



# DEVELOPING YOUR TACTICAL AWARENESS



Take a look at some of these tips to improve your tactical awareness

## Why important?

'The objective of tactical information is to provide the athlete with the strategic knowledge required to effectively execute the skills they have acquired'.

(Bompa, 1999 – Sports Psychology & The Theory of Sports Training)

Tactics can often be a neglected part of a player's development yet in essence can be the difference between winning and losing matches.

## What to do?

| GENERAL TACTICS  | PLACEMENT  | SPEED   | SPIN  |
|--|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vary Spin, Speed and Placement.</li> <li>Avoid playing to 'Power Zones'.</li> <li>The greater the Technical, Physical and Psychological abilities of a player then the more tactical options are available to them.</li> <li>General tactics against all opponents involve being able to play with variation to stop opponents getting into a rhythm and anticipating.</li> <li>The more accomplished players become, the greater choice of executing a variety of tactical options.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practice playing into the crossover Point.</li> <li>Topspin's are more effective played deep/wide.</li> <li>Develop a range of short or long pushes.</li> <li>Lines of play (where you play the ball to determines recovery position).</li> <li>Half long balls.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Playing attacking shots with speed reduces their organisational time.</li> <li>Change of pace can be effective especially against defence or half distance players.</li> <li>Don't let opponent dictate the pace of the game!</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observing your opponents' spin by watching contact and trajectory of ball.</li> <li>If unsure of spin select slightly later timing point.</li> <li>Use good variation and disguise of spin especially on service.</li> </ul> |

| HOW TO PLAY DIFFERENT STYLES   | TACTICS V DIFFERENT KINDS OF RUBBERS  | SERVICE/RECEIVE   |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When playing <b>counter hitters</b> use both heavy backspin/topspin and avoid playing to Power Zones – Crossover is effective placement.</li> <li>Patience is required against <b>defenders</b>. Varying topspin and using short drop shots especially to F/H. Also, fast topspins to the middle are effective.</li> <li>Against <b>blockers</b> be prepared to vary the topspin especially slow heavy topspin followed by a fast attack to crossover.</li> <li>Against <b>aggressive spinners</b> try and initiate the first attack and avoid pushing passively to the Power Zones.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Short Pimples</b> usually used by defenders or attacking players who play counter-hitting style close to the table.</li> <li>They are good for controlling heavy spin and defenders can use to good effect to vary amounts of backspin.</li> <li>Often players who use short pimples on one side will use the reverse rubber to impart more spin on service.</li> <li><b>Long pimples</b> are basically spin reversal and are referred to as a 'Parasite' rubber as can only work with the spin that is given to them.</li> <li>Generally used by defenders on the B/H where the more topspin on the ball the more backspin comes back!</li> <li>General tactics against long pimples is to serve long or short with backspin or no spin which allows a strong 3rd ball attack.</li> <li>If it is returned, then the ball will have backspin so push the return and start the cycle again.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Service</b> is a crucial part of tactics as allows one to plan point to exploit own strengths and opponent's weakness.</li> <li>A varied service game with ability to change direction, spin, and speed (also with disguise) keeps opponent from anticipating.</li> <li>If a particular service is effective, then perhaps save for important situation.</li> <li>Players should be able to <b>receive</b> and play against a variety of serves and in general try play most attacking option.</li> <li>Being able to read and play half long serves is an important part of the game as players develop as it can take servers initiative away.</li> </ul> |