



Topic 3. TACTICAL PREPARATION IN TENNIS

Module 1. Training in sport tactics and physical condition of athletes



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CONTENT



- Difference between technique, strategy and tactics
- Strategy versus tactics
- Types of players
- Basic game situations
- Tactical options
- The right mind-set
- Basic tactics in the three development stages
- Closing notes on tactical options
- Types of court surfaces
- Weather impacts
- Playing in windy conditions



TECHNIQUE – STRATEGY - TACTICS

- **Technique:**
 - linked to the motor learning of each athlete
 - consists of the realization of necessary movements and skills
 - unlike strategy and tactics, it does not take into consideration the factor of the opponent
- **Strategy** -> describes the general destination and outlines the way to a certain goal
- **Tactics** -> is more specific and focuses on smaller steps and a shorter time frame along the way -> involve best practices, specific plans, resources, etc.

STRATEGY VERSUS TACTICS 1



Strategy:

- is one of the 4 main areas of the game besides technique, physical preparation and mental competencies;
- is similar to tactics in terms of advance planning, but it has many aspects that exceed the immediacy of the competition.
- covers concepts such as the planning of training sessions, nutrition, regeneration and, more or less, the whole life style.



STRATEGY VERSUS TACTICS 2



Tactics:

- basically, consists of small decisions to be implemented during a match;
- always demands continuous, razor-sharp observation, since circumstances in a match may change and the athlete will have to improvise and react accordingly;
- places great emphasis on the understanding the game at beginner and intermediate level, while at advanced level various aspects that distinguish the modern game step into the foreground;
- can be individual (one-on-one situations, collective, defensive, offensive, etc.

TYPES OF PLAYERS



- the counter puncher
- the aggressive baseliner
- the serve-and-volleyer
- the all-court player





NINE TYPICAL OPPONENTS:

- Pushers
- Aggressive baseliners
- Net rushers
- Big servers
- Servers and volleyers
- Big forehand hitters
- Counter punchers
- Aggressive returners
- Hackers and slicers

BASIC GAME SITUATIONS



- Serve
- Return of serve
- Both playing from the baseline
- Attacking
- Passing and lobbing



TACTICAL OPTIONS 1



1. Consistency:

- Try hitting one more shot than your opponent.
- Save riskier shots for situations when leading by a safe margin or having an open court decision.

2. Control:

- Try playing your strengths and exploiting your opponent's weaknesses.
- Try controlling the middle of the court and spread your opponent out, making him constantly run from side to side and thus forcing him into a defensive mode.

3. Serve Placement:

- Study your opponents to find out early how they react to your serves.

TACTICAL OPTIONS 2



4. Return Placement:

- Just with the service, it gives you an opportunity to place the ball so that your opponent is forced to hit to your stronger side.
- Returning the ball down the middle is generally an effective approach.
- In case of powerful serves, you will just be happy to get the ball back in any way.

5. Depth:

- Pushing your opponent back by hitting deep into their court is even more effective than moving them from left to right and vice versa.
- Increase your chances by hitting deep into their weaker side, usually their backhand.



TACTICAL OPTIONS 3

6. Playing above the Net Level:

- Aim to get the ball over the net with enough margin for error and the chance of hitting a deep shot.
- Hitting your groundstrokes mainly cross-court gives you a bit more distance to work with and more room to clear the net as it is lowest there.

7. Rhythm:

- If you hit your ball high and with plenty of topspin, you force your opponent to hit out of the strike zone and throw them off their timing.
- Likewise, you can use power and heavy spin to break your opponent's rhythm.

TACTICAL OPTIONS 4



8. Tempo:

- You can control the tempo by switching between aggressive and softer shots.
- By varying the tempo you can make your opponent guessing or eventually force them to hit an unforced error.
- By hitting a ball hard you can take away time your opponent has to react.

9. Time:

- Use time to your advantage by reducing the time your opponent has to get to the ball or increasing your time to recover after an offensive shot by using power or placement to make it take more time for them to reach the ball.
- In defensive situations, you can give yourself more time by returning the ball high and deep to the baseline, or by hitting a lob.

TACTICAL OPTIONS 5



10. Strike Zone:

- Try to find out your opponent's ideal strike zone and avoid hitting balls that land there.
- If their strike zone is high, at chest height, hit low balls, including deep slice shots.
- If their strike zone is low, at knee level, hit them high shots with a lot of topspin.

11. Court Position:

- You can improve your position if you hit the ball on the rise without having to back up and play deep into the court.
- When hitting to your opponent's forehand, assuming you are right-handed, do not position yourself in the middle of the court but more to the right as your opponent has a better cross-court angle than down the line.

TACTICAL OPTIONS 6



12. Direction:

- Move your opponent from side to side and keep him behind the baseline by hitting deep shots.
- Throw in an occasional drop shot to bring them to the net and answer their ball with a lob, thus moving them also forth and back.

13. Pace:

- The faster the pace, the less time your opponent has to react to your shot.
- At the same time, shots with a heavy pace allow your opponent to work off of your shot, which means that they can use your shot to generate power without much work.
- On the other hand, shots with little pace force your opponent to hit

TACTICAL OPTIONS 7



14. Movement:

- While trying to move your opponent around the court, do not forget to pay attention to your own footwork.
- Do not wait for the ball to come to you, go for it. The sooner you get to it, the better you will be ready for your next shot.

15. Power:

- is used to either finish off your shots or to put your opponent on the defensive.
- If you can hit the ball too fast for your opponent to reach, you are sure to win the point.

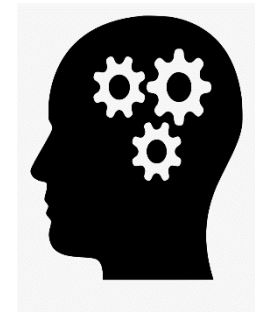
TACTICAL OPTIONS 8



▪ **The Right Mindset:**

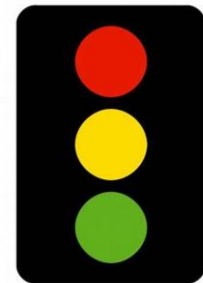
→ When both players have a nearly perfect tactical plan, the outcome of the match will also depend on the better mindset.

→ Once a player loses the mental battle, he is likely to lose the tactical battle as well.



▪ **The Principle of the Traffic Light:**

→ With this principle in mind, in-experienced players learn to react by hitting appropriate shots, depending on their position on the court.





BASIC TACTICS IN THE THREE DEVELOPMENT STAGES

Early Stage:

- Focus on co-ordination with partner
- Keeping ball in play

Intermediate Stage:

- Introducing all tactical options
- Developing attacking gamestyle and strategy
- Practising decision making skills

Advanced Stage:

- Developing individual but adaptable gamestyle
- Fully developing individual style

NOTES ON THE TACTICAL OPTIONS



- Experienced players do not only have a clear picture of their own strengths and weaknesses but also of those of their opponents.
- Their ability to gain the upper hand depends on their ability to find out in which respects they are better than their opponent and then try to concentrate on and make use of that aspects.



TYPES OF COURT SURFACES 1



- Grass Courts

- Balls are fastest due to their slippery surface
- Balls have a lower bounce as the soil is softer
- Balls have an unpredictable bounce because of the softer and slightly uneven surface of grass



- Clay Courts

- slow down the balls
- make the balls bounce higher in comparison to hard courts and grass courts
- take away many of the advantages of big servers
- tend to favor baseline players



TYPES OF COURT SURFACES 2



▪ Hard Courts

- made of concrete with a synthetic surface layer
- offer bounce consistency
- are faster than clay courts
- are best for all-round players
- are the commonest type of surface on the Pro Tour



▪ Carpet Courts

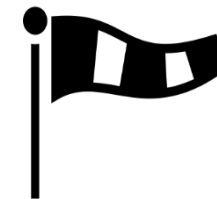
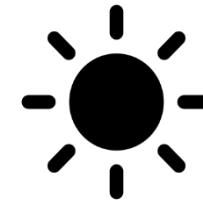
- are less slippery than grass courts
- in wet weather
- are faster than hard courts
- make balls bounce low and zip off the surface
- are popular in Europe where it rains a lot (GB, Ireland)



WEATHER IMPACTS



- Rising temperature increases the pressure inside the balls and, as a consequence, makes balls bounce higher. The same effect can also be witnessed at higher altitudes above sea level.
- Humidity makes the balls heavier and slower.
- Windy conditions have an impact on the ball trajectory and shot placement.



PLAYING IN WINDY CONDITIONS 1



1. Focus on your footwork:

- Lots of small steps are needed to make adjustments.
- Players who take large steps as they prepare to hit the ball run the risk of being caught off-guard.

2. Tweak your groundstrokes:

- Allow yourself a larger margin when going for the corners.
- The harder you hit, the less the wind affects the ball on its way to its destination.
- The slower you hit the ball, the more the wind will play with it.



PLAYING IN WINDY CONDITIONS 2

3. Adjust your swing:

- The bigger the back-swing, the more the ball can change its course from the start of your stroke to the point of contact.
- When hitting into the wind, try to aim a little higher than usual, otherwise the wind will make your shots shorter, inviting your opponent to attack the ball.

4. Use the spin:

- With the wind in your back, hitting high and long topspin shots will force your opponent to move deep into the back court, increasing the probability of your opponent to hit a short ball.
- With the wind blowing sideways, side spin can be an effective means of forcing your opponent out of the court.



PLAYING IN WINDY CONDITIONS 3

5. Adjust your Serve:

- Slice and kick serves are very effective, especially when the wind is blowing sideways.
- If your toss is very high, do not hesitate to catch the ball when the wind is moving it around.

6. Master the overhead:

- Overheads can be very tricky when the wind makes the ball change its course while still in the air.
- Consider letting the ball bounce before you hit it.

7. Try the drop shot:

- Drop shots are very effective when hitting into the wind.



THANK YOU!

*For more information follow the presentations of **TC4DC** program*

