

Ball Control Basics

The goal of tennis in its most basic form is to: "Make the little round, yellow, fuzzy ball, go where you want it to". There are only 5 ways to manipulate the ball in tennis (Height, Direction, Distance, Speed, Spin). To master tennis a player must learn how to receive variations of these 5 'Ball Controls' and send variations as well.

The P.A.S. Principles

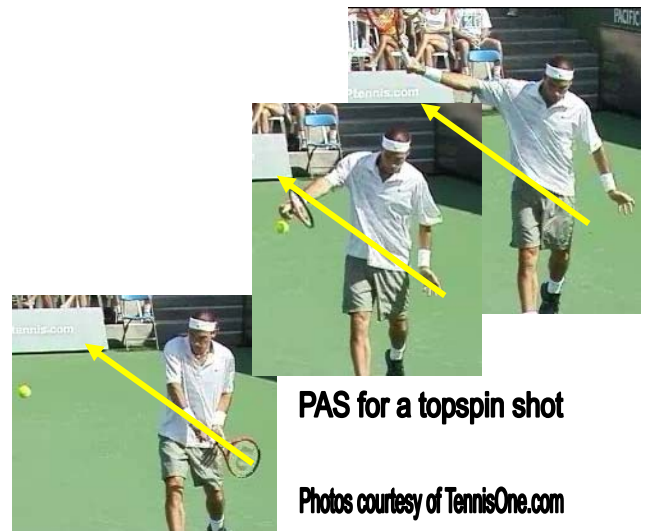
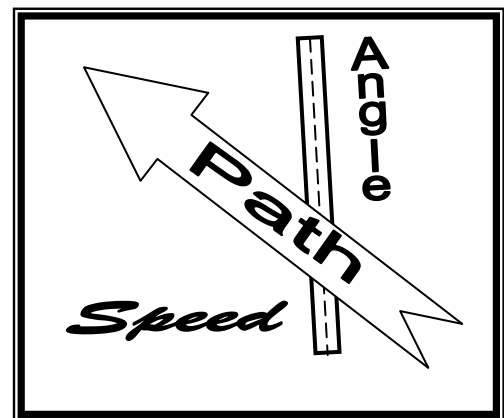
To manipulate any of the 5 Ball Controls, the first step is to imagine a 3-dimensional 'Ball Control Box' at the Impact Point of the ball. What the racquet does at the impact makes every ball control happen. Every shot in tennis whether groundstroke, volley, or serve, requires the racquet to 'pass' through that box. We can modify the word P.A.S. to help remember all the elements that control the ball.

"P" stands for **Path** of racquet, which includes if the racquet is moving through the impact from low to high, level, or high to low.

"A" stands for **Angle** of racquet which includes both the vertical angle (how open or closed to the sky), and horizontal angle (how much the racquet face is angled to the right or left).

"S" stands for **Speed** of the racquet through the impact which includes if the racquet is accelerating, decelerating, or maintaining speed.

Every shot is a 'recipe' combining varying degrees of each P.A.S. principle. Even a complex ball control like spin is simply a combination of the appropriate amounts P.A.S. For example, 'topspin' would result if the racquet path was low to high, the angle was vertical, and the speed was fast (With the same racquet path, more speed increases the amount of spin, less speed decreases it).



Court Home-work

Beginner: Start with a 'Mini-Tennis' rally (serviceline to serviceline) then progress to $\frac{3}{4}$ court, then baseline to baseline. At each stage explore each P.A.S. principle after every error. For example, if the ball goes into the net, which of the principles was incorrect? Fix it and see if it works. The goal is to be able to 'coach' yourself and solve Ball Control problems while playing.

Intermediate: For more advanced training the goal is to add new shots to your repertoire by figuring out which P.A.S. principles apply. For example, to pass a player at net you may want to 'dip' the ball with a crosscourt angle. What would the path be, the racquet angle, the speed? New serves and volleys can be explored with this method as well.