

A WARRIORS GUIDE TO WINNING AT TOURNAMENTS

STRATEGIES WHERE IT'S ALL ABOUT WINNING



Winning philosophies taught by 3x
National Gold Medal Winner
Brett Noel



Brett Noel is a **three-time National Gold Medal winner**, Undefeated in 2017,2018 and 2019. He recently won Gold medals at the Huntsman World Games, Double Gold medals in Regionals 2019 and Gold Medal in 2020 at Professional Pickleball Associations Grand Slam Tournament. With over 100 medal winnings, Brett shares insights that help players become the best they can be. Brett achieved a ranking of 5.0 in 2018. Brett is a certified instructor with Professional Pickleball Registry under Sarah Ansboury traveling across the country offering professional coaching and private lessons.

Brett's FREE E-Books are sponsored by "Pickleball Sports Apparel". Their website is www.Youeverythingpickeballstore.com. When you have an opportunity, check out their website. They offer Pickleball clothing, accessories, gifts, and products that you want to see.

If at any time you have questions, need some FREE advice, contact me anytime.
BrettNoel2@gmail.com.

It does not matter if you are new to the sport or an advanced player. The ideas and strategies I will share with you worked for me and I feel they will work for you. I always share with the players I coach that there is not only one way to play Pickleball. Take what works and what resonates with you and use it. If you do not like it, toss it out. So many of the videos and training I see in social media is how the pros do it. Most players are not pros or even 5.0 players. Most players are 3.0-3.5 and **these strategies I share with you will help you the most.**

If you are playing at levels 2.5 – 3.5 there are a lot of shots and strategies that you can easily get away with successfully at that level which might not be as effective at the upper levels so **test your opponents and see what they can handle.**

When I play against 5.0 players and professionals, I still lob, drive, and serve hard to test them, to see what they can do. How well do they handle hard drives? Can they retrieve lobs effectively? Can they return a hard serve deep? In this E-book, I will not be discussing the "How" but rather the "What to do".

LET'S GET STARTED

You need to find a partner that has a similar mindset as you. Both of my partners at Nationals had the same mindset as me.

1. We went into the tournament expecting to win
 2. We always supported each other no matter what. If one of us was missing shots, we touched paddles and said, "Good Try".
 3. We were willing to change strategies or positions if needed. If something was not working, we were open to change.
 4. We created a specific strategy on what to do and who to attack and we stayed with that plan until both of us agreed to change it.
 5. We communicated often to each other, what was working and what might not be working. Always adjusting as needed.
 6. We trusted each other. You need to have faith in each other and trust that they will be there to do what needs to be done. I have had partners that have come way over into my side of the court to hit a ball (Usually into the net) saying "I didn't see you". Until your partner shows that he or she cannot return the ball effectively, trust them and do not try to play singles in a doubles match.
3. **Determine who you are going to attack.** This was a critical decision that helped me win Gold so many times in many tournaments across the country. In every match my partner and I determined who we would attack. If we played men's doubles or Mixed doubles, we **ALWAYS** chose someone to attack. We attacked the weaker player.

How do we know who the weaker player is? If I am meeting my opponent for the first time on the court, I would watch them warm up. I am usually on the court with my partner warming up at the same time, but I am also keeping an eye on my opponents as they warm up. You will usually find the weaker player by watching them hit the ball.

I would look for posture and position. Which one of my opponents was having trouble dinking the ball over the net? Were they keeping their paddles down? How did my opponent look regarding balance, and proper technique?

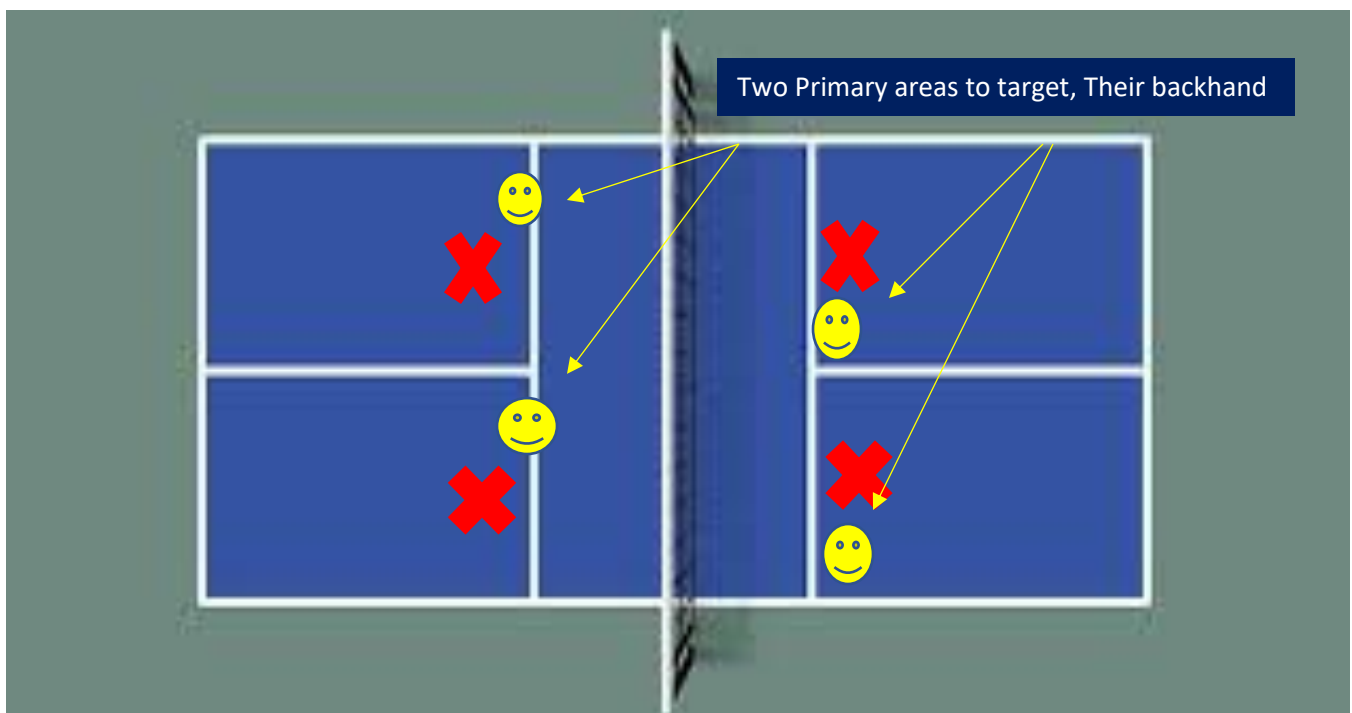
If I have an opportunity to watch my opponents play in a match, that is worth its weight in Gold. Often my partner and I will watch the team we are going to play. We might say we are going to play the winner of this match or the loser of that match. We watch the team that we are going to play next and we decide then and there who we are going to attack.

Just Pick one. Have a conversation with your partner on who you are going to attack and then attack them. There is tremendous pressure put on a player when they know they are targeted. Once they miss a few points in a row they really succumb to the pressure and make more mistakes. If you and your partner chose a player to attack and they are defending well, change the attack to the other player and see how they do.

When I play against two players that are equally skilled, I still choose one to attack and see the results. You might have two players equal in skill and ability when things are going right, but how do they perform when the pressure is on? Test them.

4. **There are only two areas to hit too.** Especially at the lower skilled levels. I know there are more areas to attack but this really works. The answer is your opponent's backhand. If I am at the kitchen line and we are dinking, I am dinking to your backhand. Rarely do players attack with their backhand. Usually they just try and get it over the net. Often making the mistake of hitting it too high or into the net.

If I am driving the ball, I am trying to drive to my opponents backhand (Unless a far more favorable shot opens). Attacking you opponents' backhand will usually give you the advantage.



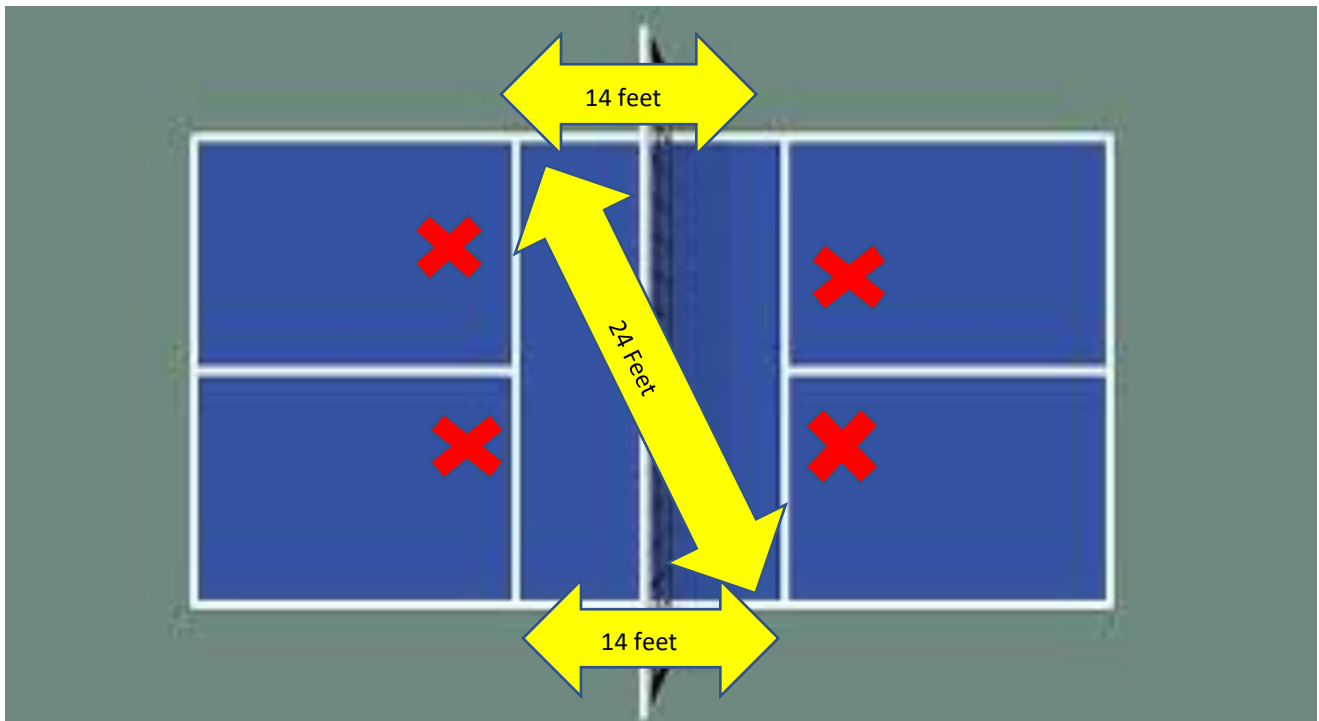
In this scenario we assume all players are right-handed. If you come across a player that is left-handed your target area will change because their backhand is now on the opposite side. You get the strategy. Hit to your opponent's backhand for better results.

5. **Use distance as a weapon.** In the heat of battle when you are making mistakes, you are not taking the time to analyze your posture, position, balance etc., when mistakes happen. All you know is that your ball is going too far or too high and your losing rallies. The easy fix is distance.

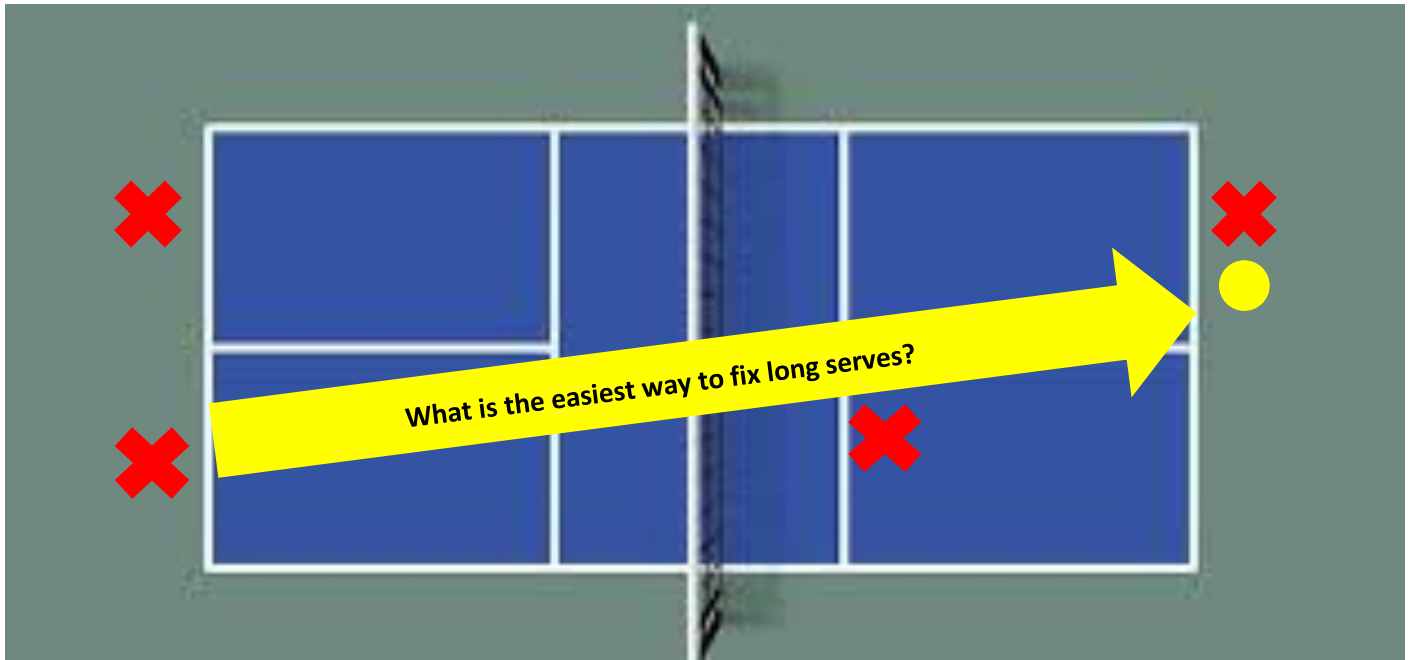
The distance between two players standing in front of each other is 14 feet. The difference between two players cross court is 24 feet. You have 10 more feet to make an error.

If I am at the baseline and I try a third shot drop that flies 30 feet, my opponent will smash the ball for a winner. A 30 foot drop cross court is an amazing shot. Make a 35-foot shot cross court and you're a hero.

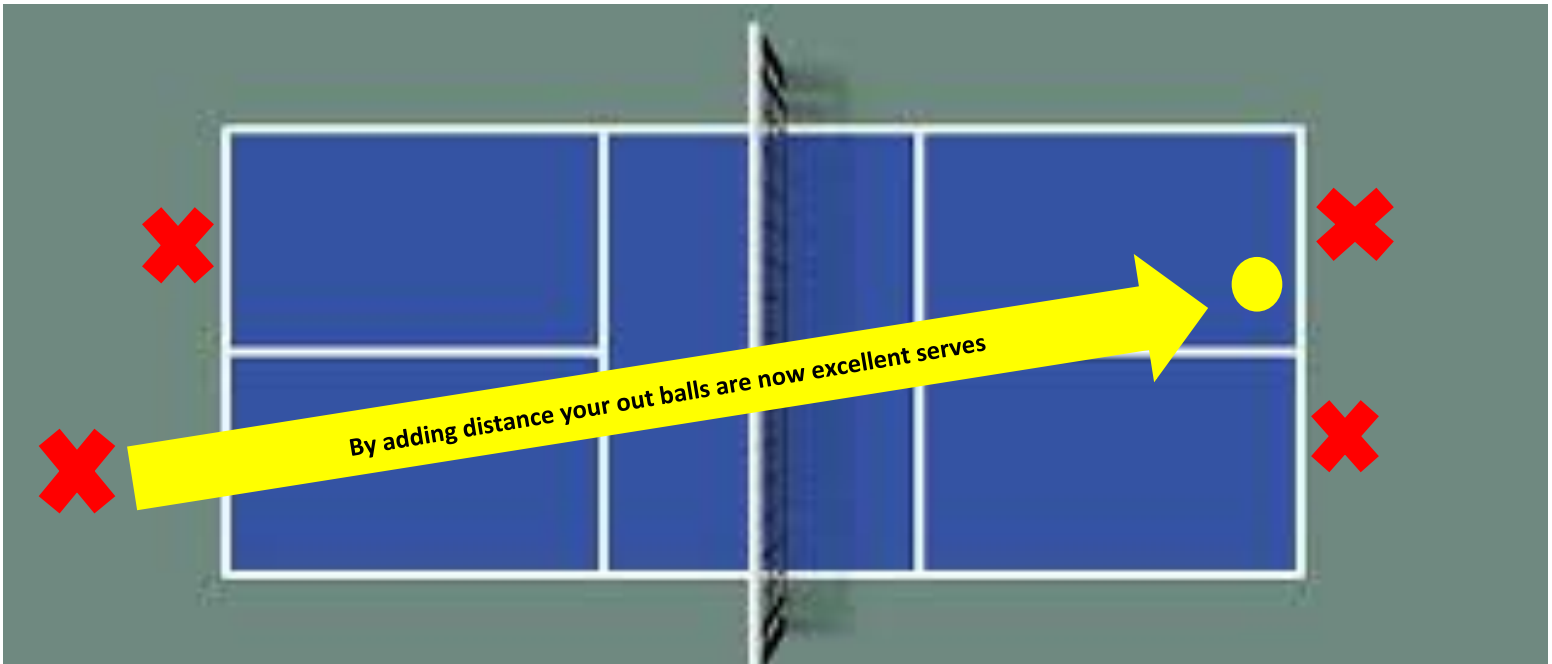
If you are returning serve and your balls are going out. Just return cross court. Add distance. If you are serving long simply back up and add distance. If you are serving short step forward to take away distance. Use distance as a tool.



If I am playing the soft game and dinking straight in front of me, I have 14 Feet. If I hit cross court, I have an additional 10 feet for errors. I love the extra length, Use it to your advantage.



When you find yourself serving out of bounds here is an easy fix. Just add distance. Can you see how distance can be your easiest solution?



6. **Use Time Outs to stop their momentum.** As a referee I have watched hundreds of matches where I want to yell to a team "Take a time Out". Their opponent has been scoring point after point and they are doing nothing to stop the momentum. Use time out as a tool. In most matches you will get a minimum of two time-outs. Use them.

As a rule, I will consider taking a time out if my opponent gets three points in a row and an absolute time out will be called if they score four points in a row. You need to break your opponent's momentum and concentration. Figure out what works for you, but make sure you use each time out available if needed.

A time out allows you to stop and discuss with your partner what is going on. Do you need to change strategies? Who should you be attacking? What is not working? Time outs allow you to refocus and plan for better success. Use them to your advantage.



What we Have learned so far

Go in with the Mindset that you are going to win

Pick the right partner

Determine who you are going to attack

There are only two areas to hit too

Use distance as a weapon

Use Time Outs to stop their momentum

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

Professional athletes are not paid to play. They are paid to practice. They show the results of their dedication, drills, and practice on game day. Can you imagine a professional athlete not practicing all year and just showing up on game day?

What if you never drilled or practiced and just showed up on the day of the tournament. Would you expect to win? The very first thing I mentioned about winning tournaments was expecting to win. Having the mindset that you are going to win Gold.

Where does this mindset come from? It comes from knowing you drilled and practiced and drilled some more. It comes knowing that you did the absolute best you could do to prepare for the tournament and your going to give it your all.

Be willing to lose

The ability to win in tournaments is to be willing to lose in practice. To often I see recreational players attacking the weaker player who cannot return a shot just to win a game. It adds no value to win a game and not improve your skill set.

Here is what worked for me. Every time I played a game, I focused on one skill set. Maybe I was practicing hard serves one game. The next game I practiced drop shots to my opponents backhand. Another game might be about offensive lobs. I urge you to focus on one specific skill set each game and in the long run you will benefit greatly. Even if you lose the game.

Pretend the stronger player is the weaker player

What helped me tremendously when practicing games was to pretend the stronger player of my opponents was the weaker player. That way I was able to direct my shots to a specific player (This helps in tournament play as I can attack the weaker player) and there was a better chance the better player would return the ball creating a longer rally forcing me to up my game.

Ask why you lost

When ever I lost a match, especially in a tournament I would kindly ask my opponents what their strategy was. I would tell them for learning purposes I wanted to see what they did to win. I learned so much just by asking questions.

I learned that I was covering the side lines too much. I learned that I was exposing the middle of the court. I learned that my dinks were weak. Every lesson helped me improve. I might have lost the tournament, but I learned a lesson.

I practiced my dinks, I practiced covering the center of the court, I learned not to stand so close to the sidelines. So much great information will be given to you just by asking.

Soon, the greatest compliment you will get is when they say, “We just avoided you”.

Attend a Pickleball Clinic

There is tremendous value in attending a Pickleball clinic run by a professional Pickleball Instructor. Especially if you are over 50 and the instructor like me is also over 50. I can relate to the nuances of playing effective Pickleball with limitations due to age, or physical ability.

I would love to have a Pickleball clinic in your area. Please reach out to me at BrettNoel2@gmail.com or call me at 805-975-5781 so we can talk about my one and two day Pickleball clinics guaranteed to dramatically change your game.



Please take the time to thank our sponsor for this
FREE E-Book

I have included just a few of the many great Pickleball apparel, accessories, book, equipment, and great gifts you will love. Look and please visit

www.YourEverythingPickleballstore.com

CUSTOM WOMEN'S PERFORMANCE WEAR



ONE OF A KIND CUSTOM MADE RACER TANKS



WWW.YOUREVERYTHINGPICKLEBALLSTORE.COM

No Headache Foam" Sun Visor Hats



Men's One of a Kind Pickleball Shirts



WWW.YOUREVERYTHINGPICKLEBALLSTORE.COM



THANK YOU FOR
YOUR SUPPORT



WWW.YOUREVERYTHING
PICKLEBALLSTORE.COM