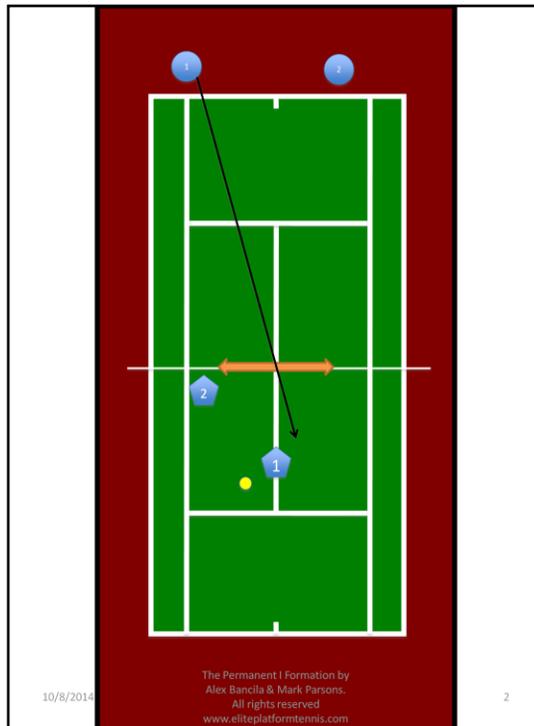
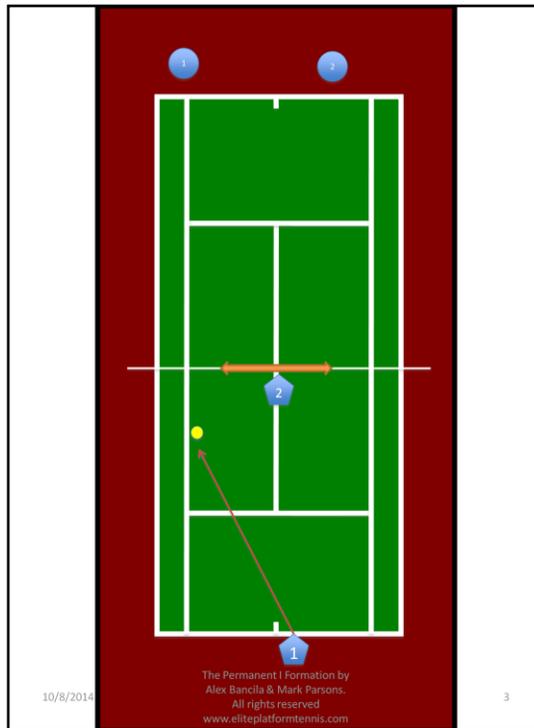


Mark Parsons and I pride ourselves for being at the forefront of how the game of platform tennis has evolved over the years. While some aspects of the game have remained the same, in the past decade there have been significant changes that have taken the game by storm. One thing that has remained constant since the game was invented in 1928 has been positioning at the net during a point. Until now!

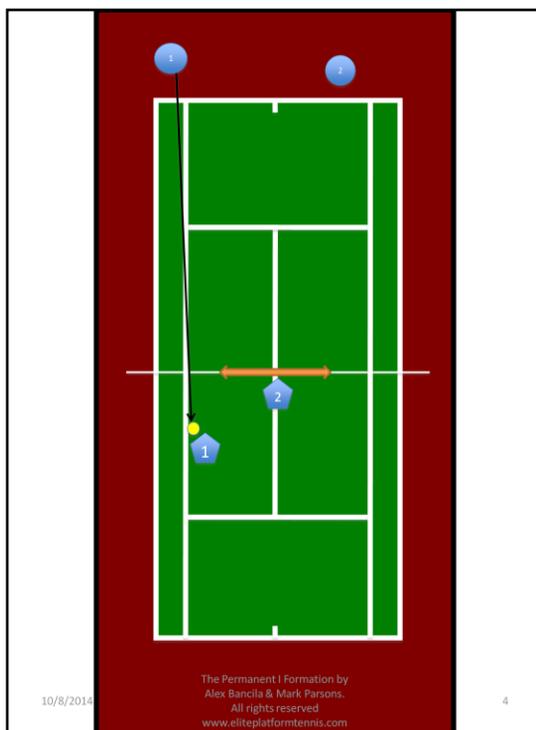
Whenever picking on the AD court player (Backcourt Player 2), this net formation has been traditionally used employed by the net team. Within this formation, both Net Player 1 and Net Player 2 can be righties or if they are a rightly/lefty combo then Net Player 2 is a lefty and Net Player 1 is a righty. If Net Player 1 has great overheads (location, spin, proper pace, etc.) then the net team will be fine for the most part. The problem with this formation starts when Backcourt Player 2 (Ad court player) is considerably better than the deuce court player – this will be the case at least 75% of the time when two righties play together. Why pick on the better player!? Mark and I strongly believe that the following will be a major game changer.



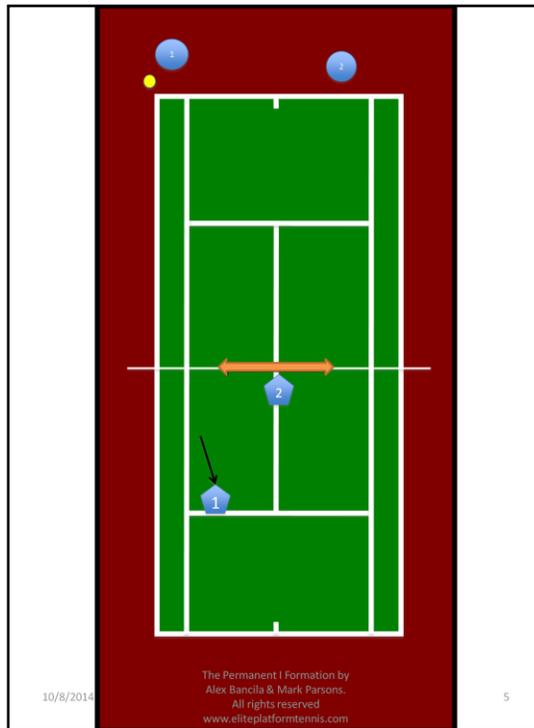
Until now, it has been virtually impossible for two righties at the net to pick on the Deuce court player (Backcourt Player 1). Like we already mentioned, when two righties are playing together in the backcourt, at least 75% of the time the deuce court player (Backcourt Player 1) is the weaker one. Traditionally, the net team has been using this formation whenever picking on the deuce court player. If both net players are righties, then they will be vulnerable on the lob that goes between them – Net Player 2 is too close to the net while Net Player 1 will be forced to hit backhand overheads (not a winning proposition at any level). If Net Player 1 is a lefty, he/she will hit 90% of all overheads but the net team will still have a big problem to deal with: if Net Player 1 gives too many drivable balls to the Backcourt Player 1 (Deuce court player) that player will have too much court (the middle third of the court, represented by the orange arrow) to hit it past Net Player 2. This is problematic for the net team because the middle third of the net represents the highest percentage shot for either backcourt player.



In order to cover the net as efficiently as possible and take away our opponents' highest percentage shots, we are introducing the "Permanent I Formation": when the serving team decides to pick on the Deuce court player (Backcourt Player 1), the serving team will start in the "I Formation" and stay within that formation throughout the point. When Net Player 1 is serving, Net Player 2 will start as close as possible to the net, straddling the middle line.

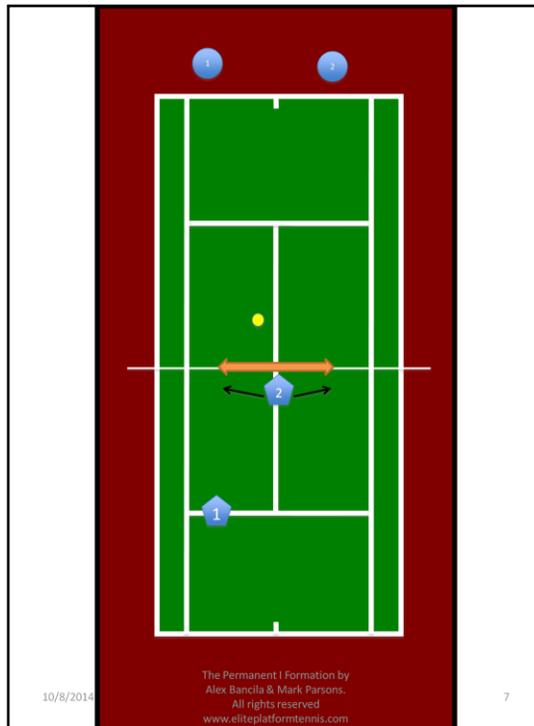


The serving teams' primary objective is to get in the point/get the point started. We should know by now that that means to successfully defend against the return of serve, in this case against the Deuce court player's (Backcourt Player 1) return of serve.



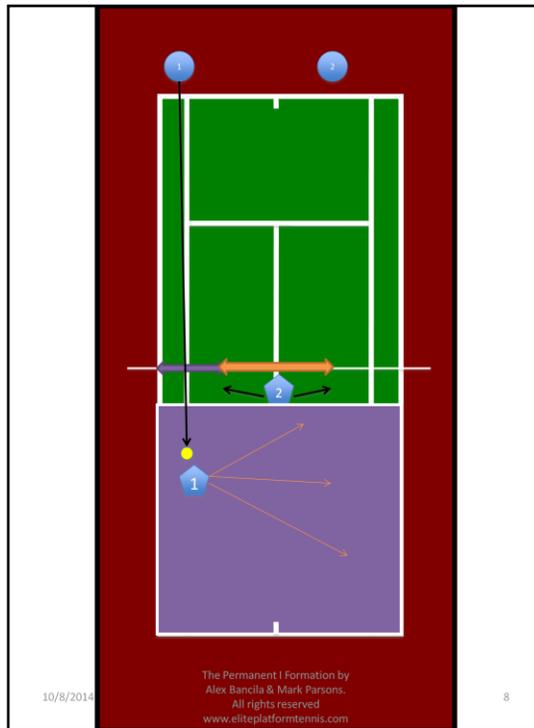
Once the serving team has successfully defended against the return of serve from Deuce court player (Backcourt Player 1), they will stay within the I Formation TO THE DEUCE SIDE throughout the point. After making the first volley, the server (Net Player 1) will retreat further back and his/her home base will be on the service line, halfway through between the "T" and the left doubles line. Net Player 2 straddles the middle line throughout the point, as close to the net as possible. Net Player 2 DOES NOT back up at all throughout the point, unless for whatever reason the net team is forced to give up the net altogether.



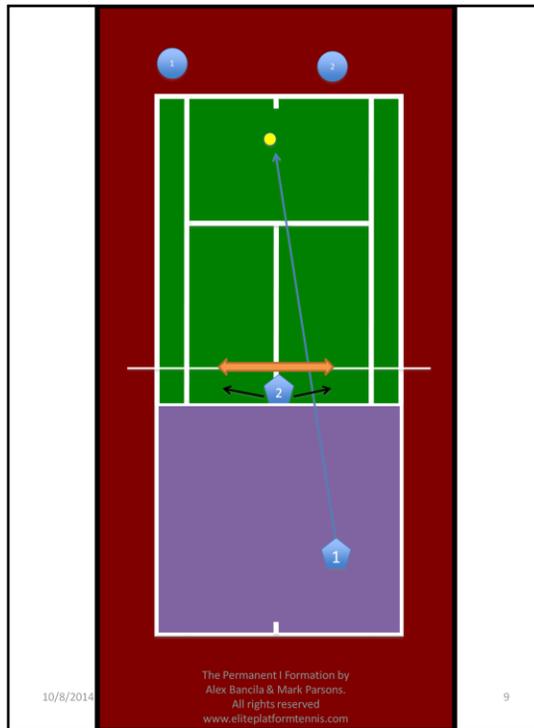


Net Player 2 is the flashy player within this formation. He is responsible for the “Infield” – incoming drives and short lobs, spanning at least 75% of the net, depending on the range of Net Player 2. *Net player 2 has free range laterally but does not back up off the net.* A good net player with good hands, reflexes, and volleys will cover 75% of the net. A great net player will cover 85-90% of the net. Net Player 2 will hit a lot of drop shots, misshits that will become clean winners, stick volleys, spin/kill shots, etc. You will hit more winners from this position within this formation than from anywhere else on the court!

**Note:** on deeper lobs that go behind him, Net Player 2 will have to duck, squat, bend at the waist, etc. (whatever it takes in order to get below the level of the net) so that his partner (Net Player 1) has full access to the court.

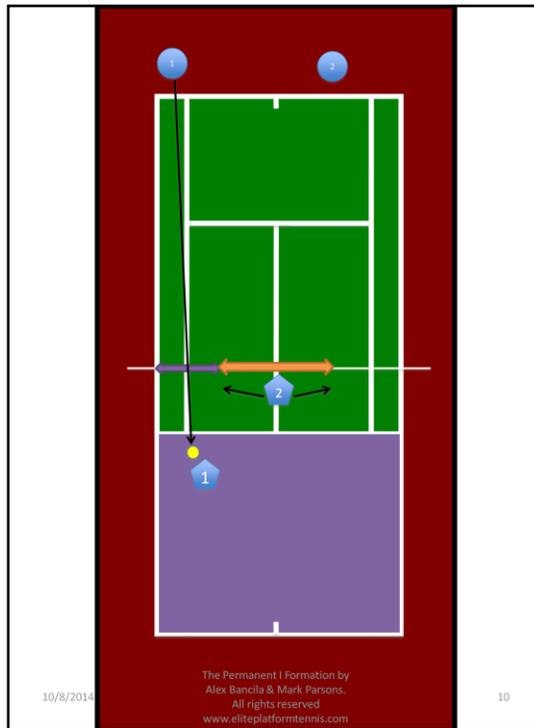


Net Player 1 is doing all the heavy lifting within this formation: Net Player 1 is responsible for the “Outfield” – all deep lobs and drives that beat Net Player 2 (drives that go over the orange arrow - over the five leftmost boards). Net Player 1 will be hitting overheads to the Deuce court player (Backcourt Player 1), preferably roll volleys. Those shots should be aimed towards the crease/nick whenever the angle presents itself – keep in mind that most incoming lobs will be aimed toward the “T” so there will be some angle available for Net Player 1. The roll volleys should be hit with the proper pace (not too hard) and with the purpose of keeping the ball low. A side-back screen is preferable to all other screen combinations.



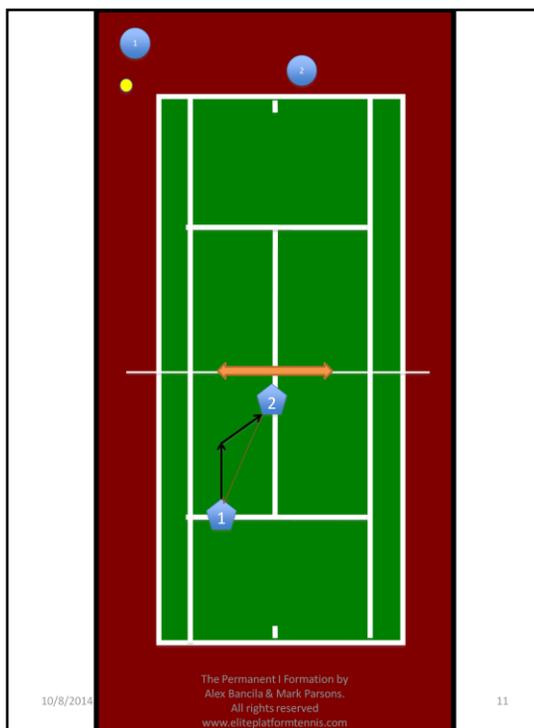
How to defend against this formation (Part I)!?

a) Backcourt Player 1 (Deuce court player) needs to hit good lobs that push Net Player 1 to his right. If successful in doing so, Net Player 1 should take that overhead to the middle of the court so that his partner (Net Player 2) can cut off any incoming drives which most likely will be hit over his territory – the middle third of the net. Balls that are hit to the middle most likely come back down the middle.

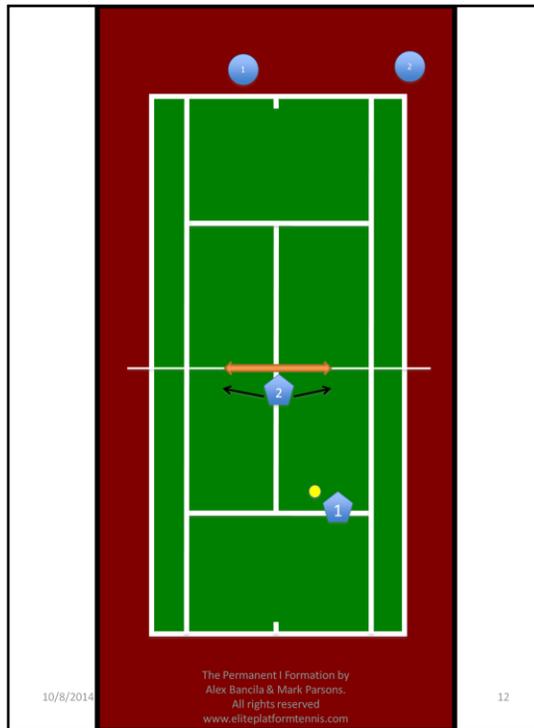


How to defend against this formation (Part II)!?

a) Backcourt Player 1 (Deuce court player) needs to hit good, low drives down the line that are outside of the range of Net Player 2. If so, Net Player 1 will be caught off the net and will only be able to, at most, block the volley back. If Net Player 2 intercepts any weak drives or short lobs, he/she will have the ability to finish the point (dropshots, misshits, stick volleys, etc.) primarily because he/she is so close to the net.



Net team will have to decide what position each player should play based on their respective strengths. If Server (Net Player 1) is ultimately the stronger net player, the Net Team will call a switch, once they play a safe shot to the opposing deuce backcourt player. Conversely, they will do the same if they decide to use this formation against the AD court player (Backcourt Player 2).



The “Permanent I Formation” can be used successfully against the AD Player (Player 2 in the backcourt) IF:

- a) Net Player 1 (the one responsible for all the deep lobs) is a righty and has (MUST HAVE) a two handed backhand roll overhead/volley.
- b) Net player 1 (the one responsible for all the deep lobs) is a lefty.