



10 MIXED DOUBLES

The requirements for playing good mixed doubles are basically the same as for the doubles with some slight modifications.

MEN ARE SUPPOSED TO:

- 1) Be more active around the net by attempting more interceptions from slower shots for the opposing woman in order to intimidate and to distract her;
- 2) Be prepared to cover 55-60% of the court particularly lobs over the woman;
- 3) Return from the backhand court (mentally more difficult points and easier court coverage, namely for righthander).

WOMEN SHOULD:

- 1) Restrain their feminist urge to pass the opposing man with every other shot, instead they must stick to proven doubles shot selection 6-7 times cross-court, 2-3 lobs, 1-2 down the line hard shots in opportune time out of 10 shots. If the woman prefers to stay in the back-court instead of coming to the net the percentage of lobs will increase;
- 2) Try to direct most of their shots at the opposing woman, particularly when she is in the back-court;
- 3) Be prepared to cover for her poaching partner all the time and switch immediately to the other side when her partner covers the lob over her head.

In principle the man's role is to intimidate and to confuse the female opponent, the woman's role is to keep the ball away from the male opposition. Following the above tips the players will play good mixed doubles and will avoid "mixed troubles".



11 REMEMBER THE SIMPLE THINGS

- Capital rule to winning doubles – find a good partner
- Serving team wins nearly twice as many points as the receiving team. If the receiving team has an opportunity for a good second shot, the changes to win a point are event.
- Seven out of ten shots in doubles should go cross-court or down the middle, the remaining three shots are divided between lobs and down the line shots.
- A player's position on the court must favour the coverage of the opponent's shot down the middle – particularly initial position of the server's or receiver's partner.
- Player at the net should watch only the opponents in front of him. Their moves and position will indicate the type and the direction of their next shot.
- Observe and register opponents' shots are 3-4 games. It will help you to anticipate their shots and moves in later stages of the match.
- The ability to anticipate makes a difference between a mediocre and a good doubles player.
- Players must be prepared to cover lobs over their heads. In the case when the partner covers the lob, the lobbed player switches immediately to the other side.
- After hitting a good lob both players run up to the net.
- As a receiver do not forget to move 1-2 steps forward when a server misses first serve; the same goes for a receiver's partner.
- If one player is pulled wide off the court, his partner must move with him to cover correctly the court.
- The objective of poaching is to make the receiver or the server with the first volley apprehensive and distracted.
- There won't be any team work without forgive and forget attitude.
- Do not try to emulate shots of great players, emulate their court position.
- When a player decides to poach he must go all the way.
- When moving up to the net a player must get at least two steps inside of the service box.
- When you face at the net a shoulder high or higher drive, hit with reasonable pace – let it go, because most of the time it will be long.
- In a friendly mixed doubles avoid hitting hard against the woman. In a tournament match consider her just as an opponent.
- Doubles is a black or white affair, either you are on the attack or you are on the defense.



12 HOW DO TOP WORLD PLAYERS PLAY DOUBLES?

I have charted many top flight doubles matches during different Grand Slams or in Davis Cup ties. Here are the results which you can compare with your proficiency in doubles.

First service in play..... 65-80%;

Point decided after first shot (service) ...Men 30%, Women 18%;

AcesMen 5-10%, Women 1-3%;

Double faultsMen and Women 2-4%;

Missed returnsMen 20-25%, Women 10-15%;

Winning returns.....Men and Women 5-10%;

Missed first volleys when serving.....Men and Women 15-20%;

In men's doubles 50% of all the points are decided after the first two shots (service + return), 40% in women's doubles;

More than 50% of all the points are decided at the net.

John McEnroe and Anybody?

As the media coverage of doubles around the world is notoriously poor, I feel it is more than appropriate to finish my booklet by paying tribute to some of the greatest doubles teams of the last four decades. The Australians lead the way with teams like Bromwich-Sidwell, MacGregor-Sedgman, Hoad-Rosewall, EmersonStolle, Newcombe-Rochc and lately Woodforde-Woodhridge. The United States has had some world class teams - Trabert-Seixas, Smith-Lutz, Seguso-Flach, McEnroe-Fleming. Some others deserving to be mentioned are Hewitt-McMillan, Edberg-Jarryd, Forget-Hlasek, Smid-Fi tgeraldcl, El ting-Haarhuis. The best ever team according to the players -J. McEnroe with

anybody. Would even you qualify?

The women have had their share of great doubles teams - Bueno-Hard, KingCasals, Navratilova-Shriver, N ovotna-Sukova G. Fernandez-Zvereva, with Sanchez, Neiland, Davenport and Hingis deserving to be mentioned.