

Hip-Hip, Rotate.

Have you watched a boxing match? The boxers use two main punches, the jab and the hook. The other punches, the upper cut and the cross are variations of the hook and the jab but their line of approach is different.

Which punch delivers the most knockouts? The hook, connecting mainly with the jaw or the temple! Why is it so effective? Because the body weight goes into the shot, rotating at the hip and pushing from the toe!

Boxing lesson over. Why is this important in table tennis? Because weight transfer, hip rotation and a combination of 'joint forces' is most important in delivering power and bat speed and many coaches do not spend a great deal of time in ensuring that young players incorporate it early enough in their play.

So what are the advantages of good hip rotation:-

1. More power in the shot
2. Stroke can be shorter so more control
3. Quicker than foot-back-foot forward technique
4. Avoids over-rotation
5. Recovery is quicker
6. Preparation for the shot is quicker
7. Encourages weight transfer.

Let's look at the forehand drive from the feet upwards.

The Ball is on its way with topspin toward our forehand:-

1. Feet - are they in the right position i.e. can you reach the ball with your bat?
2. Turn 'bat foot' out
3. Rotate hips NOW, preparing your bat for the returning forehand drive
4. Weight is shifted over the 'bat leg'
5. Eyes on the ball up to your favoured spot *
6. Rotate hips forwards to the ready position while playing a short, compact stroke with the arm
7. Weight is transferred to the 'free arm' leg
8. The wrist is kept soft and for the advanced players, can 'snap' on contact with the ball
9. Follow through to a central position and straight back to the ready position, weight being distributed evenly between the feet which are both facing 11 - 1.

How does it look?

Make them do the stroke without a ball to analyse weight distribution and length of arm. If it doesn't appear to be working, do single ball multi ball and get the player to rotate and prepare the shot before the ball is delivered.

My opinion is that it is never too early to build this into the game of a player. It is not an advanced technique but a method of encouraging an efficient and powerful forehand drive.