

# HOW TO POACH AND FAKE POACH IN TENNIS

## Poaching Tips

- 1 Communicate.** Communicate with your doubles partner and let them know that, when they're serving, you're going to be trying to poach some returns. This lets your partner know to keep an eye on you and to switch sides when you go for the poach. It also helps prepare you mentally to give poaching a try.
- 2 Look for opportunities.** This can mean watching your opponents' returns and deciding who is hitting the weaker, poachable return. It can also mean just going for it at some point, without waiting to see what kind of return is hit.
- 3 Move diagonally.** When you go for the poach, think about moving diagonally. Don't just move sideways to the ball, move forward also. This will bring you in closer to the net, sending the ball back to your opponents quicker.
- 4 Be fearless.** Get over the fear of poaching. If you try poaching several times in a match, and your opponents successfully beat you with down-the-line returns every time, then stop poaching in that match and save it for another day. And, if you have a partner who is unhappy with your unsuccessful poaching attempts, well, it just may be time to get a new doubles partner. This tactic is just too valuable to give up on because your partner is unwilling to let you try it.

## Fake Poaching Tips

- 1 Decide to fake poach.** Give yourself some a mental boost by making the decision that you are going to put this tactic into play.
- 2 Communicate with your partner.** Tell your partner what you are doing so he or she is not surprised when you don't actually complete the poach.
- 3 Take a strong first step.** Make your sure you get your opponent's attention and give them the message that you may poach by taking a strong, obvious, loud first step.
- 4 Push back to your position.** With the foot you've used to take your strong first step, push off and get yourself back into position at the net.
- 5 Play out the point.** Be prepared for whatever return comes back. If you've been effective, you can expect it to be weak and you should be ready to possibly put it away. In other words, your fake poach may become a real poach!