



## Footwork in modern tennis

**You can't hit what you can't reach: Being in the right place at the right time is key to success**

In the process of writing about a complex subject such as footwork, it becomes evident that there is so much to learn that it is almost impossible for it all to be committed to words. This is the reason why, despite there being so many great teachers with knowledge and experience that would be invaluable to others, the intricate details of tennis teaching often are not committed to paper.

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For example, in the first of these Player Development Program inserts published last September, is a graphic of the six General Performance Components and another with their 43 general subcomponents. Not only do the subcomponents have to be defined, they must also eventually be expounded upon to include all the intricate details of the subcomponents that are vital to tennis teachers. In many cases a knowledgeable writer could write a full chapter, if not an entire book, on each of the subcomponents.

Footwork is only one of the 43 subcomponents. The process of producing this insert about it – which we believe just scratches the surface – highlights the magnitude of what it will take to train the comprehensive tennis teacher, especially considering the modern aspects of play that still require research and inspection.

We also are wrestling with an interesting dilemma that even some of our advisory council members question at times: How much information should we deal with and how deep should we dig into the respective ways in which the game is taught? Obviously, all of the information is not intended for all students. It would only confuse students who, in most cases, only need bits and pieces of the information to supplement their natural or previously learned abilities. However, all of the information is needed by every teacher, so that when and if a student has one or two particular problems, he is capable of immediately diagnosing and curing those problems. It is certainly the duty of every capable tennis teacher to be able to see a problem and offer the most expedient solution.

The perfect teaching book cannot have too much information in it. It should be like a dictionary or thesaurus of tennis. Maybe a better

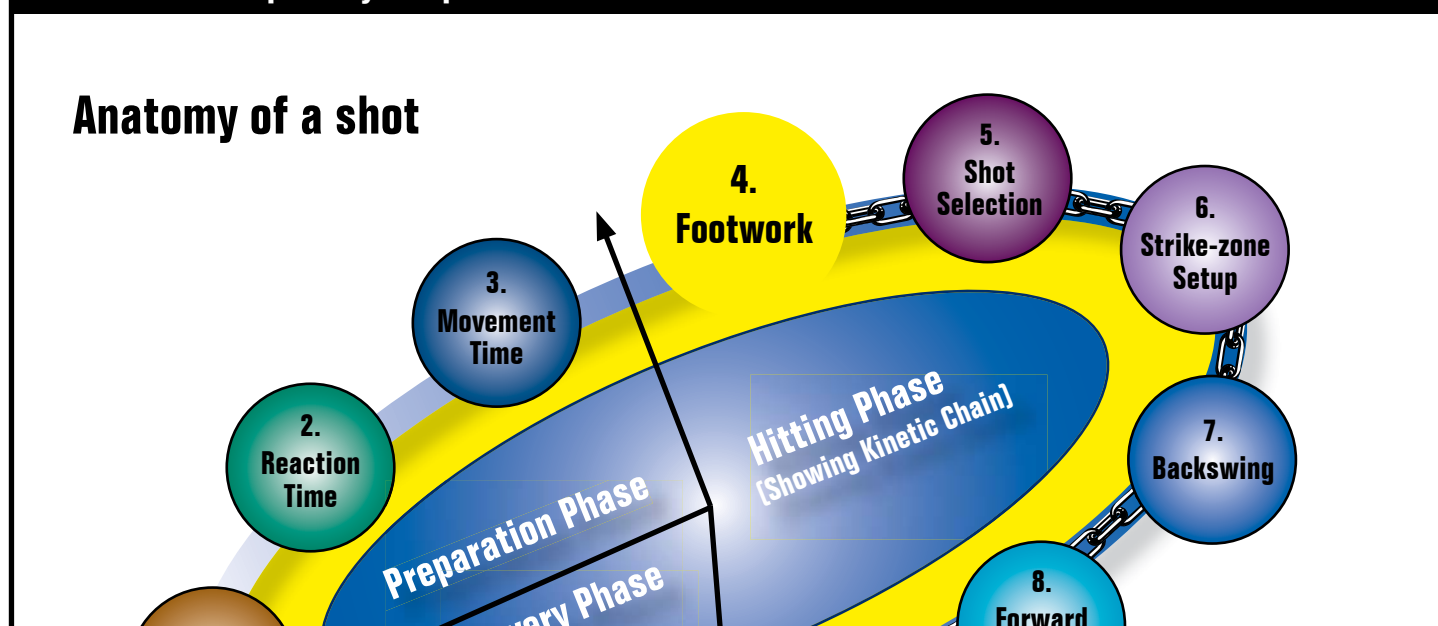
analogy is the notorious *Gray's Anatomy* manual for physicians. This book has everything that a physician should know about anatomy, and is a reference piece that is certainly not intended for the patient's information. The patient of a doctor who does not understand everything in the manual should think twice about any grave diagnosis or cure proposed for him or her. Writing the tennis professional's equivalent guide to *Gray's Anatomy* is a monumental goal, but there isn't any group more qualified to do it than USPTA Professionals.

Footwork is the foundation for building solid technique – technique that can grow with a player. Good footwork enhances powerful, controlled shot-making and increases player efficiency. Footwork also is the foundation for the transition into the modern game, where use of the kinetic chain and angular momentum has helped define the era.

Footwork is part of every phase of shot-making, from the beginning of a point to the end, and is one of the most complex components of modern shot anatomy (see Exhibit I). However, the exhibit does not do justice to the role of footwork in the modern game. Our goal with this insert is to break down and present the details in a format that tennis teachers can understand and use, and open the door to additional, more comprehensive resources.

As we move into studying the hitting phase of shot-making with this insert, you'll notice a slight change to the Anatomy of a Shot diagram introduced in the previous insert (Vol. 2, No. 3). We have moved footwork to No. 4 since the other hitting phase components are so dependent on it.

### Exhibit I: The 11 primary components of a shot



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