

TABLE TENNIS *TACTICS*

Geske/Mueller

NEW EDITION
INCLUDES
DOUBLES AND
RETURN
TACTICS



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Table Tennis Tactics—Be A Successful Player

ACKNOWLEDGMENT, OR (TO QUOTE JOE COCKER)
“WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS”

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Klaus-M. Geske & Jens Mueller

TABLE TENNIS **TACTICS**

Be A Successful Player

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GREETING FROM TIMO BOLL

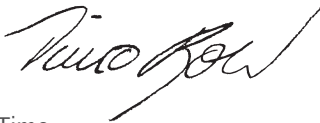
Hi there!

Do you enjoy table tennis as much as I do? I hope so, for it is certainly one of the fastest, most exciting and diverse sports around. It can be rather confusing though, if, for example, you are only able to return serves high, if at all, or still haven't understood how to play against different types of table tennis rubbers.

In case you have ever wondered why a coach advised you to play more on the forehand side against one opponent but the opposite against another, the many explanations and tips contained in this book will give you some suggestions to help your game.

I hope you have fun and find the answers to your unresolved questions! And if you feel like seeing great players in action, why not attend a National League game?

Bye for now!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Timo Boll". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Timo

FOREWORD

Do you know this feeling? You have just lost to a player and even after the game you thought that you were the better player.

What makes you think that?

Perhaps his technique is not as elegant as yours in the most important stroke, the forehand topspin? Or did you only lose because you couldn't control your returns of serve? "But otherwise" you may now add "I was much better at him at everything!"

Is that really true?

Let us first consider what elements a good table tennis player needs.

The first is technique, for after all, that is that is practiced the most (e.g. with many-balls-training).

Another component is definitely fitness (also called conditioning). This is made up of the five areas of speed, coordination, flexibility, endurance and strength that every player needs.

Is it also important to be able to keep your nerve in table tennis? We think so. For what use is all your ability if you can never play your best in a match due to nerves? We are talking about the typical *training world champion*.

It is expressed by rushing about too hectically during rallies, which causes you to make unforced errors or prevents you from making the most of your chances, and by literally standing like a rabbit in front of a snake, being so tense that your actions run in slow motion and are easy for the opponent to anticipate.

Boris Becker, the German tennis player and two-times Wimbledon champion, once said: "Today I was not all there mentally."

This brings us to the fourth component, which forms the subject of this book: tactics.

We do not intend to simply tell you how to play against certain types of players. The aim of this book is to teach you to automatically implement the tactics learned in training in matches, and with this in mind, we have added a drills section with many training tips at the end of each of the five main chapters.

Let us return to the opening question.

We don't play table tennis to demonstrate textbook technique but to win, for which good technique is essential.

But in our opinion, many coaches and trainers place too much emphasis on perfecting the hitting techniques instead of showing how and when they can be used to win points.

This requires a certain theoretical background. One must learn to understand the game of table tennis. But this kind of table tennis lesson is hard to find.

We decided to write this book in order to give ambitious up-and-coming players a helping hand.

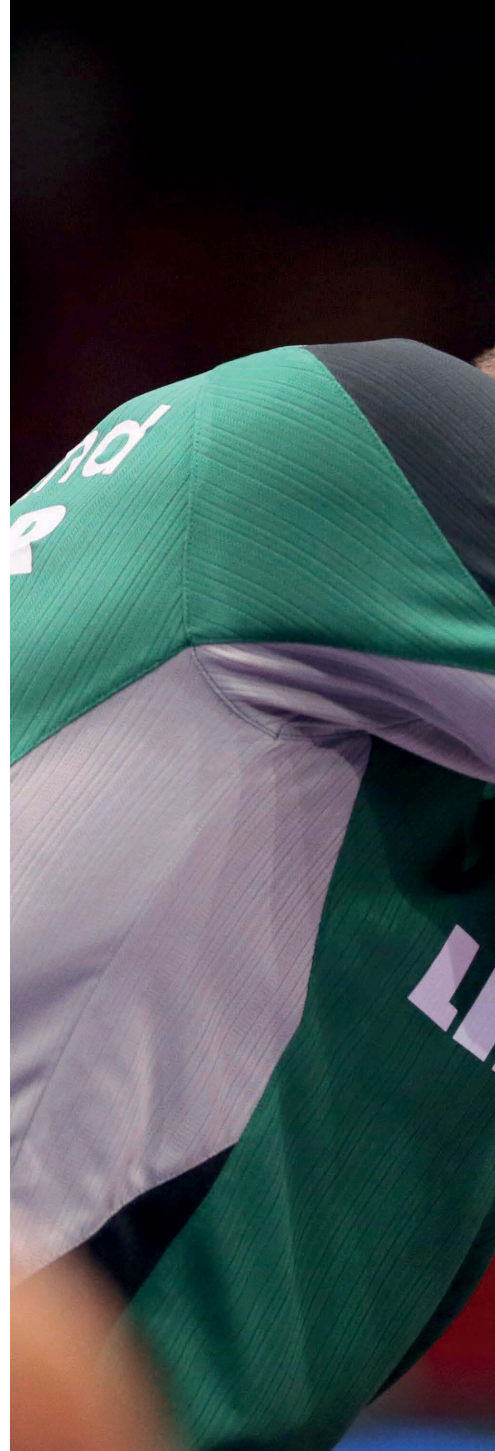
We have tried to explain quite complicated topics as simply as possible, by including many photos and illustrations in order to aid understanding of the text. The five *tactical foxes* provide valuable tips and advice throughout the book.

Committed coaches and trainers can also use the graphics and illustrations as source material for theory classes, which, in our opinion, should be an indispensable part of table tennis training.

We hope you enjoy reading this book and wish you well on *your personal path to success!*

Hanover and Meerbusch, Germany

Klaus-M. Geske and Jens Mueller





BEFORE WE START, JUST A FEW MORE TIPS:

Our descriptions are limited to right-handed players for the sake of simplicity.

If you are a left-handed player, just reverse the description where necessary, which shouldn't be too hard! For example, if the text says play further to the right on the forehand side, for the left-handed player this means exactly the opposite, i.e. play further to the left on your forehand side!

When we talk about hitting a ball cross-court, this means hitting it from forehand side to forehand side in the case of two right-handers.

If we suggest you play parallel, you must hit the ball almost straight ahead from whichever position you are in, i.e. in the above-mentioned case of two right-handers, this would be from your forehand side to the opponent's backhand side!

In the drills section at the end of each chapter, you will often see the phrase: "serve short over the whole table." By this we mean that you can serve the ball where you like as long as you play it short.

Many drills end in free play. This means after a few predefined strokes, you and the partner with whom you are practicing the drill play for points!

This makes the drill match-specific. While you play the drills that do not culminate in free play with each other, in the drills that do culminate in free play, you play against each other. In free play, your partner becomes your opponent.

Even if a drill mentions "play a short serve," you should also throw in a long serve from time to time for an element of surprise so that your partner does not get too used to short serves and stands right next to the table to return serve so as not to have to move around too much. As soon as you notice this happening, you should shake things up a bit with a long ball. Remember to do this in competitions too!

Of course, the same applies to the receiver, who, although he could play, for example, a long forehand return, decides to play a short drop shot in order to vary his game.

At the same time, this interspersing of surprise shots draws on your creativity and powers of observation!

In the drills sections we use the usual abbreviations FH and BH for the terms forehand and backhand.

Throughout the book we use the term "racket," which is also referred to as a "paddle" in the USA.

For the sake of simplicity, we use only the masculine form of address; it goes without saying that this refers to both men and women.



BALL PLACEMENT

01



1.1 ELBOW

1.2 SCATTERING ANGLE

1.3 RACKET GRIP

1.4 GAME TYPES

1.5 DRILLS

1 BALL PLACEMENT

In our first chapter we want to show how important it is to position your shots correctly on the opponent's side of the table. For orientation, we use two different zone divisions for the table. In the first zone division, one half of the table is subdivided into three zones:

- The **net zone**
- The **middle zone**
- The **baseline zone**

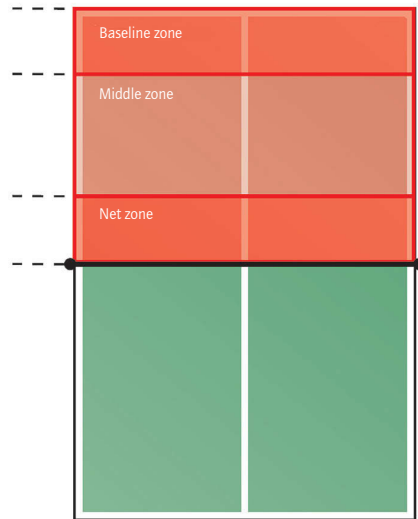


Fig. 1 First zone division of the table.

As this division is still quite rough, we would like to present a second option, in which half of the table is divided into four areas (from left to right):

- **Wide forehand**
- **Forehand area**
- **Backhand area**
- **Wide backhand**

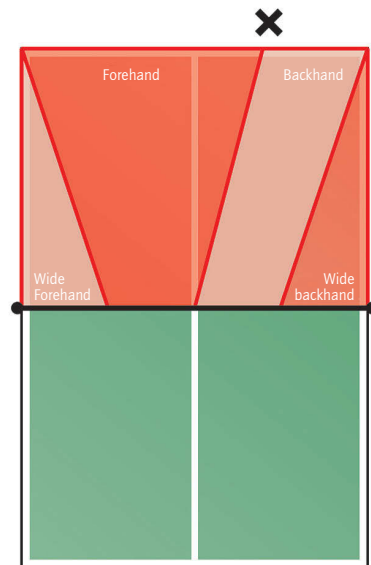


Fig. 2: Second zone division of the table.