Tennis Doubles / updated 041723

1. Doubles is a different game than singles! You MUST move and work with your partner.
   1. Two top rated singles players do not necessarily make a good doubles team; two under rated players can rise higher by syncing together.
   2. Play in a way to set your partner up, and always keep them in mind.
2. The two of you always want to be moving forward toward the net and attacking. The team that controls the net wins the vast majority of the time.
   1. Come to the net in a controlled way. Do not rush to the net just because as this may cause you to be caught off guard. Instead, come to the net wisely, reading the opponents shot and thinking ahead so that the proper half-volley or volley can then be made.
   2. There may even be times when you make a return at the baseline first before going forward. This gives you a bit more time to set up your partner and/yourself for a better approach situation. But, do NOT stay at the baseline simply exchanging shots like a singles player. Always be trying to approach and be with your partner to pressure the opposing team.
3. With regards to your partner, you want to be revolving around your partner.
   1. An example: if the ball gets lobbed over your head, you will want to automatically move to the other side while your partner automatically switches with you to get the lob.
   2. Try not to be in an even line at the net; it is best to have one person slightly forward and the other slightly in back of each other. This happens because of the following.
   3. Think of the triangle as you and your partner face the opposition. The triangle never stays the same but constantly moves. Movement toward the opponent with the ball should happen constantly and will also help determine who is slightly up and who is slightly back.
   4. Only one player chases down the lob; who moves to take the lob is clarified when following b. and c. above.
4. When playing at the net:
   1. Poach wisely – be aggressive but do not over-reach.
   2. If you go for a poach, keep on going and switch sides. Do not hesitate. Commit to the shot. Hesitation causes mishaps and errors.
   3. Play off the line until the competition burns you a couple of times down the line. Be a threat to the opposing team hitters.
   4. Move back to the service line if the competitors start to lob you at the net. But if they no longer lob, then once again move forward. This continuous up and back occurs during a game but the effect is to always put pressure on the other team.
   5. You will typically want to let the forehand player take the ball down the middle at your team.
   6. Signaling is optional: hybrid may work best.
5. When poaching, volley to the open court or at the opponent’s feet.
   1. Always be thinking that the ball may come to you, and always try to be aware of where you are going to hit it if it does.
   2. Try to always be looking forward at your opponents, NOT your partner.
6. Four possible service returns:
   1. Cross court; high percentage shot.
   2. Down the line; typically a lower percentage shot.
   3. Directly at the opponent at the net; this keeps the opposition off guard.
   4. Lob over the opponent at the net.
   5. You will want to mix these up, with the majority of your returns simply going back across court.
   6. Keep track in your mind what returns you have used against the competition. Always try to be ahead of the server and know what you are going to hit, regardless of whether he gives you a forehand or backhand.
7. When hitting against competitors who have both come to the net:
   1. Hit to the middle: down the middle solves the riddle.
   2. Lob; and lob preferably to the backhand side of one of the opponents.
   3. A low % shot is hitting down the line on one of the opponents, but this shot should be used wisely and seldom.
8. OVERALL RULES FOR DOUBLES:
   1. Be a positive partner! There is nothing worse than to have a partner that is judgmental and condescending toward you if you make a mistake. So think about how you want to be treated and treat your partner the same way. Always be encouraging toward each other!
   2. Always try to think ahead of your opponents shots. Think to yourself: ‘if he hits me a forehand, I’ll go down the middle and then come forward’ or ‘if this guy returns down the line to me here, I’m simply going to volley in the middle between the two of them”, etc. The more you play in doubles matches with your partner, the easier it will become to do this forward thinking.
   3. Reduce your unforced errors. One more shot back is one more chance for the competition to make a mistake.
   4. Have fun!!!