



READY FOR CLAY? PART 8

THIS IS HOW TO ANALYZE YOUR OPPONENT AND WIN MORE MATCHES

5 TIPS TO ANALYZE YOUR OPPONENT

Tennis is like a game of chess. It has as much to do with having a strategy as actually utilizing this strategy. It is essential that you approach each match not only with a good selection of shots but also possess a good technique. Most players, no doubt you too are aware of their strong points, this is important for a good match plan. Even so beside your strong points you must achieve an effective tactic and take particular note of your opponents weaknesses. But how do i find these?

As we all know - many roads lead to Rome. Likewise before and during a match there are many opportunities for you to analyze your opponents`weaknesses. As soon as you step onto the court your analysis should begin and if you take note of a few points, at the end of warm up time you will have a solid match plan in order to drive your opponent into difficulties. A plan should never be so set as not to be adjustable. In case of doubt always be ready to adjust your strategy. Only in this way can you prevent your opponent from developing his own strategy.

OUR FIVE TIPS TOWARDS WINNING MORE MATCHES.

While weighing up the situation.

- 1) Which shots does your opponent prefer?

Watch your opponent very closely. Does he prefer forehand or backhand? Perhaps he dislikes volleys or overhead balls, but instead plenty of back hand slices? Take note of this behavior right from the start. Most players tend to mostly make use of their strong points giving them more rhythm but at the same time taking too little notice of their weak points. The same applies to you: Don` t simply let fly. Choose your shots with care, try not to think too much about your strengths and weaknesses. Use the games warm up time to get to know your opponent and to prepare yourself perfectly for the match.

- 2) Does your opponent play volleys? If so how?

When, during warm up, your opponent comes up to the net to practice volleys, notice exactly where he

stands. Does he approach aggressively or rather more with caution? Throw in a few lobs. How does he cope with those? It is essential to find out from the start what tactics your opponent will use. Aggressive or defensive? This test will give you insight.

3) What sort of serves is your opponent practicing?

Watch your opponents' serves. Does he only practice the first serve? Does he try to hit as hard as possible? Is the serve variable, sometimes with little speed but plenty of cut? Does your opponents' serve always aim for the middle or does he try for various areas of the service field? It is very important to establish the pattern of your opponents' service procedure. In this way you will be prepared to return optimally.

During the match

4) Do not be afraid to adjust your play to the situation.

As soon as the first serve has been played you should have enough information to provide a solid match plan. It is now important to stick to this plan, at least for a few games. Only in this manner can you judge whether he will rise. If the plan does not work: Do not be afraid to adjust your play to him. If you have been working on your opponents backhand and this turns out to be his strength then change your game! Start working on your opponents forehand. Try to imagine yourself as a sort of tennis computer, which is constantly digesting information in order to re align your own play. And when that does not succeed: Keep playing point for point. Consciously try to build up ball exchanges and to use them usefully. Do not simply and carelessly whack the ball over the net, in this way you will only increase your mistakes.

5) Make sure to have the optimum position on the court!

You have no doubt learnt to return to the middle of the base line after every shot. Which is basically a good strategy but is not always the best solution. If for instance your opponent drives you far to the side, the chances are he will play the next ball there again. This is because it is generally difficult to alter the direction of a ball, especially when one finds oneself in an extreme cross court duel. In this situation it would be cleverer if you did not try to run to the centre again, but far better to position yourself between the side line and middle mark. No doubt you will pay for this with a Longline winner, but in tennis it depends on likelihood and this position offers you better options. Tennis is more often played on the diagonal rather than the direct line. If you keep this in mind, you will automatically position yourself better and be able to play more aggressively! Tennis is not just reliant on being athletic and have good technique - it also involves a lot of thought and tactic. If you improve your tactics your play will also improve and you will automatically win more matches.

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