

## 7 Tournament Play

If you have reached the stage when you want to play more competitive badminton then you must enter tournaments. A good player always prepares thoroughly for a competition. There are some factors you should consider.

### **Training**

Conclude training and hard practice to allow at least one full day for resting before the tournament. A gentle knock-up is all right, but nothing too strenuous.

### **Arrival**

Arrange to arrive early at the tournament venue. This should give you time to relax after travelling and get used to the conditions of the hall, lighting, temperature, etc. You will have plenty of time to change, warm up and, if possible, have a practice before you go on court. There is nothing worse than arriving at the last minute and rushing onto court restless and unprepared. More often than not you lose the first set before you have settled down.

### **Equipment**

It is very important that you have sufficient equipment. A check-list can help when packing and then nothing is forgotten. One international player, who was careless in this respect, has been known to arrive without his rackets or his contact-lenses. All the hard work for a tournament can be wasted by forgetting to pack one important item. Here are some suggestions.

*Rackets.* You need at least two rackets for a tournament.

*Footwear.* Some players carry two pairs of shoes with them and certainly an extra pair of laces. In addition extra socks and one or two spare shirts make a difference to personal comfort and ensure that you feel fresh for each match. Extra items such as elastoplast and scissors are sometimes included by tournament players. It is attention to small details which reduces the chances of anything affecting your performance.

### **Dress**

Begin the warm-up and knock-up in a tracksuit, particularly in cold badminton halls. Exercise the body to warm it and extend the muscles fully before play. You are then ready for a flying start when the game begins.

### **The game**

In the game it is important that you concentrate on your opponent and not on your strokes. Some players are so concerned with the production of a stroke that they forget that there is an opponent on the other side of the net and that a stroke is only of interest as a move in the game, a move designed to help to win the rally.

In practice you may have been working on new strokes and moves. The tournament is the testing ground. You may think that you should make a purposeful effort to try out the new strokes and moves in the tournament. Unfortunately you could do this and forget, to some extent, about your opponent. When you are in a game, forget all about the practice and concentrate on defeating your opponent. If you have worked hard in practice you will most probably perform the new stroke in the game anyway.

*Playing the game.*

You should play to win. This means that you should play to win each rally. Do not think ahead to the end of the game, but simply concentrate on winning each rally and let the points take care of themselves. Win 15 rallies when serving and you win the game.

*End of the game.*

After the game, thank your opponent and the umpire, then take your equipment and return directly to the changing room. Remove your damp clothes, wash down, dry and change into dry clothes for your next match.

*Evaluation.* If you want to become a better player you should assess your performance each time you play. Why did you lose? What happened when you were leading 12-3 in the third set and he caught up? Is there anything you need to work on in practice? What sort of moves did your opponent make that you found difficult? Ask questions about your game, study opponents and then decide what you ought to work on. In this way you will make steady progress and find the game more interesting.

Finally, a reminder. Before you leave the tournament make it your duty to find out who is the organizer or the referee, and go and thank him for organizing the tournament and for the enjoyment you gained from participating in it.