

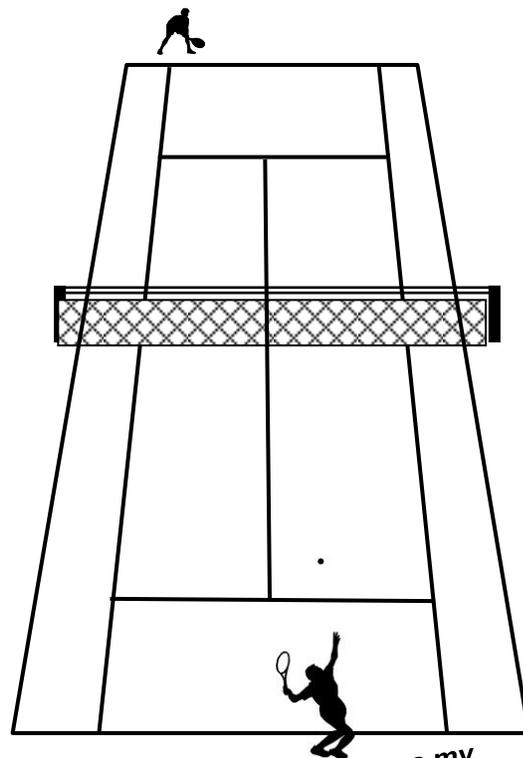
BASIC SINGLES STRATEGIES

*Tennis is a game. Every game has ways to win. To be successful at any racquet sport, a player must control the critical elements of **time** and **space**. For this, players need a plan. The general and overall plans to win are called "**Strategies**". The specific intentions for shots to execute the strategy are called "**Tactics**". The combination of shots used to execute the tactic are called "**patterns**".*

Basic strategies: USE YOUR STRENGTHS

You will often hear professionals interviewed after winning matches 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? Strengths may also be physical (I can outlast opponents in long matches) or psychological (I can maintain confidence for long periods). Awareness of how you play best is the key to many other strategies and tactics. Playing *how you want to play* helps you play with intention rather than just reacting 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. These are the 'patterns' or 'plays' you use to win points. If the whole package isn't there, the strength may never be utilized. For example, a player with a dominating forehand must also work on the shots needed to set-up the opportunity to use it (like a high looping shot to the backhand that gets a weaker ball in the middle). In this way they will 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. If your serve is your strength, work on the shots that follow-up after it.



Here comes my big serve followed by my inside-out forehand!

Uncovering your strength:

For further reflection on this topic, go to the ACE Player page.

<http://www.acecoach.com/main/aceplayer/>

Work through the article entitled, "Gameself".

~~Court~~ Home-work

2.0-3.0 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.

3.5+ 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. To make it easier to keep track of this score, 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.