

ATP & WTA Tour Research Summary

A Study into the 4 Shot Combinations™ in Tennis

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The key findings from the ATP & WTA Point Ending Outcome and Outcome Type studies conducted at the Grand Slam level on all surfaces is outlined below. These findings are summarized by tour and surface and identify the tactical differences relevant to training boys and girls.

For more detailed findings refer to www.mccrawmethod.com/research.

WTA & ATP Tour Overall Summary

- (1) Grand Slam level tennis is a game of unforced errors.
- (2) Regardless of surface speed and point outcome, unforced errors remained the highest outcome type for all surfaces except Rule 2 Grass Court and Rule 3 Hard Court (Grass Court ATP Tour).
- (3) Point outcome is not surface dependent. There is no significant difference in point outcome type for Australian Open (Hard Court – Plexi Cushion) and US Open (Hard Court – Deco Turf).
- (4) **Rule 3:** Was by far the lowest point outcome of the four and the most surface dependent for outcome type. As surface speed increased, forced errors decreased and winners increased.
- (5) **Rule 4:** The most frequent point outcome irrespective of surface. As speed of surface decreased, so does the number of winners with a corresponding increase in forced errors.
- (6) Surface speed does not dictate the point outcome used at Grand Slam level on WTA & ATP Tour.

Specific to the WTA Tour

- (1) **Rule 1:** Outcome type was not surface dependent. Unforced errors were the highest point outcome type.
- (2) **Rule 2:** As surface speed increased, forced errors decreased and winners increased.

Specific to the ATP Tour

- (1) **Rule 1:** Outcome type was surface dependent for Grass and Clay Courts. There were increased forced errors on Grass, at the expense of winners on Clay Court.
- (2) **Rule 2:** Grass Court produced the most winners and least unforced errors of any point outcome type and surface. As surface speed slowed, forced errors increased on all surfaces

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Player Development Coaching Applications Summary (All Surfaces)

- (1) Coaches should train the same point outcome combinations for boys and girls on all surfaces.
- (2) **Rule 1** – Both boys and girls should learn to reduce unforced errors when rallying cross court. This should be reflected in the structure of drills in both their purpose and the time spent hitting cross-court vs. to down-the-line directions for both rallying and point ending situations.
- (3) **Rule 4** – Train decision making of ‘right shot at right time’ and hitting down-the-line in the context of this ‘change of direction’ combination.
- (4) Players should focus on creating forced error outcomes at the expense of unforced errors and not focus on hitting winners at the expense of increased unforced errors.
- (5) An understanding of the four point outcome rules and three outcome types (winner, unforced error and forced error) can serve as a tactical foundation for players through all stages of development.

Hard Court Specific Coaching Applications

Coaches should prioritize the following when training boys and girls on Hard Court:

- (1) **Rule 2** – Boys learn to reduce unforced errors and girls to develop ability to hit winners at the expense of unforced errors.
- (2) **Rule 3** - Increased awareness of opportunities to create forced errors and hit winners (both genders).

Clay Court Specific Coaching Applications

Coaches should prioritize the following when training boys and girls on Clay Court:

- (1) **Rule 2** - Develop ability to hit winners at the expense of unforced errors (both genders).
- (2) **Rule 3** – Boys to learn to create forced errors and girls to hit winners using Rule 3 as a tactical point outcome.
- (3) **Rule 4** – Boys to emphasize forced errors and girls winners, both at the expense of unforced errors.

Grass Court Specific Coaching Applications

Coaches should priorities the following when training boys and girls:

- (1) **Rule 2** - Develop ability to hit winners at the expense of unforced errors (both genders).
- (2) **Rule 3** – Boys to learn to create forced errors and girls to hit winners using Rule 3 as a tactical point outcome.
- (3) **Rule 4** – Both boys and girls to learn to hit winners and create forced errors at the expense of unforced errors.