# Back the Server

This strategy works best with men's matches as they tend to have the stronger serve.  
  
The majority of the women don't have an effective enough serve, but there are always exceptions to every rule! If a woman is holding comfortably, you can make a good profit from this strategy. I suggest waiting until you're an experienced tennis trader to try that out.  
  
I also advise that you avoid players who are priced below 1.40 as the price move for a hold of serve is not really worth the risk.



### Pre-Match Analysis

What you are looking for is a player who has a good record of winning service games.  
  
Concentrate on:

* **First serve percentage** - The top players get over 70% of their first serves in. When you watch a tennis match, you will notice that they hit their first serves much harder which gives them more chance of winning the point. Anything over 65% is excellent over the whole season.
* **First serve points won** - There's no point getting a high first serve percentage if it's not an effective weapon. The top players are around 80% and anything over 70% is good.
* **Service Hold percentage** - If you're going to back the server, you obviously need to know how many games he wins on serve! The top players win over 90% of their service games and anything over 70-75% is great.
* **Break points saved** - If a player gets into trouble, how often can he pull it back? The top male players save 70% of break points and anything over 60% is excellent.

Don't worry too much about the number of aces.

For a while, I didn't recommend using this strategy when a match is played on clay. The slower surface takes away some of the power of the serve and it becomes a less potent weapon. However, I have changed this view as those players with a decent serve and excellent ground strokes will more often than not hold their service games. Do your homework properly!

Over the coming months, I'll be making videos which show you exactly how to do pre-match research using our exclusive Trading Stats.

### Entering a Trade

You've found a suitable player for Back the Server, now what?  
  
To open your trade, back your player right before he starts his service game. It's often a good idea to watch the first service game from each player without entering the market as some players can take a game or two to get their serve and ground strokes warmed up.  
  
As soon as the previous game has finished, place your back bet at the highest available price. The reason you do it as soon as the previous game has finished is that there are other traders who back the server and they will push the price down a tick or two. You want the best price available, so get in early.  
  
As you get more experienced, you will be able to estimate where the price will move to before the previous game ends. You can then place your bet early. After a game ends, the price may overreact and "bounce" an extra tick or two. The better price you enter at, the more profit you can make. Every tick counts, so practice estimating where the price will bounce to and take advantage!  
  
If all goes to plan, your guy will win his service game and you can hedge for a guaranteed profit on both players. Again, try to estimate where the price will bounce to and enter your closing bet before the end of the service game. This takes practice, but it's well worth the effort.  
  
Many more games go with serve than there are breaks. If you have done your homework and chosen a player with a consistent serve, then you will make a profit. You then wait for his next service game and repeat the process.

You *can* back both players on their service games if they both have high averages in the serving league tables, but until you are confident with the strategy I recommend you stick to one player.

### What if it Goes Wrong?

Of course, you also need a plan for what to do if it looks like your player is struggling to hold serve.  
  
Often, the server will go 0-30 down or maybe 15-40 down and come back to win but you're a trader, not a gambler... *right?*  
  
I highly recommend you use the following rule: *If the receiver gets to 30 first, get out of the trade.*  
  
Sure, this means you risk missing out on some profits but that isn't your priority... it is to protect your trading bank at all times. I have found that using this rule limits my losses. Besides, there is another service game coming up that you can try again on.  
  
It's also likely that you will come across the situation where the score is 30-30 and the receiver wins the next point to go 30-40 and break point. I also recommend that you use this as an exit point or, at least, lay off part of your original stake. You really don't want to risk having an open back bet if your player loses his service game!  
  
Once you're an experienced trader - *and at the risk of contradicting the above rule* - if your player has really strong serve stats then entering at the start of his service games won't bring many ticks profit. In this situation, you can back at 0-15 or even 0-30. A couple of big serves later, your player will be back in the game and the potential number of ticks profit is much bigger.

### In Summary

This strategy is quite simple and stress-free, but only if you do your research! Don't cut corners or you may find yourself backing a player with a terrible serve.  
  
*...and if you use it on a women's match on clay, don't come crying to me!*