

## 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: PLAY AN OPPONENT'S WEAKNESS

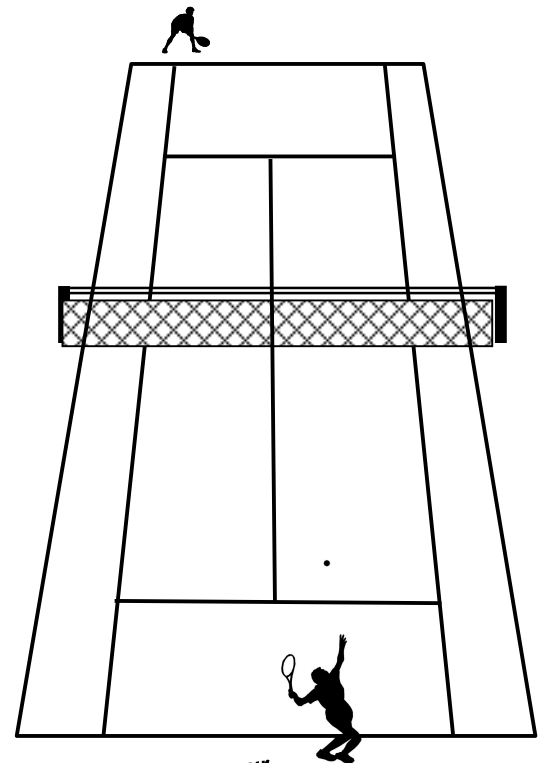
No opponent is good at every shot from every location on the court. Players typically have a couple of things they do well, a lot of average things, and a few not-so-good items.

One of the keys to playing smarter is developing your 'tactical awareness'. Playing any game (whether tennis or chess) requires awareness of what your opponent is doing. That awareness will lead to seeing trends which will give you a way to win more points (or lose less), by picking on their not-so-good skills.

Shots aren't the only weakness a player may have. Weaknesses can be technical (shots) but psychological, physical or tactical as well. For example, an opponent may be slow or unable to last in a long match (physical). They could play 'safe' under pressure or get mad easy (psychological). They could go for 'low percentage shots' or lob whenever they are in trouble (tactical). It is your job as their opponent to identify and exploit any weakness they have.

### Uncovering an Opponent's weakness:

The greatest asset you have to reveal an opponent's weakness are the questions you ask. Questions help you become aware of what is happening on the court. A good question to start the process is, "When my opponent loses points, what happens?" Zero in on the weaknesses by asking, "Where are they when they lose points?" (e.g. at the net, behind the baseline, etc.) and, "What kind of ball is giving them the most trouble?" (e.g. high balls, fast balls, a type of spin, etc?).



*My big serve to your weak backhand return!*

## ~~Court~~ Home work

**Beginner players:** Keeping your shots to an opponent's weaker side is the most basic strategy a player must master. Play a singles game where you attempt to place the ball to only one side of your partner (e.g. backhand side only). Start right from the serve. If you win a point from their 'weak' side, you win 2 points. If your partner wins a point using the other side (their forehand) they get 2 points (since you didn't keep it away from their 'stronger' side). Each player serves 4 points. Play to 21.

**Intermediate-Advanced players:** For advanced players, it is not only good to pick on a weakness, but to match your strengths to their weaknesses. Have your partner write down 3 of their weaknesses (can be technical, tactical, physical, or psychological). You write 3 of yours. With this knowledge, look to match your strengths to their weaknesses. Play tiebreakers. If anyone gets a point by matching a strength to a weakness (for example, using your big forehand against their weak backhand. Using your strength of placing against their weakness of movement, etc), they receive 3 points. Sharing your weaknesses will help you to improve them as well.

We would like to gratefully acknowledge Tennis Canada and Louis Cayer for providing inspiration and source material  
If you would like to ask a question, give feedback, or want more information, contact Wayne at:

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