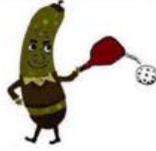


PICKLEBALL



Pickle's Tip of the Month – 3 ***Why learn the soft game?***

By now, most of you have heard me profess the benefits of learning to play the soft game (dinking at the net). It was first introduced to the Eagle River club three years ago by John Kobach. You see, John rarely lost a game, back then, because he was the only one playing the soft game. He got my attention and I began to work on the pointers John had given me. That winter when we came to Florida for four months, I couldn't find anyone at the advanced-beginner or intermediate level who played it. Everyone was banging, and I found myself on the losing end of most games I played. I was really getting sick of people banging the ball at me!

Before we headed back to Wisconsin, I paid big bucks for a private lesson from one of America's top players, who was in The Villages for an exhibition and some training clinics. He reiterated John's advice on the third shot soft, and then taught me the block shot and the block-drop shot. Since then, my game has continued to improve. A good soft third shot does take the slammer's shot away from them, while the block shot can keep your opponents back, until you have an opportunity to block-drop into the NVZ.

Now the tip(s)...

...find time to practice (drill) – I know you're inside now and court time is precious. Even if it is only the first 20 minutes, if you take the time to drill on shots, your game will improve...guarantee it!

...if you are hitting up on the ball (that is your paddle is vertical with your hand above the blade) hit it soft into the NVZ...any more juice on the ball will put it up for your opponent to nail you

...if you are hitting down on the ball (the paddle blade vertical, above your hand) it is okay to hit it hard aiming for the opposite ankle of your opponent.