

Choose the next useful ball

Use one cue while playing. Save the longer analysis for the changeover.

RED: get back into the point

Late, stretched, jammed, or off balance? Use a manageable target and buy time. Against a baseliner, consider height and depth. Against a net player, consider low to the feet or a lob.

YELLOW: build the opening

Balanced without a clear advantage? Use purposeful depth or shape through a generous crosscourt or central target. Do not change direction just because the rally feels long.

GREEN: create pressure

Arrived early with comfortable contact? Step in, place the ball, take time away, or approach. Short and low still needs lift and control. Expect another shot.

Before serve

Choose a large location and one likely first-ball plan. Cancel the attack if the return is strong.

Before return

Read actual serve quality. Neutralize strong serves; pressure manageable ones. In doubles, account for the net player.

After every shot

Recover toward the likely replies, including forward or backward. Split around the opponent's contact, even before you reach the ideal spot.

At a changeover

What repeated contact is hurting me? What reply does my plan create? Change one thing I can execute.

A clear plan under pressure

Doubles: agree before serving

Serve location + stay, fake, or committed cross + coverage. A planned cross means the server covers the side the partner leaves.

Doubles: return into a useful lane

A controlled crosscourt return can avoid the net player. If that lane is not available, use another deliberate solution, such as a manageable lob. A stretched line attempt is demanding.

Doubles: react as a pair

Good low ball: look to move forward. Floating sitter: prepare to defend. On lobs, call early, identify who can reach the ball under control, and clear the partner's path.

Pressure: use what is effective today

Bigger targets can preserve margin without producing short passive balls. Important points do not require an unfamiliar shot.

When the obvious rule fails

Crosscourt can feed their weapon. A short ball can be too low to drive. A made return can be easy to attack. Watch the actual contact and reply.

My plan today

Serve pattern: _____

Return target: _____

Rally pattern: _____

Attack trigger: _____

Plan B if the first pattern fails: _____

One post-match practice decision: _____