



READY FOR CLAY? PART 3

EFFECTIVE LEGWORK - STEP FOR STEP TO SUCCESS

The ball won't wait. We have to advance. Approaching the ball on sand is an important factor - as is the complete leg work. On faster surface, such as carpet, the ball approaches us faster. One is able to remain comfortably on the baseline. And calmly wait for the ball. On sand the game is different. You have to get out of the comfortable rocking chair! Away with the comforts and approach the ball with small steps. Rhythm and timing are the friends you need to take care of. You should give them your fullest attention.

SMALL STEPS - BIG RESULTS.

Too large steps will only mix up your motion sequence. You will be under time pressure more quickly. If you make a large step at this point, you will once again have to correct your forehand striking position. Your two friends, rhythm and timing hate to be put under pressure. To make your friends smile, you must concentrate on small steps. This is more difficult than it sounds. Many of your movements on court are subconsciously directed. You must push this subconscious "driver" aside. Then you can divert your full concentration on small steps.

Small steps forwards and to the side. Work with side steps at short intervals. Get the dusty cross steps out again. Gain a feeling for the timing between your steps and your meeting point at baseline shots. Also use small steps to regain your centre court position. The more you use small steps the quicker your subconsciousness will get used to the idea. Your two friends rhythm and timing will be grateful to you.

ONE MORE STEP - ALSO MENTALLY

Transferring from the indoor to sand court you will have to do more. Sometimes one more step. Perhaps even three or four. You will move backwards and forwards on the baseline more. Ball exchanges will be longer. You have to invest more. You have to position yourself more often. More steps are demanded of you.

Your concentration must go hand in hand with your leg work. At the beginning of the sand court season do not make the mistake of concentrating merely on your shots. You must focus on concentration. Concentrate on your feet. Learn when you can make use of the various leg work techniques. Side steps, cross steps and also the split step.

KEEP MOVING

When can you put these tools to work? Naturally, the split step prepares you directly before the next shot. You get ready. The side step is one of your most important tools on sand. Get this out of your tool bag when concentrating on forehand and backhand shots. Using the side step you can quickly regain your mid-court position. Keep your body weight as low as possible. Otherwise you are liable to lose your balance.

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Cross steps will assist you with your leg work. You will progress quicker from point A to point B. Additionally, when you are in the offensive, the cross step will assist you in forward movement. Take note of the value of small steps. Be aware you must invest more to gain points. Confront the balls more. Move back and forth more when first playing on sand. This is the way to get rhythm and timing into your game on sand.

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