

How to Defend the Attack and How to Make Your Shots Unattackable

First off - The Golden Rules of Pickleball

1. Be ready. Use Good footwork. Use Proper Form. Be in a Good set position. Be ready for any serve, return or shot than comes your way. Be ready to cover for your partner when they get out of position. Most important - Watch the ball.

2. Consistency - Hit the shot where you want. Take 20 % off to hit it in a better location and to keep it from going out or into the net. Hit a slam shot with a 3/4 sidearm shot. Not OVERHEAD. This will help to keep your shots from going into the NET. (ouch)

3. Have a plan. Before you start the game, think about where you are hitting the ball in certain situations. Adjust your plan if something is not working. Hit shots they don't like, so they will give you a shot that you like.

4. Be positive with yourself and your partner. Say things that will encourage them. If they hit a bad shot. "It's ok we'll get the next one." When they hit a winner, "Great shot, keep it up, we've got this". Other like phrases to keep you and your partner focused and ready for the next point. If you somehow end up losing. "No worries we'll get it next time."

5. Be ready for the hard/fast shot. If a dink or other slower shot comes, then you're ready for it. Stay in the middle area don't give them too much room to hit it hard past you. Cut off the alley when the ball is on your side of the court, cut off the middle when it is on the other side of the court.

Defending against the Attack

If it is a high lob and that sets up to hit a slam, you know what is coming. Back up a couple of steps if you have time, get yourself lined up in front of them, get yourself low with your paddle parallel to the net and turned slightly upward. Once the ball is coming your way position your paddle to let it hit your paddle. DO NOT strike the ball let it bounce off your paddle, you may even need to move your paddle backward a bit to take off some of the power of the shot. Ideally you would like to reset it into the kitchen, but at the very least it MUST GO OVER the net and hopefully not out of bounds. Let the force of them hitting a slam do the work. And then be ready for the next shot, most likely another slam or attack. All of this takes practice with a partner.

If they decide to speed it up early and attack you off your dink, BE READY. Have your paddle waist high, paddle parallel to the net. This way you can hit any shot that is right at you or away from you on the backhand side. If it is hit to your forehand, you will have to reach to your forehand side to get the ball. But it can be done with practice.

How to make your shots. Unattackable

When dinking, keep your dinks about a half paddle to full paddle length above the net (4-10 inches). Give yourself a little room to work with. Don't try for an inch above the net, it doesn't

give any margin for error. Try to put a little top spin on the dink. This will keep it from bouncing high and it will actually spin into them faster making a return dink that much harder and you may get a set up shot out of it.

Also don't hit a dink directly to them, rather make them move left or right. Hit a cross court dink, making sure it doesn't go so far beyond the post to give them an opportunity for an ATP.

When dinking near the side lines be careful not to dink too high because it could give your opponent an opportunity to hit an ERNE as well. If you don't know what an ERNE is, ask me or another top player and they will explain it to you. (Yeah, it's not Ernie, it's ERNE)

When hitting a drive shot from mid court or farther back, you MUST hit the ball 2-6 inches above the net with a little top spin. Anything higher will give them an opportunity to drive it back to you. Also, your drive shots should be directed to the backhand side or directly at them. You can go to the forehand side too, if you notice they are set up with a backhand. This will force them to have to move from a backhand position to a forehand position.

Good luck. If you want to know some practice routines/drills for improving your Dinking to make your shots unattackable, and how to defend against the Attack, let me know and I will be happy to help you out with those.