



**THE PADEL  
SCHOOL**



## Overheads Season

Here's what you will have access to this season:

### Video List

1. Introduction to Smashes
2. Bandeja
3. Vibora
4. Topspin Smash
5. Gancho
6. Flat Smash
7. Fake Smashes

Additional videos: To accompany the technical shots mentioned above.

### **Introduction to Overheads**

In padel there are a variety of smashes that are used depending upon the court position, the type of ball and where the opponents are. These can be separated into defensive and attacking overheads. By definition, defensive overheads are used to maintain your court position and protect your team from being attacked on the next shot, usually played on a more difficult lob. Attacking overheads are used to finish the point on that shot or the subsequent one, usually an aggressive smash on an easier ball.

#### **Defensive Smashes:**

Bandeja  
Gancho

#### **Attacking Smashes:**

Vibora  
Topspin Smash  
Flat Smash  
Fake Smash



### **Bandeja/Defensive Slice Smash**

Bandeja is a slightly more defensive type of overhead, with a flatter contact than the vibora, but some slice is still used on more difficult balls. If the ball is easier and you want to attack more then you hit faster slicing round the outside of the ball more and this is called a Vibora. The main objective of this shot is to maintain net position, so the speed of the bandeja must be relatively slow and it is crucial the player moves forward to net quickly following the shot.

- **Bandeja – 3 Stages of the technique on the video**
  - Racket Back and High (left arm too)
  - Feet in position to side of ball
  - Swing through high with chest, keeping chest up.
  
- **Court position -**
  - Body turn (shoulders and hips) racquet back and high, head point to up, racket face pointing to side glass, elbow bent and same height as shoulder, left hand up and in front pointing towards ball.
  - Feet in position – linear, right foot behind, moving into position with little steps.
  - Contact – forehead level far to side of body just in front (approx. 2 o'clock angle), flat/minimal slice contact, chest up.
  - Follow through – finish in direction of ball, racket head goes through contact finishing similar level.
  - Body weight should be balanced, chest up and in front so not fall through the shot.
  
- **Bandeja Common Errors**
  1. Incorrect grip – continental grip should be used, if the hand slips round to tennis western grip the player will not be able to hit spin.
  2. Distance from the ball – closer to the body than the vibora, but contact should be to the side of the body so the arm can swing through the ball.
  3. Contact - too high and the ball will bounce too high at the other end or too low and the ball will likely end up in the net.
  4. Shot intention – this is intended as a defensive smash, not intended to finish the point. The aim is to give the player enough time to get back into their net position.



### **Vibora/Attacking Slice Smash**

The vibora is a more aggressive type of overhead, used on easier balls this smash is designed to finish the point on this shot or the following shot. This shot is usually hit fast, with spin into the corners of the court. Often an effective vibora will hit both the side glass and the back glass (in different orders), making it very difficult to defend. The player is already in an attacking net position, so the effectiveness of this shot depends on the accuracy and speed.

- Vibora – 3 Stages of the technique on the video
  - Faster swing
  - Contact outside of the ball
  - Using feeling of fingers round the ball
  
- Court position -
  - Body turn (shoulders and hips) racquet back and behind the head racket face pointing to side glass, elbow bent and same height as shoulder, left hand up and in front pointing towards ball.
  - Feet in position – linear, right foot behind, moving into position with little steps.
  - Contact – forehead level far to side of body just in front (approx. 2 o'clock angle), slice contact round the right side of the ball, chest up.
  - Follow through – finish in direction of ball, racket head goes through contact finishing similar level.
  - Body weight should be balanced, chest up and in front so not fall through the shot.
  
- Vibora Common Errors
  1. Incorrect grip – continental grip must be used; some players even slip the grip slightly round to tennis eastern grip (although the majority keep it in continental).
  2. Distance from the ball – closer to the body than the vibora, but contact should be to the side of the body so the arm can swing through the ball. The ball is slightly more in front of the body for this shot.
  3. Contact - too high and the ball will bounce too high at the other end or too low and the ball will likely end up in the net.



## Topspin Smash

The topspin smash is an aggressive type of overhead, used on easier balls this smash has a few options. To either hit topspin into the fence or to hit so that it bounces over the fence, out of the court. This is most often hit when the lob is quite high but not too deep. More often the topspin is hit by the player on the left side of the court, but can also be used both sides to spin the ball over the fence.

- Topspin Smash – 3 Stages of the technique on the video
  - Trophy position – turned to the side
  - Leg bend (and then drive) – feet beneath the ball
  - Contact brush up back of the ball – creating the topspin
  
- Court position -
  - Body turn (shoulders and hips) racquet back in trophy position.
  - Feet in position – linear, right foot behind, moving into position with little steps.
  - Contact – at highest point above the head, slightly to the right, slightly in front of body. Contact at the top section of the racket face.
  - Follow through – down right side of the body, wrist flexing on contact.
  - Body weight should be balanced, chest up and in front so not fall through the shot.

## Topspin Smash Common Errors

1. Incorrect grip – still using the continental grip, this is needed to create spin.
2. Contact – often players contact too far behind them or to the right side of the body – both mean the ball will not have enough speed or accuracy for the desired shot.
3. Choose the right ball – must be on a ball the player is capable of attacking.
4. Accuracy – The ball needs to bounce in the right place on the court and rebound in the right place on the back glass. If the ball is too central bounces too short up the court it will be easy for the opponents to attack.



## Flat Smash

The flat smash is an aggressive type of overhead, used on easier balls when the opponents are at the back of the court. This shot is hit hard and flat not giving the opponents time to run forward. The target is deep in the court towards the feet of the opponents or right down the middle where they cannot reach it. This shot is used by high level players as a disguise, often looking like they will hit a bandeja and then hitting hard and flat.

- Flat Smash – 3 Stages of the technique on the video
  - Racket Back and High (left arm too)
  - Feet in position to side of ball
  - Swing through fast, flat contact, going through the ball
  
- Court position -
  - Body turn (shoulders and hips) racquet back and high, head point to up, racket face pointing to side glass, elbow bent and same height as shoulder, left hand up and in front pointing towards ball.
  - Feet in position – linear, right foot behind, moving into position with little steps.
  - Contact – forehead level far to side of body just in front (approx. 2 o'clock angle), flat contact, strong wrist, just in front of the body.
  - Follow through – finish in direction of ball, racket head goes through contact finishing similar level.
  - Body weight should be balanced, chest up and in front so not fall through the shot.

## Flat Smash Common Errors

1. Contact – contact should be in front of the body, to the side. If the contact is behind or too high the ball will bounce
2. Choose the right ball – the opponents should be at the back of the court, if they are forward they are able to play the ball after the rebound.
3. Disguise – this is most effective if the shot is disguised, if it is too obvious the opponents will run forward making it possible to play.



## Gancho

The Gancho is a defensive smash that is designed to push your opponents into the corner of the court, while maintaining the net position. This shot is played when there is not enough time to move to the side of the ball and play a bandeja so it is often hit over the head of the player with a relatively straight arm. Usually the lob has come over the left shoulder of the net player (assuming they are right handed).

- Gancho – 3 Stages of the technique on the video
  - Racket Back, High and arm close to the head.
  - Feet moving quickly beneath the ball.
  - High contact point, going through the ball.
  
- Court position -
  - Body turn (shoulders and hips) racquet back and high, head point to up, racket face pointing forward, with arm almost straight.
  - Feet in position – linear, right foot behind, moving into position with little steps. Move beneath the ball.
  - Contact – above the head of the player (or slightly to the left), contact above the head or slightly in front.
  - Follow through – finish in direction of ball, racket head goes through contact with short follow through.
  
- Gancho Common Errors
  1. Movement – the player should move their feet straight into position, often players feet stop and they end up reaching for the ball.
  2. Speed of the shot – players often play this ball too hard and therefore it bounces too much off the walls and allows the opponents to attack.
  3. Tactical player – the decision to play the shot depends on the ability to get back to net, if they are too far out of position and cannot recover the net, often it is better to let it bounce and play after the ball.



**THE PADEL  
SCHOOL**



## **Fake Smash**

The fake smash is commonly used at the higher level of the game to misdirect opponents. Players ability to hit the fake smash often relies on their ability to disguise their intentions, so setting up to hit one type of smash and actually hit another.

The 2 most common fake smashes are:

1. Setting up to hit a topspin smash, so the opponents sprint forwards to the net, then in reality hitting a soft (Gancho type) overhead down the middle of the court. If this does not win the point it forces the opponents back the glass and to a defensive position.
2. Setting up to hit a bandeja, so the opponents maintain their position at the back of the court, then in reality hitting an aggressive flat smash towards the feet of the opponents. This means the players do not have time to react and run forward.

## **Tactical Smashing**

One of the most common errors for players of every level is selecting the wrong smash, for example attacking when they should be defending and vice versa. It does not matter if the technique is perfect, if the player decides to play the wrong smash they are still likely to lose the point. The video in this season, “To Smash or Not to Smash” gives some pointers to look for when making the decision to smash the ball or to let it bounce off the back glass. It is part of the game to regularly change attack for defence, so players need to learn that they should not smash everything and it can be a good decision to rebuild the point from the back.

## **Season Summary**

The season is designed to give you technical and tactical grounding in the variety of overheads that can, and should, be played in padel. As with all the courses (and videos), please do not hesitate to ask any questions. Please share your feedback in the form of testimonials or indicate areas we can improve by emailing us at: [sandy@thepadelschool.com](mailto:sandy@thepadelschool.com).