

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.

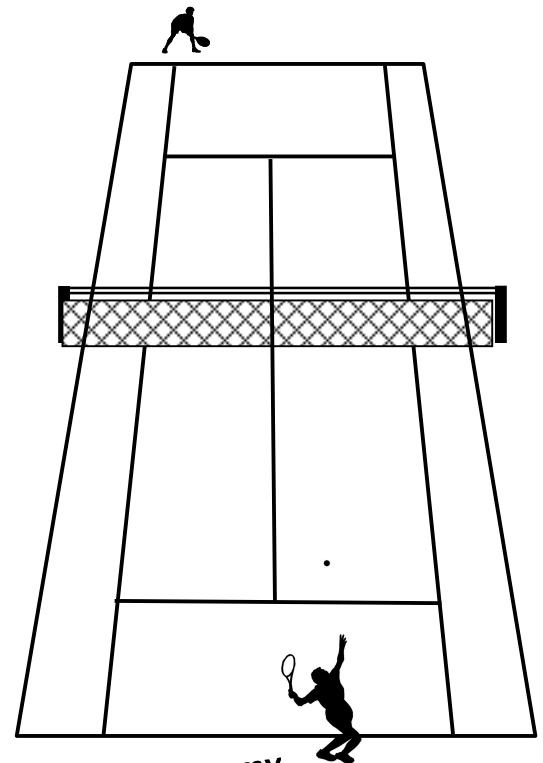
Basic strategies: USE YOUR STRENGTHS

You will often hear professionals interviewed after winning matches who say, "I played my game". Utilizing what you do best is a good plan. Ask yourself, "How do I get points best when I compete?" Is it by relentless consistency, punishing power, taking time away (taking the ball earlier or coming to net), or deadly accuracy? Awareness of how you play best is the key to many other strategies and tactics. Playing *how you want to play* helps you to intentionally hit rather than just react to the ball. It also keeps you from being dragged into an opponent's favorite game.

For higher level players who know their strengths, the issue is making sure they can maximize the use of their strength. Let's say a player's strength is a big shot (e.g. their forehand). The key would be to work on a 'Weapon Package'. This includes not only your killer shot but setting it up, identifying opportunities to use it, and disguising it. If the whole package isn't there, the strength may never be utilized. For example, if a player works on, "the shot before" (like a high looping shot to the backhand to set up a dominating forehand) they can make their forehand happen more often. It is especially important to practice using your strength right off your serve since you should be in control (you are giving the ball to yourself) and holding serve is critical to win sets.

Uncovering your strength:

For further reflection on this topic, go to www.acecoach.com to the ACE Player page. Work through the article entitled, "Gameself".



Here comes my
"big serve"!

~~Court~~ Home work

Beginner players: It is important that you discover what your strength is. Play a practice set and keep a 'point journal'. Write how you got each point you won (your practice partner can help). The trend will be easier to discern if you play with different people.

Intermediate-Advanced players: Play 4 games (you serve twice in singles or everyone serves once in doubles). Keep a separate 'strength score' as you play. Every time you set-up and get a chance to use your strength, give yourself a strength point (whether you won the point or not). However, don't give yourself a point if you chose a poor time to use it. You should be able to use your strength on average 2 points per game. Place 8 paper clips on your no-racquet side pocket (or dress). Every strength point you get, move one clip over to the racquet side.

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:

www.acecoach.com