

Ball Control Basics

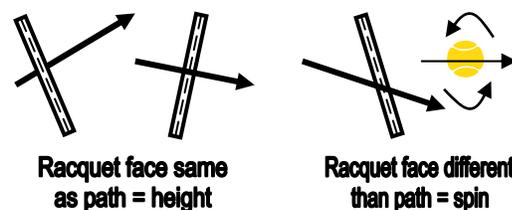
"Making the little round yellow fuzzy ball do what you want is what tennis is all about". Ball Control is the way a player solves problems on the court. For example, players need to receive different heights of volleys. To master tennis, a player must learn to receive and send variations of the 5 Ball Controls (Height, Direction, Distance, Speed, and Spin)

HEIGHT ON VOLLEYS

Sending different Heights

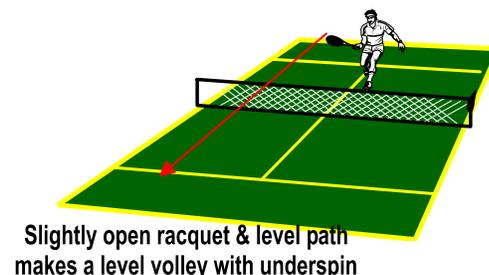
Just like on the groundstrokes, the determining factors for controlling height on volleys are what I call the PAS Principles. The **Path** of the racquet through the impact (high to low, level, low to high). The **Angle** of the racquet (the vertical angle of being 'open' to the sky, vertical, or 'closed'), and the **Speed** of the racquet (is the racquet accelerating, maintaining speed, or decelerating).

When the racquet angle is the same as the path, you get direct height control. When the racquet angle is different from the path, spin results. It is the specific combination of PAS elements that create a height. For example, for a level volley with some backspin, "open" the racquet angle to the sky slightly and level out the racquet path.



Receiving different Heights

The goal is to take the volley higher than the net if possible. Prepare the racquet to match the height of the ball received. Receiving a high ball requires a high preparation, a low preparation helps when receiving a low ball. On volleys, spread out your feet to lower and move forward rather than just, 'bending your knees'.



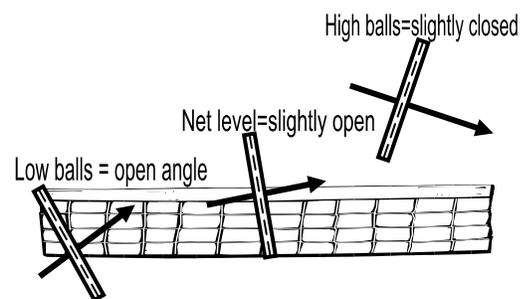
Kinesthetic Key (Key feeling when doing it)

For volleys, receiving different height volleys require different feelings:

Low balls: "Catch & Carry": Open the face with a longer, slightly upward racquet path to lift it over the net.

Net level balls: "Catch": Racquet face slightly open with a level path to place the volley

High balls: "Punch": Close the face a little with a downward path and some speed to attack with power.



Court Home-work

Sending & receiving different Heights: This drill is called, "Cat & Mouse". Players start at the servicelines. The goal is to move in and take the ball higher than the net for a put-away volley (become a 'Cat'). To start, Player #1 feeds the ball to Player #2 low to their feet (making them a 'mouse'). If Player #2 pops the ball up, Player #1 can become a cat. The mouse must place the ball low to the feet of the other player to neutralize them and make them into a mouse as well. Play on one half of the court (centre line to doubles line). The court does extend to the baseline, so if a cat comes too close to the net, the opponent can become a 'bird' and lob it over the cat's head. Great drill for volley decision-making.