



READY FOR CLAY? PART 2

MAKE A PERFECT ATTACK - WITH THE FORE HAND FROM THE HALF FIELD

It looks easy. But what is often the result? A frustrated cry. A date between racket and court. A ball, which rolls towards you from the net. Welcome to the world of a little madness. The forehand from the service box can drive you crazy - or your opponent. Your opponent then, when you gain points as reliably as your alarm clock in the morning. Positioned. Certain. Without your opponent seeing where you will play your forehand.

THE FACTORS WHICH WILL DRIVE YOUR OPPONENT CRAZY

Have you a plan for your forehand from the service box? If not, then please read further. The most common fault which occurs with this apparently easy shot is a lack of plan. You will see it each season probably 132 times. The ball staggers at half height with 3 km an hour into the service box. Player A moves equally slowly towards the ball. Whilst the ball is still in the air player A thinks about what he'll watch on TV tonight. Not three seconds later player A is annoyed with himself over the simplest mistake of the match. Do not underestimate the forehand from the service box. Take it seriously. You must build up body tension just as for a shot from the baseline. You must position your body to have a low centre of gravity. You must watch the ball attentively. You must move towards the ball. Do not wait for it. Small steps. You must meet the ball well. Strike the ball from below upwards. Get over the ball - make a roof over it. Meet the ball above the height of the net edge. All these small puzzle pieces are often ignored. Thus the puzzle will never be complete.

We have processed the technical aspects. Let's go over to the tactics table and take a seat. Have you ever known there to be a prize for the fastest forehand? No? Cool, nor have I. As this is the case, we won't give it too much attention. Speed does not get you to the goal. It is your tactical skill which will gain you the desired result. What is your desired result? With the forehand from the service box there are three main aims:

- a direct winner.
- to force your opponent into a mistake.
- you determine the winner with the shot after the forehand from the service box.

Making a slow ball faster is harder than playing a fast ball faster. This is the reason why so many simple mistakes are made with this shot. Play the forehand from the service box with more spin. Due to the twist the

ball will land faster and more trickily on your opponents field. It is less risky for you. Your opponent has greater problems. In business one would speak of a win-win situation. Decide on exact target areas. David Goffin likes to play on the short corner, where the T and side line meet. A difficult shot. It drives your opponent way out of the box. You can of course reposition your target further back. In the area between the T and baseline. Do not try too hard to meet the line. This will only increase the risk. Remember: Your opponent first has to return the ball - a difficult task.

Conclusion: Take the risk out of this relatively easy shot. Take care with your preparation for the shot. Do not underestimate the forehand from the service box. Make sure you have a plan how you want to play this ball. Decide on exact target areas. Do not try to break speed records, this does not lead you to your goal. And: Do not let the ball fall too low.

Author: Marco Kühn