



The Reset / Resetting the Point

Are you stuck on defense in pickleball, desperately trying to keep the ball in play while your opponents dictate the rally? Frustrated by exchanges where you always feel one shot behind, unable to shift the momentum? Imagine completely flipping the script—neutralizing their attack and regaining control with a single, precise shot.

The drop shot is your secret weapon for resetting the point and moving back onto offense. Mastering this shot can transform your game, giving you the ability to stop your opponents' momentum and build your own.

In this text, we'll break down the art of the reset in pickleball and share three decisive drop shot drills to help you take control of the court. Whether you're a beginner or an experienced player, these techniques will elevate your strategy and confidence.

Ready to stop reacting and start attacking? Let's dive in.

What Is a Reset in Pickleball?

A reset in pickleball is a strategic shot used to neutralize an opponent's offensive play and return the rally to a neutral or defensive situation. It is typically a soft, controlled shot—such as a drop shot or a dink—that lands in the non-volley zone (NVZ), forcing opponents to slow down their attack. Resets are essential when you're under pressure: they buy you time and shift the momentum of the point.

Resets are especially effective when you're defending from the baseline or mid-court against a team that dominates at the net. At the intermediate level, a well-executed reset significantly reduces your opponents' ability to maintain offensive pressure.

The goal? Stop the attack and create an opportunity to move forward to the net.

Why the Drop Shot Is the Ultimate Reset Tool

The drop shot—a soft, slightly arcing shot that lands just over the net in the NVZ—is the gold standard for resetting a point. It forces opponents to move forward and hit the ball upward, limiting their power and giving you time to reposition. A great drop shot relies on finesse, not force.

Players who master the drop shot win far more rallies in defensive situations than those who rely solely on lobs or drives. Its low trajectory and short landing zone make it difficult to attack, especially against players already at the net. Precision is critical, however: a poorly executed drop shot becomes an open invitation for your opponents to attack.

Key Elements of an Excellent Drop Shot

- **Spin:** Adding backspin or sidespin improves control and makes the ball “die” in the NVZ.
- **Height:** Clear the net by 12–24 inches (30–60 cm) to avoid errors while keeping the ball low enough to prevent an attack.
- **Placement:** Aim for the sidelines or the center of the NVZ to disrupt your opponents’ positioning.
- **Timing:** Use it when opponents are backing up or overly aggressive to catch them off guard.

Common Reset Mistakes

At first glance, the reset looks simple but execution challenges many players. The most common mistake is hitting too hard, turning a potential reset into an easy put-away for the opponent. Other pitfalls include poor footwork, leading to off-balance shots, and predictable placement that experienced players read easily.

To avoid these mistakes: keep soft hands, maintain good positioning, and vary your shots. Practice is essential to turning these weaknesses into strengths.

3 Drop Shot Drills to Master the Reset and Turn Defense into Offense

These three drills, suitable for all levels, will sharpen your drop shot technique, improve the consistency of your resets, and help you transition quickly to offense. Each drill targets a specific skill—control, movement, or decision-making—with progressions to keep things challenging.

Drill 1: NVZ Drop Shot Accuracy

This drill develops your ability to place precise drop shots from the baseline, simulating a real defensive situation.

Setup

Start at the baseline. A partner or coach stands at the NVZ line on the opposite side.

Execution

Hit 10 drop shots into the NVZ, alternating left, center, and right. Your partner provides feedback on height and placement.

Progression

Increase difficulty with faster feeds or by having your partner move randomly at the net.

Goal

Land 8 out of 10 shots in the NVZ with backspin, clearing the net by 12–24 inches.

Why It Works

This drill builds the muscle memory needed for soft, controlled shots under pressure.

Drill 2: Drop Shot with Lateral Movement

This drill improves your ability to reset while moving laterally—an essential skill in doubles play.

Setup

Start at mid-court. A partner feeds balls from the opposite NVZ, alternating left and right.

Execution

Move laterally and hit a drop shot into the NVZ. Complete 3 sets of 12 balls, resting 30 seconds between sets.

Progression

Add a second ball immediately after the first to perform two consecutive resets while staying balanced.

Goal

Land 10 out of 12 shots in the NVZ with consistent spin.

Why It Works

Opponents often try to pull you out of position; this drill replicates those situations and improves footwork and control.

Drill 3: Defense-to-Offense Transition

This drill teaches you how to reset the point and immediately transition to offense.

Setup

Start at the baseline. A partner at the net feeds aggressive balls (drives or volleys). Use a full court.

Execution

Return the first ball with a drop shot into the NVZ, then move up to mid-court. If the next ball sits up, attack with a drive or volley. Complete 15 rallies.

Progression

Your partner varies responses (dink, lob, or attack) to challenge quick decision-making.

Goal

Successfully complete the defense-to-offense transition in 12 out of 15 rallies.

Why It Works

This drill bridges the gap between defense and offense and teaches you how to seize control after a reset.

Drill Comparison Table

Drill	Objective	Level	Equipment	Duration
NVZ Drop Shot Accuracy	Placement and control	Beginner	Partner, balls	15 min
Drop Shot with Lateral Movement	Footwork and balance	Intermediate	Partner, balls	20 min
Defense-to-Offense Transition	Decision-making and transition	Advanced	Partner, full court	25 min

Integrating Resets into Your Match Strategy

Mastering the drop shot is only half the battle—knowing when to use it is just as important. The best resets surprise your opponent; timing and disguise are key.

- **Read your opponents:** Use the reset when they are overly aggressive or well-established at the net.
- **Vary your shots:** Mix drop shots, lobs, and drives to avoid predictability.
- **Positioning:** After a reset, move up to mid-court or the NVZ to prepare for attack.
- **Partner communication:** Signal your intentions so your partner can reposition effectively.
- **Warm-ups:** Instead of only dinking, incorporate drop shots into your routines.
- **Quiet Eye:** This visual focus technique significantly improves drop shot accuracy.

Drop Shot Troubleshooting

Problem: Balls hitting the net

Solution: Increase the arc (12–24 inches) and relax your grip.

Problem: Balls sitting up and getting attacked

Solution: Add backspin and aim for the front of the NVZ.

Problem: Lack of consistency

Solution: Use a continental grip and brush under the ball. Drill 2 is especially effective for improvement.

The Mental Advantage of the Reset

The reset is as much mental as it is physical. A well-placed reset frustrates opponents and forces errors. Stay patient and trust your training. Each successful reset builds confidence and turns defense into opportunity. Visualize your drop shot dying in the NVZ—and you'll take control of the court.

Conclusion

The reset in pickleball is your passport to turning defense into offense, and the drop shot is the key.

By practicing the three drills presented—**NVZ Accuracy**, **Lateral Movement**, and **Defense-to-Offense Transition**—you'll develop the skills needed to neutralize opponents and dominate rallies. Commit to consistent practice, and results will follow quickly. Grab your paddle, hit the court, and start resetting like a pro. Your opponents won't see it coming.