



CORNY'S CORNER

Finger Tip Attack Hits

Corny Galdones, February 1998

A hand thrust by a player attacking the ball by controlling and directing it with finger tips is called a tip, and formerly, a dink. It is one ball handling play that often falls in the "gray area" of being legal. The difficulty in judging a tip stems from the controlling and directing actions and the occasional surprise element of an unexpected tip.

Types. There are two types of tips that are differentiated by the attacking speed. A regular or soft tip is done with finesse. A power tip is done with force. A play in which a player in the act of setting decides at the last moment to direct the ball over the net with the finger tips of one hand technically is a tip but is better known as a dump. Regardless of type or label, all tips are judged the same way.

Duration of contact. The ball can be contacted on a tip only for a brief interval, both in time and in distance. Time-wise, the ball contact must be momentary. The attacker should not be allowed time to contemplate where to direct the ball during contact. Distance-wise, the ball must be released near to its initial contact point. Ball contact should not last through the full range of the attacker's arm span. Watch the entire duration of contact when judging the legality of a tip. Do not look ahead of the actual ball contact.

Contact of ball. The ball cannot be caught, i.e., the attacker's hand cannot stop or move backward on initial contact with the ball. On a power tip, force is used to propel the ball. The hand must already be in forward motion before contact is made with the ball. That way, the ball is legally rebounding upon contact. Otherwise, it is being caught first before being moved forward. It's a held ball violation if the hitter makes contact with the ball, reloads, then pushes the ball forward. During contact, the hand must move continuously forward at the same speed without changing course from its initial direction. Giving upward impetus to the ball or cradling it from underneath is allowed on a tip provided the ball instantly bounces off the fingers. If the ball contact is extended, the ball cannot come to rest. Theoretically, it should drop freely from the fingers if the attacking motion were stopped. The ball cannot be thrown or be analogous to a baseball toss. Any subsequent hand actions after the ball is released, such as breaking of the wrist, is immaterial. The palm of the hand must not come in contact with the ball during a tip. Else, it is a caught, held, lifted, or thrown ball.

The tip is a very effective attack-hit especially when it's unexpected. Always be on the lookout for it. Like other ball handling plays, deciding what is a violation on a tip is a judgment call. Using the above guidelines, set your own judgment parameters as the match develops and be consistent in properly judging its legality no matter what transpires during the ball contact.