



Mike's Tennis Tips
Attacking and Defending Off the Lob
 Professional Tennis Management, PTM, Services



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A question that comes up from time to time is 'how do my double's partner and I effectively attack the net after we have hit a deep lob to our opponents?' I generally reply by saying, 'this is a very good question'. Although it is important to know how to attack against a well executed lob, it is equally important to know how to position yourself to defend against your opponent's reply.

Let's start by addressing the first question, how to attack the net after a well executed lob against your opponents? This actually depends on what side of the court the lob was hit and where you and your doubles partner are positioned on the court. Assume you are receiving serve, (R1), at the baseline in the ad court and you hit a high lob over your opponent who is positioned as the volleyer, (V1). Your partner is positioned in the 'hot seat, (HS1) in the deuce court. According to Pete Collins, Professional Tennis Registry Master Professional and author of Successful Doubles if you are on the same side or half of the court that the lob was hit, you become the attacker, (R2), and your partner becomes the defender, (HS2).

By assuming these positions, you and your partner are in much better position to attack and defend against the possible return. As you can see in *Diagram A*, after R1 executes a deep lob over V1, R1 attacks the net and moves to become R2. Now R2 is effectively the net person in an offensive position to volley or hit an overhead. HS1 who is on the opposite side of the court that the lob was hit, moves back to defend, and becomes HS2. Here HS2 can move forward for a volley if his opponents return a floating ball or he can move backward to cover a lob return over his partner's, (R2), head.

From these temporary staggered positions, R2 and HS2 are better able to cover the entire court and play more aggressive/defensive successful doubles.

The mistake that many doubles teams make is to attack the net together in tandem making their team extremely vulnerable to a lob return which neither player is in position to retrieve. The attack and defend staggered positions as illustrated above, are especially advantageous for senior play or with players with limited mobility.

Modified Option (Illustrated in red in Diagram A): If mobility is in question, as is the case with some senior competitors and others, there is another option that requires less movement. Instead of R1 rushing to the net all the way from the baseline, H1 can move to R1's attacking volleying position R2. R1 will cover for HS1's defensive position by moving forward and diagonally to HS2. This way both players can get to there designated areas quicker and they are still ideally positioned to attack and defend.

This simple positioning technique provides an effective and easy road map to follow and gives each doubles player a clear understanding of their specific roles on the court.

Have fun, and remember 'attack and defend your way to successful doubles'.

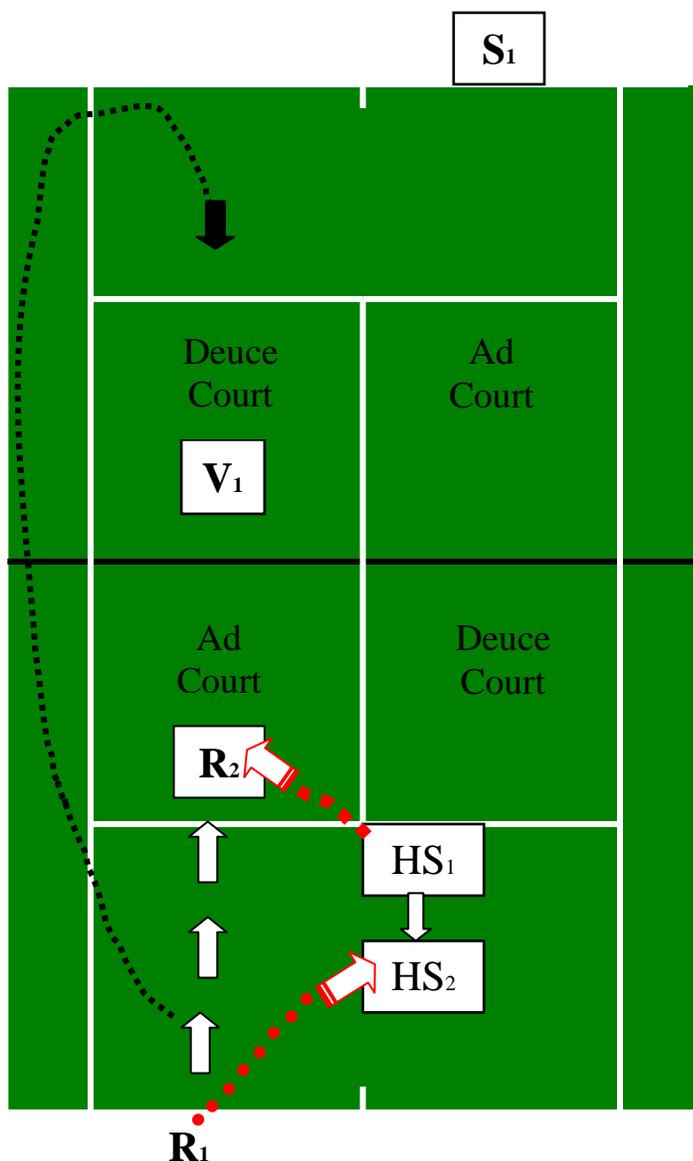


Diagram A
 Attacking and Defending off the Lob
 Modified option illustrated with red dotted lines