

## **SPECIAL BONUS REPORT** **© Tomaz Mencinger**



<http://www.TennisMindGame.com>

### **For the The 12 Days of Tennis Giveaway**

**This is an excerpt of the Tennis Strategy Encyclopedia ebook – these are two chapters from the PART IV of the ebook. You have received these 6 pages for free as my gift for the Christmas giveaway, the whole Tennis Strategy Encyclopedia contains 97 pages more...**

## **PART IV – Understand your mind and your game**

You now have a good overview of the general and specific tennis strategies. You have also learned certain tactical plays. (Remember the tactical battle?)

Tactics are different ways of achieving a strategy. For example, if you want to make someone run, you can play (a) long crosscourt shots to the left and right, (b) short, sharply angled crosscourt shots to the left and right, or (c) long shot and drop-shot combinations to make him run forward and backward. All three tactics have the same basic strategy — to run your opponent.

There are many other tactics, and you can find many of them in the strategy section of TennisMindGame.com.

In this last part you are going to learn more about how our mind works and how to use all this information from the ebook (and your experience) to help you play your best tennis.

## ***7. TACTICAL DECISIONS***

There is one more term to introduce. (I know, you are already overwhelmed, but hang on... :))

Tactical decisions.

You make a tactical decision every time the ball flies to you (or even before it does). You must decide what shot you are going to play: Are you going to just play the ball back? Are you going to open up the court? Are you going to approach down the line? And so forth.

This part of tennis strategy and tactics is often overlooked. It hasn't been deeply explored. You have a rare opportunity here to understand what goes on in the mind and how do we make these decisions.

Obviously, we are not thinking consciously when we play. If we try to do that, we miss the ball. Why? Because the brain is busy with all sorts of calculations during ball exchange. It must calculate the speed and trajectory of the ball, your balance, your timing (e.g., when to start the forward swing, which you DON'T consciously decide — your MIND does, starting your swing automatically!), which muscles to use and when in coordinating the kinetic chain, and countless other processes.

Conscious thinking interferes with this complicated and demanding processing, slowing it. As a result, your brain makes errors. It actually ditches some steps in the process to keep up. For example, it may take fewer "pictures" of the approaching ball. It may lump more muscle signals in the same export job. It may disregard more information.

The result is degraded perception and performance. Rather like a computer that can't keep up with the frame rate in a game or the action in a virtual reality game.

It makes errors even without interference, because players cannot possibly hit every ball in the sweet spot or always find the right distance to the ball or always swing the racquet and the exact right moment.

Despite these mistakes we can play tennis, even at fantastic levels. But as soon as conscious thinking is present, or any other mental activity, it interferes with these brain processes and consequently we make more mistakes. You can see hundreds of them even on ATP and WTA tour.

So how do we make decisions if we cannot think?

Here's the secret — you need to have an INTENT!

Intent isn't thinking or analyzing. An intention is just a thought in your subconscious from which your conscious decisions arise. What do you think is the intent of an aggressive baseliner? Yes, to hit the ball hard into the open space most of the time.

So, whenever the ball comes over the net, good aggressive baseliners decide quickly, almost instantly, how to play it. They are successful because they decide so quickly, without doubting their decisions or changing their mind.

An all-court player's intent is to outplay his opponent. All-court players usually have another strategy in play, like How can I be the first open up the court and then attack the net. So their first intent is to open up the court.

And whenever the ball starts flying toward them, their brains are already checking to see whether this ball can be played so as to open up the court.

Then a simple decision occurs — They choose YES and then play it to open up the court, or NO and then execute a backup plan. What is the backup plan? It's a shot that PREVENTS the opponent from attacking. This is the heart of tennis — playing deep shots that prevent your opponent from attacking while you look for an opportunity to attack.

So you needn't do any conscious tactical thinking during the ball exchange. It happens automatically but ONLY if you have an underlying intent or purpose. If you have no clear intent, you will play somewhere in the middle and often just hit the ball back without any special purpose.

This approach makes you vulnerable to good strategic players who work you around so that you are constantly reacting to their game. You make many unforced errors because you don't aim your shots at any particular part of the court and don't hit them decisively enough.

Playing with intent requires a high level of focus that many players aren't accustomed to. Even if they begin the match with good focus and intent, they lose it in pressure situations or situations that upset them.

When that happens to you, you must first know how to find your "zone" state again, regaining your focus. That skill is beyond the scope of this book; it's what *The Mental Manual for Tennis Winners* shows you how to do. That book explains concentration, arousal, and the power of visualization in simple, concrete terms and then shows you how to deal with 29 mentally challenging situations in a tennis match.

You will learn how to refocus, how to think constructively, and how to approach and solve each problem situation. Thus, finding your energy and focus again, you'll be able you play with your strategic or tactical intent again.

And, you'll be able to think clearly again.

## ***8. Statistics and intuition***

### ***The left and right side of the brain – which is right?***

The first part of *The Tennis Strategy Encyclopedia* describes ways of successfully playing the game of tennis regardless of your opponent. There are laws of geometry and human limitations you can exploit.

The second part of *The Tennis Strategy Encyclopedia* walks you through different approaches to playing specific types of players and specific situations in match play. Again, these are only recipes.

Since you use these recipes most of the time, they are predictable. Your opponent can quickly discover what you want to achieve. Think, if Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal play a match, how many shots that either man plays are unanticipated by his opponent? In other words, how many times do they surprise each other? My estimate is that only about 5–10% of the shots are somewhat surprising to the opponent.

These surprises come when a player does NOT follow the typical strategy or tactic in that situation. So here is the \$64,000 question: WHEN do you play against the rules? Because that is almost the only way of surprising your opponent. Good players not only know how to play, they also know what is the best shot from their opponent in a certain situation. So they anticipate the most probable and the best shot combinations from their opponent.

### **So how can you surprise them?**

This is where intuition and feel for the situation comes in. There is rarely enough time during the ball exchange for you to consciously analyze the situation and decide "Aha, since my opponent is already running to the other side, I'll wrongfoot him." Sometimes what he's doing is obvious and you do have time to decide what you'll do. (You can think analytically only before you serve.)

But usually your first reaction, and tactically the most consistent and effective shot, is to play to the open court. This is a general rule, or guideline, that you should follow most of the time.

But sometimes an IDEA flashes through your mind, one against the guidelines. That is your intuition. If you stay with that idea and execute it decisively, it's most likely a very effective decision.

Don't confuse this intuitive idea with the ideas beginners and intermediate players get. They CONSTANTLY try to outthink you. They have no general strategy, and they don't follow the guidelines — they just want to surprise you on almost every shot.

That isn't intuition, that is overthinking. They make so many choices to play in a way you won't expect that the result is a total mess. :)

Intuition happens when you play by the "rules" of tennis strategy and know exactly what you usually play that is most effective (e.g., into the open court). In the same way, you suddenly clearly see what to play even when it isn't based on these rules.

Intermediate players get an intuitive idea and start to doubt it, because it is against the rules. This hesitation, this indecision, delays their final decision, usually resulting in an error. This unfortunately reaffirms their mistrust of these ideas so that they don't want to listen to them.

That's why they are intermediate players. They may play good tennis, but it is too predictable.

Expert players play the game most of the time by the rules of tennis strategy: they attack down the line, they defend crosscourt, they cover the court correctly, and so on. But now and then they play a shot that surprises their opponent and wins the point.

Doing this has a deep effect, because we humans have a very strong need for predictability. We want to know what will happen next, especially in the most important areas of our lives. If our world becomes unpredictable we

live in a constant stress. We cannot relax and expect good things to happen. It's a survival mechanism still working deep in our brain.

Occasionally playing unpredictably, and with good success, puts a lot of stress on your opponent. He feels that he cannot predict your play and becomes very alert and stressed. This tires him psychologically, so that he cannot maintain a high level of concentration for very long.

To play your best strategic tennis, you must find the right blending of statistically and tactically smart tennis with your own intuitive ideas. It takes a lot of experience and a clear mind to be able to HEAR intuitive ideas and follow them confidently.

In my opinion, Martina Hingis is the best player ever at playing smart, strategically correct tennis mixed with cunning tactical plays that her opponents can't read. Even though these ideas go against recommended tennis tactics, they work for her very well. She uses them selectively and doesn't overdo them.

She relies on her intuitive ideas and trusts them. The fastest way to learn is to watch someone, so I invite you to attentively watch her matches and see what she does. She is a master of statistics and intuition, and you can be too.

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**And remember, if you decide to purchase [Tennis Strategy Encyclopedia](#) between 20th and 25th of December, you will receive [The Mental Manual for Tennis Winners](#) for FREE!**

**If you wish to read more about both ebooks,  
follow this link: [Win Matches](#)**

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