

BASIC STRATEGIES

Tennis is a game. Every game has ways to win points. To be purposeful about winning, players need a plan to win. The general and overall plans to win are called "Strategies". More specific ways to implement the strategies are called "Tactics". The combination of shots used to execute the tactic are called "patterns". It is good for players to understand these concepts to develop a winning game.

Basic strategies: GAIN TERRITORY

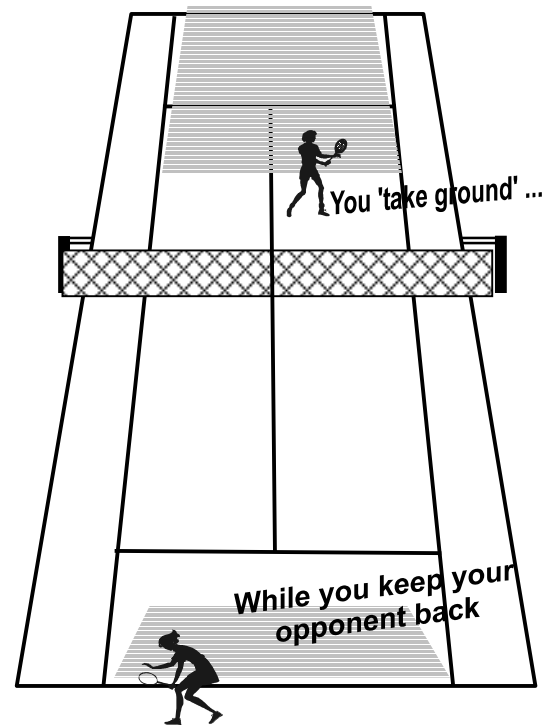
This basic tennis strategy uses the physical dimensions of the court. Just like two armies doing battle, the objective is to keep the enemy behind their lines and 'take ground' to advance. The concept is simple; opponent's who are kept as far back as possible can hurt you less. On the other hand, the closer you are to the net, the more angles and attacking opportunities are available.

A typical point using this strategy would look like this:

A player starts the point (after the serve & return) by hitting deep, penetrating shots. On any shorter or weaker ball by the opponent, the player moves in and gains advantage. This could mean moving in and taking the ball earlier on a groundstroke (like a $\frac{3}{4}$ court shot), or moving right up to the net for a volley. Typically, the player would send the ball more to the sides of the court once they have this better court position. The opponent, on seeing this may lob over the net player's head to push them back and approach the net themselves.

Gain Territory tactics:

- Higher groundstrokes penetrate the court deeper than low, hard ones
- Approaching on down-the-line shots (rather than crosscourts) positions you to cover the court easier
- 'Reverse' the strategy by hitting a short shot that pulls your opponent in (especially if they are uncomfortable at net). Lob it over their head if they get close to the net



Court Home-work

Beginner players: Play the "Depth drill". Start the point with a serve and play to 5 points then rotate servers. Both players try to rally the ball past the serviceline. Focus on sending the ball higher over the net. This extra height will help to add depth to the shot and push the opponent back. If a player gets a point by sending the ball past the opponent's serviceline, they get an additional 'depth bonus point'. As you improve, try making the game even more challenging by having balls that land shorter than the serviceline called out (except the serve of course). Try to move in on balls landing near or shorter than the serviceline.

Intermediate-Advanced players: Play regular points. The 1st person to 7 wins the game, then switch servers. Where you are on the court gets you points. If you win the point positioned behind the baseline, that's one point. In front of the baseline = 2 points. In front of the serviceline = 3 points. Keep the opponent back to minimize their points while you move in to maximize yours. Remember, it is where you are when the point ends that gets you points. For example, if you hit an approach shot that your opponent misses but you have run in front of the serviceline, that's 3 points for you. For a doubles version, start with all 4 players back.

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If you would like to ask a question, give feedback, or want more information, contact Wayne at:

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