

*The top 10 mistakes recreational tennis players make and how to correct them quickly by understanding; What shot to hit, When to hit it and Where to aim.*

**THE 10 DEADLY SINS in TENNIS DOUBLES:**  
**HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR GAME, TOMORROW, WITHOUT PRACTICING!**  
By Mike Kennedy

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THE 10  
DEADLY SINS  
— IN —  
TENNIS DOUBLES



MIKE KENNEDY

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# INTRODUCTION

There are 10 DEADLY SINS which you are making when playing tennis doubles that are killing your chances of winning. If you clean up these SINS, or even get better on a few, you'll notice how much stronger your game is. Those 4-6, 4-6 losses will become 6-4, 6-4 wins.

These are the top 10 SINS that recreational players make. Even many players who have taken lessons or clinics make some of these errors unless they concentrated on not just strokes, footwork, grip, etc. but on **strategy**. Why? Well, some of these SINS seem to be intuitive, for example hitting too hard. And when your occasional hard shot is a winner, it reinforces this bad habit. And when you first start playing, your opponents aren't that strong, so you'll win points even while making these SINS. This again reinforces the bad habit and is one reason many players play for years without getting much better.

But for recreational tennis these 10 bad habits will cost you points, games and sets without you realizing you're giving away WAY too many points with your poor shot selection and placement. This will be your new **strategy**; which shots to hit, when to hit them and where your targets should be. Clean up these bad habits and your game will improve dramatically.

*Mike Kennedy*

And just understanding these SINS can change your game immediately by using your smarter **strategy**. For example, quit aiming your lobs into the corners of the court! See? You've got it, an immediate fix!

# **SIN 1 - HITTING TOO HARD**

This is the MOST common error in club tennis, trying to hit that winning shot! But this is causing WAY too many errors. Even at the pro level, most matches are won by the player who makes the fewest errors. And do you factor in, the lower the ball is, and the closer to the net it is, the less able you are to hit hard? Simple physics.

Why do you hit so hard? Well, you watch the pros do it most of the time. And, yes, you occasionally get a winner and it feels great. And you rationalize your mistakes with, “Oh, I just missed by two inches.” But a pro will tell you, “no, you missed by two feet and two inches.” You’re not supposed to aim inches over the net. Watch the pros, most of their shots are four feet over the net.

So an easy solution. Hit MEDIUM pace balls, just like most folks do in their warm up on the court. And hit to a target, if you’re a 3.0 or below this is probably cross court. Higher levels can narrow down the target, for example, hit to the opponent’s backhand. Instead of thinking of hitting a winner, think of hitting to put them in a weak position. Teaching pros will stress to first work on consistency, then work on placement. THEN you can work on power. Most club players are weak on consistency and placement, hence many errors. Many, MANY recreational matches can be



*Mike Kennedy*

won by out hitting the opponents... letting them overhit and make the errors.

Aha, you will now hit all MEDIUM paced balls tomorrow. Forget about ripping that winner. And you'll notice, "hey, my opponents are making all the errors."

## **SIN 2 - MISSING PUT AWAY SHOTS**

Ok, first our definition. Put away shots are the balls that are shoulder height or above, near the net and have little pace on them. Seems like an easy shot for the net person. It's usually caused by our opponents hitting a weak shot, a mis-hit, or a weak lob attempt. We want to win this point 95% of the time. This is what we're waiting for, to put away the weak shot by our net person for our point. But club players miss this shot WAY too much. Yes, I see you nodding. You swing too hard and hit the net or you try for an acute angle and it goes wide. Or you hit it at the opponent at the net but it comes back to you before you can regain your position... and you miss it.

Why? Well, first it seems such an easy shot and yes, we watch pros or better players and they pound this one for winner. It seems so easy!

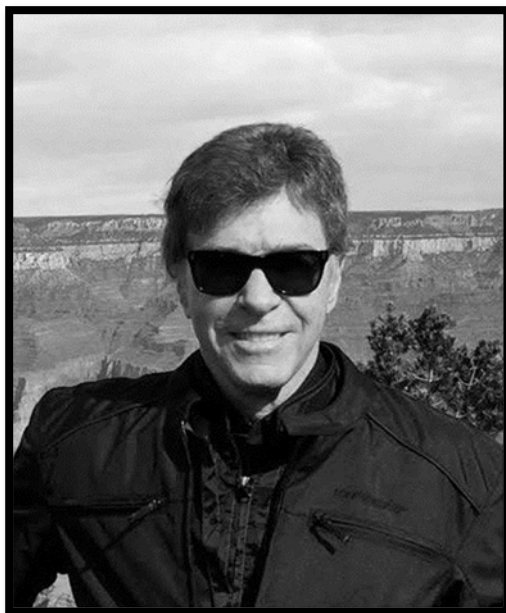
Solution? Don't pound it, don't hit an acute angle...hit a medium pace **in between** your opponents. It's all about placement. Don't hit to the opponents net person because if your shot is high it will go out. If you hit their racket, it may come back to you before you're set up for another shot. Hit **in between** their position so they'll have to run and stretch to get it.

*Mike Kennedy*

Aha, you've been aiming at the wrong target all this time. "Down the middle solves the riddle." So, this means hit in between the opponents position, not the middle of the court. Make them RUN AND STRETCH to get to your shot.

Another instant cure, and when in doubt, your default shot target is **in between** your opponents' position.

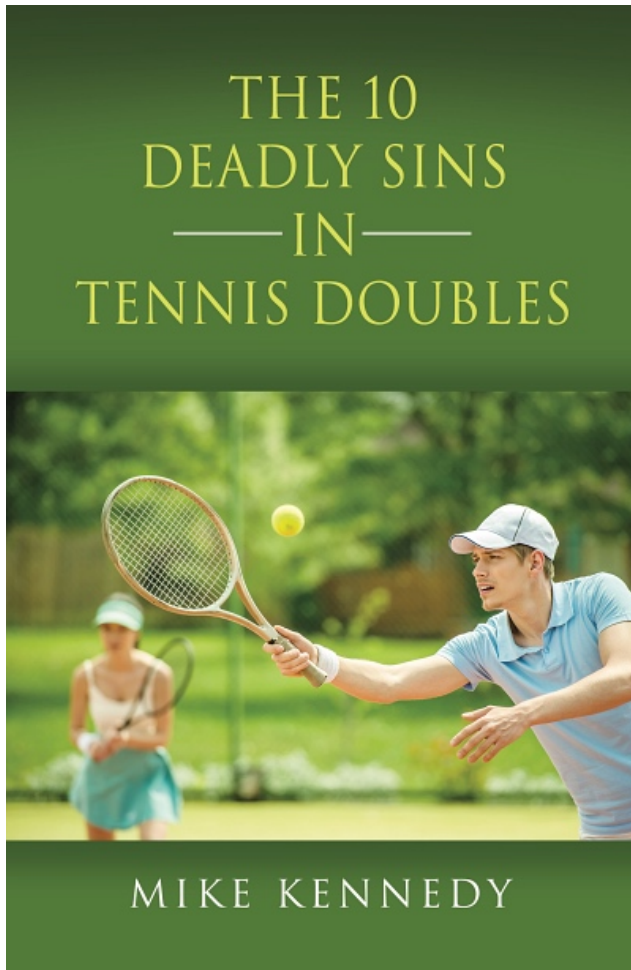
## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Coach Mike Kennedy has won leagues and tournaments from the USTA ratings of 3.5 to 4.5 to include; The Mission Hills, California Three Surface Tournament (hard court, grass and clay), the BNP Senior Cup, Coachella Valley Grand Prix, several Coachella Valley Desert Leagues in Men's and Mixed, and many Legend and Masters leagues. He graciously thanks all his great partners for all these wins.

*Mike Kennedy*

Coach Mike still plays tournaments and league tennis, teaches at The Village Club in Greendale, Wisconsin and coaches at Franklin High School.



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