

PART ONE

Learning Badminton

1. HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

There are various accounts of how and when the game of Badminton started. The account usually accepted is that a game with rackets and shuttlecocks was played at the estate of the Duke of Beaufort in Gloucestershire in the 1860s. The estate was called Badminton and hence the game was given the name of Badminton.

From this starting point the game was played in various forms in different countries. In 1877 at Karachi in India the first attempt was made to form a set of rules. The game developed in other areas of the world and it became essential that an acceptable standard set of rules should be devised. In 1893 the Badminton Association of England was formed and a standard set of Laws for the Game were devised. From a membership of a few clubs, this Association now has almost three thousand clubs affiliated to it.

In 1934 the International Badminton Federation was formed, and com-prises the associations of all the countries which play Badminton.

In 1899 the first All-England Championships were held. These have developed to the stage when competitors from all over the world arrive to compete in the Championships. Unofficially these Championships are con-sidered to be the World Championships and it is a great honour to compete in them.

Many of the countries affiliated to the International Badminton Federation compete against each other in international matches. Every three years a men's team representing each country competes for the Thomas Cup, which is a much prized trophy presented by Sir George Thomas, the late president of the International Badminton Federation.

Since 1956 the ladies have competed for the Uber Cup in international competition. Badminton as a game has not received as much publicity as many other sports. The reason for this is that all players are strictly amateur and lack of finance restricts players from travelling to other countries unless as official representatives of their National Associations. Perhaps now that the sport has received greater recognition by its inclusion in the Empire Games, it may yet be considered as an Olympic Sport and receive more interest from the Press and the Public in general.

2. EQUIPMENT

RACKET

A Badminton racket is very light, weighing between 4 to 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounces. In selecting

a racket the most important consideration is the 'feel' of the racket. The feel of the racket is dependent upon the size of the grip and the distribution of the weight. A racket may be heavy in the head in relation to the handle, or light in the head in relation to the handle.

Some rackets feel equally balanced in the head and the handle. The weight is distributed evenly. When selecting a racket, try out several until one is found which feels evenly balanced and comfortable to hold.

Many sports' manufacturers now produce a wide range of rackets of various quality. Obviously the quality of the racket affects the price of the racket. The complete beginner is wise to buy a racket at a medium price. With more experience you will make a good choice when selecting the most expensive racket. If you wish to begin with the top quality racket then do so. Any good sports shop will advise you.

Because the racket is so light it can easily be damaged by ill-treatment. Look after your racket and you will receive good service from it.

SHUTTLECOCKS

The shuttlecock is the object used in play. It is referred to as the 'shuttle' or the 'bird' or the 'feather'. It is of a very delicate construction.

A shuttlecock weighs only a small fraction of an ounce. The weight varies between 73 grains weight and 85 grains weight. The weight affects the flight. A shuttlecock varies in speed of flight from slow (73 grains) to fast (85 grains).

It is constructed of 14 to 16 goose feathers inserted into a cork base. The base is covered by kid leather. If the feathers are damaged in any way the flight of the shuttlecock is affected. Always take care of the shuttlecock and smooth out the feathers whenever they become disturbed during play.

SELECTING SHUTTLECOCKS

A shuttle travels slowly in a cold hall and quickly in a warm hall. The speed of flight is affected by the temperature. For this reason select a shuttlecock according to weight, for use in the appropriate temperature.

Shuttlecocks vary in quality. A sports shop will advise you on which quality to buy. If you can afford it always buy the best.

Some firms now manufacture plastic shuttlecocks. Though these are not yet as good as feathered shuttlecocks, they are excellent for practice and much cheaper to buy.

CLOTHING

Badminton is a fast energetic game requiring a wide range of physical movement. Clothing should be chosen for comfort and freedom of movement.

FOOTWEAR

The feet receive quite a considerable amount of wear during play. Buy good quality shoes and thick socks to prevent blistering of the feet.

SELECTION

Many firms now manufacture clothing specially designed for Badminton. A good sports shop will stock a large range of clothing and will give expert advice in selection.

ADDITIONAL CLOTHING

For health reasons it is usually sound policy to wear a warm pullover prior to beginning play, and for wear immediately after a game. This helps the body to warm up quickly and prevents cold after a game. As many halls are quite cold many players wear a track suit. A track suit is really a very sensible purchase and will be found to be extremely useful for play and training.

3. OBJECT OF THE GAME

The game is played on a rectangular court, divided into two halves by a net. The game is played by opposing players. Two players make a single game. Four players make a double game. The players occupy opposite halves of the court. The players use rackets to hit the shuttlecock over the net so that it hits the floor on the opponent's side of the court. The doubles court is wider than the singles court. A contest consists of the best of three games. All games are played up to 15 points or 21 points except Ladies Singles, which are played up to 11 points. At the conclusion of each game, the players change ends. The rules at the end of the book will give more details of the procedure during play.

BEGINNING THE GAME

To begin a contest the players toss. The word 'side' describes the player or pair of players. The side which wins the toss has the chance of:

(a) serving first, (b) not serving first, (c) choice of ends

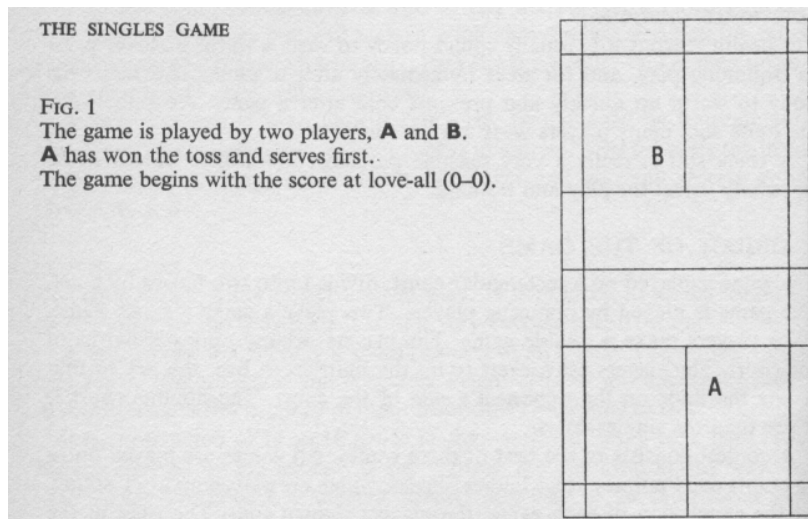
The side which serves the shuttle is known as the Serving Side. The side which receives the serve is known as the Receiving Side.

SCORING IN THE GAME

Only the serving side can add points to the score. Each side tries to win the service. Having won the service, the side in possession has the opportunity to add points to the score. A rally is won during play if a player hits the shuttle to the ground on the opponent's half of the court; or if the opponent is unable to return the shuttle into play.

Though a rally is won in the way described a point is only added to the score if won by the serving side. If the receiving side wins the rally, the score remains the same but the receiving side have now won the service. They become known as the Serving Side and have their opportunity to serve and add points to their score. In Doubles play, the receiving side would have to win two rallies before they gained possession of the service.

4. ORDER OF SERVICE

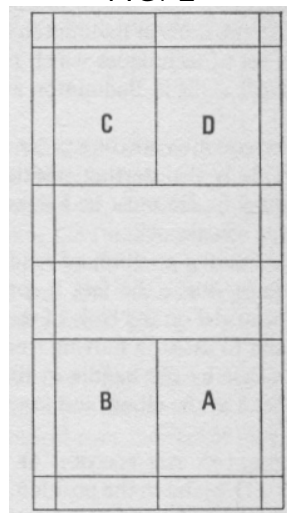


- (1) A serves from his right service court diagonally opposite to B.
 - (2) A wins the first rally. The score becomes 1-0 to A.
 - (3) A moves to his left service court to serve diagonally opposite to B. The receiver must always stand diagonally opposite to the server.
 - (4) A wins the rally. The score becomes 2-0. A moves once again to his right service court to serve diagonally opposite to B.
 - (5) B wins the next rally and wins the service. The score remains the same.
 - (6) B now serves from his right service court diagonally opposite to A.
 - (7) B wins the rally. The score becomes 1-2. The score of the server is stated first.
- It follows that the players stand in the service court related to the score. If the servers' score is an even number the players stand on the right service court. If the servers' score is an odd number the players stand on the left service court.

THE DOUBLES GAME

This is slightly more complicated but the principles of changing the service court as a point is won remains the same. At the beginning of the game only one player of the serving side is allowed to serve. He continues to serve until he loses the service to the other side. From then on both players on each side have a turn to serve when their side is in possession of the service. The service always begins from the right court.

FIG. 2



(1) A serves diagonally opposite to C. The serving side win the rally. The score becomes 1-0.

(2) A moves to his left court and serves diagonally opposite to D. He continues to serve from one player to the other until that serve is lost.

(3) If A was serving to D before he lost the service, he must remain in that court to receive service until his side gains possession of the service.

(4) Whatever the state of the score, only the serving side may change from one court to the other, in order to serve to each player of the opposing side. The receiving side must remain in the court they occupied before they lost the service.

This is a simple explanation. A more detailed account of order of serving may be referred to in the Laws of the Game

5. THE SKILLS OF THE GAME

It is possible to play Badminton in a very simple manner without learning more than how to hit the shuttle over the net.

This is the game played in its most simple form. Badminton is a game requiring a wide range of movement of the body. It is a fast energetic game with a wide variety of situations occurring in the game. To gain greater enjoyment from the game and to improve performance it is necessary to make progress. Progress is made by the learning of the different techniques and strokes peculiar to the game of Badminton. A player becomes skilled when he has mastered the basic strokes and acquired skill in hitting the shuttle with a variety of different methods. All the skills in Badminton are really common sense. The game has developed a set of techniques which make it easier to play and give better results. The basic skills in Badminton are as follows.

POSITION OF READINESS (*see photo 1*)

This is the starting position. A player must be alert and ready to move quickly. He must be balanced and in a position to watch his opponent and the shuttlecock. For the position of readiness stand in the mid-court facing the opposite court. Place the feet a comfortable distance apart with the weight equally balanced on the balls of the feet. Bend the knees slightly to maintain balance and to assist in moving from the spot to any position on the court. Hold the racket by the handle in the hand in front of the body. Allow the arms to bend at the elbow and keep the racket head up.

PRACTISE THE POSITION OF READINESS

(1) Stand in the position of readiness. Rock over to the right side and allow the body weight to be supported by the right foot. Pause and rock to the left side so that the weight is supported by the left foot. Return to the ready position, balanced equally on both feet.

Repeat this practice, keeping up a continuous rocking movement before returning to balance on both feet.

In this way, before a player moves off from the spot, he may transfer his weight to the left foot to move to the left. He may transfer weight to the right foot to move to the right. He may place the weight on the right foot to lunge forwards on to his left foot, and the same in moving backwards. The position of readiness is an alert position, weight evenly balanced ready to move off in many different directions.

(2) Stand in the position of readiness. Practise a bouncing action, keeping the feet in contact with the ground. The knees initiate the bounce, by bending and extending. So bounce on the knees. During this movement the upper part of the body should be carried and not allowed to slump. Maintain a light tension in the upper body. The head is upright and looking forwards and the trunk leans slightly forward to assist in balance. The arms are flexed and the racket held with the head up. This is important as most of the strokes are played from a high position, and the racket is ready to move easily and quickly into position

THE GRIP

The racket should be gripped to give maximum control of the racket face and allow the shuttle to be hit easily from any position. A racket has two faces, both being identical. If the shuttle is hit on the forehand side of the body that face of the racket used to hit the shuttle becomes the forehand face. If the shuttle is hit on the backhand side of the body that face of the racket becomes the backhand face.

FOREHAND GRIP

Method 1: Hold the racket by the neck in the left hand. Place the palm of the right hand flat on the strings of the racket. Slide the palm down the racket until the little finger meets the bottom of the handle. Close the fingers and thumb round the handle in a gentle grip. This is the forehand grip.

Method 2: Hold the racket by the neck with the left hand. Hold it in front of you, with the head of the racket pointing forwards and the side edge of the racket head pointing towards the ground. Shake hands gently with the handle of the racket. This is the forehand grip.

This grip gives maximum control over the racket face. The fingers can be spread out to allow a more comfortable grip. The more the handle is held in the fingers and not the fist, the greater is the control over the racket face.

THE BACKHAND GRIP

This grip is used to give greater control over the backhand face of the racket and allows ease of movement of the racket on the backhand side of the body.

Stand in the Ready Position. Hold the racket in the forehand grip. Relax the grip and use the left hand to turn the racket slowly to the right until the right thumb lies flat along the back of the handle. Remove the left hand. The racket is now held in the backhand grip. The weight and strength of the thumb is now directly behind the backhand face of the racket.

PRACTICE FOR THE GRIP (*see photos 2 and 3*)

It is necessary to develop a feel for the correct grip. It is important in the game to be able to take up the correct grip and to be aware of the position of the hand in relation to the handle and the racket face without thinking about it.

Practise spinning the racket in the hand and stop the racket in the correct grip i.e. forehand or backhand grip. When the grip is held correctly by touch and not by looking to see if it is correct, you have developed a 'feel' for the grip. Players must be able to change grip very quickly in the game, so practise until you can change the grip and hold the correct grip at any time.

6. THE STROKES- OVERHEAD

Many strokes in Badminton are played from an overhead position. The actual stroke selected from the overhead position is dependent on the position of the player in relation to the court, the shuttlecock and the opposing player. A player may have to move to the rear of the court to play an overhead stroke. From this position he can hit the shuttle high to the back of the opposite court, or smash it down steeply over the net, or drop it over the net. The player may have to make a stroke from an overhead position in the middle of the court. As he is now nearer the net, the opportunity is created for him to smash the shuttle down to the ground in the opponent's court and give the opponent very little chance of returning it. A player may have to run backwards to play a stroke from his backhand side at the rear of the court. He may decide the best shot is a drop shot and so he will play a backhand overhead drop shot. There are numerous possibilities, and understanding of the game will help a player to decide which type of stroke to perform. The essential factor is to be able to perform the particular stroke chosen. The following strokes are all strokes played from an overhead position on the forehand and backhand side. Each stroke involves a preparation, an action and a recovery.

OVERHEAD FOREHAND CLEAR (*see photo 4*)

This stroke is played from an overhead position on the forehand side. It is usually played from the rear of the court and the aim of the player is to hit the shuttle in a high arc, deep to the rear of the opponent's court.

Preparation: Stand in the position of readiness. Hold the racket in the forehand grip with only a light tension in the fingers. Keep the racket head up. Twist the body to the right and step backwards with the right foot so that the left side of the body points towards the net and the weight is supported on the right foot. As the body twists to the right the racket head is taken past your face and allowed to drop behind the right shoulder by bending the elbow and relaxing the right wrist. The wrist is now cocked back. Examine your stance. The body is sideways to the net. The weight is supported by the right foot. The racket is held back in a throwing position with the wrist cocked. The left arm is held high for balance.

The Action: As the shuttlecock approaches, begin the throwing action upwards to meet it on impact at racket stretch height above the head. The wrist leads the throwing movement upwards, as the racket head is held back by the cocked wrist. The body weight begins to transfer forwards as the arm straightens out. Just prior to impact the wrist straightens (or uncocks) to bring the racket head forwards at great speed to hit through the shuttlecock.

Recovery: As the shuttle travels forwards after the impact, the racket head follows forwards and downwards across the body in a natural recovery. The weight transfers to the front foot as the arm follows through after the impact with the shuttle, for the player to recover in a balanced position.

BASIC POINTS

- (i) Stand in a sideways position in line with the flight of the shuttle.
- (ii) Prepare for the stroke, weight on the rear foot and racket held back with the wrist cocked.
- (iii) Throw upwards to full stretch height and allow the body weight to transfer forwards on to the front foot.
- (iv) Keep both feet in contact with the ground.
- (v) Follow through and recover in a balanced position.
- (vi) These points apply to all the overhead strokes.

There are two types of overhead clear. These are the *overhead defensive clear* and the *attacking clear*. The action is the same for both, apart from one difference. The difference is the angle of the racket face at the point of impact. The defensive clear returns the shuttle on a pathway which goes very high and deep in the opposite court. The racket face must be pointing upwards towards this pathway at the moment of impact. It is used to allow a player time to recover when under pressure.

The attacking clear sends the shuttle on a lower pathway just higher than the opponent can reach. It forces the opponent to move quickly to the back of the court, and so play a stroke before the shuttle drops. For this stroke the racket face meets the shuttle at impact at an angle which directs it more forwards than upwards. Both types of clear can be practised by performing the identical action, but altering the angle of the racket face at the moment of impact.

OVERHEAD FOREHAND SMASH (see photo 5)

The objective of the smash is to hit the shuttle from a high position down to the ground on the opposite court. The shuttle is hit to travel quickly and steeply. For this reason the smash is aimed straight, the shortest distance between two points being a straight line. The racket face must be pointing downwards at the moment of impact, and the racket head must be travelling at great speed to impart force to send the shuttle on its way.

Stages in the Smash: Stand in the ready position. The preparation is the same as for the forehand overhead clear. This is a sideways throwing position directly in line with the oncoming shuttle. The wrist is cocked to allow the racket head to drop back. The throwing action is aimed to meet the shuttle at impact in front of the body in a high position. Begin throwing the racket head up to meet the shuttle. Lead the movement with the wrist, and increase the pressure on the handle of the racket.

As the arm begins to straighten out, allow the wrist to travel forwards (uncock). The racket head is brought forwards at great speed to hit over the top of the shuttle. At the moment of impact the racket face directs the shuttle towards the ground and the wrist whips through as far as it will travel to bring the racket head down over the shuttle. The racket follows through in the direction of the shuttle until the arm naturally falls across the body to recover in a balanced position.

The most difficult part in this stroke is the wrist action which travels through its full range of movement, and the timing of the impact.

Practise the stroke in stages.

(1) Preparation or backswing.

(2) The action: a throwing action with the wrist whipping forwards and down.

(3) Recovery: follow through and balance. Do this slowly in stages and then try to join the movements together to make one continuous movement.

THE OVERHEAD FOREHAND DROP SHOT

There are two types of drop shot from this position. These are the *slow drop shot* and the *fast drop shot*.

The Slow Drop Shot: From an overhead position the shuttle is hit gently so that it loses speed quickly and drops down close to the net in the opposite court. The drop shot is a very deceptive shot, as the opponent only realises at the last moment that he is receiving a drop shot.

The preparation for the stroke is identical to the preparation for the forehand overhead clear. The point of impact is taken above the head of the player. The racket head is thrown up at the shuttle with the wrist leading the movement. Just prior to impact the speed of the racket head brakes sharply and the movement continues with the face of the racket gently stroking the shuttle softly forwards and upwards. The shuttle travels slightly upwards after impact and then drops steeply over the net. The racket leads the arm in a gentle follow through down and across the body to recover and balance.

Stand in the ready position. Prepare as for a forehand overhead stroke. Throw upwards towards the point of impact above the head. Just before the impact, check the forward movement of the arm and racket to slow the racket down, and continue the movement for the racket face to hit shuttle gently forwards and upwards. Allow the racket to follow through down and across the body still continuing the slow gentle movement.

The later you can delay the checking action of the racket before impact, the greater the deception. Do not stop the racket speed, only slow it down.

The Fast Drop Shot: This shot carries the shuttle deeper into the court than the slow drop shot. The preparation and throwing action are identical to the slow drop shot. The difference is that the point of impact is high and in front of the body. The racket head is above the shuttle with the racket face pointing downwards at the moment of impact. The racket speed brakes sharply before impact but continues with enough speed to allow the shuttle to pass over the net before it drops quickly to the ground. The racket follows through on its natural arc for the player to recover and balance.

THE OVERHEAD BACKHAND CLEAR (*see photo 6*)

The shuttle is hit from a high position from the rear court on the backhand side of the body. The objective is to hit the shuttle on a high pathway to the back of the opposite court. The stroke can be performed as a defensive clear or an attacking clear by altering the angle of the racket face on impact. This is explained in the forehand overhead clear.

Stand in the ready position with the racket held in the backhand grip. Take the racket back by stepping backwards onto the left foot and twisting the body to the left. Continue the body twist in the shoulders until the back is almost facing the net. The weight is supported on the left foot. The racket arm is flexed, elbow pointing upwards towards the point of impact which is above the right shoulder. To hit the shuttle step across to the left on to the right foot. Throw the racket arm upwards, elbow pointing towards the point of impact. Stop the forward movement of the elbow at the point of impact and allow the rest of the arm to straighten out to bring the racket head through at great speed to hit the shuttle with a strong sudden effort. All the force is concentrated towards the point of impact. After impact the racket arm returns naturally to the starting position in front of the body.

Practise these stages:

- (i) Twist the racket and body to the left and step backwards on the left foot.
- (ii) Aim the elbow up towards the point of impact, and step across on the right foot.
- (iii) Hold the racket back as long as possible as the throwing action explodes upwards to hit the shuttle at full stretch height.

The feeling of the movement can be experienced by practising without a racket. Simply stand in the ready position, twist the right arm and body to the left as far as it will go. Release the body by flicking upwards with an explosive action. Repeat this several times. Twist slowly to the left and flick upwards suddenly.

Now hold the racket and stand in the ready position. Repeat the practice, this time also stepping across with the right foot to take the body weight as you flick upwards.

THE OVERHEAD BACKHAND SMASH (*see photo 7*)

This stroke is usually played from a mid-court position on the backhand side. The object is to hit the shuttle down quickly and steeply over the net into the opposite court. The preparation for the stroke is identical to the preparation for the overhead backhand clear, except that as in the case of the forehand smash the point of impact is at the side of the body and slightly forwards.

Preparation: Stand in the position of readiness and hold the racket in the backhand grip. Take the racket back by stepping backwards with the left foot and twisting the body to the left until the back of the shoulders are almost facing the net. The feet are now sideways to the net with the weight on the left foot. Point the right elbow up towards the point of impact.

Action: Throw the arm upwards, elbow leading, with an explosive movement. Allow the arm to straighten out and flick the wrist forwards at speed. At the moment of impact slightly forwards of the body the racket face points downwards to hit the shuttle with great force. The shuttle travels down quickly and steeply.

Recovery: Allow the arm to return naturally to the ready position. Practice: Prepare for the stroke. Begin the hitting action and try to stop the racket head at the point of impact. Examine your position. The body is stretched upwards, the weight is on the right foot, arm and wrist fully extended and the racket face pointing downwards.

Practise this movement slowly until it can be performed in one continuous movement. Concentrate on a slow gentle preparation, a strong sudden hitting action and a natural follow through of the arm to recover and balance.

THE OVERHEAD BACKHAND DROP SHOT

Drop shots are played on the backhand side for the same reasons as those played on the forehand side.

THE SLOW DROP SHOT

Preparation: Stand in the position of readiness. Hold the racket in the backhand grip. Step backwards on to the left foot and twist the body round to the left. Point the right elbow up towards the point of impact. The point of impact is at a position above the right shoulder.

Action: Increase the pressure of the grip. Throw the arm upwards with the elbow leading the movement. Allow the body to untwist and stretch upwards as the arm leads the way. The racket head gathers speed as the arm straightens out. Just prior to the impact brake the forward speed of the racket head and continue the movement to hit the shuttle gently. The racket face hits the shuttle slightly upwards and forwards to stroke softly through the shuttle.

Recovery: The arm and racket follow through after the shuttle before naturally falling and recovering in a balanced position.

The longer it is possible to delay the braking action of the racket head, the greater the deception in the stroke. The important factor is that the movement does not stop during the hitting phase.

The racket head speed slows down abruptly, though the movement is continuous throughout the complete stroke.

The order of movement in the hitting phase is always shoulder, elbow, forearm, wrist, racket head. Practise until the arm can be straightened out in this order with an even flowing movement.

FAST DROP SHOT

The action is identical to the slow drop shot. The difference is that the point of impact is slightly forwards of the body to allow the racket head to hit the shuttle from above, and allow the racket face to direct the shuttle down-wards. It is hit downwards with even forward speed to send the shuttle over the net, before it drops to the ground.

THE POINT OF IMPACT ON OVERHEAD STROKES

Forehand and Backhand Clears - the point of impact is directly above the body.

Forehand and Backhand Smash - impact is slightly forwards of the body.

Forehand and Backhand Drop Shots

Slow Drop Shot - impact above the body.

Fast Drop Shot - impact forwards of the body.

7. THE STROKES- UNDERARM

These are the strokes in which the shuttle is hit from a low position.

THE UNDERARM FOREHAND CLEAR (*see photo 8*)

This stroke is played from a low position on the forehand side of the body. The shuttle is hit upwards with an underarm action, and directed high and deep to the opposite court.

Preparation: Stand in the position of readiness. Hold the racket in the forehand grip. Twist the shoulders to the right and lift the arm back with the wrist cocked and the racket head pointing upwards. The left shoulder points towards the net. Step towards the shuttle on to the right foot. Examine the position. The left shoulder is pointing towards the opposite court. The racket is held back with the arm flexed and the wrist cocked. The racket head is pointing upwards.

Hitting Action: The point of impact is in front of the body on the forehand side.

Begin throwing the racket forwards. The wrist leads the movement as the weight transfers to the front foot. The wrist straightens out as the arm extends forwards. The racket head is whipped forward at speed to travel from below the shuttle. The racket face points in the direction forwards and upwards on impact. After impact keep the feet planted and the body low as the arm naturally follows through in the direction of the shuttle.

Recovery: The arm continues to travel high as the racket follows the flight of the shuttle and the body straightens up to recover in a balanced position.

THE UNDERARM FOREHAND LOW RETURN (*see Photo 9*)

This stroke is played from a low position on the forehand side. The intention is to hit the shuttle upwards over the net so that it begins to lose height immediately after crossing the net. The preparation for the stroke is identical to the preparation for the underarm clear.

The racket head is thrown downwards and forwards to meet the shuttle from below and directs it forwards and upwards enough to skim the net. The wrist is kept cocked throughout the hitting phase, so keeping the racket head down and the racket face pointing forwards. After impact the racket follows through to about shoulder height.

The shuttle is hit gently with a continuous forward movement of the racket arm and the wrist remains cocked throughout the stroke.

Practice: (i) Play a rally with a partner. The task is to hit the shuttle from a low position on the forehand side. Try to hit the shuttle softly and aim at skimming the net.

(ii) Vary this practice by playing low returns to the partner and then occasionally with the same action, whip the racket head forwards at great speed to hit the shuttle high to the back of the opposite court. Very little effort is required and these strokes are easy to improve if practised.

UNDERARM BACKHAND CLEAR (*see Photo 10*)

This is a stroke played from a low position on the backhand side of the body. The intention is to return the shuttle high and deep to the rear of the opposite court.

Preparation: Stand in the position of readiness. Hold the racket in the backhand grip, racket head held up, arms flexed. Twist the body to the left and take the racket back in preparation for the stroke. Step forwards and across with the right foot. Plant the right foot, with the right knee slightly flexed supporting the body weight. Examine the position. The body is twisted to the left, racket held back, and the right side of the body and feet pointing towards the net.

Action: Point the elbow down towards the point of impact, which is forwards and to the left of the body. Throw the right arm downwards towards the shuttle, and hold the racket head back until the last moment. Just prior to impact whip the racket head forward at speed by flicking the wrist forward. The racket head straightens out last in order to flick upwards from underneath the shuttle. The face of the racket is directly in line with the shuttle, and directs it upwards to the rear of the opposite court.

Recovery: Allow the racket head to follow through along the pathway of the shuttle and finish high. As the racket completes the follow through, the weight transfers completely to the front foot and the body straightens up to recover.

THE UNDERARM BACKHAND LOW RETURN (*see Photo 11*)

This is an underarm stroke played from a low position on the backhand side. The intention is to return the shuttle on a low pathway, so that it skims the net and loses height immediately after crossing the net.

Preparation: Prepare as for the underarm backhand clear.

Action: Begin the throwing action, elbow pointing towards the point of impact. Keep the racket back throughout the stroke by preventing the wrist from straightening out as the arm travels forwards. The racket face hits the shuttle gently forwards and just high enough to cross the net.

Recovery: The racket follows through forwards in the direction of the shuttle, until it reaches shoulder height. The weight transfers completely to the front foot as the arm naturally recovers and the body straightens up.

8. THE STROKES-DRIVE STROKES

The drive stroke is a stroke played in a situation when the shuttle is to be hit from approximately shoulder height. The situation arises when the shuttle is too low for an overhead stroke and too high for an underarm stroke. The intention is to hit the shuttle at shoulder height level, so that it travels quickly across the net. The drive stroke can be played on the backhand side or on the forehand side. The stroke can be performed from any part of the court, wherever the shuttle is about shoulder height.

THE FOREHAND DRIVE (*see Photo 12*)

Preparation: Stand in the position of readiness. Hold the racket in the forehand grip. Twist the body to the right, support the body weight mainly on the right foot. Take the racket further back and cock the wrist. Step towards the shuttle on to the right foot. Examine the position. The left side of the body points towards the net. The racket is held back with the wrist cocked. The stance is a sideways throwing position.

Hitting Action: This is a sideways throwing action to hit the shuttle on impact at a position opposite the body at shoulder height. Keep the wrist cocked and throw out sideways to meet the shuttle. As the arm straightens out, throw the wrist forwards. The racket head travels forward at speed to hit the shuttle. The racket face meets the shuttle and directs it forwards to skim the net.

Recovery: The racket follows through forwards in the direction of the shuttle, as the weight of the body stays balanced on the right foot. The arm then naturally recovers at the completion of the follow through.

THE BACKHAND DRIVE (*see Photo 13*)

This is a similar stroke to the forehand drive played from the backhand side of the body.

Preparation: Stand in the position of readiness. Hold the racket in the backhand grip. Twist the body to the left and take the racket back. As the racket moves back turn the right thumb inwards towards the body. Continue the twist in the shoulders until the back of the shoulders are almost facing the net. Point the right elbow towards the point of impact which is shoulder height, at the side of the body. Step across to the left on to the right foot.

Action: Throw the arm out to the side, with the racket head held back. Allow the body to untwist, and the body weight to travel forwards on to the front foot. As the arm straightens out, bring the wrist forward to whip the racket head forwards at great speed. The racket face hits the shuttle on impact at a point opposite the right shoulder. The shuttle is directed forwards to skim the net and travel into the opposite court.

Recovery: The racket follows through in the direction of the shuttle until the strength fades away and the arm naturally recovers at the completion of the stroke. The arm travels on a pathway parallel to the floor.

9. SERVING

The service is the only time during the game when all the players start from a stationary position. The serve is the stroke which initiates the play.

There are four types of service:

- (1) The short serve.
- (2) The high serve.
- (3) The flick serve.
- (4) The drive serve.

In the serve the shuttle is hit with an underarm stroke. The shuttle must be below waist height at the moment of impact with the racket, and the racket head must be below the hand of the server. It follows that the shuttle must travel upwards before it crosses the net.

THE SHORT SERVE

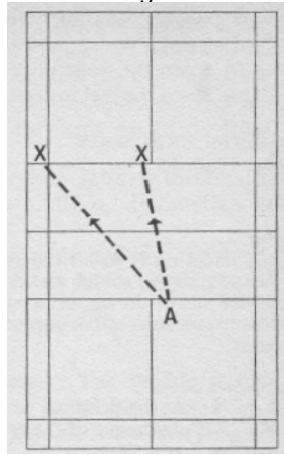
The object of the short serve is to hit the shuttle from the front of the service court, so that it passes over the net and lands on the front service line of the opposite court.

Short Serve (Fig 3)

A shows serving position.

X shows placement of the serve.

Fig 3



The receiver prepares to attack the short serve, therefore the shuttle must skim the net and begin to lose height immediately on passing over the net. To achieve this requires an accurate, controlled service. If the short serve passes too high above the net the receiver can easily step forwards and hit it down to the ground. A good short serve forces the receiver to hit the shuttle upwards and allows the serving side to gain the attack. The short serve is used mainly in Doubles but can be used with effect in Singles.

Preparation: Stand close to the centre service line and about two or three feet from the front service line. Place the left foot forwards until the feet are a comfortable distance apart. The right foot supports most of the body weight.

Hold the racket in the forehand grip. Swing the racket back and cock the wrist. Hold the shuttle by the feathers with a gentle grip of the finger and thumb of the left hand. The aim now is to play an underarm stroke to skim the shuttle over the net.

Action: Keep the wrist cocked throughout the stroke.

Swing the racket forward as you release the shuttle by opening the finger and thumb. The racket face meets the shuttle from underneath and gently pushes it over the net.

Recovery: The racket arm follows the flight of the shuttle as the body weight travels over the front foot. The racket head keeps low on the follow through so that the racket face points directly towards the pathway of the shuttle

Practise this movement until it is possible to skim the net and make the shuttle land on the front line of the opposite court. Remember to:

- (i) Watch the shuttle throughout the stroke.
- (ii) Stroke the shuttle gently.
- (iii) Keep the wrist cocked.
- (iv) Keep the feet in contact with the ground until completion of the stroke.

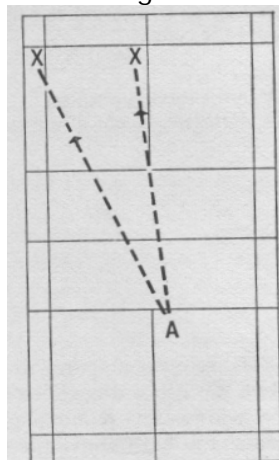
THE HIGH SERVE (see Photo 15)

Fig 4: The intention is to hit the shuttle from the serving position, to travel high and deep to land on the back service line of the opposite court. The shuttle can be directed towards either corner of the opposite service court

Doubles Serve

A shows serving position. X shows placement of the serve.

Fig 4



Preparation: Stand in the serving position. Prepare as for the short serve, though the racket may be held a little higher on the backswing.

Action: Swing the racket down and forwards as the shuttle is released by the finger and thumb of the left hand. Just prior to impact, uncock the wrist and whip the racket head forwards at speed to hit the shuttle from below. The racket face directs the shuttle upwards, high and deep into the opposite service court.

Recovery: The racket follows through high in the direction of the shuttle. The arm follows its natural swing up and across the body as the weight transfers fully on to the front foot on the completion of the stroke.

It is not a difficult stroke to perform though it needs practice. It is used as a tactical serve. Hit the shuttle high so that it will drop steeply and become difficult for the

receiver to judge the timing of his return stroke. Practise serving high and deep to both corners of the opposite service court.

THE FLICK SERVE

The flick serve is a surprise serve, used to deceive the opponent. The action is almost identical to the short serve, prior to impact with the shuttle. The intention is to deceive the receiver into thinking he is about to receive a short serve. At the last moment, the shuttle is flicked upwards to pass at a height just above the receiver's reach and then drop quickly into the court.

Preparation: Stand in the serving position. Prepare as for the short serve.

Action: Swing the racket forwards with the wrist cocked, as the shuttle is released by the left hand. Immediately prior to impact, flick the wrist forwards so that the racket head increases speed to hit the shuttle upwards over the receiver's outstretched reach. The weight travels forwards on to the front foot as the shuttle is hit.

Recovery: The wrist continues forward as the racket follows through in the direction of the shuttle. The arm recovers naturally on completion of the stroke.

The later the hitting action can be delayed, the more deceptive is the serve. The serve is a tactical one to make the receiver hesitate in rushing forwards to attack the short serve.

THE DRIVE SERVE

The intention is to drive the shuttle at the receiver. The shuttle travels towards the receiver so quickly that he is forced to rush his stroke. It is a surprise serve and used as a tactical move. To comply with the rules of serving, the drive serve must be hit from an underarm position. The shuttle skims the net, and travels quickly upwards. For this reason it should not be used too often. A thoughtful receiver will soon recognise the serve and deal with it easily.

Because the shuttle travels upwards after crossing the net, the server should try to keep the serve as low as possible.

Take up the serving position a pace further back than usual. The action is identical to the short serve. The wrist must remain cocked throughout the stroke, to keep the racket head low and allow the racket face to point forwards. The racket head is kept low on the follow through.

Practise the drive serve in the following way:

- (1) Serve a short serve. The racket travels at a slow pace.
- (2) Repeat the same action and increase the speed of the swing forward. The shuttle travels faster and continues to rise after crossing the net.
- (3) Repeat the same action and increase the speed of the racket arm even more. Do this practice until it is possible to perform a quick movement without allowing the racket head to follow through high.

The drive serve should be aimed at the face of the receiver or at the back-hand side of the receiver. If it is aimed at the forehand side of the receiver it is easy to return. The receiver has only to raise his racket to block the serve, and it loses its effect.

GENERAL POINTS ABOUT SERVING

As the shuttle is hit upwards in serving, there is a danger that the receiver may gain the attack. The serve is one of the most important strokes in the game and should be mastered. It is possible to gain the attack with the serve, but to do so requires great accuracy and control.

(1) Watch the shuttlecock. The receiver is usually standing in an aggressive receiving position, ready to attack a poor serve. Do not allow this to distract you from concentrating on serving the shuttle.

(2) Keep both feet in contact with the ground throughout the stroke.

(3) Keep the racket head below the level of the hand holding the racket and hit the shuttle from below waist height.

(4) Decide beforehand what type of serve you intend to do and take your time in making the stroke.

10. RECEIVING SERVICE

It is necessary to know how to receive the serve. There are different movements required for receiving each type of serve. The one common factor is the stance taken when preparing to receive the serve. The stance is the starting position prior to any particular serve (see photo16).

Stand in the forehand court (the right court). Occupy a position about a pace from the centre service line, and one or two feet from the front service line. The left foot is placed forwards so that the feet are a comfortable distance apart, and the body weight is evenly balanced. Flex the knees and lean forwards so that the body weight is supported mainly by the front foot. Hold the racket in front of you in the forehand grip. Keep the head of the racket up and look at the server and the shuttle. This is an alert comfortable position which allows speed of movement forwards or backwards.

PRACTICE

(a) Stand in the receiving position and move towards the net as quickly as possible.

(b) Stand in the receiving position and move backwards to the rear of the court as quickly as possible.

RECEIVING THE SHORT SERVE

There are three basic replies to the short service. These are as follows.

The Dab Shot: The intention of this stroke is to attack the serve. As the shuttle passes over the net, the receiver moves towards the net, reaches forward and taps or dabs the shuttle down towards the ground.

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Stand in the receiving position. Step forwards. Reach out towards the net, with the racket head raised and wrist cocked. Dab the wrist forwards with a quick light movement, so that the head of the racket hits the shuttle down towards the ground. The arm reaches forwards and the wrist performs the dabbing action (as illustrated in photo 17).

There is no follow through to this stroke. The recovery is a rebound action of the racket after the impact.

Practise this movement in the following way. Stand on the front service line facing the net. Reach forwards to the net and make a continuous quick light tapping action of the racket over the top of the net. In this way it is quite easy to experience the rebound after the dabbing action. This stroke is used for all short serves which are high enough to hit downwards.

A variation of this shot is used when the shuttle is just below net height. Using the same action the shuttle is pushed quickly upwards, past the server to land in the half court area. This is called the *Push Stroke*.

The Underarm Net Shot: This stroke is played to return a good short serve, when it is not possible to hit the shuttle down.

Stand in the receiving position. Step forward to attack the shuttle. Stretch the racket forward and drop the racket head quickly to meet the shuttle from below. The racket face meets the shuttle as near the top of the net as possible. A gentle upward movement of the outstretched racket will stroke the shuttle back over the net for it to drop down the other side. The aim is to hit the shuttle so that it almost creeps over the net (see photo 18).

Underarm High Clear: If the shuttle has dropped too low for it to be returned from net height, an alternative stroke is the underarm clear, high and deep to the rear of the court. This stroke is played with the same action as the normal underarm clear. However, as the receiving stance is such that the racket head is held up in front of the body, there is no time for a full backswing as the shuttle comes over the net.

Stand in the receiving position. Step forwards to attack the serve. As the shuttle falls, drop the racket head below the pathway of the shuttle. Cock the wrist quickly and flick the racket head up at speed to hit the shuttle high and deep into the opposite court. The racket travels up to follow through in the direction of the shuttle before the arm naturally recovers. At the completion of the stroke the body straightens up to recover in a balanced position.

RECEIVING THE HIGH SERVE

Stand in the receiving position. As the shuttle is served high and deep to the back of the court, you must push off the front foot to travel quickly to the back of the court. Move quickly backwards to get behind the shuttle. Stop and balance as you prepare to hit the shuttle. The situation is now similar to any overhead stroke.

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The emphasis is on reacting quickly to the serve to get into a hitting position. Once in position any overhead stroke can be played. The usual reply in Doubles play to a high serve is to play an overhead forehand smash. So smash straight or to the centre.

To move quickly to the rear of the court from the receiving position requires good footwork and balance. It is possible to move backwards, with either a side skipping action or a running action. The preparation for the stroke can be made whilst travelling to the rear of the court or on arrival at the rear of the court. The choice is a personal one but will be made naturally according to the time available in the situation.

RECEIVING THE FLICK SERVE

Stand in the receiving position. The server appears to be serving a short serve, you are ready to move forwards. At the last moment, the shuttle is flicked upwards above your outstretched reach. It now requires speed of movement to move backwards to reach the shuttle before it drops to the ground.

Move quickly backwards into a position that you can smash the shuttle down from an overhead position.

It is not always possible to place the feet behind the shuttle, though it is possible to place the racket behind the shuttle by bending backwards, or jumping back even though off balance.

Only practice and experience will enable you to manipulate your body in this way. If the smash is not possible, an alternative stroke can be played, i.e. the overhead forehand clear or the overhead forehand drop shot. When you have been deceived by the serve and find yourself in an awkward position, whatever you do, make sure you return the shuttle back over the net.

RECEIVING THE DRIVE SERVE The shuttle approaches at speed on a rising pathway. Stand in the receiving position. Hold the racket in the forehand grip with the racket head held up. Remember the instructions for the drive serve. To perform a good drive serve it is necessary to stand further back in the court; if you see the server do this, then you can anticipate the serve and be ready for it.

As the shuttle approaches at speed the immediate reaction is to make a hurried smashing action. There is not enough time to do this.

(a) Raise the racket head higher, to place the face of the racket in line with the oncoming shuttle, cock the wrist and tap the shuttle lightly back over the net down to the ground.

(b) Raise the racket head higher in line with the shuttle - block the shot. The shuttle bounces off the racket and drops over the net.

(c) Raise the racket head higher, racket face in line with the shuttle, and tap the shuttle upwards, high and deep to the rear of the opposite court.

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These actions can be performed when the shuttle is driven towards the forehand side or the backhand side. If the shuttle arrives on the backhand side move the racket across the front of the body to play a forehand stroke from the backhand side of the body.

Practise this movement: Stand in the receiving position, move the right arm across the front of the body with the forehand face pointing towards the net. Practise tapping down, tapping up and blocking.

11. NET PLAY

Net Play takes place in the area between the front service line and the net. There are a limited number of possible shots in the situations which develop in this area. It is necessary to become familiar with the strokes possible in the situations created.

A player at the net has two objectives. The first objective is to hit an outright winner. The second objective is to force the opponent to play a defensive stroke or make an error.

To achieve the first objective the player must create a situation which allows him to hit the shuttle down to the ground for a winning shot. To achieve the second objective a stroke is played which forces the opponent to hit the shuttle upwards.

Stand in the position of readiness. Occupy a position on the centre of the front service line facing the net, keep alert, concentrate and watch the shuttle and always keep the racket head up.

(1) If the shuttle is above the height of the net, place the racket head in line with the oncoming shuttle and either tap it or push it down towards the ground.

(2) If the shuttle is below net height, play the stroke as early as possible, i.e. meet it near the top of the net. Place the racket head in line with the oncoming shuttle. The racket face meets the shuttle from below and gently strokes it upwards over the net so that it passes close to the top of the net and falls steeply to the ground, immediately after crossing the net.

(3) If the shuttle has fallen near the ground before you play the stroke either return a low net shot away from your opponent or flick it past him so that it falls behind him in the mid-court area.

The basic strokes for net play are dab shots and underarm strokes. These are described in detail in 'Receiving the Short Serve' (page 32). One other stroke is the *block stroke*; when the shuttle is travelling at speed across the net, time does not

allow a dab stroke or an underarm stroke to be performed. As with receiving the drive serve, the best tactic is to block the shuttle by placing the racket face directly in line with the pathway of the oncoming shuttle, the shuttle bounces off the racket and drops down over the net.

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The essentials of Net Play are:

- (a) An alert ready position
- (b) Watch the shuttle.
- (c) Keep the racket head up.
- (d) Hold the racket with a gentle grip of the fingers.
- (e) Basic shots are dab stroke, underarm stroke, block stroke.
- (f) Play net shots at a comfortable distance from the shuttle, usually at arms length.

12. FOOTWORK, BALANCE AND STROKE PLAY

Good control of the body is necessary to play Badminton. To play any stroke in the game situation involves a sequence of movements. From a fixed position, the player must move into a hitting position, play the stroke and move to the next position. This requires travelling on the feet to move into the hitting position. On arrival in the hitting position the player must stop and balance. The feet support the body in the balance position. Balance is essential to allow the player to perform the movements of the upper body required to hit the shuttle. The movements of the upper body are: a preparation for the stroke, the hitting action and a recovery from the action. Unnecessary movements of the feet during the hitting action can upset the rhythm of the stroke and effect accuracy and control. The sequence of movement for any stroke in any situation is: travel, balance, prepare, hit, recover. This should take place as one continuous movement.

TRAVEL

The player travels on his feet from one position to another, and movements of the feet should be quick and light. Practise in the following ways. Begin in the centre of the court from the ready position:

- (a) Run with quick light movements of the feet in the directions forwards and backwards.
- (b) skip sideways to the front of the court and to the back of the court. Do this facing the right side of the court and repeat the action whilst facing the left side of the court.
- (c) Practise running, and change to skipping sideways in different directions.
- (d) Practise skipping sideways and change to running in different directions.

BALANCE

Balance is essential during the hitting phase. The feet are still in the balanced position.

- (a) Practise running and skipping forwards and backwards, and stop suddenly to balance.
- (b) Practise travelling in different directions on the court and stop suddenly to balance.

PREPARATION, ACTION AND RECOVERY

Preparation is the movement which takes the racket in the backswing ready to hit forwards into the shuttle.

The action is the hitting movement.

The recovery is the natural movement of the racket arm after the hitting movement.

(a) *Practice*: Select a stroke. Prepare with a light effort. Hit forwards with a strong sudden movement. Recover naturally, i.e. as the force of the stroke dies away, allow the racket arm to continue easily on its natural pathway until completion of the stroke.

Repeat this practice with the selected stroke. Perform the movements separately and then try to join them together to make one continuous movement.

(b) *Practice*: Stand in the ready position in the centre of the court. Select a stroke to practise and decide on the position you will play it from. Now try to join all the movements together to make a continuous, flowing pattern of movement.

From the ready position, travel, balance, prepare, hit, recover and return to your starting position.

The ability to perform these basic actions in a continuous sequence of movement, will help to raise the performance of your game.

13. SIMPLE PRACTICES FOR THE STROKES

Stroke practice plays an important part in improving stroke production. It is not always possible to improve strokes during a game. In a game, the atmosphere is competitive and the intention is to win the game. A learner does not have time to think about performing the correct stroke, and he has not yet reached the stage when the correct stroke is an automatic action. During a game it is usually satisfactory if a learner can return the shuttle back into play without having to think about footwork, balance and correct stroke production. Only time and playing experience will enable the learner to play the correct stroke in the game situation.

It is important that the learner practises the strokes in a situation which is not competitive. Instead the learner should practise the strokes with a friend.

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It will not matter if mistakes are made, for the intention of a practice session is to allow mistakes and concentrate on eliminating them gradually to acquire perfect stroke production. The aim of practice is 'to groove the stroke'; that is, to repeat the same stroke continuously, and so make the movements automatic.

The following practices are a few simple ones to begin with.

HOW TO PRACTISE STROKES

The ideal situation is to play on a singles court with a partner. This is not always possible in a club because other players are waiting to play. The Doubles game is played most in a Badminton Club to provide an opportunity for more players to play at one time. However, it is customary to allow a short period for a 'knock up', in which the players loosen up. Use this 'knock up' period wisely to practise selected strokes. If this is done on each occasion in the 'knock up' period, the strokes will eventually improve. For this reason the following practices are designed for the 'knock up' period. If you ever have the opportunity to practise on the full court for any length of time, then make the most of it.

