

Advice for Beginning Badminton Players



Written by kwun

Wednesday, 02 March 2005

Badminton is becoming more and more popular, more and more students are taking up badminton as their main sports, more and more adults are also taking up badminton as their recreational activity. As we see more beginners, I hope to point out in this article what aspects of badminton a beginning badminton player should focus on, as well as point out a few common mistakes that beginners tend to make. We hope this will help your journey into this sport that we all love.

First, let's point out the positives, ie. Aspects of badminton that we think will help the up and coming players.

FOCUS ON:

Focus on the correct grip

The most fundamental aspect of badminton technique is the grip. The grip is how a badminton holds the badminton racket. A correct grip is a pathway for a badminton player to improve upon their skills. on the contrary, using an incorrect grip is often a brickwall that leads to poor form and poorly executed techniques. It takes much more time to unlearn a bad technique than to learn one. Many of us have experienced it before the painful way.

The proper badminton grips may feel uncomfortable and unnatural in the beginning, but if you are able to get over that fact, later on you will appreciate what you have learned.

There are two basic grips for badminton, the forehand grip and the backhand grip. We won't go into much more detail here, if you want to know about gripping, please read the grip guide in Badminton Central. The information maybe overwhelming at first, but since this is so fundamental in badminton, it is worth the time to digest it.

Focus on the correct strokes

The worst part of learning something is to have to unlearn it later on. This happens to many recreational badminton players. We hop into the court, invent all these wild shots that seems right then, but later on to find out that they are the wrong way to hit. Then we spend 3 times the time to unlearn them as they have been so

ingrained into our muscles. If you want to avoid that happening to you, it is vital to learn the proper way in the beginning.

To do that, you must find a good coach who can direct you. When you choose a coach, make sure he understands and can demonstrate the fundamentals. Your friend who happens to be playing next court to you may not be the best coach you can get.

Focus on footwork

We cannot stress the importance of footwork more. Footwork is the skill that allows you to move from point to point in the badminton court. While it sounds like an easy concept, in fact it is one of the most difficult skills in badminton. The reason footwork is so important is very simple: if you cannot get there in time, it is useless to have the best racket skill. The Cororary of that is that, the earlier you can get to the shuttle, the more choices of shots you have and the more you can pressure your opponent.

Lee Jae Bok, an ex-Korean national player, once says:

"You hit shuttle with your feet."

Footwork is one of the most difficult aspects of badminton. It takes a lot of time to learn, as well as a lot of time to practice. It is often less practiced because of the lack of venue. It is quite uncommon and anti-social for someone to take up ½ of a badminton court to practice footwork while everybody waits on the sideline. Despite so, it is still very important. A professional player can move around the court very effortlessly solely because they have very good footwork technique, they do make it look very easy but in fact, it takes many years of very hard work to master it.

Focus on fitness - jog/swim/bike - or do footwork drills

Fitness is one of the many reason many people take up badminton. Depending on the level of one's game, badminton can be a very leisure game all the way to a down-right fitness torture. Beginning recreational players will likely be moving relatively less around the court, but as one's skill improve, you will not only notice that you have to cover more parts of the court, you will also have to cover it in greater speed, which multiplies the fitness level needed by many folds.

In order to catch up with your pending improvements in skill, it is then important for you to increase your fitness level to complement it. There are many ways to improve one's fitness, one popular way

is to skip rope, or jog, swim, bike. Doing footwork drills also a great way to practice footwork and develop one's fitness at the same time.

Focus on keeping track of your progress

Often when one is having fun, you must try to re-evaluate what you have learned and how you are using it. Most recreational players do not do that but it is helpful in identifying potential weaknesses in your game.

DO NOT FOCUS ON:

Avoid expensive equipment - you will most likely be wasting money

Badminton is solely a game of skills and mind, and not a game of equipment. 99% of ones game depends on how well one can yield the racket but not depend on the racket itself.

Having said that, equipment is still one essential aspect of badminton, and one do need to get the correct equipment. However, the most important equipment that a beginning badminton can own is not the top of the line racket, but instead a good, fitting pair of badminton shoes. Due to the nature of badminton movement, there is a high risk of injury due to twisting or spraining of various leg joints. A good pair of badminton shoes will ensure that you get a good solid grip of the badminton court and vastly reduces the risk of injury.

I'd like to mention one more thing on badminton equipment, often top of the line badminton rackets are not designed for beginners. While they are cool looking and expensive, their characteristics are more suited for advance players with more power. Beginners are best suited to lower end rackets. Your money is best suited to pay for some decent coaching instead.

Avoid trick shots - stop learning those strange shots.

Too many a time I have stepped into a badminton court against some beginning players who can do all these fancy trick shots but at the same time, unable to do a proper baseline to baseline clear. Badminton is a very fundamental game where one really need to learn all the basics in order to survive in a match. Trick shots may work once or twice but soon your opponent will learn how to read them and then you are back to square one.

There is definite a place for trick shots in badminton, but that's only after one has learned to execute all the fundamentals shots first.

Avoid fancy style - i have so many times seen beginners with really fancy looking hitting style but then they miss the shuttle completely. keep it simple.

Badminton is a very efficient game. The standard, non-fancy, way of playing badminton is the most efficient way for one to hit a shot, there is simply too little time in badminton for one to do all these fancy style.

Avoid strength training - leave this after you have learned your basic strokes

Every now and then, someone will come to badminton and they want to know how to train their muscles to hit the strongest smash. Which is ok except we later on find out that such person cannot even hit a baseline to baseline clear properly. There is no point trying to hit hard when one cannot hit properly. An example of a proper technique is when I see 12 yrs old girls at 5 feet tall who can hit baseline to baseline clear with ease. Imagine what she can do when she grows a few inches taller?

To close, I'd like to point out that badminton is a very complex game, even advance players learn new aspects of badminton everyday. Make sure you keep an open mind when you approach badminton, only then will you be able to appreciate the greatness of this sport.