

Secret 1

Tennis Talk - What to say and when to say it

Before the Match

- Decide with your partner ahead of time if you want to serve or receive first. Choose from which end to play, so when you spin you will already have a plan.
- Decide who on your team will serve first, who will serve from the sunny side, or the strongest serving combination to start the match.
- Decide on a game plan for the first three games of the match to take control (serve and volley, use the 'I' formation, Australian formation, two back, lob and take the net, etc.).

During the Match

- Compliment each other on what you are doing well as a team, so you'll know why you are winning and what to continue to do as the match progresses.
- High five after each lost point to reconnect with your partner and to get your minds off losing a point.
- Make sure your partner tells you his or her plan for the next point to stay in the present, and to get ready at the net or after the return of serve.

After the Match

- Ask the 5 Essential Questions
 1. What did we do best in the match?
 2. What did our opponents do best?
 3. What was our weakness in the match?
 4. What was their weakness?
 5. If we could replay the match right now, how would we play differently?

Secret 2

Tennis Dance - Where to move and when to move there

Dance of the Server's Partner

- Find the middle of the service box, halfway between the net and the service line, the center service line and the singles side line. When your partner serves, move forward toward the direction of the served ball to be in the best position to poach the return of serve.
- Be ready to poach by moving forward at a diagonal toward the net and center service line or to defend your alley on a wide serve.
- If the ball is returned passed you, slide back diagonally toward the service line and the center service line while facing the opponent at the net diagonally across from you.
- If the return by your partner passes the opponent at the net, move toward the net in the direction of the returned ball and be prepared to distract or poach again.
- Repeat this part of the dance until you can poach to win the point or your opponents lose the point.

Dance of the Receiver's Partner

- The receiver's partner stands near the service and center lines to intercept any poached volleys up the middle by the opposing net player, and to call the service line for your partner.
- If the serve is in and is returned crosscourt passed the opposing net player, move up and forward toward the middle of the service box to put pressure on the server's return of your partner's shot.
- If the server returns crosscourt to your partner, slide back on defense toward the service and center lines, depending upon the speed and direction of the return by the server.
- Repeat the dance until you can poach or until one team wins the point.

Dance of the Circle

- Once the ball is in play, keep your feet in motion as if you were moving around a cone on the ground. The small circular motion enables you to have a feel for being in motion and to change directions quickly.

Secret 3

Tennis Targets - Where to hit and when to go there

Serving as Simple as A-B-C

- When serving, tell your partner where you plan to direct both serves. For example, A-B, B-C or C-C (A=alley, B=body, C=center). Many players tell where the first serve is planned, but if they miss, the net player has no idea where the second serve is intended to go.
- This communication before the point also helps keep the server focused on the game plan.
- The server's partner can plan to fake at the net or poach, if s/he knows in advance the directional intent of the serve. Without this prior knowledge, s/he is the last person on the court to see where the serve is landing, which makes it difficult to react quickly to help the server win the point.

Receiving as Easy as 1-2-3-4

- When you are receiving, there are four targets or squares on the opposite side of the court. (The deuce court is square 1, the area behind the deuce service court is square 2, the area behind the ad service court is square 3 and the ad court is square 4). Tell your partner to which of the four squares you plan to return serve, knowing that if you get it trouble, you will always lob to square 2 or 3 as an escape route.
- This prior communication allows the receiver's partner to plan to defend if the receiver is going to lob, or to move forward if the receiver is going to chip a shorter low crosscourt return.

Volley in the Valleys

- When you volley at the net, aim between the two mountains (the two players on the other side).
- The most common mistake in doubles is to volley at the player's feet. That will cause them to hit accidental lobs over your head as a reflex to defending their bodies. Aim at their feet, but off to the side - in the valleys.