The Banger Decision Tree

In2Picklers,

Letting the ball go is often the best strategy. Let's look at a mathematically driven decision tree for why this is.

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Decision Tree

Banger Strikes the Ball
→ Avoid
  → Ball lands in
  → Ball lands out
→ Make Contact
  → Winner
  → Reset
  → Error
  → Popup

The principles

When presented with any shot, we have to decide whether to make contact with it or avoid it. This decision-making is more acute when playing a banger because of the additional pressure created by a hard drive, and the fact that you can use the nature of the banger's shot to your advantage.

If you avoid the banger's shot, the outcome will be what it is with no further decision-making or action required on your part. If you make contact with the banger's shot, there are four possible outcomes: one good, one neutral, and two bad. Before deciding on a course of action, you need to do some rough math in your head. Your decision will depend on the probabilities assigned to each potential outcome. Let's see how it works. We will do it for a baseline drive from a decent banger and then for a no man's land drive for the same player.

The below probabilities are hypotheticals used in these examples. You will have to assign your own probabilities to an opponent. And the probabilities that you assign may change over the course of a match.
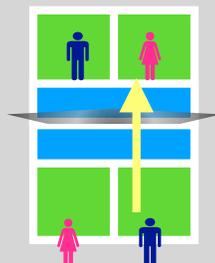
Working the math

Baseline drive

Avoid
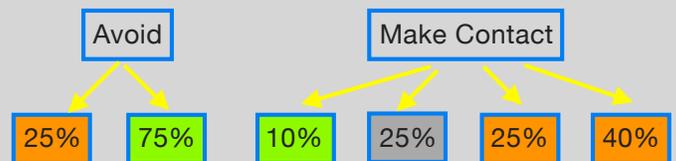- 80%
- 20%

Make Contact
- 15%
- 60%
- 15%
- 10%

If you avoid the ball here, you will automatically win 20% of the points (the out balls). If you make contact, you will win 15%, lose 25% of the points, and be neutral in 60% of the points.
Answer: make contact.

No man's land drive

Avoid
- 25%
- 75%

Make Contact
- 10%
- 25%
- 25%
- 40%

If you avoid the ball here, you will automatically win 75% of the points (the out balls). If you make contact, you will win 10%, lose 65% of the points, and be neutral in 25% of the points.
Answer: avoid.