

14 New discussion on the table tennis tactics

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1 Concept of table tennis tactics and strategy

By table tennis tactics we mean ruses and actions used in table tennis competitions in order to beat one's opponent.

The biggest difference between tactics and strategy is that the former probes into the partial guiding law of a competition and the latter researches into the whole guiding law.

The core tactics of table tennis is to gain a partial advantage. The condition that all the skills of the player in our team are superior to those of the player in other team, which is called an absolute advantage, is rare in practice. In many circumstances superiority and inferiority are relative, and sometimes the technical level of the two players is equal. Therefore, the player must use rational tactics to win a partial advantage. It is the best thing for the player to attack his opponent's disadvantages with his advantages, but sometimes it is a little difficult to realize. Let's take service for example, the player's specialty in our team is spin or without spin service, whereas his opponent's weakest point is to receive high toss service. Although high toss service is the player's weakest point in our team, he still takes an advantage compared to his opponent. Under this condition the best tactics is to attack his opponent's weakest point by using the player's weakest point in our team because he has a partial advantage.

Next, we analyze the differences and connections between tactics and skills.

For example, how to use strength to make the ball spin more about the action methods of service belongs to skills, while where is the service falling point, and how to make a group of service belong to tactics.

Table tennis skills mean the action methods of taking the ball. For example, the action methods of service belong to skills, whereas the placement of service belongs to tactics.

Skills are basic to tactics. The player can use various kinds of tactics as long as he masters the comprehensive and practical skills. Accordingly, the player can fully utilize his skills as long as he uses the tactics rationally. So the player can master practical skills as long as he practices skills with tactical consciousness. In addition, skills and tactics develop continuously. Generally speaking, the development of skills is faster than that of tactics because new tactics can't

appear until the original skills are improved and new skills are created. However, advanced tactics can promote the improvement and development of skills in return.

2 The research scope of table tennis tactics

The focus of the research in Table Tennis tactics should include the following:

First, we map out a detailed set of tactics used in receiving services, attacking after services, and long rallies based on an analysis of different types of play or individual play. Numerous tactical articles enumerated in many textbooks basically belong to it.

Second, we analyze the development of tactical situation. When starting a competition, the two players will change the tactics unceasingly, which requires using appropriate tactics in the light of the development of tactical situation. Let's take the chop shot player versus the attacking player for example. How should the chop shot player cope with it, when the attacking player smashes the ball continuously, or smashes during consistency, or seeks the consistency only. These are several tactical situations. The player loses the game if he can't see the tactical situations very clearly and changes his tactics as well. When the competition goes smoothly towards the player in our team, the player can speed up the rhythm of the competition in order to win the game more quickly. When the competition goes smoothly towards the opponent, the player should slow down the rhythm of the competition in order to turn the situation around.

Third, we probe into the score. The score is the actual mark of the battling result. It directly influences the player's mental state which can directly affect the player's bringing his skills into play.

When the opponent's scores stand behind, he usually uses continuous smashes and sound attacks. In this situation he will use without spin service, top-spin service and long service, and accordingly the player in our team should bravely hit the ball over the table and attack. Based on the opponent's characteristic of more pivot attacks, the player in our team should change the direction of the ball in time to move the opponent. Based on the opponent's characteristic of more hard attacks or drives, the player in our team should strengthen control of the ball in order to increase the difficulty of hard attacks or drives, and try to attack the ball on his own initiative to deflate the opponent's arrogance.

When the opponent's scores stand front, the player in our team should show a dauntless spirit, fortify his confidence, analyze the situation calmly, grasp the principal contradiction, and change the tactics resolutely. Sometimes the player can turn the situation around if he can have a better deal with certain ball attack, or change the direction of the ball a little.

When his scores stand front, the player in our team should pay more attention to the control of service reception in order to destroy the opponent's attacking after service. When his scores stand behind, the player in our team should make full use of service to attack boldly. This is an effective method to enlarge the advantage and shorten the gap of the score.

The eleven - point scoring system shortens the competition process because the score decreased to half. The influence it brings to the player's competitive psychology and use of tactics is far beyond our imagination. It requires that the player must go into the competitive state as quick as possible, and that on starting the competition (or called the starting game), he should use his special skills, change his tactics continuously, and pay attention to the accuracy of his skills to decrease the misses, so that he can take the lead in the starting game. In the 21 - point scoring system the player usually takes sounding so that the scores are very close in the former ten - score balls, whereas the eleven - point scoring system doesn't permit the players to take sounding because the game is close to be over when the score comes to seven or eight. When the score stands from 5 to 8, it belongs to the middle game in which the two players have an understanding of each other. Under the circumstances, the player should use the most practical tactics, which detailed speaking are his specialty versus his opponent's weakest point, his specialty versus his opponent's, or his weakest point versus the opponent's weakest point. In a word, the player can hit the ball hard and initiatively to win the partial advantage in order to provide a sound basis for gaining the game. The ending game refers to the one after nine scores, in which the player decides whether he should use continuous smashes or flexible tactics based on the spot situation. There are many occasions in which the score is 9 to 10 or 10 to 10 in the eleven - point scoring system, so the players should pay attention to dealing with these key balls. Generally speaking, the eleven - point scoring system demands much more energy than the 21 - point scoring system. It emphasizes the reckoning of every ball. The remark stated in the book on the art of war "more reckoning, more winning, and less reckoning, less winning, and no reckoning, no winning" is used here much more properly than anything in the world.

Another important characteristic of the eleven - point scoring system is to increase the risk. In the 21 - point scoring system, the average value of one score is 1 to 21, that is 0.048, and whereas in the eleven - point scoring system, the average value of one score is 1 to 11, that is 0.091. Clearly enough, the value of one score in the 11 - point scoring system is nearly twice as much as that in the 21 - point scoring system. The higher the value of one score is, the more influence and role it brings to and takes in one game. When the score is 10 to 11, in which your scores stand behind your opponent's, you will lose the game if you lose one score again. Therefore, the value of your next ball is 1 to 1, which

is 1. Such a high value can easily give rise to nervousness. The 11 – point scoring system brings much more advantages to the player who is apt to run the risk and struggle tenaciously and whose specialty is prominent than to the one who is reluctant to run the risk and longs for consistency. The boost of the value of one score in the 11 – point scoring system requires that the player should cherish every ball to decrease the misses as much as possible. At the same time, it also requires that the player should go into the competitive state as quick as possible, and go all out, and change his tactics according to the spot situation. In return, it will bring disadvantages to the player who goes into the competitive state slowly and has a poor capacity to handle changes.

The rule regulates that “One player or two doubles players can ask a time – out, which is not beyond one minute.” It is a tactical problem with practical significance for players when to ask the time – out. Many players are accustomed to asking the time – out at the last game. In fact, there are several opportunities for players to ask a time – out. For example, the competition is best of 7 games, in which the player takes the advantage of 2 to 1 in the first three games. In the fourth game, he has no idea when the score transforms into 9 to 7 under the condition of taking the advantage of 9 to 2, on which occasion he could lose the game if the game continuously goes on. If he asks the time – out on this circumstance, he could alleviate the spot atmosphere and adjust his state of mind on one hand, and he could get wise counsel on the other hand. There is a big difference between the player’s taking the lead of 3 games to 1 and equalizing the game, 2 to 2.

3 The content of tactical training

Tactical training should cover both the development of tactical consciousness and the use of tactical actions. During trainings, many players ignore the importance of the development of tactical consciousness, and have the misleading notion that tactical training is only about tactical action. After many years’ training, these players, who were not flexible enough to change their tactics according to the circumstances in a match, often have shown little or no improvement. One of the important reasons attributes to this phenomenon is that, these players do not have sufficient training in the development of their tactical consciousness.

The training of tactical action has been recognized before, and a lot of precious experience has been accumulated in practice. So here unnecessary details about it will not be given. Next, I want to emphasize the training of tactical consciousness.

The training of tactical consciousness includes three parts which are as the followings:

(1) Tactical attainments. That is, the player's tactical accomplishment in daily life. The players should understand indispensable theoretical knowledge about tactics, be clear about the concept of tactics, and have a command of the developmental law of table tennis tactics. It is quite necessary for the players to learn some theoretical knowledge about tactics in order to boost their tactical attainments.

(2) To foster the correct tactical guiding ideology. That is to say, some theoretical knowledge about tactics should be combined with the analysis of the current situation of table tennis. The tactical guiding ideology is very important because it is not only the principal of setting up the concrete tactical program, but also the outline of the whole training in table tennis skills and tactics. There is a saying "When the general plan is laid out, the details are easy to arrange." Some problems in the general tactical guiding ideology will lead to the misses in whole training and competition.

(3) Tactical thinking powers. This is the reflection of psychological activities to tactics, which asks the players flexibly change his tactics according various kinds of circumstances to win the competition.

Tactical thinking has the characteristics of audio - visualness and vividness. That is to say, the tactics used by the players in the competition relates to the direct consciousness, not to abstract concepts. Tactical thinking also has the characteristic of agility. That is to say, there is a rigid limit of time between deciding tactical strategies and finishing tactical actions in the competition.

Tactical thinking powers mainly depend on the level of players' understanding and classifying the competitive situation. In order to boost tactical thinking powers, the following contents for learning and training should be arranged on purpose. Players must master necessary theoretical knowledge about tactics.

(1) To arrange specially the training for the purpose of observing tactical changes from both players in the competition. After the competition is viewed and emulated, a seminar should be organized in order to analyze the conditions of both players' using tactics in typical competitions.

(2) Coaches should hold a lecture on the tactical analysis in a planned way in which the tactical changes in a representative competition should be analyzed carefully and thoroughly.

(3) When players participate in training of the concrete tactics and skills, coaches should make players understand the role and methods of using them.

(4) After each competition is over, players should cultivate the habit of re-collecting timely the tactical situations of both players to increase the presentation ability of tactical actions.

(5) Set up file system. To sort out in wording the conditions of using tactics by other nations, other teams and other players, this is best to be combined with watching a video.

4 References

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