

HOW TO BECOME AN ESTABLISHED PLAYER...

(An insightful report)

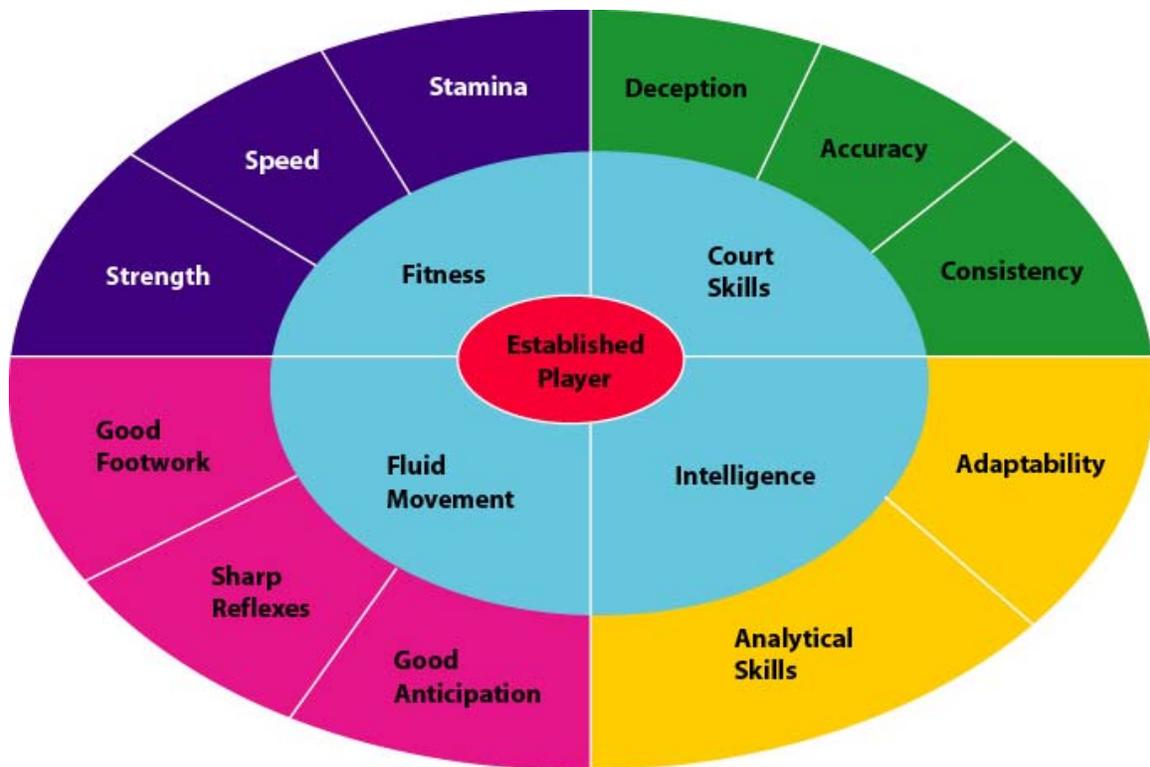


INTRODUCTION

What makes you an established player? Or anyone else! Well... The definition of this statement is referring to that elusive state where your body works in unison with your game like clockwork. There is no limit to excellence.

Every player has his own weakness and strength. You can't be outstanding in all aspects of the game as there is no such thing as a perfect player in Badminton. So in order to consistently stay on top, of course you need to consistently improve your game in areas that you are weaker which requires a lot of dedication and hard work.

Different people have different perspective on the definition of an established player and each player has a different goal in training. Coaches play an important role as they must determine an individual's strengths and also weaknesses so that they can help them become a better player.

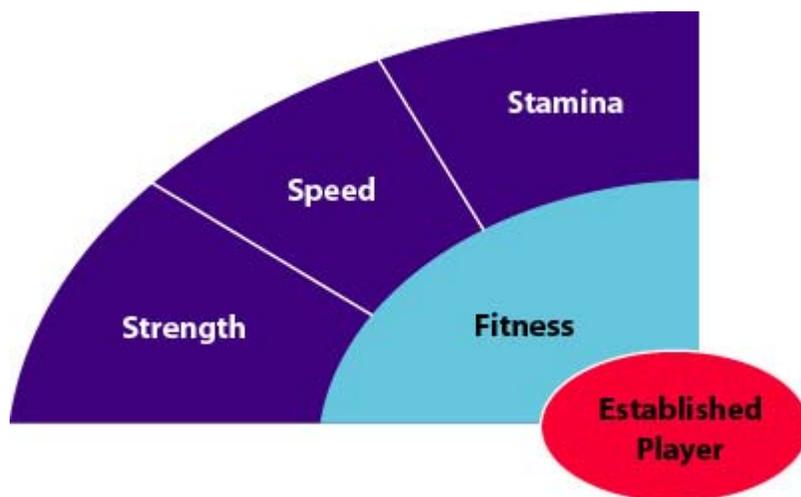


The diagram above shows the Quality circle. An established player have to master 4 areas in this game which is fitness, court craft, fluid movement and also being intelligent in the game. Mastering the fundamentals are not done overnight. The quality circle of training can serve as your guide in becoming an established player.

It is formed in a circle because it involves a process that requires constant improvement on different areas of training. Each area in the circle comprises two or three skills. You may already have a high intelligence level but do not have a good fitness. Your development in each area will not likely be the same.

To become a successful and established player, you have to perfect your basic skills and fundamentals first which requires commitment to learn. Certainly, it is not impossible.

The Established Player: Part 1 - Fitness



The diagram above shows one quarter of the quality circle. Here, we are going to focus on the first area of an established player which is the fitness. Fitness composes three aspects which are strength, speed and stamina. In sports, all athletes whether amateurs or professionals should train to gain fitness before going into it and that include badminton players.

Nowadays players like to take short cuts in their training. However, if one goes through the tactics and strokes before fitness, he will be over-extending himself. No matter what sports you play, being physically fit is the most basic requirement.

The better you want to become, the greater fitness level is required. The first step of becoming an established player is to have excellent strength, speed and stamina.

* **Strength**

Strength can be defined as the player's ability to produce a force that is generated from directing his body as well as the racket head towards hitting the shuttlecock. The power of the shots depends on muscle efficiency.

One of the common ways to improve strength is to do weight training. However, the training to build the strength for badminton should not be geared too much towards body building. A too muscular body can cause stiffness which limits the range of your body movements in the game.

* **Speed**

The definition of speed is the ability to move the whole body from one place to another in the shortest possible time. In all the sports, athletes need speed to be faster than their opponent to win the game. This is also true in Badminton.

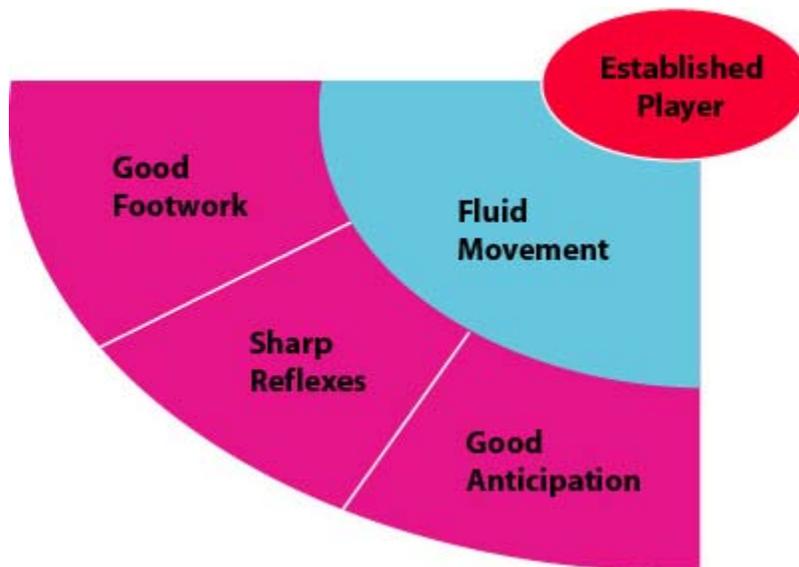
To improve speed, a player should undergo endurance training. Sprinting and Shadow drills are the most important drills to achieve optimum speed. Nowadays, speed plays a major role to win the game especially in the 21 points rally system. Gaining speed is important in becoming a successful player.

* **Stamina**

Stamina is the ability to sustain a high level of performance over a long period of time. To achieve it, it requires discipline and consistency in training.

Jogging is one of the most common training methods to improve stamina. It is normally used as part of warm ups and also training. Jogging under the hot sun once in a while is also good to build up the mental strength and better stamina.

Established Player: Part 2 - Fluid Movement



On the last topic, we talked about the fitness which is one area that needs to be mastered in order to be an established player. Now, we are going to concentrate on the second part which is fluid movement. The diagram above shows another quarter of the quality circle.

Fluid movement consists of good footwork, sharp reflexes and good anticipation. It is this combination that produces quick movements and sharp smashes executed in an effortless way that are simply fascinating. Some players may be naturally talented but their ability to move quickly in the court is the result of perfecting the fundamentals of the game. These three aspects of fluid movements form the foundation of an established badminton player.

*Good Footwork

In Badminton, we do not run. This could be a deceiving statement since badminton is considered the fastest racket sports. Good footwork is referring to having the ability to reach the shuttle early.

Different players have different footwork. They will skip, shuffle, bounce, glide, chasse step or combination of these steps. Some small fast steps or lunge in big steps.

Having solid footwork would easily take a player towards any direction on court in 2 steps. You don't have to fumble all over the court. You have to look at the shots

made by your opponent and used your body to go towards it. This is where eye and feet coordination is important.

*** Sharp Reflexes**

Sharp reflexes can be defined as a reaction of the body that is produced automatically and instinctively in response to a stimulus. For example, when you put your finger on the hot kettle, your finger will automatically withdraw from the kettle quickly due to natural reflex. In badminton, sharp reflexes are needed in order to move quickly.

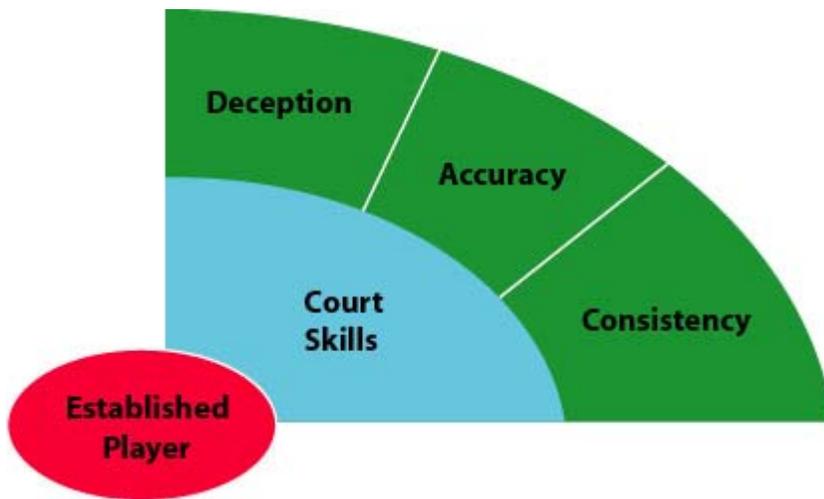
A player must undergo regular quickness drills. The idea is to increase concentration and awareness as they are learning badminton techniques. The muscles have to be trained to response quickly.

*** Good Anticipation**

Anticipation is the ability to sense what is happening in a split second before others can and to react quickly. By reacting earlier, one gains a decisive advantage.

In order to have good anticipation in Badminton, experience is the key. A player develops anticipation when he has mastered the skills to play the game. By developing these skills, he will be able to be at the right place at the right time, quickly analyzing game situations and react faster.

Established Player: Part 3 - Court Skills



After learning about the fitness and fluid movements, we are in the third topic of being an established player. The topic that we are going to discuss now is about court skills. The quarter of the quality circle above shows that court skills consists of deception, accuracy and consistency. It involves fine tuning your badminton shots and techniques.

You have to make each shot count when you play the game. This has become even more important under the 21 point rally system. Each mistake will give your opponent a point. You have to develop certain techniques in executing the shots. Talented players normally take 8 to 12 years to reach the high level of court skills. Some shots might look simple but it is not easy to master it.

Training in this aspect of badminton aims to develop deception, accuracy and consistency.

***Deception**

In order to be deceptive, you have to keep your opponents guessing. Basic preparations for executing shots are all the same. You will discover that the angle of the racket face, speed of the racket head and point of the impact can be changed to create deception. Of course there's a need for experience.

Wrist work is also another important aspect to create deceptions. Your deception is considered successful when the opponent is fooled by your shots. One of the most popular deceptive players all time was Zhao Jian Hua.

*** Accuracy**

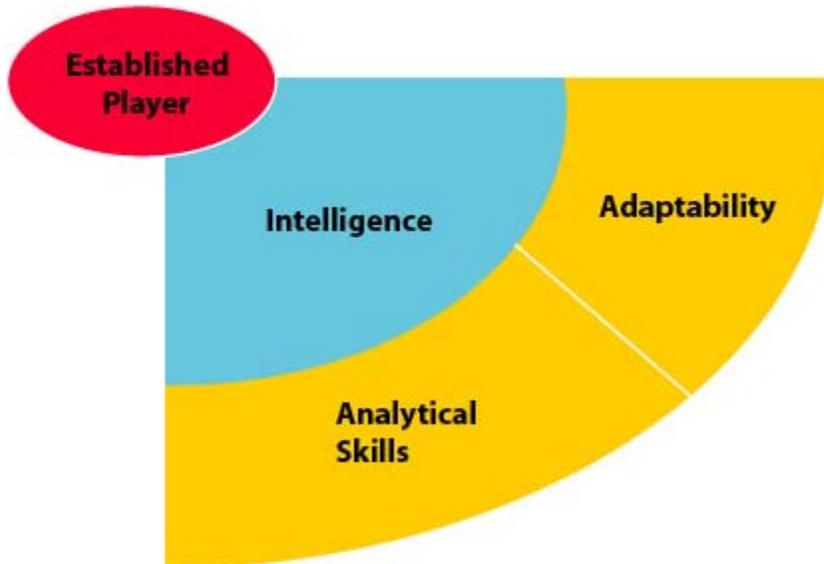
In order to gain accuracy, one needs to have good footwork, technique and also fitness. Badminton player develops shot accuracy through multi-shuttle drills. He has to hit a lot of shuttles toward the same spot on the other side of the court.

In a match, an accurate and consistent player will have an advantage when he is under pressure. The advantage refers to driving his opponent to commit errors and making wrong decisions first.

*** Consistency**

Before hitting the shots accurately, badminton players need to have the consistency first. Consistency can be defined as keeping the shots simple and safe over the net. In order to be consistent, frequent and repetitive practice of a technique is needed. Understand the techniques first before gaining the skills. Repeat the shots until you perfect it.

Established Player: Part 4 - Intelligence



Badminton is not just about being tough physically and having deadly skills. It is called a physical chess game which requires strategies and intelligence as well. Players need to set up some tactics to use their strengths to attack opponent's weaknesses.

A thinking player is an established player. He must be willing to learn different techniques taught by different coaches. Coaches have to develop athlete's mental game as well.

You cannot just rely on physical ability to go far in badminton. Game plan, tactics and strategies are important to beat your opponent. Players are required to be analytical and adaptable during the course of the game.

* Analytical

Before a training session begins, it is good to develop an analytical mind to become adaptable in the court. Analytical mind refers to lessons on psychology, studying the opponent's playing style, strengths and weaknesses and also identifying his game's pattern. These might sound complicated but it will help a lot in the game.

Other than their game ability, you must also watch out for your opponent's stamina, attitude and rhythm.

***Adaptable**

A good player must have the ability to adjust to changes and new situations on court. There are a lot of changes in pace or tempo of the game in badminton. The environment, style of opponents and others could affect your game.

You need to come up with strategies on how to counter your opponent. By adapting to different situations, you may have an advantage by taking control of the match.

It is about reading the game during the match. The player needs to be mature. Do not lose the game without knowing why.