

Tennis Tip from the Pro  
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### Follow That Lob!!!

We all know what an effective shot a lob can be in doubles. It can be used to keep an aggressive net player from picking off your cross-court ball, give you time to get back in position after getting pulled off the court, or show your opponents a change of pace if they're returning your aggressive shots easily.

The lob can also be used as an offensive play when placed over the opposing net player's head and deep into the corner. Their partner will have to chase the lob down from the other side of the court and will most likely be limited to a lob return. Just like any other offensive shot you hit during a match, you should expect a weak reply from your opponent most of the time. This is especially true if the player retrieving the lob is doing so with their backhand.

The mistake most players make after hitting an offensive lob is to stand back on the baseline waiting to see what the opponent will do with the ball if they get to it at all. Remember, if the lob is deep to the corner (especially the backhand corner) the most likely response will be a weak lob back. If you hang back on the baseline waiting to respond to their shot after their return you'll be forced to play the ball off the bounce from the backcourt and your opponents will have time to regroup and get back in position. They've now successfully reset the point and are back to a neutral position instead of remaining on defense.

The more pro-active play is to "follow that lob" to the service line and take advantage of the opponents likely weak return with an overhead or mid-court volley. This play will take away your opponent's time to recover to a better position and also allow you and your partner to maintain an offensive position on the court. You just have to be careful not to position yourself inside the service box where you become much more vulnerable to a lob return over your head.

Additionally, if you're following your offensive lobs in to the service line, your partner (who was most likely already in a volley position when you hit the lob) should also take a position near the service line on their side of the court. This way neither of you is susceptible to getting lobbed over if your opponent gets off a better shot than expected. You can cover your own overheads and either of you can close on the net for a put-away if the return comes back short.

See you on the courts!!!

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