

• World Champion No 5: Jonathon Power •

I had the privilege of watching Jonathon grow up and develop into one of the World's Greatest Players. During the 1980's I was based in Canada and happened to be one of the best players there at the time. I used to do a lot of exhibition matches throughout the country and on one occasion I was in Montreal doing one. My first meeting with Jonathon was playing a couple of games with him at that particular exhibition when he was about 12 years old. Already then you could see he had the potential to be one of the best.

Over the next few years I played him many times and each time, I could see a huge improvement not to mention his now famous court antics coming to the surface, as well. Even at that stage Jonathon was very creative with his shotmaking always inventing the unusual to deceive and keep you off balance. That combined with a very fast reading of the game enabled Jonathon to keep up the tempo of the match. It also helped that he was very fast around the court himself. The combination of all of his skills made for a World Champion. Along with Graeme Ryding, they both pushed each other to the top of World Squash.

What can we Learn from Jonathon?

Try and be creative. The more shots you develop the more options you have. This means your opponent will be playing Your game.

Many times your opponent will have a pattern of play. They will do this shot from this position, that shot from another position. Look for their pattern. That will enable you to read their game quickly and to be able to counter a shot before they know what is happening. Work on your speed around the court, use it as a bonus, the same with your fitness. Lastly, as in Jonathon's case, a few mind games can certainly throw off your opponent as well. Yes, I can still remember a couple he tried on me. I'll save those stories for another time.

• World Champion Number 4: Rodney Eyles •

Rodney had a very distinguished squash career throughout the eighties and the nineties with the highlight being his winning a World Championship. Once again another squash prodigy, he turned pro around the age of 15, and along with his peers at the time he set out to conquer the squash world.

From one of the golden era's of Australian squash, his group of rival's included Rodney and Brett Martin, Chris Robertson, Tristian Nancarrow and Chris Ditmar, all of whom reached the Top 6 in the squash world.

Rodney's game was very characteristic of the group using great shotmaking, deception, along with tremendous retrieving ability to reach the pinnacle of the game.

What can we learn from Rodney's game?

Consistent shot-making along with tenacious retrieving keeps your opponent scrambling, nervous, frustrated and sure to force them into mistakes as their game will break down along with their stamina.

• World Champion No 3: Ross Norman •

Ross has been New Zealand's best player, and apart from winning The World Open amongst his tournament victories, he also happened to be the player who ended Jahanghir's 550 match unbeaten streak. Unbelievably, that happened to be in a World Open final. Up to that point Ross had lost on many occasions to Jahanghir. So it goes to prove that everyone is beatable; it just might take you longer to achieve the victory.

So let's see what we can learn from Ross.

Never give up no matter who you are playing and what reputation they have.

Ross was again incredibly fit. He hit the ball very hard for quite a thin guy and had a big loopy swing. Again very basic in his approach, hitting excellent length and taking the ball very early. He used his speed around the court to force you into making mistakes by keeping you under pressure. By having the big swing he could add a bit of deception by shaping up for a drive and changing it to a dropshot at the last minute. Another champion who worked out the best way to maximize their strengths.

To sum his game up in words: Pace, Volley and Pressure!

• World Champion No 2: Jahangir Khan •

Jahangir probably gets my vote as the World's Greatest Player. Having won over 550 tournament matches consecutively and being undefeated for close to 6 years is unbelievable and also having won 6 World Championships and 10 British Opens sort of says it all. Did he never feel sick or injured during that time? I guess you have to think that even at his worst he was still better than every other player. Wow!!!

Ok, so let's have a look at his game.

Jahangir based his game on hard low length, getting you scrambling to the back of the court, then intercepting with volley boasts, or if anything was loose he would finish the point with a straight Volley drop shot which usually found the side wall nick.

With him being incredibly fit, the pace was severe. As the match wore on, whatever attack you had was turned into defense. As he got older he developed more and more shots thus lengthening his career.

What can we learn from Jahangir?

Hitting Good Length is the basis of the game. Without it you are always going to be in the back court digging balls out and it is only a matter of time before your opponent hits a winner.

Keep your opponent moving to the farthest point of the court. If you have them in the backhand deep corner, your next shot should end up in the front forehand corner or the front backhand corner. Remember it is a big court out there especially if your opponent is the one doing all the running.

• World Champion No. 1 - Geoff Hunt •

Geoff Hunt is, up to this point, Australia's greatest male player. Let's have a look at his game and compare it to the game today.

Geoff's game had a fast paced tempo. He did not hit the ball that hard, mixing working drops and boasts with an occasional boast into the nick. The same with crosscourts, sometimes a hard cross into the nick, lots of straight drives to very good length with volleying a very important part of his game. He was more of a positional player, very consistent and mentally, extremely strong. Not so much a flashy player, but he would usually wear his opponents down and frustrate them with his speed around the court. Geoff would never beat himself with mistakes.

Always remember that you already have an opponent; don't make it 2 by beating yourself with mistakes.

Looking at today's game, it is a lot more attacking, partly because of the changed scoring system (played to 11 points a game; point a rally scoring) and because of the influences of the 80's and 90's era players such as Rodney and Brett Martin and Chris Ditmar. Today, it seems you take the player to the front at every opportunity and look to counter, instead of the longer more drawn out rallies. The volley drop, low slices, and volley nicks all make it a lot more severe on a person's stamina.