



## The Forehand and Backhand Drive

### Forehand Straight Drive

The forehand straight drive is used to hit the ball to good length and tight to the sidewall. The straight drive is used to rally with the opponent and/or move the opponent to the back of the court and into a defensive position. It can also be used as a defending shot to gain control of the “T”. The straight drive is a higher percentage shot than the crosscourt drive.

### Forehand Crosscourt Drive

There are times in rallies – for instance when the opponent is out of position on one side of the court – when it is better to play a crosscourt drive than a straight drive. The forehand crosscourt drive is used to hit the ball to good length and width so that it hits the sidewall behind the service box and lands near the back wall on its second bounce.

The crosscourt drive is used to rally with the opponent and to move that opponent to the back of the court and into a defensive position.

### Preparation

Straight Drive & Crosscourt Drive:

- The racquet head starts high and back and above the shoulder
- The elbow is bent, and the wrist cocked
- The hips and shoulders face sideways to the oncoming ball

### Action to Contact

Straight Drive:

- The weight is transferred forward onto the lead foot as the ball approaches
- Stride length is comfortable and balanced
- The shoulder and elbow move the slightly open racquet face down towards the oncoming ball. The wrist stays cocked and the elbow stays bent
- Path of the racquet is low to high in the contact zone

Crosscourt Drive:

- Same as for the forehand straight drive except the shoulders and hips rotate into a more open position; sideways to the target on the front wall

## Contact Point

### Straight Drive:

- The forearm pronates; at contact, the arm and wrist are extended
- The ball is hit at the top of the bounce, at approximately knee height and slightly ahead of the hitting shoulder

### Crosscourt Drive:

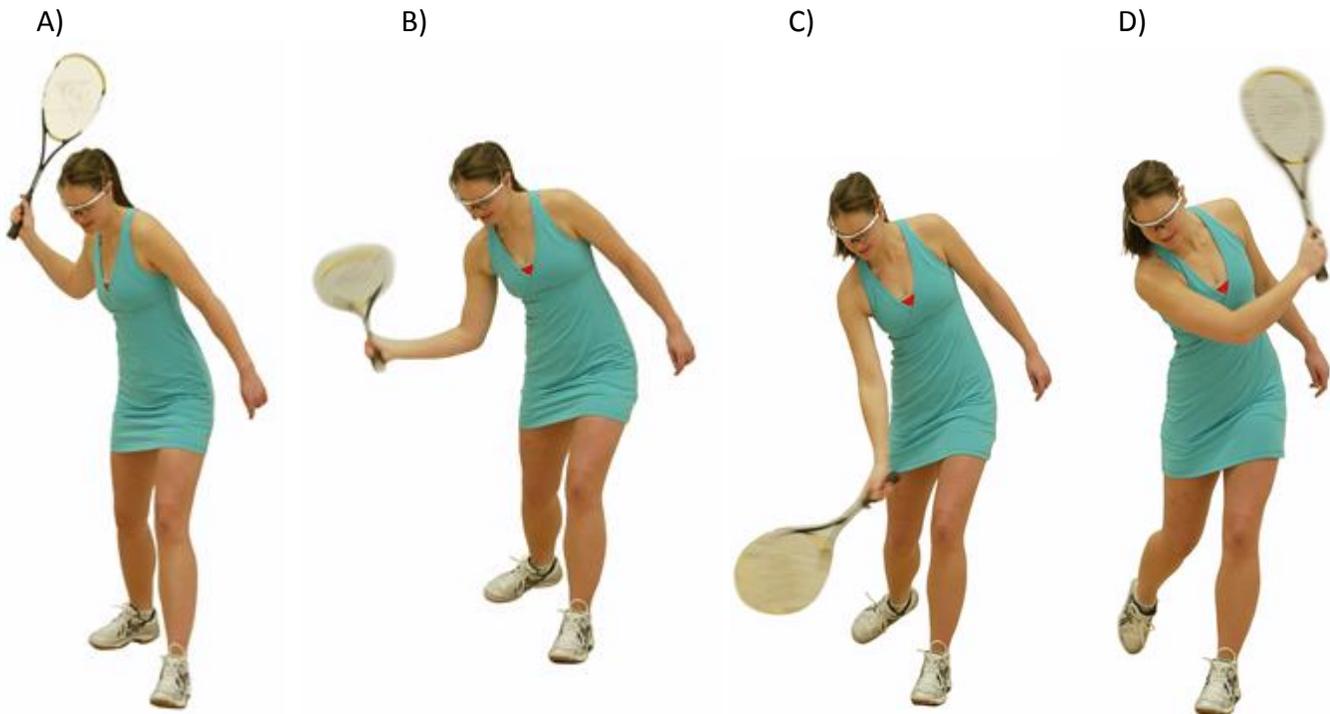
- Same as for the forehand straight drive, except that the ball contact occurs earlier, that is farther ahead of the hitting shoulder

## Follow Through

### Straight Drive & Crosscourt Drive:

- The follow-through is towards the front wall
- At the end of the swing, the elbow is bent and the wrist cocked

## Diagram



The proper form for the forehand drive as depicted during the four stages of the stroke: A) Preparation, B) Action to Contact, C) the Contact Point, and D) the Follow Through.

## **The Backhand Straight Drive**

The backhand straight drive is used to hit the ball to good length and tight to the sidewall. The straight drive is used to rally with the opponent and to move the opponent to the back of the court and into a defensive position. It can also be used as a defending shot to gain control of the "T". The straight drive is a higher percentage shot than the crosscourt drive, especially after receiving a crosscourt shot.

## **The Backhand Crosscourt Drive**

There are times in rallies – for instance when the opponent is out of position on one side of the court – when it is better to play a crosscourt drive than a straight drive. The backhand crosscourt drive is used to hit the ball to good length and width so that it hits the sidewall behind the service box and lands near the back wall on its second bounce.

The crosscourt drive is used to rally with the opponent and to move that opponent to the back of the court and into a defensive position.

## **Preparation**

Backhand Straight Drive & Backhand Crosscourt Drive:

- The racquet head starts high and back and above the shoulder
- The elbow is bent across the chest, and the wrist cocked
- The hips and shoulders face sideways to the oncoming ball

## **Action to Contact**

Backhand Straight Drive:

- The weight is transferred forward onto the lead foot as the ball approaches
- Stride length is comfortable and balanced
- The hips and shoulders initially face sideways to the oncoming ball, but the hips rotate further to allow the racquet arm to cross the body and the racquet shoulder drops
- The path of the racquet is low to high in the contact zone

Backhand Crosscourt Drive:

- Same as for the backhand straight drive except the shoulders and hips rotate into a more open position; sideways to the target on the front wall

## **Contact Point**

Backhand Straight Drive:

- At contact, the racquet face is slightly open, and the arm and wrist are extended from forearm supination
- The ball is hit at the top of the bounce, at about knee height, and slightly ahead of the hitting shoulder

## Backhand Crosscourt Drive:

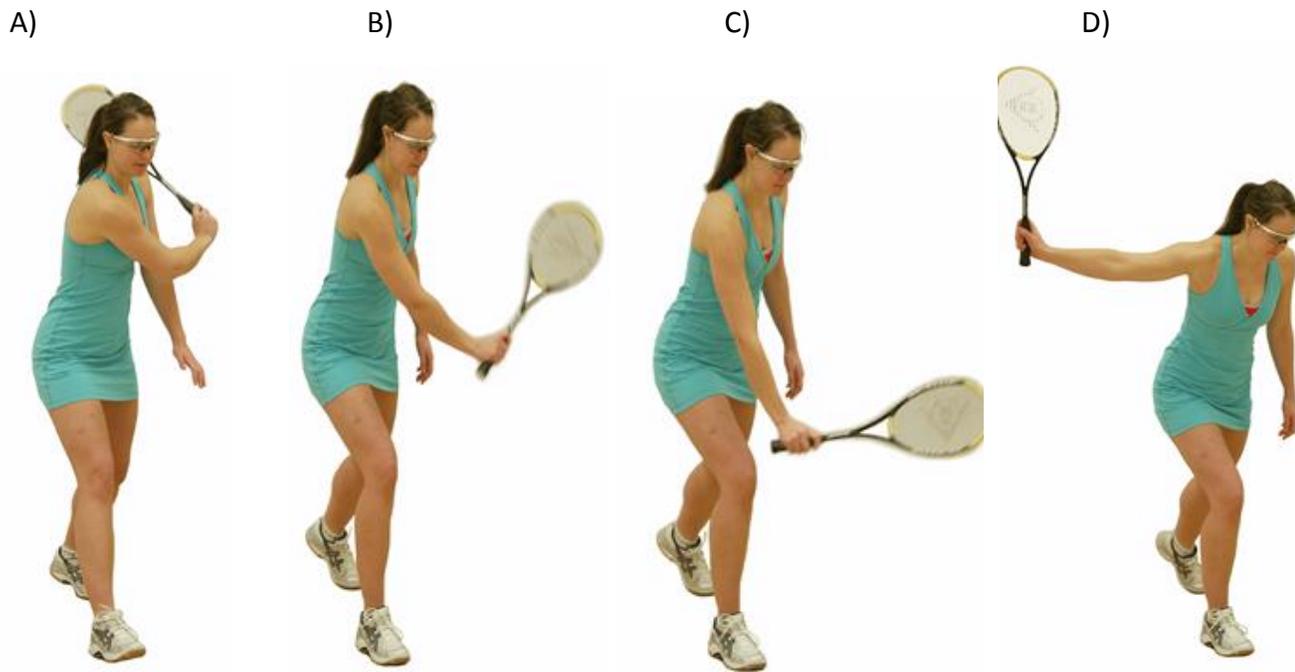
- Same as for the backhand straight drive, except that the ball contact occurs earlier, that is farther ahead of the hitting shoulder

## Follow Through

## Backhand Straight Drive & Backhand Crosscourt Drive:

- The racquet head continues to travel toward the front wall
- At the end of the swing, the elbow is bent, the wrist cocked

### Diagram



The proper form for the backhand drive as depicted during the four stages of the stroke: A) Preparation, B) Action to Contact, C) the Contact Point, and D) the Follow Through.

### Forehand and Backhand Drive Activities

#### Hand Feeding

##### 1. One Step

- Students stand slightly ahead of the short line, facing the instructor with their racquet prepared.
- Instructor stands facing student, with back to the wall.
- Hand feed students so that they can take one step forward to contact the ball.

##### 2. One Step

- Students stand in the "T" area, facing the instructor with their racquet prepared.

- Instructor stands at the short line, facing student, with back to the wall.
- Hand feed students so that they can take one step forward to contact the ball.

### 3. Pivot, One Step

- Students stand in the “T” area, in ready position
- Instructor stands at the short line with back to the wall.
- Hand feed students so that they can pivot and take one step forward to contact the ball.

### 4. Pivot, One Step

- Student stands at the “T”, in the ready position.
- Instructor stands slightly behind the service box.
- Hand feed students so that they can pivot and take one step back to contact the ball.

### 5. Many steps

- Students stand at the “T”, in the ready position.
- Instructor stands in the front corner.
- Hand feed students so that they can take many steps forward to contact the ball.

### 6. Many steps

- Students stand at the “T”, in the ready position.
- Instructor stands in the back corner.
- Hand feed students so that they can take many steps back to contact the ball.

## **Racquet Feeding**

### 1. Single Straight Racquet Feeding

- Students position and movements to the ball are as for hand feeding progressions 1 – 6, starting with the student standing sideways with racquet prepared
- Instructor feeds from behind the service box
- Provide students with single straight feeds so that they experience the same movement patterns used in hand feeding.

### 2. Single Crosscourt Racquet Feeding, Straight Drive Returns

- Student stands at the “T”, in the ready position
- Instructor stands near the service box area on the opposite side of the court and feeds balls crosscourt
- Start with single crosscourt feeds that DON'T rebound off the side wall, and progress to feeds that DO rebound off the side wall
- Students hit straight drive returns

### 3. Continuous Straight Racquet Feeding, Straight Drive Returns

- Student stands at the “T”, in the ready position
- Instructor stands slightly behind the service box
- Hit continuous straight racquet feeds so that student moves to a variety of positions and hit straight drive returns

### 4. Continuous Crosscourt Racquet Feeding, Crosscourt Drive Returns

- Student stands at the “T”, in the ready position
- Instructor stands slightly behind the opposite service box

- Hit continuous crosscourt racquet feeds so that the student moves to a variety of positions and hit crosscourt drive returns

#### 5. Continuous Racquet Feeding, Crosscourt and Straight Drive Returns

- Student stands at the “T”, in the ready position
- Instructor stands behind student.
- Move from backhand to forehand, and hit combinations of crosscourt and straight feeds so that students move to a variety of positions and hit crosscourt and straight drive returns from them

### Rallying

#### 1. Rallying, Crosscourt and Straight Drive Returns

- Hit combinations of crosscourt and straight drives continuously with individual students, changing places with them on the “T” as you rally
- Students hit crosscourt or straight drive returns

**Feedback Chart**

Shot	Outcome	Ball Control	Fundamentals	Reinforcement Points & Tips
Straight Drive	Too short	Distance: <b>Height, Speed</b>	Racquet head control –vertical  Racquet path	Check grip. Check racquet face is open on contact.  Check path is Low to high in contact zone.
	Too long	Distance: <b>Height, Speed</b>	Racquet head control –vertical  Racquet path	Check dropped wrist and spacing  Level off the path
Straight Drive	Too short	Distance: <b>Speed, height</b>	Biomechanics, length of back swing, angular and linear linking momentum	Check racquet preparation.  Check action to contact; Hip, shoulder position. Bent arm – straight arm
Cross-Drive	Ball too loose	Direction	Face of racquet on contact	Check contact point. Too far behind/ahead of the hitting shoulder
	Hits side wall too early		Footwork and balance	Check for too much wrist action  Check shift angle of shoulders, hips relative to the target