

TACTICAL ERRORS

PART 3



Recognising tactical errors in your game is just as important as recognising mistakes in your play.

Practice may give you better shots and training can improve your speed and stamina, but what about your decision-making? You can practise aspects of your tactics – a backcourt game for defence; lobs for your slow game; volleys for your pressure game and shots for attacking play. But when will you use these? How are you going to put your game together, make decisions and take risks when you are under pressure? Be clear on how to eradicate errors by looking out for them in live play and on video. Recognise them and minimise them. Learn from your mistakes and those of others.

5. HITTING THE TIN

Problem: Most matches are won and lost on mistakes and most mistakes are shots into the tin. What is the reason for this: technical, physical, mental or tactical?

Solution: Leave a margin for error above the tin.

Leave a margin for error above the tin. Vary this margin depending on the difficulty of the ball and the distance from the front wall. Play attacking and 'working' shots when an opponent is out of position and you can afford to aim a little bit higher.

Practise with condition games. Use the front/back game and practise games in which one player plays all shots short. When you practise, count the number of shots you can play without a mistake.

6. NOT LOBBING WHEN UNDER PRESSURE

Problem: Being under pressure either temporarily or regularly means you are deprived of time. You are playing rushed shots under pressure which means there is more chance of an error, a loose return, a predictable shot or an under-powered one.

There is also the risk that your hitting position is stressed, you will struggle to get back to the T quickly and restricting your opponent's options is difficult, especially if they can take the ball early. There is also the issue of fitness and pacing yourself throughout a match.

Solution: Lob to create time.

The solution to being under pressure is seemingly simple; create the extra time you need with slower shots, tighter shots and length. The most obvious shot to create time is the lob.

Create the time you need by lobbing and varying the pace throughout your match. Pressure players or hard-hitting players will play fewer slow shots but it should still be a part of their game and it is a tactical error not to lob when needed. Many players will try to hit their way out of trouble, but variations of pace, rather than smashing the ball, is a more astute tactic. Try lobbing or playing slowly in your practice games.

DECISION MAKING:

Joel Makin is under pressure but decides to go short rather than lob to create time

TOP 10 TACTICS

1. LENGTH

Use length to put your opponent in the back corners and deprive them of attacking opportunities. Minimise mistakes. Start with defence (See Issue 2018 No.3).

2. WIDTH

Use width to get the ball past your opponent and force weak shots (See Issue 2018 No.4).

3. WIN THE T

Move to and take control of the T. Recover here quickly before your opponent hits their shot (See Issue 2019 No.1).

4. VARY THE PACE

Tactics involve a balance between hard and soft shots. Use the lob and other high shots to create time to recover the T. Vary the pace of your play to break an opponent's rhythm (See Issue 2019 No.2).

5. APPLY PRESSURE AND VOLLEY

Apply pressure to deprive your opponent of time by taking the ball early, hitting it hard and volleying. Volley to keep control of the middle (See Issue 2019 No.3).

6. POSITIONAL PLAY

Hit the ball away from your opponent when openings occur. Make your opponent run. Play into the gaps (See Issue 2019 No.4).

7. ATTACK

Look for opportunities to attack. Attack when you have an opponent out of position and an easy ball (See Issue 2020 No.1).

8. VARIATIONS

Use surprise, disguise and deception to catch an opponent out. Set up patterns and then suddenly change them (See Issue 2020 No.2).

9. RALLY

Squash is a rallying game, so rally and look for opportunities to play winners and force errors (See issue 2020 no.3).

10. MATCHPLAY

Adapt to your opponent's strengths and weaknesses (See Issue 2020 No.4).

TACTICAL ERRORS

1. ATTACKING DIFFICULT BALLS (See Issue 2021 No.1)

2. ATTACKING WHEN AN OPPONENT IS ON THE T (See Issue 2021 No.1)

3. HITTING BACK TO AN OPPONENT (See Issue 2021 No.2)

4. LEAVING YOURSELF OUT OF POSITION (See Issue 2021 No.2)

5. HITTING THE TIN (See Issue 2021 No.3)

6. NOT LOBBING WHEN UNDER PRESSURE (See Issue 2021 No.3)

NEXT ISSUE:

TACTICAL ERRORS: PART 4

- Not returning to defence
- Overplaying crosscourts and boasts