

Summary

Over the last 9 weeks we have looked at the importance perception plays in your game and linked this to the components of striking and moving to the ball. Hopefully this workshop has drilled down into the detail and given players a practical and theoretical resource to help train this skill. In this last session I have tried to give players a practical ghosting session to help reinforce these skills and have focused on attacking and defending the ball.

Theory

In summary I believe perception and court awareness are the foundation of any good player and without this skill you cannot achieve elite status in the game. Simply put the following applies:

Example ball striking - you could possess the best ball striking around with perfect technique but if you have poor perception skills you will struggle to utilize your ball striking skills. You will struggle to get to the ball because you will not have the ability to read the play or link your movement to your ball striking. On the other hand, you could be an exceptional mover who is very quick but again if your poor perception skills you will struggle to link your movement into match play. Invariably you will go the wrong way, overrun the ball and have stop/start movement because of a lack of awareness. Everyone has seen players who look good in training or practice but struggle in match play this is because they lack perception. Perception is the glue that enables everything to come together. I think the ghosting session below gives players the opportunity to train this skill and, more importantly, with visualisation offers the chance to understand this skill and practice it. Also, a good warm up skill to get yourself in the zone pre match.

Ghosting Example

<https://youtu.be/IKXVSg5NGIs>

The full explanation is in the video

Resources / Setup

- 7 cones
- Racket
- Ideally use a tennis court as the lines give a good indication for cone markings
- 2 cones front corner, 2 cones left and right off the T position, 2 cones back corners and 1 cone representing the T
- Set 1 Ghost an attacking shot into all 6 positions, reap ghost with a defensive shot into all 6 positions
- See demo for full explanation

Coaching Tip

Focus on trying to be efficient and smooth. Just like being on a squash court, you want to move effectively and try to minimize start / stop movement as this slows you down and uses up more energy. Link the components together and see them as a continuation of each other and this will ensure your efficient and smooth. Try not to see the components in isolation as this will make your movement very erratic. With your attacking ghost you are looking to get in strong, early positions to give yourself multiple shot options. On the defensive ghost you are looking to get the racket head under the ball and generally extend your swing out to give yourself more time and balance. The key to a good defensive shot is having the ability to lift the ball so a shorter racket prep is recommended. Focus more on the follow through to generate height on the ball.

I firmly believe that if the players can understand perception and how it links into the play you will become a far better player and offer players limitless scope to improve. This workshop gives players a practical aid to train and improve this vital component.