

Dear Glen,

I love playing singles and my favorite shot is the forehand. My biggest issue is that I get jammed a lot in my right hip by incoming balls. Do you have any suggestions for this aspect of the game? It is my observation that many playing professionals have the same issue.

Ahmed

Dear Ahmed,

A lot of this comes down to footwork or lack of footwork. Many times when the ball is misjudged and the ball gets on top of you, it feels as though you are digging the ball out of your bellybutton. Maintaining "active" feet can avoid these situations. In addition, as fatigue sets in during a match, the movement tends to slow and the jamming of the forehand takes place.

There can be a habit to get sloppy with the forehand due to the ability to catch the ball late. The hip and shoulder rotation is a big key to keeping the contact of the ball well out in front of the body.

Dear Glen,

Looking at the tennis this weekend on TV, many of the clay court specialist are really weak at the low volley as they come in against the baseliner. Is this just inadequate practice for the volley shot?

Dear Player,

Your conclusions are correct as far as effective and consistent practice of this shot. Due to the shot making capability of clay court specialists, coming in on anything that doesn't create extreme distress can be disastrous for the incoming volleyer. Players should only attack on clay when they can cut reaction time and a defensive posture of their opponent.

As far as mechanics, the passing shot is dipping and the volleyer tends to reach for the volley that causes a dump it into the net. Movement forward can avoid this mistake and cut reaction time of the opponent. Many players also try to backspin the volley. If the path of your racquet is going down as the ball is dropping, there will only be one outcome. The volley must be lifted to make this shot.

Dear Glen,

Looking around at the players at Tom Brown, I notice that many choke up on their grip to hit the ball. Doesn't this cause reach issues? What are the benefits?

Wayne

Dear Wayne,

Choking up on the racquet will give a player more control. On the other end, moving your hand down the grip will create a longer lever and more power. On my personal really bad days, I will choke up on the grip to gain some control and get the ball in the

court. Some players will even separate their two hands on the two-handed backhand to gain control.

Dear Glen,

I just found out that I have a torn rotator cuff and will need surgery. Can I learn to hit with my other hand. It seems very hard but I am really addicted to this game. Can you give me any inspiration or advice?

Jane

Dear Jane,

It is quite possible and very feasible. Over the years, I have had a couple of students that have changed hands or gone to a two-handed shot off of both sides. Coordination will improve and muscular strength will increase as the non-dominant arm is used. It is curious that Rafael Nadal is not a natural lefthander. His uncle made him play tennis left handed. So, why not give it a chance.

Dear Glen,

I noticed that many of the players at the Challenger are now traveling with a coach. What are the roles of these coaches? Do they work on their strokes like a teaching pro?

Tennis junkie

Dear TJ,

Their role is very all-inclusive. At the Challenger level, they coach, spar, scout the opponents, and take on the support system role. You will notice many of the players looking over at their coach during a match for reassurance. Many coaches, at this level, take care of the daily details so that their player can focus on playing their best.

The higher the ranking the more support system the players have in their entourage. Martina Navratilova started the trend of traveling managers, coaches, nutritionists, and support group to tournaments. At the Grand Slam level, the payoff is approximately ten million in endorsements with a Grand Slam title.

Dear Glen,

As I attack the net more and more, where do I hit my first volley? Is this the key to winning more sets of doubles?

Mary

Dear Mary,

There are a couple of different schools of thought, but I have found this targeting system effective for my students. If the ball is above the net, it should be struck short to short at the opposing volleyer. And if the ball is below the net, the tactic should be short to long. This is the highest percentage shot because the ball travels over the shortest part of the net and goes the longest length of the court. This system works very well if your partner is aware of the path of the shot. To answer your second question, hold serve each time and break once.

Dear Glen,

The Tennis Challenger brings out the worst in some of the players. This is not unlike many of my teammates that get angry during play. Is this just their personality or is this something that needs to be trained?

Dear Tennis Fan,

The pressure of competing at a high level has been the undoing of many great players. Mental techniques can be practiced just like the players practicing their forehands and backhands. Mental focus training needs to be practiced consistently to work at the most critical times in a match. One of the principles of correcting these tendencies is to look at the behavior post match and decide what should be done differently the next time a player gets in a predicament. Remember, it's not your job to chance your teammates behavior.

Dear Glen,

I always have trouble with keeping score during a match. My opponents refuse to call the score before a point is played. I have taken it upon myself to call the score. Is there any rule for such a problem?

Tamara

Dear Tamara,

According to USTA Comment 5.3, the server is required to call the score at the beginning of each game and before each point. This would be enforced if there were a roving official. When no official is present, "The Code" applies in this situation. All points are played in the spirit of fair play.

Dear Glen,

Is it acceptable to hit a two-handed volley off both my forehand and backhand? There seems to be some limitations. Any ideas would be great.

Sherwood

Dear Sherwood,

In the history of the game, some of the best volleys of all time have come from players that had two-handed shots off both sides. Gene Mayer, Fabrice Santoro, and Frew McMillian are a couple of the players that had a lot of success with this technique. The two-handed volley gives the player the ability to disguise the shot better than a one-hander and can produce a great deal of power. The shot also helps with the technique of the volley. The racquet doesn't go back too far and the two hands promote a consistent shoulder turn.

The downside is that there are vulnerabilities with reach and flexibility. This is a personal preference shot and possibly something you might consider.

Dear Glen,

I was watching Tennis Channel yesterday and the Tennis Academy was teaching the pronation on the serve for more power. The concept is complicated. Can this also be done with spin?

Mike

Dear Mike,

The easiest way to understand the pronation of the racquet is to relate it to what takes place with the forearm. An internal rotation of the forearm takes place during the throwing action. Looking at your palm, rotate your hand so you can see the backside your hand. If you look at a baseball pitcher, it is easier to see this action when the ball is being thrown.

To hit this shot with spin, the racquet face is pronating on the ball and a brushing of the strings against the ball needs to take place. Try this from the service line for practice to grasp the concept.

Dear Glen,

I am really looking forward to the Tallahassee Challenger this year. When watching the pros, what can I look for that would help my game?

Dear Tennis Enthusiasts,

My learning laboratory takes place watching the practice court. The players hit the same shot over and over to train the muscle memory. If I see the same shot numerous times, I tend to remember the concept verses seeing it only once in a game play situation. In addition, the warm up rituals are a learning time for me because these are pattern that I can teach as well as use in my game. And lastly, the play at the Challenger inspires me to play better!

Hi,

I was wondering if you accept late registrations for tennis camp? My son is 12 and just recently began to have an interest in tennis so I thought it would be nice to send him to a summer tennis camp to see if he would like to further his interest? Either location will work for us. Please let me know.

Thanks, Kristen

Dear Kristen,

There is still limited space in our tennis camps at Forestmeadows and Winthrop Park. An application can be downloaded from the Talgov website as well as application at our three monitored stations. In addition, Tennis Camp will be presented the weeks of June 14-18 and July 5-9 in the afternoon. Call 891-3920 for more information.