

# Signature Shots Coaching Guide

This guide helps coaches introduce young players to the signature techniques of our 2025 Tennis Hall of Fame inductees. Each activity is designed to be accessible, fun, and instructive, connecting young players to the legacies of these tennis greats.



Bob and Mike Bryan



Maria Sharapova

## Maria Sharapova's Backhand

### SHOT DESCRIPTION

Maria Sharapova's backhand was incredibly reliable. Despite being very tall, she could steer the ball in from up high and down low, using unbelievable left hand extension. No target on the court was safe from her lethal backhand!

### KEYS TO SUCCESS

Sharapova's backhand had many forehand tendencies: an early shoulder unit turn, racquet tip up, and unbelievable extension. Her left arm would straighten out after impact. Her groundstrokes looked extremely similar, with the exception that two hands were on the backhand. However, she was famous for occasionally hitting lefty forehands when necessary!

### ACTIVITY: Seeing Double

#### SETUP & INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Player has two racquets, one in each hand.
- 2 Coach is hand-tossing balls side to side, dominant hand first.
- 3 Player tries to mimic the extension of the forehand on their non-dominant hand.
- 4 The key is to be smooth and notice how the kinetic chain can be the same on both sides, although likely a bit more awkward-feeling on the non-dominant side.
- 5 Try to make 10 in a row!

### COACHING TIPS

- Try to make sure the "controlables" are there—wide base, early preparation—so the player can focus on extension and rotation.
- "Stay loose and relaxed so as to make the kinetic chain—your whole body—work its magic."
- "Extend and hold the finish like you're on the cover of a tennis magazine."

## Bob Bryan's Drive Volley

### SHOT DESCRIPTION

While Mike was making opponents run, Bob would offer the finishing blow to opponents by sticking volleys and making sure they didn't come back. One of the reasons the Bryans are some of the greatest volleyers of all time is because of their simplicity and efficiency.

### KEYS TO SUCCESS

As soon as Bob sees the ball coming in, he sets the racquets behind the projected impact with the ball. In doing this, his core is turned to the side, racquet tip is up, and legs are ready to pop forward. This way, he has time to move his body into the volley. Getting your body to and through the volley is the key to driving the shot.

### ACTIVITY: Bob's Alley

#### SETUP & INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Coach stands in the middle of a service box.
- 2 Player stands at the service line directly across from the coach, close to the alley.
- 3 Coach feeds a hip- to shoulder-height volley, and the player must drive the volley directly into the alley.
- 4 If needed, work on setting the racquet first by turning the core and outside leg, then feed.
- 5 Keep feeding until the player gets to a certain number dependent on level.

### COACHING TIPS

- "Good split, and good forward movement through the contact point."
- "Hold the racquet out to the target as the legs drive forward."
- "Set the racquet by turning the core. Finish the volley with the legs."
- "The racquet controls the ball, the legs and body provide the power!"
  - This volley should be relatively flat, if there is too much backspin have the player set the racquet behind the ball and keep the racquet face towards the target.

## Mike Bryan's Touch Volley

### SHOT DESCRIPTION

The Bryan brothers were perfectly matched doubles partners. While Bob hit his big lefty ball, Mike was able to clean up at net with his deft touch. In his game, placement was more important than power!

### KEYS TO SUCCESS

The most important part of having good touch is softening your hands. Upon impact, the hands will help absorb power. A good way to think about this is trying to hit the ball while making as little noise as possible on impact.

### ACTIVITY: Teardrop Volley

#### SETUP & INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Player starts in the middle of the service box.
- 2 Coach has a cone, bucket or any target opposite the player in the service box.
- 3 Coach feeds low, forcing the player to absorb the ball with the legs and use touch to get the ball up and over the net to the target.
- 4 To scaffold, coach can add a target in the cross court service box for the player to change directions.
- 5 Repeat on the other side.

### COACHING TIPS

- "Soft Hands! Pretend you're volleying in a library."
- "Strings point to your target."
- "Racquet controls the ball. Be aware of where it is facing and how much it moves."
- "Having a good split and getting to the level of the ball make this easier."
- For hitting cross: "Having a good split, getting to the level of the ball, and kissing the outside of the ball make this easier."