



racquetball

Mike
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Wallpaper shot a good weapon

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The wallpaper ball — it's one of the more racket-twisting, knuckle-scraping experiences in racquetball. When your opponent is on the receiving end, it's great. But when you are, it's pure frustration.

A wallpaper ball can be simply defined as a shot that travels very close to the side wall on the way to the back wall. There is nothing simple about this shot, however, regardless of which side of it you're on.

The wallpaper ball can travel toward the back wall at any height. Usually it comes off the front wall at a perfectly acceptable height and pace that, if placed a couple of inches closer to center court, would make it a plus.

But a player has only about a one-in-five chance of making a decent return of a wallpaper ball.

That's the bad news about the wallpaper shot. The good news is that it can put your opponent in a very difficult position.

You can't hit wallpaper shots with the frame of your other shots, but you can improve your chances for this point-winner with proper attention to your down-the-line drives.

You don't have to be right against the side wall to have your shot rebound close to it, although closer is better. Even a crosscourt pass can come off the front wall as wallpaper. It's a question of how it goes into the front wall.

Unfortunately, I can't tell you how to hit the ball so that it comes off the side wall as wallpaper every time.

The angles will change, depending where you are on the court. The only way to become acquainted with them is through practice and play.

Another aggravating characteristic of the wallpaper shot is its unpredictability. The ball is going to the wall all the way to the backcourt, then, just as you are about to hit it, knock the wall slightly and jump out.

This kind of behavior can send you up the wall, but you can improve your chances of a decent return if you keep your cool.

YOU DON'T HAVE to change shots for a wallpaper return, just attitude. When you see the ball sliding back along the wall, it should be a signal to switch into low gear.

Most of you, I think, that you are going to hit a ceiling ball, because any attempt at an offensive return will probably get you into trouble.

Also realize that you will not have a full swing because the wall is going to be in the way. Position yourself far away enough from the wall so that if the ball does jump out you will be able to handle it.

Think of your racquet as a big spatula.

St. Mary's tops Spring Arbor

David Jones, a sophomore guard from Ann Arbor, scored 18 points Saturday to pace Orchard Lake St. Mary's College to a 71-57 win over Spring Arbor College. The win boosted coach Tim Dome's OLSM crew to 14-5.

Craig Blackwell scored 13 points for the winners, and 6-foot-7 Mark Sulek had 11 points and 19 rebounds.

Ren Taylor scored 20 points for Spring Arbor, and Dean Lorkwood had 16.

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