

The Table Tennis Playbook



By Ben Larcombe

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	2
Who is Ben Larcombe?	2
What is 'The Table Tennis Playbook'?	3
Who Is It For?.....	4
Why Am I Writing This?	4
How to Use It.....	5
Terminology.....	5
SERVICE PLAYS.....	6
Short Serves.....	6
Long Serves.....	10
RETURN OF SERVICE PLAYS	13
Returning Short Serves	13
Returning Long Serves.....	17
MY FAVOURITE PLAYS	20
NOW IT'S YOUR TURN.....	24
FINAL WORDS	25

INTRODUCTION

Who is Ben Larcombe?

Hello and welcome to The Table Tennis Playbook! My name is Ben Larcombe and I'm a table tennis coach from London. I'm 23 years old and this is my second year as a full-time coach.

I began playing table tennis at the age of 10, back in 1999, and I've loved the sport from then on. As a player I was a bit of a late developer. It wasn't until I was 16 that I started to practice more than once a week and I entered my first national competition aged 17. Before then I had been practicing once a week, playing in local tournaments and leagues, and representing my county of Surrey. I finished the juniors ranked about 70th in England (I said I was a late developer!).



Playing senior counties last season (2011/12) for Surrey.

At the age of 18 I made the decision to move away from home and join Grantham Table Tennis Academy. I began a degree in sport science and was able to play table tennis every day, under the guidance of some top English coaches. Naturally my development accelerated as I was exposed to new training methods and expert coaching. I left the academy in 2009 (aged 20), moving to Nottingham to finish my degree.

Since then I've continued my development as a player (I am currently ranked about 150th in England) but have also passed my coaching awards and spent many hours increasing my knowledge of table tennis and coaching. I am now a UKCC level 2 table tennis coach, with coaching experience in schools, regional development squads, club sessions and one-to-one environments.



Coaching the Wilson's team at the Jack Petchey London South Finals.

At present, I spend most of my time coaching at Wilson's School, a boy's grammar school in London that invests heavily in sport. Current pupils include Michael Ho, English Schools U19 National Champion (2012) and Liam Grant, one of the best U15 players in England.

What is 'The Table Tennis Playbook'?

A playbook is a notebook containing descriptions and diagrams of the plays a team or individual has practiced. Playbooks are most commonly used in American Football as a way to create and modify specific strategies. They are given to players at the start of a training season to be learnt and implemented. They often contain certain codes or abbreviations used to refer to certain tactics or drills.

The Table Tennis Playbook is intended to be a comprehensive training manual for table tennis players of all abilities. The 'plays' contained within this eBook are split into service and receive of service exercises. The focus is very much on match-specific practice drills, always starting with a serve, a series of shots and then going into free play (if the rally hasn't already broken down). There will be no 'regular' footwork exercises, or similar, in the playbook.

Service exercises will include a serve, the third ball, and the fifth ball, before going into free play. Receive exercises will include the return of serve and the fourth ball, before going free.

Who Is It For?

The Table Tennis Playbook is my free resource and it's available to anyone that wants it. If you would like to share it with a friend please direct them to www.experttabletennis.com/playbook so that they can join the Expert Table Tennis Academy themselves.

I would like to point out that, in an ideal world, it would be a good idea to have learnt a solid basic technique before starting on the serve and return exercises or 'plays' described in this book.



Ideally you'll be able to push, drive and topspin correctly before moving on to the plays included in this book.

Obviously this is not always possible but I believe that the best way to improve your game is to nail down the basics first, creating a strong foundation to build on. Then you can move on to using your technically correct shots in matches and match-like practice drills. Spending hours and hours practicing an incorrect technique can make it much harder to change later on.

Also, the exercises I have included in this eBook assume that both players are right-handed and attacking or 'up to the table' players. If you are left-handed or more of a defensive player you will have to make some small adjustments to the drills. Don't let this put you off. The general principles of the book can be applied to all styles of play.

Why Am I Writing This?

My experience playing and coaching table tennis really opened my eyes to how good and bad training sessions can be. I have been to training camps abroad, in France and Denmark, and been very impressed by the wide range of exercises used to help players develop.

However, in other sessions I've heard countless players tell me they don't know what to practice or they can't think of a drill. I've also seen some very good players practice the same regular exercises over and over again until they look great knocking up but fall to pieces in a game.

My aim with this playbook is to give you ideas and to inspire you to try some new things in the training hall.

How to Use It

Now that you've downloaded The Table Tennis Playbook you can use it as you like. Feel free to pop it onto your iPhone or smartphone so that you can have it with you at practice sessions.

If you're quite new to these types of drills you might like to skip to the 'My Favourite Plays' section and try out some of those before creating your own.

L/FH Long Forehand	L/MID Long Middle	L/BH Long Backhand
S/FH Short Forehand	S/MID Short Middle	S/BH Short Backhand
S/BH Short Backhand	S/MID Short Middle	S/FH Short Forehand
L/BH Long Backhand	L/MID Long Middle	L/FH Long Forehand

Each half of the table is split into six sections to make the plays easy to follow.

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In terms of practically how to use the playbook, I've split each half of the table up into six sections. As I mentioned earlier I'm setting everything up for two right handed players but it shouldn't be too hard to switch around if you're a lefty. In table tennis a ball can be either short (it would bounce twice on your side) or long (it would only bounce once on your side before dropping off the table). Then there are three main areas; the backhand side (where you would usually play a backhand shot), the forehand side (where you would almost certainly play a forehand shot), and the middle (where ideally you would be trying to play your forehand, unless you have a particularly strong backhand). The combination of length and placement gives us six areas per side of the table.

Terminology

I will be using various terms and shorthand to explain the exercises in this book. Please read the following list before going through the drills.

Shots

- **Block:** a control shot usually played off a topspin ball.
- **Counter:** a topspin shot played off a topspin ball (loop-to-loop)
- **Dig:** a long/deep push.
- **Flick:** an attacking shot off a short ball.
- **Open up:** a topspin shot played off a backspin ball.
- **Return:** the receive of service.
- **Serve:** the first stroke of any point.
- **Topspin:** a topspin shot played off a block.
- **Touch:** a short push.

Spins

- **BS:** backspin
- **NS:** no spin
- **SS:** sidespin
- **TS:** topspin

Other Terms/Shorthand

- **BH:** backhand
- **FH:** forehand
- **Free:** the rally goes into free-play.

SERVICE PLAYS

There are thousands of combinations of table tennis service plays. I am not attempting to record every possible play imaginable. Instead I will be splitting the plays down into groups and giving an example for each.

So there will be one play starting with a short backspin serve, a dig, and then a topspin open-up. The serve could go to the backhand, middle or forehand, as could your opponents dig. You have even more possibilities once you start thinking about where you will attack your third ball to. The possibilities are (almost) endless but once you have understood the general principles, and gone through the example, you should be able to easily create your own plays, starting with a short serve, dig and open up. Its then up to you to tailor the drill to your strengths or weaknesses so that you get the most out of it.

Short Serves

The majority of serves in table tennis are short. As we increase our level of play, our ability to capitalise on long serves also increases. This forces players to serve short much more often to stop their opponent from getting in first in each rally.

If the majority of your serves are going to be short it is important that you are still able to use a lot of variation and deception. You can vary the spin you impart on the ball (topspin, sidespin, backspin, no spin), your placement (backhand, middle, forehand), and the area you are serving from.



Having a good short serve is crucial once you start improving.

The following plays all start with a short serve, which is followed by various different returns from your opponent. Your opponent's return of service will largely determine your shot selection for the third ball. For example, if they flick your serve you won't be able to touch the next ball, you will have to topspin.

Opening up Service Plays

Opening up drills will usually start with a short serve. You'll then get your opponent (the receiver) to push or dig the ball long to your forehand, backhand or middle.

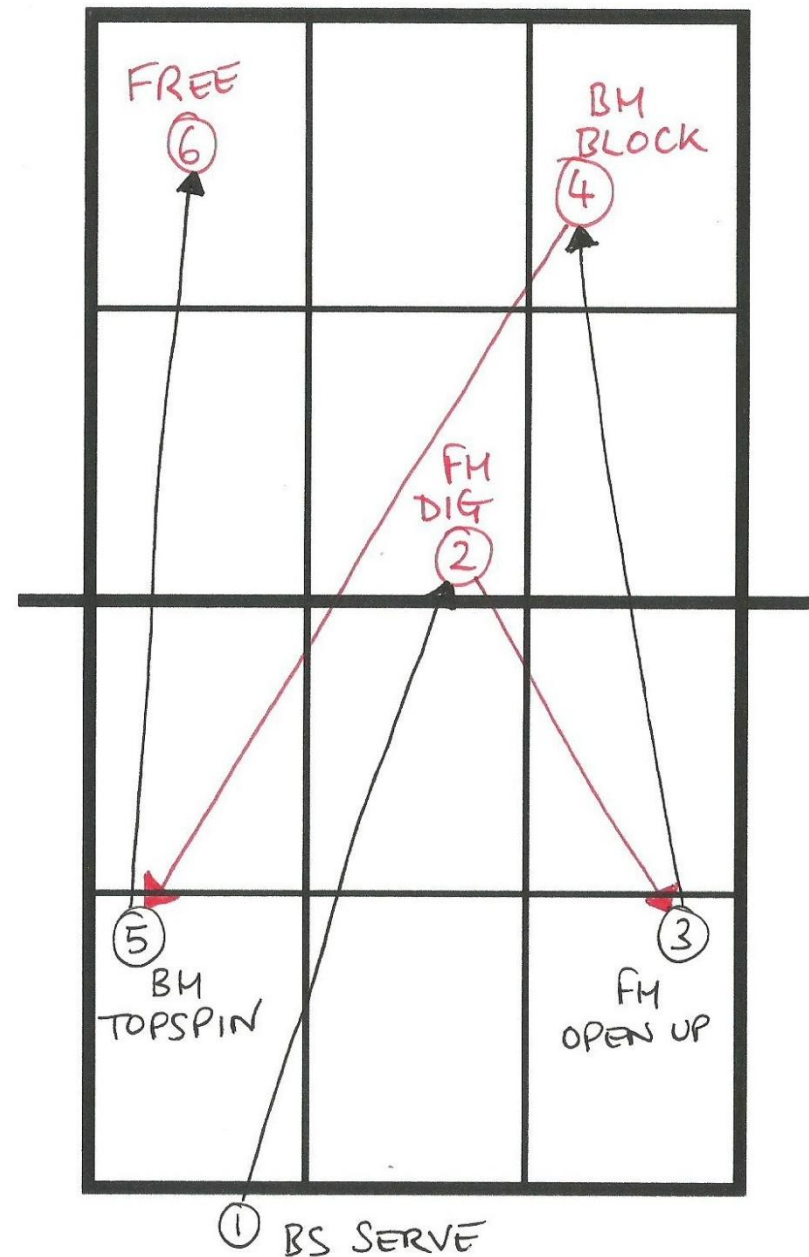
The purpose of the drill is to work on your 'third ball attack', specifically your topspin off a backspin ball. Once you have opened up you can have your partner play a block or counter topspin which you will try to attack with your fifth ball.

From there the exercise goes free and you both try to win the point. If you have got in with a good topspin loop and followed it up with a strong fifth ball you should be winning the majority of the points.

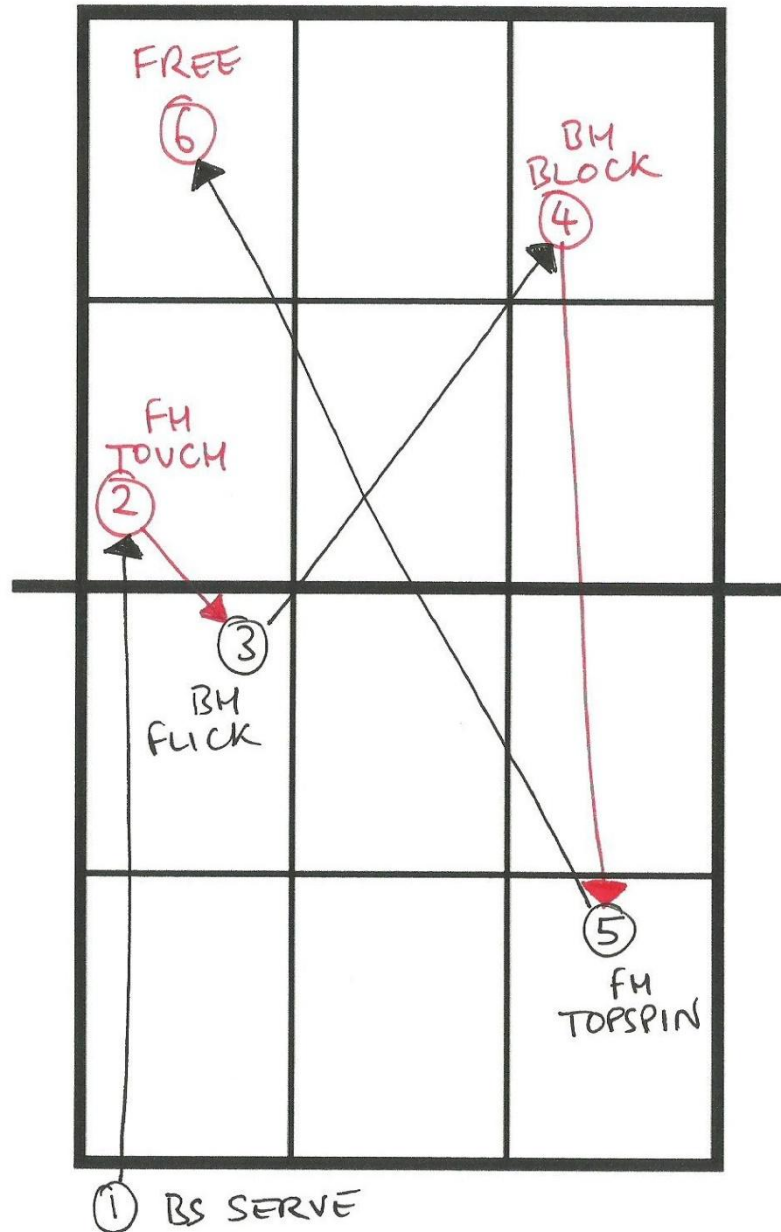
Here's an example of an 'opening up' play...

1. Start with a short backspin serve to the middle.
2. Your opponent plays a forehand dig to your wide forehand.
3. You play a forehand open up down the line to their backhand.
4. They backhand block to your backhand.
5. You move across and play a backhand topspin down the line.
6. They play free from their forehand.

"I like this play because it gives you a high amount of control over the rally. If you serve short backspin to your opponent's middle you will often get a dig to your forehand. Opening up down the line can surprise your opponent and 80% of the time they end up blocking cross court so you can get ready for a backhand winner or a well placed topspin shot down the line."



Flicking Out Service Plays



In order to attack the third ball with a flick you'll need to force your opponent to touch return your service. Sometimes putting a bit less backspin on your serve can make it more likely you'll receive a short return. Players often choose to dig a heavy backspin serve as they are afraid to put it into the net when touching.

You can then decide whether you want to flick hard or whether you want to slowly roll the ball. Both can be effective if played correctly.

Your opponent will probably block your flick if you catch them out (especially with a hard flick) or topspin your flick if they read it well, setting you up for a fifth ball topspin.

Here's an example of a 'flicking out' play...

1. Start with a short backspin serve down the line.
2. Your opponent plays a forehand touch to your backhand.
3. You play a backhand flick cross court to their backhand.
4. They block the ball down the line to your forehand.
5. You move across and play a forehand topspin cross court.
6. They play free from their forehand.

"This is a really good play. It's always a good idea to get your opponent travelling the furthest distances and here you drag them in to play a forehand touch and then flick them back out deep to their backhand side. It is also very common, if you serve short down the line, for your opponent to touch the serve back over the net to your backhand as it can be tricky to touch cross court to your forehand."

Short Topspin Service Plays

A short topspin serve can be extremely effective. If your opponent misreads the spin on the serve, and attempts to push, the ball will pop up and can be finished off for an easy point.

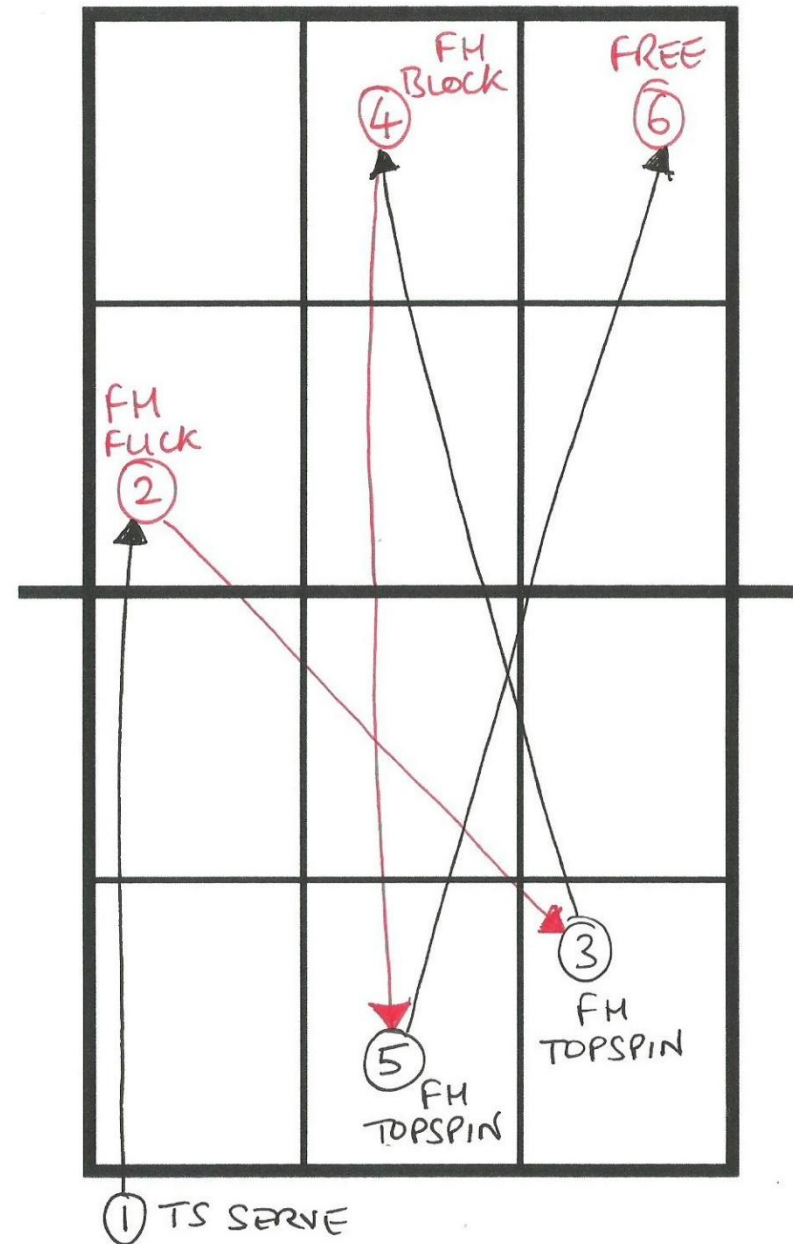
However, if they correctly read the topspin they can play a flick return which can put you on the back foot unless you are expecting it.

It's important to be ready for your opponent to flick so that you can adjust and play a topspin third ball. Topspinning a strong flick can be difficult but if the third ball is played well it can put you back in the driving seat for the rally. It forces your opponent to have to quickly get back out from the table, after their flick, to return your topspin.

Here's an example of a short topspin serve play...

1. Start with a short topspin serve down the line.
2. Your opponent plays a forehand flick wide to your forehand.
3. You play a forehand topspin into their middle.
4. They block the ball with their forehand to your middle.
5. You play a forehand topspin into their backhand.
6. They play free from their backhand.

"It's a good idea to practice points where you are put slightly on the defensive by your opponent correctly reading and flicking your serve. I particularly like this play because the third ball goes into your opponents cross-over, forcing them to play a softer block into the middle of the table. You can then move around a play a big forehand topspin fade into their backhand, hopefully catching them out."



Long Serves

Occasionally you are going to want to throw in a long serve. A long serve can be great for catching out your opponent, especially if you've been serving predominantly short and they have started 'stepping in', assuming the serve will be short.

Just as it was very important that your short serve was short (bouncing twice on your opponents side of the table), it's crucial that your long serves are long. Ideally you are trying to get the ball to bounce as close to the baseline of the table as possible. This will make the serve much harder to return if you opponent is close to the table.

A long serve must also be fast! Top players have been training to expect every serve to go long and be ready to attack it. If your long serve isn't fast enough you will likely be picking the ball up off the floor, after watching your opponent topspin the ball straight passed you.



Asuka Sakai is famous for his super fast backhand reverse tomahawk serve.

You will also need to be careful not to play long serves directly into your opponent's forehand or backhand areas. You need to at least make them move before playing a shot. Your best bet is to serve either into the body or wide to forehand or backhand.

The final point to think about when serving long is deception. It's important to try and make your long serve as identical as possible to your short serve, until the point you strike the ball. Sometimes we have tell-tale signs that we are about to serve long that we don't even realise we are doing. Ask your team mates. They will probably know!

The following plays all start with a long fast serve which is usually returned with a topspin. You can also get your opponent to block the serve back but having them play a topspin will make the exercise more challenging.

The pressure is then on you to play a counter topspin off the third ball. If you are prepared and play this counter shot successfully it will put you in a really good position to win the point and give your opponent little time to react.

When attempting the counter topspin, focus on just adding a little bit of extra pace and spin to the ball instead of trying to absolutely whack it. Keep your technique and use a short, snappy stroke. My coach always spoke about the counter topspin as "sending it back with interest", just giving it a few extra percent, not trying to kill the ball.

I'm only going to cover the long, sidespin pendulum serve and the fast topspin down the line serve in this section but I'm sure you can come up with some of your own ones.

Long Pendulum Service Plays

A pendulum serve can be long or short. When serving long using the pendulum technique you can impart a lot of sidespin on the ball making its positioning hard to read for your opponent. You can also add in a little backspin or topspin to keep them guessing even further.

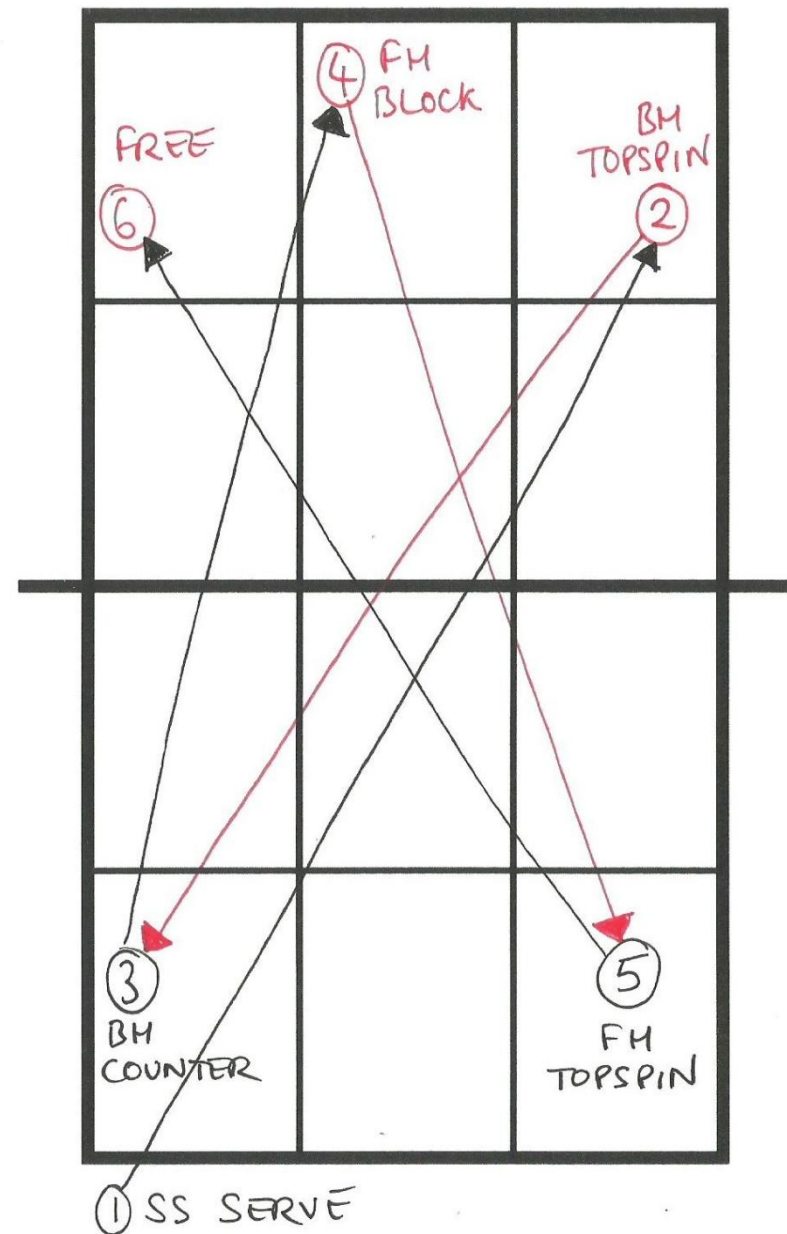
You can serve wide to their backhand or have the ball curling into their cross over point. However, you should expect your opponent to play a topspin, so you will need to recover quickly after serving.

When playing the third ball take the sidespin you put on the ball when serving into account. That sidespin can make your opponents return of service more difficult to judge.

Here's an example of a long pendulum play...

1. Start with a long sidespin pendulum serve to wide backhand.
2. Your opponent plays a backhand topspin across the table.
3. You play a backhand counter topspin to the middle.
4. They block with their forehand to your forehand.
5. You play a forehand topspin across the table to their forehand.
6. They play free from their forehand.

"The fast sidespin pendulum serve, wide into your opponent's backhand, makes it very likely that you will receive the third ball on your backhand side. You will need to be confident to play a backhand counter as you don't really want to start blocking. Alternatively you could try and get round the corner to play a forehand counter topspin. Playing this counter into their crossover is a good idea."



Down the Line Service Plays

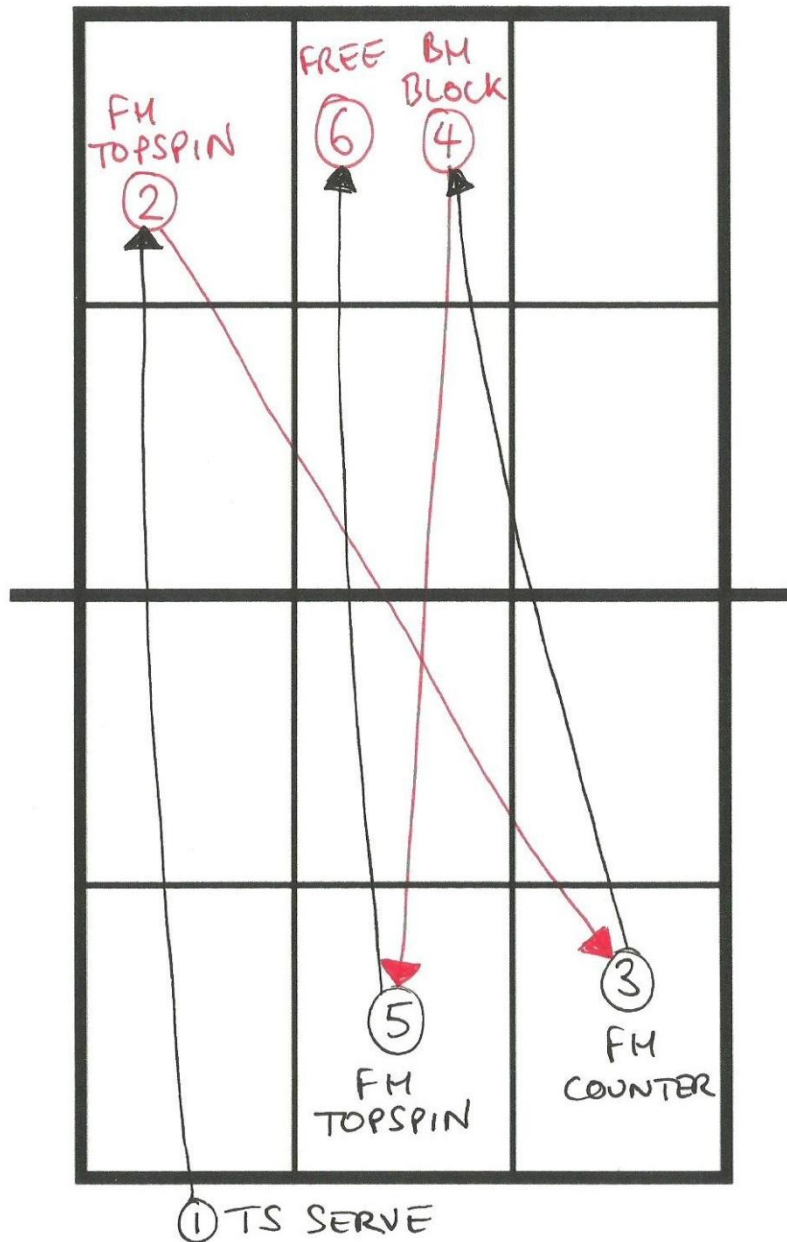
A long, fast serve down the line can be really effective. It is slightly harder to serve fast down the line so often opponents aren't expecting to have to move over to their wide forehand. Also, opponents who like to predominantly use their forehand may start stepping round the corner to try to receive all your serves with their forehand. A fast serve down the line, if disguised correctly, can win you the point outright.

As with all long serves you need to expect your opponent to attack the serve. If they read your serve and get over to their forehand side they may be able to play a very strong return of service and put you under pressure. You can expect the third ball to come to your forehand so get ready to move after the service and always look to counter topspin.

Here's an example of a 'down the line' serve play...

1. Start with a fast, topspin serve to your opponent's forehand.
2. Your opponent plays a forehand topspin to your forehand.
3. You play a forehand counter to the middle.
4. They play a backhand block to your middle.
5. You move across to play a forehand topspin to their middle.
6. They play free from the middle.

"I like this play because it really pins your opponent at the cross over point. You play two strong forehand topspins into their middle/crossover and make it awkward for them. It's also a good idea to practice that fast, down the line serve because you never know when you'll need it. Players often don't feel confident about getting it on in a match so this kind of practice is important."



RETURN OF SERVICE PLAYS

We now move on to some return of service plays. There are loads of possible combinations but I will go through five examples, three starting with a short serve and two with a long serve.

You will notice that the number of shots in the play has been decreased from six to five. As the receiver in the point you will be concentrating on your return of service (2nd ball) and your 4th ball. Your 4th ball should ideally be a very positive stroke but your return of service needs to be strong in order to set this up.

Returning Short Serves

As I said earlier, the majority of table tennis serves are short. It is therefore extremely important that you can return short serves well. The difficulty when being the receiver is that you cannot be 100% sure which spin is on the serve and where the ball is headed. This is the server's main advantage but there are some things you can do to make it easier to return serves.

1. **Watch the service action:** You would be surprised how many players don't really pay close attention to their opponent's service action. Just watching the ball will not give you the full picture. You need to keep your eyes on their stance, body position, bat, arm and wrist, to fully be able to analyse the serve.
2. **Identify your opponent's favourite serves:** Everybody has favourite serves and after the first end of a game you should be able to identify at least two serves that your opponent is likely to use. You can then be ready for these while also anticipating something different.

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3. **Commit to your decision:** If you have decided to flick the serve then flick it whole-heartedly. Even if you have misread the serve you may still get away with it. You are most likely to get into trouble when you are indecisive or just try to stick your bat in the way of the ball, without committing to any particular stroke.

Now all that's left to say is make sure you're in a good ready position, with your weight on your toes, and don't let your opponent get away with any rubbish! Anything long needs to be attacked. Full stop.



Ariel Hsing, waiting to receive a serve.

Touch & Open up Return Plays

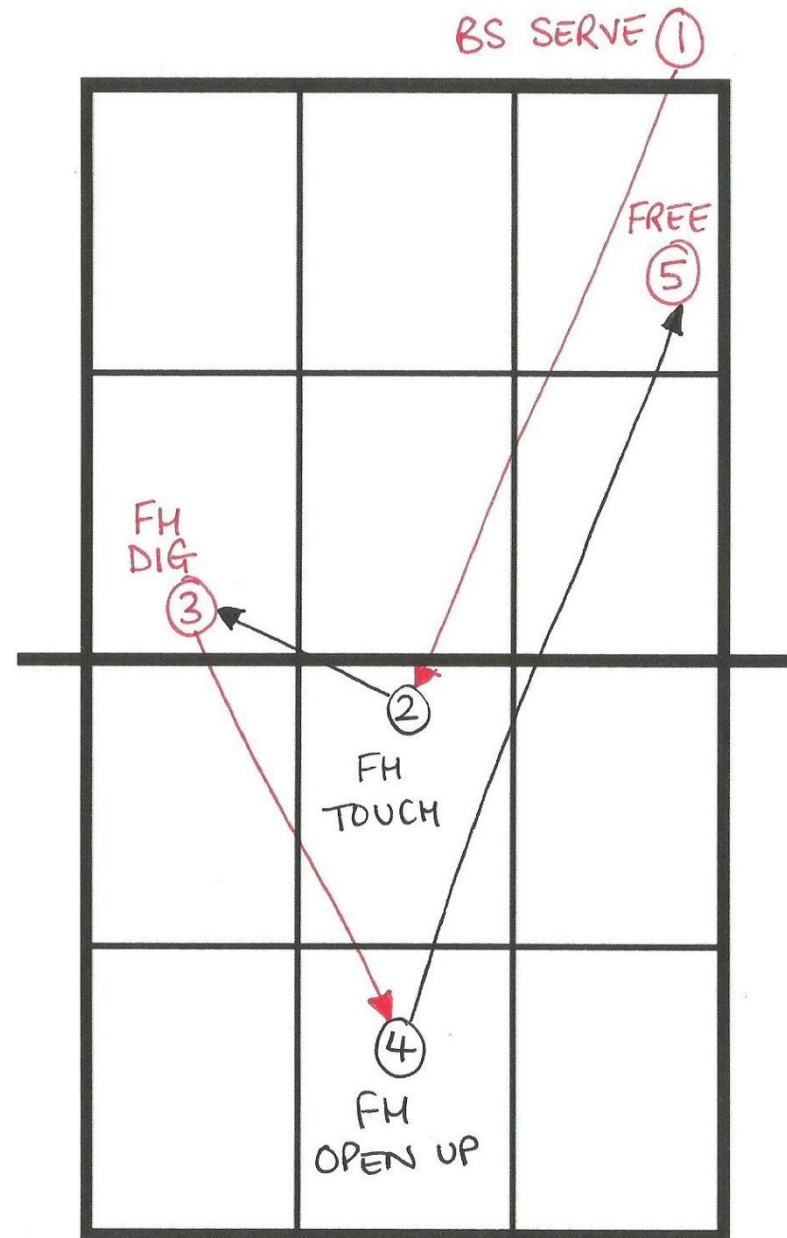
This is a very common situation when receiving service. You will often be given a short, backspin serve to your middle. This is possibly the most used serve in table tennis. It's very tight and difficult to attack. Most of the time you will have to push this serve, so it's up to you whether to go short (touch) or long (dig).

Going short with a touch return should stop your opponent from attacking the 3rd ball and will often give you an opportunity to get in on the fourth ball if they are unable to keep their push short. If you get a chance to attack the fourth ball you should be looking to play a shot that can win you points, either with heavy spin, power, or placement.

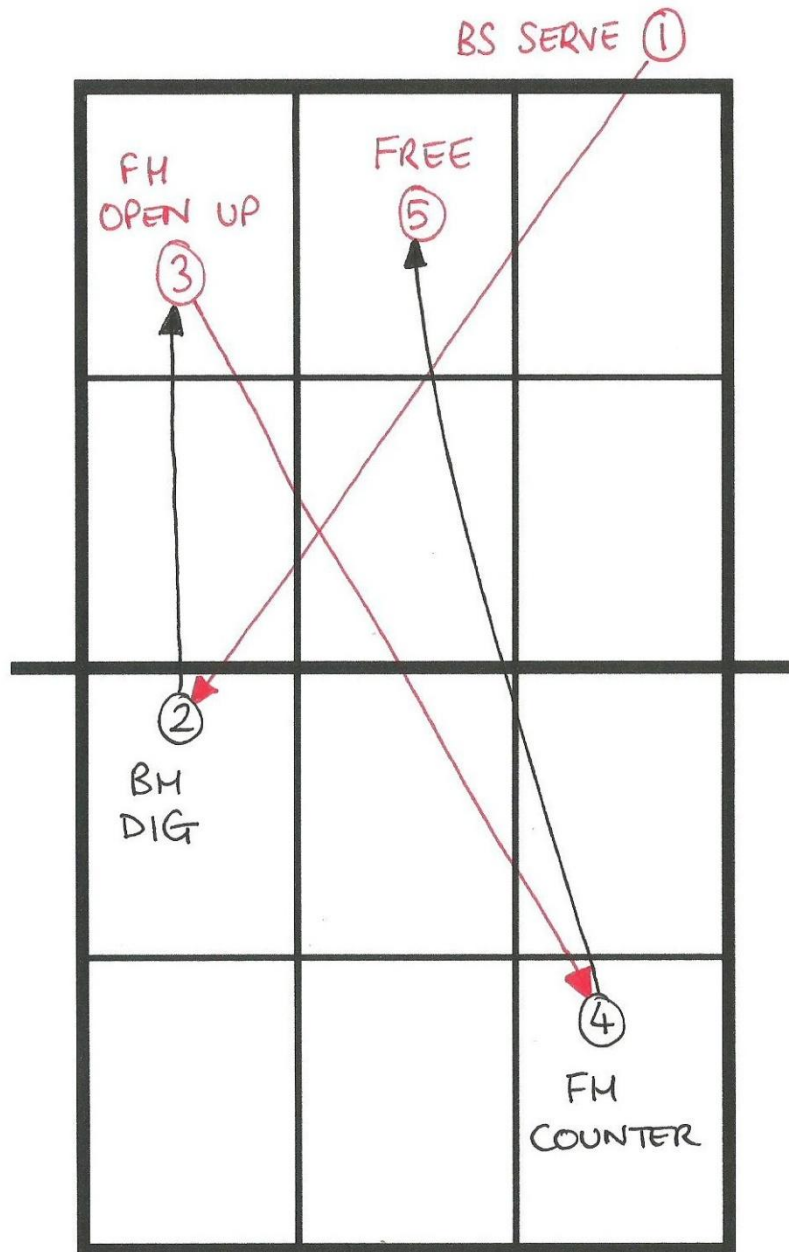
Here's an example of a touch & open up return play...

1. Your opponent serves short backspin to your middle.
2. You play a forehand touch to their forehand.
3. They play a forehand dig to your middle.
4. You step out and play a forehand open up to their backhand.
5. They play free from their backhand.

"This is a very common situation when receiving serve and you must have a good tight touch in your repertoire. I particularly like this play because you first drag your opponent into the table wide to their forehand side and then hit them deep to their backhand. This movement, where you move in to the net on your forehand and then have to get back out to play a backhand, is very difficult to do successfully and there's a good chance your opponent will miss your 4th ball or at least be thrown off balance."



Dig & Counter Return Plays



Sometimes you will face a short backspin serve that you just don't fancy touching back. Perhaps it is slightly longer and you feel a touch will be difficult to keep tight or maybe you've noticed that your opponent is not particular strong at opening up and you want to put him to the test. Either way there can be very good reasons to dig (push long) your return.

However, you will need to anticipate an attacking shot from your opponent as a good player will attack a dig 90-100% of the time. Try to work out where they are likely to open up to and be ready to play a positive counter topspin if you read it well.

Here's an example of a dig & counter return play...

1. Your opponent serves short backspin to your backhand.
2. You play a backhand dig to their forehand.
3. They play a forehand topspin open up to your forehand.
4. You play a forehand counter topspin to their crossover.
5. They play free from the middle.

"If you can produce a dig that goes very wide to your opponent's forehand with lots of backspin you can expect them to have to loop the ball up and they may even take it a bit late. You can also guess that the ball will, more often than not, come across to your forehand. Make sure you are in a good position to play a forehand counter topspin and how about hitting it into their crossover? It's a great feeling when you manage to play a strong counter topspin off an opponent's open up and finish the point then and there!"

Flick & Counter Return Plays

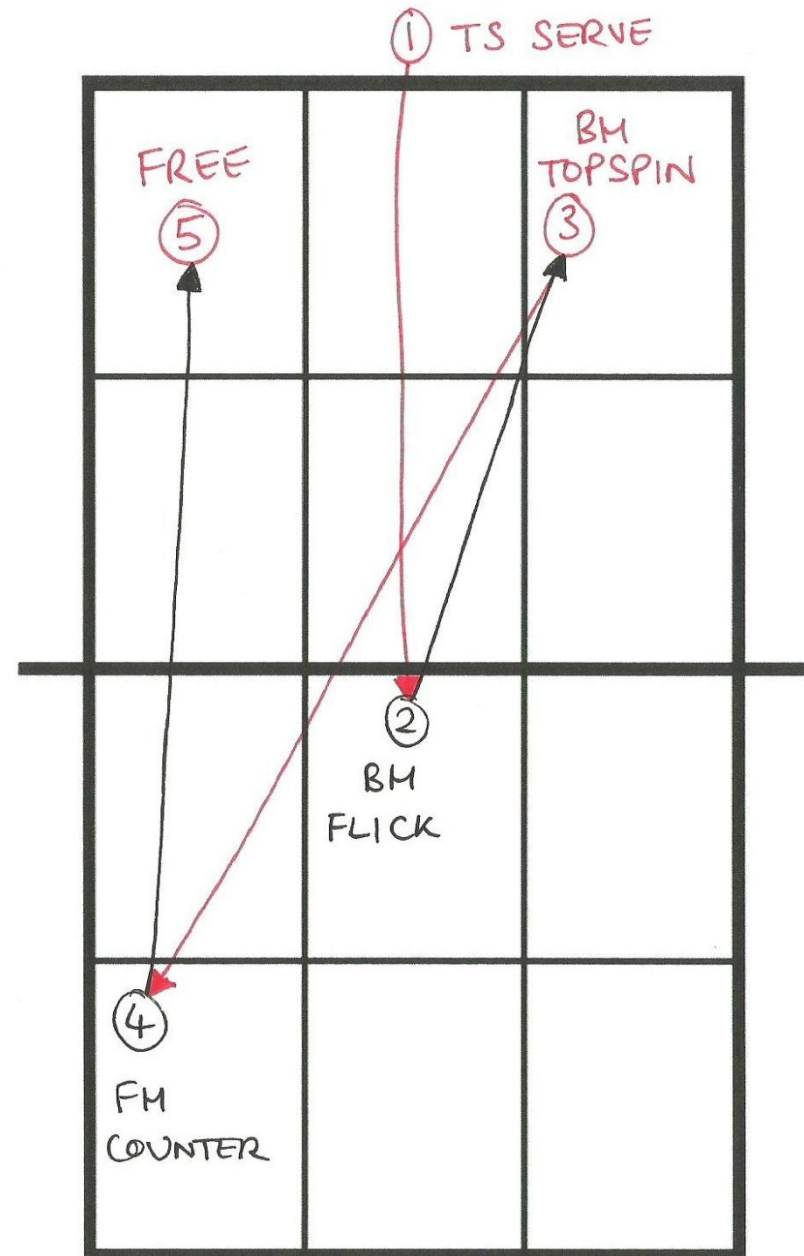
Opponents are tricky and you won't just be facing short backspin serves all the time. Occasionally they will throw in float, sidespin and topspin serves and you need to be ready to attack these, if possible. Do not get into the habit of deciding you are going to push a serve before you've seen it!

These float, sidespin or topspin serves can be flicked either hard or soft and varying your flicks is a good idea. A hard flick gives your opponent the choice to block or topspin whereas a soft flick really forces them to attack, as a block will likely go into the net. Be prepared to move and play aggressively on your 4th ball if you are flicking out.

Here's an example of a flick & counter return play...

1. Your opponent serves short topspin to your middle.
2. You play a backhand flick to their backhand.
3. They play a backhand topspin to your backhand side.
4. You step around and play a forehand counter down the line.
5. They play free from their forehand.

"This play is a little risky as you are stepping round to play a forehand counter topspin from your backhand side. You need to be aware that your wide forehand is very exposed and if you move around too early your opponent will be able to just block your flick down the line and catch you out. However, if done correctly this play can be extremely effective and win the point straight off your 4th ball. It is also a good idea to show your opponent that you are able to attack with your forehand from your backhand side, reminding them that your backhand side is not a weak area they can exploit."



Returning Long Serves

Occasionally your opponent will serve long and you need to be ready to play a positive stroke. There are really no two ways of looking at how to receive a long serve. If the serve isn't going to bounce twice on your side of the table, you need to attack it.

At lower levels of play you may find players that aren't able to serve short at all and this should be an absolute dream for any attacking player. At higher levels, opponents will use their serve well by usually serving short but sometimes throwing in a fast one or a half-long one to catch you out. You need to be able to react to and attack both.

For example, a poor short serve that happens to drift long is very different to a fast topspin serve that is hitting your baseline. Both need to be attacked and are classed as 'long' but different techniques need to be used. You will probably be forced to take a fast serve early (before the peak of the bounce), whereas a half-long serve you will have to take later (after the peak of the bounce).

The image to right highlights particular areas of the table where it may be easier or harder for you to receive the serve aggressively. The green area is where you want your opponent to serve. It's not short and it's not long. In the green area we know the ball will go long but can take our time a little and strike the ball near to the peak of the bounce.

The amber area, close to the end of the table, shows serves that were deliberately fast and long. These serves are a little bit harder to play aggressively but it is important to still hit the ball rather than just blocking.

The red area, close to net, shows the serves that will be staying short and will be difficult to attack, except possibly with a flick. The dangerous area is the crossover between the red and green area. Balls in this area are 'half-long' as they may bounce twice on your end or just drop off. If you wait too long to make a decision on these services you may find the ball has bounced twice on your side before you get a chance to topspin it. Or if you're unlucky, you may find you've smashed your hand against the table or snapped your bat in half!



There are easier and harder lengths on the table, for the receive of service.

So remember, if a serve comes long you have to attack! Make sure that is firmly in your mind. You should always expect the serve to come long and then react differently if it goes short. And of course, bear in mind that your opponent probably wants to get in a very strong 3rd ball attack, so try to play to their crossover point or another weak spot to make it as hard as possible for them to follow up their long, fast serve with a forehand winner.

Topspin & Counter Return Plays

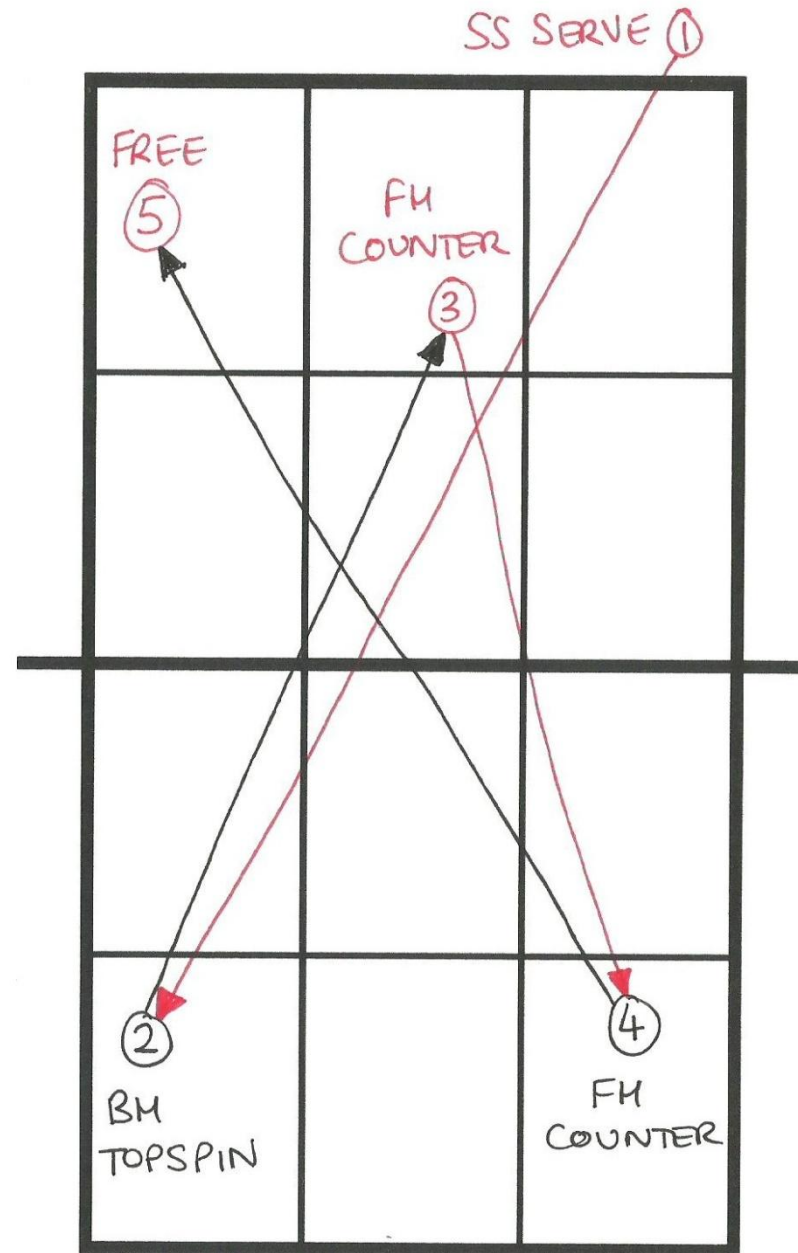
A common long serve is the sidespin pendulum serve wide to your backhand. This is seen quite regularly and if performed well can pin you really deep into your backhand side. If you are a left-handed player I'm sure you've come across this countless times as right-handed players try to catch you out wide to your forehand!

Timing can be a little tricky on this receive but you must attack. Your opponent will probably play a counter topspin for their 3rd ball so try to anticipate its direction and stay up to the table so that you can fire back another counter topspin yourself. Often it's the person who manages to stay up to the table, in these types of aggressive rallies, that manages to win the point.

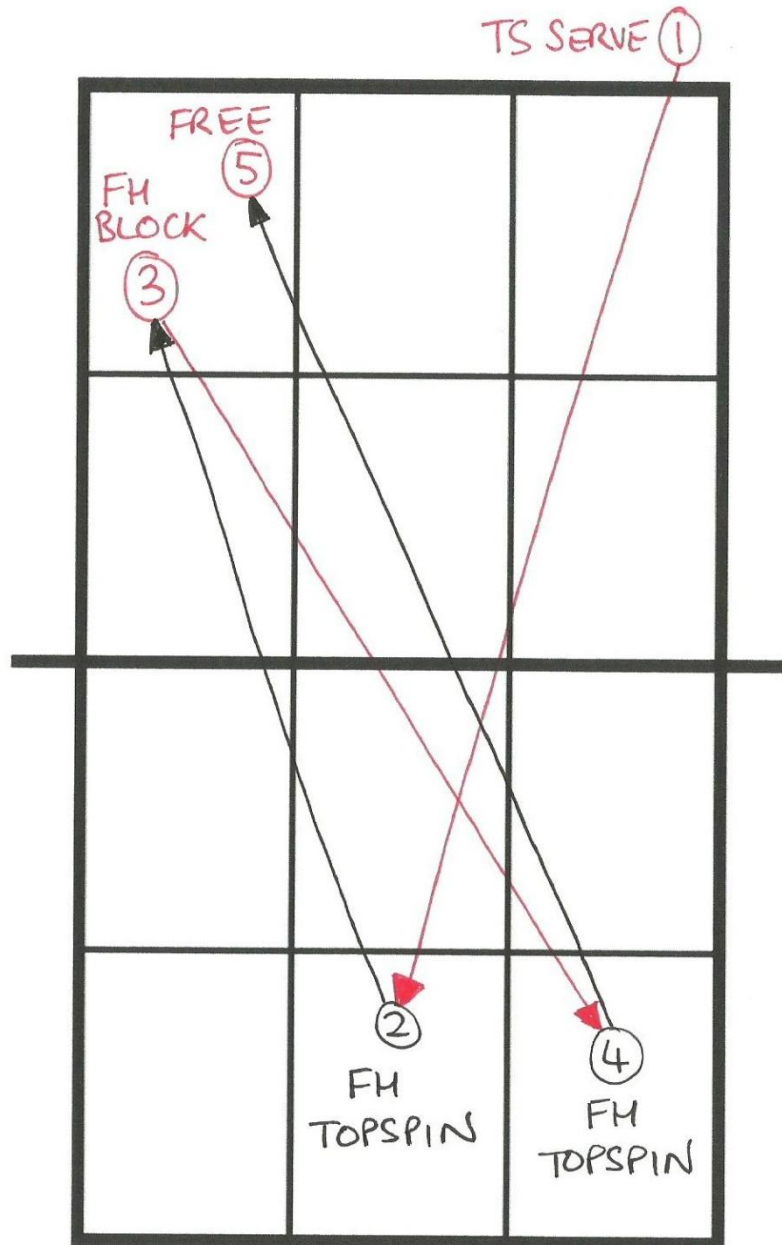
Here's an example of a topspin & counter return play...

1. Your opponent serves long sidespin wide to your backhand.
2. You play a backhand topspin to their middle.
3. They play a forehand counter topspin to your forehand.
4. You play a forehand counter across the table.
5. They play free from their forehand.

"I like this play because it's super aggressive. A long fast serve, a topspin receive, a 3rd ball counter topspin, followed by another counter topspin. It will help you to get comfortable playing topspin to topspin rallies up to the table and switching quickly between your backhand and forehand. There are loads of possible combinations as you can topspin to any of the three areas (backhand, middle or wide)."



Topspin & Topspin Return Plays



If your opponent is serving fast and long they will probably be expecting to play a strong 3rd ball. However, if you are able to read their serve, move into a good position and make a really strong return, you may be able to force them to block the 3rd ball.

Once you get them blocking it's really up to you to dominate the rally. You should be looking to play a very powerful 4th ball because you don't have to worry about timing your shot as much, as your opponent blocked rather than countered.

It can be tempting to try and switch the ball to their backhand but often in these situation it's better to just keep hitting hard across the table, which is usually an easier shot to make.

Here's an example of a topspin & topspin return play...

1. Your opponent serves long topspin to your middle.
2. You play a strong forehand topspin to their wide forehand.
3. They play a forehand block to your forehand.
4. You play a forehand topspin across the table.
5. They play free from their forehand.

"If you manage to really attack the serve and get a block from your opponent, you're in a very good place to win the point. I like attacking wide to their forehand because firstly, they usually serve from the backhand side and secondly, if they block it is likely to come back to your forehand. This makes them have to move to the block and allows me to play a big 4th ball winner."

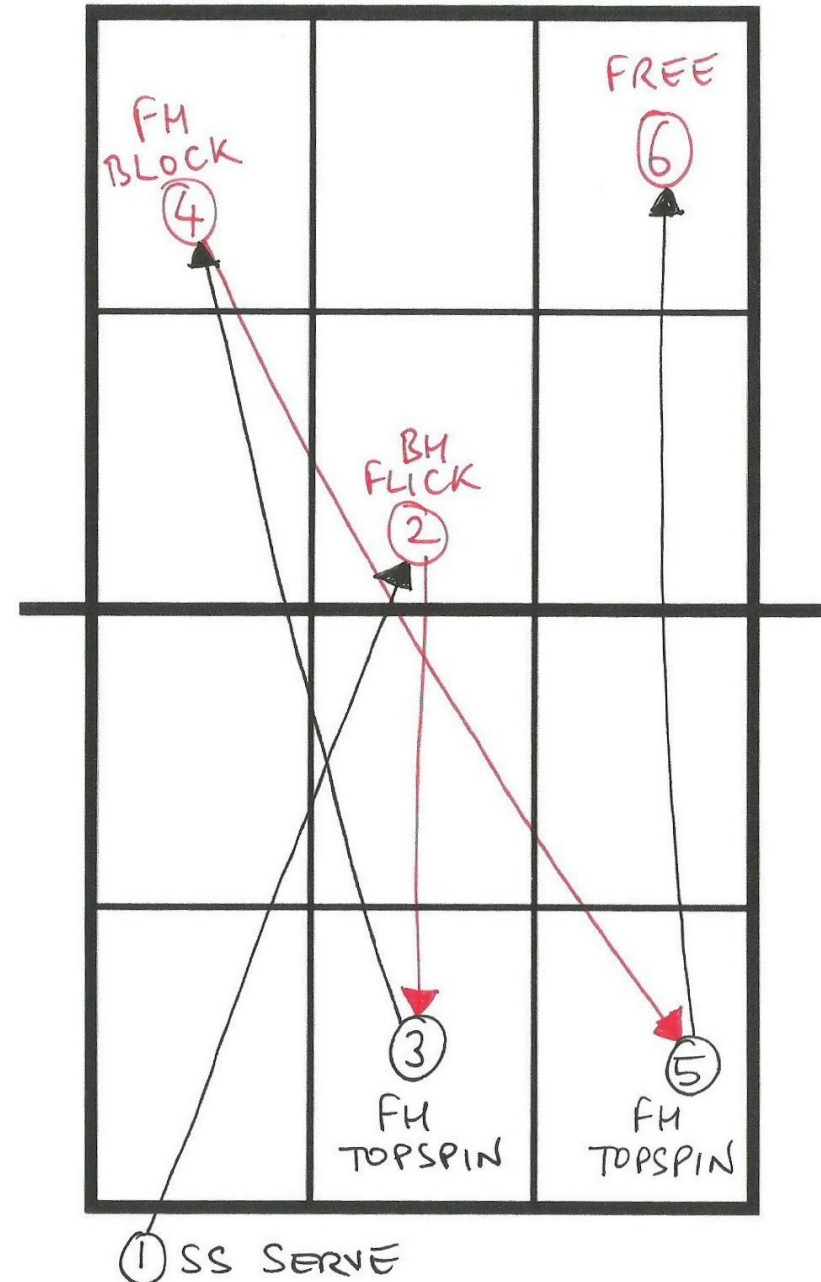
MY FAVOURITE PLAYS

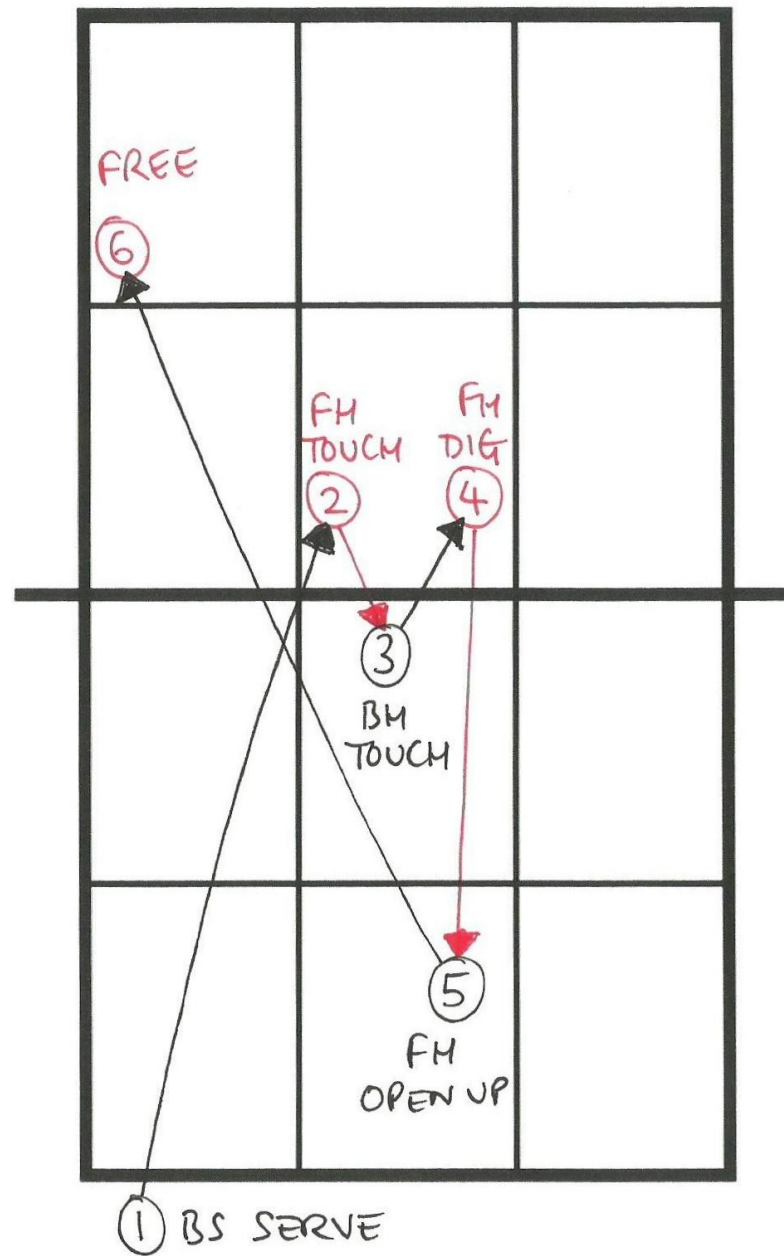
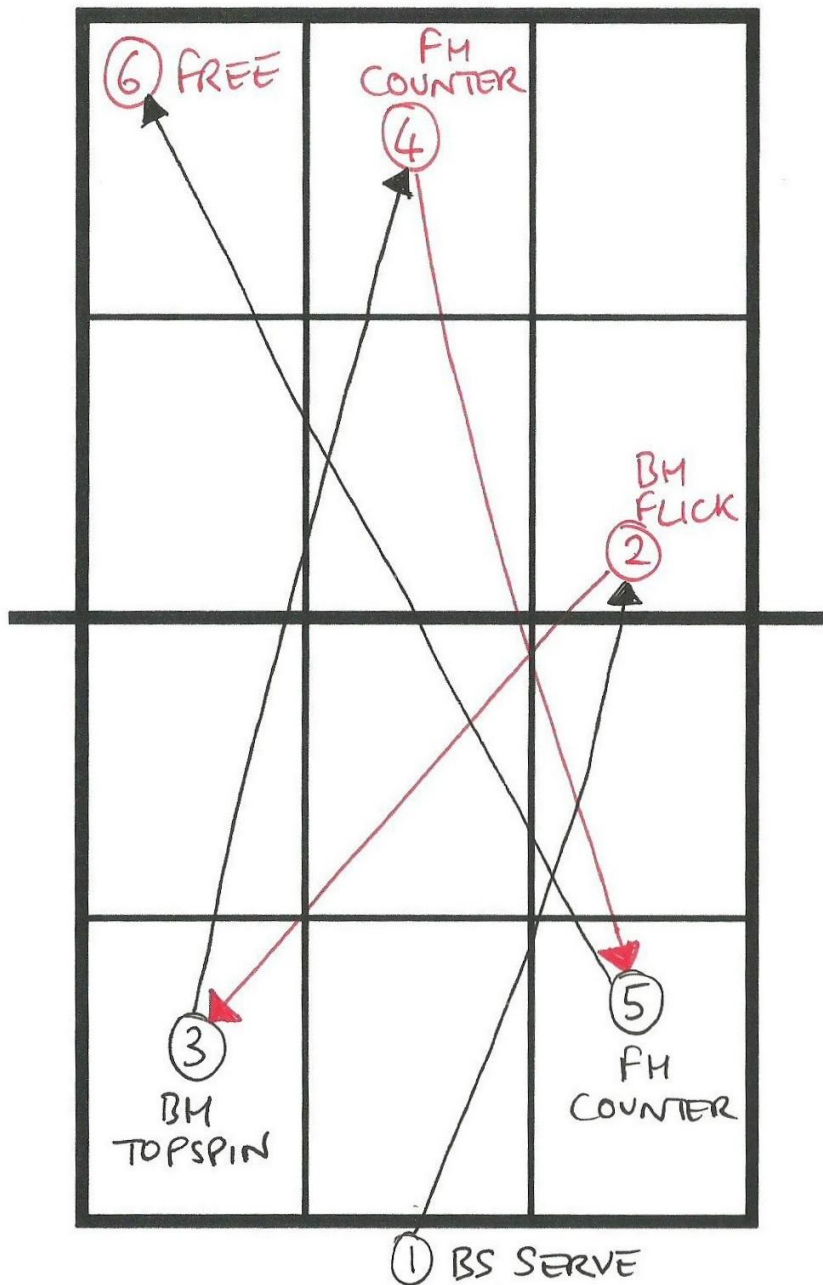
Hopefully we've now covered most of the scenarios you are likely to face in a competitive table tennis game. We've looked at serving short and long and receiving short and long serves. It's up to you now to start practicing and of course making up some of your own plays/drills.

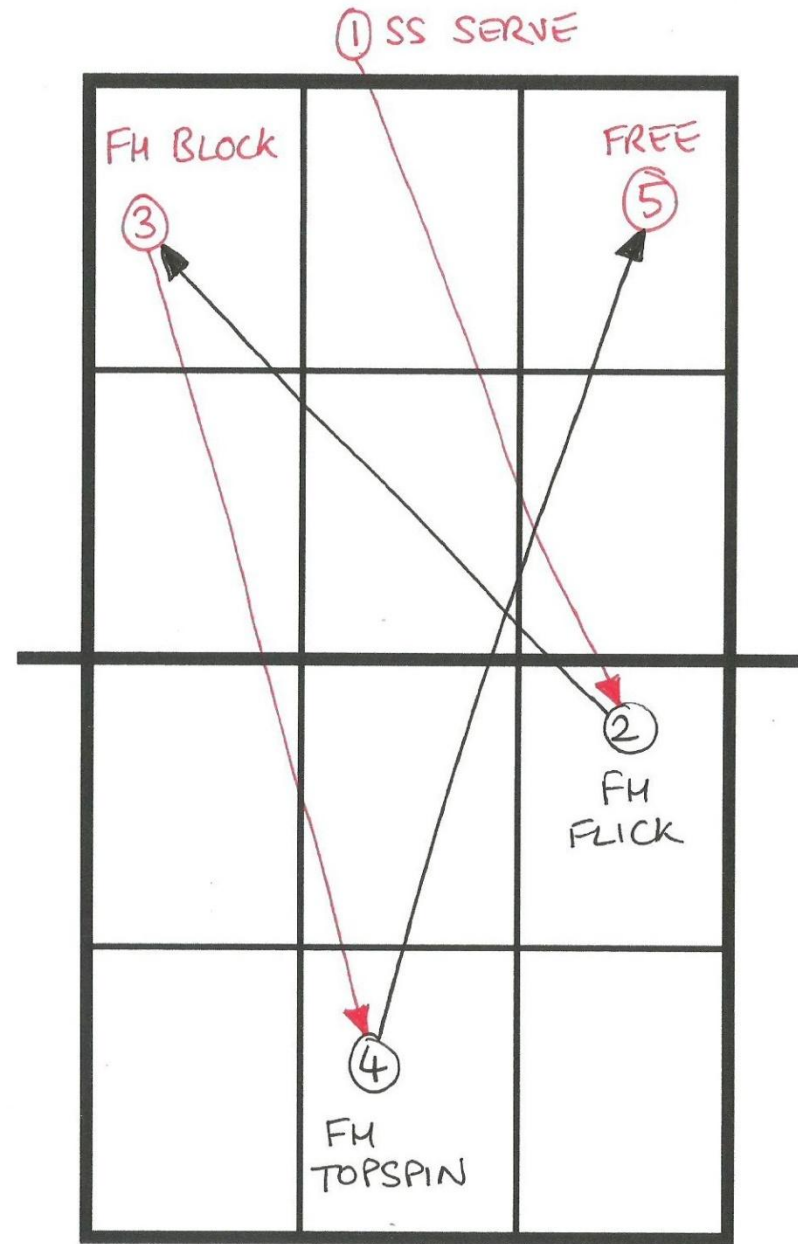
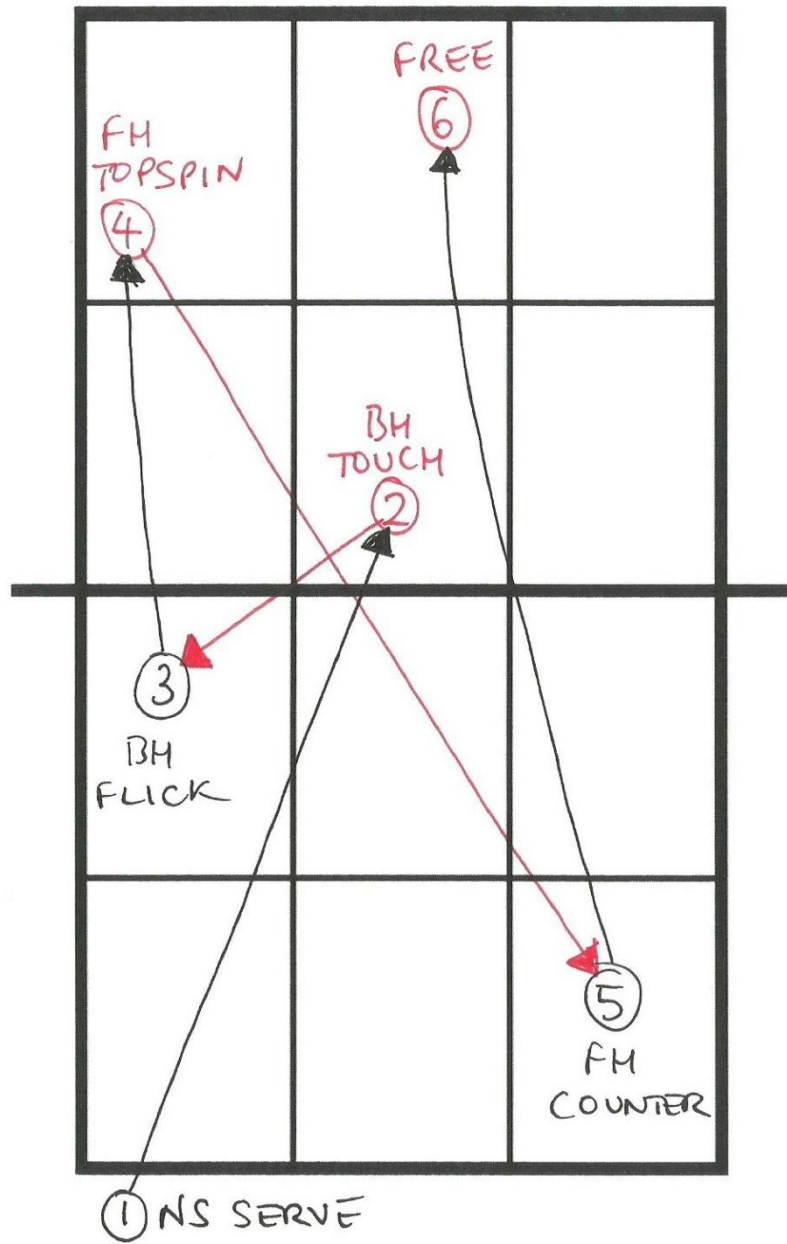
On the next few pages you'll find some of my favourite plays. Some will be similar to those you've already seen, some will be slightly different. I won't be going through them in the detail that I have previously, as I don't want to repeat myself, but I hope they give you an idea of all the possible plays available to you.

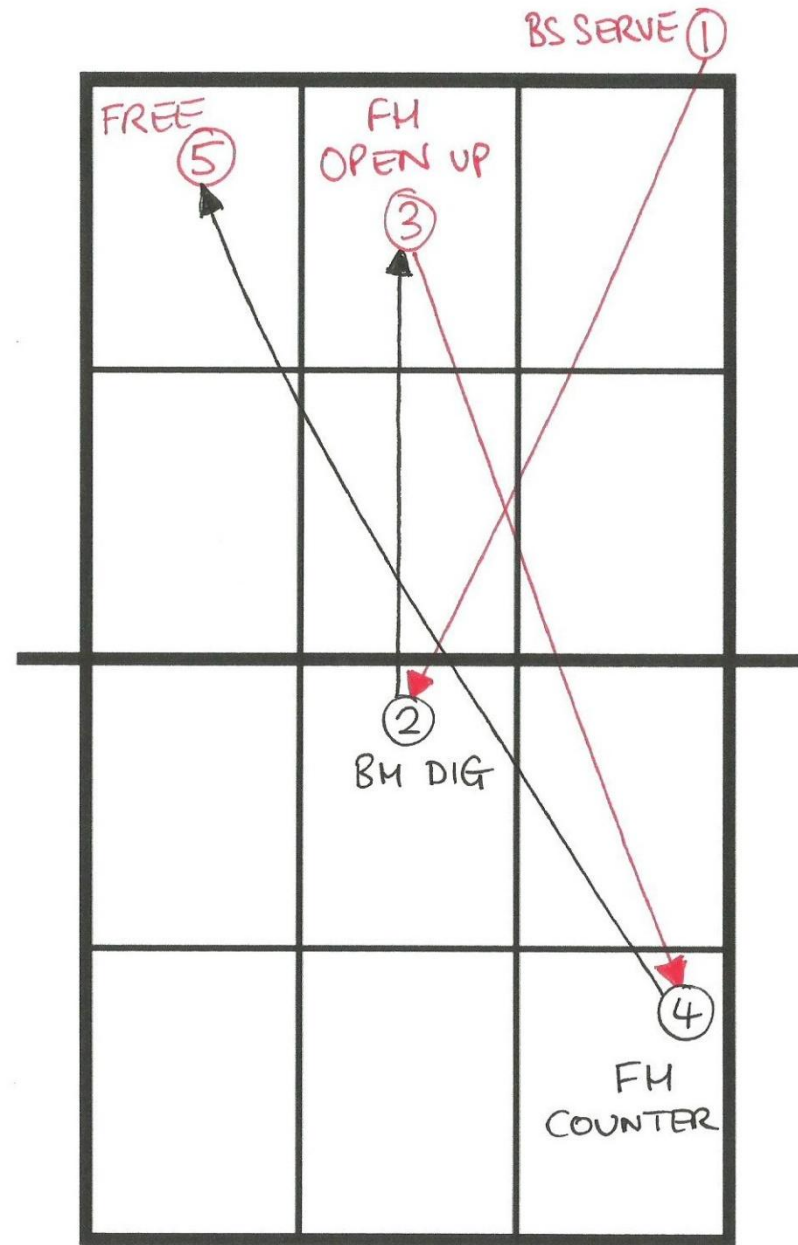
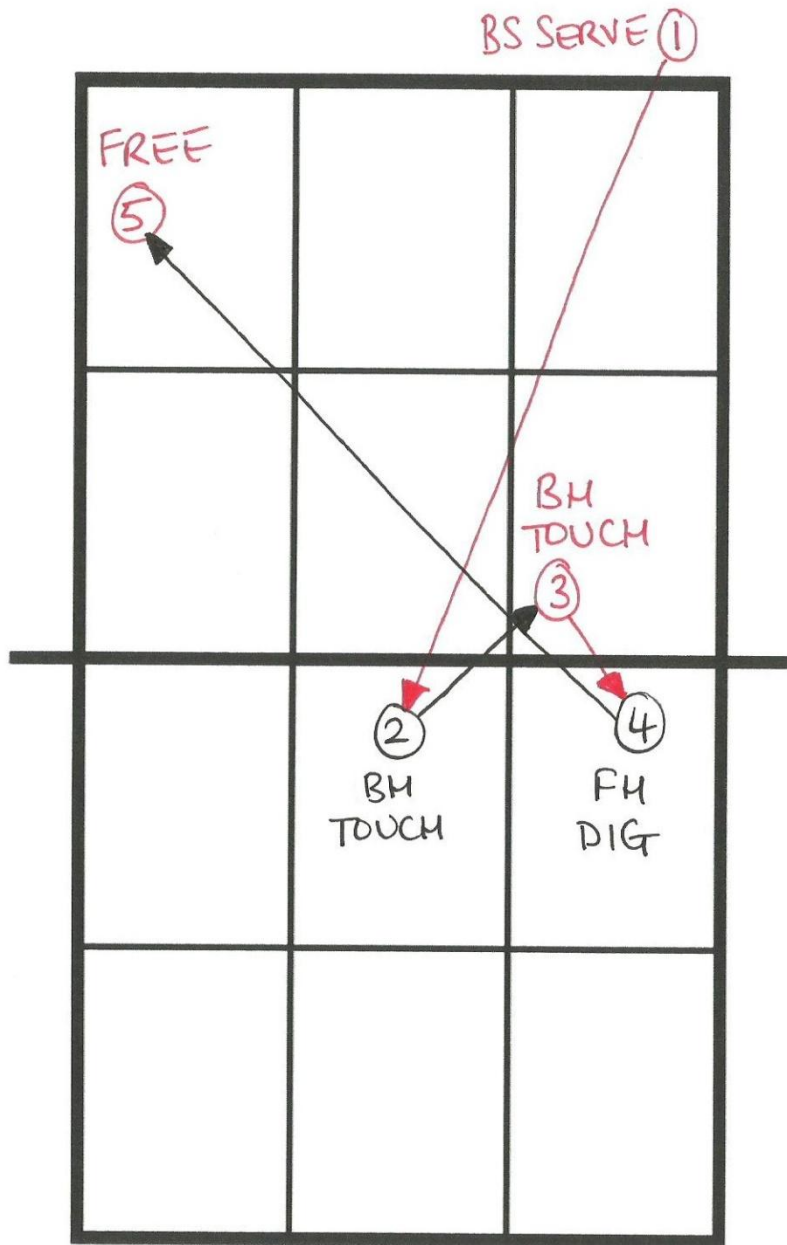
As you flick through them have a look at the opponents shots (shown in red) in particular. I usually try and have the opponent play the 'most likely' shot, based upon whatever shot has just been played. I think this is important when devising these types of drills. Too often I see younger players enthusiastically coming up with drills (which is great) that are highly unlikely to ever happen in a game (which is not so great). It's not much use doing a long serve to your opponent's forehand, getting them to push it back to you and then trying to flick the third ball!

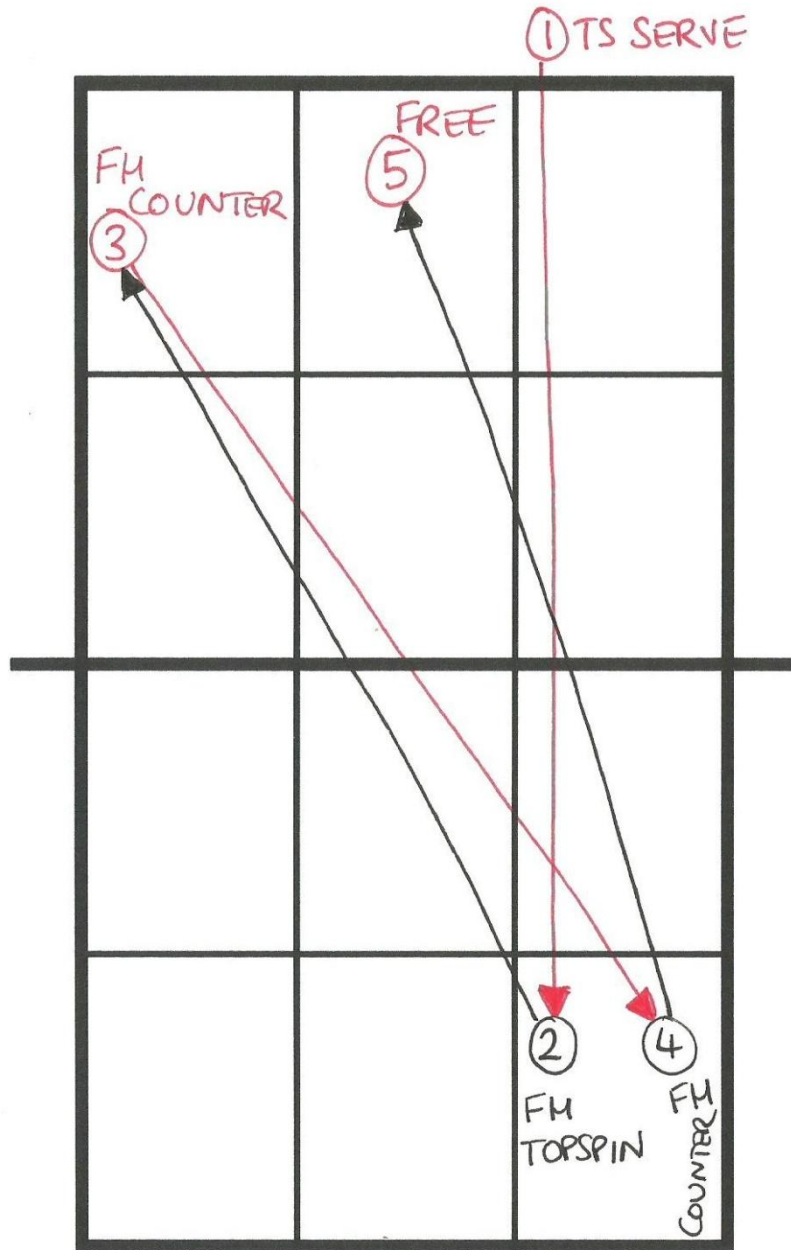
However, it is definitely worth practicing what happens when your opponent misreads a serve or something along those lines. For example, you could do a short topspin serve but ask your opponent to try and touch it. This is likely to happen in a game, and your opponent will not always do what you want him to do, so you must be prepared. I wouldn't advise doing anything like that for your own return of service practice though, as you should of course be trying to flick the serve, if it's topspin. I hope that makes sense.





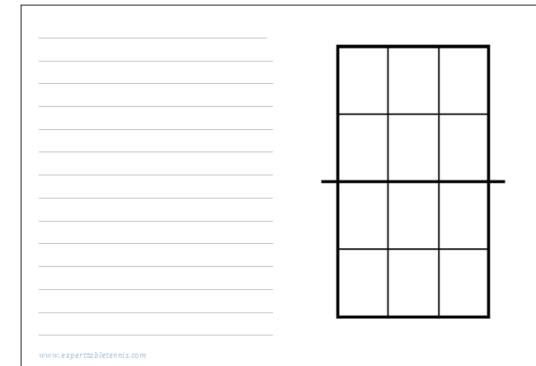






NOW IT'S YOUR TURN...

On the final page you'll find a blank table tennis table and an area for notes. I wrote this eBook with the hope of inspiring table tennis players to be more creative with their training and try some new things, so feel free to print some off, bring them to the training hall and start designing and trying out some table tennis plays of your own.



If you come up with any good plays let me know and I might be able to feature you on the site.

Something else that you can try out (that I didn't include in the book) is adding an element of irregularity to the plays. For example, having your opponent's 4th ball go either to your backhand or your forehand so that you have to wait and anticipate the shot before moving and playing your 5th ball.

This can get quite complicated once you start drawing it all out but have a go and see how you get on. That's definitely a great way to make the drills a bit more challenging and even more realistic to a match situation.

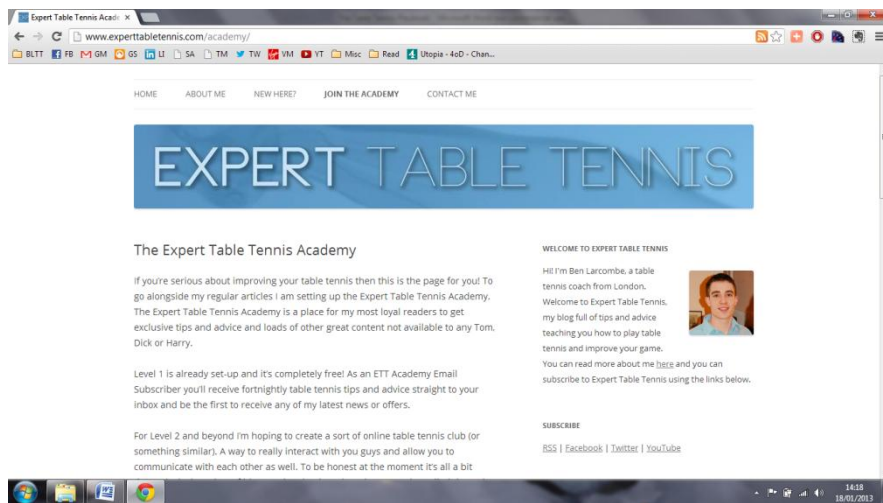
FINAL WORDS

Well, we've reached the end of The Table Tennis Playbook. I hope that you've enjoyed reading it as much as I've enjoyed writing it. For more information on The Table Tennis Playbook please visit...

<http://www.experttabletennis.com/playbook>

I am hoping to create some videos to go alongside the book and maybe even have a look at some of the world's best players and see which plays they are using to win points in their games.

I'm assuming that most of you reading this eBook will have got your hands on it by joining the Expert Table Tennis Academy. If you've picked it up by some other means or you've been passed it by a friend then please have a look at...



<http://www.experttabletennis.com/academy>

www.experttabletennis.com

From there you'll be able to join the Expert Table Tennis Academy yourself and receive exclusive table tennis tips and advice not available on the site. You'll also be the first to hear about any other books/information I decide to release.

If you would like to get in touch with me I'd be more than happy to hear from you and answer any questions you may have. You can contact me via [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), or alternatively you can send me a message by visiting...

<http://www.experttabletennis.com/contact>

All that's left to say now is, please don't plagiarise any of my content from The Table Tennis Playbook (I'm sure you wouldn't anyway). Feel free to pass it to a friend if you think they would enjoy it, it's a free eBook after all, but please don't copy any of the content without my permission, pass it off as your own work or try to sell it or anything like that. I hope you understand.

Thank you so much for reading and remember you can find loads of other great table tennis content at www.experttabletennis.com!

Train hard,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ben Larcombe'.

Ben Larcombe

