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What Is A Bert In Pickleball

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One of the reasons behind pickleball's intense popularity is its capacity to offer diverse and ever-changing gameplay, ensuring that no two matches are alike. Players witness a blend of accessibility and strategic gameplay on the court and learn to revel in the opportunity to craft their playing styles. This aspect of pickleball requires split-second decisions and precision, keeps players on their toes, and continually seeks to elevate their game.

The bert in [pickleball](#) is one such technique that takes time to master because of the extensive skill set it requires to be executed correctly. All seasoned players know the best to be audacious and complete, which adds intrigue and excitement to the game. Quick decision-making and fast maneuvering of the court make the bert a move daring enough to blur the boundaries of a conventional pickleball game by catching opponents off-guard with an oft unreturnable shot.

Today, we discuss the use and consequences of a bert in pickleball. We'll discuss its role, dissect how to set it up for success, identify common pitfalls to avoid, explore similar high-level techniques, and delve into other factors that make this advanced shot a thrilling addition to any player's skill set.

What Is A Bert?

A pickleball bert is different from Bert on Sesame Street (though some claim the latter influenced the name of the former, albeit that's not exactly true). The bert is a daring power shot involving crossing the court to your partner's side in doubles and executing a mid-air volley directly off the [kitchen](#) line or while in mid-jump that lands you outside the kitchen line.



A pickleball bert requires maneuvering to your partner's court.

This advanced technique requires strategically maneuvering the pickleball court to protect a less-prepared teammate targeted by opponents. It's natural in a game as strategic as pickleball that players try to study the skills of their opponents thoroughly. They intend to make the weaker opponent their target for complex moves. A bert counters their attempt to lure your partner into a fault.

A bert executed with precise decision-making and action acts as an element of surprise in the game. It is a high-risk and high-return shot that, when done right, often results in an unreturnable hit.

What Is Poaching In Pickleball?

[Poaching in pickleball](#) involves a player strategically intercepting and hitting a shot intended for their partner. It becomes essential when opponents target a weaker teammate or exploit a tactical advantage.

In the context of a bert shot, you poach your partner's court and amplify the surprise element of your shot. Poaching for a bert in pickleball is necessary to avoid having opponents take advantage of your partner.

What Is An Erne In Pickleball?

The erne in pickleball is a potent, powerful volley executed mid-air at the corners of the kitchen line or with both feet planted outside the sidelines (yes, you read it right!), ensuring no body part touches the kitchen line. It is not very different from a bert shot except in one way: the erne does not involve poaching your partner's court but is executed on or outside the sidelines.

The erne is a perfectly acceptable shot, and nothing in the pickleball rules infers its illegality. Both bert and erne shots are complex, advanced-level techniques, with Bert adding an extra layer of complexity by incorporating strategic poaching towards a partner's court. The unique twists of the two shots demand swift and precise timing, elevating the difficulty and excitement of the high-risk maneuvers on the pickleball court.

Naming Origins

The naming origins of bert and erne in pickleball have sparked creative interpretations, with many media articles and blogs playfully associating these shots with the iconic Sesame Street characters, Bert and Ernie. While the association is entertaining, it's only partially true. The true origin of the names starts from the sport itself.



Charles Melton

Charles has competed professionally for the past 11 years, having picked up the sport in sophomore high. He remembers the first time he held the paddle and made a shot toward his P.E. coach. Since then, he hasn't looked back. He likes to write and play with Darcy the pug in his free time. He is associated with The Pickleball Professionals.

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Interestingly, Bert and Ernie from Sesame Street also have fascinating naming origins. Rumors suggest the cop and cab driver in the 1946 classic "It's A Wonderful Life!" inspired the writers to name their characters as such because they are partners in some way. The producers of Sesame Street dismiss these claims, attributing the names to sheer coincidence.

What Are Bert And Ernie Named After?

The bert and ernie shots are named after Ernie Perry, a skilled professional player renowned for mastering these daring maneuvers. Ernie's exceptional execution of the shot led to its association with his name, cementing Ernie's place in pickleball terminology.

The playful association with Sesame Street's puppets, Bert and Ernie, arises from their roles as counterparts, mirroring the dynamic between the two shots in pickleball. Just as Bert and Ernie are partners, bert and ernie shots are also each other's counterparts in some way.

The bert shot also finds its name rooted in Ernie Perry, who used the shot during the 2010 [USAPA National Pickleball Tournament](#) and showcased its effectiveness. Perry's exceptional performance on the court solidifies these names in the lexicon of advanced pickleball techniques.

Setting Up A Bert Shot

Setting up a pickleball bert requires strategic timing. Taking a risky shot requires precision in the hit and maneuvering to your partner's court quickly and carefully to ensure you stay outside the kitchen line.



A bert shot requires quick decision-making and precise action.

Use the bert shot when your opponents target your partner's weaker skills or repetitively stack shots in a rally at them. Since a bert is quick, it strikes the opponent out of nowhere if they do not anticipate it. This advanced maneuver will throw off their efforts and give them a challenging shot to return.

However, caution is vital, as executing the bert demands advanced skills to avoid touching the kitchen line and committing a fault by volleying in the non-volley zone. Precision and split-second decision-making are critical to hit a successful bert.

Remember that an ill-executed bert in pickleball lands you in a fault by having you volley in the non-volley zone, missing the shot altogether, the ball not crossing the net etc. This makes the bert a high-risk and high-reward advanced pickleball technique.

Playing A Bert

To play a bert, you must watch for your opponent's mindset to anticipate their strategy and get into action when it's time. To execute this high-risk shot, players recognize the opportunity - typically when opponents exploit your partner's weaker skills or bombard them repeatedly with challenging shots - and then respond hastily with a split-second decision.

The [pickleball bert](#) is a responsive move whose opening is created when the opponent hits a low shot near the net. You must receive the ball before it bounces on the non-volley zone (kitchen) and must do it without being inside or on the kitchen line.

Court Awareness

Staying prepared for a bert involves constant court awareness. If opponents target your partner, be on the lookout to pounce on the opportunity, positioning yourself strategically to execute the shot. This requires predicting the opponent's tactics and understanding when they will set up shots that leave an opening for the bert.

Efficient Maneuvering

To execute a successful bert, you must maintain balance and speed. When the opponent's shot creates an opening, swiftly cross the court in coordination with your partner. Anticipate the ball's trajectory, and time your jump or sidestep to deliver a powerful shot before the ball bounces in the non-volley zone.

Analyze The Risks Of The Shot

You must also be acutely aware of the risks associated with the bert. Failure to land a perfectly executed bert can cost your points or the entire rally. Poor execution may lead to faults, commonly touching the kitchen line while hitting the shot or volleying from within the non-volley zone. The precision required to avoid these faults makes the bert in pickleball a challenging yet rewarding shot.

Time It Perfectly

Mastering the technical aspects of the bert adds a layer of complexity to pickleball, elevating the game for those seeking advanced maneuvers. With strategic awareness, precise footwork, and quick decision-making, players can make the bert a potent weapon, surprising opponents and gaining a strategic edge on the pickleball court.

Setting Up An Ernie



A pickleball [ernie](#) is an off-center technique that is either shot mid-air near the sidelines or with two feet planted outside them.