Franklin’s Pickleball Clinic Notes: 12/05/16 (Player from Chicago)

1. Pickleball is game of DEFENSE. Goal is to make everyone of your shots “unattackable”. If your opponent has to hit up on the ball, it is very difficult for him to attack you. Ideally, aim every shot at your opponent’s foot on his backhand side.

2. Respect the net. Need a margin of error for each dink and third shot.

3. Good things happen in Pickleball when you are at the kitchen, bad things happen when you move back unless it is quick step back to defend a smash, but you must get back to the kitchen line ASAP.

4. In a dink of third shot drop, keep the ball in front of you. Pendulum swing. Target a cross court third shot for maximum margin.

5. For punch volley or blocking, keep paddle face perpendicular to the ground.

6. Roll or wrist snap volley slow and high balls.

7. OK to undercut third short or dinks but you must be consistent.

8. CONSISTENCY is the key to good pickleball.

9. Do not give points away. All serves must be in. Respect the net. Do not hit out balls.

10. Goal is to be consistent and keep the point alive and let the other team make the mistake.

11. Sometimes it is better not to drive a ball that is above the net at your opponent (because it is easily block) but to roll the ball to their feet on their back hand side to set up a weak return or an hit ball that you can smash.

12. Practice the third shot by starting at the kitchen and slowing back up to the baseline with each successive dink until you reach the baseline and then work your way back.

13. Kyle Yates does not recommend driving short returns to you opponents but instead take the opportunity to hit an easier third short to get you to the kitchen line.

14. Continental grip at the kitchen line

15. Cut off angles in dinks. Do not let the dink go behind you if possible.

16. When to take a dink in the air. Kyle Yates suggests that if your arm needs to be fully stretched to volley the ball, you need to let it bounce. If you can volley the ball
with your elbow bent, then you should take it in the air.

17. Avoid wrist actions dinks (cuts down on the complexity of the shot and reduces errors) Shoulder pendulum swing are more consistent.

18. Dink and third shots are low to high with momentum transfer forward. Backing up while hitting a third shot is a low percentage shot. You always want your momentum to be moving towards the net for your third shot.

19. The high point of your arc for the third shot should be about 7 ft above your own kitchen line.

20. Aim for the front 2/3s of the non volley zone.

21. Kyle always puts back spins on dinks. Practice this when your basic dink is second nature.

22. Dave Weinbach looks down on this third shot and does not look up until after the ball leaves his paddle.

23. Concentrate on seeing your paddle hitting the ball. No look shots can be impressive and entertaining but very difficult to master and if your opponent is watching you paddle, he will not be easily fooled.

24. Dave Weinbach looks at the opponent’s paddle face to predict the direction of the incoming call and usually swings before the ball cross the net.

25. If you have to hit up on the ball, you must slow it down and make it a defensive shot. (DINK)

26. To take pace off the ball, block with vertical paddle face with minimal or no forward motion.

27. Aim you shots so your opponent but hit his return from below his knees.

28. PATIENCE, the more you have, the better player you will be.

29. If you have to hit the ball below net level, it must be a defensive shot.

30. Practice, Practice and more Practice.

31. It is much more difficult to hit a good lob than a third shot to get you to the kitchen so Kyle does not recommend lobbing. Kyle never lobs.

32. To get better, play with better partners. The weaker member of the team gets most of the balls and practice. In a social environment, do NOT avoid the better player in the opposing team. She will not have any fun nor incentive to ever play with you and you will not improve your game.
Drills

1. Dink game basic 1st to 7, balls that do not land in the kitchen is out. No volleys.

2. Dink game advanced 1st to 7. Opposing team gets 1 point for balls that do not land in the kitchen and 2 points for balls that do not clear the net.

3. Dink game really advanced Opposing team gets 1 point for balls that do not land in the front 2/3s part of the kitchen and 2 points for balls that do not clear the net.

4. King of the court, last person to make a mistake rotates out. Mistakes include setting up your opponent for an attack, out balls, starting an unsuccessful attack on balls that are not sitting ducks, improper court coverage, improper shot selection. Does not count if the opponent hits a great shot or a series of shots to win the point.

5. King of the courts for the dink games

6. Volley drills (strive for consistency). Practice (fast/Hard, slow/soft) combination. Block for balls that are below the net, hard punch volley for balls above the net.

7. Prevent you opponent from getting to the kitchen. Goal for the feed team is to keep the opponents from reaching the kitchen.

8. See Mark Rennison’s youtube video (3rd shot sports) for good drills.

Notes by Others

- Drill for the first 25-30 minutes of your game and work on consistency. Dinks, kitchen shots, aiming for the left foot, etc.

- When dinking or 3rd shot drop, hold your paddle grip at a 3.

- Good, safe dinks are about 4” above the net and in the back 1/2 of the kitchen.

- The better your opponent the worse a lob is for a shot choice. The pro’s never hit lobs.

- Balls that are below the net should be returned to the NVZ. Only drive the ball that is higher than the net.

- The best way to ease pressure on your paddle while at the NVZ is to raise your thumb slightly off the handle.

- Avoid backing up – get to the NVZ and stay there.

- Work on efficient foot work – hop to to your right or left while on the balls of your feet, take one step forward or back with one foot. Feet should be slightly wider than your shoulders. Avoid cross steps if you can.
• You should be inches from the NVZ and move-slide-hop right and left to avoid the line.

• You and your partner should cover 2/3s of the court directly across from the ball. Leave the 1/3 which is the most difficult shot for your opponent.

• Keep your head close to your paddle head while at the NVZ – stay low bend your knees.

• Lean over the NVZ line and take the ball in the air if you can. You won't have to chase a ball that bounces and it takes time away from your opponent.

• Avoid spins, cuts, slams, slices, line shots, lobs, etc, - too many things can go wrong. Keep your stroke and shot simple – straight arm with paddle – that should be the first 3 shots of a game. Serve, return of serve & 3rd shot drop. If you can't hit 80 to 90 percent of your shots, change to a more simple shot and concentrate on watching the ball hitting the paddle.

• A 70% effort slam to a location like the center or to an opponents foot is much better than a 95% effort slam that tend to go into the net or long.

• Cross court shots while at the NVZ is easier and more manageable than a shot directly across the net. This shot can be 12 inches or more above the net and still hit in the front half of the NVZ. Aim tor the left foot or backhand of your opponent.

• Return of serve should always be deep and slow enough to give you time to get to the NVZ before your opponent returns the shot.