

## Developing a relationship: You and the ball (part 5)

Tennis is an, 'impact sport'. The impact of the ball is the most important moment in all of tennis. Setting up a good relationship between you and the ball effects balance, power, coordination, timing, control, and a host of other crucial elements.

### SERVE 'BOX'

#### For the Beginner... (Tennis Rating 1.0-2.5)

Imagine a 3 dimensional box floating approximately six inches higher than as high as you can reach with your racquet and slightly closer to the net than your head. This is your 'ideal' serve impact point. Every point in tennis starts with a serve. The goal is to execute a good 'service toss' with the ball set in this Ball Control Box.

A good toss is "lifted" into place with your arm hinging and extending from the shoulder (not the elbow or wrist). The racquet motion is a 'throwing action'. Imagine throwing the face of your racquet at the ball.

#### For the Intermediate player... (Tennis Rating 3.0-4.5)

A feeling of 'letting go' rather than pushing is important to develop a good serve. The impact must allow you to fully extend and 'snap up' at the ball. It should feel like quick 'hit' rather than a 'hard push'.

For spin the ball toss is placed so the Ball Control Box is above your head (rather than forward). This will allow more racquet head motion across the ball to enhance the spin.



### ~~Court~~ ~~Home work~~

**Beginner:** Give yourself 1 point for contacting the ball inside your 'Box', and one point for getting it in the appropriate service court. Start with a "half serve" (starting with the racquet set beside the ear) at the serviceline. Focus on the impact and wrist action. Move back to  $\frac{3}{4}$  court after 10 points. At  $\frac{3}{4}$  court, focus on the 'throwing action'. Move to the appropriate service position behind the baseline beside the centre mark after 10 points. The drill is over when you have accumulated 10 points at the baseline. Play serving to the Deuce side first then, play on the Ad side.

**Intermediate:** Player "A" starts by playing points with both a 1<sup>st</sup> and a 2<sup>nd</sup> serve. The scoring is 'badminton' style (if the server loses the point, serve goes to the opponent. Only the server can accumulate points) play up to 15. Double faults mean a possible lack of focus on the impact point. The server loses the serve and 1 point on a double fault.