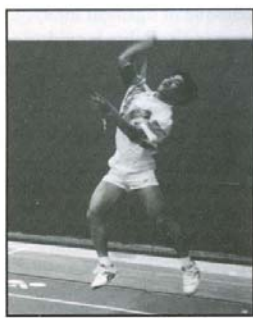
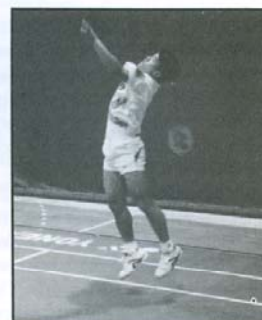
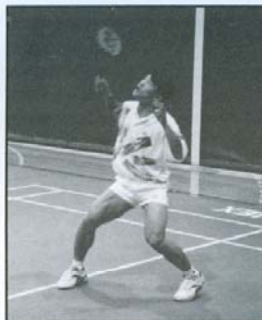


## Best Strokes: Howard Bach's Around-the-Head Corner Shot

Stroke Analysis by  
U.S. Assistant National Coach Tom Reidy  
Photography by Donn Gobbie



Howard Bach is the 1996 Pan American Junior Champion and one of the brightest young talents in the United States. If you've ever seen Howard play, you know he has an exceptional jumping ability. When that athleticism is combined with excellent technique and footwork on his around-the-head shots, it's easy to see why this move is one of his best.

In the first photo, Howard is in the ready position, keeping his racket in front and facing the hitter. Next, he sees the shot and prepares to move. His **initial step is slightly forward with the right foot**, which will give him more power for his backward push. Howard is beginning to pull the racket back, his right shoulder is beginning to turn, and his eyes are **focused on the flight of the shuttle**.

In photo 3, Howard pushes back, rotates his hips, pivots on both feet and has his shoulders fully turned. His eyes are focused on the shuttle, his feet are apart and he uses his left arm for balance. It is at this point that Howard will **use both legs to push up during his weight transfer**, which helps him get such spectacular height.

The next photo shows Howard jumping up to the contact point. Notice that the **left arm is still raised**. This positioning keeps him balanced, ensuring that Howard will make contact above and slightly in front of his left shoulder. Many players drop their left arm at this

point, and as a result, lose their balance, make contact late, and fall backward. It is also apparent in this photo that Howard has begun his **scissor kick motion**, with the right leg coming slightly forward.

In photo 5, just before contact, Howard's hips have rotated and his shoulders have opened up. Because of his excellent technique, **his weight is moving into the court after contact**. This photo is also a very good example of Howard's superb balance and posture, a key factor to his success in this shot.

Next, contact has just occurred, and Howard's **right leg has kicked out** as his left leg comes down first. This movement of kicking the right leg forward will help Howard maintain his balance and help him in preparation for his next shot.

Photo 7 shows Howard landing on the court. He pushes off with his left leg and **uses shuffle steps to move into position**, keeping his right leg forward the entire time. If Howard had hit a defensive shot and had more time to get into position, he could have used a cross-over footwork movement. Here, however, he doesn't have that luxury. This shuffle step footwork movement will allow him to quickly return back to the same corner if he has to.

While shuffle stepping forward, Howard's racket is in the ready position, and by photo 8, his momentum is carrying him forward.