



Coaching Workshop

Footwork

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Introduction

The footwork in Speed Badminton...

...is characterized by many fast movements in all directions, by quick body turns, by quick starts, stops and different jumps. The perfect hitting technique needs an optimized and adapted footwork.

Preface

Most of the used techniques in Speed Badminton are the over head hits, the drives and volleys as well as a mixture of all techniques. In order to achieve the highest biomechanical impact in the moment when hitting the Speeder[®], it is recommended to take a sideways position towards the Speeder[®] (body rotation and forward movement). However, due to the high hitting frequency it is advisable to keep an open (frontal) hitting position when playing drives or volleys. Therefore sidesteps, "step through's" and lunges are generally used in the front part of the square (court). When playing a smash the scissor jump (from the back of the square) and the step through (from the front or the square) are preferably used (→ economical play!).

Methodology of teaching footwork techniques

- Presenting the movements or have someone present them (Establish reasons with players or name them yourself)
- Footwork techniques are best demonstrated and exercised without a Speeder[®] ("Shadow speeding").
- If possible try exercises where the Speeder[®] is thrown first (before the Speeder[®] is hit)
- Split up parts of the movements and combine them later, but always use a holistic approach!
- Some exercises need a capable person to play the Speeder[®] to a certain spot; work for example with a Speeder[®] pendulum to simulate the timing when hitting the shuttle

General Overview: The footwork techniques of Speed Badminton

- Quick start from the ready position
- Split drop
- Steps
- Chassé steps
- Sidesteps
- Crossing steps
- Step through's
- Lunges
- Scissor jumps
- Block jumps
- Double hop

Term introduction, explanations and teaching aids

Central Position (CP)

The central position is the preferred base position in order to keep the distance to the next hitting position as short as possible and to minimize the chance for the opponent to score a point. The CP is taken when waiting for Speeder[®] to be played and is usually located in the centre of the court in front of the service line.

Marking court positions

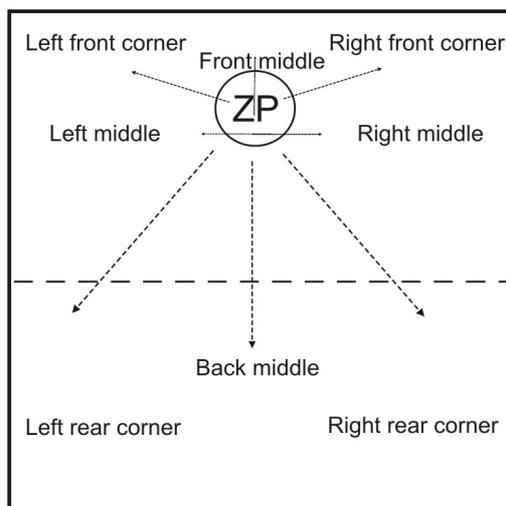


Illustration: Dividing the square into 8 zones.

Note: The most shots are played through the middle of the square on chest or hip level. The most points are scored in the front left and the front right zones.

Ready Position (Speeder[®] expectation position)

The ready position is already presented with the hitting techniques:

- Frontal position, the feet are hip-width (women) or shoulder-width (men) apart
- Both feet point to the front
- Put your weight slightly on the front of the foot
- Your knees are slightly bent
- Comfortable and stabile position

Common Mistakes

- Knees are straight
- Heels are still on the ground
- The “cat“ instead of the “tiger-position“

Split Drop

Movement features

- Jump up slightly with both feet from a basic position
- While landing prepare for the following steps
- Build up a pre-load in your calves and thighs
- The feet are placed more than shoulder-width apart



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- Keep the time of contact of your feet to a minimum
- Quick start by taking one leg behind your center of gravity and pushing yourself forward

Tip

Practice the movement at first in a non-specific situation, e.g. not on the square!

Quick start from the ready position

There are two possibilities for the quick start:

1. Start with the split drop (or pre-loading hop), if you have to move quickly to reach the next shuttle. Then you jump up slightly with both feet in order to prepare for the following steps and movements.
2. The starting step (or pre-loading step) is used if you have a bit more time when running for the next shuttle. You use the leg of the opposite direction, which you are going to reach, for the starting step.

Tip

Practicing the starting step in different directions is important; however when a certain speed of the rallies is reached it is no longer possible. In that case only the slip drop is used. An appropriate way to teach this technique is to have the players start standing on one foot (with the starting foot being held up). Note the shoulder-wide position of the feet, bent knees and a low centre of gravity.

Running steps

Smaller steps are in Speed Badminton often more practical than big steps as you are more agile and stable. Running steps should however only be used to reach the hitting position when you are not under pressure or when they enable you to take a better position for the next shot.

Note

The biggest risk with running steps are the use of too many additional, but unnecessary steps, which can result in an inconvenient position for the next shot when trying to reach the shuttle.

Example: When moving into the right front corner, the player is then standing with the back to the uncovered backhand side. Usually running steps are often used in order to resume quickly to the CP or even during the rally for regeneration.

Chassé steps

The Chassé steps are similar to the footwork of fencing. The front foot points into the direction of movement (roll from heel to toe). The back foot, in a perpendicular position to the front foot, is set on the ground while pushing the whole body forward.

Tip

The feet never pass one another. In Speed Badminton Chassé steps are often taken in preparation of the lunge steps (when the player is not close enough to the Speeder[®] yet).

Side steps

Side steps are very important in Speed Badminton as they are the basic steps used to defend the attack line. The feet move parallel to each other (on the ball). The legs are slightly bent.

Crossing steps

With the crossing steps either the front or the back foot is moved passed the supporting leg, contrary to the side steps. The pace of the movement is therefore mostly slower compared to the side steps and there is a higher chance “to trip over your own feet”.

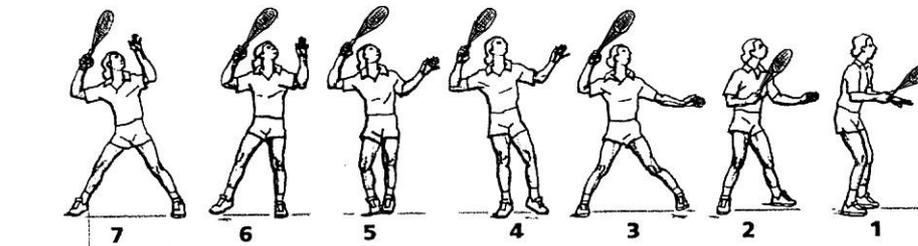


Illustration: Crossing in front

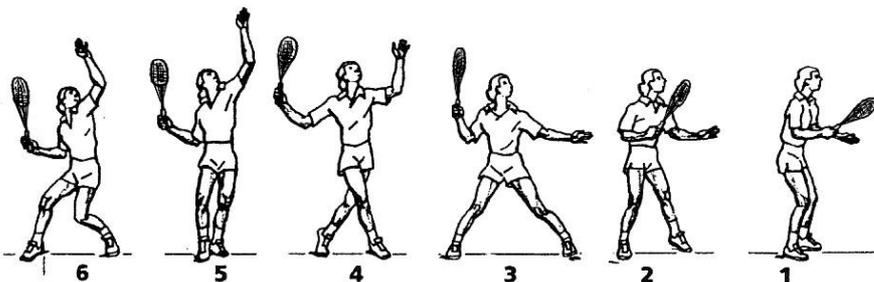
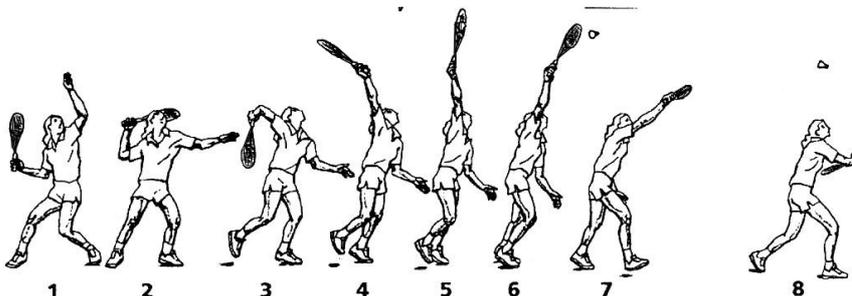


Illustration: Crossing in back

Step through / Stem step



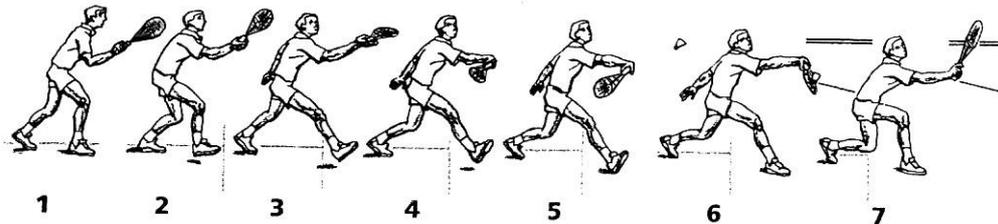
The “step through“: the right foot is pushed past the front (left foot for right handed players) foot. The right foot taken from the back into the direction of the opponent’s square. When pushing to the front the back foot is held perpendicular to the front.

Tip

The players should be proficient in using the step through technique before introducing the scissor jump. The advantage of the step through is the high level of control throughout the movement due to the constant ground contact.

Lunge step

The lunge step is the most frequently used footwork technique in Speed Badminton. It is time saving and makes covering a big court possible. Lunge steps enable the players to defend their square and to quickly resume to the central position (CP) after each shot.



Common mistakes

- Is the lunge step taken with the correct foot (to the right with the right foot, to the left with the left foot)?
- Does the front foot point to the Speeder® (correct) or does the tip of the foot point to the inside?
- Does the knee stay behind the foot when setting the front foot down? The lunge step leg should spring back softly!
- Does the player keep his body and head upright when taking a lunge step?
- Is the supporting arm used for stabilisation or is it mostly passive?
- Is the back foot slightly pulled on the inner side to the front (correct) or is it pulled forward on the toes (wrong!) to provide stability?

Vertical jump

Slightly bend your knees; the racket is in front of the hand and shoulders relaxed. Jump up with both feet and stretch your legs. Bend your lower legs while in the air (for a more balanced position), turn your upper body and land on both feet.

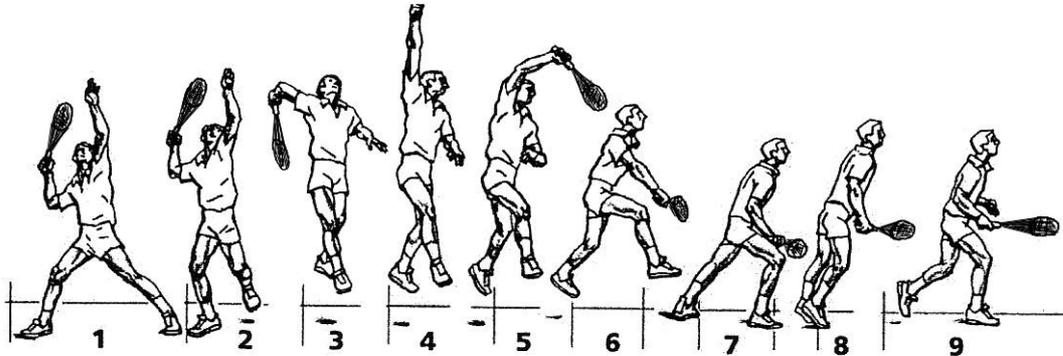
Note

The over-head smash makes your own smash more dangerous! “Jump-Smash” allow for the Speeder® to be hit at a steeper angle as the regular smash.

Condition

Enough time for the return of the Speeder®.

Scissor jump



The scissor jump makes a more effective overhead play possible as the reach height is increased (Angle of the smash – c.f. vertical jump) and the body's center of gravity is moving into the direction of the CP after playing the shot. Thereby you have more time to position yourself and at the same time the pressure on the opponent is increasing. The scissor jump often follows of a side step movement. The foot of your hitting hand is set parallel to the base line (when moving towards the back center). The center of gravity is moved onto the jumping leg. Then you push yourself up (back-up). While in the air the back leg is brought to front and the front leg to the back, thus switching positions. The right part of the body is also moved forward, together with the leg (rotate along the longitudinal axis). You can either land on both feet or on the non-jumping-leg with the foot pointing sideways. The head and shoulders face the front.

Tips

- The scissor jump enables the ideal use of the body rotation.
- The scissor jump is easy to introduce through a throwing movement (without racket).
- Use holistic approach when teaching!
- A line can help when learning the scissor jump.
- Jump up with the right foot back & up to the same time.
- Only teach the full body rotation when playing a smash, not with a clear. When playing a clear the body is only rotated so far that the feet are next to each other when landing.
- If the leg is in sufficiently bent before the jump, just instruct the players to “push out their butts”.
- The landing is followed by a compensatory chassé step; continue then with further running steps.

Common mistakes

- Is there a pause between stopping and jumping, resulting in a loss of energy?
- Is the jump carried out from a good sideways position of the right foot (like with the step through)?
- Does the hip rotate sufficiently?

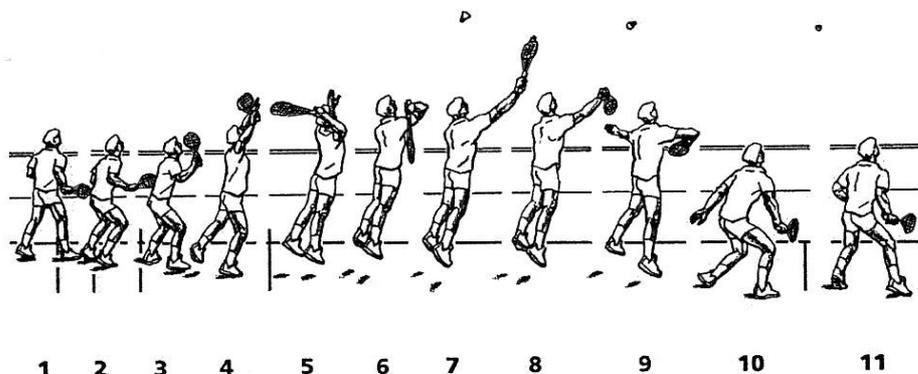
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- Can you detect a “crossing of the legs”, meaning that in the air the back leg is moved to front and the front leg actively lead to the back?
- Does the timing of the scissor jump fit the hitting movement?
- Does the player actually hit while jumping?
- Is the (former) front leg already in the back when hitting (correct)?
- If the player “falls back” too far after the scissor jump, he/she does not stop the movement well enough with the back leg. Therefore the player has to stretch further to the back during the scissor jump.
- Is the back foot pointing to the outside after the landing (correct)? The wrong landing (foot pointing to the front) can lead to problems with the back, ankle, Achilles tendon or knee!
- Can an effective movement to the center of the court be detected right after the landing?

Frequency when learning the scissor jump

1. Each participant finds a line in the gym. Make a standing jump and try to turn 180 degrees in the air, landing on both feet on the same spot as at the beginning.
2. Do exercise no.1 and add two or three side steps along the line before the jump (Make sure to rotate into the right direction!).
3. Try to jump standing on one leg (right-handed persons: standing on the right foot!) and land standing only on the other leg (left).
4. Do exercise no.3 with two or three side steps along the line.
5. Now try the movement of the scissor jump. Focus only on the legs at first; combine it with the hitting movement after.
6. Do the whole movement with side steps beforehand, throwing a shuttle and high-fiving with your partner (also possible with passing the shuttle and handing it over).
7. Throwing a Speeder[®] in while doing the exercise
8. Playing a Speeder[®] while doing the exercise

Block jump



The block jump is carried out with the player jumping with and landing on both feet. The block jump can be from the center of the square as well as in the back zones. In the back of the square the block jump is always used after some side steps and is

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often part of defensive play. Right after the landing another jump back into the central position is necessary. At the landing the outer leg should be pointing so far to the side lines that the stopping is as effective as possible. As mentioned above the player should try to keep a frontal position towards the Speeder® for timing purposes, e.g. to be as quick as possible. The block jump is therefore a very useful option for a Speeder® that arrives on a medium height (on head level or higher).

Note

Since there is no contact between the ground and the body at the point of impact, reaching a high level of stability during the hitting movement is very challenging and often very difficult to achieve for beginners.

Double hop

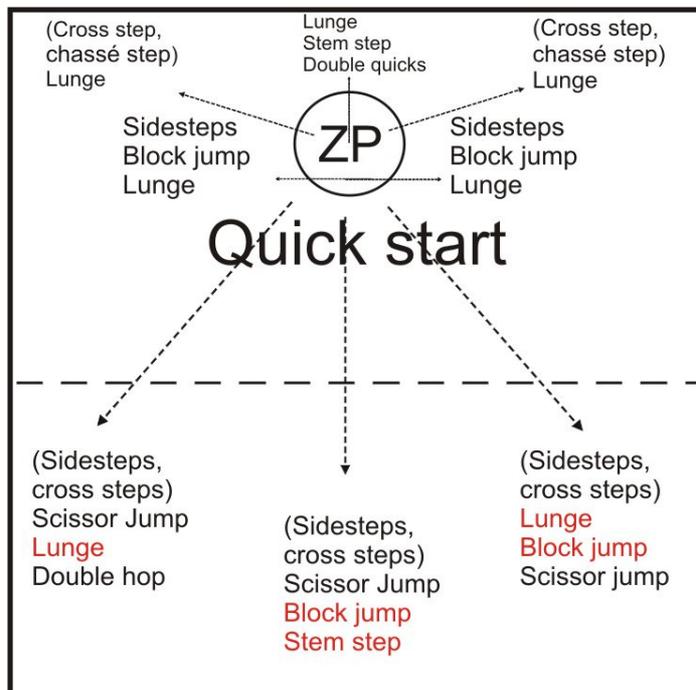
The double hop is an efficient way of avoiding a side or chassé step (especially when moving to the back left zone) and avoid a back hand shot. The first step is taken with the right foot followed by a double hop on the left leg (for right-handed persons) and the scissor jump, thus moving quickly over distances and saving time.

Tip

By doing some exercises (hop left-left) the movement can be practiced with a body rotation. Meaning of the first step: moving quickly away from the middle line.

Using footwork techniques to reach all zones of the square

(marked in red: only useful for defensive play)



Moving to the left rear corner to the back hand (for right-handed persons)

The starting step is always taken with the right foot to the the right front corner followed by the left leg moving backwards. Depending on the lengths of your legs and the shuttle position chassé or running steps are carried out.

It is important to keep the head facing to the opponent as long as possible. Only when starting the hitting movement the body should be rotated to the left and a lunge step with the right foot can be taken.



Exercises and Games

Calling out footwork elements

The coach calls out a shot together with a footwork technique and names the zone of the square where the player should move to (the coach can also demonstrate the movements). The players should follow the instructions without the use of a Speeder[®] (shadow speeding). After one or two rounds the coach can also try to trick the participants.

Fastest Worm

The participants build a row by putting their hand on the shoulders of the person in front. The whole row moves with alternating chassé steps through the gym. The person at the head of the row determines the speed (competition with 2 teams).

Step on feet

Each of the two participants try to step on the other person's feet without touching otherwise.

Mirror Dance

Two participants stand facing each other and connect with the palms of their hands. Participant 1 starts with a combination of steps, which participant 2 tries to mirror.

Attack and Escape Game (Sidesteps)

Form a pair with player 1 trying to throw a Speeder[®] at player 2 over a certain distance (only shots on the legs count). Player 2 tries to avoid the Speeder[®]. Each player has 15 shots, then they swap roles – who scores the most?

Lunges on a long bench

This exercise requires the correct execution of the movement as otherwise the players will have trouble with their balance (Variation: turn the long bench over!).

- The body's center of gravity needs to lie between the feet
- Keep the upper body straight
- Set down the back foot on its inside and let it slightly trail behind

Lunges while holding hands

Form groups of 3 participants. Player 1 practices lunge steps with player 2 throwing Speeder[®]s to him. Player 3 is standing behind player 1 and holds on to player 1's hand (not too rigidly), so that player 1 has to keep his upper body straight.



Sling shot scissor steps

You wrap an elastic band/ tape around the hip of player 1. Player 2 holds the ends so that the elastic is lightly strained. Then player 1 performs a one or two side steps backwards followed by a scissor step. Due to the strain the player is pulled towards the front when rotating.

Quicker than the Speeder®

Player 1 is standing in front of the square, holding some Fun Speeder® in his hand. Player 2 is inside the square in the ready position. Player 1 throws the Speeder® in a high curve to the back of the square, so that player 2 can practice scissor jumps.

Experience the Speeder® pace

Player 1 is standing in front of the square, holding some Fun Speeder® in his hand. Player 2 is inside the square in the ready position. Player 1 then throws the Speeder®s into the square, so that player 2 can reach them using the correct footwork techniques.

Exercise for block jumps

Form group of 3 participants. One player is standing inside the square (Player 1 – in CP), while the other players take positions in front of the square in throwing distance of player 1. Players 2 and 3 have each one Speeder® and alternate in passing it to player 1 when being in the CP. As soon as player 1 catches a Speeder®, he/she performs a block jump to the left or right, throwing back the Speeder® to the player it came from.

Shadow Speeding

1st Version: Policemen game

Player 1 takes position in front of the square and points with his racket to 15 different corners in a row (then swap roles). Player 2 is in CP inside the square and moves into the corners using footwork techniques according to the instructions of player 1.

2nd Version: Mirror game

Two players are standing inside one square facing each other. Player 1 moves to 15 corners using the correct footwork techniques, while player 2 mirrors the movements of player one (it can also be about the quickest time!).

From line to line

Each participant needs 3 Speeder®, which he/she positions on the base line of his square (also possible with other lines). One Speeder® into each corner, while the third Speeder® is kept in the hitting hand. Then the player moves (along the line) with side steps and a lunge step into one corner and switches the Speeder® he/she is holding with the one standing in the corner. The participant does the same in the other corner and so on (in total: 15 times).



The ideal leg and feet positions for the correct hitting technique

- Drive shots (forehand and backhand): sideways position (c.f. introductory remarks however)
- Volley shots: frontal position, step forward in the moment the racket moves forward (c.f. introductory remarks however)
- Defensive shots in front of the body: potentially a small lunge step; ready position
- Over-head shots (forehand – smash/ clear): Step through or scissor jump
- Backhand shots: lunge step

Notes/ Conclusion

- To play in the sand:
Playing Speed Badminton in the sand requires a special form of footwork techniques. The movements in the sand are considerably more difficult and variations of techniques are often used (dives etc.). Running steps are needed a lot more often in the sand.
- For each situation in a game there is a specific CP in the sense of an ideal *ready position adapted to each situation*.
- The *speed of each movement* should be adjusted for the respective situations in a game (a calm and smooth return to the CP after playing a high clear shot; but resuming the CP as fast as possible after playing a quick return shot).
- If possible: a small *split drop in the moment just before the opponent hits the shuttle* in order to align your feet, enabling a quick start into all possible directions.
- “*Floating into*” the CP for the split drop, which needs to be adapted depending on the zone that needs to be moved to next
- Effective footwork techniques to reach every zone of the square with the respective techniques at the returning points.

Tips

Give the players the freedom to try and decide on their own which technique is best for them! Different game situations require different footwork solutions.

Common mistakes in general

Do not stop after each shot to look at the Speeder[®] and its flight path! After the landing always try to stabilize the upper body and hitting arm as soon as possible. When moving to the back always keep you racket up as well.



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