

How To...

ANTICIPATE



By Peter Farrell – *Leinster Development Officer*

After your opponent hits a shot, you usually have very little time to react. You need to calculate how hard the ball has been hit, with what type of spin, and where it is heading for. And you need this information in a hurry.

Would it help if you could have some idea of what type of shot is coming *before* your opponent actually hits it? Many people think that this skill of `anticipation` is only for advanced players, but this is not the case. A player at any level who has his or her thinking cap on can make it easier to get to the ball, by asking a few relevant questions.

Anticipation is not something you need to do on every one of the other player's shots. But if your opponent is in a strong position, and looks as if she will be able to hit a winner unless you move in the right direction before she hits the ball, here are some questions you should ask yourself:

What shot has she played before in this situation? If a player has a habit of going crosscourt off a short ball on their forehand side, chances are they will do so again.

What shots can this opponent not play? If you know she cannot hit a wide slice serve to the deuce box, you need not concern yourself with having to prepare to return this shot.

What shot would I play if I were in my opponent's position? If you see a logical place where your opponent's next shot should go, she probably sees it too.

Anticipation boils down to an educated guess. If you guess right you have a chance to get to a ball you really had no right to get to!



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