

BASIC STRATEGIES

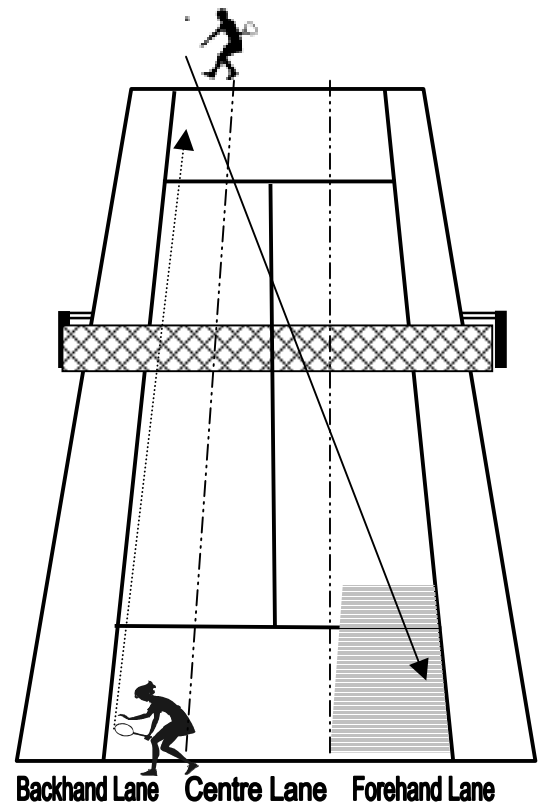
Tennis is a game. Every game has ways to win points. To be purposeful about winning, players need a plan to win. The general and overall plans to win are called "Strategies". More specific ways to implement the strategies are called "Tactics". The combination of shots used to execute the tactic are called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

Basic strategies: HIT TO THE OPEN COURT/ MOVE THEM AROUND

The legendary coach Harry Hopman said, "Tennis is a game of control and restraint, and hitting the ball where the other guy ain't". Even in today's power tennis, placing the ball to an opening is still an effective tactic. Open court can mean side to side, but up and back is a good option as well (the court is longer than it is wide). Hitting to the open court makes the opponent move. An opponent on the move is less likely to hurt you and more likely to cough up a weaker shot you can take advantage of.

Open Court tactics:

- Hit to one side and then the other. As a surprise, hit 'behind the opponent' (hit to the same side twice) to mess them up (especially if the opponent starts 'anticipating' and moving early to cover the open court).
- Pull the opponent up to the net with a short ball or drop shot. Then, lob over their head. Or, hit a deep ball to keep them way back and follow-up with a drop shot.
- Take balls received in the centre of the court as opportunities to place shots to the sides.
- Hit crosscourts off any down-the-line shots you receive. Beware hitting down-the-lines off crosscourts unless the ball is weaker. Down-the-line shots are riskier and can give your opponent an easy crosscourt that makes you run maximum distance.



Court Home-work

Beginner players: Play the "Lane drill". Split the court into 3 lanes from net to baseline (markers are helpful), a forehand lane, a backhand lane, and a centre lane. The goal is to hit to the lane furthest from the opponent. If the ball is in the centre lane, hit to whatever side is easiest. Start with one player just keeping the ball going and the other going for the lanes. Progress to both players going for the lanes. The game can start with groundstrokes or serves and play up to 7 points.

Intermediate-Advanced players: Practice open court "combo's". Have one player act as the 'runner'. The runner must cooperatively place the ball back to a designated area (to the centre, just to the forehand, just to the backhand, etc). The other player is the "mover". The mover places the ball in specific combinations. (a) Side to side. (b) Side to side then hit behind the player. (c) X pattern (a short angle to one side, a deep ball to the other). (d) Drop shot/lob, deep ball/drop shot. Every time the mover can string together 3 shots in a row, they get a 'pattern point'. Play for 3 minutes or 5 points (whatever happens first), then switch roles. For extra practice, start patterns off the serve.

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