



DOUBLES FOR TOURNAMENT PLAYERS

Level II Coaches Course



By the end of this session you should be able to:

- understand the benefits of doubles for juniors and professional tennis players
- know the tactical goals for doubles tournament players
- understand the main characteristics of the strategy and tactics for doubles
- devise effective and appropriate knowledge of the mental performance in doubles tournament play

BENEFITS OF DOUBLES

for juniors

- Develops:
 - An all-round game
 - The use of lob
 - The use greater angles
 - Return of serve
 - Quick reactions, and improves reflexes
- Pressure shared with partner
- Encourages:
 - teamwork (co-operation)
 - communication
- Confidence to play at the net (offensive game)
- More fun and enjoyment
- Success in doubles can lead to more confidence in singles



BENEFITS OF DOUBLES for professional players

- In team events (Davis Cup), doubles is often what determines the winning team
- Provides extra practice time and prize money
- High doubles ranking can help save money as players in the main draw of the doubles receive hospitality at the tournament even if the player fails to qualify for singles



HOW TO SET THE DOUBLES TEAM

- If there is one strong player he/she should usually play in the ad side as this side usually deals with more game points
- If there is a left hander he/she should usually play in the ad side, unless both players have better backhands than forehands
- If there is a good right court or left court player, they should play on that side



TACTICAL GOALS FOR DOUBLES

Under 11

- Communicate with each other
- Play as a team with high positive energy and intensity
- Stay centered on the present and focus on one point at a time



TACTICAL GOALS FOR DOUBLES 11-13

- Chose a partner with a complementary game
- Understand percentage play in doubles
- Know responsibilities/positioning of each player
- Have a variable and flexible gamestyle to allow changes in tactics during the match
- Devise a game plan



TACTICAL GOALS FOR DOUBLES

14-16

- Normally stay with a winning game, if the tactic is successful keep attacking the opponents' weaknesses

HOW TO CHOOSE A DOUBLES PARTNER

- Important decision
 - Each player should know themselves very well
 - Contrasting but complementary personalities that are team strengths not weaknesses (Emotional harmony)
 - Take time to get to know each other
 - When under pressure each player has to bring support, balance and direction to the team
 - Experiment with a variety of partners



COMMUNICATION

Questions for doubles partners

- Do I need a lot of encouragement?
- Do I like to talk a lot?
- When do you become most uptight?
- How do you respond to criticism?
- What should I say when you make a mistake?
- What helps to build your confidence?
- What types of behaviour irritate you?



VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Situation	Ineffective	Effective
Partner makes a mistake on a big point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Say nothing - Walk immediately to the next point ignoring partner - ‘You are playing awful in important points’ - ‘Why can’t you make the return? That was a big point!’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ‘OK, no problem’ - ‘Let’s go, next point’ - ‘Well, get it next time, no worry!’
Before a big point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ‘You have to make this return’ - ‘Everything depends on you!’ - ‘Don’t double fault’ or ‘Get the return in, please!’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ‘OK, let’s go for it!’, ‘You can do it?’ - ‘I know we’re very good at these points’
Partner is playing badly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ‘Come on, bend your knees a little bit more!’ - (Cynical) ‘You are playing great today, my God!’ - ‘I don’t know why I play with you’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ‘Come on, you can do it!’ - ‘Don’t worry, it will come!’ - ‘Hang in there’
Partner is nervous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ‘Come on, you are driving me mad, please relax!’ - ‘Please, don’t choke now!’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ‘Come on, take your time!’ - Use humour to help then relax
Partner is angry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ‘I can’t stand your behaviour!’ - ‘I don’t care what you do!’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ‘OK, lets forget it, it’s over’ - ‘Let’s focus on the next point’ - Use humour
Partner is not motivated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ‘I’m running like hell, and what about you?’ - ‘Do I have to win this myself?’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ‘Come on, let’s fire up!’ - ‘Here we go!, let’s activate ourselves!’



NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Effective communication	Ineffective communication
Turning toward each other as soon as the point ends	Turning away from the partner
Walking shoulder to shoulder at the same pace (shoulder touching)	Refusing to walk together
Using hand signals to improve non-verbal communication	Saying nothing and avoiding communication
Body contact (high-fives and back-patting)	Refusing body contact
Smiling, being constructive	Being emotionless, cynical and very critical
Frequent eye contact/ Nodding approval	No eye contact/ or eyes raised to the sky



TEAM COHESION IN DOUBLES

- Be honest, but supportive and understanding
- Help build partner's confidence
- Compliment good shots
- Do not apologise for errors
- Avoid talking too much
- Know partner's preferences
- Be aware of possible negative non-verbal communication



MENTAL TIPS

for doubles performance

- Use changeovers to communicate with your partner
- Use the full 90 seconds to sit down
- Always discuss the strategy for the next games
- Be aware of physical, emotional and tactical adjustments that should be done
- Stand up together and walk shoulder by shoulder to the court positions
- Remember: you are a team!

