

The Magnificent 7. Placement tactics you can do.

1. Everything at the forehand
2. Everything at the backhand
3. Everything at the centre line (x over) until they are out of position
4. Everything returned straight down the table
5. One at the X over and one at the forehand
6. One at the X over and one at the backhand
7. Alternate backhand to forehand

REMEMBER TO TOPSPIN HEAVILY when you use the forehand

If you are ?-10 down, serve sensibly onto the table or low and flat at the X over.

Change tactics mid game and change again if they are getting the upper hand

If you are really struggling, tactic 1 or 3 are the safe options

Nerves will affect heartbeat which dumps adrenalin which affects the muscles which affects touch. Blood carries the adrenalin to the muscles which makes the smaller muscles shake. The majority of the blood goes to the large muscles to 'fight or runaway'. Your body thinks you are in combat.

Utilise the extra blood flow by forcing your large muscles to work. This is done by looping heavily 1 to 2 metres from the table. Drive with the legs but DON'T try to hit the ball hard.

If you try to use 'touch' around the table or dinky pushes etc, the adrenalin will be more of a problem to you because you will be shaking and therefore lose your touch.

Simply forget you are in a game. Think of a tactic and use it. Practice like this too. Then think of a match like a practice.

Serve:- don't include the serve as part of your tactic. The serve and 3rd or 5th ball are separate to your tactic.

Return of service. Start your tactic on the return of serve.

Their tactics and how to combat them

Often, a player (us) will get hung up on the fact that every player has a skill or a tactic that works, i.e., they win more points than we do.

Forget it. a) Stick with your tactic of 1-7 or vary them from point to point until you find a weakness in their play

b) Remember that an experienced player has just that.. experience but you have youth, ability and a forehand. Think positively about your ability.

Some players use combination bats which assist them to win points. They generally force mistakes from the opponents and then they win the point with the reverse rubber. Here are some ways to play combination bats.

Anti-loop: i.e. Pat Swindell's forehand. Long flat or topspin serve wide to the antiloop, who generally will chop and when it comes back, it WILL have backspin, maybe a bit less than the topspin you put on. You can then pick your spot and topspin drive the ball anywhere you want. GIVE ANTI LOOP NOTHING AND IT CAN ONLY GIVE YOU A BIT OF SPIN BACK BUT IT IS DIFFICULT TO HIT WITH.

Long pimples:- frictionless. (SuperBlock etc.) I love playing this stuff. Give it no spin and it will come back with float. Chop to it and it comes back with TOPSPIN. Topspin and it comes back with HEAVY CHOP. I generally serve long and flat and bouncy to it and then attack anywhere. Don't be afraid to loop and loop again, just make sure your blade is open and you guide the ball back onto the table after the first topspin. It is very difficult to control a flat hit with this rubber. This will be banned after 31st July.

Long pimples:- friction (Friendship 755, Long Feint etc). These can be used for attack as well and it comes through with a little bit of topspin but generally these are the defenders rubbers. Similar to the frictionless, the long pimples will be less easy to control a ball that has little or no spin. You CAN get a reaction from the rubber, i.e. if you do a spin service, the ball will 'dig in to a certain extent. The best thing to do is try a variety of services. Short float works well but watch for a twiddler!

If this person is a defender with this rubber on the backhand, they will generally like to chop topspin. The CLASSIC tactic against defenders is to build up down the centre of the table, firstly getting them away from the table and then doing a less-spinny and less hard topspin to make them reach forward to hopefully give you a high return to smash. Also, as they move onto their backhand at the middle of the table, this may leave their backhand side open for a fast wide topspin; likewise if they take it on their forehand to open up the forehand side.

Short pimples: Generally used to attack with and they don't provide much topspin so unless it is high, you will have to topspin the ball back by lifting it over the net. This feeds the strength of short pimples, the BLOCK. I find these most difficult to play against in the hands of an accomplished player. The best tactic against short pimples is to vary the pace and spin as much as possible. The most difficult shot to control for short pimples is a paceless float.