

# Three Strategies to Defuse the Banger



Dear In2Picklers,

Many players become frustrated when having to face a banger. Here we share three strategies to help you defuse the banger and retake control of the pont.

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Before diving into the specific strategies, all are driven by one principle:

## Let the banger do all the work.

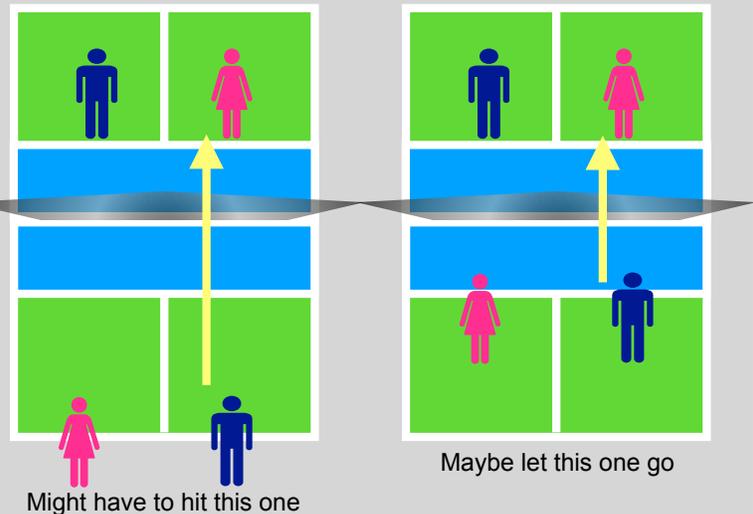
By letting the banger do all the work you can focus on redirecting the banger's power and using that power against him or her. Aikido is a martial art that focuses on redirecting the opponent's energy in a manner favorable to you. These strategies employ a similar approach.

### No. 1 Contact only when necessary

If you have not done so already, take a look at our Banger Decision Tree. It will help you determine when you should address (or contact) a banger's shot. The trick is to make contact only when necessary. The rest of the time, let the balls fly and, chances are, you will be rewarded by one out after another.

### No. 2 Let them go

Do not help the banger. Every time you hit an out ball, you are bailing the banger out from having hit a bad shot. Pickleball is a game of errors. Do not help your banging opponent by hitting balls that are going out. While not etched in stone, there are two rules you can follow. If the banger is hitting the ball from or behind the baseline hit anything hard that is under 18 inches or so from the top of the net (where on that body falls will depend on your height). If the banger is hitting anything hard from within 12 feet of the net (so 5 feet from behind the NVZ line) let it go.



Might have to hit this one

Maybe let this one go



### No. 3 Prepare to move

If you wait until the banger has hit the ball to decide what you are going to do, it will probably be too late to move out of the way. Your time is further reduced as the banger gets closer to the net. If you see your opponent load up to hit the ball, get ready. Most players telegraph when they are going to hit it hard - huge windup is the clue. You can also predict based on player tendencies. We all play with folks who just love to bang the ball every single shot. If you think a hard shot is coming, you have to pre-move. This means that you get ready to roll out of the way before the banger has hit the ball. If the banger slows down the shot, you will likely still have time to adjust and get the ball. What you will not have time to do is get out of the way if a hard shot catches you flat footed.

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