



# Statistical Influence on Tactics and Strategy in the Men's Game

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## I. TACTICS VERSUS STRATEGY

Tactics is the securing of objectives set by a strategy. It is a procedure engaged in to achieve an end or a goal. Strategy is a plan of action intended to accomplish a specific goal. It is the science and art of using all forces to execute plans as effectively as possible.

## II. DEFINING TACTICS THROUGH PLAYER EVALUATION

Develop a series of techniques designed to define an optimal style for a player. Such techniques include:

- A) Player interview with a written questionnaire
- B) Opponent interview
- C) Observation of match play
- D) Digital video analysis
- E) Computer match charting for developing statistical databases

## III. ADOPTING AN OPTIMAL GAME STYLE

The five major game styles include:

- A) Defensive baseliner or Counter puncher
- B) Offensive baseliner
- C) All-court player
- D) Attacking player
- E) Pure serve and volleyer

## IV. APPLYING STATISTICAL DATA

For an example of professional players averages, review published statistical information for WTA and ATP tour players. Divide this review into top 20 players, top 100 players, and players ranked from 100 to 500. Evaluate the differences between clay court, grass court, hard indoor and hard outdoor courts. The most important statistical factors include:

- A) First serve percentage
- B) Percentage of first serve points won
- C) Second serve percentage

- D) Percentage of second serve points won
- E) Percentage of net points won
- F) Percentage of short ball approaches
- G) Percentage of first serve return points won
- H) Percentage of second serve return points won
- I) Forehand vs. Backhand winner/error ratio
- J) Passing shot percentage
- K) Aggressive error margin

## V. MANAGING MATCH MOMENTUM

Momentum within a match can be managed based on the score, or based on the process leading up to a score.

**A) Score-Based Momentum:** Often players make poor mistakes when they are ahead in the game, but they tend to play their best tennis when they are behind. Ideas on how to respond in specific score situations include:

1) 0-15, 15-30, 30-40, ad-out

Response: Play a point of immediate pressure such as serve and volley, high ball and sneak into the net, or draw your opponent into the net and go for a passing shot.

2) 0-30, 15-40

Response: Play a breakdown point by focusing on consistency and making the opponent work extra hard for the critical third or fifth point.

3) 0-40

Response: Focus on fundamentals, increase aggressive style, and hit out on every ball.

4) 0-0, 15-15, 30-30, deuce

Response: Use your own game-style, continue to attack opponents' weaknesses, and use your strengths.

5) 15-0, 30-15, 40-30, ad-in

Response: Play a delayed pressure point. In other words, make your opponent hit as many balls as possible.

6) 30-0, 40-15

Response: Apply quick pressure, such as serve and volley or attacking return.

7) 40-0

Response: A low risk score situation where you can go for it.

**B) Process-Based Momentum:** These are situations that occur in the process leading up to a specific score.

1) Your opponent hits a winner

Response: Aggressive attacking shot

2) Your opponent makes a poor, unforced error



Response: Serve and volley, attacking style

3) You make a poor error

Response: Take your time and focus on consistency

4) You hit a winner

Response: Play a point of delayed pressure

By applying published statistical information, you can assist a player with improved on-court decision making.