



The Art of the Target

BY JOE DINOFFER

Imagine driving your car the wrong way on a one-way street. A police officer pulls you over and asks what you were thinking. You reply, “Not much, Officer. I am just happy to be driving!”

Although it may not be a matter of life and death, isn’t it similar when you hit a winner by accident? It just turns awkward when your partner gives you a high-five and says “Great shot!” Unfortunately you had no target in mind at all and were just happy to hit the ball. Should you confess and risk having your partner think less of you?

The point is that every shot should have purpose. This includes aiming at a specific target. Now the questions are when, where, and how big? “When” depends on the situation. Let’s discuss size and placement:

- 1. SIZE** – Create a target area and not a bull’s-eye. You want to succeed in hitting your designated target area 60-70% of the time. Success is important for confidence and future visualization (seeing the target even when it is no longer there).
- 2. PLACE** – Place your target area away from the lines to give yourself a margin for error. In other words, if you miss the target, you want the ball to still land in the court!
- 3. MATERIALS** – Use throw-down lines, a group of cones, or even old beach towels. Just create a large target that is highly visible.

More good news is that target practice has a secondary benefit in addition to improved ball control. You should also improve your focus and concentration. All good things for your pickleball game!



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