HOW TO PRACTICE LOOP-TO-LOOP

In modern table tennis competition loop-to-loop technique is very important and effective way to deal with topspin ball, to transfer from defense to attack, to take initiative, is one of the key techniques top player must master. From the middle of nineties of the last century Chinese Table Tennis Team constantly improved loop-to-loop technique and thus gained today's domination in this important table tennis element.

The main reason why in late eighties and early nineties Chinese Men's Team had big problems in games with European stars was lack of effective means to confront their looping strokes. To deal with heavy loop only with defensive strokes, only with various kind of blocks, was not enough. So if the rally was not won within first 2 strokes, the following counterattack situation was very passive without good loop-to-loop skills.

Through experimenting and practice Chinese Team improved loop-to-loop skills, thus increasing dynamism and making possible to take over initiative in defense and counterattack situation. So you can say, if you want to reach top level it is very important to develop loop-to-loop technique.

MAIN ASPECTS OF LOOP-TO-LOOP

In real competition, loop-to-loop is the most often used stroke against 'heavy loop' because this kind of loop is relatively slow, so you can have more time for loop-to-loop. If the coming ball is 'fast loop' feasibility of loop-to-loop is much more difficult. For average player level of difficulty is than extremely high.

When playing loop-to-loop, the body center of gravity shouldn't be too low, as far as possible you need to stand up a bit, the swing of the arm should be appropriately higher, you shouldn't lower the arm. The coming ball has strong topspin, if your hand is too low, it is very difficult to contact the ball at the right moment - 'before declining' period to hit back-middle-right-upper part of the ball (for right handed player).

It is recomended to contact the right part of the ball, to avoid the most spun part of the ball and to reduce the difficulty of loop-to-loop. In this moment the racket should be suitably leaned forward, if not, you will not be able to contact the proper area of the ball. At the same time, the movement of the arm should be performed in forward-and-slightly-upper direction.

The center of gravity should be moved in back-to-forward direction. At the moment of ball-racket impact the wrist should make a small inside turn, but the width shouldn't be to big. In this whole process of movement, you should turn your waist accordingly, coordinating its power with the swing of the arm, and in this way control the trajectory of the ball and increase the accuracy of the stroke.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOOP-TO-LOOP

Service and loop-to-loop

1. **Serve long into your opponent's backhand side**. When your opponent uses backhand return or forehand without enough time to play with fool power prepare for forehand loop-to-loop from the whole table . From such a position the opponent can't easily send the ball with wide angle, you can more easily attack with forehand from the whole table;

2. **Serve long into your opponent's forehand side**. When your opponent can't easily play powerful loop in this situation, prepare for loop-to-loop from forehand side. Because the probability of your opponent returning cross-court is very high, and loop has usually some right-top-spin, the ball turns to the right, it is easy to play cross-court with wide angle and if you play whole table forehand loop-to-loop you can become dominating in the rally.

3. **Serve long into your opponent's middle-slightly-to-forehand-side**. When your opponent is not fully prepared (it is not the good position for him/her), get ready for forehand loop-to-loop. Top players can be prepared for the whole-table-forehand-loop-to-loop in this situation.

4. **Serve half-long into your opponent's backhand side**. When your opponent hesitates to come close and finally plays loop return, prepare for whole-table-loop-to-loop. In this situation opponent's loop can be rather high, distance to move is rather short, and there is enough time to adjust your position and play loop-to-loop.

5. **Serve half-long into your opponent forehand side**. When your opponent can't play easily powerful loop, prepare for loop-to-loop from forehand side;

6. **Serve half-long into your opponent's middle**. In this situation opponent can play forehand or backhand. Be prepared to attack service return from the whole table with loop-to loop.

Push and flick

1. **Push fast and long to opponent's backhand side**. Your opponent can use backhand or forehand pivot loop return. Prepare for whole-table-loop-to-loop if your oponent was not able to attack the ball with full power.

2. **Push fast and long to opponent's forehand side**. Prepare for forehand loop from forehand side.

3. **Flick to opponent's backhand side**. After your flick the opponent will play long ball. Prepare for whole-table-forehand-loop-to-loop. In this case you need to move half step back, to get the position to be able to use full power.

4. **Flick into opponent's forehand side, and prepare for forehand-side-loop-to-loop**. In this case you need to move half step off the table to forehand side, to have a bit more time for powerful loop.

5. **Return with side-spin pushes and prepare for whole-table-loop-to-loop**.

Defense-counterattack and loop-to-loop

1. **After playing backhand-to-backhand counterattack,** suddenly change to his/her forehand and prepare for forehand loop-to-loop;

2. **After playing backhand-to-backhand counterattack**, change into your opponent's middle-near-forehand area, and prepare for whole-table-loop-to-loop;

3. **When dealing with two-wings-loop-player**, play into his/her backhand with wide angle and prepare for whole-table-loop-to-loop. It is very difficult to loop from two wide angles, so you can easily create opportunity for your loop-to-loop.

4. **Combine 'kuaidai' and loop-to-loop**. This is how the top players gain initiative. Firstly play forehand 'kuaisi' or backhand 'kuaidai', so it is difficult for opponent to play with powerful loop and then choose easier ball to play loop-to-loop and to take initiative.
(4 'Kuaidai' and 'kuaisi' are fast attacking topspin ball techniques, usually used by fast attackers to deal with loops)

By courtesy of " *World Table Tennis Magazine of China*"

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