Open Stance vs. Closed Stance

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In the open stance forehand the feet are positioned one in front of the other but at an angle (pic. 1). This is different than someone standing open (pic. 2). In an open stance forehand, the body weight is loaded up on the outside leg while the hips are turned and the trunk is coiled to load up the energy for the shot. In releasing the energy from the leg and uncoiling the trunk, a player gains great racquet head speed and power. The open stance is effective in counteracting hurried shots such as the return of serve, very deep balls, or balls that are hit deep in the corners of the court. The disadvantages are that it doesn't allow the entire body to get behind and through the shot, and it can allow a player to become lazy with their footwork.

In the closed stance forehand the feet are positioned one in front of the other towards the net (pic. 3). Here the rotation of the body comes more so from the stance and less from coiling up through the trunk. Weight transfer from the back leg to the front leg will give the player power momentum. This stance is effective in hitting the ball early on the rise thus giving one's opponent less time to react. The disadvantages are that it takes more time to hit closed stance, making it more difficult for shots such as serve returns and it can limit the forehand stroke if one's front leg locks, not allowing the back leg to come forward through the shot.

The tennis staff at Five Seasons Family Sports Club teaches players to prepare with a slight open stance by loading up on their right leg for a righty and left leg for a lefty and then stepping into the ball whenever they have the time. If the ball is coming to them too fast or too deep, the student is in an open stance and ready to hit the shot. This can be executed because both stances share the similarity in that they both begin by loading up on the back leg.