

## Guidance from the Dhronacharya during Covid 19

The Covid-19 Corona Pandemic is playing havoc in everyone's life including sports personalities (top to novice players). Its almost 3 month since most of our table tennis players & coaches haven't seen their practicing clubs. As I am involved with Table Tennis for half a century lets discuss about our game table tennis.

Time to time from March 2020 all of us are hoping to start the club. It has remained as a hope as on date & not sure of starting of activity in the near future.

Mean time as a coach i advice our players to keep them physically fit. Even though all the players know that exercises/fitness will play a key role in their sport careers, in reality fitness will take a back seat when compared with practice. Since now we don't have the option of Table tennis practice at clubs we are forced to go with physical fitness (blessing in disguise). I strongly advice take as much as load of physical fitness in this lean period of pandemic. I am sure fitness will ensure improvement drastically.

During April & May Sports Authority of India along with Table Tennis Federation of India have organized online session with eminent players and coaches. Mr. Kamlesh Mehta coordinated the whole show in an attractive manner. Below are the details of the sessions:-

- **KAMLESH MEHTA** Important life values for making a champion
- **S. RAMAN** Methods & Importance to train players in different rhythms
- **SHARATH KAMAL** Insight & benefits of playing in European circuit
- **SOUMYADEEP ROY** Mental Health during present time & importance of change & adaptability
- **SANDEEP GUPTA** Advantages & disadvantages of Long Pimples & how to use it
- **BRETT CLARKE** Use of body while playing backhand & Forehand strokes
- **G. SATHIYAN** Importance of footwork & technique to be World class player
- **MANJIT DUA** Importance of Coach Advise at right time

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- PETER ENGEL                      How to measure Success in practice and the advantages of measuring it
- HARMEET DESAI                How to encourage & develop individual strengths & style of a player
- BRETT CLARKE                    Serving Mechanics
- N. RAVICHANDRAN                Camp Planning
- ELINA TIMINA                    Developing Choppers & how to play against them
- VIRENDRA GULATI                Elements of Tactics
- V. MUKKAMALA                  Periodisation
- MURLIDHAR RAO                Developing Players at Grass root level
- SHARATH KAMAL                Injury management & longevity of career

The above sessions were overall useful for the coaches & players. As a player and coach i am involved with table tennis for more than 50 years, though i know the points of the above sessions, still they are refreshing. (I hope the same for even the senior players and coaches). I am sure the aspiring young players will try to observe and take the valuable points from the above sessions of eminent coaches and players and work hard to make the grades. Along with this we will send you all the possible videos for your ready references. My advice - From the above sessions pick up the points which are related to your game, note it down in the diary, discuss with your coaches and proceed to practice with full focus to improve your game in short time.

A player has to sacrifice totally to shine in the sports field. He/She has to spend the equal number of hours practice, on par with studies. Apart from these main part of the game, improvement depends on physical fitness and then the player has to play at least 15 to 18 tournaments in District, State, National level to know their standard. They also need to spend a lot of money for tournaments in terms of accompanying the kid/coaches/parents for the tournaments. (most parents are sparing a lot of time in terms of daily accompanying the kids for practice sessions) . In India Academics are critical because you will get a suitable job based on the academics and along with sports it will be easier to get even under sports quota for the suitable jobs. All sports person have to accommodate studies along with their sports which will help them in a long run.

**Advice for the Sports person who aspire to make it big!!**

- Give Sports equal importance along with studies.

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- Give Confidence to your parents that you can manage both sports and studies
- Be regular to the practice sessions both physically and mentally without wasting the time, Strictly no time-pass.
- Don't be choosy about your practice partner. Whoever your coach allots practice with that player with full focus. Give your 100% to get the best possible from your sparring partner. Discuss with your coach about every session. Strive to surpass your coaches expectations. This will go a long way and this is the gateway for consolidating your positive attitude.
- Do service practice for 15 to 30 minutes everyday after your practice session. This will help you in serving a good serve which will make it easy to attack the first ball. Also you will be able to receive the opponent's service without difficulty.

In my opinion sports is much more tougher than studies especially in Table Tennis. This is a game of spin with variety of variations along with different rubbers. Moreover a player has to think quickly and play. If both the players play closer to the table, the distance between the players is approximately 6 to 7 ft, which is the closest among any other racket games.

This induces quick thinking and decision making. The most difficult aspect is physical fitness. Given a chance everyone tend to practice more and skip physical fitness. But at some stage of your career physical fitness will play a major role in extending your career.

In table tennis the strokes what the world class player players it can be played by even a district level players. **If so where does the difference lies???**

- \* Top Players stay more focussed.
- \* They anticipate the direction of the ball while playing.
- \* The world class players are always moving with the ball (this comes from anticipation)
- \* Top players are quick in taking decision with good timing and always ready for next ball

In one of sessions, India coach, UTT director, 8 times national champion Shri. Kamlesh Mehta briefed about the tennis legend Boris Becker's focus on a match. He was asked how he stayed with complete focus throughout the match; does he practice any meditation etc., Becker replied that he does the same focus on every practice session and in fact for every ball during those practice sessions. So he doesn't

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need to do anything special for the matches.

So try to give 100% focus in every practice session

**My advice to all the players who aspire to achieve higher goals:**

- \* Set your goals high.
- \* Work towards them. Don't lose heart or quit. As time goes it becomes habitual
- \* Take every practice session seriously.
- \* Keep basic style of the game in your mind
- \* Prepare well before every match.
- \* Have an idol to look upto but don't try to imitate their style (set your own pattern)
- \* Maintain diary. Refer to it when you are playing a repeat opponent
- \* Always have a positive mind set (especially during this pandemic)

Good days are ahead for sports as recently our Union Sports Minister has announced that Sports is not an extra-curricular activity in schools. Sports is part of education. That is a very good move. Let us hope to compete with the Olympic medal winning nations.

Best wishes

**A. SRINIVASA RAO**