ITF Coaches Education Programme
Level 2 Coaching Course

Tactics and patterns for the approaching or at the net game situation
By the end of this session you should be able to:

- Understand and explain the main tactics and patterns for the:
  - Both from the approaching or at the net game situation
- Know how and where to play from the mid court
- Understand the key tactics when playing at the net
Approaching or at the net
General considerations

• Pressure your opponent with the threat of using delayed approach ("ghosting in").

• Dominate and pressurise from mid-court using power, accuracy and/or hitting on the rise.
Approaching or at the net
General considerations

• Move in to surprise the opponent.
• Use your best shot to approach the net.
• Hit the approach to the opponent’s weak side.
Approaching or at the net
General considerations

• The deep and low or a high-arching, high-bouncing topspin to the backhand (aggressive loop) are very effective.
• Down the line approach is safer, while cross court approach makes the opponent run more.
Approaching or at the net
General considerations

• Make a split-step before the volley.
• Don’t overdo drop shot or stop volleys. Use them to bring the opponent to the net and as a surprise/variation.
Approaching or at the net
General considerations

• Follow the path of the ball with your footwork: After the approach, move in to volley.
• Try not to play more than 3 shots in the net area (put the ball away).
• Move diagonally and with balance.
Approaching or at the net
General considerations

• Be alert. Try to ‘read’ the opponent’s intentions.
• Mid court volleys should be deep and low.
• Net zone volleys should be angled, short and strong.
• Always be prepared for the opponent’s lob.
Mid-court game
How to act

• Volleys: Play no more than 3 volleys in a row and win the volley to the open court.

• Overhead: Direct the ball always to the weak side of the opponent.
Mid-court game

How to act

• Approach: Start with a down the line approach and direct the volley to the open court.
• Don’t approach crosscourt unless the opponent’s wrong footed and you’re going back behind.
Mid-court game
How to act

• If you hit a deep high ball: Wait for opponent’s reaction and as they hit, move in covering down the line passing shot

• If you hit a lob and the opponent doesn’t make an overhead: Move in but look out for the lob.

• If you hit a drop-shot and the opponent moves in to get it: Move towards the net to narrow and cover the angles.
Mid-court game

How to react

• If it’s a short ball: Approach with best shot to opponent’s weak side.

• If it’s an easy high mid court ball: Hit an attacking volley, a smash or a swing drive volley.
Mid-court game

How to react

• If it’s a waist high mid court ball: Hit a deep volley and move in closer to the net.

• If it’s a low mid court ball at your feet: Play a deep half volley or low volley down the line or let the ball bounce and hit a groundstroke.
Net game
How to act

• If it’s a waist height ball: Volley with your best shot to the open court.

• If it’s a low ball close to the net: Hit a low volley down the middle or an angled drop-shot volley.

• Be prepared for the opponent’s passing-shot or lob.
Net game
How to act

• If it’s a high and slow ball: Hit a high volley or smash to the open court.

• If it’s a very high and mid court ball: Smash in the air to the open court.

• If it’s a very high and deep ball: Smash after the bounce to the centre and move in to volley.
Net game
How to react

• After your volley or smash is returned by the opponent, move in to ‘close’ out the point.

• Mid court ball very easy for the opponent: Don’t move back, pick a side and try to intercept the passing-shot.

• Passing-shot very difficult : Use stop volley. Don’t move back. Move diagonally.
Net game
How to react

• Cross court passing-shot: Don’t push the volley down the line. Volley crosscourt on a short angle. Play stop volley to make opponent run the longest court angle.

• Down the line passing-shot: Never volley crosscourt if you can’t win the point.

• You are forced to play a half volley: Keep the ball in front of you.
Net game
How to react

• Opponent hits good passing-shots: Vary your approaches. Stay back more often for variation.

• Opponent doesn’t know how to pass you: Charge the net at all times.

• Don’t commit too early for the lob: Watch for racket face opening.