

Strategy #3 - Exploit territory

The tennis court is like a chess board where you create openings by dictating your opponent's moves, and positioning yourself to pressure them. When opponents hit while on the move, their next shot may not be as effective as if they had time to set up. Keep them moving until they miss or until you hit a winner. The main tactics to exploit territory are:

- 3.1 Pulling your opponents off the court
- 3.2 Bringing your opponents inside the court
- 3.3 Pushing your opponents back
- 3.4 Aiming down the middle
- 3.5 Aiming at the opponents
- 3.6 Making use of switches

The table below summarizes this section:

Game Situations Tactics	<i>Serving</i>	<i>Returning</i>	<i>Backcourt</i>	<i>Approaching or at the Net</i>	<i>Countering or Defending</i>
3.1 Pulling your opponents off the court	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> wide serve => shot to the open court 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> angle => shot to the open court 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> execute an angle after receiving an angled shot
3.2 Bringing your opponents inside the court	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> draw player in => aim at the chair drop shot => lob 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> drop shot => drop shot
3.3 Pushing your opponents back	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> moonball => drop shot 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> moonball => moonball
3.4 Aiming down the middle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> hitting down the middle repeatedly hitting down the middle => shot to the open court 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to cut off angles and dispose of a safer target
3.5 Aiming at the opponents		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to win the point to obtain an easier ball to put away 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
3.6 Making use of switches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pressing switch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pressing switch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A

Table 5.3 - Tactics and patterns to exploit territory.

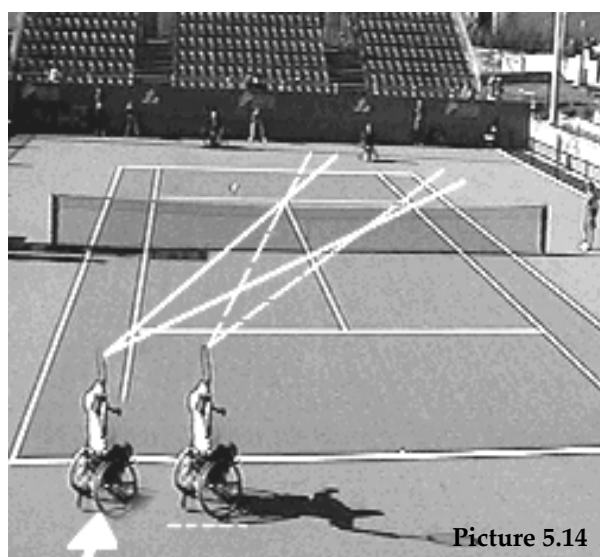
3.1 Pulling your opponents off the court

a) When serving

3.1.1 Wide serve -> Opening

Initial positioning:

Pulling one player off the court will force his partner to cover a larger area, and make it easier for either player to move afterward. Therefore, **shifting the initial serving position** closer to the sideline can help pull the receiver off the court, and then make it



easier to create an opening for the following shot. In the two pictures above (5.13 and 5.14), we can see the different angles created by the shift in position on the serve.

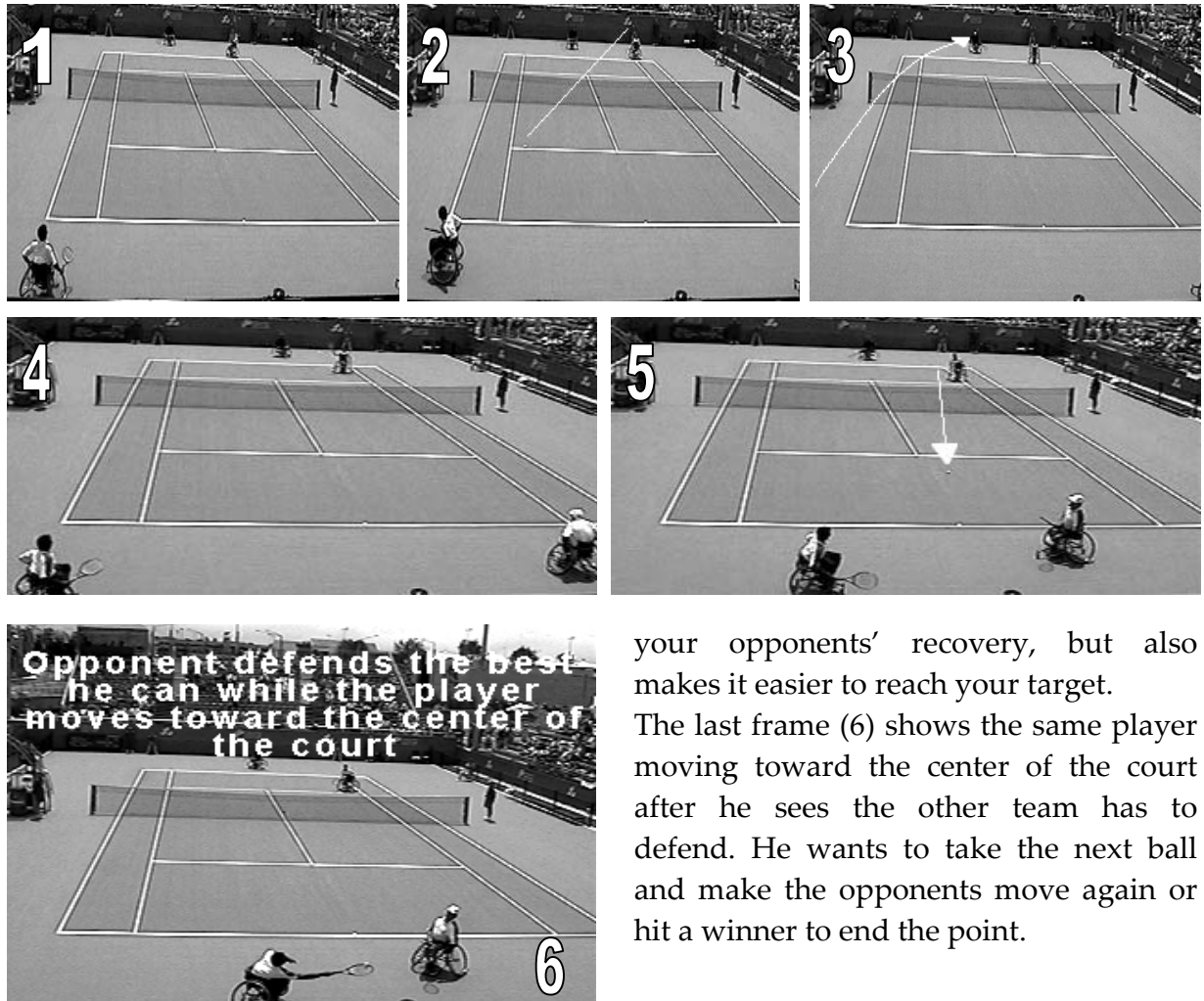
Shot selection:

The first five pictures in sequence 5.11 on the next page show the entire pattern as used on the ad-side. The first three pictures show the execution of the wide serve. The fifth one shows the player aiming down the middle toward the open court **to force the opponents to move once more**. The target may vary depending on how your opponents are covering the court just before impact.

Movement:

To make sure that your opponents do not have time to cover the whole court and neutralize the wide serve, hit the next ball as early as the return allows. "When one of the opponents is pulled off the court, both players should lean in and look for one bounce opportunities" (Moore & Snow, p. 118). Do not let your opponents off the hook

by waiting for the second bounce at the baseline. Hitting the ball from inside the court (frame 4) not only puts pressure on



Sequence 5.11 – Serving wide and hitting to the open court.

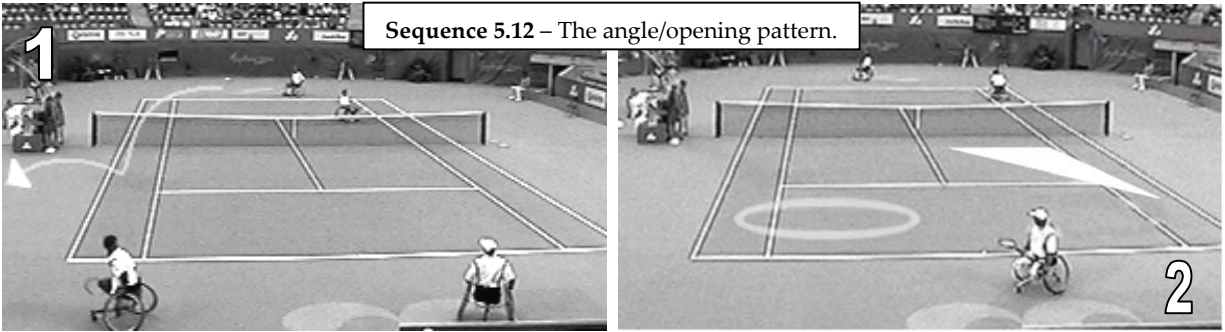
your opponents' recovery, but also makes it easier to reach your target. The last frame (6) shows the same player moving toward the center of the court after he sees the other team has to defend. He wants to take the next ball and make the opponents move again or hit a winner to end the point.

b) When returning, from the backcourt, or when approaching

3.1.2 Angle -> Opening

Shot selection:

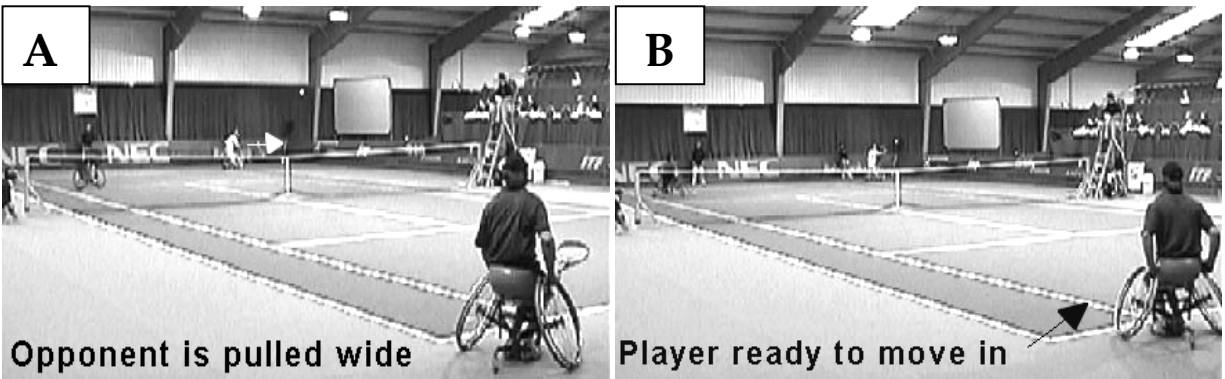
The **return of serve** is a great opportunity to take control of the point. Many players' serve effectiveness is weak, and provides an attacking opportunity for the receiver. If the return does not provide the opportunity to implement the *exploit territory* strategy, it is possible to use it during a point **from the backcourt** when the right ball comes. The two possibilities have been combined below.



The goal is to force the player forward and outside, and follow it with a deep shot on the same side. The second shot could also be an angle toward the partner's side who has moved over to cover the whole court (frame 2 in sequence 5.12 above). Another option is to hit behind the recovering player. Note that this second shot could be executed by the net player or the backcourt player.

Movement:

This pattern will work best if the ball that follows the angle is taken early enough to rob the opponent of recovery time. Sequence 5.13 illustrates how this is done.



The player moves in to play the ball (C) on the first bounce (D). The target would be down the middle. Playing behind the recovering player is a variation.



Sequence 5.13 – Hitting the ball on the first bounce after an angle.

c) When countering or defending

3.1.3 Angle -> Angle

Shot selection:

If your opponents pull you off court with an angled shot, you may counter by **hitting an angle yourself to keep them moving**. The other advantages are that you are aiming at the lower part of the net, and that your recovery position for ideal angle coverage is closer to you than if you go down the line. Many experienced players use the two bounce rule to set up behind an angle to hit a better one back.

3.2 Bringing your opponents inside the court

a) When returning, from the backcourt, or when approaching

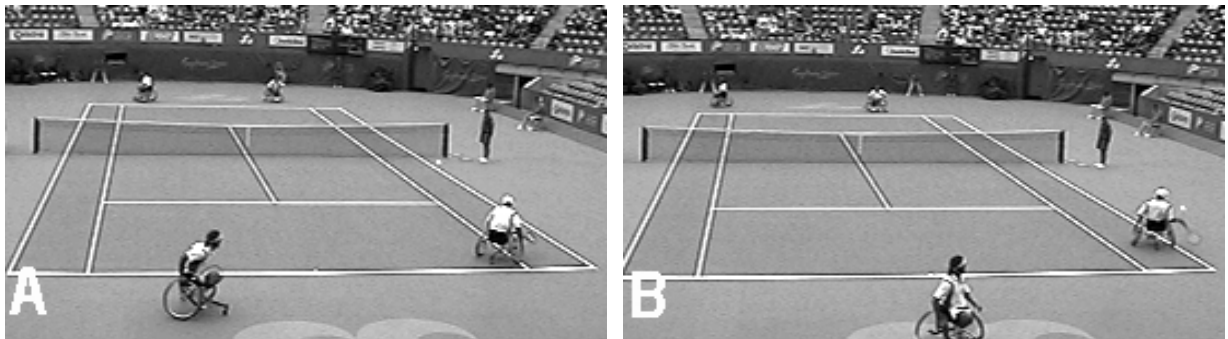
3.2.1 Draw player in -> Aim at the chair

Shot selection:

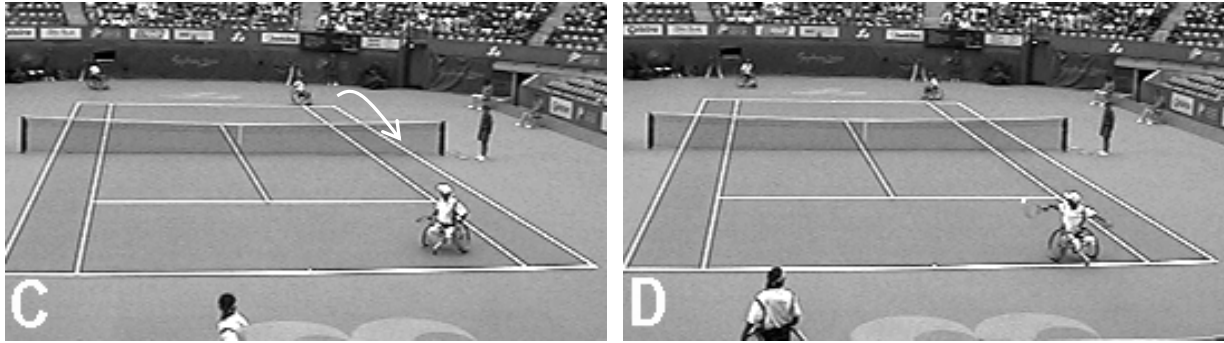
Exploiting territory does not necessarily mean aiming at an opening. A very successful doubles player, Steve Welch, mentions: “I like to bring the player in with short shots and either play him when they come to the net or play their backs as they retreat. This is probably the most common play in my doubles book, even at the highest level”. Forcing an opponent to hit a ball at $\frac{3}{4}$ court can be an effective tactic when you can follow it with a shot aimed at the opponent’s back. In the next sequence (5.14), the team has taken advantage of the recovery path of the opponent (picture C) after forcing him to hit a ball from $\frac{3}{4}$ court (A and B). Picture D shows how the player has to counter the ball coming straight at his back, which ends up producing a weaker shot.

Movement:

Start moving forward slowly to cut off the opponent’s recovery time.



Sequence 5.14a – Bringing a player inside the court and aiming at the chair.



Sequence 5.14b – Bringing a player inside the court and aiming at the chair.

3.2.2 Drop shot -> Lob

Shot selection:

Figure 5.15 shows the team reacting to the drop shot, and figure 5.16 shows the area for the second shot of the pattern (lob), and the area for the possible variation (an angle).

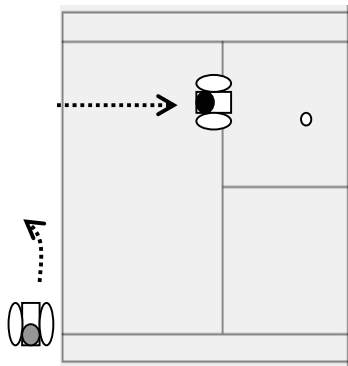


Figure 5.15

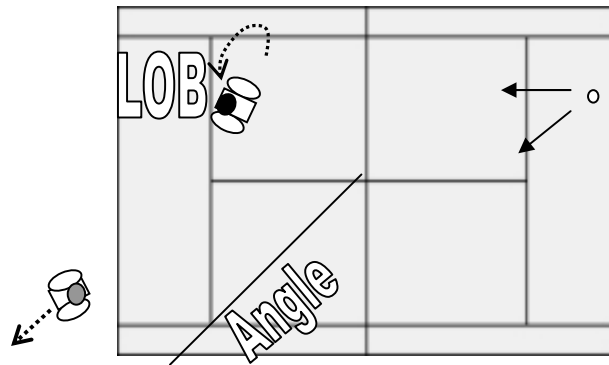


Figure 5.16

Picture 5.15 shows the same situation where both shots are possible. A variation to the lob can be an angle on the backcourt player's side since he should position himself further back to cover the possibility of the lob. In this example the net player is down-the-line to the ball, but if the net player is cross-court, the best option to keep them moving is the cross-court lob or a deep or powerful shot down the middle. The goal is to keep the ball out of the net player's reach and moving away from the backcourt player. Figure 5.17 shows the path of the ball passing between the two opponents.



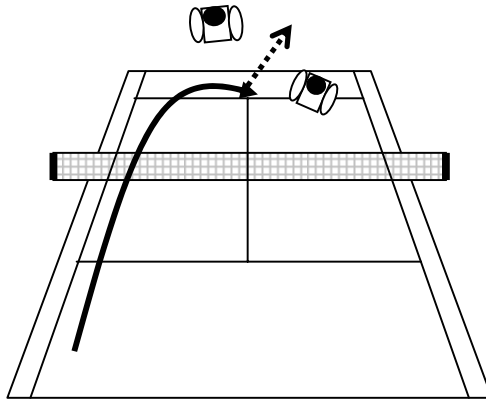


Figure 5.17 - Ball is moving away from backcourt player.

b) When countering or defending

3.2.3 Drop shot -> Drop shot

Shot selection:

Playing short on a short ball might **surprise your opponents**, and **buy you more time** than if you aim deep while you are still close to the net. It will bring your opponents to the net where they may be less effective in their countering/defending abilities.

3.3 Pushing your opponents back

a) When returning, from the backcourt, or when approaching

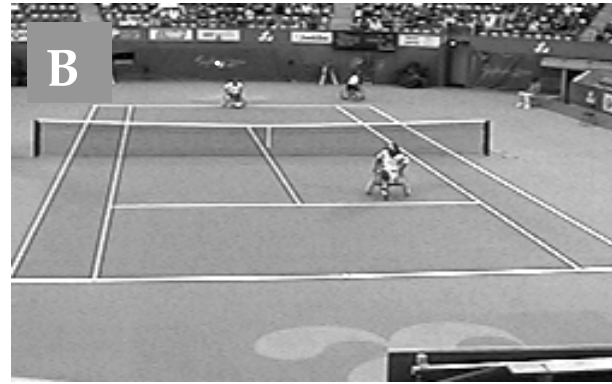
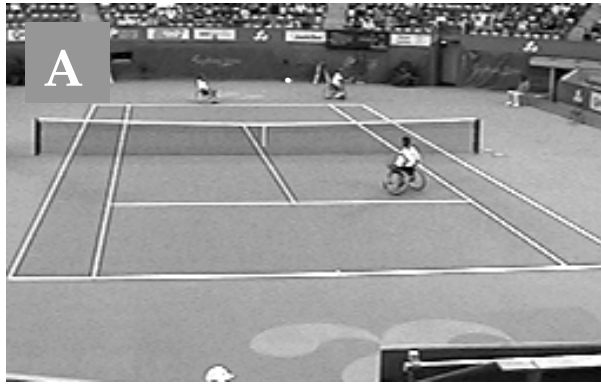
3.3.1 Moonball -> Drop shot (or short ball)

Shot selection:

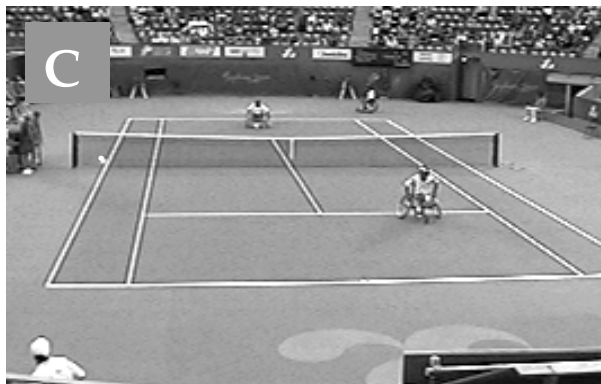
The goal is to move your opponents **up and down the court**. One way to do this is to push one of them back and then hit a short ball on the same side.

Movement:

This works best if the ball following the moon ball is taken early enough to **rob the opponent of recovery time**. Since a common answer to a moon ball is another moon ball, it is often an effective variation to take the ball in the air and hit a drop volley. Therefore, if it suits your style, one of the partners could move in as in sequence 5.15.



Frames A and B - The backcourt player (near court) has been pushed back, far behind the baseline. The net player (far court) starts moving in when the ball crosses the net.



Frames C and D - The net player stays close to the middle of the court to cut off regular angle coverage since the probability of a powerful winning shot from that far back is extremely low. This maximises the chances of taking the next ball in the air.

Sequence 5.15 – Putting pressure with a moonball.

b) When countering or defending

3.3.2 Moonball -> Moonball

Shot selection:

This pattern **buys time** to reposition, and places opponents on the defensive.

3.4 Aiming down the middle

a) When returning, from the backcourt, or when approaching

3.4.1 Hitting down the middle -> again-> and again...

Shot selection:

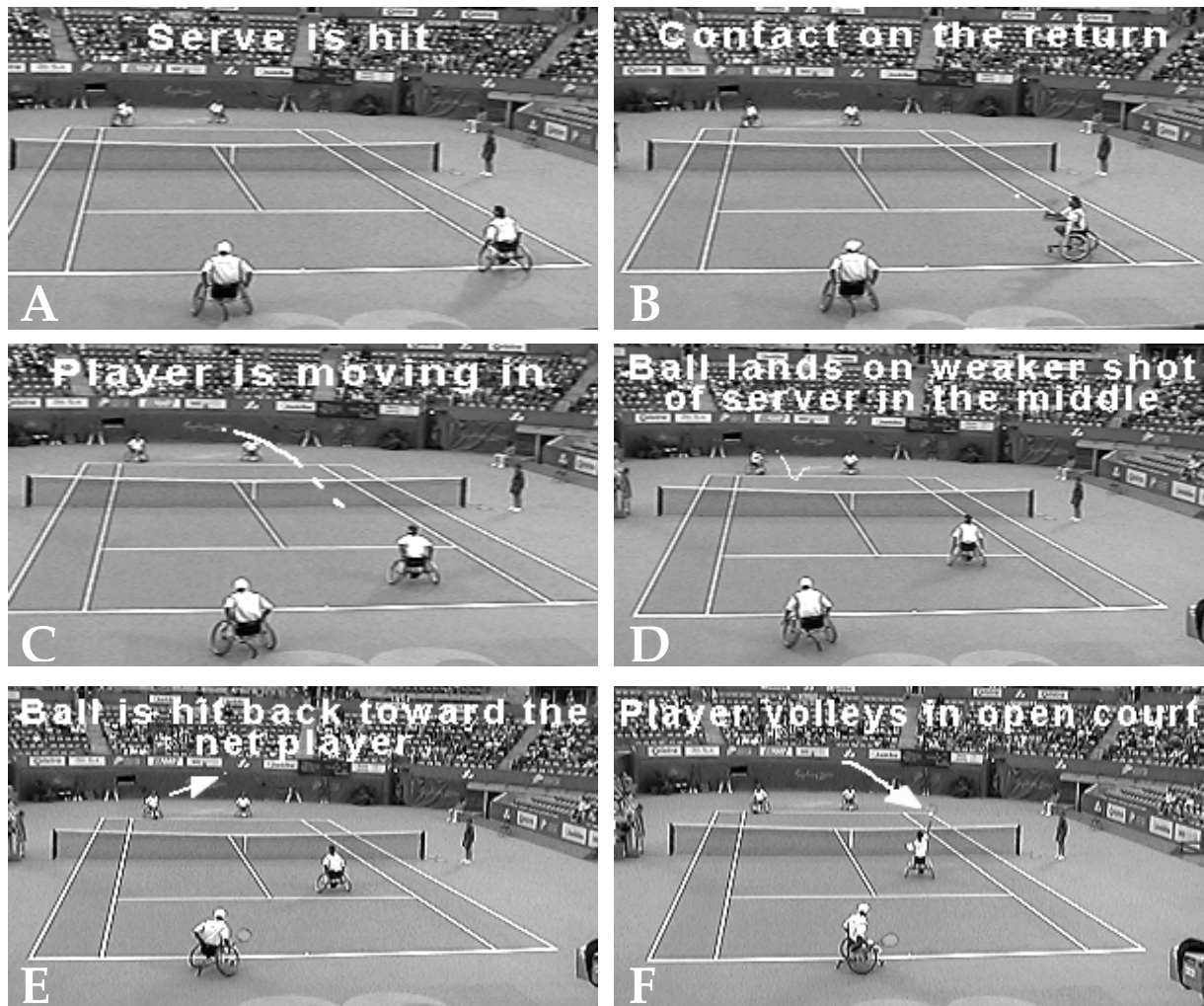
This is a smart way of exploiting territory. If you hit down the middle with consistency, **you will make one or both opponents move**. Additionally, this tactic may create confusion and frustration for the other team.

This tactic is a good option with a partner at the net for the following reasons: (1) the opponents have less angles so the net player can cover the opponents' shots with less risks and use anticipation skills more effectively; (2) court coverage is facilitated for the backcourt player since it takes away the crosscourt lob; (3) the net player can come from the middle in his recovery paths and **put more pressure on the opponents**; and (4) the ball in the middle might draw both players toward to that spot, and thus **give easy targets for the net player** when he gets to volley.

A section of Appendix 3 displays quotes collected from different players and coaches about hitting to the middle of the court.

3.4.2 Down the middle -> Opening

Shot selection:



Sequence 5.16 – Approaching in the middle on the return.

Since the goal is to make your opponents move, aim straight between them but keep a margin of error to the side with the weaker player/shot. The second shot should be aimed at the alley of the opponent who played the ball. Sequence 5.16 (previous page) shows the ball landing in the middle, but on the backhand side of the server.

A similar combination with the first shot going between the opponents can also be a way to generate a momentum switch (figure 5.18). The second shot would be an angle toward the side of the player who is the farthest from the baseline (figure 5.19). A variation would be to play back down the middle, behind both players. Even if there is no switch, the pattern can be used with the same goal.

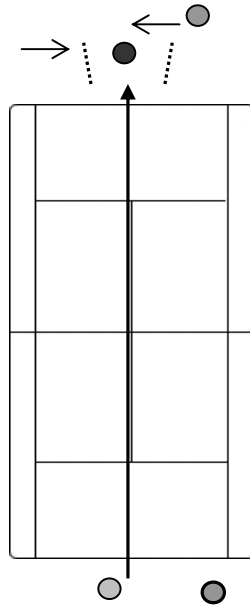


Figure 5.18 – Hitting down the middle.

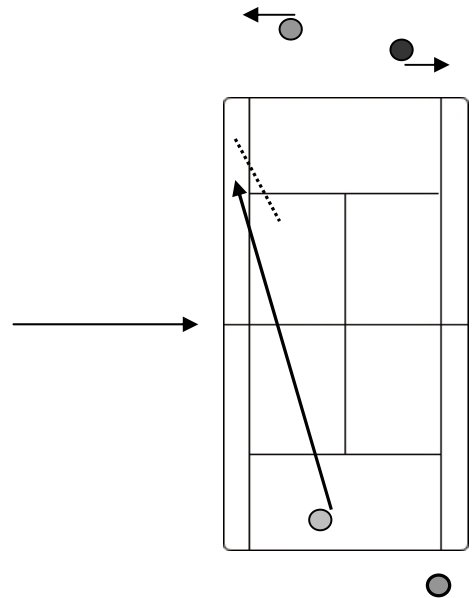


Figure 5.19 – Following up with an angle.

Movement:

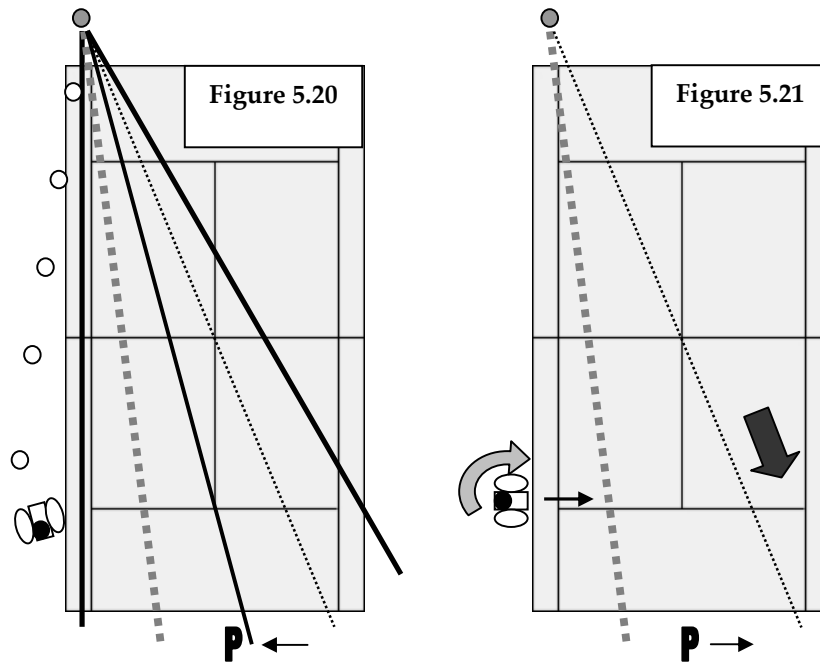
This pattern will work best if this second ball is hit early enough to rob the player of recovery time.

b) When countering or defending

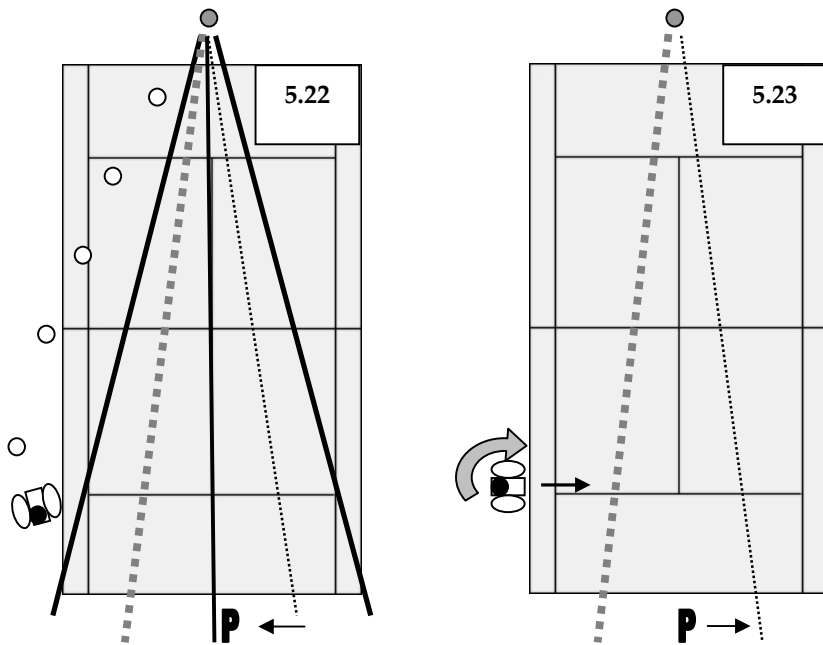
Shot selection:

Aiming down the middle when attacked **minimizes the potential angles** for your opponents, and gives you a **safer target area**.

In the next example (figures 5.20 and 5.21), the player forced to the net on an angled drop shot chooses to go down the line with his defensive reply. This shot selection gives his partner (P) a more difficult task of covering the possible angled reply (large black arrow in figure 5.21).



Figures 5.20 and 5.21 - Going down the line.



Figures 5.22 and 5.23 – Going down the middle.

If the player aims the shot toward the middle of the court, he would have the same distance to wheel to cover angles, and his partner (P) would have less court to cover than on the shot coming from the side. The experienced Swiss player, Martin Erni, wrote: "the player hitting the ball needs to pattern his intention so that his partner does not get in trouble after his shot".

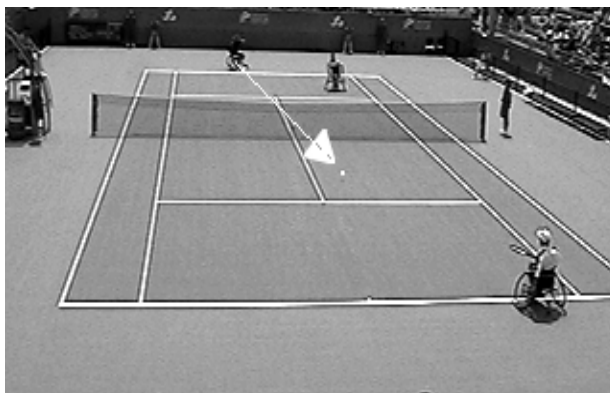
3.5 Aiming at the opponents

a) When serving, when returning, from the backcourt, or when approaching

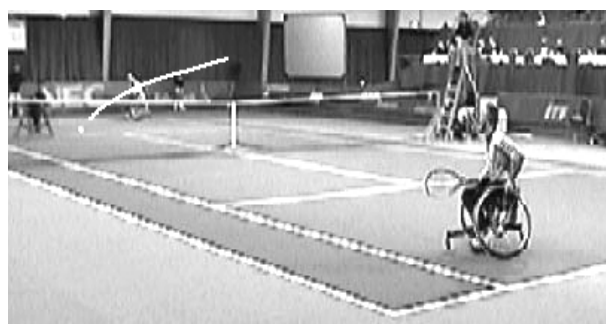
Shot selection:

In wheelchair tennis, **getting out of the way of the ball** is more difficult than in stand-up tennis. Therefore, aiming at the opponent's body is a good way of exploiting territory to force an error, or to obtain an easier ball on the next shot.

At a certain level - whether it is a serve, a groundstroke or a volley - a deeper or more powerful shot will be necessary to challenge the control of your opponent when you aim at the body or at the bottom of the chair (as in sequence 5.17 below).



Picture 5.16 – A serve aimed at the body.



Sequence 5.17 – Aiming at the bottom of the net player's chair.

3.6 Making use of switches

a) When serving

The following possibilities apply for an All-Court (AC) or a Net Player (NP) team. They focus on positions and movements which give the opportunity to switch/poach and press the opponents (**a pressing switch**). Pressure is created by the uncertainty of the net players movements.

Initial positioning:

Start in the center of the court at $\frac{3}{4}$ court (see picture A of sequences 5.18 and 5.19).

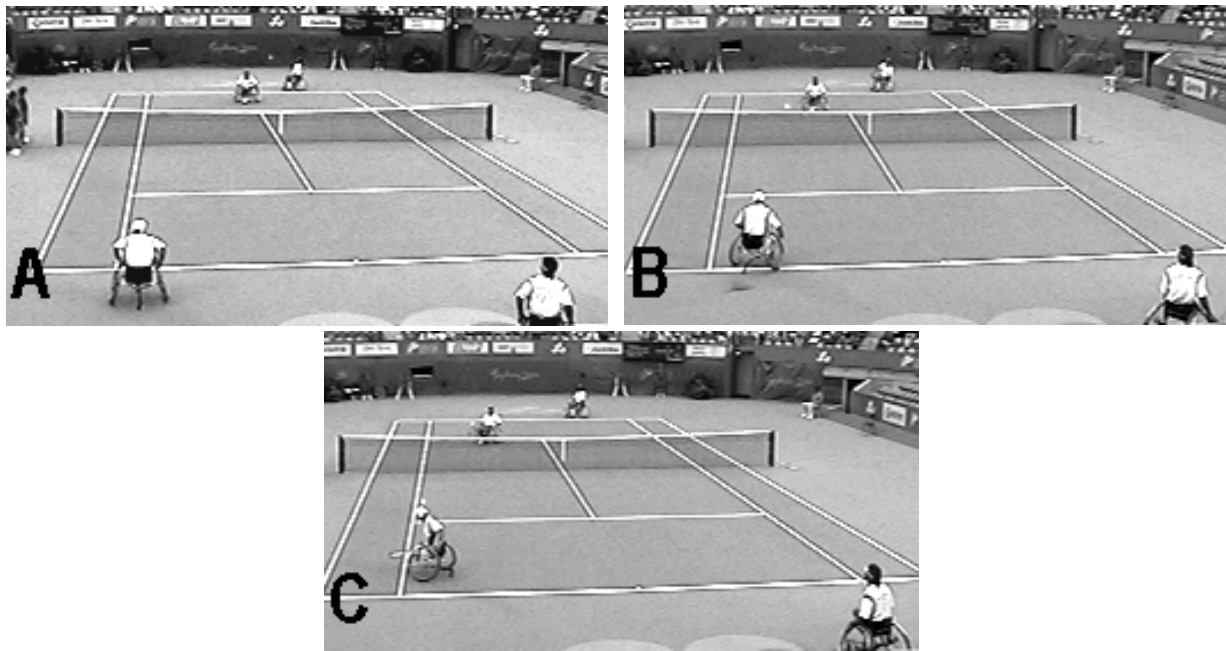
Movement:

- If you are paired with a very good server, and/or facing a weak receiver, you can **go straight down the middle** at first (sequence 5.18).



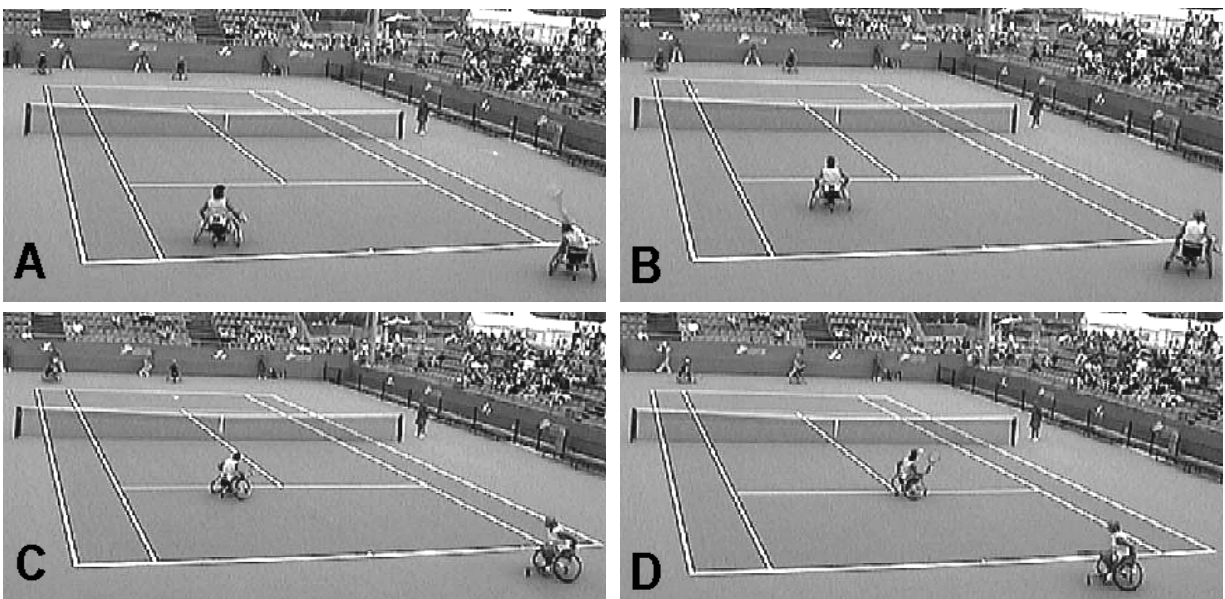
Sequence 5.18 – Net player going down the middle.

- If your partner has an average serve, and/or you are playing against an excellent receiver, you can elect to **stay on your side with a try me type of movement** (sequence 5.19). The latter still gives you the possibility to switch or not.



Sequence 5.19 – Net player moving from the middle to the side.

- Likewise, a net player could decide to move from the side toward the center, and end up in a similar position at the receiver's impact (compare frame C of sequence 5.19, and frame B of sequence 5.20). The difference is that he does not have as much momentum when going toward the middle because it is very difficult to turn and cover the potential down the line return.



Sequence 5.20 – Net player moving from the side toward the middle.

Mobility and lack of power on the serve set limits on this tactic. If there is a switch, the server and net player must move early enough to cover the court properly, and if the serve is coming at a lower speed, the receiver will probably have time to see where he should aim. Nevertheless, it shows a different picture to the opponent, and still forces the receiver to *observe* what is happening before he decides on his shot.

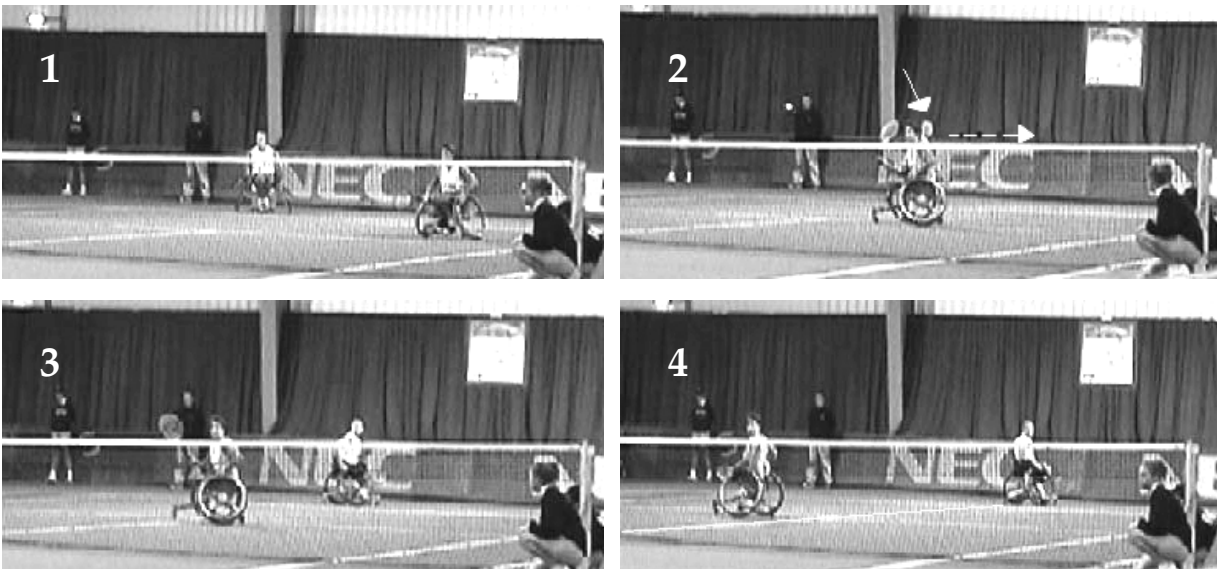
b) From the backcourt, when approaching, or at the net

Shot selection:

The goal of exploiting territory is to **put pressure on your opponents**. Therefore, pick a shot that is going to apply pressure rather than a neutral or rallying one. One way to do this is with a **pressing switch**. It is done by taking the ball in the air or after the first bounce.

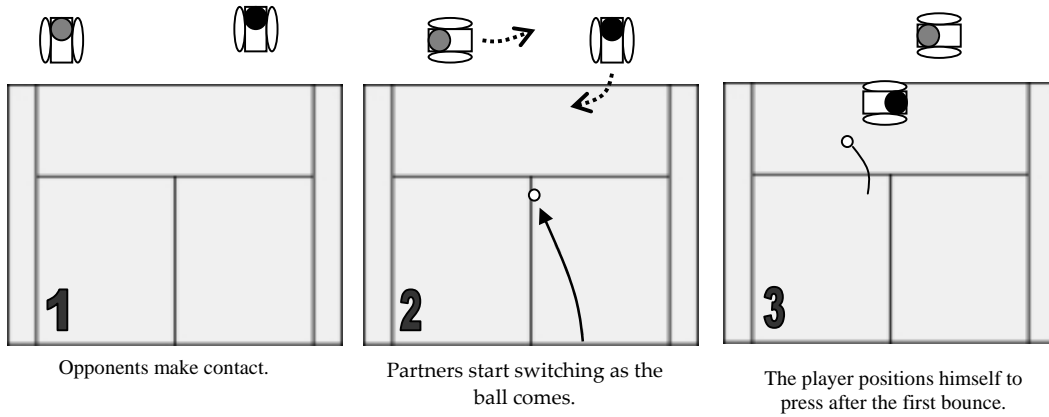
Movement:

A pressing switch is used to **rob opponents of recovery time** (press). The player hitting the ball crosses in front of the partner while the latter switches to the other side. The player crosses because he sees an opportunity to **put pressure on the opponents** by hitting the ball earlier. Often players will cross if they can hit the ball with their stronger shot, and if the switch leaves them in a position that gives an edge.



Sequence 5.21 – A pressing switch at the net.

In the next sequence (5.24), the player hitting the ball during the switch could elect to return to the backcourt or approach. The team’s style should guide the decision.



Sequence 5.24 – A pressing switch in the backcourt.

Note: the shot setting up the pressing switch could be any of those mentioned in the previous patterns (i.e. down the middle, an angle).

Strategy #4 - Exploit Weaknesses

Remember that you are playing opponents with **specific singles’ styles** that can be countered with the same tools used in singles (i.e., mixing up the pace, height, etc.).

Another way to put pressure on the opponents and force errors is to **pick on their weakness**. The main tactics to exploit weaknesses are:

- 4.1 Singling out the weaker player
- 4.2 Singling out the weakest shot of the other team

The table below summarizes this section:

Game Situations Tactics	<i>Serving</i>	<i>Returning</i>	<i>Backcourt</i>	<i>Approaching or at the Net</i>	<i>Countering or Defending</i>
4.1 Singling out the weaker player	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aim repeatedly at the same player 			
4.2 Singling out the weakest shot of the other team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aim at the exposed weakness of an opponent • find ways to hit at the hidden weakness of an opponent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make the other team switch to expose a weakness 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aim at the exposed weakness of an opponent

Table 5.4 - Tactics and patterns to exploit a weakness.

4.1 Single out the weaker player

- a) **When returning, from the backcourt, when approaching, or when countering or defending**

One tactic is to **aim relentlessly at the weakest or least threatening player** of the opposing team. Keeping pressure on the weakest player increases the chances of getting a “free” point from a mistake, or an easier ball to hit a winner or force an error. The other advantage is that even if you hit an ineffective shot it is being received by the weaker partner. Use these tactical patterns to wear out that player, and when countering and defending.

Remember to occasionally play a ball to the stronger partner who may be getting cold, frustrated and impatient.

4.2 Single out the weakest shot of the other team

Add to the previous tactic by hitting to the weakness of the weaker player. If this weakness is exposed, or located in an alley, the opponent cannot hide it without leaving too much of the court open. Successful teams will hide the weaker shot in the center of the court therefore you may have to force them to switch and thus break their most effective position.

Serving to the weakness is a clear tactic and will not be discussed further in this section.

a) When returning, from the backcourt, when approaching, or when countering or defending¹

4.2.1 Aiming at the “exposed” weakness of an opponent

Shot selection:

In the remaining game situations, it is best to **match your strength against the opponent’s weakness**. The example below uses a backcourt situation and shows how to trap an opponent and expose his weakness.

Figures (5.25 and 5.26) on the next page show how difficult it is for an opponent to get out of that scenario. All the players are right-handed, and the weakness is located in the grey zone which is the backhand side of the player in the ad-court.

Movement:

When the two partners **recover** as in figure 5.26, you can see how difficult it is for the opponent behind the grey zone to stay away from their forehands.

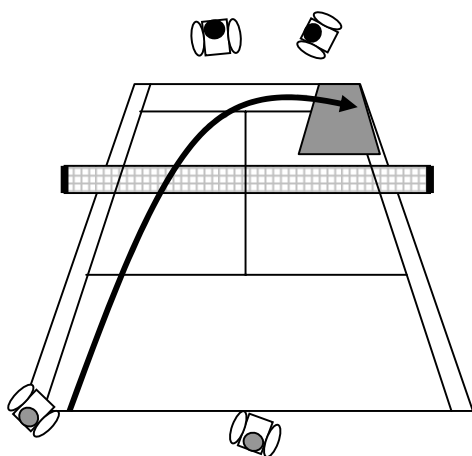


Figure 5.25 – Aiming at a weakness located wide.

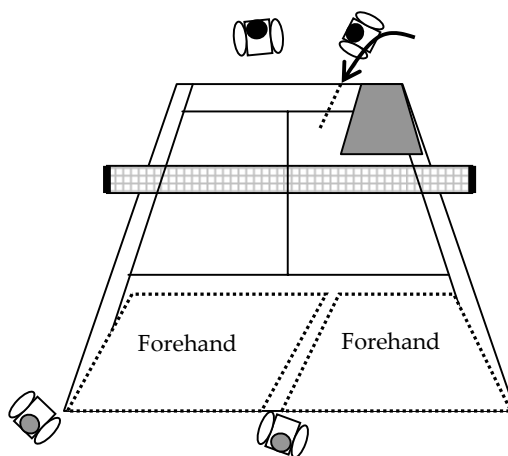


Figure 5.26 – Recovering in the backcourt to match strengths to weakness.

¹ This last game situation applies only for 4.2.1 (Aiming at the “exposed” weakness of an opponent).

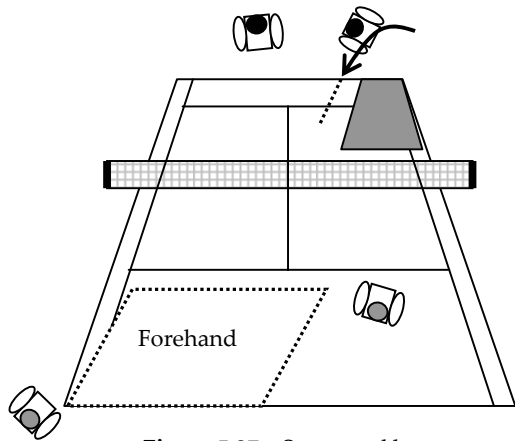


Figure 5.27 – Same goal but with a player at the net.

Figure 5.27 shows how to exert the same pressure with one of the partners at the net. The backcourt player recovers the same way he would with a partner playing in the backcourt. He does not worry about a potential lob down the line if his partner knows where to position himself and how to recover (see Appendix 1). The weaker shot of the opponent will rarely produce an offensive lob.

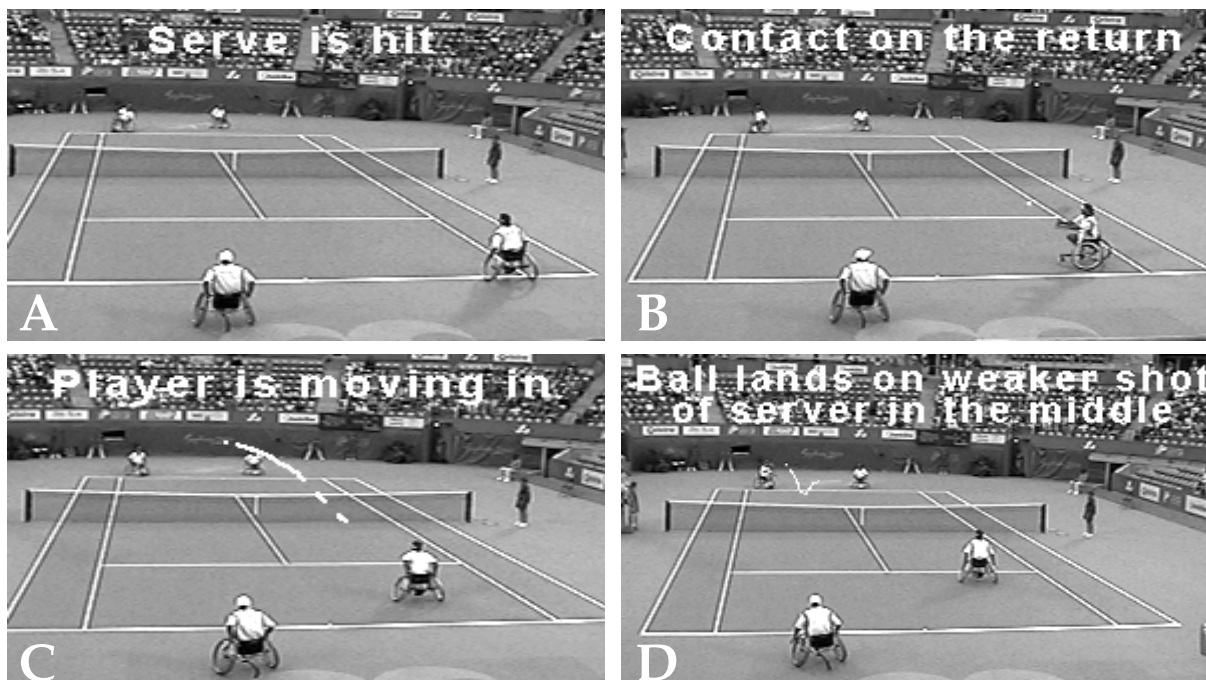
4.2.2 Aiming at the “hidden” weakness of an opponent

Shot selection:

Using the example above (figure 5.27), the best way to reach the weaker backhand of the player in the deuce court is by hitting the ball from the deuce court.

Movement:

It is effective to **take the ball early** to give less time for the opponent’s partner to cover the middle. Sequence 5.21 shows how the return of serve from the deuce court can create the opportunity to hit early to the backhand in the middle.



Sequence 5.21 – Aiming at a weakness in the middle on the return.

However, this position is not ideal for the backcourt player to dominate with the forehand. He cannot afford to move too much out of regular angle coverage to open up his forehand, as a crosscourt lob would be going away from him.

To match strengths to weakness, they would need to switch, and this could be done in two ways:

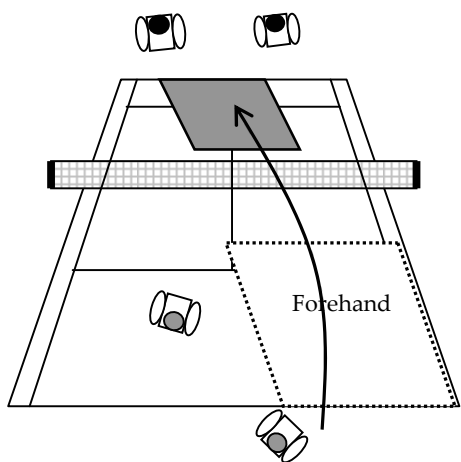


Figure 5.28 – Positioning to pressure a weakness located in the middle.

- 1) Have the net player go to the ad-court right after his return (frame C of sequence 5.21) instead of moving forward on the same side, or
- 2) Bait the other team into lobbing crosscourt by having the net player get very close to the net after his return.

In both scenarios, the backcourt player would now be in the deuce court, and could hit to the weakness in the middle more easily with his own strong shot.

4.2.3 Making the other team switch to expose a weakness

4.2.3.1 Against a team with two players in the backcourt

Shot selection:

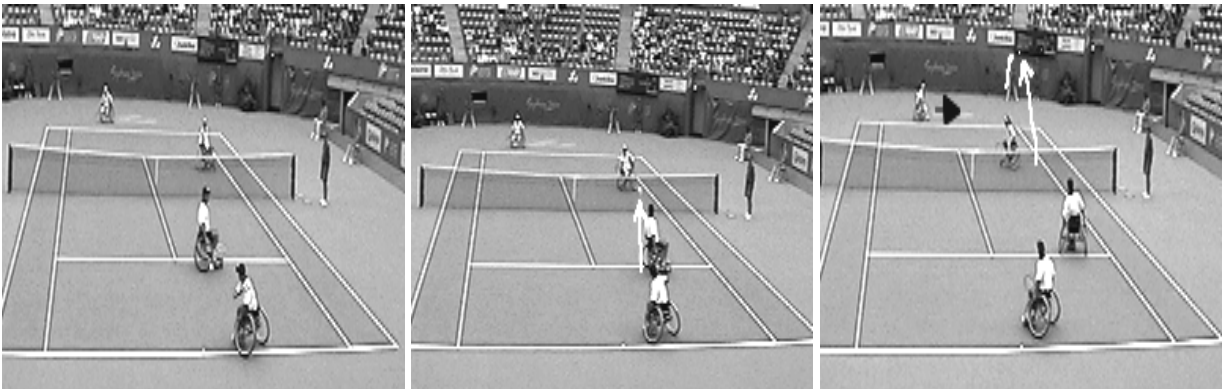
- When you are playing a team with two players in the backcourt you can use the **“drop shot and lob” pattern** to draw one player to the net, and then lob over him. This will force his partner to retrieve the ball behind him, therefore **causing a retrieving switch**.
- Another option is to use the **“hitting down the middle” pattern**, and hope to cause a **momentum switch**.

4.2.3.2 Against a team with one player at the net

Shot selection:

- When you are playing a team with one player at the net, you can wait for an opportunity to **lob over that player**.

In the sequence below, the backcourt player in the far court has to cover the lob over his partner who was drawn in by the previous shot (previous frame). Forcing a **retrieving switch** has neutralized an effective positioning (i.e., the strong forehand in the deuce court with the partner at the net).



Sequence 5.22 – Forcing a retrieving switch by lobbing the net player.

Notes:

Strategy #5 - Force the other team out of its style

Experienced players like Steve Welch use this approach as a basic strategy for doubles. “I spend most of my time on the doubles court making the other team do something they obviously would prefer not”, says Welch. A team plays at its best when it can impose its style and maximise its position on the court. One way to avoid this is to force them out of their style by moving them around. The two main tactics to force a team out of its style are:

- 5.1 Bringing an opponent to the net
- 5.2 Keeping the net player back

Here is a table summarizing the parts of this section:

Game Situations Tactics	<i>Serving</i>	<i>Returning</i>	<i>Backcourt</i>	<i>Approaching or at the Net</i>	<i>Countering or Defending</i>
5.1 Bringing an opponent to the net	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • against a backcourt team • against an all-court team • against a net player team 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
5.2 Keeping the net player back	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a high % of first serves • serve wide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aim deep toward the potential net player 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aim deep toward the potential net player • play short to his partner’s side 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aim deep toward the potential net player

Table 5.5 - Tactics and patterns to force the other team out of its style.

5.1 Bringing an opponent to the net

These patterns were discussed previously (Strategy #3 – Exploit territory), therefore only the rationale as it relates to the team styles will be examined below.

5.1.1 Against a BackCourt team (BC)

This team likes to build its points from the backcourt, therefore bringing one of the opponents to the net is effective. Ideally, **try to bring the strongest backcourt player to the net.**

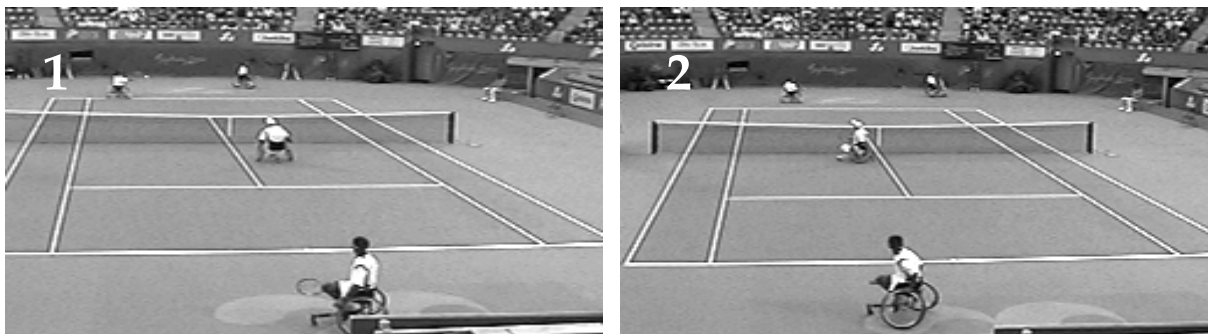
5.1.2 Against an All-Court team (AC)

This team likes to build its points primarily from the backcourt and occasionally with a player at the net. **Try to determine if they are favoring one player over another to play the backcourt.** If they are, then try to bring that player in.

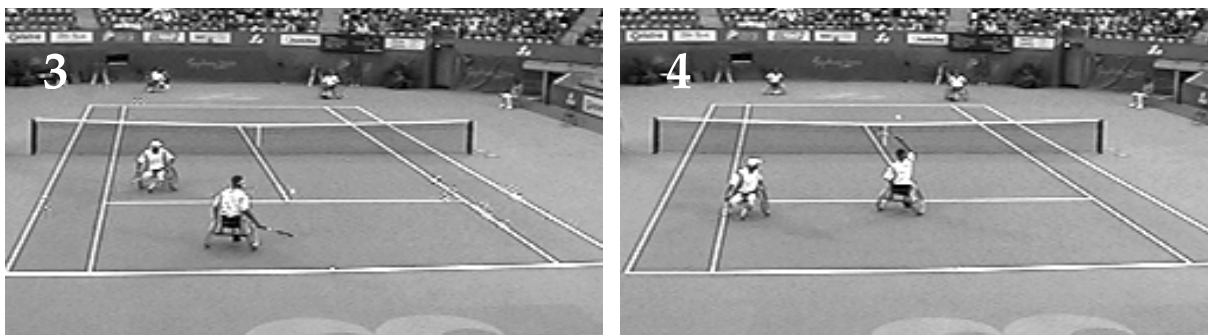
5.1.3 Against a Net Player team (NP)

This team likes to build its points with a specific player at the net. **Try to bring the backcourt player to the net** by forcing the opponents to *piston* up and down the court. Two players at the net is a low percentage play in wheelchair tennis. **Pistoning by obligation** occurs when a player chooses to retreat behind the baseline to cover the court when his partner is moving in to **retrieve a ball**. Sequence 5.23 illustrates how this occurs on a short lob. The easiest way to provoke it is by playing short to the backcourt player's side (Figure 5.29).

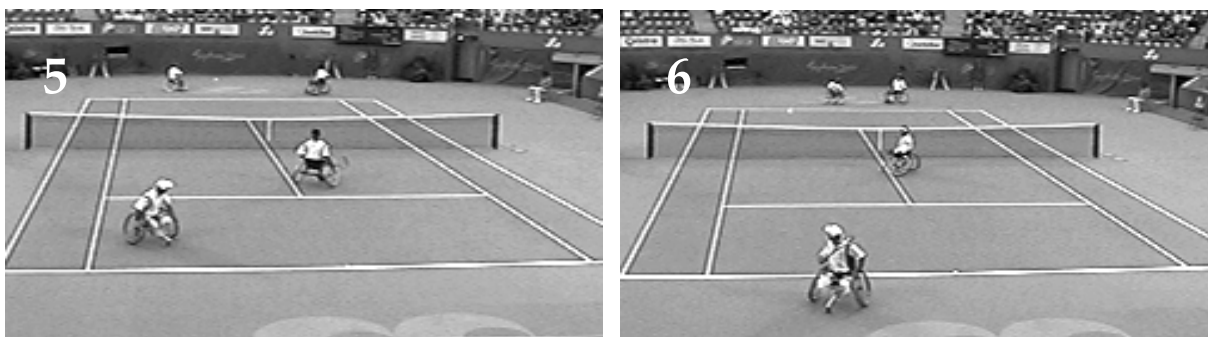
Frames 1 and 2 - The net player has just hit a powerful volley which is blocked back over his head (but short) by the opponent.



Frames 3 and 4 - The net player starts his reverse mobility recovery while his partner becomes the new net player.



Frames 5 and 6 - The new backcourt player watches the ball along his recovery, and prepares to play the next ball.



Sequence 5.23 – Pistoning by obligation (on a lob).

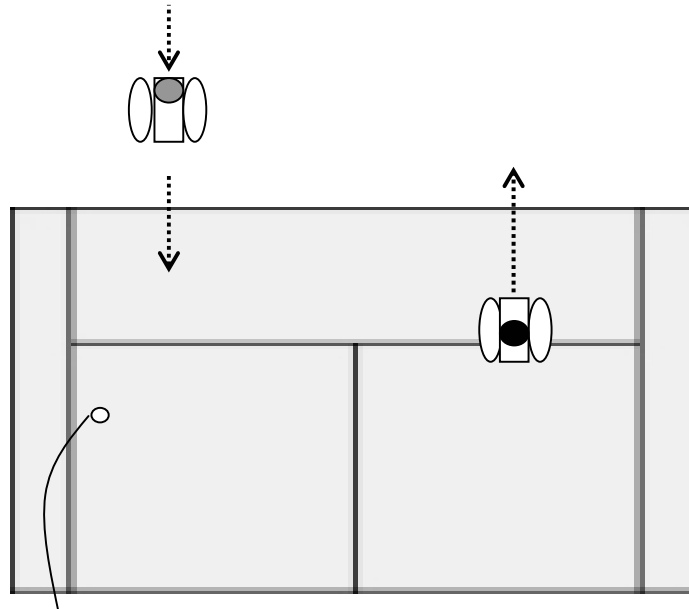


Figure 5.29 – Pistoning by obligation (on a short ball).

5.2 Keeping the net player back

a) When serving

Shot selection:

- Maintain a **high percentage of first serves** when an opponent is coming in behind his return.
- **Serve wide more often**; this makes it more difficult for the opponent to move forward as he has to first move sideways and advance from the outside of the court.

b) When returning

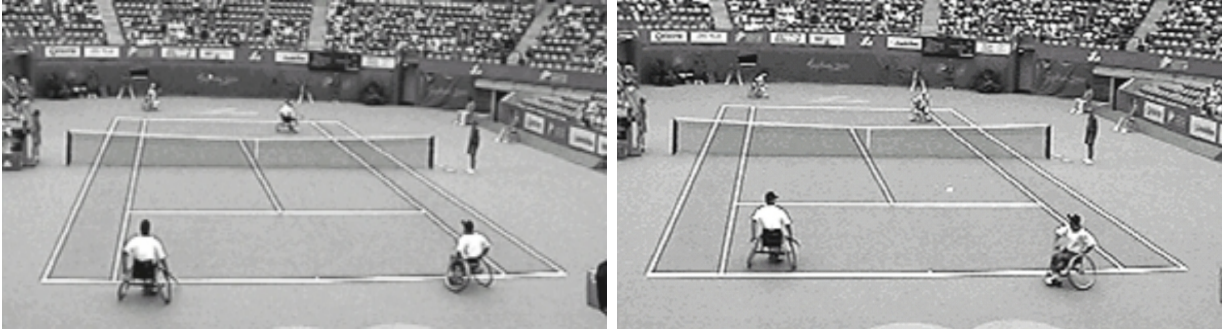
Shot selection:

- When the net player is serving, aim the **return deep to his side**.
- When his partner is serving, you do not know if he will start inside the court or not. If he chooses to stay back and only move in after the serve, aim your **return deep to his side**.
- If he is already in, **play a short ball on the server's side** to make them piston, and then aim deep to his side.

d) From the backcourt, or when approaching

Shot selection:

- When the net player is in the backcourt, and plans to move in during a rally, **play deep balls to his side.**



Sequence 5.24 – The net player successfully moves in during a rally when the ball is played to his partner.

- If he has already moved in, **play a short ball on his partner's side** to make them piston, and then aim deep shots to his side.

d) When countering or defending

Shot selection:

- When the net player is in the backcourt, and plans to move in during a rally, **play deep balls to his side.**

CHAPTER 6



LAST THOUGHTS

"Anything can happen in doubles! Two singles players of lesser abilities can beat two singles players of greater abilities. This should be significant to both teams. The lesser players must adopt an attitude that they truly believe they can win and play to their utmost. The better players must guard against being over-confident, give their opponents great respect no matter who they are, and play hard and smart. And still, anything can happen."

Bruce Karr, USA

Last Thoughts...

To be effective, players and coaches have to plan AHEAD, and not imitate or continue doing what is working NOW. As the great Australian player Daniela DiToro said, "*don't be afraid to try or create something new*". Technology is continuing to advance, creating new possibilities for higher quality tennis and more fun for all players. I hope that everyone will keep sharing their thoughts and discoveries in order to go beyond what IS and get to what COULD BE. My purpose for writing this manual was to give a boost to the sport. Wheelchair tennis doubles is what sport should be all about: ***collaboration and transcending one's own limits***. I love to watch wheelchair doubles with the spectacular long rallies backed by the court awareness and coverage. Below are my thoughts on what direction doubles might take in the future, and what can make you a more effective player.

STYLE & TACTICS:

- ❖ Clearly establish your role on the team, and the style of the team. Your movement can then be adapted to what you know about your partner.
- ❖ The power, accuracy and speed of the sport are improving. As a result, being aggressive will lead to more opportunities to end the point with a volley. Many players have indicated that it is difficult to find an opening in doubles. Therefore, hit the ball early whenever possible, or send a player (or two!) to the net to take the ball in the air. The goal is to press opponents as often as possible within your perceptive and physical limits whenever you create an opening.
- ❖ As the game transforms, develop your countering/neutralizing skills as well as your attacking/dominating.

PLAYING AT THE NET:

- ❖ Be a force at the net. Position yourself to intercept balls when you or your partner force the other team into a difficult situation.
- ❖ Train your dynamic volleying skills. Many players only train static volleys, which rarely occur in match play. Two ways to train volleying while moving are: (1) to have a partner very deep behind the baseline to give you time for recovery after your volley, or (2) to train with two people at the net alternating hitting volleys to the backcourt player.
- ❖ Get experience at the net so that you become comfortable there.

PLAYING IN THE BACKCOURT:

- ❖ If you are the backcourt player, develop shots and patterns to set your partner or yourself up.
- ❖ Aggressiveness is key, but work on balancing it with percentage tennis. Pick the moments and the targets that fit your abilities and style.
- ❖ Try to be the first to attack; be patient until an opportunity is created.

"Doubles is a horse of a different color and we have not finished painting the singles horse yet."

Hope Lewellen, USA



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E-mail: loulamon@bluewin.ch

Last Thoughts

Notes:

APPENDIX 1

Court coverage to help keep the ball in play: the basics

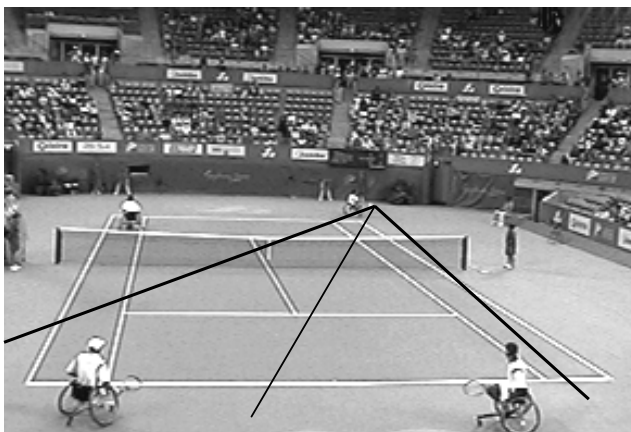
1. How to cover the angles?

Good angle coverage means being in position to minimise openings for your opponent, and to maximise your chances of getting to the ball. This is achieved by understanding the angles for which you are responsible. It is determined by the position that keeps your opponent from hitting a winning shot with power. Precision shots outside this area can be covered as the balls are slower.

1.1 When the ball is on the opponents' side

Each player is responsible for the angle shot hit with power on his side. In figure A1.1, these angles are formed by the two black lines and by the dark dotted line. The players are facing play in the middle of these angles, and the grey areas represent the approximate precision targets.

Covering the “ power angle ” means positioning yourself so that you are in the middle of the angle when the opponent makes contact. Contrary to stand-up tennis,



Picture A1.1 – Covering the angles on a ball coming from the ad court.

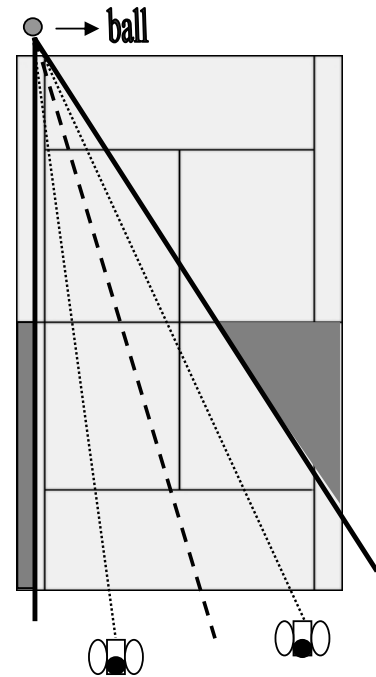
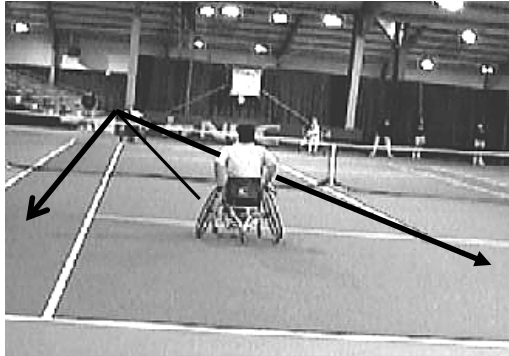


Figure A1.1 – The players are placed in the middle of the « power angles ».

moving to the middle of that angle at the right moment is not always easy because of the limits imposed by mobility, and the need for chair momentum. The player could have any amount of momentum¹ while expecting the next ball, but it is important to be in the right place at opponent's impact. Picture A1.1 illustrates angle coverage on a ball

¹ Although it is highly recommended to keep some momentum at all times, some situations might force a player to come to a complete stop.

coming from the ad side. Notice that the player on the right in the near court is wheeling toward the center of the angle he is responsible for just before the opponent's impact. Picture A1.2 shows that the same logic applies to covering angles at the net.

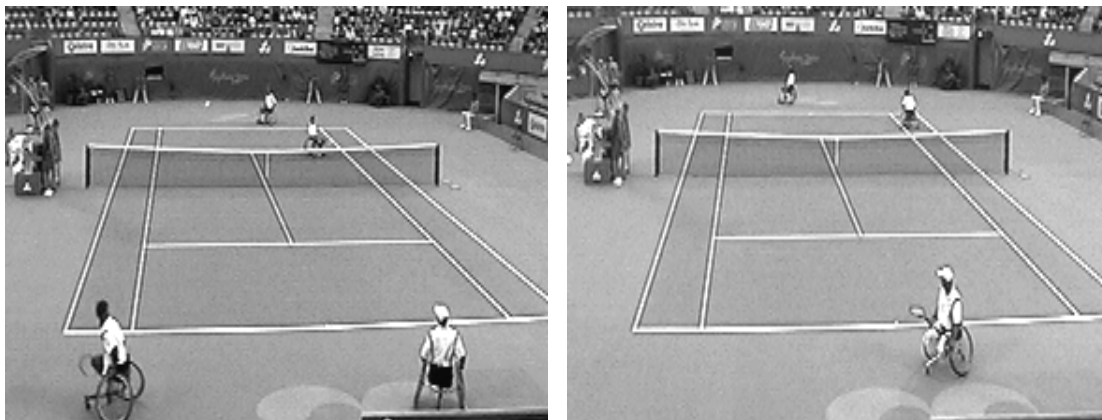


Picture A1.2 – Angle coverage at the net.

Therefore, whether you are serving, returning, in the backcourt, at the net, countering or defending, you need to be aware of angle coverage and maximise your position.

1.2 When the ball is on your side

The teammates should **move together** so that the entire court is covered. Be prepared for your opponents to try to exploit an opening by volleying or hitting early to pressure you. For example, "when a player is moved wide off the court, the partner must adjust, move over, and bisect the open court" (Moore and Snow, 1994, p.106). Sequence A1.1 shows that type of movement from the partner.



Sequence A1.1 – Moving to cover the open court.

Picture A1.3 shows the same movement, but with the partner at the net. In both cases, as soon as the partner who was pulled wide comes back toward the center of his half-court, the player will move back to cover the smaller angle of his own half of the court.



Picture A1.3 – Moving to cover the open court with a partner at the net.

2. How to cover the lob for the net player?

This is an area where high performance stand-up and wheelchair tennis differ. Mobility and height make it possible to play very close to the net, and still cover the backcourt fairly well in the stand-up game.

2.1 Why adopt a certain distance from the net, and where is it?

Clearly, the closer you are to the net, the easier it is to lob over you. The goal is to find the breaking point that makes it a challenge for your opponents to get the ball over your head. When observing the top net players, you can see that they try to be positioned about a meter behind the service line (with low momentum) at the moment of the opponents' impact. This makes it more difficult to lob effectively. Figure A1.2 shows the room over the racquet and behind the player at different distances from the net. The spot where the darkest line (representing the court) is transparent is the service line.

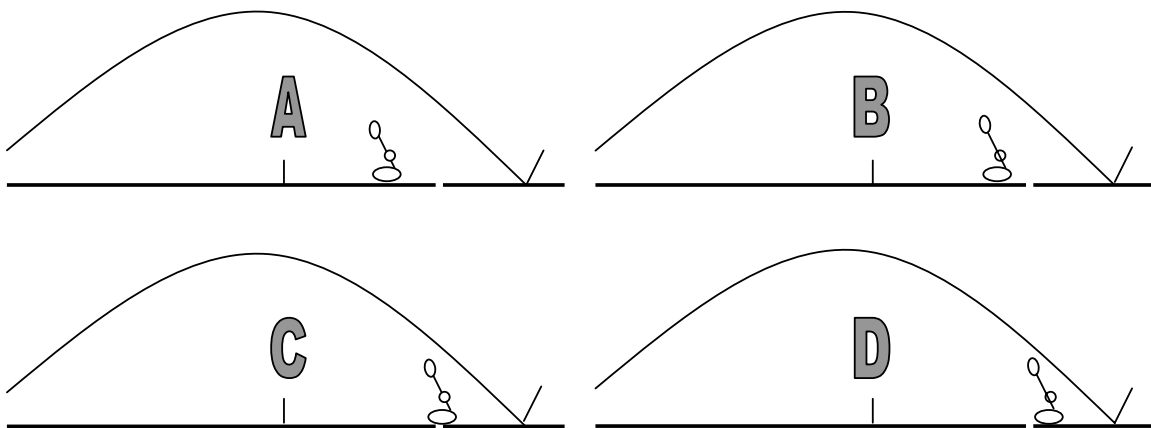


Figure A1.2 – Different net positions facing an offensive lob.

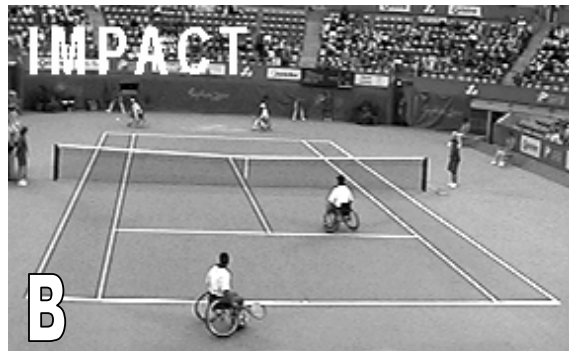
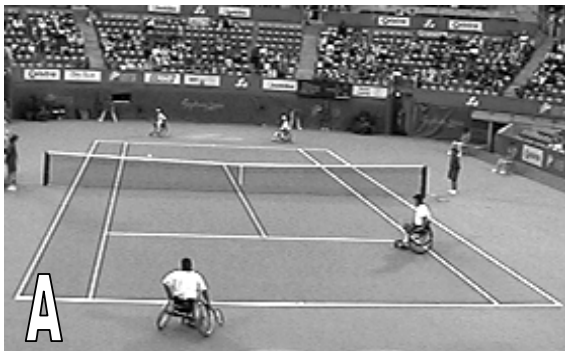
Illustration D shows how little room is left to hit an offensive lob when the player positions himself behind the service line.



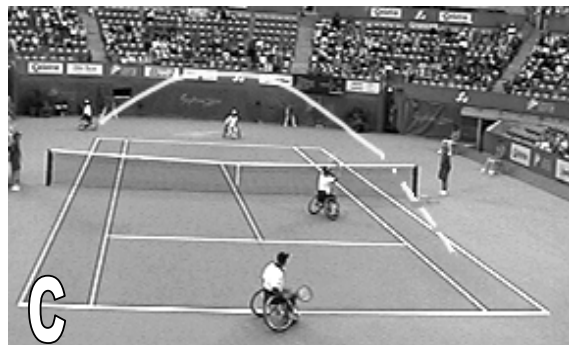
Picture A1.4 – Low momentum behind the service line.

Picture A1.4 shows that the exploitable space behind the net player gets smaller as she increases the distance between herself and the net. As the goal is to pressure the opponent by coming to the net, it is important to **find the right momentum** in order to be behind the service line when the opponent is about to make contact. That way she does not "see" the opening for the lob.

If she is moving in very quickly, the opponent might detect that, and hit a winning lob. Low momentum will also help you change direction or stop more easily if a lob is coming.



Sequence A1.2 shows what might happen when the net player ventures too close to the net. The previous shot was hit to the forehand of the best player on the opposing team who is cross-court from the net player. The trajectory of the ball makes it impossible for his partner to protect the court behind the net player on this offensive cross-court lob.



Sequence A1.2 – Weaker position against the lob.

Frame A in sequence A1.3 shows a very conservative position by the net player who is still beaten by the lob. The difference is that the trajectory of the lob was very high (defensive) which gave her partner time to cover the court behind her.



A – The player moves forward.



B – The player slows down to assess the incoming shot.



C – The player decides to let her partner take it.



D – The player watches the ball and prepares to switch.

Sequence A1.3 – A strong position against the lob.

2.2 Recovering at the net (when the ball goes to the partner)

2.2.1 The circular recovery

Three different paths are useful when a player recovers at the net. The first one is called **circular recovery**.

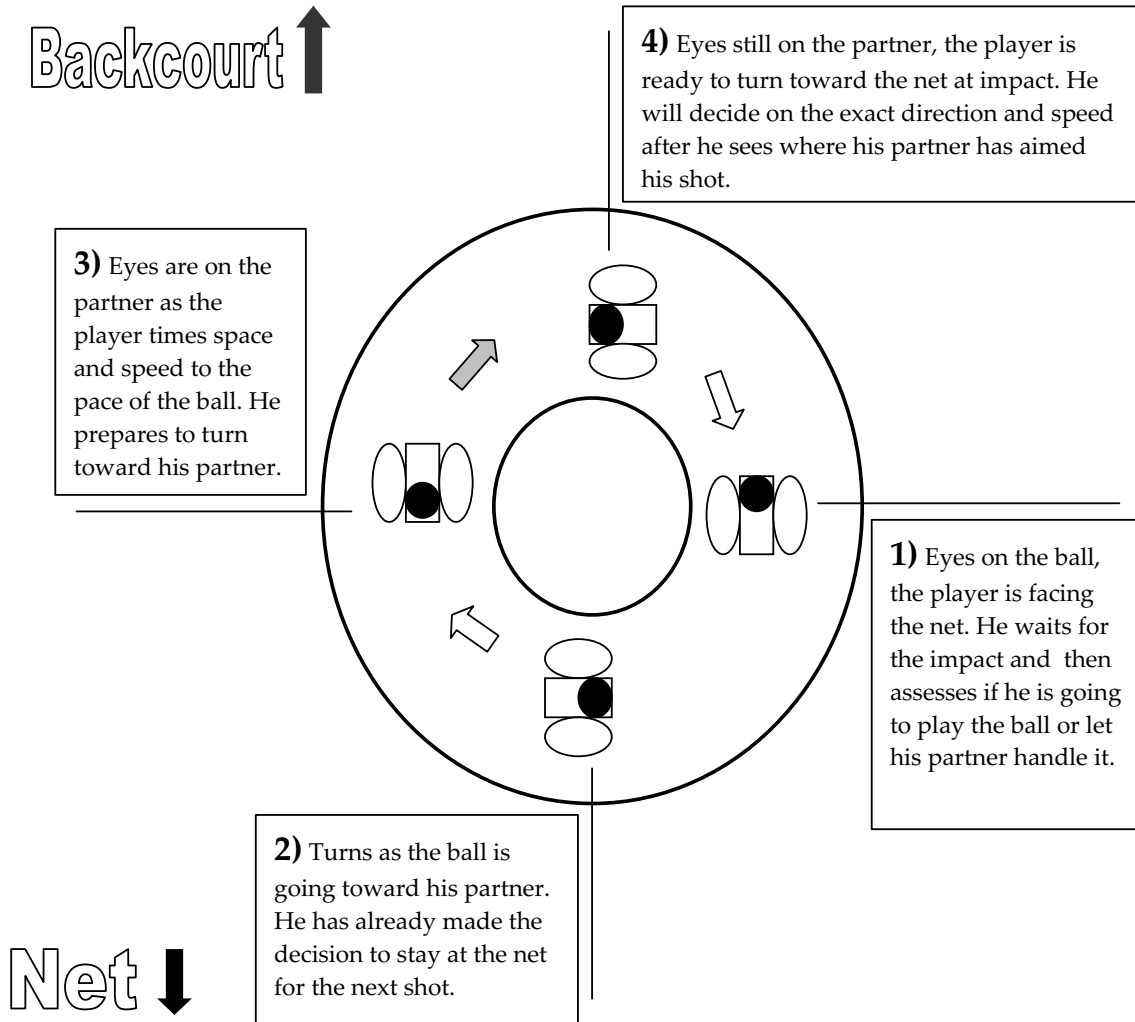
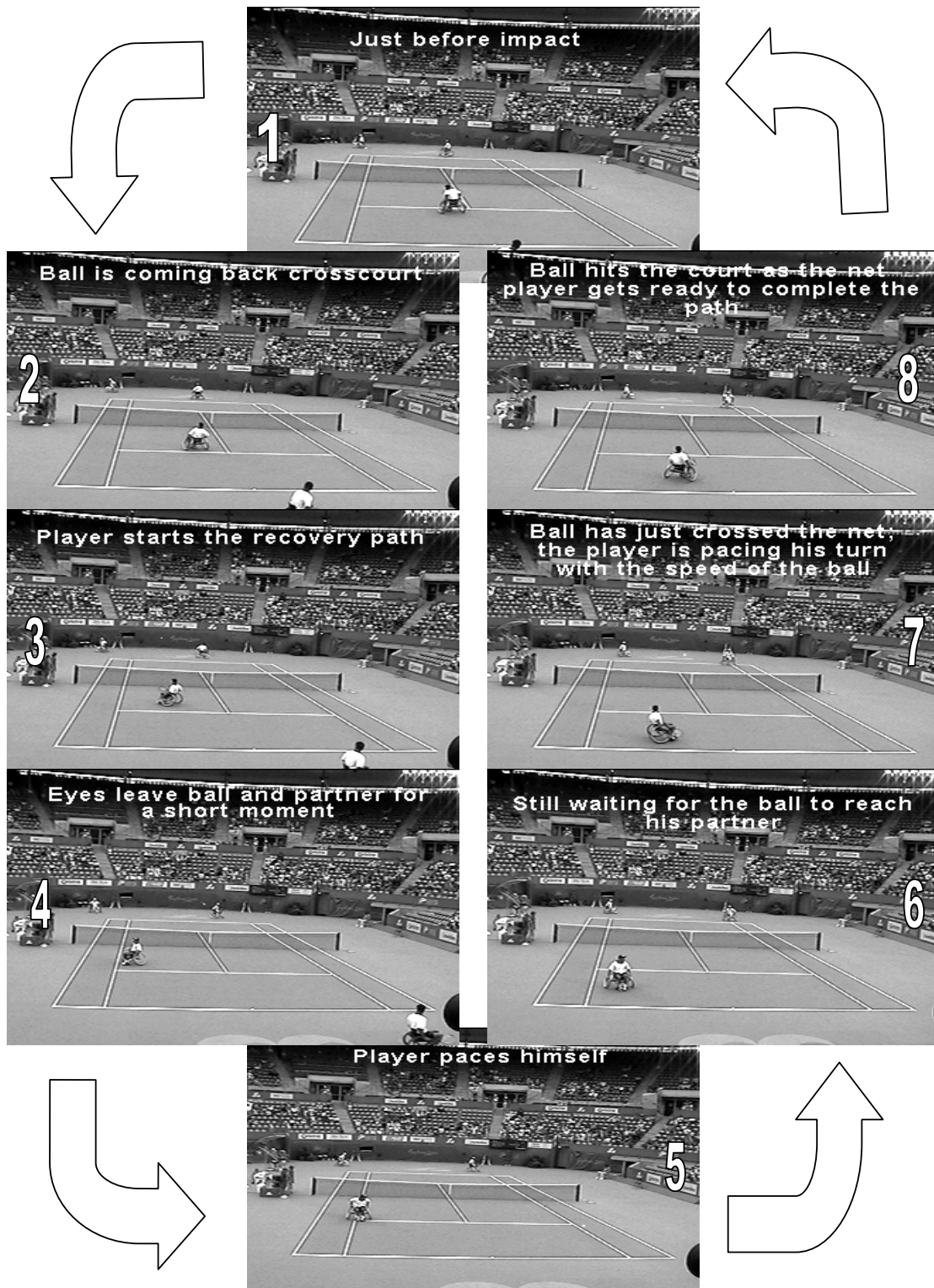


Figure A1.3 – Circular recovery path.

The circular recovery path is used often as it serves momentum and positioning well. It is also an **aggressive** way of playing the net. As the player faces the net, **initially coming from the center of the court**, it will help determine which turn he will choose. The two circles in figure A1.3 show that the path can be of different widths. The net player has to keep up with the pace of the rally, and the space he uses is directly related to the time he has to complete his recovery. The next sequence (A1.4) shows an example of a wide circular recovery.



Sequence A1.4 – A circular recovery at the net.

2.2.2 The figure “8” recovery

The second recovery path is called **figure “8” recovery**, as illustrated below in Figure A1.4. Start with step 1, and follow the white arrows.

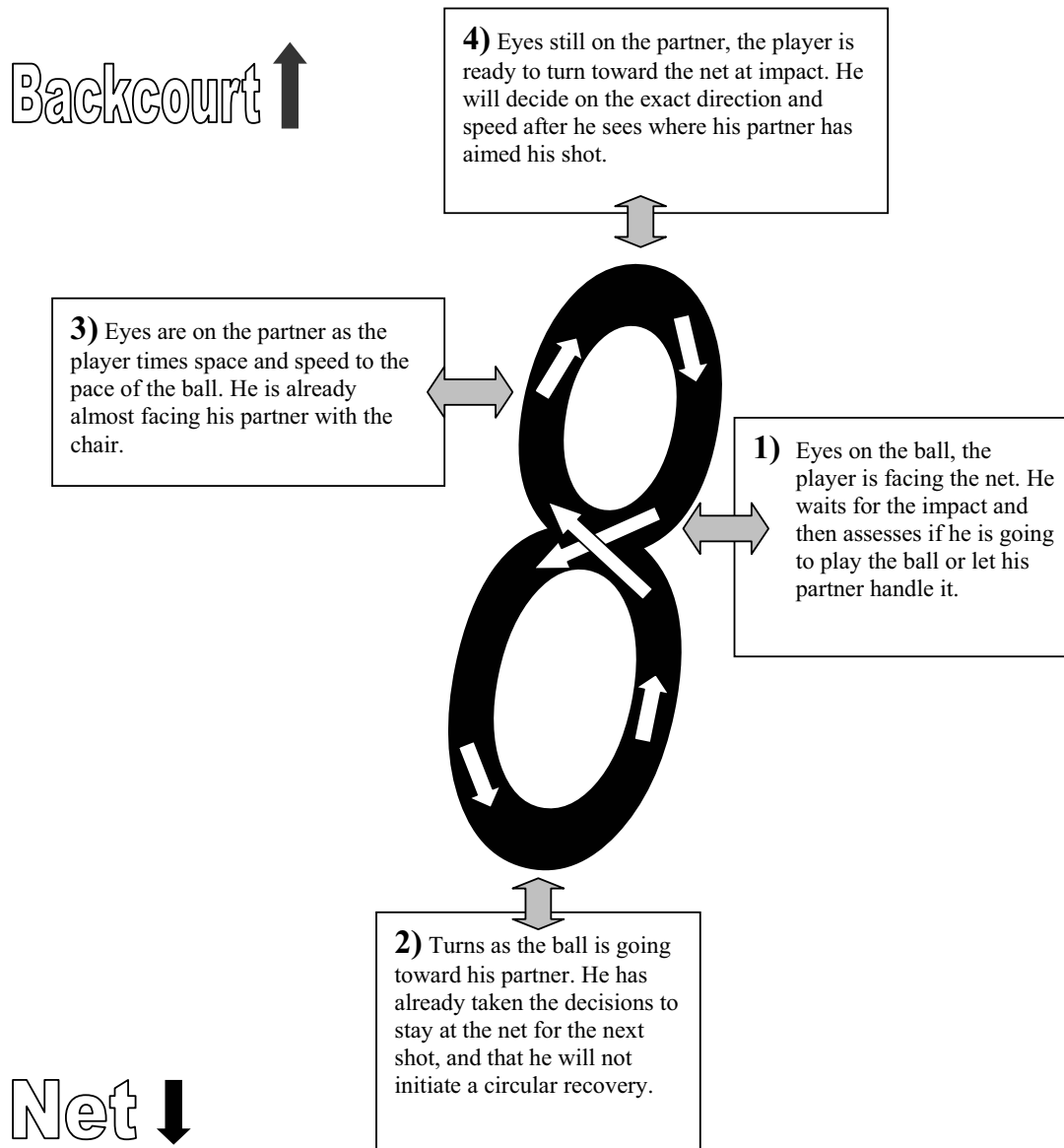


Figure A1.4 – The « 8 » figure recovery path.

The following images explain when to use the figure “8” recovery instead of the circular recovery. The player in sequence A1.5 (part one is at the bottom of the next page) is **initially positioned near the singles line** when he is moving toward the net. After he assesses that he is not be playing the ball he does an in turn. If he had done an in turn it

would have moved him into the alley. He does not use circular recovery as it risks leaving too much of an opening in the middle if his partner goes down the line with the next shot (figures A1.5 and A1.6). From his new position in figure A1.6, the net player

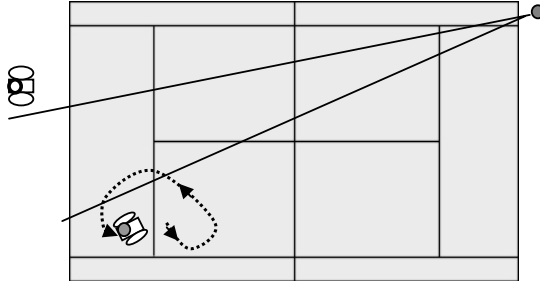


Figure A1.5 – Doing a circular recovery leaves an opening between the partners.

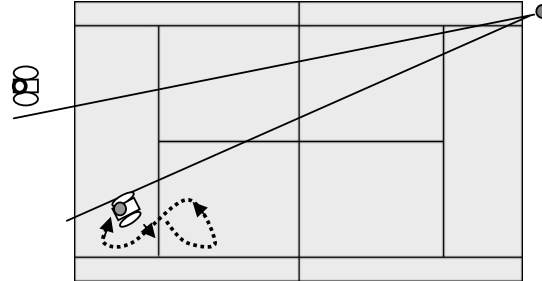
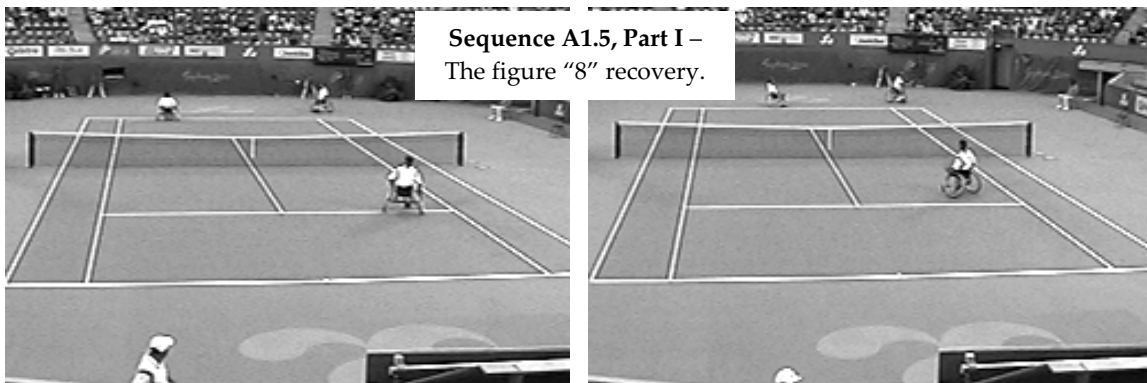


Figure A1.6 – Doing an « 8 » figure recovery to cover the center of the court.

can elect to use a circular recovery since he has moved away from the singles line.

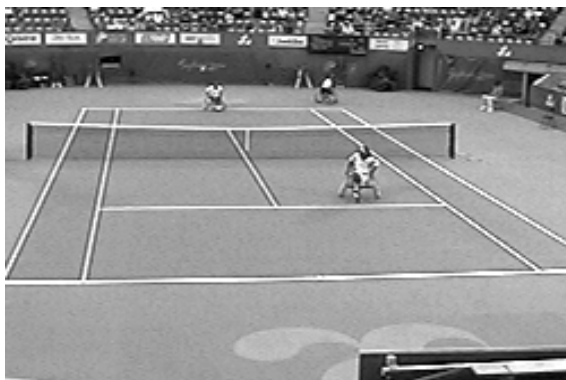
If his partner goes cross-court, he can maintain a **conservative** position by using the figure “8”, which will bring him back close to the singles line.



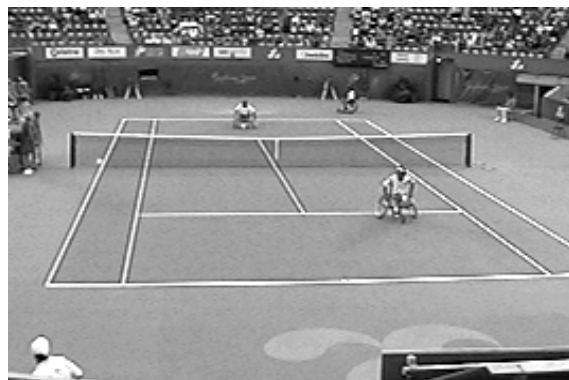
Sequence A1.5, Part I – The figure “8” recovery.

Frame A – The net player protects the alley by going toward the singles line.

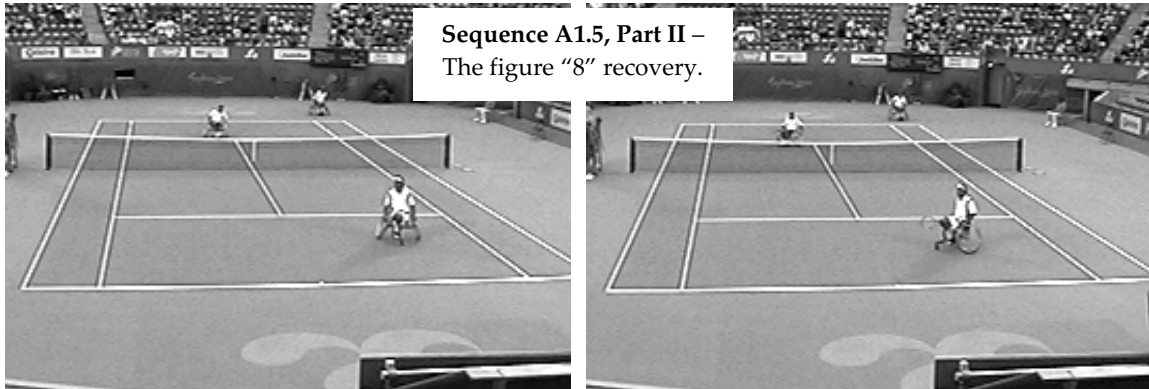
Frame B – The ball is hit cross-court ; the net player initiates the first turn.



Frame C – The net player initiates the first straight line of the figure “8”.

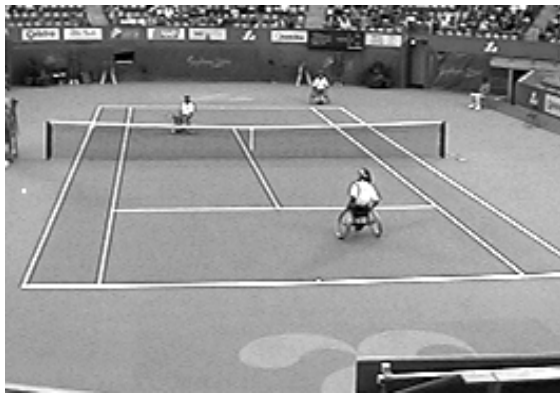


Frame D – He watches the ball land.

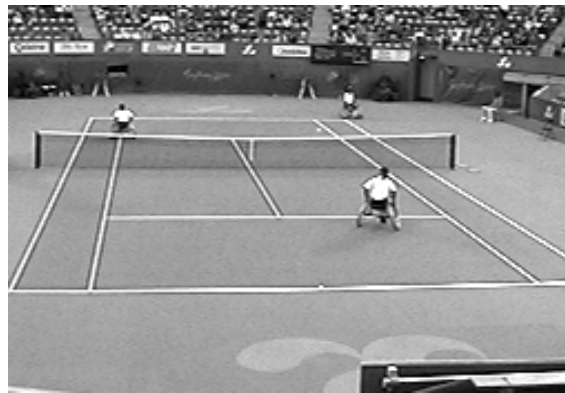


Frame E – The net player initiates the second turn.

Frame F – He watches his partner make contact.



Frame G – The net player has moved closer to the center of the court to cover that potential opening.



Frame H – He heads back toward the net and the singles line, maintaining a conservative net position.

The figure “8” is tipped toward the middle of the court for the reasons stated previously. It is also more time consuming than a circular recovery, due to the number of turns. Even a small figure “8” will take more time to execute than a small circle. **The pace of the rally** will also permit this type of recovery. In the pictures above you see that the net player’s partner is positioned very deep in the court, giving the net player a lot of time to recover this way.

2.3 The “S” figure recovery

The third type of net recovery is the “S” figure recovery. The size of the “S” will depend on the time the net player has to get where he wants. Note that the steps 2 and 3 of the circular recovery path become a single one (#2) in the “S” figure (See figure A1.7).

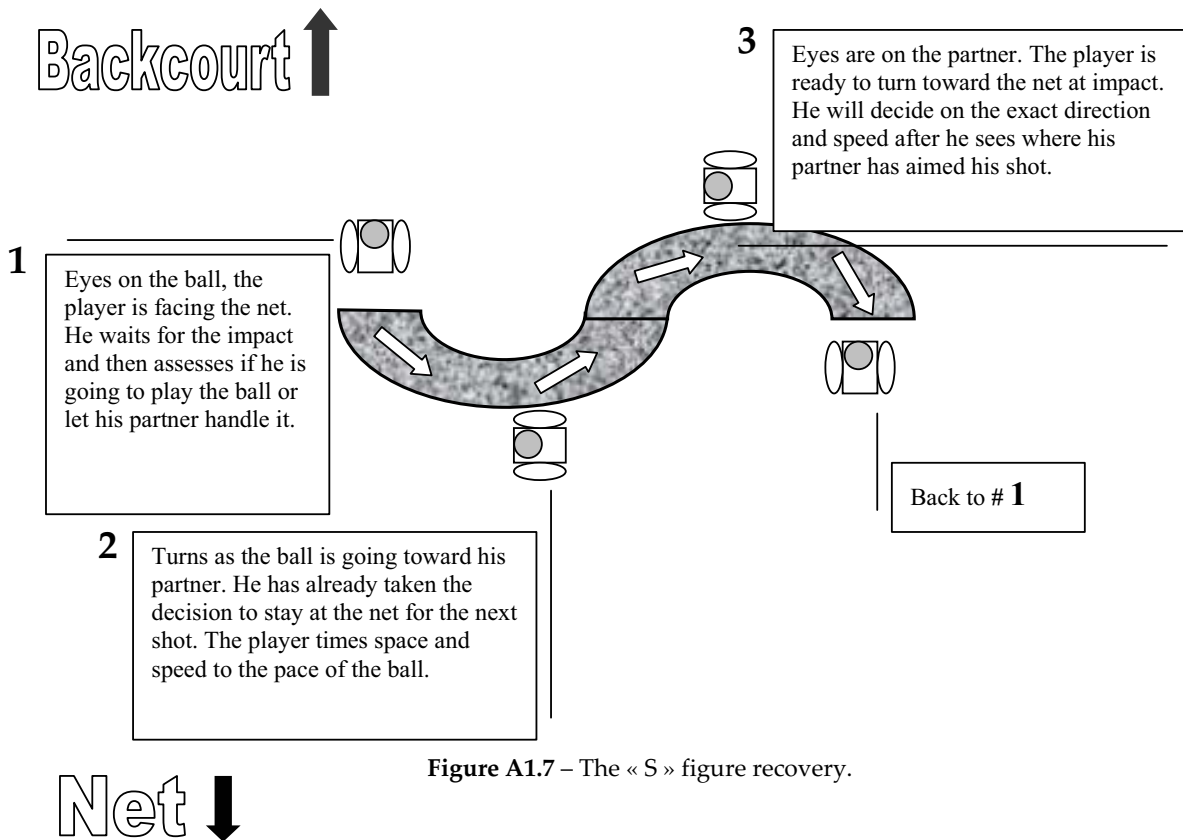


Figure A1.7 – The « S » figure recovery.

This type of recovery is used when the net player is **initially near ¾ court and close to the singles line**. Initiating a circular recovery takes the player too far away from the center of the court. It is easy to see that a circular recovery could follow an “S” figure, but that the “S” figure could not be repeated because the player would find himself too far away from the center of the court.

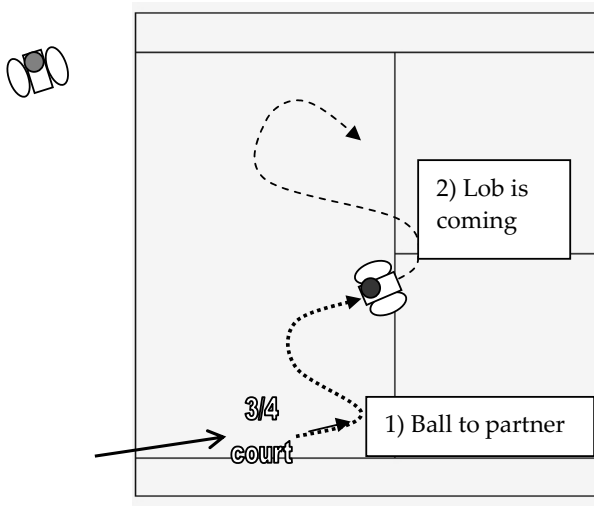


Figure A1.8 – Two situations where an « S » figure recovery could be used.

This “S” figure is executed when a player switches sides after being lobbed, but decides to stay at the net while switching sides (top dotted line in figure A1.8). The first “S” is done after the ball goes to the partner, and the second “S” after a lob goes over the player. The size of the “S” figure will depend on the time and the space available to the net player.

3. Recovering after volleying

3.1 Using time and space

A net player who volleys has less time to recover because the ball is returning quicker. The farther he is from the net when he volleys, the more time he has to **recover** (Circular, “8” figure or “S”).

If he is in front of the service line, he must **try to hit a winner, force an error or put the other team in trouble**. Otherwise his team is in poor position. Recovery is very difficult from close to the net unless he hits a high volley to buy time. He does not want his back to the other team when he is at mid-court. For these reasons, the timing of space and speed matters for the net player. He wants to be close enough to hit effective volleys, but not so close that he is stuck there, leaving his partner has to take care of a larger court area.

In sequence A1.6, the player gets caught not using the time right after her high and deep volley. When she turns to face the play, she is still on the service line and gets beaten by

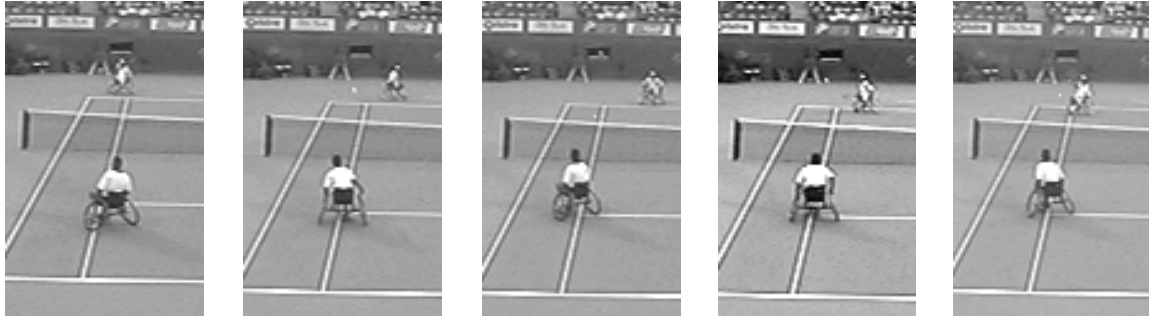


Sequence A1.6 – Small « S » figure after a volley.

a lob on the next shot. It would have been useful for her to be more dynamic after her volley, and to “draw” a wider “S”.

3.1.1 Stationary turns

Stationary turns, or stuttering are used when a player has little or no time to recover (sequence A1.7). They are executed by pushing one wheel while pulling the other so that the chair faces one side, then the other, and so on. At the start of this sequence, a ball jams the player, and he returns it down the line. His opponent moves in, and the net



Sequence A1.7 – Stationary turns at mid-court.

player has no time to recover, and must hold his position at the service line. In the last three images, the stationary turns prepare him to move while holding his position, and blocking part of the court.

Notes:

Appendix 2

Switch classifications

1. In the 4 phases of play

Table A2.1 - Phases of Play and the Use of Switches

Attacking	Rallying	Countering	Defending
1) Pressing Switch	1) Target Switch	1) Momentum Switch	1) Momentum Switch
2) Weapon Switch	2) Momentum Switch	2) Retrieving Switch	2) Retrieving Switch
3) Target Switch	3) Retrieving Switch		
4) Retrieving Switch			
5) Most Effective Position Switch			

2. In the 5 game situations

Table A2.2 - Game Situations and the Use of Switches

Serving	Returning	From the backcourt	Approaching	Passing
1) Most Effective Position Switch	(None)	1) Momentum Switch	1) Momentum Switch	1) Momentum Switch
		2) Retrieving Switch	2) Retrieving Switch	2) Retrieving Switch
		3) Target Switch	3) Target Switch	
		4) Weapon Switch	4) Weapon Switch	
		5) Pressing Switch	5) Pressing Switch	
		6) Most Effective Position Switch	6) Most Effective Position Switch	

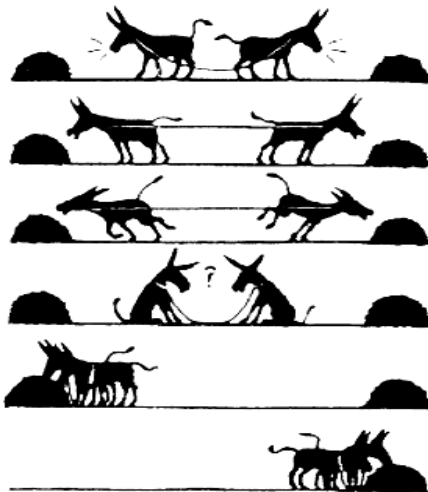
Notes:

APPENDIX 3



Appendix 3 is divided into four sections: 1) Communication, 2) Team styles and tactics, 3) Movement, and 4) Consistency. Each quote has a “signature”, except for those who preferred to keep their contribution anonymous. The quotes in different languages were translated.

1. About Communication



TEAM SPIRIT

"Doubles is first and foremost a team spirit feeling - which is a very difficult concept to apply in an exclusively individual sport. Coming from basketball, I had that team spirit feeling, and it made everything easier for me. Additionally, doubles is a lot of teamwork, and that cannot be improvised; two players can be very successful in singles and worth almost nothing in doubles: two good singles players never formed an exceptional doubles team, and that is true in stand up tennis as well. Doubles is first and foremost about completing each other, and some complicity; players appreciate pairing if they have at least these two factors reunited. It is a state of mind that we only find in doubles matches. Without this, it's not motivating for either player (same thing in men's doubles; state of mind stays the same).

For sure this can be worked at, improved, but to play without having to mind where your partner is on the court, or that she gets in good position is the "best" in doubles, but it is an achievement that asks for months or years of work, or you have to be in the presence of exceptional players, and that cannot be invented; we come across that once every 10 years!! I could speak of World Team Cup matches where doubles can decide if you go to the next round, then the true importance of having a real doubles team is tested; same for the Paralympic Games, an important goal for many athletes."

- Arlette Racineux, FRA

Appendix 3 – Stories, Anecdotes & Quotes

"To have fun playing doubles with your partner and to communicate well with your partner so that no one feels bad when one of team members makes mistakes."

- **Chiyoko Ohmae, JPN**

"Be patient, have trust in your partner".

- **Lesly Page, AUS**

"When your partner is playing bad, do not be angry but cheer her/him up. Talk to each other while playing; say "switch", "you", "me", "out", etc."

- **Djoke van Marum, NED**

"In the doubles game good communication is a must. In between points a strategy for the ensuing point should be talked over and clarified. While communication during the point should be concise and direct, it must be ongoing."

- **Nick Taylor, USA**

"Tactical: (how your going to play your opponents). Technical: (having the ability to relay to your partner something that he or she has changed. i.e. not swinging through the ball) Physical: Playing off each other's strengths. Psychological: The ability to motivate in a positive way by finding out what he or she would like to hear when things are not going so good, i.e. Key words or phrases)".

- **Brian McPhate, CAN**

"For me, the most important thing is that the partner must give you confidence".

- **Torsten Purschke, GER**

"(...) trust that your partner can and will do his/her job, and be supportive of him/her regardless of the outcome."

- **Rick A. Draney, USA**

"A good wheelchair-tennis doubles player needs to have an excellent team-spirit".

- **Karin Suter-Erath, SUI**

"You have to play with a partner you really like. You have to be able to have fun with her/him on court as well as off court".

- **Esther Vergeer, NED**

"The most important thing in doubles for me personally would be playing with a partner that I have complete confidence in."

- **Mark Eccleston, GBR**

"(...) you have to be good in "team work" and volleys."

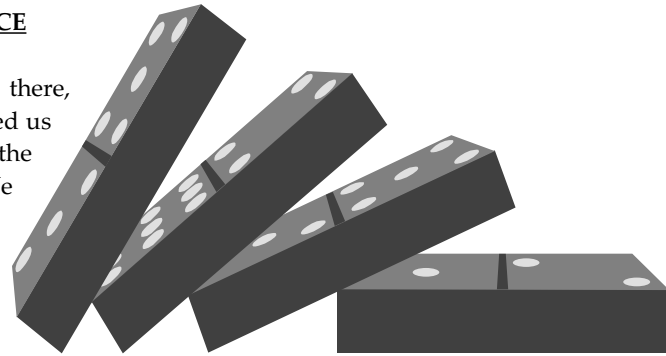
- **Sharon Walraven, NED**

"Each person on the team MUST be vocal. "Mine"/"Yours" ...It's important to let your partner know where you are on the court and if she's got my back or I've got hers".

- **Karin Korb, USA**

WHEN EVERYTHING FALLS INTO PLACE

"As you know I had an incredible time there, especially the doubles matches. What helped us a lot to win that medal was for sure the training unit where we trained together. We tried to focus on the good strokes of each of us; like Christine's excellent baseline strokes. Volker tried to get me more and more to the net to volley and put the opponents under pressure, where we were successful. And also, try to play doubles constantly with the same partner. To talk about the match after every match no matter whether we won or lost. I think another thing that helped us that we knew each other very well, including Volker the coach. Last but not least, we seriously tried to have fun!"



- Petra Sax-Scharl, GER

"To be a great doubles player, one must fully be able to appreciate, communicate and understand their partner. Once these key elements break down, the partnership is doomed, and defeat, inevitable."

- Carlo Tresch, SUI

"The most important thing in doubles is to form a team together, this can be in either tactical, technical, physical or psychological way".

- Robin Ammerlaan, NED

"I think the most important thing in doubles is communication. It is so important to communicate with your partner about your strategy, so both players know the game plan. Also, it is important to determine who will hit the ball, so the players do not run into each other. You must work together as a team in order to be successful."

- Sharon Clark, USA

"The most important thing in doubles is the communication between two players. You, as a team, need to discuss beforehand what one wants to hear from the other during a match when he/she is playing well/poorly."

- Yuka Chokyu, CAN

"(...) keep each other boosted with confidence; always support your partner, whether they made a good or poor shot, constant encouragement (...)"

- Beth Arnoult-Ritthaler, USA

"Accept the mistakes of your partner then you can accept your own mistakes and become a better team".

- Eric Stuurman, NED

"(...) anyway, I give many thanks to Dave Hall for taking under his wing and showing me the game. He is the one who set me up as a good doubles player. When I first started to play with Dave, I was a little nervous on the court, but we joined forces and went for what we knew we could get, and that was a medal at the para games in Sydney".

- David Johnson, AUS

"(...) I would say: complete trust and respect for your doubles partner. I could never imagine playing doubles with somebody that I do not have a strong personal relationship with."

- Kai Schrameyer, GER

"A good doubles match is based on good teamwork."

- Brigitte Ameryckx, BEL

"Communication is a key factor. By communicating you know what your partner does and your partner knows what you're doing. Communication makes doubles partners a team. Try to communicate what you do, so your partner knows what to expect."

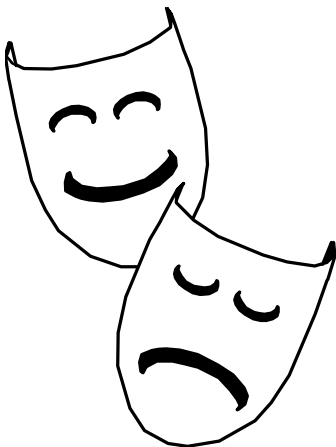
- Maaike Smit, NED

"(...) ultimately you have to have faith in your partner, without that you have nothing."

- David Hall, AUS

"(...) have good communication with your partner (...)"

- Severine Tamborero, CAN



WINNING TOGETHER, LOSING TOGETHER

"A past coach of mine once told me that the best doubles teams always enter and exit the court together including changeovers; no matter the result or score of the match. This shows undying unity and can subliminally intimidate your opponents. When one of us was struggling, the other would pick things up. I used to look for this weakness in teams we were playing, for it gave me confidence that in the end, we would win because we were a "tighter" TEAM. This tip hit home during a match in the 2000 Paralympic Games in Sydney. We were up 3-0 in the third set (one break) and were fighting hard. We went down 3-5 and came back to 4-5. My partner hit the last point out and we were done. After all the after-match formalities, I retreated to my towel on our bench and buried my head in disappointment. I lifted my head a minute later to see my partner wheeling off the court toward the tunnel, leaving me alone on the court after a match we had prepared for four years. It was a horrible feeling, one I will never forget, but it also provided me with the insight to why we finally lost that match. My partner and I had shared many dinners, entertained each other at our homes, trained together on our National team that competed throughout the world and shared a strong camaraderie. When I saw my partner leave the court without me I knew we were not 100% a TEAM. We were not totally bonded, and in the biggest of big matches it finally finished us."

- Name withheld

"(...) because he plays, not only according to the opponents, but also according to his partner. Because he respects a common tactic, or else he will put his partner in difficult positioning situations (...) to have a constant dialogue with the partner so that there are no doubts about the intentions. To sum up, I would say that to play good doubles (for a team) is to play together."

- Pierre Fusade, FRA

"Doubles is about staying focussed for long rallies, without errors, with movement and communication until you get your chance to finish the point"

- Paul Johnson, CAN

"If I respect my partner then I trust my partner. If I trust my partner I have faith that we will win."

- Randy Snow, USA

"Knowing your partners personality is also important. From a psychological perspective you must both know how to motivate each other or how to calm one another down."

- Karin Korb, USA

SPEAKING FROM EXPERIENCE



"Since I began playing doubles with Nancy Olsen back in the early 90's I was taught that communication was the vital element not only for effective doubles but for effective learning. Playing with great doubles partners like Chantal Vandierendonck, Sharon Clark and my fabulous current partner Maaïke Smit¹ have further entrenched the importance of communication. Here are a few reasons why: (1) Important to tell your partner where you are serving so that your partner at the net (or otherwise) has an idea of where the return is "most likely" to go and then can intercept the return. (2) If you are at the net it's good to know where your partner is so that if you do not have a handle on a volley then you know you can leave it for your partner rather than risk muffing it up. (3) Important to call when balls are going out especially if one or both of you are not on the baseline, sometimes your partner has a better idea of the length than you do or may have read the spin, wind, etc., better than you did. (4) Important to communicate to your partner when you are about to go for something big then your partner knows what to look for in case

it does not pull off and they get nailed in the head. (5) Communicate the game plan and keep talking about it if it needs to be altered at any moment. 6. Communication keeps enjoyment and momentum of the match up, and I think makes for fun doubles not only to play, but to watch as well."

- Daniela Di Toro, AUS

"The main ingredient in being a good doubles player is to be able to communicate continuously with your partner in order to facilitate the pre-match game plan."

- Sarah Hunter, CAN

"My experiences over 14 years on the tour have taught me that the psychological components of any top team are the most important in achieving overall success - emphasis on team."

- Scott Douglas, USA

¹ This quote was collected in 2001

Appendix 3 – Stories, Anecdotes & Quotes

"It is not a "must" to be best friends or very close off the court, but on the court, the two partners must establish an excellent relationship: have a great communication, complicity, and an immense mutual respect. Encouraging words, slapping hands, the winking of an eye at the right moment, everything that enhances the pleasure of playing together might be the difference between a win or a loss."

- Helene Simard, CAN

"I feel that it is fun and enjoyable to play doubles although it is more complex than to play singles; that is for example, difficulties in believing in your partner and in comprehending your partner's psychological aspect in addition to your own."

- Sadahiro Kimura, JPN

"The leader on the team will not necessarily be the best player of the two; it will be the player with the best feeling for the doubles game."

- Pierre Fusade, FRA



"I would have to say that constant communication between you and your partner is the key to doubles. Right from the time before you step on the court to the warm up, the very first serve of the match, the last point of the match and after the match, to discuss the match that was just played".

- Frank Peter, CAN

2. About team styles and tactics

"I find that having a partner who can play both the net and the baseline is of course, optimal. I also need a partner who is an aggressive ball retriever (like me), which means...they must HUNT down each and every ball... PUSSSSHHHHH!"

- Karin Korb, USA

"I think the most important thing in doubles is for each player to understand and execute their role on the court. One player may have a better forehand/backhand, volley, better mobility, etc."

- Rick A. Draney, USA

"A good doubles player understands his role on the court and the position he needs to play. A strong net player will not chase from the baseline for long and a strong chaser will not remain at the net long. But, a great doubles team has that combination."

- Daniel James, USA

"In the last couple of years the wheelchair doubles game has changed a lot with the position of each player. One player will go up to the net now, when before, a wheelchair player go to the net?... no way . But now you will be able to win if you are to both be able to come in and out, so your opponents are guessing who is coming in."

- David Johnson, AUS

"It is much more enjoyable if one player plays at the net than when you both play from the baseline."

- Maaike Smit, NED

"The old game of playing both players at the back and waiting for a mistake from your opponents or trying to hit winners (try counting how many errors versus winners per doubles match, the errors far outweigh the winners), has evolved into more an attacking way of playing."

- Jayant Mistry, GBR

"For forming a good double, choose a partner with other qualities than you have. When you are a baseline player form a double with a volley player. When you are a steady player with less winning shots, form a couple with a scoring player."

- Djoke van Marum, NED

"Doubles is NOT $1 + 1 = 2$. This means that a combination of two players could lead to MORE than twice as much as power produced by just two individuals. On the contrary, even if each player on a doubles team is very good at his/her singles matches, a "not-so-good" result may sometimes be seen if the combination is bad. I think that the doubles strategies and understanding your partner is based on the basics of singles."

- Sadahiro Kimura, JPN

Appendix 3 – Stories, Anecdotes & Quotes

"A good doubles team has a clear distribution of roles between the two players. The player not involved with the ball needs to be figuring out how to adapt his position at all times to the actions of his partner so that his partner's position does not become a disadvantage. Concurrently, the player hitting the ball needs to pattern his intention so that his partner does not get in trouble after his shot."

- **Martin Erni, SUI**

"With regard to having a specific approach to where I position myself I generally feel most comfortable/effective playing with a partner hitting big ground strokes from the back of the court often with heavy topspin to allow me to get to the net to look for a put-away or an aggressive volley."

- **Simon Hatt, GBR**

"Put your "runner" at the baseline, position the volley person at the service line, put the opponent on the defensive and "cherry pick" your way to victory."

- **Randy Snow, USA**

"Having the best two players in the world together does not guarantee success as a team, but having two experienced players together can make a big difference!!"

- **Severine Tamborero, CAN**

"Hey women! The net does not bite, I promise."

- **Hope Lewellen, USA**

"An offensive team should put their strengths to the outside of the court so their weaknesses will overlap in the middle of the court."

- **Moore & Snow (p.118), USA**

"Adapt the tactics of the teamwork to the individual capabilities of both players."

- **Isabelle Lamontagne-Müller, SUI**

"Steady wins the race, there is nowhere to go with the ball, winners cannot be hit, your opponents must be forced into trying something risky, or you must manoeuvre them so far out of position that the put-away shot is routine."

- **Paul Walker, USA**

"The goal is to get around tactical and technical disadvantages (mobility, weaker backhand, bad positioning, etc.), and to dominate the game with our own tactical and technical advantages."

- **Martin Erni, SUI**

"Be creative and pressure the ball. When your team gets a green ball, the ball should be returned with pace and either of you should follow the ball in looking for a weak reply."

- **Philip Rowe, CAN**

"You are always working on getting your partner or the person at the net the opportunity to hit the big shot for a winner."

- **Tiffany Geller, USA**

"It is getting more and more important to pick up the aggressive part of the game (...) to cooperate and to read every situation and use each other strength in the situation on the court."

- Peter Wikström, SWE

"When there is an opportunity to both come to the net, then do so - but not closer than the service line. The only time you should come in closer is when one player makes an outstanding shot."

- Bradley A. Parks, USA

"When a player comes to the net, it forces the opponent to change his thought process. Now the opponent will be pressed to hit the ball to the deeper and smaller area of the court."

- Moore & Snow (p.112), USA

"Before you start, make a plan how to play the match. Who are your opponents? How are they playing? Are they steady players, baseline players etc.?"

- Djoke van Marum, NED

"For wheelchair tennis, the serve is not a weapon so the return is even more of an opportunity".

- Randy Snow, USA

2.1 Hitting the ball down the middle

"A plan can be quite basic like keeping the ball *down the middle*. Of course, it always depends on who your opponents are".

-Karin Korb, USA

" Wait for the opportunity to attack since there are less openings, and mostly play the ball *in the middle* between the two players knowing that it is a safe target, and often, the opponents' least defended area."

- Christoph Trachsel, CAN

"Put the ball with pressure *in the middle* of the court with depth and attack".

- Peter Wikström, SWE

" (...) remembering that its not singles. There is a different strategy, usually *driving the middle* (...)"

- Steve Baldwin, USA

"To attack the *middle lane* (centre with depth) and construct points from there".

- Chiyoko Ohmae, JPN

" (...) be steady and not try and play above your abilities, and if all else fails aim *down the middle*".

- Lesly Page, AUS

" (...) attack the *middle of the court* (limits your opponents angles), (...)"

- Jayant Mistry, GBR

"It is effective if you attack *the middle lane* with depth and pace. A team will be successful if it takes advantage of the *centre lane*".

- Tadashi Aisu, JPN

"The safest shot in doubles is *up the middle* (...) Attempt to hit the ball just out of the reach of the net player and *up the middle*".

- Bradley A. Parks, USA

3. About movement

"Adjust your movement according to partner's movement when he/she is hitting the ball (so that the court is well covered) and keep moving to be ready for any shots hit toward you."

- Chiyoko Ohmae, JPN

"If your partner is strong and quick, then you will have more confidence to come up close to the net because you know that your partner will most likely get the lob".

- Bradley A. Parks, USA

"Moving around the court is very important. It's easier to cover the whole court when you both move around."

- Maaike Smit, NED

"Do not allow any lines to be created in your mind, that divide the court, as far as what part of the court is your responsibility and what part of the court is your partner's responsibility, it is all both of yours responsibility.... »

- Beth Arnoult, USA

"(...) it is very important to keep on moving during the game. It is very easy to stand still during a doubles match because you only have to cover half the court. But still, it is one of the most important things you have to keep in mind."

- Esther Vergeer, NED

4. About consistency

"In addition she/he has to anticipate well, be patient and feel the right moment to make the point."

- Karin Suter-Erath, SUI

"Doubles is about consistency and setting up for next shot."

- Tiffany Geller, USA

"Tactically, make no errors, force the other team out of their comfort zone with movement to the net and angles, and wait for your chances, don't try to force the point."

- Paul Johnson, CAN

"The nature of our tour doesn't always mean that we play week and week out with the same partner so it is important in doubles to have a solid game that doesn't break down unnecessarily from the back of the court.(...) doubles is generally won on consistent low error play (...)"

- **Simon Hatt, GBR**

"(...) a greater need for patience and the development of points. a good doubles team is willing to play points that are fifty shots long, just to prove that they won't be the ones who crack. There are relatively few clean winners in doubles; I think that this is important to remember."

- **Steve Baldwin, USA**

"You cannot go for the winner straight away but built up the point, be patience and play with a lot of variety."

- **Brigitte Ameryckx, BEL**

"To me doubles is game of patience. Waiting for the right shot to play to win the point or if your partner has set you up to finish the point (...)"

- **David Johnson, AUS**

"If the ball can't be put away at the net, don't be afraid to start all over again. Winning doubles tennis matches isn't a sprint, it's a marathon. (...) keep the ball in play".

- **Jayant Mistry, GBR**

"Play the percentages, attack short balls with controlled aggressiveness".

- **John Greer, USA**

Notes:

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