

How to Play Lawn Tennis.

SIMPLE LESSONS FOR SPEEDY PROGRESS.

By S. POWELL BLACKMORE (Author of "Lawn Tennis Up-to-date," in Cassell's Magazine.)

"Why did I miss that shot?" That is the question every player should ask of himself after a failure, and the next thing he might probably do would be to look at the position of his feet. In lawn tennis good footwork is the half-way rung in the Ladder of Success. And only a few reach it because the majority do not read the path of systematic practice.

Let me say at once, therefore, that I am writing for the ordinary man and girl. To the born genius of himself after a failure, and the next thing he might probably do would be to look at the position of his feet. In lawn tennis good footwork is the half-way rung in the Ladder of Success. And only a few reach it because the majority do not read the path of systematic practice.

for him. Footwork is as important in lawn tennis as it is in boxing, dancing, or golf. But it is the means whereby a player gets into the best position to make the most effective shot.

There is but small space at my disposal, therefore I propose to suggest broad general rules which, from a long experience and wide observation, will, I know, help the largest number. Footwork in the overhead service implies a stance that will bring the player's whole weight on to the front foot at the moment of impact. Last season I was much impressed with the exaggerated stance of F. T. Hunter. Why did he stand with his feet so unusually far apart? I experimented; that stance compels transference of weight on to the front foot when striking the ball. I told him of my discovery. "I guess you are right," he assented. Hunter has a first-rate service, and was one of the real bright stars at Wimbledon. Later I communicated my conviction to Major Dudley Brown—the man with the most fiery service in

England to-day, and, alas, he is an Australian! "I discovered that myself some time ago," he replied. The moral is there for all, with this addendum: No English-born and trained player has ever achieved a first-class service of the modern high-kicking calibre. Cannot some of our youngsters now remove that stigma?

Footwork in driving must be directed towards placing the striker in the best position for hitting the ball. For the forehand stroke hard hitters almost invariably plant the feet wide apart. (Throughout I speak of right-hand players; left-handed players will, of course, read "left" for "right foot," and vice versa.) Always keep on the toes when the ball is in play. That helps mobility and good poise. On the forehand the left foot is planted well ahead of the right; for the backhand drive the right foot is in front. A line drawn from one toe to the other should indicate the line of your return. That is a golden rule to remember when practicing footwork. It is the ideal to strive for, especially in back-

hand driving, so that there may be full freedom for the shoulder swing. One of the chief faults of the beginner is standing square-on to the net to make a back-hand drive. Take up this stance and see how impossible it is then to swing the racket well back.

Hard hitting is largely dependent upon getting body weight into the swing at the moment of striking the ball, and this transference of weight from the back foot to the front cannot be achieved efficiently unless the feet are placed aright. Keep always on the toes, that gives poise, balance, and keeps the knees bent. This gives a crouching expectant attitude which is one of the chief secrets of mobility. Stiffened knees, with the player's weight on the heels, almost invariably indicates a mind not fully alert; it also most certainly prevents any player getting off the mark in the shortest possible time. This stooping posture, with the weight on the toes, must be regarded as essential both in receiving service, and when in the volleying position close up to the net.

SWING OF THE RACKET.

The swing of the racket may be conveniently divided into three parts: the swing back, the hit and the follow through. The swing back of the racket is of vital importance. This is the preparation for the actual stroke. I believe in a full swing back. Many out-of-date writers used to urge that the back swing should be reduced to a minimum, and that it was follow-through that gave speed to the stroke. Ambitious beginners, those who want to acquire modern hitting powers, must eschew this old fallacy.

The most prevalent fault in the swing is a late start in the swing back. This is the natural tendency, so I would emphasize to the beginner this: You can hardly start the swing back too soon once the direction of the ball to forehand or backhand has been discovered. The back swing should be commenced before the ball has struck the ground, because it is advisable to have a moment's pause before commencing the sweep forward. That pause is of immense importance to hitting true. Not only does it indicate, but it reaffirms confidence: the actual stroke is steady and the danger of undue hurry—a fault fatal to the effective production of any shot—is eliminated.

At the end of this swing back for the forehand drive off the ground, the left shoulder should be pointing towards the net, and the right shoulder towards the base line.

In the backhand drive the full swing back is equally imperative. Often, on this side, the right foot should not only be well advanced, but nearer the line the left side line the back foot. For the backhand drive straight down the line this stance is frequently taken up by fine-stroke players such as Mr. F. Gordon Lowe or Mr. B. I. C. Norton.

If these essentials are faithfully observed, and if the actual hit is unchecked, the follow-through of the racket will look after itself. In the forehand cross-court drive the racket head will finish against the left arm with the racket pointing towards the base-line. With the forehand shot down the line the racket should finish extended at arm's length pointing to the spot aimed for. The same holds good in regard to the backhand drives. Consider the follow-through as the effect, or as the harvest of something sown; an incomplete or imperfect follow-through is evidence of a fault developed before or at the moment of the actual hit. In the past the stress has been wrongly laid upon the follow-through as being a cause of faulty stroke-production. In reality had follow-through is like photographic evidence of an earlier error. This is of vital importance, so think it over carefully. The old teaching indicates very loose thinking.

Racket control of the tennis ball involves a heap of things well done. We have seen that the player in driving must swing round and face the ball. That is why footwork is important. The swing back must be full, free and early. But the ball has yet to be truly hit if it is to be controlled. We must now insist, therefore, upon the keenest concentration in watching the ball—without relaxation for the fraction of a second—when the ball is in play.

Go amongst a group of beginners or mediocre players and anyone will hear the querulous remark in explanation or apology for a service fault or for a ball driven beyond the base-line: "I cannot see the service-

line," or, "The back line is rubbed out." These players should not want to see the line. What they should desire, with all the power and willing of which they are capable, is to see the ball at the moment of hitting it!

HOW TO ACQUIRE CONTROL OF BALL.

I am not going to enter into a long discussion as to whether a few super-champions do or do not deliberately, in the last fraction of a second before or as the racket strikes the ball, look up to the spot aimed for. Suffice to say, I possess a heap of photographic evidence proving that, practically up to the moment of impact, past and present champions do have their eyes glued to the ball in actual match play. This rule—to keep the eye fixed on the ball—should be taken imperatively and without reservation. It is one of the most difficult things of all, to do continuously in actual play.

"But how can I, if my opponent is coming to the net?" a reader may inquire. Here again the older, instructional writers have erred. Faced with this poser, they have confessed that the player must take his eye off the ball. Rubbish, twice rubbish. After your opponent has struck the ball you swing or run into position, all the time keeping your head turned to the oncoming ball. Your eyes are thus continually photographing your opponent's court right up to the last fraction of a second before your actual hit. While you concentrate upon watching the ball in its flight over the net your mind is subconsciously recording the movements of your opponent. Up until the last quarter of a second, when your glance swings sideways, you have, therefore, while watching the ball, obtained a simultaneous picture of your opponent's court. What the player has to do is to concentrate upon the ball up to the moment of hitting, and the more faithfully he can achieve this the better.

I believe that there is a blind spot just before the actual impact of racket and ball, but it does not affect the truth of this fundamental principle. It must be the object of every player to see the ball as late as possible. To do so will require immense concentration for the vast majority; day after day the player will have to get back to this elementary rule. He can never become good enough to forget it.

In the service stroke there can be no possible object in wanting to look down to see whether the lines have shifted. The boundaries of the court permanent. Therefore keep your eyes glued to the ball once it has been thrown up, and try consistently to see the impact. You won't be able to, but the endeavor may be regarded as an insurance premium against a mishit. "Eye on the ball" is equally important in the overhead volley, generally called the "smash," and in all the low volleying strokes.

(To be continued.)

Just Folks

By EDGAR A. GUEST.

THE FRIENDLY FOLK.

When the world has paid its honor to the glory of the brave And has laid its wreath of laurel on some valiant soldier's grave, When high skill has been rewarded, and the great with pen or brush Stand as Masters of their fellows, in the silence, and the hush Which follow after cheering, then my tribute I would pay To the friendly men and women that I've met along the way.

The hand that drew the water and the hand that hewed the wood, The friends who stood behind me when in danger dire I stood, The gentle, kindly neighbour, seeking neither wealth nor fame, Who knew my need for comfort and so, bringing comfort, came, 'Tis to them I'd pay my tribute—for when all is said and done, It's the humble friends about us that our joys depend upon.

Praise the super-man for courage, the artist for his skill, Robe the Masters with distinction, but at last when all is still, If you turn and look behind you and recall the blows of fate, You'll find the friends who loved you best were not the super-great. The ranks of kindly people are the ones you will recall, For the humble men and women are the greatest after all.

Household Notes.

Sorrelle makes a delicious accompaniment to veal. Serve with poached eggs on it.

Serve Neufchatel cheese as a luncheon dish with stuffed dates and mayonnaise.

Shelled peas become tough if they are exposed to the air any time before cooking.

Vegetables to be used for garnishing can be cut into fancy shapes before canning.

The Japanese sauce made from the black soy bean is excellent in flavoring gravy.

This is the time to can some huckleberries with tart apple or rhubarb for flavor.

Serve a block of vanilla ice cream in a ring of peach halves filled with whipped cream.

Air bubbles can be removed from the contents of a preserve jar by "padding" with a knife.

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