
- The student who wins the point scores 1 point
- If the point ends before "LIVE" has been called then no score is counted

- Students switch on / off court after every point
- Alternate the server
- Students 1 and 3 are a team and Students 2 and 4 are a team adding their points together
- Students switch to the other half court and play using the alternative diagonal

Progression:

- The returner becomes the caller and can call "LIVE" at any stage during the point
- The students off court become the callers, deciding when their team mate is in a winning position
- "LIVE" has to be called before the ball is hit



TEACHING POINTS:

- Control the ball when serving
- Return the ball accurately
- Aim for spaces to win the rally
- Anticipate where your opponent is going to hit the ball
- Play attacking shots based on your opponent's court position
- Recognise your opponent's weakness and aim to put them under pressure

Equipment:

- Tennis balls
- Tennis rackets

ATTACKING & DEFENSIVE SKILLS PRACTICES

VOLLEYS

How to Play:

- Students work in pairs
- Full singles court or half court singles
- Student 1 starts on the service line
- Student 2 starts on the baseline
- Student 1 feeds the ball to Student 2 and moves into a volley position
- Student 2 hits the ball back to Student 1
- Student 1 hits a volley

Option 1

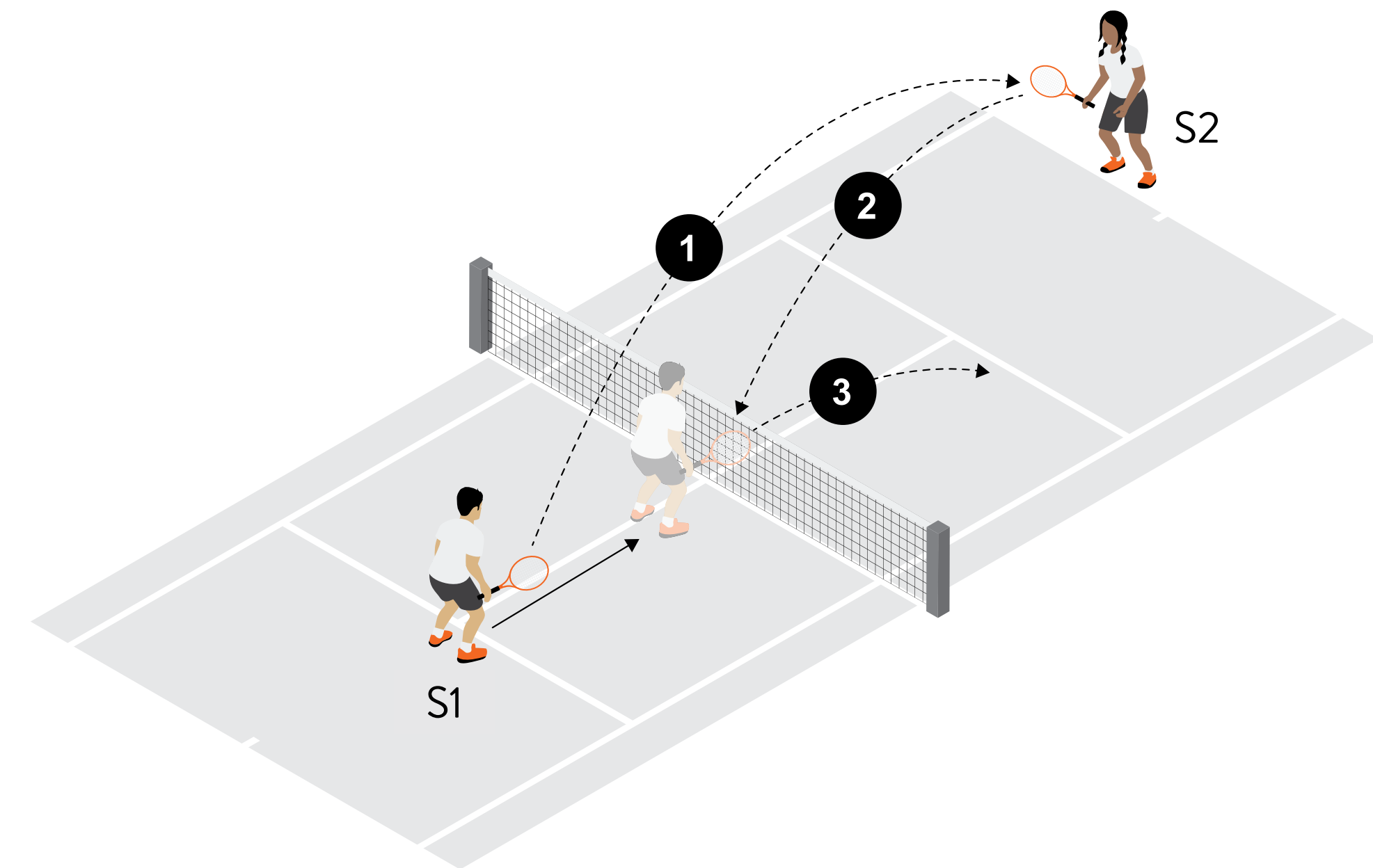
- Reset to the start of the drill after the volley is hit

Option 2

- Place targets for Student 1 to aim the volley at

Option 3




- Students continue the rally with Student 1 volleying
- > Feed to the forehand and backhand side in isolation or to either side
- > Add a target or target zone for the volley to be hit into



TEACHING POINTS:

- Contact the ball in front and to the side of the shoes
- Student 1 should aim for space
- Student 2 should vary the height, side, speed of the ball they hit

Equipment:

-  Tennis balls
-  Tennis rackets
-  Targets

ATTACKING & DEFENSIVE SKILLS PRACTICES

VOLLEYS AND LOBS

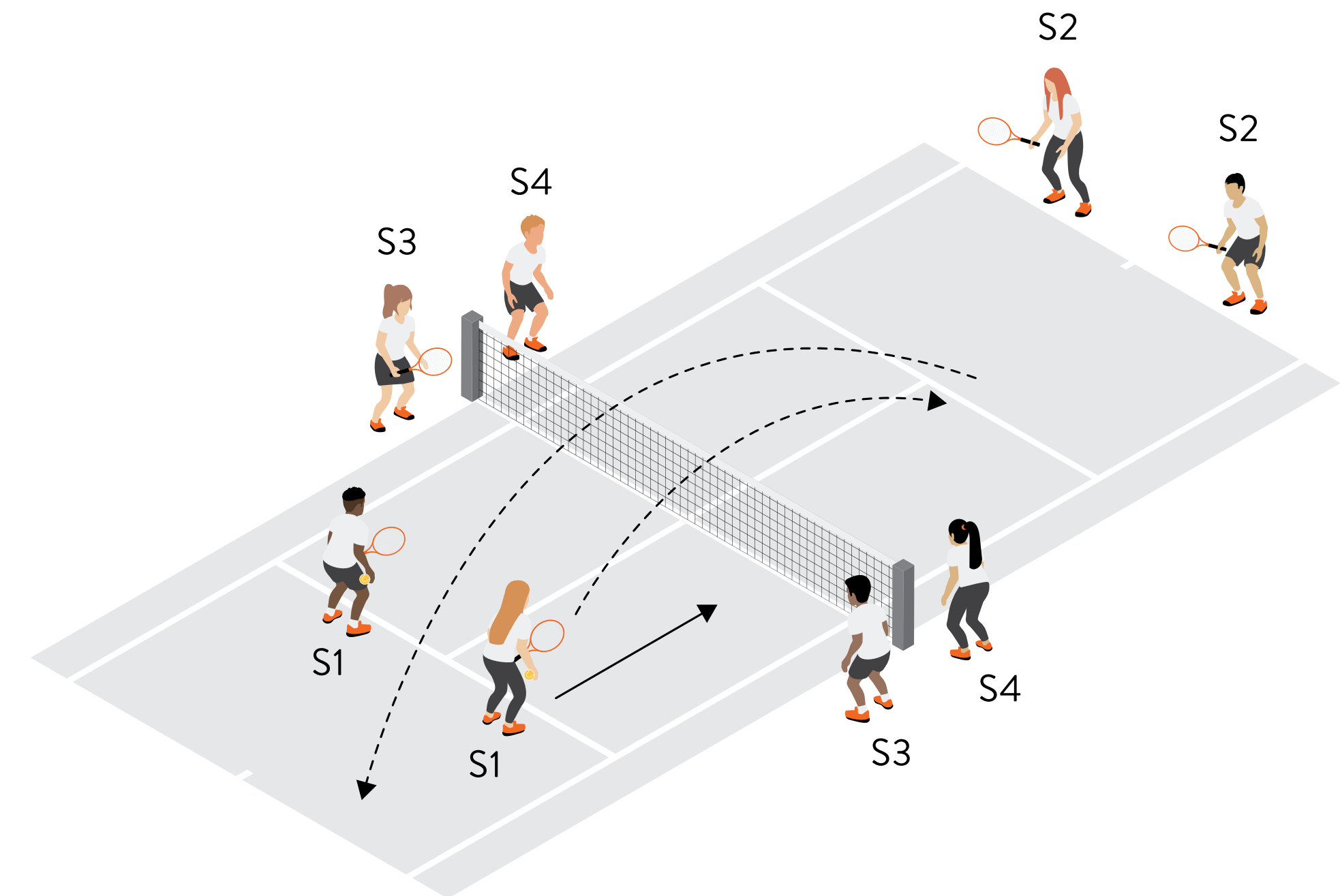
How to Play:

- Students work in 4s in a half court area with a racket each and 1 ball
- Students 3 and 4 act as coaches
- Student 1 starts on the service line and feeds the ball underarm aiming for the ball to bounce in the service box
- Student 1 then moves forward into a volley position (use a throw down line as a marker if required)
- Student 2 lets the ball bounce then returns the ball over Student 1's head, playing a lob
- Student 1 tries to intercept the lob with their racket and the sequence stops
- Students 3 and 4 give feedback then have their turn on court

- Students continue switching on / off the court after every 2 balls
- When Student 1 and 2 return to court they switch roles

Progression:

- Students play out the point after the lob using the full length of the court
- Students switch on / off the court after each point
- Alternate who serves



TEACHING POINTS:



Volley:

- Balanced central ready position
- Adapt the body and racket to the incoming ball
- Racket head above the wrist
- Contact with a tap (no swing)
- Contact in front and to side of shoes

Lob:

- Racket path - low to high
- Strings pointing up
- The ball travels high above the head of the student at the net

Equipment:

-  Tennis balls
-  Tennis rackets

ATTACKING & DEFENSIVE SKILLS PRACTICES

SMASH

How to Play:

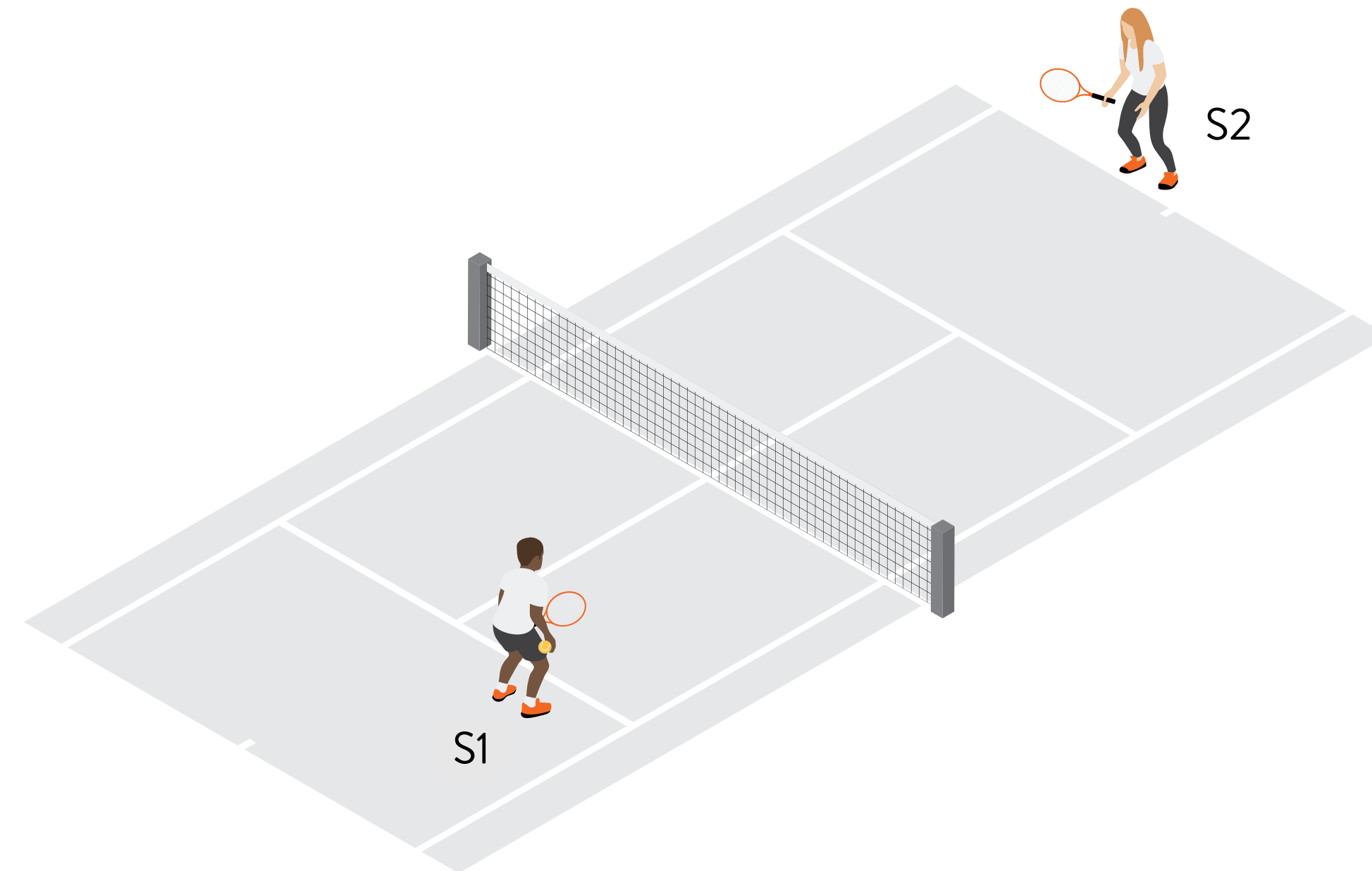
- Students work in pairs
- Full singles court or half court singles
- Student 1 starts on the service line
- Student 2 starts on the baseline

Option 1

- Student 1 feeds the ball
- Student 2 hits the ball high
- Student 1 smashes the ball and the point is then live

Option 2



- Student 2 feeds a high ball and the point is live



TEACHING POINTS:

- Adapt to the incoming ball
- Student 1 tracks the ball with the non-hitting hand
- Student 1 contacts the ball high at a 12 o'clock position
- Student 1 recovers into a volleying position

Equipment:

-  Tennis balls
-  Tennis rackets

ATTACKING & DEFENSIVE SKILLS PRACTICES

SERVING

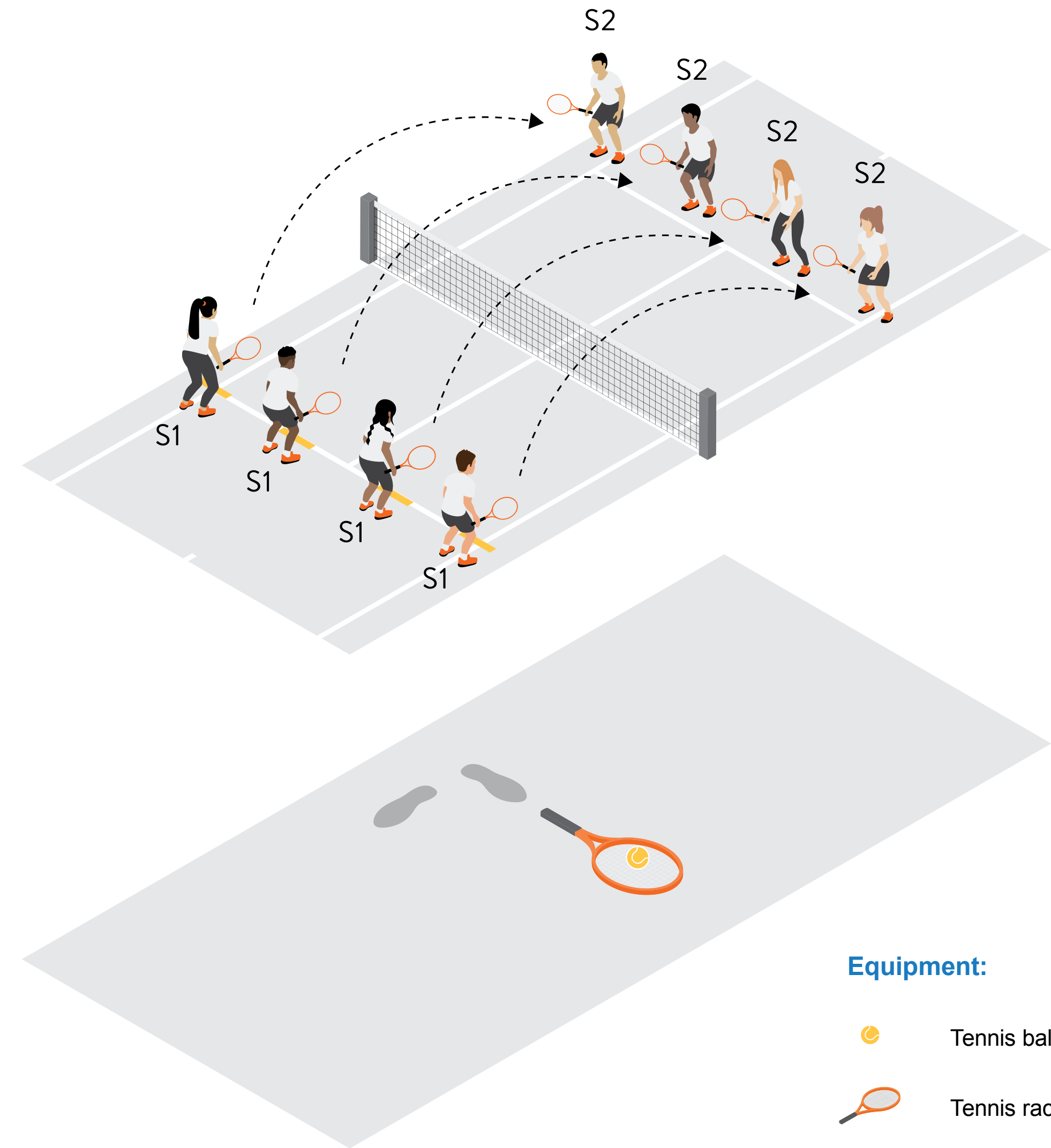
How to Play:

- Students work individually with 1 ball and racket
- Stand sideways, place the racket on the floor so the grip comes out of the non-dominant shoe
- Hold the ball in the non-dominant hand, and throw the ball up in a straight line (Toss Up) and catch it with the non-dominant hand
- Repeat 10 times
- Start with the dominant arm touching the back of the head
- Toss the ball up using the non-dominant hand
- Reach up with the dominant hand and catch the ball above and in front of the head with a straight arm
- Students work in 2s with 1 ball
- Students start either side of the net on the service line
- Student 1 overarm serves the ball to bounce inside the service box
- Student 2 stops the ball with their racket, after one bounce

- Student 2 moves to the service line and overarm serves the ball back to Student 1
- Repeat 3 times each, then both students take a step backwards, gradually moving back to the baseline

Progression:

- Students work in 4s in half a court, switching 2 on and 2 off, all with rackets, 2 throw down lines and 1 ball between them
- Student 1 and 2 place a throw down line half way between the service line and the baseline
- Students stand behind the line and take it in turns to serve overarm aiming for the ball to land in the service box
- The receiver stops the ball with their racket after one bounce, then serves the ball from behind their throw down line
- Score 1 point for each serve that bounces in the service box
- Students 1 and 2 switch with Students 3 and 4 after 2 serves each
- Move the throw down line gradually back towards the baseline each time they score 3 points



TEACHING POINTS:

- Opposite shoe forwards to the dominant hand

Non-dominant hand:




- Ball is released straight up and fingers stretch to the sky

Dominant hand:

- Hand behind the head

- Elbow high above head (Nike tick or Bolt position)
- Extend arm to straight position as it passes over the head
- Catch / contact the ball with a straight arm in front of the body at a 12 o'clock position

Equipment:

-  Tennis balls
-  Tennis rackets
-  Throw down lines

ATTACKING & DEFENSIVE SKILLS PRACTICES

SERVING FOR DIRECTION

How to Play:

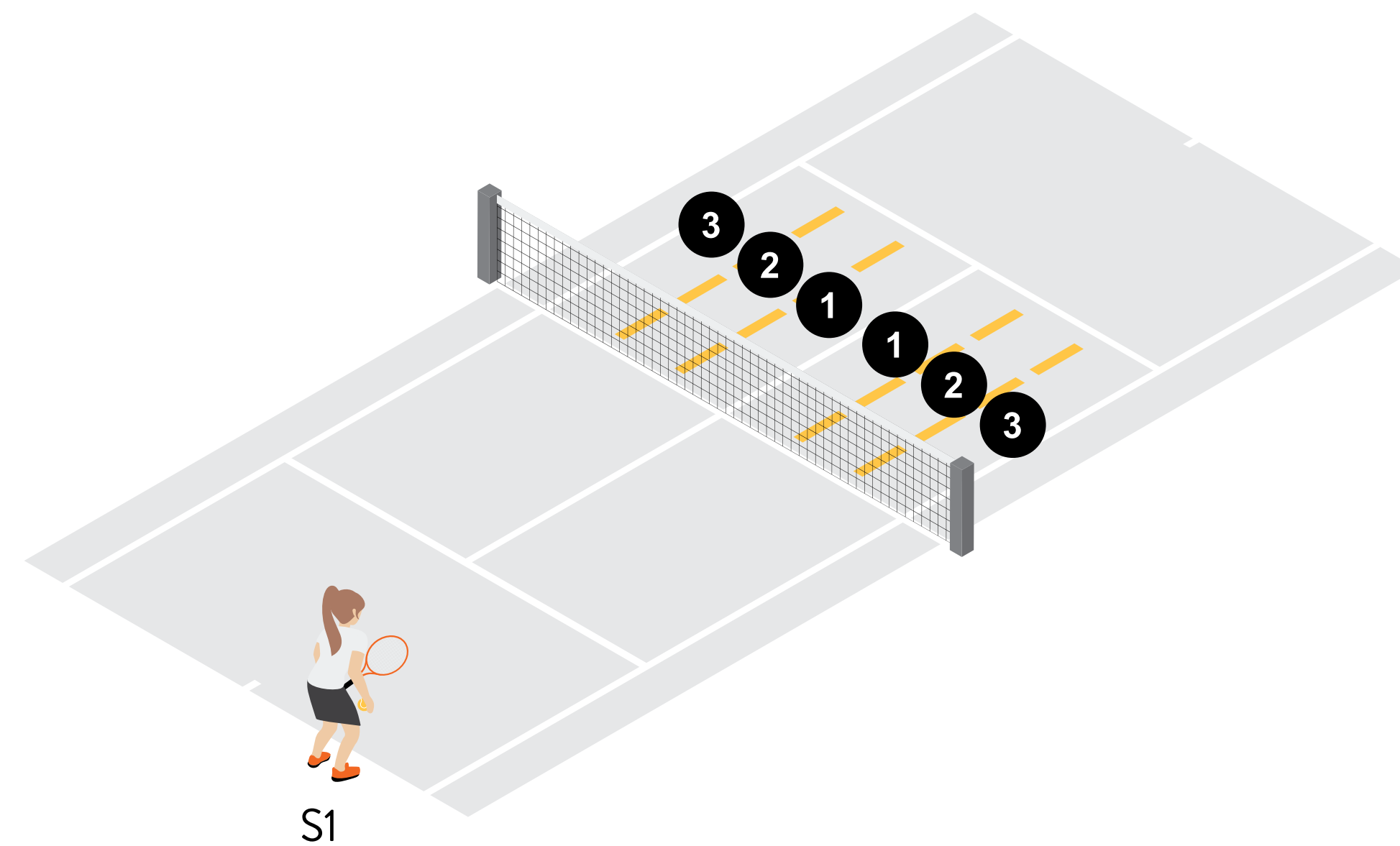
- Students work individually
- Split the service box into 3 channels length ways
- Perform on both the deuce and advantage side of the court

Option 1

- Students identify which channel they are aiming for before hitting a serve (flat, slice or topspin)

Option 2




- Partner or teacher calls out the channel to aim at as the student tosses the ball up
- > Include a returner in the drill



TEACHING POINTS:

- Contact the ball high
- Place spin on the ball
- To slice the ball, contact around the outside of the ball
- To put topspin on the ball, contact underneath the ball

Equipment:

-  Tennis balls
-  Tennis rackets
-  Throw down lines

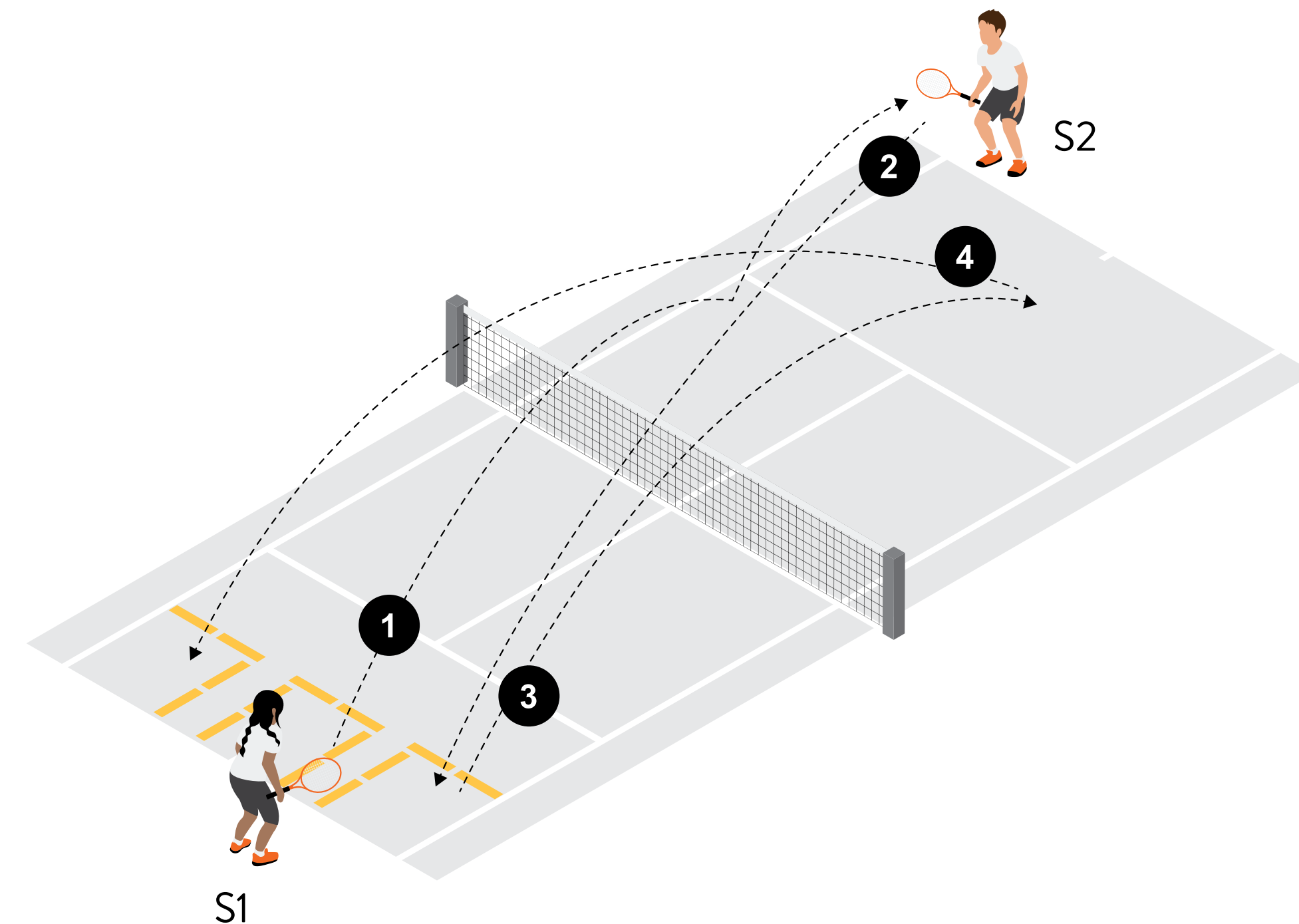
ATTACKING & DEFENSIVE SKILLS PRACTICES

RETURN OF THE SERVE

How to Play:

- Students work in pairs
- Full singles court
- Three target zones are marked at the back of the court:
1 in the right corner, 1 in the centre, and 1 in the left corner
- Student 1 is the server at the end with the target zones
- Student 2 is the returner
- Student 1 serves from the deuce court
- Student 2 returns the serve aiming for a zoned area
- Student 1 hits the 3rd shot
- Student 2 hits the 4th shot
- Perform on both the deuce and advantage side of the court




> Specify the type of serve hit



TEACHING POINTS:

- Returner needs to read the ball and set up quickly
- Contact to the side and in front of the shoes
- Contact with the strings pointing towards the target
- Both students should recover into a central position after hitting the serve or return

Equipment:

-  Tennis balls
-  Tennis rackets
-  Throw down lines

ATTACKING & DEFENSIVE SKILLS PRACTICES

GAME

Champion of the court

How to Play:

- Students work in 3s or 4s using a half court (tramlines are in) with a racket each and 1 ball
- Student 1 starts as Champion of the court
- Other students are the Challengers and start at the other end
- Student 2 starts the point with an underarm serve
- Students 1 and 2 play the point out
- If Student 2 wins the point, they score 1 point
- The Challengers take it in turns to play against the Champion
- Students keep their own score
- The first Challenger to score 3 points becomes the Champion and switches places with Student 1. Challengers points reset to 0.

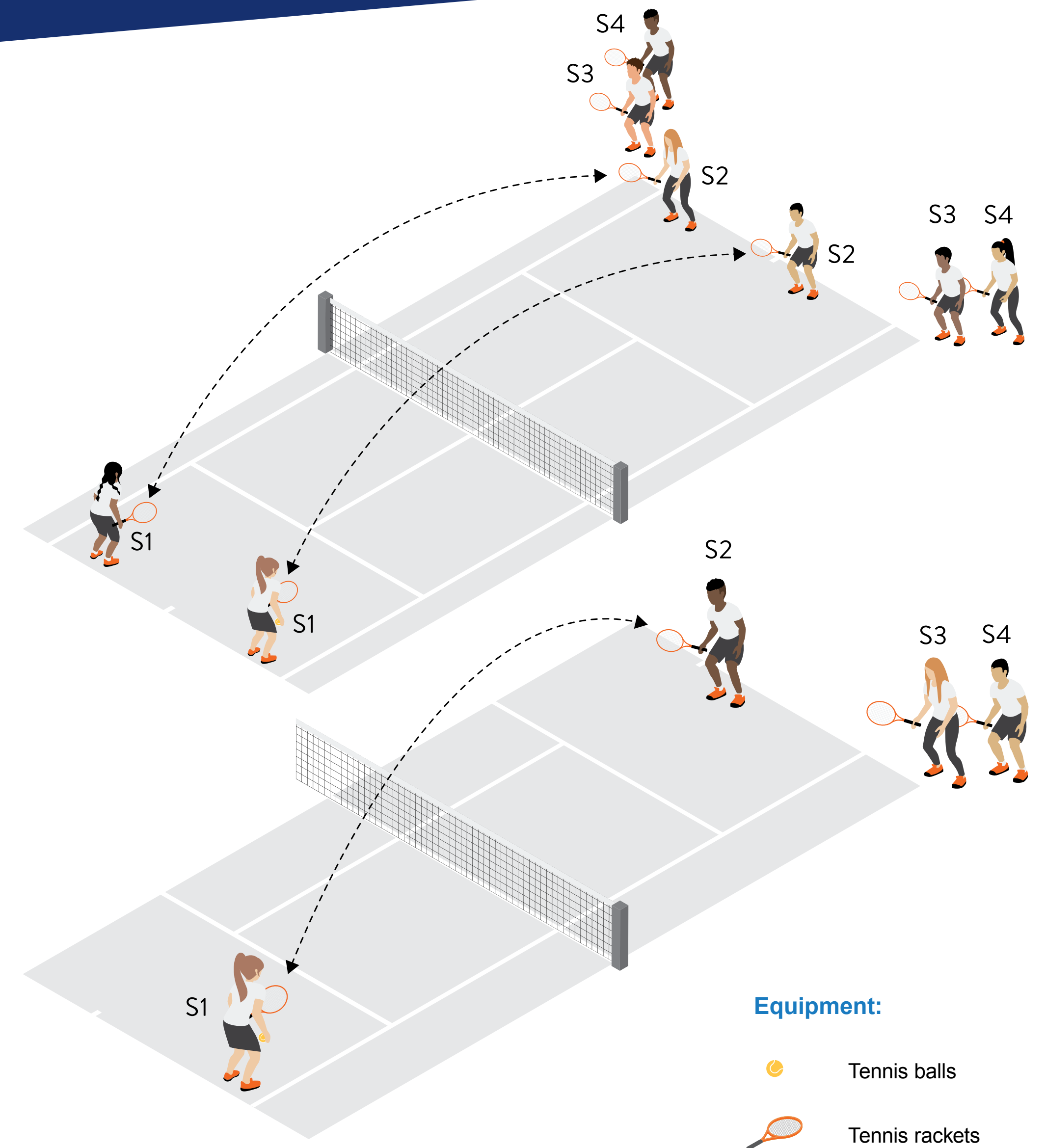
TEACHING POINTS:

Underarm serve:

- Bounce the ball in front of shoes
- Forehand tap over the net towards opponent
- Adapt the body and racket to the incoming ball
- Recover after hitting the ball into the ready position
- Control the direction and depth of the ball
- Aim for space
- Keep track of own score

Progression:

- If a Challenger hits a backhand which wins the point, they automatically become the Champion



TACTICS IN TENNIS

In essence tennis is about outplaying the opponent and there are 3 ways to win a point:

1. Hit a winner
2. Force the opponent to make an error
3. The opponent hits an unforced error

Game Situations:

As players advance it is important that the Game Situations are discussed and understood. They refer specifically to the position the ball is being received from and where the ball is being sent, allowing for technique to be taught within the tactical situation. The Game Situations are very similar for Singles and Doubles and the situation will determine which shots are played and to some extent the tactics used.

There are 5 main game situations within competitive play:

- Both players at the back of the court
- When serving
- When receiving
- When approaching or at the net (and your opponent is at the back of the court)
- When opponent is approaching or at the net (and you are at the back of the court)

In addition, for doubles:

- Both players at the net

Examples of combining tactics with game situations for Singles and Doubles

	Both players at the back of the court	When serving	When returning	When approaching the net	When opponent is approaching the net	When both players in the team are at the net (doubles only)
1: CONSISTENCY	Rallying forehands crosscourt, aiming to hit the ball so it bounces between the service line and the baseline.	Hitting a serve which is 75% the speed, with the intention to get the ball in the service box.	Returning the serve with depth with a high clearance over the net.	Approaching the net on a ball which is neutral in power and is placed in the centre back third of the court, not too close to the baseline.	Hitting the ball back towards the incoming player, to allow the player to make the volley reducing the risk of angles being created by the volleyer.	Being in essence a volley wall – hitting volleys back to the opponents, trading groundstroke for volley.
2: CREATING / CONTROLLING SPACE	Rallying the ball crosscourt, create an angle which moves opponent off the side of the court, therefore creating the space to change direction and hit the ball down the line.	Hitting a slice serve to move the opponent out of the court to create space.	Hitting the return of serve down the line, resulting in server having to move to hit the 3rd ball.	Hitting the ball down the centre of the court, which reduces the angle the opponent can hit when attempting a passing shot.	Hitting the ball low to the approaching players feet, expecting the volleyer to lift the ball.	One of the players hits a ball wide into the tramline, allowing their partner to look to intercept the next shot.
3: CONTROLLING TIME	Hitting the ball back following an aggressive shot with height on the ball.	Hitting a second serve with topspin towards opponent's backhand, which results in the ball kicking up high, forcing the opponent to move back to strike the ball.	Returning a second serve with aggression deep, towards the serving position, resulting in server not having time to move and prepare for the next shot.	Hitting the ball with slice (keeping it low) and central (providing no angles).	Hitting the ball to the opponents' hip position to make the approaching player play a tough first volley off an aggressive low shot, taking preparation time away.	Maintaining court position and block the volleys back deep into court.
4: PLAYING TO YOUR STRENGTHS	Hitting a fast aggressive forehand into space.	Hitting a fast flat first serve with the intention to serve an ace.	Attacking the second serve, playing it into space.	Hitting the ball into space, forcing the opponent to block the ball back, taking the pace off the ball, providing an easier volley.	Hitting a drop shot to bring opponent to net, followed by a topspin lob.	Forcing the opponents to hit the ball up into the air, to allow an aggressive volley into space, or smash.
5: PLAYING TO YOUR OPPONENTS' WEAKNESSES	During a rally, constantly hitting the ball deep into the weak side of the opponent (commonly the backhand side), forcing an error or a short ball to attack.	Serving a flat, fast first serve into space or into the body of the opponent.	Returning the ball deep on to the weak side of the player (commonly the backhand side).	Approaching the net on a sliced approach into the opponents' backhand, resulting in the player having to hit the ball up and provide an easy volley.	Dropping the ball short, bringing the player to the net, if they have a weak volley or don't like the net position.	Hitting the ball towards the weaker player of the pair, or forcing one of the players out of court position.

DOUBLES COURT POSITIONING

The court positioning for doubles will depend on the game situation.

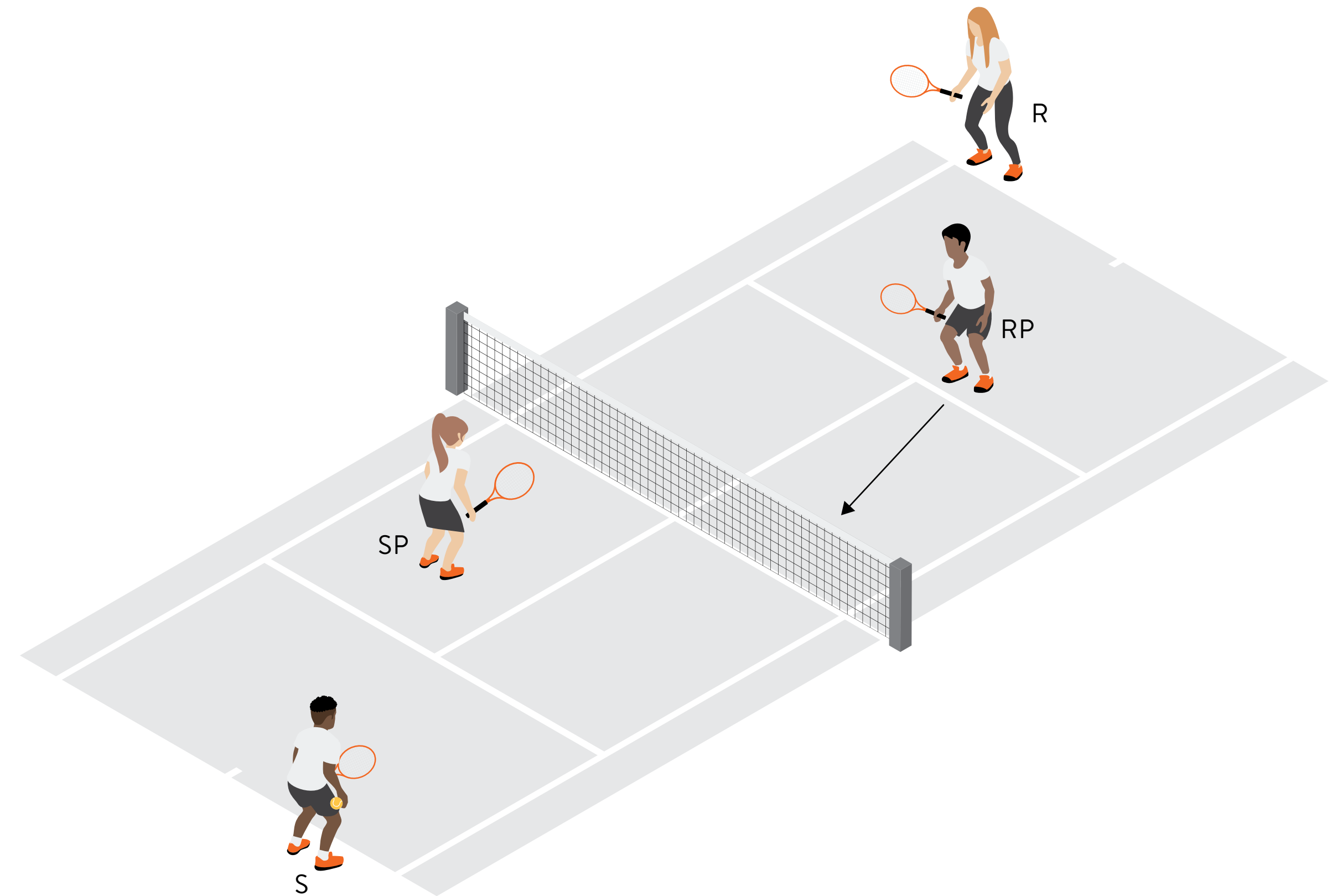
WHEN SERVING:

The server must stand start at the back behind the baseline.
The servers partner starts at the net in a volleying position.

WHEN RETURNING:

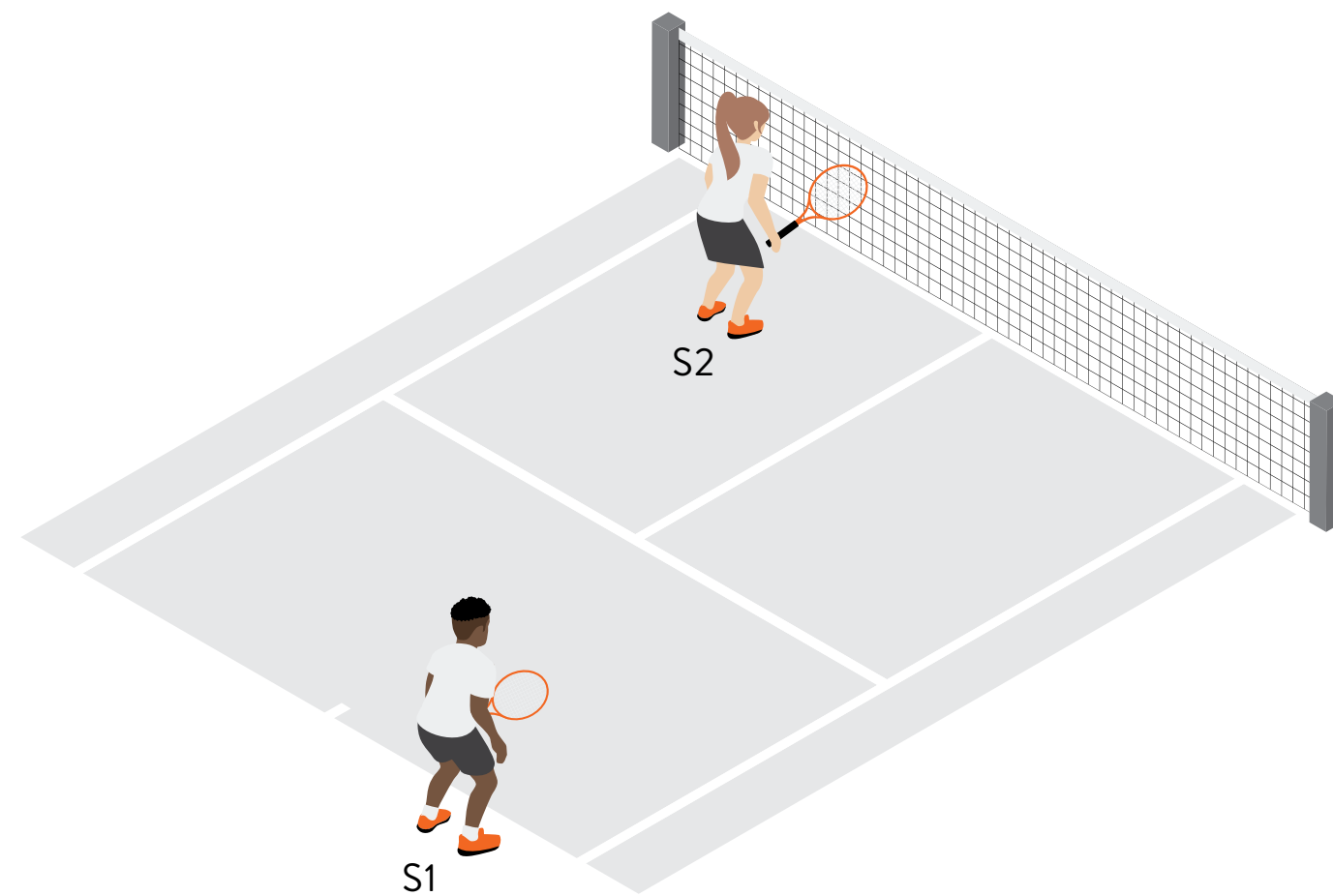
The returner starts at the back ready to receive the serve.
The returner's partner starts on the service line, and moves into the net once the ball travels past the servers partner at the net.

When serving or returning pairs can start with both players at the back of the court. This is considered a defensive formation.

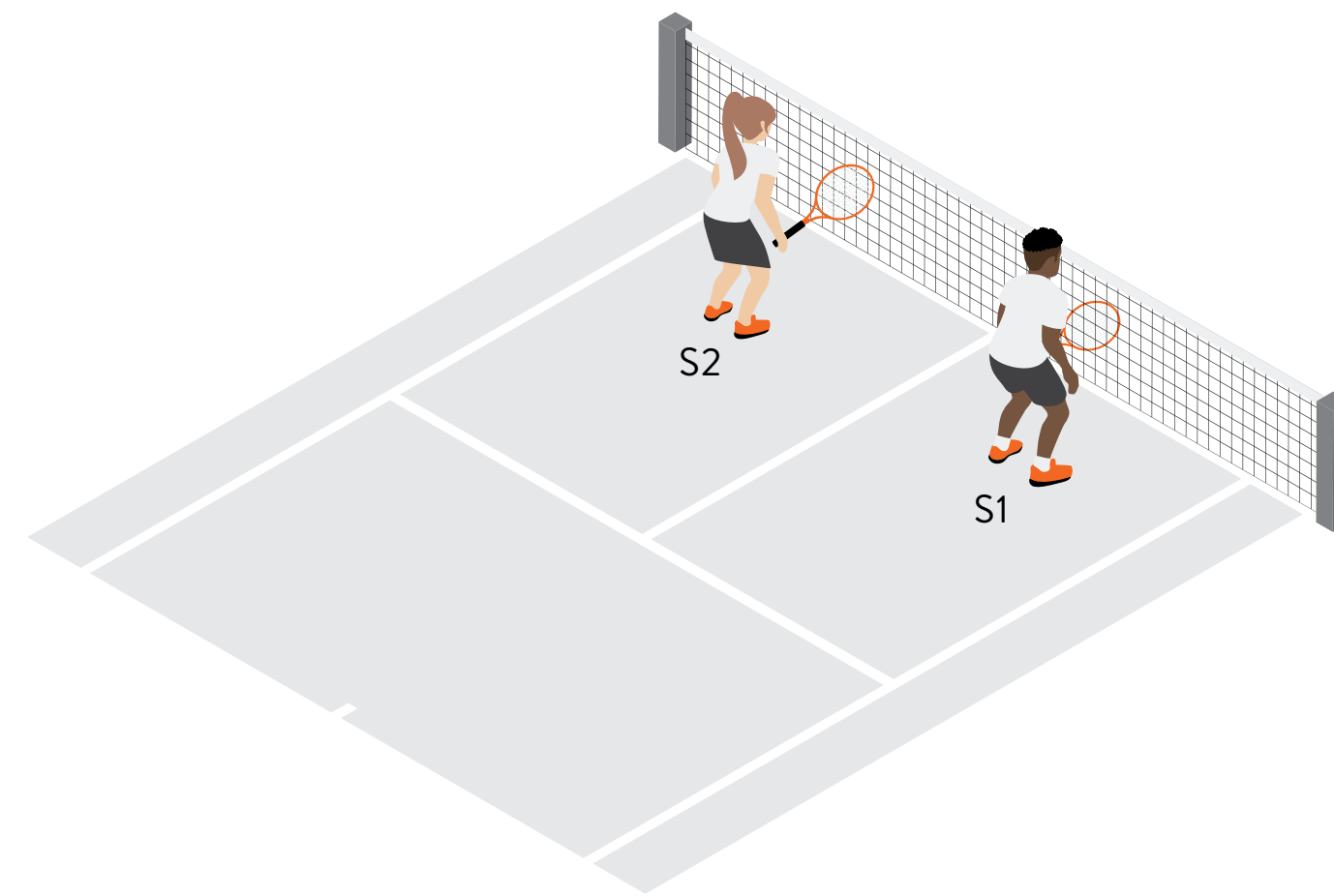


DOUBLES COURT POSITIONING

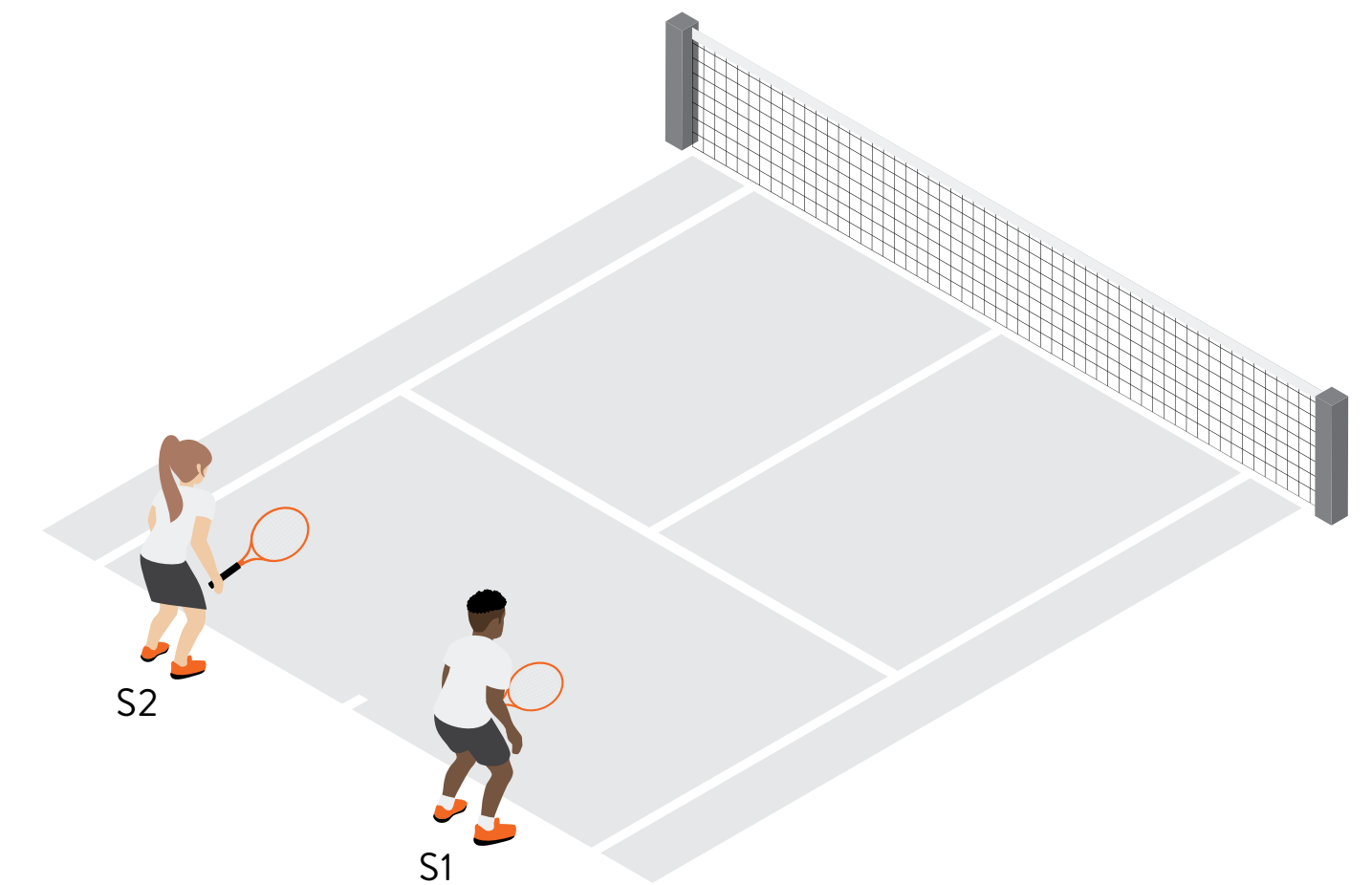
During the point, after the serve and return, the game situations are:



A pair may continue with one player at the net and one player at the back of the court.



A pair move so that both players are at the net. This is an attacking formation. It is possible that all 4 players may be at the net during the point.



A pair may move so that both players are at the back of the court. This is a defensive formation.

During a point, a pair may have moved into all 3 game situations, depending on the shots played and their opponents' court positioning.

TACTICAL INTENTIONS

Advanced players who have been coached may use tactical intentions and the language associated with these.

Players should have a tactical intention (i.e. what they are hoping to achieve) every time they strike the ball, which will impact on the movement, preparation, execution and where they recover to on the court after hitting the ball. The tactical intention may also be affected by the score; for example when serving in a tie-break 1-6 down, the intention of server may be different than if they are serving and up 6-1 in the tie-break. The tactical intention will depend on the situation in each individual point, and the intention may change several times during a point.

The terms used to describe tactical intentions are:

- **Trading:** Rallying with their opponent on equal terms where no one has the advantage
- **Building:** Creating an opportunity
- **Finishing:** Finishing the point
- **Neutralising:** Neutralising their opponents' advantage
- **Staying in the point:** Playing defensively with the sole intention of getting the ball back in play
- **Turning the point around:** Momentum changes from defending to having the advantage and controlling the point



