

ITF Coaches Education Programme Level 2 Coaching Course



Tactics and patterns for the approaching or at the net game situation

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

- Understand and explain the main tactics and patterns for the:
 - Both from the approaching or at the net game situation
- Know how and where to play from the mid court
- Understand the key tactics when playing at the net

Approaching or at the net

General considerations

- Pressure your opponent with the threat of using delayed approach (“ghosting in”).
- Dominate and pressurise from mid-court using power, accuracy and/or hitting on the rise.

Approaching or at the net

General considerations

- Move in to surprise the opponent.
- Use your best shot to approach the net.
- Hit the approach to the opponent's weak side.

Approaching or at the net

General considerations

- The deep and low or a high-arching, high-bouncing topspin to the backhand (aggressive loop) are very effective.
- Down the line approach is safer, while cross court approach makes the opponent run more.

Approaching or at the net

General considerations

- Make a split-step before the volley.
- Don't overdo drop shot or stop volleys. Use them to bring the opponent to the net and as a surprise/variation.

Approaching or at the net

General considerations

- Follow the path of the ball with your footwork: After the approach, move in to volley.
- Try not to play more than 3 shots in the net area (put the ball away).
- Move diagonally and with balance.

Approaching or at the net

General considerations

- Be alert. Try to 'read' the opponent's intentions.
- Mid court volleys should be deep and low.
- Net zone volleys should be angled, short and strong.
- Always be prepared for the opponent's lob.

Mid-court game

How to act



- Volleys: Play no more than 3 volleys in a row and win the volley to the open court.
- Overhead: Direct the ball always to the weak side of the opponent.

Mid-court game

How to act



- Approach: Start with a down the line approach and direct the volley to the open court.
- Don't approach crosscourt unless the opponent's wrong footed and you're going back behind.

Mid-court game

How to act



- If you hit a deep high ball: Wait for opponent's reaction and as they hit, move in covering down the line passing shot
- If you hit a lob and the opponent doesn't make an overhead: Move in but look out for the lob.
- If you hit a drop-shot and the opponent moves in to get it: Move towards the net to narrow and cover the angles.



Mid-court game

How to react

- If it's a short ball: Approach with best shot to opponent's weak side.
- If it's an easy high mid court ball: Hit an attacking volley, a smash or a swing drive volley.



Mid-court game

How to react

- If it's a waist high mid court ball: Hit a deep volley and move in closer to the net.
- If it's a low mid court ball at your feet: Play a deep half volley or low volley down the line or let the ball bounce and hit a groundstroke.

Net game

How to act



- If it's a waist height ball: Volley with your best shot to the open court.
- If it's a low ball close to the net: Hit a low volley down the middle or an angled drop-shot volley.
- Be prepared for the opponent's passing-shot or lob.

Net game

How to act



- If it's a high and slow ball: Hit a high volley or smash to the open court.
- If it's a very high and mid court ball: Smash in the air to the open court.
- If it's a very high and deep ball: Smash after the bounce to the centre and move in to volley.

Net game

How to react



- After your volley or smash is returned by the opponent, move in to 'close' out the point.
- Mid court ball very easy for the opponent: Don't move back, pick a side and try to intercept the passing-shot.
- Passing-shot very difficult : Use stop volley. Don't move back. Move diagonally.

Net game

How to react



- Cross court passing-shot: Don't push the volley down the line. Volley crosscourt on a short angle. Play stop volley to make opponent run the longest court angle.
- Down the line passing-shot: Never volley crosscourt if you can't win the point.
- You are forced to play a half volley: Keep the ball in front of you.

Net game

How to react



- Opponent hits good passing-shots: Vary your approaches. Stay back more often for variation.
- Opponent doesn't know how to pass you: Charge the net at all times.
- Don't commit too early for the lob: Watch for racket face opening.