THE SLICE BACKHAND
by Peter Farrell

Playing Standard: ITN 1 to 6
Long Term Player Development Pathway: Phase 3

In these days of fierce power allied to heavy topspin, here is a plea to remember to fully develop one of my favourite shots in the game – **the slice backhand**. The long list of situations in which slice is effective on the backhand side (see below) should convince any player that this shot needs to be comprehensively developed and improved.

I like to break down situations in which a player should use the slice backhand into two distinct categories - *`forced to slice`* and *`choose to slice`*. **Forced to slice** happens when the opponent has played an effective shot, so that the incoming ball makes it awkward to reply with topspin. **Choose to slice** is were the player has the option of coming over or under the ball, but decides that in this particular case slice would actually be more effective.

FORCED TO SLICE *(Rally/Defend Situation)*	CHOOSE TO SLICE *(Attack/Counter Attack Situation)*
Incoming ball is very high (above shoulder height)	Approach shot (producing a low bounce to make the pass more difficult)
Incoming ball is very low (below knee height)	'Changing the pace' following a fast exchange
Incoming ball has a lot of pace (e.g. first serve, smash)	Drop shot – 'holding the ball back` from the opponent
Incoming ball is "into the body" (cramping the player)	Hitting low bouncing shots to players who thrive on high bouncing shots
Incoming ball is far away (stretching the player)	Hitting slow shots to players who thrive on receiving hard shots (e.g. a low, underspin passing shot with minimal pace can be very effective in producing errors on the volley)

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For more information on the ITN:
http://www.tennisireland.ie/player_database/what_is_the_itn

For more information on the Long Term Player Development Pathway:
http://www.tennisireland.ie/coaches/player_development_pathway