



DECISION MAKING:

To volley or not volley? That is the question that faces Ali Farag against Paul Coll

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 PART 5

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

Practice may give you better shots and training can improve your speed and stamina, but what about your decision making? 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 tactical 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.

9. FAILING TO TAKE ATTACKING OPPORTUNITIES

Problem: You are immersed in the rally. You are working hard to get the ball back. You are trying to survive under pressure. You are a bit tense, a bit nervous, and you don't want to make mistakes. An easy ball pops up in the middle, you are not sure where your opponent is and you hit it back down the court. Opportunity lost.

Solution: Become familiar with your attacking shots

It is just as much a tactical error to fail to attack when the opportunity presents itself as failing to defend when the conditions dictate. Practise attacking shots so that you are familiar with them and can play them easily. Practise combinations and condition games like the front/back game

and play some easier practice games where you play defensively and concentrate on just picking a small selection of attacking shots at a time.

10. FAILING TO VOLLEY

Problem: The ball drifts out from the side wall or a loose crosscourt comes through the middle. You don't read it in time, you don't react, you are scared of making a mistake and you head to retrieve it from the back corners.

Solution: Volley to keep the middle

Volleying is the opportunity to keep the middle, pressurise an opponent and, at times, play winning shots. Practise volleys in solo and pairs routines and play condition games on the volley.

Play some easier practice games where you are volleying as much as possible and a few where you are trying to volley everything. In your matches, set up rallies, look for volleying opportunities and try to anticipate these. If in doubt, volley.

NEXT ISSUE: MISTAKES: PART 1

- Aiming too low
- Choosing the wrong ball to attack

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)
7. NOT PLAYING DEFENSIVELY (See Issue 2021 No.4)
8. OVERPLAYING CROSSCOURTS AND BOASTS (See Issue 2021 No.4)
9. FAILING TO TAKE ATTACKING OPPORTUNITIES (See Issue 2022 No.1)
10. FAILING TO VOLLEY (See Issue 2022 No.1)