



# PLAYMATE PORTABLE series



Owner's Manual



# **PLAYMATE** PORTABLE SERIES

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## **HALF VOLLEY & VOLLEY**

Owner's Manual

**Serial #:** \_\_\_\_\_



**METALTEK**

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Rev. H.1

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Rev. H.1

# **PLAYMATE PORTABLE SERIES**

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Rev. H.1

*Dear Valued Customer,*

*Congratulations on the purchase of your new PLAYMATE Tennis Ball Machine. We have packed over 40 years of experience and dedication into the production of each and every ball machine that leaves our high-tech facility in Raleigh, North Carolina.*

*It is our mission to build the most durable, dependable, and player-friendly machines. Quality is assured; from the gear motors and pitching wheels, to the fully programmable control boxes and remote controls.*

*We hope that you enjoy your new ball machine as much as we enjoyed building it. We encourage your comments and suggestions on how we could better serve you in the future. Please feel free to contact us on our Consumer Connection Line at 1-800-776-6770.*

*Sincerely yours,*

*Alfred F. Yarur  
President and CEO*

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# Introduction

The best way to improve your tennis game is to practice. That may sound like simple advice, but it's advice we take very seriously here at PLAYMATE. We believe that the best way to practice your game is to spend some quality time on the court with a ball machine. Only by utilizing a ball machine as a constant partner will you be able to repeatedly challenge yourself, whether that means learning new strokes or perfecting your footwork. A ball machine is your best choice or hitting partner when it comes to developing an all-court game.

The PLAYMATE PORTABLE SERIES comes in 2 exciting models:

## **THE PLAYMATE HALF VOLLEY**

The PLAYMATE HALF VOLLEY is an upgradeable model with a 3-hour battery-pack. It supports the following upgrades:

- Optional 2-Line Oscillation
- Optional Handheld Remote Control
- Optional 6-hour battery-pack

## **THE PLAYMATE VOLLEY**

The PLAYMATE VOLLEY is a fully loaded model with a built-in 2-Line Oscillator, handheld remote control system, and 6-hour battery-pack.

**Visit [www.PlaymateTennis.com](http://www.PlaymateTennis.com) for more information about HALF VOLLEY upgrades.**



# Safety Instructions

**WARNING!** To reduce the risk of electrical shock, fire, injury to persons, and other damage when using this product, please follow these basic safety precautions.

1. Read all instructions carefully before operating this machine.
2. To protect against the risk of electrical shock, never immerse any part of this machine in water or any other liquid.
3. Close supervision is necessary when operating this machine near children.
4. Never walk in front of this machine when it is operating. Tennis balls leave the machine at high speeds and could cause serious injury.
5. Always stand to the side, or behind the machine when attempting to alter the settings of the various controls.
6. **If it is necessary to free a jammed tennis ball, make sure that the machine is turned OFF and UNPLUGGED.**
7. Always wear protective eyewear when attempting any repairs or adjustments on this machine.
8. **Never attempt any repairs of adjustments on this machine when it is plugged in. Always turn the power switch OFF and UNPLUG THE POWER CORD.**
9. **This machine is intended for pitching tennis balls only. Never attempt to use this machine with any other type of ball or any foreign object whatsoever.**
10. Always make sure to turn this machine OFF when it is not in use.
11. **NEVER place hands or any other body part near moving parts, including but not limited to the feeding disk and pitching wheels. Pitching wheels can cause severe burns!**

# Getting Started

Your new PLAYMATE should have arrived securely packed. Inspect the ball machine for any damages that could have occurred during shipment. If the machine is damaged please save box and all packing for inspection purposes. Inside the packing box, you should have found the owner's manual, warranty card, battery charger, and battery pack. The VOLLEY also comes with a handheld remote control. If any of these are missing, please notify us immediately. Please read the instructions carefully.

## The Hopper

The hopper is the top of the ball machine where tennis balls are placed so that the ball machine has balls to feed. The hopper is raised up in order to hold tennis balls or is lowered in order to make the machine more compact for storage and transportation.



Hopper Raised  
(Play Position)



Hopper Lowered  
(Storage Position)

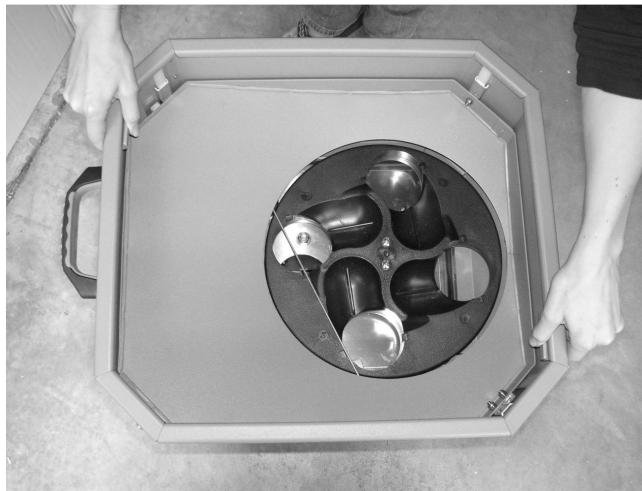
# Raising the Hopper

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1. Pull up on the hopper release levers.



2. Pull the hopper up while continuing to depress the hopper release levers.



## Raising The Hopper continued...

3. Release the hopper release levers.



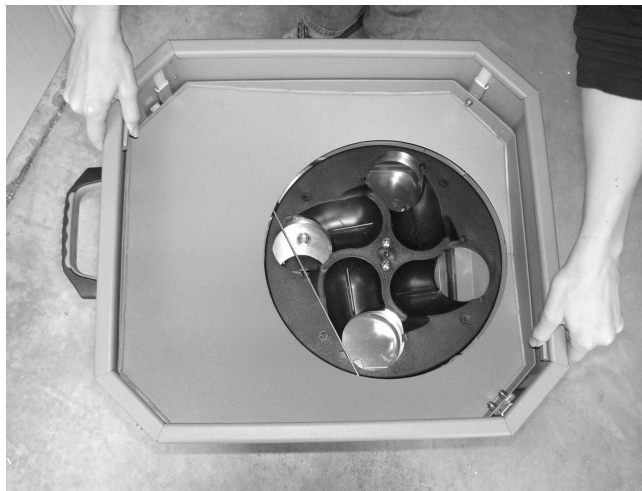
# Lowering The Hopper

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1. Pull up on the hopper release levers.



2. Push the hopper down while continuing to depress the hopper release levers.



## **Lowering the Hopper continued...**

3. Release the hopper release levers.



# Charging The Battery-Pack

---

## **ALWAYS CHARGE THE BATTERY-PACK!**

We recommend that you charge your battery-pack for up to 6 hours before the first use. **Anytime the ball machine is not in use, the battery-pack should be plugged into the charger and charged.** The charger is designed to maintain the proper health of the battery-pack by only charging it as needed and never overcharging. If a battery-pack is left sitting without the charger connected for an extended period of time, the overall battery-life will start to diminish. There is a light on the charger. When the charger is properly plugged in, the light will turn orange while charging and green when a battery-pack is fully charged or no battery is connected.

1. Plug the battery-pack into the charger.



## **Charging The Battery-Pack continued...**

2. Plug the power cord into the charger.



3. Plug the power cord into the wall outlet.



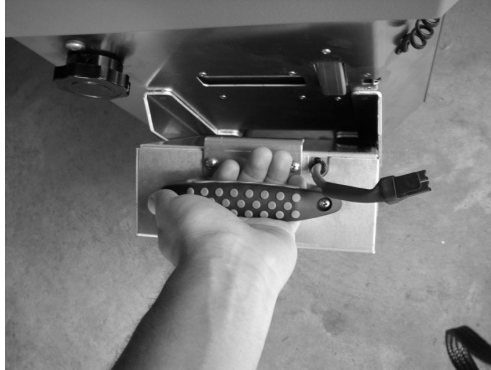


# How To Mount The Battery-Pack

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The ball machine will not operate or turn ON without the battery-pack properly mounted.

1. Grab the battery-pack by the handle and line it up with the guides on the bottom back of the ball machine.



2. Line up the hasp with the slide in hole while lining up the tabs on the bottom and slide the battery-pack downward until it "clicks".



## How To Mount The Battery-Pack continued...

3. Plug in the battery-pack with the black connector.



# How To Remove The Battery-Pack

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1. Squeeze the black connector and pull it straight out.



2. Grab the battery-pack by the handle.



## **How To Remove The Battery-Pack continued...**

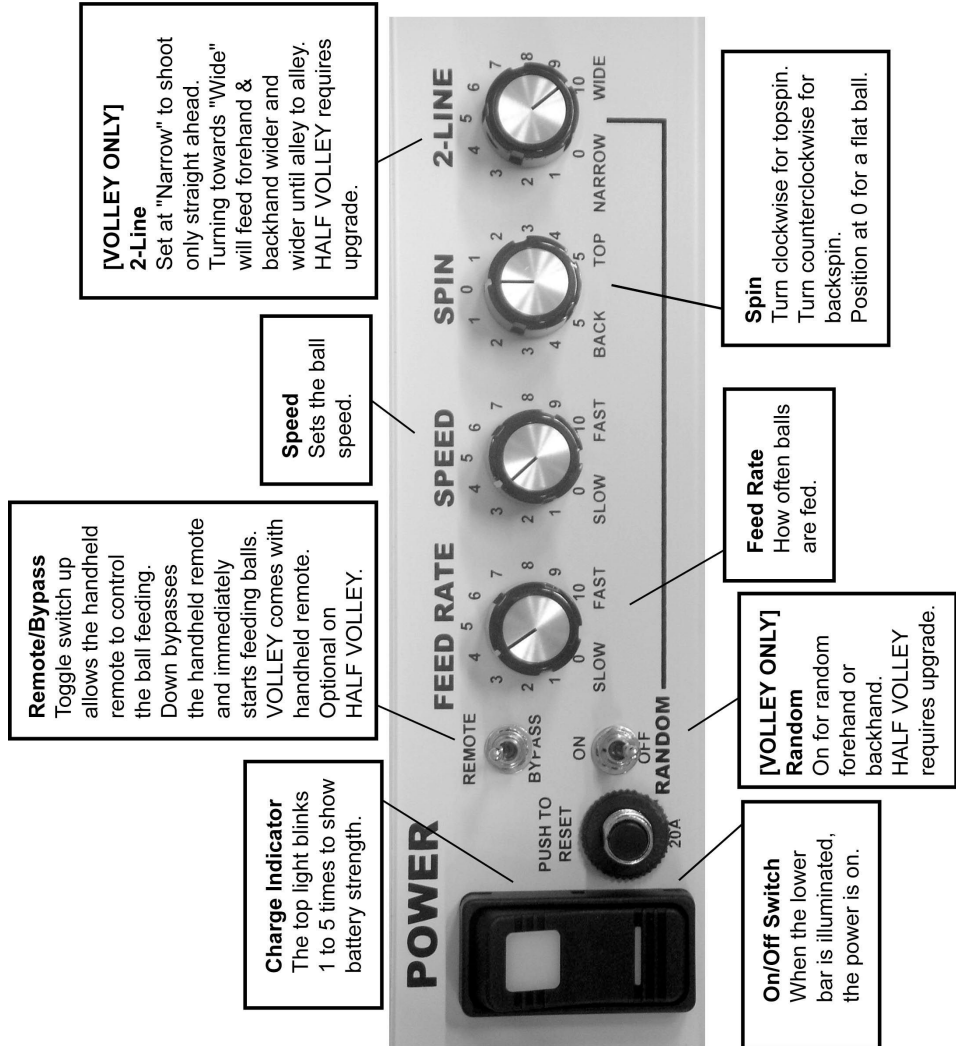
3. Press the battery-pack lock button.



4. While pressing the battery-pack lock button, pull the battery-pack up and out.



# Controls Layout



# Controls for the HALF VOLLEY

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1. **POWER** – Flip the switch up to turn on the machine. When the bottom light is lit, the power is on. The top light blinks 1 to 5 times to indicate the strength of the battery-pack. Blinking 5 times is full power. Blinking 2 times or less means that the battery-pack needs to be recharged soon. When the battery-pack runs out, the machine will stop itself and beep once every second.
2. **PUSH TO RESET** – This is an electronic safety feature. If the switch pops out wait at least 5 minutes before pushing it back in. Check for jammed tennis balls and then continue.
3. **FEED RATE** – This knob determines how often balls are fed. Turning the knob clockwise will feed balls more often, up to 1 ball per second. Turning the knob counterclockwise decreases how often balls are fed to about 1 ball every 20 seconds. **At position 0 the machine will completely stop feeding balls.**
4. **SPEED** – The speed knob controls how hard the balls are being pitched. Turning the knob towards "FAST" will increase the speed to pitch up to about 70 MPH. Turning the knob counterclockwise towards "SLOW" will slow to a soft toss.
5. **SPIN** – Turning the spin knob clockwise will increase the topspin on the ball. Turning the knob counterclockwise will increase the amount of backspin. At position 0 the ball machine will pitch a flat ball or a ball without any topspin or backspin.
6. **2-LINE** – The 2-Line knob is only a feature of the VOLLEY. The HALF VOLLEY can be upgraded with an optional 2-Line Oscillator Upgrade Module to make this feature work. Details about this feature can be found in the **Controls For the VOLLEY** section.
7. **RANDOM** – The Random toggle switch is only a feature of the VOLLEY. The HALF VOLLEY can be upgraded with an optional 2-Line Oscillator Upgrade Module to make this feature work. Details about this feature can be found in the **Controls For the VOLLEY** section.

## **Controls for the HALF VOLLEY continued...**

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8. **REMOTE/BYPASS** – If the switch is set to REMOTE, the HALF VOLLEY will not feed balls. When the switch is toggled towards BYPASS, the HALF VOLLEY will wait 10 seconds and then start feeding balls until the switch is set back to REMOTE. This switch is used on the VOLLEY to enable the remote control system. The HALF VOLLEY can be upgraded with an optional Remote Control Upgrade Module. Details about this upgraded feature can be found in the **Controls For the VOLLEY** section.
  
9. **ELEVATION** – There is a large hand-crank-wheel located on the back of the ball machine. Turning the hand-crank-wheel clockwise will cause the machine to feed balls lower. Turning the hand-crank-wheel counterclockwise causes the machine to feed balls higher.

# Controls for the VOLLEY

---

1. **POWER** – Flip the switch up to turn on the machine. When the bottom light is lit, the power is on. The top light blinks 1 to 5 times to indicate the strength of the battery-pack. Blinking 5 times is full power. Blinking 2 times or less means that the battery-pack needs to be recharged soon. When the battery-pack runs out, the machine will stop itself and beep once every second.
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5. **SPIN** – Turning the spin knob clockwise will increase the topspin on the ball. Turning the knob counterclockwise will increase the amount of backspin. At position 0 the ball machine will pitch a flat ball or a ball without any topspin or backspin.
6. **2-LINE** – The 2-LINE knob controls how far you have to reach or move between shots left and right. Turning the knob clockwise towards "WIDE" will make the ball machine shoot balls from doubles sideline to sideline. When the knob is anywhere in between on its way towards "NARROW", the distance between the left and right shots will gradually narrow until only shooting straight ahead.



## **Controls for the VOLLEY continued...**

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7. **RANDOM** – The Random toggle switch is toggled up towards “ON” in order to make the 2-Line feature feed a random left or right shot depending on how the 2-Line knob is set. If the 2-Line knob is set all the way “NARROW” the machine only shoots straight ahead. Toggling the switch down towards “OFF” allows the machine to feed alternating shots left and right.
  
8. **REMOTE/BYPASS** – When the Remote/Bypass toggle switch is toggled up for Remote operation it enables the handheld remote control to be used to control starting and stopping the ball feed. When toggled down for Bypass, the ball machine will bypass the handheld remote control and start feeding tennis balls after 10 seconds.
  
9. **ELEVATION** – There is a large hand-crank-wheel located on the back of the ball machine. Turning the hand-crank-wheel clockwise will cause the machine to feed balls lower. Turning the hand-crank-wheel counterclockwise causes the machine to feed balls higher.

# Ball Machines 101

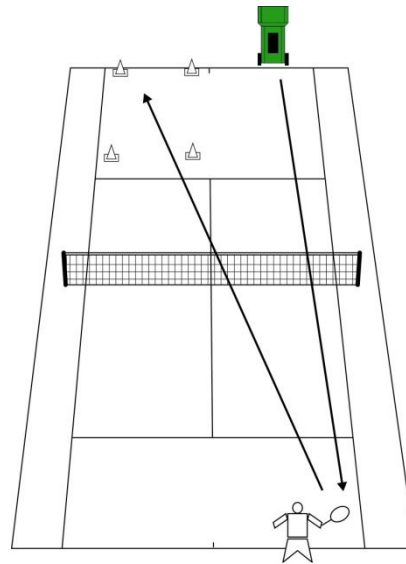
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Even experienced ball machine users are often surprised by the following basic advice when using a ball machine:

## TARGETS

When training with a ball machine it is critical to first decide where you are going to hit the ball to and setup a target that you can see on the opposite side of the court. This target should be an area blocked off with cones or markers or something that shows you an area large enough that you can reasonably hit the ball there 6 out of 10 times.

For example, the picture to the right shows a player receiving a down-the-line shot and hitting a cross-court forehand drive to an area marked off with cones. As a player you should be able to hit this area 6 out of 10 times. As you get more comfortable, you can reduce the area size and aim more towards the doubles alley to challenge yourself. You can also increase how hard you hit the ball while keeping your shot in the target area.



## **Ball Machines 101 continued...**

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### **INTERVAL**

Interval, also known as Feed Rate, refers to how often a ball is fed from the ball machine. The FEED RATE should always be set so that the ball machine feeds the next ball at the same time as the ball that you hit back towards the ball machine crosses the front of the ball machine.

If you hit a ball back towards the ball machine and your ball has not crossed the front of the ball machine, but the ball machine has fed the next ball, you need to reduce the FEED RATE. Reduce the FEED RATE by turning the knob counterclockwise.

If you hit a ball back towards the ball machine and your ball crosses the front of the ball machine but the ball machine does not immediately fire the next ball when your ball crosses the front of the ball machine, you need to increase the FEED RATE. Increase the FEED RATE by turning the knob clockwise.

Using a Feed Rate that is too fast or too slow is bad because it introduces an unnatural rhythm that will lead to long-term mistakes with stroke production and footwork.

## Ball Machines 101 continued...

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### POSITION

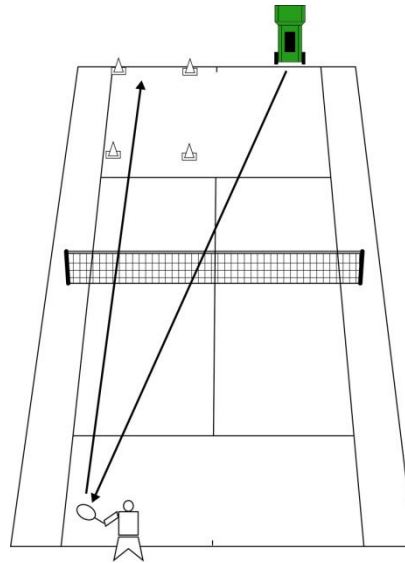
*(position of the ball machine on the court)*

New and experienced ball machine owners often place the ball machine at the center mark on the baseline when setting up the ball machine for a drill. This is a common mistake that misleads many players.

Hitting a cross-court forehand drive from a down-the-line shot feels very different from hitting a cross-court forehand drive from a ball that comes from the center of the court. This is true of every stroke in the game. If practicing overhands, it is best to place the ball machine at either of the corners of the singles court.

If practicing a down-the-line backhand drive, it is best to place the ball machine so that it provides a cross-court shot as shown to the right.

Following this advice will make the difference between small improvements and huge improvements in your game.



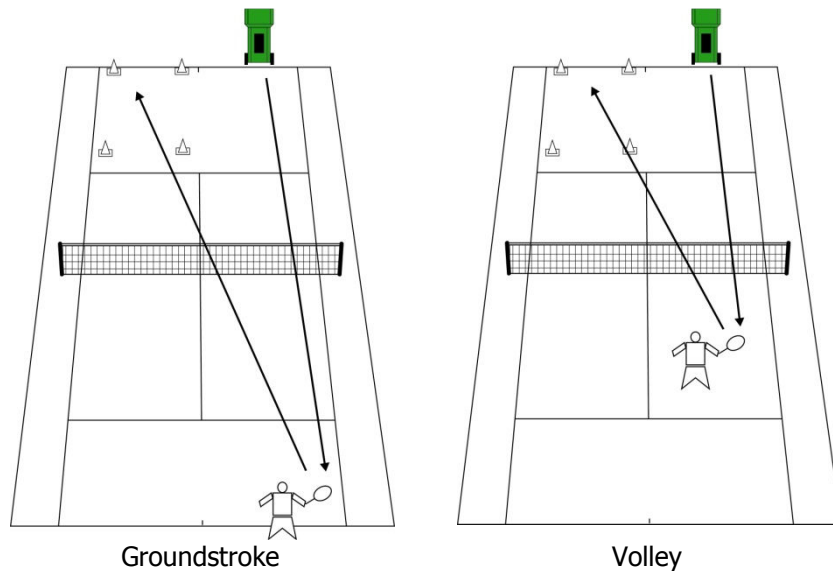
# PLAYMATE HALF VOLLEY Drill #1

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Flat cross-court groundstroke or volley to the Deuce Court.

1. Position the ball machine as shown below.
2. Set REMOTE/BYPASS toggle switch to REMOTE.
3. Push the POWER Switch up to turn on the ball machine.
4. Set the FEED RATE knob to 4 for groundstrokes or 6 for volleys.
5. Set the SPIN knob to 0 for flat balls.
6. Set the SPEED knob to 6.
7. Turn the Elevation hand-crank-wheel in the back of the machine all the way clockwise until it stops.

Now, flip the REMOTE/BYPASS toggle switch to BYPASS to start feeding balls while turning the Elevation hand-crank-wheel counterclockwise until the ball is high enough to suit your needs. Walk to the other side of the court and practice until the balls are depleted.



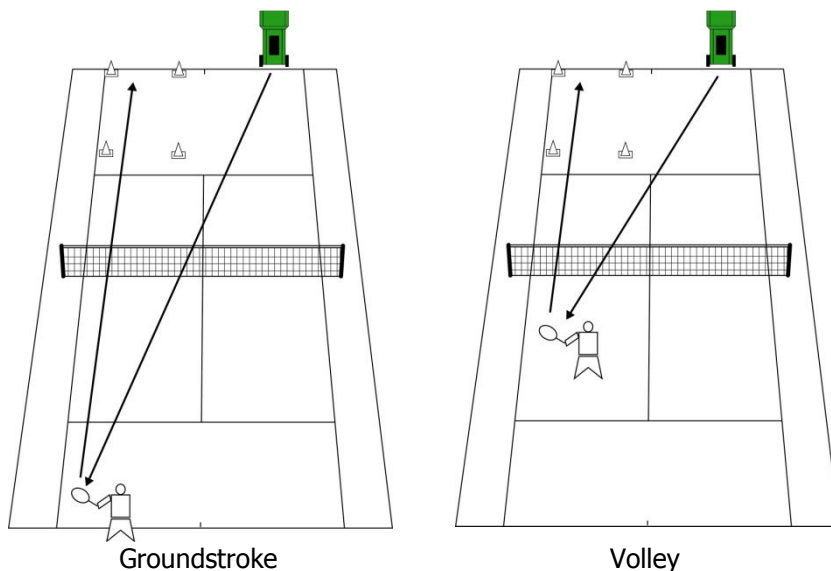
## PLAYMATE HALF VOLLEY Drill #2

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Flat down-the-line groundstroke or volley to the Ad Court.

1. Position the ball machine as shown below.
2. Set REMOTE/BYPASS toggle switch to REMOTE.
3. Push the POWER Switch up to turn on the ball machine.
4. Set the FEED RATE knob to 4 for groundstrokes or 6 for volleys.
5. Set the SPIN knob to 0 for flat balls.
6. Set the SPEED knob to 6.
7. Turn the Elevation hand-crank-wheel in the back of the machine all the way clockwise until it stops.

Now, flip the REMOTE/BYPASS toggle switch to BYPASS to start feeding balls while turning the Elevation hand-crank-wheel counterclockwise until the ball is high enough to suit your needs. Walk to the other side of the court and practice until the balls are depleted.



# **PLAYMATE VOLLEY Drill**

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Flat groundstroke or volley to the Deuce Court then Ad Court.

1. Place the ball machine on the center mark on the opposite baseline pointing down the center of the court.
2. Set REMOTE/BYPASS toggle switch to REMOTE.
3. Push the POWER Switch up to turn on the ball machine.
4. Set the FEED RATE knob to 4 for groundstrokes or 6 for volleys.
5. Set the SPIN knob to 0 for flat balls.
6. Set the SPEED knob to 6.
7. Set the 2-LINE knob to 5.
8. Set the RANDOM toggle to OFF.
9. Turn the Elevation hand-crank-wheel in the back of the machine all the way clockwise until it stops.

Now, using your handheld remote, turn the ball feed on and turn the Elevation hand-crank-wheel counterclockwise until the ball is high enough to suit your needs. Turn the ball feed off with the handheld remote. Walk to the other side of the court and use your handheld remote to start feeding tennis balls. Practice until the balls are depleted or you tire. Turn the ball feed off with the handheld remote before reloading balls.

Try turning the RANDOM toggle switch to the ON position and challenge yourself by having to switch back and forth between forehands and backhands at random.

# Care and Maintenance

With proper care and maintenance, your PLAYMATE tennis ball machine should last for years and years of effortless operation. These few basic steps will help to keep your machine in great shape, and deter any future mechanical problems.

- 1. PERIODIC CLEANING** – Over a period of use, various debris and ball fuzz will begin to build up on the interior of the ball machine cabinet. This should be cleared away periodically to avoid excessive build-up that could clog mechanical parts. Use a damp cloth to wipe down both the interior and exterior surfaces of the machine. Very gently use a dull object to help break away large clumps of debris. Never scrape at the surface of your PLAYMATE ball machine with a sharp object, or use any harsh abrasives or solvents. Loose debris can be vacuumed out of the ball machine cabinet. Never use a hose to attempt to spray debris out of the interior of the machine. Excessive water pressure can damage the sensitive electrical components, as well as increase the risk of electric shock.

**NOTE:** On a regular basis, compressed air should be used to blow ball fuzz and/or debris away from the ball switch area located underneath the black feeding disk near the ball drop hole on the top of the ball machine. Ball fuzz also builds up underneath the same area which can be accessed by turning the ball machine completely upside down and blowing with compressed air. The ball feed wire that goes over and across the feeding disk should be inspected to make sure that it is perfectly straight and not bowed in any way. These maintenance steps are essential for the proper function of the ball machine as well as the safety of ball machine users.



## Care and Maintenance continued...

- 2. STORING** – When the machine is not in use, it should be stored in a proper and secure fashion. Ideally, it should be placed in a dry and clean area that offers shelter from the elements. Even though the ball machine is constructed from anti-rust aluminum, excessive exposure to wind, rain, sunlight, etc., can often interfere with the operation of the sensitive electrical components, and cause fading and/or other damage to the finish.

# Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	POSSIBLE CAUSE	APPROPRIATE ACTION
<b>Inconsistent ball speed</b>	- Pitching wheels are heavily worn; the pitching surface is dirty	- Wheels need to be sanded and/or cleaned. Use medium grit sandpaper to restore the textured surface of the wheels.
<b>Ball is not pitched</b>	- Tennis balls and/or pitching wheels are wet	- Wheels and/or balls require cleaning and drying. Remove any wet balls from hopper.
	- A ball is jammed	- Turn off power and remove any jammed balls.
<b>Feeding disk does not turn</b>	- Loose electrical connection	- Turn machine upside down; check connection of cord #3 at side of control box.
	- Problem with the remote relay	- Turn REMOTE/BYPASS switch to BYPASS. If feeding disk works properly, check the remote (see remote troubleshooting below).
	- A ball is jammed	- Turn off power and remove any jammed balls.
<b>Balls jam repeatedly</b>	- Ball feed wire is damaged or missing	- Inspect the position of the feed wire over the feeding disk. Make sure only one ball is allowed to enter at one time. If feed wire is missing, call METALTEK for service.
<b>Remote does not function properly</b>	- Antenna is not facing upward	- Reposition antenna
	- Battery is dead	- Replace battery in handheld remote
	- REMOTE/BYPASS is switched to BYPASS	- Set Remote switch to REMOTE (see pg.10 #2)
<b>Pitching motors and/or Feed motor do not operate properly</b>	- Loose electrical connection	- Turn machine upside down; check connection of cords #1 and #2 at side of control box.

# **PLAYMATE Consumer Connection**

We are here during business hours to help provide technical assistance to our customers.

**Hours of Operation:** Monday - Friday  
8:00am - 4:30pm (EST)

If you experience difficulty with your METALTEK Products, please feel free to contact us at one of the following numbers:

Toll Free (USA): 1-800-776-6770

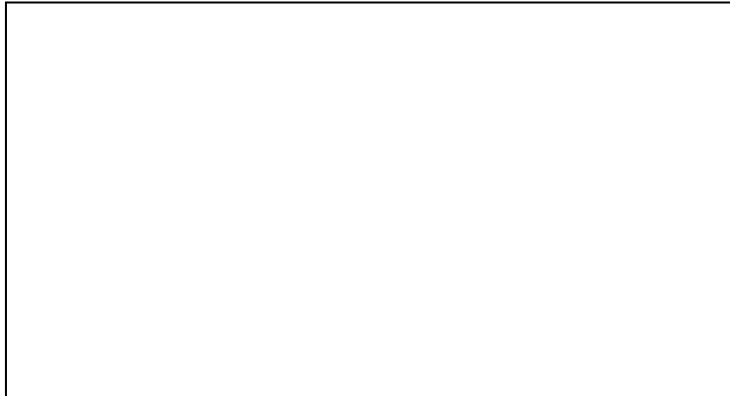
Tel: 919.544.0344

Fax: 919.544.1430

Visit our website at:  
[www.playmatetennis.com](http://www.playmatetennis.com)

Or write us at:  
METALTEK  
455 Kitty Hawk Drive  
Morrisville, NC 27560  
USA

## **Authorized Sales & Service Center**



## METALTEK LIMITED WARRANTY

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**WARRANTY COVERAGE** –This warranty applies to new PLAYMATE Portable Series tennis machines (VOLLEY, HALF VOLLEY). PLAYMATE Commercial tennis machines (ACE, SMASH, DEUCE, GENIE, GRANDSLAM, and SERVELIFT) are warranted under separate warranty. This warranty covers defects in materials and workmanship for **two (2) years** from the date of purchase. During the warranty period, METALTEK will repair or, at its option, replace components that are determined to be defective under non-commercial use, and shall do so at no charge. However, you must pay any applicable labor and inspection charges, and shipping charges to METALTEK. This warranty only applies to original purchasers.

**WHAT WARRANTY DOES NOT COVER** – The PLAYMATE Portable tennis machines are not designed for commercial use. Commercial use is defined as the rental or use of the same ball machine by a group of 6 or more people. Commercial use may void the warranty. In addition, this warranty does not cover damage to the machine or any part or component thereof caused by or resulting from: misuse, abuse, accidents, acts of God (such as floods or hurricanes), normal wear and tear, failure to follow operating instructions, service or modifications by any persons other than those certified by METALTEK, and damage during shipment (all claims must be presented to the shipper within 7 days of receipt of merchandise).

**TO OBTAIN SERVICE** – In order to be eligible for service under this warranty, you **MUST** return the attached warranty registration card within ten (10) days of purchase. If something goes wrong, you can contact METALTEK directly at:

**METALTEK'S PLANT:**      **REPAIR POLICY**  
   **455 Kitty Hawk Dr.**  
   **Morrisville, NC 27560**  
   **USA**  
   **Toll Free No: (800)776-6770**

METALTEK may refer you to an Authorized Sales and Service Representative for consultation and/or inspection of the problem and to correct if possible. There may be an inspection charge for on-site inspection. You will be responsible for any labor charges and for prepayment of the costs of returning the machine or part(s) to METALTEK. Parts should be returned in a protective package to avoid in-transit damage. Such damage is not covered by this warranty.

THIS LIMITED WARRANTY IS IN LIEU OF ALL OTHER EXPRESS WARRANTIES. ANY IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY AND FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE SHALL COINCIDE IN DURATION WITH THE TWO-YEAR LIMITED WARRANTY. IN NO EVENT SHALL METALTEK BE LIABLE FOR CONSEQUENTIAL AND INCIDENTAL DAMAGES. (Note: Some states do not allow exclusion or limitation of incidental or consequential damages, so the above limitation or exclusion may not apply to you.) This warranty gives you specific legal rights, and you may also have other rights which vary from state to state. No dealer has the right to modify this warranty or to make any representation or promise on behalf of METALTEK.

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