

# **The Game Plan and the importance of hitting a good length from the back of the court**

**By**  
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## **My definition of a good length, hit from the back of the court is:**

A ball that is hit tight to the side wall (without clipping the side wall), It should land behind the service box, ideally fading in to the back corner.

I've purposely missed out the height of the shot on the front wall due to differences in power/strength of each individual player but also the type of length played.

## **Why is this so important? My definition is:**

It will create pressure, forcing your opponent to move away from the T-Zone and in to the back corner, limiting his/her options and forcing a weak recovery shot.

I'm certain that most of you have heard this before, but my question is why don't we do this in practice and in matchplay? Without being hard on you, I personally believe that most of you don't truly understand the benefits of hitting a good length and what opportunities that await you if you can master this skill.

I'm sure you all think the Egyptians hit lots of nicks... yes they do, but because they put so much effort in to hitting a quality length, they're able to create more opportunities to hit winning shots.

As a young player, I only began to understand the importance of a good length once I was given a basic GAME PLAN!

I was given this plan when I was 14 years old and I still use my game plan today.

- 1. Hit the ball past my opponent in 1 shot.**
- 2. Get to the T or get in front my opponent.**
- 3. Hunt the volley (hunt the loose shot)**
- 4. Hit the ball into the open space**

- 1. Hit the ball past my opponent in 1 shot** – This means hit the ball to length, without my opponent being able to volley the ball. (You do not want to be stuck behind your opponent.)
- 2. Get to the T or get in front my opponent** – This seems self explanatory, but never underestimate how much pressure you can exert on your opponent by being in control of the T-Zone.
- 3. Hunt the Volley (Hunt the loose shot)** – The whole purpose of No.1 and No.2 is for you to hunt the volley or hunt down your opponents loose shot and exert the next level of pressure on to your opponent.
- 4. Hit the ball into the open space** – You're in front of your opponent and they've hit a loose shot, now is the time to attack one of the open spaces.

My game plan had a very important addition.

Obviously there were going to be many times my opponent would hit the ball past me and force me in to the back corner... but I thought no problem, I'll repeat the process and get the ball past my opponent in one shot and this would be repeated over and over again.

The only way I could do this and have the consistency and confidence in hitting a quality ball past my opponent in one shot, was to do a lot of practice and in a variety of ways. I'd practice hitting straight, cross court, either hard and low or high and soft.

Every length I hit, whether it be in solo/pairs practice or in matchplay was played with a purpose. As the quality of length improved, I was able to get in front of my opponent more often and put more pressure on them by hunting in the volley and hitting in to open spaces.

I'm going to ask you to watch some videos and you'll see that the best players in the world are generally using this simple but effective game plan.

Qatar Classic 2020 Final - Farag v Coll

Qatar Classic 2020 Quarter Final – Makin v Momen

Windy City 2020 Final – El Sherbini v Welily (possibly the best womens match ever)

British Junior Open 2019 – Girls U19 Finals

Whilst watching ask these questions:

Did he/she hit a good length?

Was he/she able to get in front of there opponents?

Were they able to hunt the volley?

And did they hit the next shot in to open spaces?

Over time you'll see this pattern of play happening over and over again.

If you have any videos of yourself playing matches, take a look and see if you're length is good enough. If you don't have any videos, no problem. Once you're back on court, start to focus on the quality of your length and see the opportunities you'll create.

Good Luck,

Mike