



## READY FOR CLAY? PART 4

**THE BEST DIRECTIONS TO ASSURE YOU GO CRAZY IN FRONT OF YOUR NEXT OPPONENT. OR HOW YOU SHOULD BETTER PREPARE YOURSELF.**

Saturday 17:58 Lie on your couch with your smartphone. You're in a comfortable track suit. You lie happily on your back with your legs crossed. The Magnum ice almond has gone down. Sunday is approaching. Your next team game is waiting for you. The perfect moment to check up on your opponents individually.

### YOU COMMENCE EXACT RESEARCH

The third match day is immanent. You are playing third position in your team. Your first check will therefore be to find out who your opponent is? Push aside all thoughts that it is pointless to check up. How should you know which of the listed 17 players will be your opponent? Logical thinking fails.

You have only one thing on your mind: driving yourself mad! Thanks to the fast WLAN in your flat you can easily reach the latest matches of your opposing team. In the meantime, television, telephone and all other noises around you are ignored. That you are assisting the audience rating of "Musikantenstadl" no longer interests you. You have only one thing on your mind: driving yourself mad!

### YOU ARE LOST IN CROSS COMPARISONS.

If only there were a national league for cross comparisons: You would confidently be in the lead. Now, that after the first two match games you have found out who is likely to be your opponent, you can begin with a deeper breakdown. You click through all your opponent's results for the past year. Even though these really have no bearing on how he will play tomorrow. Even though you may not even play against this player. Logic really has no place in cross-checks. Especially not when you notice that your possible opponent beat your last opponent. Your pulse is rising.

### THE LAST STEP TOWARDS GOING MAD

Thoughts race through your head. On seeing your opponents record you gulp for the first time. You work out how many wins your next opponent has had against your last one. You check against whom your likely opponent has played, and compare. Once again you go through the past years. You try to extract all possible

information.

In the meantime it is 18:38. You get your charger. In less than an hour, you have prepared yourself for your next singles in the worst possible way. However, you are not ready yet. You haven't yet uncovered the other possibilities, those concerning the player you may actually be playing against. Team line-ups vary. So take a good look at the last four line-ups of the opposing team. Who has played in position three the most frequently? Who else has played in this position? And who else is likely to be your opponent?

### **THE MISTAKE IN THE THOUGHT SYSTEM.**

You have not considered your own plan for a single second. You have neither considered specific moves. Nor have you organized a few ball exchanges with your training partner. Your attention has been solely directed towards your opponent. You are making your opponent stronger than he actually is, by attributing him far too much attention before the match. In tennis it is your form on the actual day which counts. Numerous circumstances accompany you and your opponent onto the court. Starting with how you have both slept, your private problems, which can completely confuse the tennis match. Performance on the court depends on so many factors, making research ridiculous. Of course it is exciting to see against whom one will be playing. How he or she has played up till now. What KPIs he has...

### **MAKE A ROUTINE**

In order not to go completely crazy before the match it helps to have a routine. Always proceed in the same way. Pack your bag carefully. Keep up regular training. Everything that feels just the same as always will give you confidence. And above all concentrate on your game. Think about your strengths not about those of your opponent. Have you a terrific serve? Good, make sure it is functioning well. Have you perfect legwork? Super, make sure you are running like a world champion. The best way not to go crazy is to focus on yourself. Because when you are both on the court, only the next point counts. Statistics are of no interest, nor are KPIs. You can actually weaken your position by researching your opponent too much and setting him on far too high a pedestal. Often one is an expert at setting personal abilities too low and those of one's opponent too high. Endless research before the match is merely assisting your opponent. Forget it and do not occupy yourself more than three minutes with your coming opponent. This is what will help your performance on the court.

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