

# A Practitioner's Guide to Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU)

By  
**James Mandigo & Nick Holt**  
**Brock University**

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*11:15 – 12:15*

“Can we play the game now?” How many times have you heard that from your students? Come find out how you can use games to teach skills, rules and strategies. Using the TGfU model, participants will learn how to implement this model to achieve various curricular expectations. Assessment strategies for formative and summative purposes will be presented as a way for checking student learning.

## **Step 1: Game Form**

*Game 1a: Keep It Goin'*

Tactical Problem: Understanding Space (tactical complexity level 1)

Equipment: 1 ball / pair (use ball appropriate for ability level)

Set-Up (see Figure 1)

- create a 2 meter neutral zone using pylons to represent a "net" or use a badminton net that is set at a low level so the bottom of the net touches the ground
- use poly spots to create a grid to play within
- the size of the grid should be appropriate for the age and ability level of the group

*Purpose*

To introduce students to net/wall games and to provide them with an opportunity to generate an insight bank of potential tactical solutions commonly used in net/wall games.

*How To Play*

- ♦ play 1 Vs. 1 cooperatively
- ♦ students stand on opposite sides of the net
- ♦ players start by bouncing the ball on their own side so that their partner can catch the ball in the air after it has crossed the neutral zone or net
- ♦ players must bounce the ball from where they caught it and as quickly as possible
- ♦ partners keep track of how many consecutive catches they can make to each other without letting the ball hit the ground after a bounce within a 2 minute time frame
- ♦ play several times and try to beat previous score

## **Step 2: Game Appreciation**

### *Reflection Questions*

- a) How much force do you need so the ball goes high in the air to allow time for partner to catch it (e.g., just enough so the ball goes high in the air to give partner time to catch it)?
- b) Where is a good spot to place the ball in court so your partner can accurately catch it (e.g., middle of the court; directly to the person)?

### *Potential Modifications to Increase Task Complexity and Encourage Sampling*

Pair chooses 1 form of modification to play:

- a) strike ball over the net with open hand (allow one bounce per side and self-hit if necessary)
- b) strike ball over the net with racquet (one bounce before striking and self-hit if necessary)
- c) strike ball over the net with feet (one bounce before striking and self-hit if necessary)
- d) strike ball with hands or arms (no bounce)
- e) strike ball without using hands (no bounce)

## **Step 3: Tactical Awareness**

### *Game 1b: Put it Away*

The following game builds upon the tactical problem of understanding space by raising awareness of more complex tactical problems and solutions used in competitive net/wall games. This activity uses the pedagogical principles to address and identify tactical solutions associated with placing the object into your opponent's area of play so they are not able to return it.

### *How to Play*

- set-up same as 1a but now play competitively
- score a point if the ball lands in your partner's court and he/she cannot return it
- have to underhand throw the ball over the neutral zone (no bounce on own side) from where it was caught
- player who scored the point gets to serve

### *Reflective Questions*

Teachers can enhance student learning of future tactical problems and solutions by asking reflective questions such as:

- a) How did you try to get the object to land inside your opponent's square (e.g., hit it softly, put a spin on the ball so it went away, drop shot just over the net, put it into the open space)?
- b) Where are the open spaces on your opponent's side (front, back, sides)
- c) What did you do to try and prevent your opponent from scoring (e.g., covered space by getting back into the middle of the court)?

#### Step 4: Make Appropriate Decisions

##### *Modifications*

i) Play same throw and catch game, but this time in long narrow court

##### Reflective Questions

a) How can you get your opponent out of position to get a point in this game? (throw short by bringing them to the front of the net then throw long)

ii) Play same throw and catch game, but this time in short, wide court (play 2 vs 2)

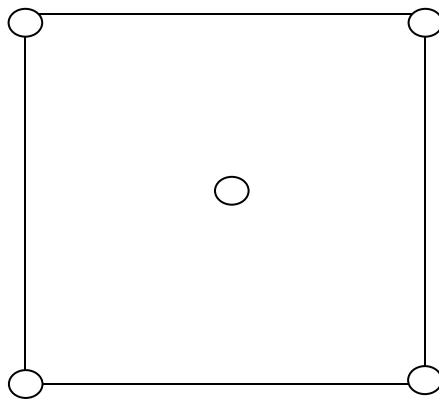
a) How can you get your opponent out of position to get a point in this game? (throw to the sides)

#### Step 5: Skill Execution

##### *Get Back*

Skill Focus: Footwork (off the ball skill ... why? Rarely focus on off-the-ball skills)

- ◆ Set up one side of the court using round circle pylons
- ◆ Participant must start from middle pylon, touch one pylon and run back to middle pylon, touch another pylon, and run back to middle pylon, etc... until he/she has touched all 4 pylons
- ◆ Participant must face forwards at all times
- ◆ Partner keeps track of how long it takes for participant to touch all four pylons
- ◆ Goal is to touch all 4 pylons as quickly as possible ... after partner goes, try again and try to beat previous time
- ◆ Key Refining Cues:
  - Spread your feet apart when you stop so that you don't fall down (why ... greater base of support provides more stability ... c of g is over base of support)
  - When you change directions, bend knees, push off with balls of feet, use arms to get going
  - legs should be springy with most of the weight on the balls of your feet

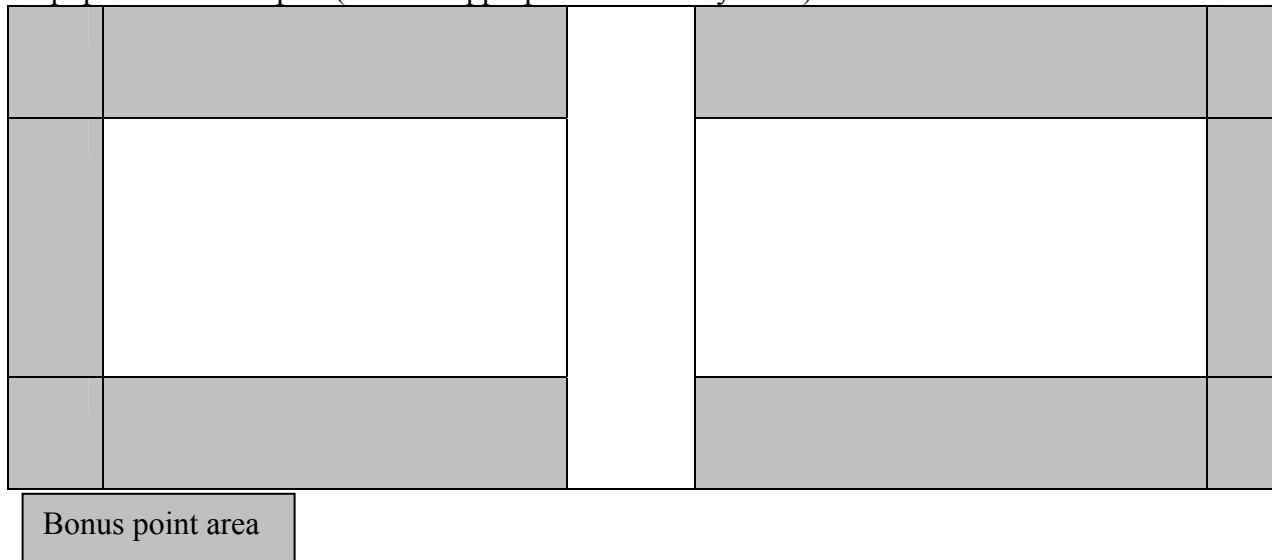


## Step 6: Game Performance

*Game 2: Corners (Play 4 vs 4)*

Tactical Problem: Setting up Attack (tactical complexity level 2)

Equipment: 1 ball / pair (use ball appropriate for ability level)



- use the same size grid and net as Figure 1
- place four poly spots to create a grid on both sides of the net (shaded area in above Figure 2)

How to Play

- play 4 Vs 4 competitively
- choose a ball that all players feel comfortable throwing and catching
- to score a point, ball must land inside the court and not be caught before it lands a second time
- all throws must be underhand and must be thrown immediately from the place they are caught
- a team can score a bonus point if the ball lands inside the grey area and can't be returned

*Reflection Questions*

- a) Can you use your body to try to fake out opponent (e.g., head fakes, shoulder fakes)?
- b) Can you get your opponent out of position to create space on their side (e.g., if throw ball to the front of the court, have now created space at the back of the court)?

*Modifications to Increase Task Complexity and Encourage Sampling*

Ask groups of 4 to modify the game to make it more appropriate for the group's skill level. Possible modifications could include:

- a) strike ball with hands instead of throw and catch (no smashes)
- b) strike ball with paddle and racquet
- c) use a scoop to throw and catch the ball
- d) kick ball
- e) allow no bounces

*Possible Assessment Strategies*

- See GPAI (subjective & tally methods)

**Game Performance Assessment Instrument**  
**(Mitchell, Oslin, & Griffin, 2003)**  
*Tally Method*  
 Sport: Pickleball (doubles)

*Components/ Criteria:*

- **Base:** Returns to base position between skill attempts
- **Decision Making:** Makes appropriate choices about when to place a long (deep) or short shot
- **Skill Execution:** Participant performs underhand ground-strokes into opponent's court

**Recording Procedure:** Use a tally to mark the observed category for the first 5 minutes of a game. Mark the person's responses to the criteria laid out above throughout the game.

Observation	Base		Decision Making		Skill Execution	
	A	I	A	I	E	I
Pre						
Post						

A = Appropriate; I = Inappropriate

E = executed efficiently; I = executed inefficiently

XX  
 X

**Subjective Method**

Scoring Key:

- 5 = Very effective performance
- 4 = Effective performance
- 3 = Moderately effective performance
- 2 = Weak performance
- 1 = Very weak performance

Observation	Base	Decision Making	Skill Execution
Pre			
Post			