

Course Name - Bachelor of Physical Education

Year - IIInd (Part-3)

Paper Name - Skill and Prowess

Topic Name - Skill and Prowess

Topic No. – Part – III (A) 4

Paper No. - A

Lecture No. – 8

Lecture Title

Fundamental Skills of Table Tennis

Welcome to the second episode of table tennis. Today we will be talking about

fundamental skills in table tennis

Fundamental Skills of Table Tennis

Some fundamental skills in table tennis include

The serve

Defense,

Movement,

Speed and mastering the basic strokes.

Table tennis is also known as ping pong, and learning some simple skills helps a person to become more proficient

Table tennis is more than simply hitting a ball over the net. In order to become competitive, players should master a few simple techniques. A good serve and defence is a basic building block for table tennis. A person should find with one's own strengths and style, and practice improving them. In addition to learning how to serve and defend, one also needs to learn the proper grip. While the shake hands grip is the most popular, there is also the pen hold grip.

Movement and speed go hand in hand with the serve and defence. It is impossible to stand in one spot while playing a lively game of table tennis. A person has to be constantly on the move and anticipate the incoming serves from the opponent. Quickly returning a serve is a good way to catch the opponent off-guard and possibly gain a point or two.

There are a few basic strokes that a table tennis player should know. These include the drive, which is a top spin; the push, which is a backspin; the block and the smash.

Basic skills

There are four basic strokes that every table tennis player should have in his or her arsenal: the drive, push, block and smash. The drive, both backhand and forehand versions are the basic offensive actions in table tennis, while the backhand and forehand push are the go-to defensive actions a player takes.

Drives deliver topspin strokes to the opponent following a low trajectory. The key is to hit the top half of the ball while performing drives. Pushes are employed when the ball is coming at the player in an actionable manner, meaning he or she can easily redirect the direction of the ball using a gentle stroke. The block is simply returning the ball using the force delivered by the opposing player. The smash occurs when the opposing player returns the ball soft and at a high trajectory, making it easier for the player to return the ball with force.

When developing a well-rounded table tennis game, there are 5 fundamentals one should master 'to achieve skill to play the game'.

1. Serve

It is compulsory to throw the ball upwards while serving, and bouncing it will be counted as a foul. Yes, in a serve, the ball must first bounce on your table, and then on the opponent's side. The ball must only be served to the opposite corner in a doubles match.

The serve is the most important shot in TT. As mentioned by Kai Lam, this is the only shot in which the player has solo control. If you watch matches with top players, most exchanges will be short and quick. The service is all about setting up the opponent. Hit it well and you can often end the point with your next shot. With lots of practice it's possible to develop a number of different serves with the same apparent ball toss, swing, trajectory and distance. If the server can make a backspin serve short to the net, and then on the very next serve use the same moves but hit a no-spin (knuckle ball) serve, the opponent may misinterpret the spin and air the ball off the table, or set-up a kill shot.

What's the hardest serve in TT?

The one that puts the opponent on the defensive, usually close to the net. How to perfect it? Practice is the only way to perfect the serve. There's no shortcuts to excellence.

2. Serve return

Learn to give your serve returns some margin while keeping them low enough to make life difficult on the opponent. If you are able to read the spin on the opponent's serve, be decisive in terms of how you plan to put yourself in an advantageous position. You can do so using timing, placement, spin, and/or pace.

Serve return is one of the most challenging aspects of table tennis. Many players have a very difficult time returning high quality serves, and as a result lack confidence in their decision making and execution. Today, we're going to go over some tips that will hopefully help you improve your serve return game and change your approach to becoming a more effective returner.

1. Practice against as many different serves as possible. This includes players who may not be up to your level but have effective serves. Playing practice games against different players while focusing on making few mistakes on serve return is a good foundation for improving your serve return.
2. Learn to judge spin through the flight and bounce of the ball in practice, not just from watching the opponent's ball contact. The opponent may have a highly deceptive contact point and motion or may have an illegal hidden serve that you need to adjust to, so being able to judge the flight of the ball, watch the label of the ball, and judge the bounce of the ball are far more valuable assets than being able to see the ball contact. As a rule of thumb, a serve that floats through the air and stops sharply after the second bounce is likely heavy underspin, while a serve that cuts through the air more quickly is more likely no spin or topspin. A nospin serve will bounce regularly on the second bounce, while a topspin serve will kick forward.
3. Be prepared first and foremost for fast, deep serves. Being beaten by these types of serves kills confidence and momentum, and allows the opponent free points without having to work hard. Shorter serves are slower and therefore allow you more time to react.
4. If you are having lots of trouble judging the spin on the opponent's serve, take the ball a little bit later to give yourself time to see what the ball is doing on the second bounce as discussed previously. Give yourself some margin and don't try to make a perfect return. This is especially important early in the match if you aren't familiar with the opponent's serves. It is also very important on drop shots, since drop shots are very difficult to control if you try to push the ball too flat. Learn to give your serve returns some margin while keeping them low enough to make life difficult on the opponent.
5. If you are able to read the spin on the opponent's serve, be decisive in terms of how you plan to put yourself in an advantageous position. You can do so using timing, placement, spin, and/or pace. Trying to receive with pace is the riskiest of these options and should be used sparingly. A combination of timing and placement, and spin is low risk and most effective. For example, using a backhand banana flip to the opponent's middle is a good combination of spin and placement, while a quick push

or drop shot off the bounce wide to the opponent's forehand is a mix of placement, timing, and spin. As the match progresses, finding which of these factors gives the opponent the most trouble will allow for more effective returns. Some opponents have trouble with heavy backspin or sidespin, while some opponents can deal with heavy spin but are not quick enough to deal with quick, well placed returns even if there is not much spin on the ball.

6. Focus on footwork on the serve return.

7. Be ready for seemingly short serves that leak half long, so that the second bounce is off the end of the table. These serves are very difficult to drop shot or flip since they are actually coming long, and trying to drop them often times causing a lot of errors and pop ups for the opponent to attack. A good way to deal with these serves is to be able to feel that the ball is coming long after stepping in to receive a short serve, then either quickly turning the body to execute a forehand loop or using a backhand loop over the table. The forehand loop is easier to execute in this situation, which is one reason why returning the majority of short serves with the forehand is preferable unless you've decided to try to backhand flip. Being in position for the forehand allows you to quickly adjust to a half long serve and attack with the forehand.

8. Try not to telegraph your returns. What this means is that you can decide on how you're going to return the serve without giving any hints to your opponent until the last minute. If you know you're going to forehand push, don't extend your arm and open your racket until the last minute when you need to do so to execute the shot. Instead, get in good position to receive the serve but keep your racket in its normal ready position. Similarly, if you're going to flip, don't give the fact away by preparing your racket to flip until you absolutely need to prepare to contact the ball. The more consistently you can make all your serve returns look until the last split second, the more difficult it is for your opponent to guess what's coming and prepare accordingly. This of course also means that you should change the placement, spin, and timing of your serve returns sometimes to keep the opponent off balance.

Improving your serve return will give you far more confidence in a match, reduce the confidence of your opponent as you take them out of your comfort zone, and take pressure off your own serve in competition.

3. Attack

How to choose the correct ball to attack is one very important aspect in improving your game of table tennis. Mastering the third, fourth, and fifth ball attack is key in taking away your opponent's confidence to hit with power and counterattack or even more frequently, upsetting their rhythm. You want to have the opportunity to know where your opponent's attack is going to at a velocity and spin that you can handle. This gives you the luck to begin crafting the point in the way that you want.

Mastering the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Ball Attack

Third Ball Attack

A third ball attack is the expression used to explain the situation where the server hits a commanding attack on the first stroke after serving-the third stroke of the match.

Various players will have different types of third ball attacks. Some will favor using a quick, flat attack with a modest spin. Others will utilize incredibly “spinny” attacks with only average momentum. The most widespread adaptation of the third ball attack in today’s table tennis is a speedy attack with sufficient topspin to hit the ball deep at the edge towards the table. This kind of stroke is frequently called a power, loop-kill, loop, or rip.

Fourth Ball Attack

A fourth attack is the expression used to describe the setting where the receiver hits a dynamic attack on the first stroke after returning serve-the fourth stroke of the match.

Various players will have different types of fourth ball attacks. Some players will favor using a quick, flat attack with a slight spin. Others will use extremely “spinny” attacks with only average speed. The most familiar form of the fourth ball attack in modern table tennis is a quick attack with sufficient topspin to hit the ball close on the opponent’s side of the table. This kind of stroke is frequently described as a rip, loop, or loop kill.

Fifth Ball Attack

A fifth ball attack is the word used to describe circumstances where the server hits a weak attack on their first stroke after serving, and then hits an extremely powerful attack on their next stroke-the fifth stroke of the match. A number of fifth ball attacks are thought out from the start of the serve with a particular third ball stroke in mind by the server be ready for the fifth ball attack. Other fifth ball attacks take place when the serve is unable to make a planned third ball attack and uses a weaker stroke, normally slowed down and with heavier topspin, eager to set up the opportunity for a fifth ball attack instead.

TIP: Remember, good quality table tennis balls can make a big difference in your game. Competition balls are evenly structured to allow an accurate flight and bounce; they make it easier to play well, and will give you a good reliable bounce allowing you to develop your consistency. The best quality ball brands are supplied in various quality levels decided by seam quality, roundness, and consistency from one to the next. Three star balls are the highest quality level ball, two star balls are the next quality level, and one star is the lowest quality in star graded table tennis balls.

4. Defense

Defense is the term used mainly for players who retreat from the table and use variations in backspin to force errors from their opponents. In reality, in modern day table tennis, it is also necessary for defenders to be able to attack when the opportunity arises. One of the main weapons of the defender is the use of deception in varying the amount of spin on the ball to cause their opponent to misread it. This is done by varying the amount of use of the wrist and point of contact on the ball. Many modern day defenders also use combination bats with long pimples primarily on the backhand side. This allows the defender to play with heavy backspin returns when their opponent plays with strong topspin attacks. However, if the attacker gives a topspin with little spin into the pimples the defender can produce only slight backspin or float (no spin) allowing the attacker to play strongly. Defensive play is even more common in elite women's Table Tennis and several of the world's top ranked players choose this style of play.

Both Backhand and Forehand defence strokes (known as chop) can be broken down into four stages.

Backhand Backspin-

The ready position is usually square to the table but this may vary depending on individual preference. As the ball approaches the player moves into position with the left foot moving backwards.

The hips and waist rotate to the left with the weight moving onto the back foot and the elbow bent at 90° moves the bat to shoulder height.

As the waist and hips rotate back to the right, the forearm and wrist move downwards and slightly forwards contacting the back/bottom of the ball with a brushing action. Contact should be made at about waist height and slightly to the left of the body. Weight is transferred back onto the front foot.

The bat continues its forward path with the shoulders finishing square to the line of play. Recovery is to the ready position.

Forehand Backspin-

The ready position is usually square to the line of play but may vary depending on individual preference. As the ball approaches, the player moves into position with the right foot moving backwards.

The hips and waist rotate to the right with the weight transferring to the back foot and the elbow bent at 90° moves the bat to shoulder height.

As the waist and hips rotate back to the left the forearm and wrist move downward and slightly forwards contacting the back/bottom of the ball with a brushing action. Contact should be made at about waist height to the right of the body with the head slightly behind the ball. Weight is transferred back onto the front foot.

The bat continues in its forward path with the shoulders finishing square to the line of play. Recovery is to the Ready Position

When you look at the way most people practice, one person is practicing the finishing attack against the block. This does not make a whole lot of sense when developing a well-rounded game. If you have the best finishing attack in the world but your serve and serve return are weak, you will rarely get the opportunity in a real match to even use what you've been practicing.

Improving one element can have a ripple effect

Keep in mind the order of priority of each of these fundamentals. A player must serve and return serves every single point. That means this aspect of the game is absolutely the most important. If your serve and serve return are strong this will set up the finishing attack that you've been practicing so much. If you master the serve and the serve return, your 3rd-ball/finishing attack will be extremely effective even if it's typically a weak spot in your game. If your serve and serve return are weak you will be on the defense from the beginning of every single point and it will be difficult to regain control.

So how should you get better at these? Practice your serves and serve returns for at least 30 minutes each time you practice.

5. Conclusion

So while concluding, In table tennis players should master a few simple techniques. A good serve and defense is a basic building block for table tennis. Also have a training partner serve to you for 30 straight minutes. This will provide excellent training for his/her own personal serves but also will develop your skills at returning serve.

Remember, the better your training partner the more you will learn! Adding this to the typical practice regimen of the finishing attack with the block and you will see your game improve in no time.

Thank you have a nice day