

## Tips for Effectively Using

# Primary Target Systems

(Airzone, Mini-Airzone, Target Trainer, and Mini-Target Trainer)

By Joe Dinoffer

We are very excited to now offer tennis coaches and teachers several Oncourt Offcourt primary target systems: the original **Airzone**, **Mini Airzone**, **Target Trainer**, and the **Mini-Target Trainer** tennis training aids. It's been long accepted that primary targets accelerate the learning process for tennis. Studies have confirmed it and we see clear parallels in other sports and activities from riflery to bowling, billiards to golf, and much more.

In tennis, one on-court study I conducted with 64 players showed up to a 66% increase in depth control using our Airzone with players hitting over the horizontal cord. Further informal studies confirmed dramatic increases in control for players aiming through specific targets, when those targets are achievable with a solid percentage of success. Gone are the days when we should have students aim for a single cone on the court and we can get away with calling that target practice. When a player only succeeds in hitting a target when they are lucky (try aiming for a single cone with a serve), there is minimal carryover of that activity to real game situations.

Ideally, a highly visual target system should be used that a player knows he or she can aim for and have a fairly good chance of hitting through or into. Be sure to use a progression to allow players of all levels succeed. Then, remember that it is critical to gradually remove the visual training aid (a technique called "fading"), to allow the players to continue to practice the skill without developing a dependence on the training aid itself.

And, remember to be creative with your visual training aids. Here are some examples:

1. **Airzone** - In addition to the 2-300 drills in the accompanying book, how about clipping the Airzone to the side and back fences to create horizontal lines and angles for players to aim over or under on both their side of the net and the opposing side.
2. **Mini Airzone** – This quick set-up training aid is a dynamic way to help competitive singles players identify when to hit topspin crosscourt with arc and when to flatten out and hit lower over the net, down the line and through the court.
3. **Target Trainer** - Like the Airzone, the **Target Trainer** can also be used in different places on the court. For example: Set it up on the opposing service line and have players aim through the center of the target to get more depth on their groundstrokes. You'll notice that they will automatically extend more through their shots and often make several positive technique adjustments to do it.
4. **Mini-Target Trainer** - Try setting up two targets on the net for the same service box. Then, just after the server tosses the ball, call out "Wide" or "Middle" and have them adjust their serves to aim for each target. The goal of this example is to help players better disguise their serves. Set up a similar exercise for passing shots as well.