



The Buddy Coaching Series

The Secret to Modern Tennis



With Vertical Power
Book 9 – The Advanced Slice

By Andrew Magrath & John Littleford
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Introduction

Yes this book can teach you to improve this shot minutes! Not weeks, not months or years but here today. All you need is a partner, some tennis balls, a couple of racquets and of course, a tennis court! This guide will allow you to learn as you teach your partner, friend or child whoever they maybe.

Tennis is really an easy game to play but has been complicated over the years by over choreographed coaching. You will see as you go through this guide that tennis is truly a wonderful and simple game to play and learn.



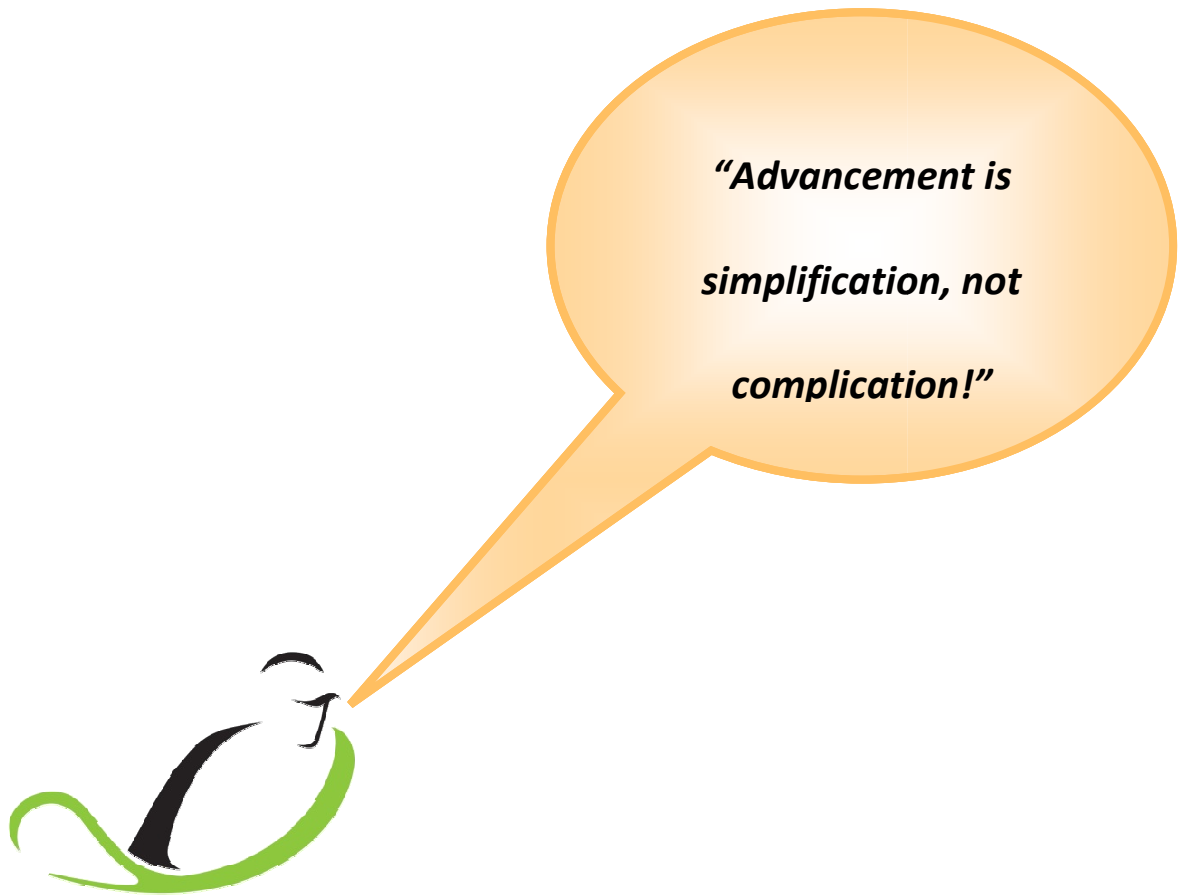
The Topspin forehand a formidable weapon in the modern game

Please do not think that learning to improve your shots means that we will take you on a complicated and convoluted technical rollercoaster. Please be assured that every drill, just like the Control &



Confidence course has an aim to allow you to perform and improve naturally.

We have a saying that we very much adhere to:



To obtain the maximum force in your strokes, the following laws of motion must be adhered to. Yes I know it's like being back at school! I do not want to blind you with science, but I think it helps to give a brief insight into why and how it all works. ***Please note that this relevant on ALL tennis strokes***

Newton's second law of motion can be formally stated as follows:

“The acceleration of an object as produced by a net force is directly proportional to the magnitude of the net force, in the same direction as the net force, and inversely proportional to the mass of the object.”



This can be expressed in equation form as follows:

$$\text{Acceleration} = \text{Force} / \text{Mass}$$

The above equation is often rearranged as shown below. The net force is equated to the product of the mass times the acceleration.

$$\text{Force} = \text{Mass} \times \text{Acceleration}$$

“The acceleration is directly proportional to the *net force*; the *net force* equals mass times acceleration; the acceleration in the same direction as the *net force*; an acceleration is produced by a *net force*.”



The NET FORCE.

Ok, using Mr Newton's laws of motion, let's examine the following tennis example.

Two players are playing tennis. They both have the same weight racquet and hit the same amount of spin. One player takes a backswing, and approaches the ball at 50 mph accelerating to 70 mph on the contact.

The other player takes a back swing and approaches the ball at 20mph and accelerates to 70 mph on contact.

Which player's shot will produce the most force?

If you said the second player then **well done!** Give yourself a big pat on the back! The reason being as we know is - ***Force = Mass x Acceleration.*** Therefore, this player was accelerating at 50 metres per second, per second. The first player accelerated at only 20 metres per second per second therefore imparting less force.

What can we learn from the backswing?

Backswing produces "**momentum**" which is **Mass x Velocity.** We have now proved that we do not want a fast or too big a backswing. This also disproves the "racquet back early" ideology which leads to a fast backswing leaving not much for the final acceleration.





WAIT FOR THE BALL...

By tracking the ball and waiting for the bounce, this leaves the player ample time to take a slow backswing and then to accelerate producing optimum force. An 'early preparation' can lead to the backswing having to stop mid flow and wait for the ball to catch up. This can hinder the player's timing.

Even when a player is rushed by their opponent's shot, leaving very little time for a backswing, the player can still accelerate effectively with a very small backswing.

One of the first drills that you will do on our syllabus will teach you the 'feel' of producing massive amounts of acceleration, thus creating huge amounts of force on your shots.

The other aspect of power and force is the manner the player should come to the ball.





VERTICAL POWER - The racquet is going up and across his body

The player should pull up and across the ball. If you watch the top Pros, they all do this very well. They use their pectoral and biceps to do this. This is very similar to a discus throw where the athlete uses an upward motion to release the discus after which the arm wraps around the opposite side of the body.

Tennis is a vertical game not a horizontal one! You will find the optimum acceleration when the racquet travels upwards. Imaging an uppercut in boxing and the power an athlete gets when they drive their arms upward when running. Imagine a conker on a string, swinging to and fro. When you accelerate, the conker goes vertical. In tennis this is also crucial when hitting topspin. You will notice the player leading with the



‘top edge’ as they approach the ball. This is known as the ‘Pendulum effect’.



A similar finish with an uppercut or a topspin forehand

We can see this when a Pro has hit a very forceful forehand. The player has actually left the ground as they hit the ball. They do this by pushing into the floor as they track the ball. From a bent knee position, they then ‘explode upwards’ with huge amounts of force and natural rotation. This is known as *ground reaction force* and *circular force*. Just watch the polo shirts of the top men players as they do this. You can see who has had a good waxing!

You must develop a sense of YIN and Yang. Yin is when you are in a state of complete relaxation and Yang is when you are in a state of intensity. So you track the ball on the move, you must be in a state of Yin and when you strike the ball, that is when you should be in a Yang. Also when you track the ball, make sure that you breathe in and exhale when you strike the ball. This is also prevalent in martial arts.

So what can we derive from all this? Is that you should take a slow continuous backswing, before jumping to ‘warp speed’ as it were at the



last minute. This last minute acceleration WILL produce more force output on all your shots. Again, you do NOT need a huge backswing to impart masses of force.

Hopefully you are all still with me. Don't worry if you are a little hazy by all this jargon because the real beauty is the drills that I am going to show you will make you do all this without thinking about things too much!



I can't take any more!

Ok, the science lecture is over. Now.....





Let's get on court, but before we do here are some tips before we begin:

- ☀ The following steps are easy progressions to improve your game and it is crucial that you follow them and DO NOT miss any out - or your game will not blossom as it should
- ☀ Please note that even the top players re-take these steps to find their rhythm again
- ☀ During the tuition one of you will become the student and the other will become the coach. You will reverse roles as you progress through these simple steps
- ☀ Please take your time and make sure you fully grasp each step as you move along
- ☀ If followed in the steps provided, you will find your natural tennis talent - and believe as we do - that TENNIS is truly a simple game to play



Nine



So let's take the

“The Slice Backhand and Drop Shot”

to the next level!



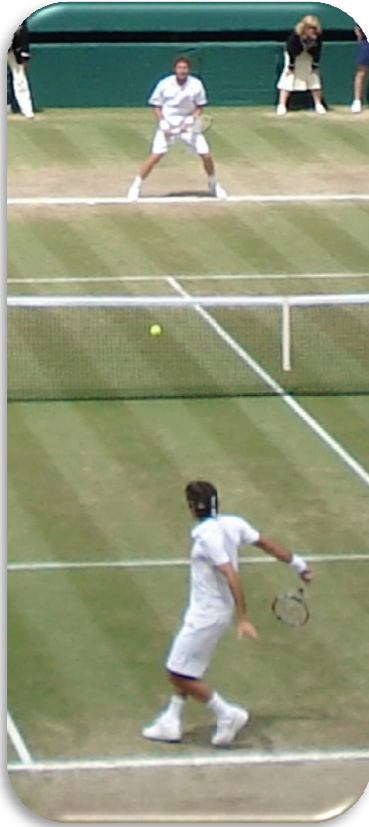


Step 1- Finding the Acceleration

- ☀ To find natural acceleration, stand on the service line with your racquet in the navel ready position. Have a partner feed you a ball to your backhand side. With a very small and slow backswing, concentrate on hitting down and across the ball. You can start with the racquet already on your backhand side in front of you, with the butt pointing at the ball.

- ☀ As you do this you should be feeling both arms finishing behind you, as you squeeze your shoulder blades together as you create more force.





Federer's slice backhand return. Look at how he uses his arms

- ☀ You are trying to hit copious amounts of back and sidespin whilst keeping the ball fairly low over the net. The progression will be to move backwards and forwards whilst really feeling that acceleration and marvel when the ball really sticks to the court.
- ☀ Encourage the student to count 1 to 5 after the bounce waiting for the ball. (This encourages the student to wait for the ball. Say 1 when the ball bounces, then 2,3,4 and 5 is when they catch the ball)





Step 2 - Develop Your Natural Shape

- ☀ The term natural shape means to develop your most efficient and effective style of hitting the ball.
- ☀ As the ball is hit to you, find your continental grip whilst keeping the racquet in front. Track the ball by tilting the butt toward the ball with your wrist cocked. Your non dominant hand is supporting the throat.
- ☀ Keep both hands on the racquet until you are ready to take a swing at the ball.
- ☀ Allow the ball to come almost level with your middle finger of your dominant hand.



- ☀ As you start to approach the ball slowly release your non dominant hand so your strings can slide under the ball for backspin.
- ☀ Feel yourself lead with the bottom edge of the racquet and hit down and across the ball.
- ☀ Make sure that you finish. Get your partner to feed 10 balls.

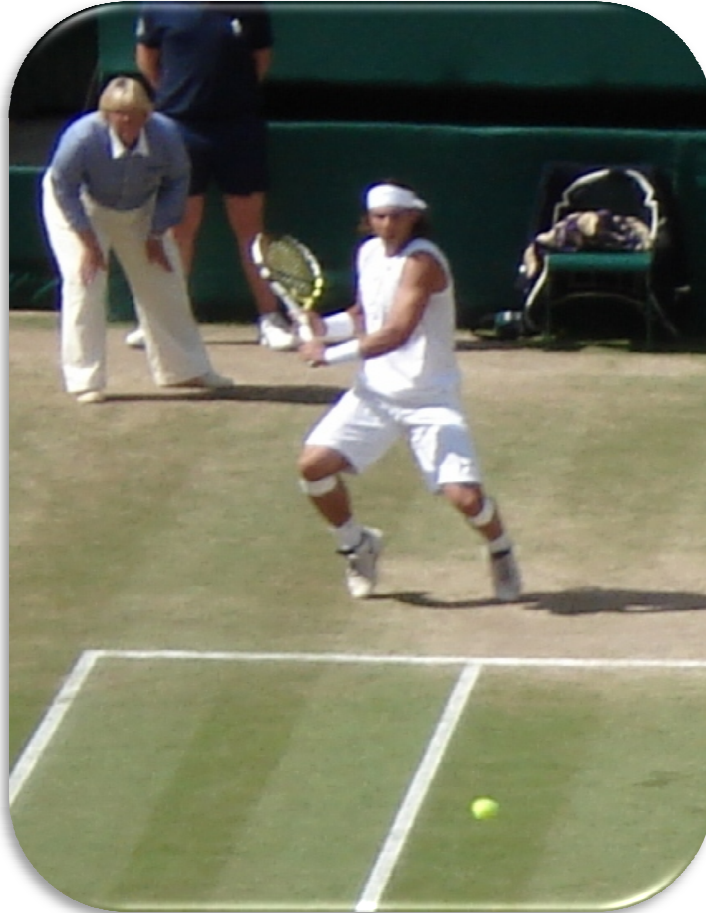


Step 4 - The Wide Ball

- ☀ When a player is pulled wide, they will try and pull the ball back into court. Most will hit cross court for safety, some will try a more aggressive down the line.



- ☀ Should you really be struggling for reach then it is probably best to play the slice backhand cross court. Get your partner to feed you 10 balls.



Nadal going for a wide return of serve with slice



Step 5 - The High Ball

- ☀ Should receive a high ball to the backhand side, you could use topspin, but you can also use slice which is fine as long as you send it deep.
- ☀ Get your partner to feed you 10 balls. When the ball comes high, track the ball by pointing the butt up at the ball and simply hit down and across from shoulder height.



Step 6 - The Low and Short Ball

- ☀ Should a ball shoot through low and/or short, maybe a slice from the opponent, then a slice is a good answer because it 'digs' the ball out because of the open racquet face.
- ☀ If the ball is short, use this as an approach shot and come into the net. Get your partner to feed you 10 balls.





Step 7 - Placement

- ☀ When hitting your shots, practice hitting 10 shots to the following placements. Remember, it is not just how hard you hit but where you position the ball in order to out-manoeuvre your opponent which is more important.
- ☀ Cross court centre – This is a diagonal shot which lands towards the centre of the baseline or just off centre.
- ☀ Acute cross court - is again a diagonal shot which lands deeper towards the corner or a little further up half way between service and baseline.



☀ Short angle – is another diagonal shot which has a very acute angle and lands roughly where the service line meets the singles line.

☀ Down the line – This is when the ball is struck in a straight line and follows the singles line in a parallel fashion. All being well the ball should land around within a foot of the singles line.



Step 8 - Drop Shots

☀ These are hit when your opponent is at the back of the court and you simply open the racquet face so the ball follows a more vertical path but drops on the other side of the net. Disguising your intentions is crucial. Also if your shot is really effective, then move forwards to pick up any short reply.





Open the racquet and feel the ball with passive hands

for the perfect drop-shot

- ☀ Start on the baseline and move back hitting drop shots to different angles. Get your partner to feed 10 balls.





Step 10 - Hitting off the Back foot

- ☀ In the modern game, as well as hitting with open stance and stepping in when you have to, you may also have to hit off the back foot when you are struggling for space to hit your shot. Again, a topspin backhand might be a better option here.
- ☀ Stand inside the baseline and get your partner to feed you awkward balls at your feet that make you scurry back and put your weight onto your back foot as you hit up. As you do this, take care not to lean back with your upper body. You might 'sky' the ball or worse still, fall backwards!





You have now completed the slice backhand and drop shot syllabus.

This should have taken you around 30 to 40 minutes to complete all the progressions.

Now you have familiarised yourself with this syllabus, feel free to re-visit again and again to really perfect each type of shot.

The next thing to do is to study our game situation drill e book and DVD to see how you can practice slice backhands and drop shots within a realistic game!



So let's take the



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- ☀ You are trying to hit large amounts of back and sidespin whilst keeping the ball fairly low over the net. The progression will be to move backwards and forwards whilst really feeling that acceleration and marvel when the ball really sticks to the court.
- ☀ Encourage the student to count 1 to 5 after the bounce waiting for the ball. (This encourages the student to wait for the ball. Say 1 when the ball bounces, then 2,3,4 and 5 is when they catch the ball)



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- ☀ As the ball is hit to you, find your continental grip whilst keeping the racquet in front. Track the ball by tilting the butt toward the ball with your wrist cocked. Your non dominant hand is supporting the throat.



- ☀️ Keep both hands on the racquet until you are ready to take a swing at the ball.

- ☀️ When you are ready, take the racquet back a short way.

- ☀️ As you start to approach the ball slowly release your non dominant hand so your strings can slide under the ball for backspin.

- ☀️ Feel yourself lead with the bottom edge of the racquet and hit down and across the ball.

- ☀️ Make sure that you finish. Get your partner to feed 10 balls.





Step 4 - The Wide Ball

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- ☀ Should you really be struggling for reach then it is probably best to play the slice backhand cross court. Get your partner to feed you 10 balls.



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- ☀ Should a ball shoot through low and/or short, maybe a slice from the opponent, then a slice is one option because it 'digs' the ball out



because of the open racquet face. However a more attacking topspin forehand should be favoured here.

- ☀ If the ball is short, use this as an approach shot and come into the net. Get your partner to feed you 10 balls.



The forehand sliced approach shot





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- ☀ When hitting your shots, practice hitting 10 shots to the following placements. Remember, it is not just how hard you hit but where you position the ball in order to out-manoeuvre your opponent which is more important.
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Open the face of the racquet and hit with passive (soft) hands



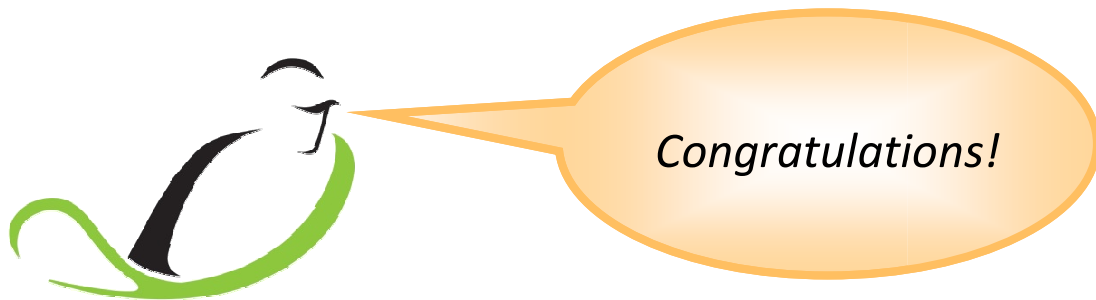


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ENJOY YOUR TENNIS!



About the Authors

Both personally tutored to the highest level by Oscar Wegner the father of Modern Tennis

Andrew Magrath – Director of Modern Tennis International

Andy has 15 years of experience coaching at various clubs and centres. He is LTA and USPTR qualified and has fast grown a reputation as one of the leading Instructors in this country and internationally. He has appeared several times on TV with pupils that he has tutored to success in record time using these methods.



Andy says “Tennis is an easy game to play and my dream is to have it as our No1 participation sport!”



John Littleford – Director of Modern Tennis International

John has over 20 years of experience coaching and playing at the highest level. He is also LTA and USPTR qualified, has represented the UK internationally and played for Hertfordshire and Middlesex at Senior County levels. John has been a success wherever he has played or coached and has always been looking for new ideas to increase participation in tennis. He is now dedicated his career to promoting these Modern Tennis methods to the masses.



John says “I am convinced this system is the answer to teaching and learning tennis. Players will retain their natural flare and fulfill their potential so much easier this way!”



About Modern Tennis International

John Littleford and Andy Magrath along with their team of skilled staff formed Modern Tennis International in June 2008 after realizing that these methods could transform Tennis the World over. Both gave up good jobs to pursue their passion.

John discovered an Argentine Coach of the name Oscar Wegner, who had been having huge success with these methods for years in Spain, Brazil, Russia and Argentina. So he and Andy brought Oscar over to UK to find out more. Oscar fully trained and tutored John and Andy and asked them to represent him in the UK.

MTI runs regular courses of this methodology as well as making user friendly DVDs, e-books and audio books. The courses have been very well received and many organizations are now adhering to these methods. Please take a look at our website www.playmoderntennis.com for more information.

