

Pre-contact phase

Defense is a **reaction skill** and the players often need to chase a ball that was deflected by another player or that was played in an area of the court that wasn't covered by anyone.

1. The defender needs to be in a **ready position** that will allow them to play both the **high hit (B)** and the **low hit (A)**. The knees have to be **bent in a comfortable position** and the weight is on the front of the feet.
It is that position that will allow the player to **quickly start chasing the ball**.
2. The defender is **looking at the hitter and reads the play**.
3. The defender identifies the trajectory of the ball and **initiates movement with first step in the direction of the ball**. If the ball is deflected behind them, they open their body by taking a first step backwards with the foot closest to the ball.
4. The defender chases the ball by **taking quick steps** towards it. While moving, the center of gravity either **lowers (D)** or **raises (C)** depending on the trajectory of the ball that has to be dug.

Contact phase

6. The most important factor in retrieving the ball is **the angle of the platform**. Just before contact, the defender must position their body in a way that will allow them to **orient their platform towards the middle of the court**. That might mean jump (B), dive with one hand (D) or fall to the floor (E).
7. The **eyes are on the ball** and arms are oriented towards the middle of the court. The shoulder further away from the court is **slightly lifted and wraps around the ball** at contact. (B, C)

Post-contact phase

7. The follow through is **oriented towards the middle of the court** as much as possible.
8. The player either **rolls or dives** to avoid injuries during the fall and to be back on their feet quickly for the next action.

