

SquashRocs – Areas & Skills

Squash can be broken down into 3 basic areas / skills, as outlined on the other side.

Whenever you practice for squash, as well as doing the drill, choose some area or skill to work on. Then, as each area of your game develops, they will come together in your matches to raise your overall playing level – **your only as strong as your weakest link!**

Playing Squash – Goals and Objectives

Your **first** consideration in your shot selection, is **yourself** – give yourself enough **time** to regain the T position **before** your opponent hits their shot.

Second, aim to move your opponent off the T. Hit **away/behind** them, or into **open spaces**.

Win the length battle – move your opponent to the back of the court, enabling you to get in front.

Control the T – ‘the player in front, wins’ !!!

Once you are in front, on the T – look to step in/forward and take the ball early, now you can attack them and the front of the court. Take time away from your opponent, don't let them recover or settle.

Develop your own movement patterns and play to your own rhythm. Keep yourself moving (maybe slower back to the T), rather than rushing and having a stop/start style of movement.

Try to break your opponents movement patterns and rhythm – use **hold** to ‘stop’ them, and **deception** to twist and turn them. **AND: don't be predictable.**

Only play as fast as you need to – give yourself time and don't rush yourself.

Levels of Play

How do you feel the when playing a match:

level 1: I hit the ball, but I'm always chasing the ball for my next shot – I'm controlled by my opponent

level 2: I'm able to play my shot and get back into position – I'm keeping up with my opponent

level 3: I have time, make good strategic shot selections, easy movement and plan ahead – I'm controlling the T and my opponent

The aim of all the areas and skills is to build up your game into playing at level 3.

To achieve level 3, maximize your time on and off the ball, by :-

- (1) be in **good position**, watching your opponent
- (2) move **quickly** onto the ball, be **stable**, **prepare** for your shot **early**
- (3) execute your shot, giving yourself **time** to move back into good position **(1)**

1) Technical

Grip – like pulling on a rope, spread your fingers, open racket face (bottom edge leading)

Posture – shoulders side on to ball, 90 degrees to shot direction (be facing the side/back walls)

Preparation – racket/wrist up early (make time), head high & open, **‘threaten the ball’**

Hold – to stop your opponent, break their movement, rhythm and flow

Swing – fast head speed, open face, cut, snap wrist, like skipping a stone/throwing a frisbee

Contact point with ball – just in front of your ‘hitting arm’ shoulder, is your ‘hitting/power zone’

Aiming – use of ‘second ball’ to control direction and accuracy of shot

2) Tactical

Shot selection options :-

if your under pressure and need **time** for yourself to recover the T, so use **height** in your shot
hit **away** from your opponent – hit into **open space**
keep the ball out of the middle of the court – **‘second bounce at the nick’**
hit to a different ‘quarter’ of the court than your last shot – use of **diagonals**, make them run
hit **behind** opponents movement – stop and turn them, **‘send them back’**

To get depth/past opponent, your shot has to have at least one of: **width, height, pace or deception**

3) Positioning & Movement

While in the T area – follow the ball and watch opponent, use a ‘floating split step’ or ‘stepping in’

From the T, try to be one step towards where the ball is, as your opponent is making their shot

Fast initial steps to ball, so can arrive early and/or slowly, to be balanced and stable for your shot

Final approach to ball: rear foot, lead foot **pivot** and lunge – positioning yourself at the ball (so it’s in your ‘hitting zone’) with your feet aligned and ready to **move off the shot** and back to the T

Play your shot, blending that into moving off the shot – push off your leading leg (the lunge) and use momentum from your shoulders to move off of the shot, **‘follow the racket’**

The key elements of your shot :-

shot selection	– time / away , etc... see Tactical
shot quality	– second bounce at the nick
shot execution	– hold , to stop your opponents movement and confuse/deceive them

Along with good movement and positioning – is the game of squash !!!