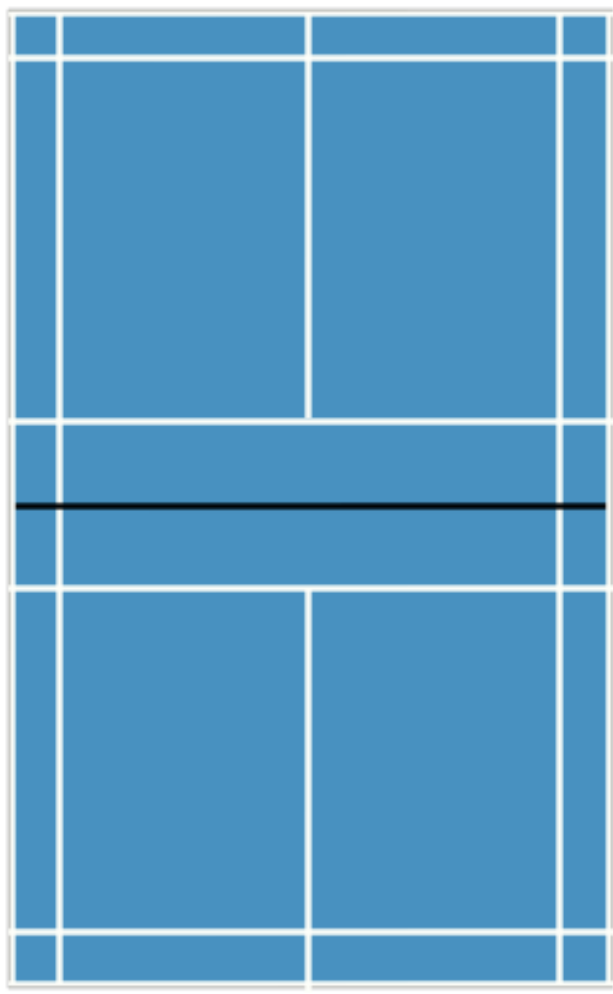


BADMINTON LIFE



SINGLES STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

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INTRODUCTION

This ebook is not meant as an overall singles guide, it's just a few strategies and tactics that you can experiment with and try out right away without too much extra work. Badminton is pretty complicated and you need to put in a lot of work if you want to see a big improvement, but sometimes you can see some impressive results just by trying a few sneaky things here and there.

Something else to keep in mind is that no matter how sneaky you are, and how many strategies you know if your game as a whole is weak you're in trouble. If you have poor technique you're going to struggle to use the strategies, and if you are not very strong or fit, your opponent is going to be able to bully you around the court. Badminton is a game where the small things count, so don't try and take too many short cuts.

The most important thing you need to understand when deciding what strategies to use is that you have to change your game depending on who you are playing. Everyone has strengths and weaknesses, so play to your strengths and to your opponents weaknesses. Also, don't forget to vary the strategies you use occasionally to keep them guessing!

RHYTHM, PACE AND FITNESS

Slow Down The Pace

This is a common strategy used by players who lack the fitness of their opponent. In badminton it's not so much duration you have to be worried about as it is the pace of the game. With the 21 point scoring system very few games are going to be so long that you cannot last, but if you are playing beyond your pace you will get tired.

To use this strategy you have to be able to absorb your opponents pressure with your defense, and force them to fall into your slower pace. This is something less experienced players are more likely to do. The more experienced players are far less likely to slow down and will force you to play a faster pace.

The best tactic to employ with this strategy is the high, deep clear to the back of the court. By forcing your opponent deep into the corners they will use more energy as they try to play faster more aggressive shots. From the deep corner they will not be able to harm you much, and will struggle to get to the next shot.

Another tactic to employ is to block back their smashes instead of driving. If you block their smashes tight to the

net they have to move further to return the next shot, and it gives you more time to prepare for the response. If they play a net shot, don't be afraid to lift deep to the back again, or to push away from the net.

Your main objective with this strategy is to conserve your energy, and force your opponent to do most of the work. Your opponent will likely start attacking very aggressively, but if you can survive these attacks they will start making errors and giving points away to you.

Speed Up The Pace

Contrary to the previous strategy, this is a strategy you use against opponents that you know have less speed and fitness than you. By playing with more pace you force them to play outside of their comfort zone. If they are not used to your pace they will make more errors, and tactically they will not be able to think of where they should hit it as clearly.

Playing with more pace **DOES NOT** mean hitting harder, and more aggressive shots, it means catching the shuttle earlier and hitting simpler shots. The less time you hold your stroke and prepare to hit the shuttle the less time your opponent has to recover from your previous shot.

To use this strategy you should be fitter and faster than your opponent. Playing with pace is the number one differentiating factor between the world's best players, and the rest.

Broken Rhythm

Rhythm is something that very few players pay attention to, but it's so important and messing with your opponents rhythm is an extremely effective way of preventing them from playing their best.

When I refer to "broken rhythm" I don't mean doing something rude, or gamesmanship of any kind, what I mean is varying your pace between slow and fast throughout the rally. When your opponent gives you a weak lift or is off balance for example, you need to seize these opportunities to suddenly add extra pressure on your opponent. For a few shots you will increase your pace as you try go for the kill, but once your opponent is comfortable and back in balance you need to slow back down the pace to something more sustainable.

The ability to rise up to this "new gear" is another major differentiator between the world's best and the rest. Zhao Jian Hua was a master of broken rhythm

Run Them Down (War of Attrition)

This is something that is hard to accomplish with the 21 point scoring system. The average match length in this new system is significantly shorter than before, and as a result it's almost unheard of to run someone down at the highest levels of the game. That's not to say that a player can't win because their fitness is better, but to go out with the specific intention of running an opponent down is not wise.

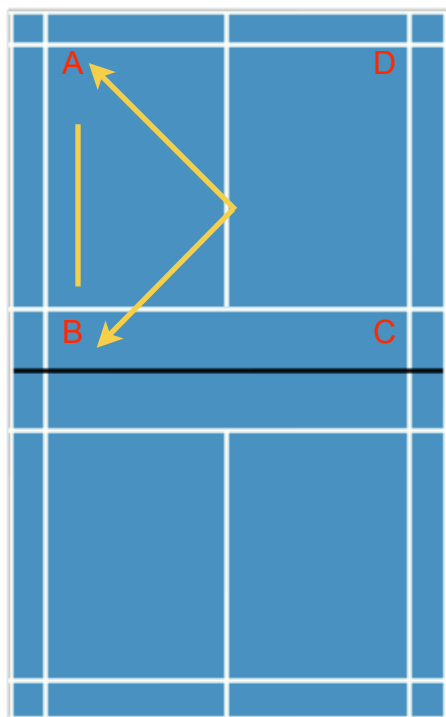
However, if you're a recreational level player, or regional competitive player it is something you can do. In order to do this you need to be fitter than your opponent, and also stronger mentally because you cannot afford to give up the fight. No easy mistakes allowed.

In the past players like Ardy Wiranata, Han Jian were famous for this type of strategy.

SHOT PLACEMENT AND COURT GEOMETRY

Use "Triangles" or "V"s

When we say to use a "triangle" or "V", what we are referring to is the shot placement you use to move your opponent around the court. This is a way to maximize how much your opponent moves to cover a shuttle, especially how much they have to twist and turn.



In the example on the left you'll see we start by playing a shot into the deep back corner (A), followed by a shot to the net (B). Because your opponent returns to the middle of the court after the first shot we cause them to cover more distance, and they have to change direction which is more tiring than running to the far corner (C). This tactic can obviously be used with

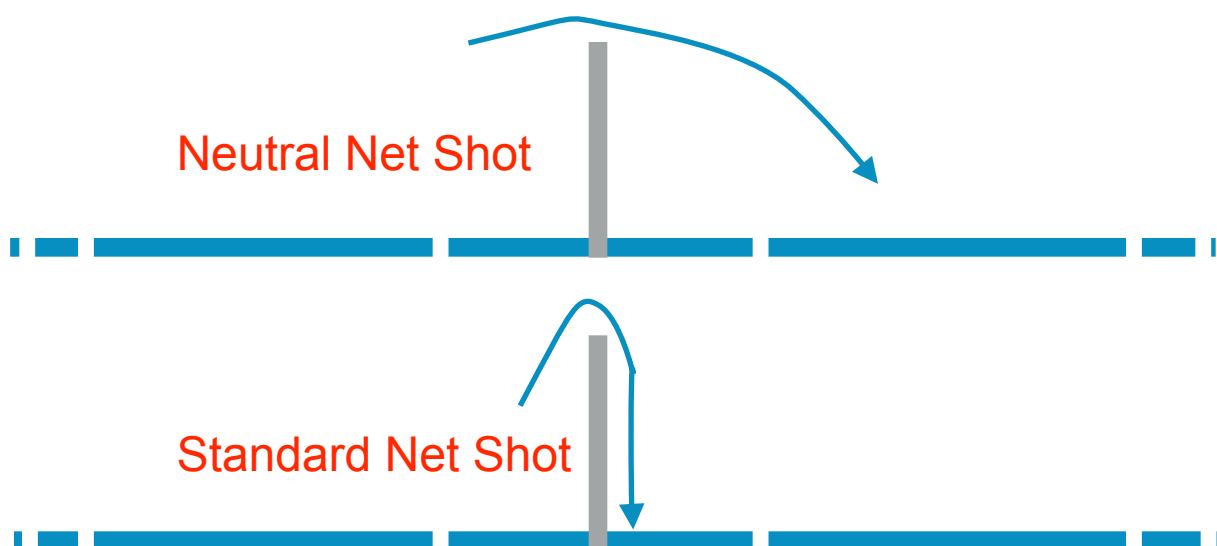
different corners, (A) to (D) for example. This tactic is especially useful with smashes after your opponent is returning from a back corner.

Remove the Net

This means to remove net play from your opponents weapons. This is a strategy you would use against opponents that have great net play and big smashes.

So how can we remove the net? Well the first thing to do is to start hitting your net shots and blocks deeper into the court. The ideal shot is "the neutral net shot" which is commonly used in mixed doubles. This type of net shot is flat and is barely high enough to go over the net as opposed to the standard net shot which hugs the net.

Hitting a standard net shot can be trouble as your opponent can easily push flat to the back without fearing a big smash. However, if your opponent is far from the net, hit a standard net shot!



Another tactic to use when you are trying to remove the net is to push the shuttle deep into the corners whenever your opponent hits a shuttle to the net. This is a tough one to pull off sometimes unless you are good at hitting a push. The challenge with this is that your opponent is able to easily cut off the shuttle and attack you. If you are going to push the shuttle a lot you need to really keep your opponent off guard with deceptive pushes, and varying your pushes with the occasional tight net shot just to keep them off guard.

Control the Net

If you're not dealing with Taufik Hidayat, Lin Dan or some other net shot master, then it's a great idea to control the net. In fact this could possibly be the key strategy in singles.

In order to control the net you need to first focus on getting there as quickly as you can. This can be achieved by training your foot speed to move faster, improve your footwork so you are smoother, and by improving your anticipation. Improving your anticipation can only really be done by playing more often and against a variety of players. Start looking for patterns in your opponents shot selection to see when they play net.

A great tactic to use in order to control the net is to repeat the net shot after your opponent nets to you. Oftentimes after hitting a net your opponent will start moving back to prepare for a smash before you have even hit the shuttle, take advantage and repeat net. Be careful though, because if your opponent is patient and waits for you to repeat net you could feel the shuttle hit you in the face!

Isolation

This is a tactic that can be very frustrating for your opponents if you can pull it off. It's a tough one as you will need to have good court movement yourself to do it.

Isolation is typically only used in the back corners where you repeatedly hit the shuttle to the same corner a number of times. This is especially useful if your opponent is getting tired as they have to work extra hard to fight their way out of the corner. After you have hit a few consecutive shots to the same corner quickly follow up with a fast drop or slice to show them that you are unpredictable. Something else to point out is that attacking clears are better for this than high clears.