DOUBLES STRATEGIES

PRE GAME STRATEGY

Pre-Game strategy is important as it sets the base of your game. It gives you a basic game plan and requires the two-person team to stick to it for success.

Pre-game planning will set up success for great offensive (getting points for you and your partner) and defensive (preventing points to get the serve back)

3 basic strategies

1. **Communication:** The most basic part of every point. Communication helps tell the partner who takes the shot, who shouldn’t take the shot, keeps you in position, and keeps your partner in communication...every shot, every hit, every movement on court should be communicated...every time.

2. **Protect and go for the middle:** If your opponents are smart they will go for the middle, if you want to reduce errors you should aim for the middle. Communication in not only verbal, it is action. If both you and your partner are right-handed, the one on the odd-side of the court controls and protects the middle...its your power shot, it’s the shot you can control better (better than your partner’s back hand), its where you need to be especially if you are hitting against the player on their odd side.
   - Protect the middle by going to the T, the center of the court, not the center of your side.
   - Aim for the middle of you opponents, counting on them not to communicate.
   - Aim for the middle because you have more room for error and the net is lower.
   - Be in the middle to cover your partner’s back hand

3. **Walk to the net:** When your team is serving, and after the opponent’s return, your next shot is typically a drop shot. Most players make the mistake of running to the net after their drop shot. The error that next occurs is that you are subject to running through the return of the opponent and you miss the shot. You need to be ready and prepared to hit every shot that comes back. The only way you can have success is to stop and be prepared. Walking to the net helps you prepare faster, you want to stop and be in a ready position as soon as your shot passes the plan of the net (before the ball touches your opponent’s paddle). The mistake is moving to fast and not being ready...so walk to the net always ready to stop.

GAME STRATEGY

Game strategy is important as it allows you to adjust your game. It is important to stay with your basic pre-game and to make slight adjustments based on your opponent’s strengths and weaknesses.

Note: do not assume weaknesses and strengths in warm up...people play dramatically different in warm up then they do in game situations.

3 basic strategies

1. **Continue to communicate:** watch how the partners move, listen to how they communicate, note if they are lefthanded or righthanded, observe if one partner is stronger that the other, or takes shots that the other should have. Watch if they move in unison, do they cover each other’s territories when one is moved off court, look for the holes, are they rushing to the net or staying back, are they hard hitters or pacers. Communicate those observations to you partner between points, and at time outs.
   - If they are hard hitters, take the pace off more
   - If they stay back, keep them back, then dink them
   - If one doesn’t cover for the other, move them wide for a set up shot down the middle
d. If they don’t talk to each other go down the middle
e. If one has a weak back hand exploit it
f. If one is covering more ground hit back to his last position, tire him out

2. **Cover your partner:** protect against the lob by taking one step back off the No Volley Line. Just showing that you are prepared to chase a lob might be enough to have your opponent think twice about lobbing.

3. **Work on your strengths and cover your weaknesses.** You know your strengths and weaknesses. Maury Wills was a great baseball player who had many records for stealing bases...he hit very few homeruns. Do you think in practice he worked on his power to try to hit more homeruns? He worked on his speed and ability to read pitchers...he worked on his strengths. If you are having a bad day covering for your partner while on the odd side of the court, the power side, then stack, let your partner cover that area and vice versa. Recognize this while playing.

### POST GAME STRATEGY

Post-Game strategy requires you to set aside time with your partner to talk about the game. Do not let a win or a loss be a distraction to talk about why you won or why you loss.

Take time to analyze the game you just finished. What points did you win and how, what points did you lose and how?

Talk about how you can reduce your unforced errors and how you will fix them moving forward.

Do more of what helped you win and less about how you lost.

### DRILLS FOR A BETTER PARTNERSHIP

Always start with a warm up regiment including:

- Stretching and moving...side shuffles up and down the line
- Dinking
  - Face to face, cross court, windshield wiper (50 continuous)
- Volley
  - Face to face, cross court and half court (50 continuous)
- Drop shots and returns (25 each)
- Deflecting Hard shots...taking the pace off 25 each)
- Lob from the dink position (10 each)
- Cross court shots (25 continuous)
- Serve and return (15 each)
- Drill with another partnership
  - Moving the players from side to side when dinking
  - Create and exploit holes
  - Lobs and tracking them down
  - Deflection shots
  - Play points out by only hitting soft shots
  - Practice walking to the kitchen with ready positions and soft shots
  - Keep your paddle and your arms out in front of you
  - Breathe
  - Communicate Communicate Communicate Communicate
**DRILLS FOR A BETTER PARTNERSHIP**

Windshield Wiper Drill – While dinking players move side to side in opposite directions...face to face at center (position 1) move until you are diagonal (each person moves to their left (position 2) and back to center (position 3) then each person moves right (position 4) and back to center (position 5). Repeat 5 times all dinks; reduce and eliminate errors.

The dink is an ‘un-attackable’ shot....it needs to stay low over the net and deep into the non-volley zone. You want to cause the opposition to decide to take it out of the air or let it bounce. The successful dink will cause the opponent to back up and setup a return that you can attack...put away.

You are also trying to great a gap in your opponents, hoping one partner does not cover or move with the other. The dink is a game of patience.

It’s a waiting game to see who makes the first mistake, either forced or unforced.
**The Drop Shot Drill**---after dinking for about 5-7 minutes practice the drop shot with one partner up at the NVZ and the other back at the baseline. The drop shot is an approach shot to allow the serving team time to get to the net. The shot should be low arc that lands deep into the kitchen...think of it as a longer version of the dink. Each partner should practice successfully 10-15 shots in a row. Aim higher and avoid the net, do not give up a point on unforced errors.

*Drop Shot*

*Power Position* – Power Position in Doubles is the forehand and usually on the odd side if both players are right-handed. This means the odd side dominates and takes most of the shots on court. I have diagramed the courts position for that player and will discuss in class.

**The Transition Shots** – The transition shot is the shot as you approach the kitchen.... practicing deep cross court shots and having both partners approaching the net transitioning from hard cross courts to soft drop shots and eventually dinks. The importance of the shot sequence is stopping at each point as your shot crosses the plane of the net...not running through each shot and taking pace off. The drill is also a variation of the windshield wiper. Start deep.

Both players move counter clockwise. Remembering to stop and be in ready position each time.

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Repeat