

Leo Arata
Brazilian Champion - Pips & Antispin



ANTISPIN ACADEMY · EBOOK

PIPS AS A STRATEGIC TOOL

in table tennis

An introduction to the Different Player Strategic System

by Leonardo Arata

Anti Spin ACADEMY

BEFORE YOU START

THIS EBOOK IS FOR YOU IF...

01 You **play with pips** and feel like you return the ball on autopilot.

02 You **play against pips** and lose without understanding why.

03 You're a **coach** with a pips player in your group.

THE PATH OF THIS EBOOK

PART 1 · MY STORY
From "take off the pips" to a pips reference. Why I chose to play differently.

PART 2 · WHAT PIPS DO
How pips react to spin. Short, medium and long pips, for real.

PART 3 · FROM READING TO DECISION
Self-assessment, coaches, frictionless long pips and the next step.

PLAYING DIFFERENTLY IS A CHOICE

PIPS ARE NOT A SHORTCUT. NOT A TRICK. NOT MAGIC.



IF YOU PLAY WITH PIPS

Pips are not a shield to hide technical weaknesses. It's not "just putting the racket there" without reading the spin, pushing any ball back and waiting for the opponent to miss. If you use pips without understanding the spin that's coming, you play on autopilot. And autopilot players don't improve. **If you don't know what you're sending back, the problem isn't the rubber.**

IF YOU PLAY AGAINST PIPS

Stop using pips as an **excuse**. Returning heavy balls well with pips takes technique, feel and precision. What I see most at intermediate level is players losing points because they underestimate the opponent, relax their execution, overhit and lose patience.



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Pips don't win the point on their own. The one who loses is the one who doesn't respect the game.



PART 1 · MY STORY

I WAS THE PLAYER NOBODY WANTED TO COACH.

If you've ever heard that pips are for people who can't play, this part is for you. I heard it my whole life.

WHERE IT ALL STARTED

SINCE I WAS 7, I WANTED TO UNDERSTAND.



I've played table tennis since I was 7.

- Always competitive.
- Always restless.
- Always needed to explore new possibilities in the game.

While many repeated the pattern, I wanted to understand what happened when I changed equipment. My father always encouraged me to experiment: **different rubber, different blade, different feel.**

And I had a knack for it. I adapted fast, found solutions and played well with alternative rubbers.

But there was an obstacle.

WHAT I USED TO HEAR

NO COACH LIKED IT.

> *"Pips are for people who can't play."*

> *"Pips are for old people who can't move."*

> *"Pips are for people who can't read spin."*

Everywhere I tried to train, the condition was clear:

> *"You can train here... but you have to take off the pips and play with two inverted rubbers."*

So from early on, I was pushed into the conventional style.

Not because it was my choice.
But because it was the only way.



WHEN I DECIDED NOT TO FIT IN

I WAS TRAINING. BUT IT WASN'T ME.

Even training in the conventional style, something always felt out of place.

I competed. I trained. I improved.

But I didn't recognize myself in that game.

On and off, **I quit playing several times** because I wasn't happy playing. I was trying to adapt to the model people expected from me.



Me and Liu Song, a long pips player from Argentina. Buenos Aires, 2001.

UNTIL, AT 17...

I WENT BACK TO PIPS. THIS TIME IT WASN'T TO TEST. IT WAS TO OWN MY IDENTITY.

WHEN I STARTED ATTACKING WITH LONG PIPS, THE REACTION CAME FAST.

> *"If you're going to play like that, play with inverted."*

> *"You can't attack with long pips."*

> *"No top player in the world plays with pips."*

It wasn't technical analysis.
It was limited vision.

Back then, we didn't have the access we have today to watch players from all over the world. There were no easy references. No clear examples. If I wanted to play differently, I'd have to face resistance.

So I understood something important:

IF THERE WAS NO REFERENCE, I WOULD BUILD MY OWN.

PLAYING MY WAY

EVERYONE WANTED TO FIX MY BACKHAND.

Since I was a kid, my game always had two very clear pillars:

01
MY SERVE

02
MY FOREHAND

That's where I felt strong. That's where I won points. That's where I was confident. But everywhere I trained, the focus was something else:

> *"We need to improve your backhand."*

> *"Without a backhand you won't beat anyone."*

And I **trained**. Hours. Months. Endless repetitions.

There was just one detail: in the decisive moments, I didn't use my backhand. I served and tried to attack with my forehand from the whole table. And my forehand wasn't as strong as it could be, because I had spent too much energy trying to fit my game into a model that wasn't mine.



AT 17

IT WASN'T ABOUT RECEIVING SERVES.
IT WAS STRATEGY.

When I chose pips, it wasn't because my backhand was bad. With pips, I forced the opponent to just put the ball back, attack weaker, lift the ball, slow down. **I broke the rhythm.** And then I came in with my best shot: the forehand.

1 · THE PIPS

BREAK THE RHYTHM

return the spin in a different way

→

2 · THE OPPONENT

puts the ball back
attacks weaker
lifts the ball
slows down

→

3 · MY STRENGTH

FOREHAND FINISHES

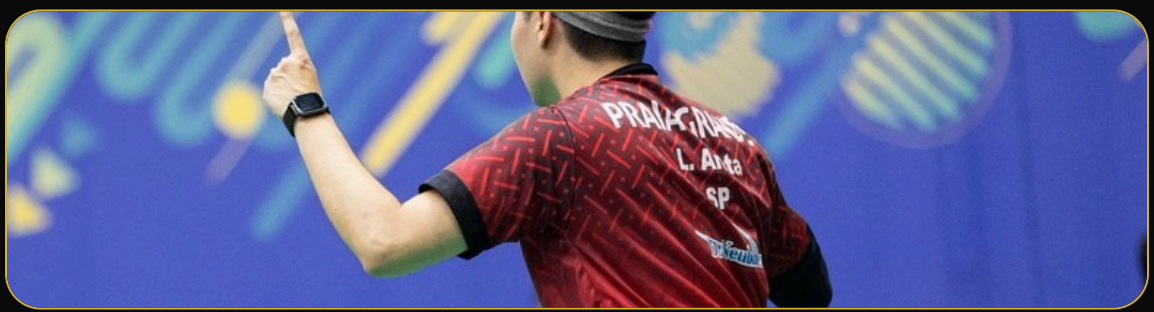
my best shot

Pips set it up. The strength finishes.



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I didn't need to strengthen my average shot. I needed to maximize my strongest one. And pips became the tool that made it possible.



IDENTITY ESTABLISHED

I PLAYED WITH PURPOSE. BUT LIFE CAME KNOCKING.

Once I found my style, my identity in table tennis became clear. I started competing with conviction and joy.

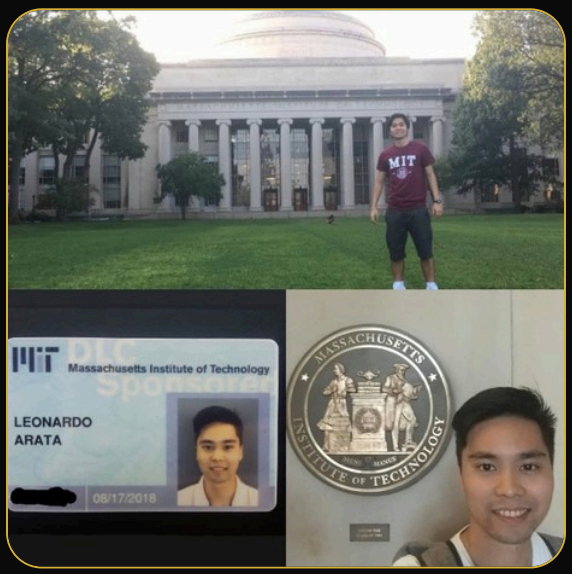
São Paulo state and Brazilian champion, in teams, doubles and singles.

I no longer played trying to fit in.
I played with purpose.

But reality in Brazil is hard for anyone who dreams of living from sport. Continuing as a professional player required a structure that simply didn't exist around me. So I did what many young athletes have to do:

I STUDIED.
WENT TO COLLEGE.
WORKED.

But I never gave up table tennis.



FROM DIFFERENT PLAYER TO REFERENCE

TEACHING THE ONE I LOVE, I BECAME A SPECIALIST.

After finding my style, I had found something bigger: **the game I loved to play.** Life's circumstances brought me back to competing.

I met the love of my life, the mother of my daughter, playing table tennis. Mika played long pips on the backhand and inverted on the forehand.

Helping her improve, I started studying pips technically. **Not out of curiosity. As a specialization.**



21
Mika's age when she started playing

<1
year of competition to reach the top division (Absoluto A)

3rd
best mixed doubles pair in Brazil in 2022

In 2022 we were the 3rd best mixed doubles pair in Brazil: **me with inverted + antispin, her with short pips + long pips.**



A CHILDHOOD DREAM

"CAN YOU VALIDATE MY TECHNIQUES?"

I started coaching pips players, creating methods, testing variations. Without ever having a specific mentor for it. With no one who had taught me the "right way". **I was building my method in practice.**

After 30, a milestone came: I was sponsored by **Dr. Neubauer**, a brand recognized worldwide for developing pips and antispin rubbers. And the first thing I asked was:

> *"Could you validate my pips techniques? I'm coaching people, creating methods, but I've never had anyone to confirm whether I'm on the right track."*

That validation not only came, it became a partnership. Today it's **more than 5 years** giving feedback on pips, antispins and blades in development.



It wasn't a shortcut.
It was study, testing and real practice.

THE ROAD SO FAR

FROM "TAKE OFF THE PIPS" TO TESTING THE PIPS.

AGE 7
I start playing and testing equipment
My father encouraged it: rubber, blade, a different feel.

CHILDHOOD
"You can train here, but take off the pips."
No coach accepted it. I went to the conventional style.

TEENS
I train my backhand and don't recognize myself
I quit playing several times.

AGE 17
Back to pips. This time, as strategy.
Pips set it up, the forehand finishes.

TITLES
São Paulo state and Brazilian champion
Teams, doubles and singles.

STUDY AND WORK
College, work and the racket in my backpack
I never gave up table tennis.

MIKA
I study pips as a specialization
2022: 3rd best mixed doubles pair in Brazil.

AFTER 30
Sponsored by Dr. Neubauer
Validation that became a partnership: 5+ years testing equipment.

TODAY
Antispin Academy
The place I never had: for those who want to play differently.

PLAYING WITH PURPOSE

PIPS DON'T LIMIT ANYONE.



For years, I heard that pips weren't high-level table tennis. That there was no technique. That it wasn't competitive.



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Alternative rubbers don't limit anyone. What limits you is the way you think about the game.

Today my purpose is clear: to be a reference for anyone who wants to build their own style with pips and antispin. To show that you can compete at a high level with strategy, win with identity and play differently while being a strong player.

This ebook isn't just about pips.
It's about owning your game.



PART 2 · WHAT PIPS DO

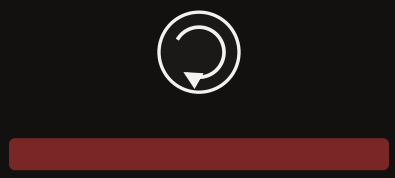
UNDERSTAND BEFORE YOU PLAY.

You don't need to memorize rubber charts. You need to understand what happens to the ball when it touches your pips.

THE PRINCIPLE

INVERTED CREATES. PIPS REACT.

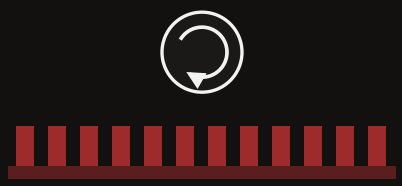
INVERTED RUBBER



GRIPS AND IMPOSES

inverted creates the spin

PIPS



RECEIVES AND RETURNS

low friction: works with the incoming spin

Unlike inverted rubber, pips don't generate spin: **they react to the spin that's coming.** Because contact on the surface of the pips is different, the return will be too. That's why pips change three things in the game:

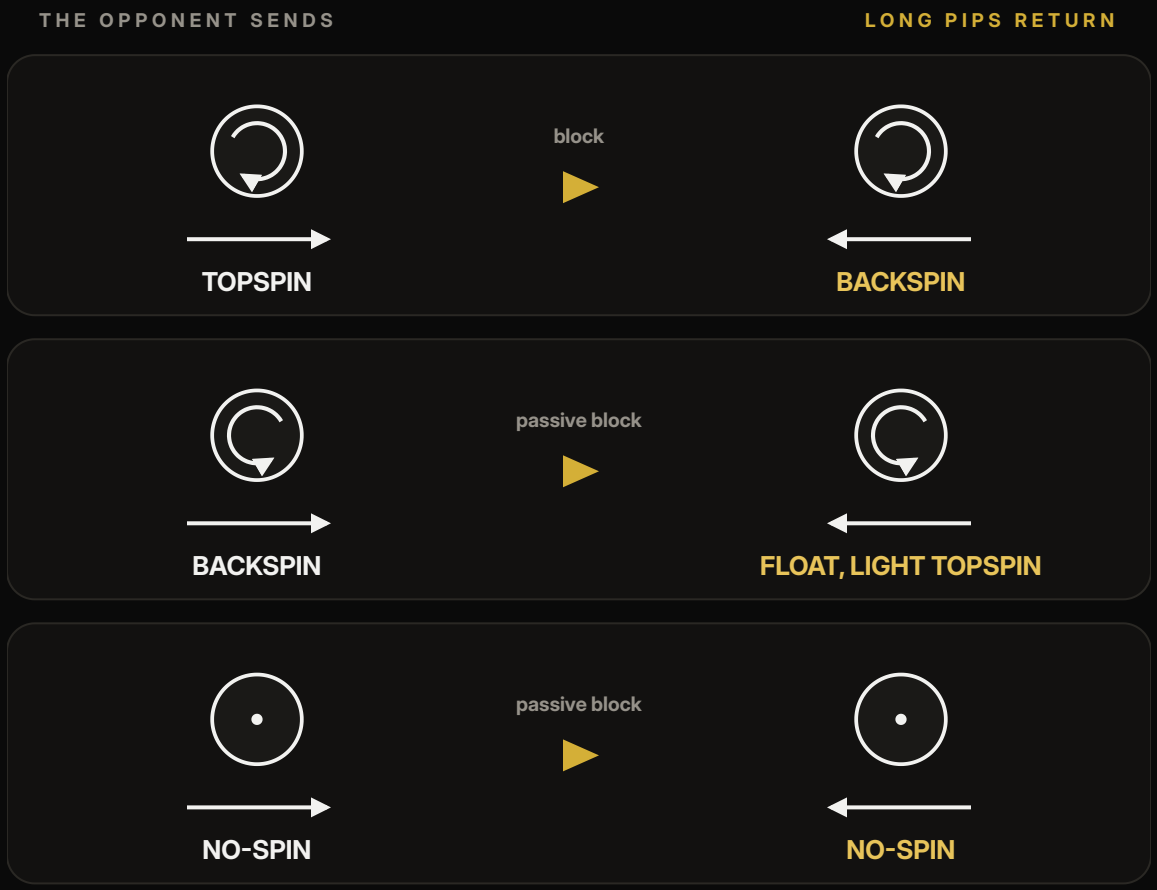
01 **THE RESPONSE TO INCOMING SPIN**

02 **THE RHYTHM OF THE BALL**

03 **PREDICTABILITY FOR THE OPPONENT**

But be careful: without the right technique, the right angle and reading the spin, pips become a disadvantage.

WHAT COMES, WHAT GOES BACK.



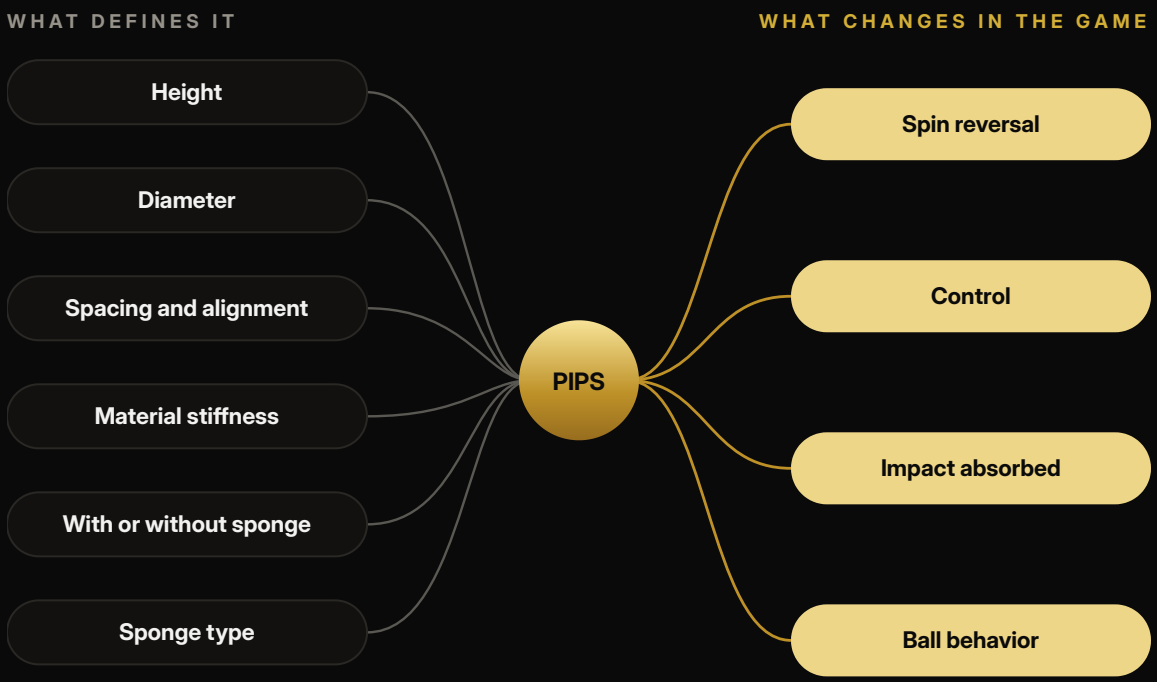
Notice: the rotation arrow is the same on both sides. Only the direction of the ball changes.

Pips keep the ball's **direction of rotation**. What changes is the **direction of the ball**. That's why the spin "reverses" for whoever receives it. The more spin comes in, the more you can use it in your favor.

SHORT, MEDIUM AND LONG

IT'S NOT JUST THE LENGTH OF THE PIPS.

When we talk about short, medium or long pips, we're not just talking about visible height. It's about how the rubber affects the **rhythm** and **timing** of the game.



LOW AND STIFF
More direct contact.

TALL AND FLEXIBLE
More contact time with the ball.

SHORT PIPS: SETTING THE PACE.







Short pips have a lower, stiffer structure. This creates:

- Firmer contact
- More spin of their own than other types of pips
- Less spin reversal
- Less wobbly balls than other pips

They reverse little and are less affected by the opponent's spin, so you can hit through the spin. And they return balls with more speed. That means one thing: **the player has to be active.**

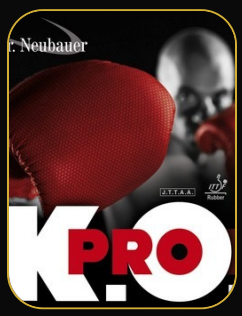
FAVORS

Firm block · fast attack on the rise · aggressive counterattack · close-to-the-table game

It's not a rubber for waiting for the opponent to miss.
It's a rubber for imposing pace and speed.

MEDIUM PIPS: CONSTANT DISCOMFORT.





Medium pips sit in between. Their structure allows:

- More wobbly balls than short pips
- Subtle changes in spin, both to create spin and to reverse it
- Slight changes in trajectory, with an irregular rhythm
- Easier handling of no-spin balls than long pips

They don't create the strong reversal of long pips. But they create "strange" balls: **balls that look normal but don't behave the way the opponent expects.**

IDEAL IF YOU LIKE

Breaking the rhythm · a more controlling, blocking game, without struggling so much with slow, no-spin balls.

LONG PIPS: THEY BUILD THE POINT.







Long pips are taller and more flexible. This allows:

- More wobbly balls
- More rhythm breaking, keeping even the most powerful attacks short
- The biggest spin reversal of all types of pips
- A more unpredictable trajectory

The more spin comes in, the more it can be used in your favor. **But long pips aren't automatic.** Without adjusting the angle, without reading correctly, without depth control, they become vulnerable.



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Long pips are not the final shot. They set up the final shot.

COMPARISON

SIDE BY SIDE.



	SHORT	MEDIUM	LONG
Spin reversal	●○○	●●○	●●●
Speed	●●●	●●○	●○○
Against no-spin balls	●●●	●●○	●○○
Tactical role	Set the pace	Break the rhythm	Build the point

The more filled dots, the stronger the trait.

None is better than the others.
Each one serves a game plan.

BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF.

Before moving on, answer honestly:

- [ ] Can you explain technically why your pips work?
- [ ] Could you choose different pips today, based on their physical characteristics and on fundamentals?
- [ ] Do you understand the physics behind your mistake?
- [ ] Do you build the point with intention, or just react?
- [ ] Does your equipment boost your strength, or compensate for your weakness?

If you hesitated on any answer, you're still using pips in a limited way. **Understanding the equipment matters. But mastering the game takes structure.**

And structure starts with awareness.



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Pips or antispin should be used to create an advantage, not to hide a weakness.

FOR COACHES

COACH, PIPS ARE GAME STRUCTURE.

Do you know how to adapt training when there are pips players in your group? Training pips as if they were inverted ignores the strategic logic behind the equipment. **The mistake isn't the pips. It's the lack of tactical planning.**

PIPS PLAYERS NEED

- **POINT CONSTRUCTION**
- **READING AND CHANGING RHYTHM**
- **INTEGRATION WITH THEIR BEST SHOT**
- **CLEAR DECISIONS**

BEFORE CHANGING EQUIPMENT, ANSWER

1. What is your player's strongest shot?
2. What ball do they need to receive to use that weapon?
3. Which pips return creates that ball?

E.g.: the weapon is the forehand. A pips block against the opponent's topspin comes back with backspin. The opponent has to lift, the ball comes slower and higher, and that's when the forehand comes in.

Alternative rubbers don't complicate training.
The lack of methodology does.

A LEVEL ALMOST NOBODY UNDERSTANDS

WHEN FRICTION DISAPPEARS.

Within long pips, there was a specific type: **frictionless long pips.** Modified pips, with practically no friction on the surface.

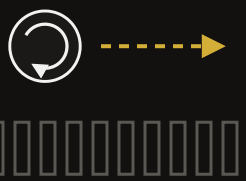
LEGAL LONG PIPS



THE BALL GRIPS A LITTLE

reverses, with control and activation

FRICTIONLESS LONG PIPS



THE BALL SLIDES

extreme spin reversal

In practice, this means:

- The ball slides instead of "gripping" the pips
- Spin reversal is extremely high
- The more spin the opponent sends, the more spin comes back
- The player needs little active movement (the chop block mechanics) to create reversal

With the right technique, frictionless long pips can even "add" more reverse spin. However, after training or playing against them once, the ball's behavior becomes relatively predictable for those who already understand the equipment.

NO SPIN, NO WEAPON.

Because they slide so much, these pips struggle much more against **slow, no-spin balls.** With no spin to reverse, control is more limited. It's a rubber that depends heavily on the opponent's spin.

Because of the extreme reversal and the low demand for angle control and activation, frictionless pips were **banned from official ITTF competitions.**



WHAT THE RULE SAYS

The ITTF Quality Programme for Racket Coverings, 2024 · page 10

> 0.50

minimum friction coefficient between pips (short and long) and the ball, measured with a 50 mN force

≤ 1.10

maximum ratio between the height and the diameter of the pips

In other words: every pips rubber has to pass the friction test. And it has already reached Brazil: **at the December 2026 Brazilian Championship there will be testing for frictionless pips**, and many pips players are switching to legal pips.

Even if you never use frictionless pips, understanding their logic changes how you read the game.

WHAT I BELIEVE

THE GAME ISN'T DECIDED BY THE RUBBER.



I believe table tennis is one of the sports with the richest diversity of equipment.

TENSOR RUBBERS | BOOSTED RUBBERS | PIPS | ANTISPINS

Every player should be able to choose the equipment that best fits their style. At the end of the day, the best player will always win. Whoever masters reading spin, adapting and strategy can play against any equipment.

It's decided by the technical, physical and mental ability of the person holding the racket.

WHAT NOW?

THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING.



If you made it this far, you already get it: **pips aren't tricks. They're tools.** But a tool without understanding doesn't create an advantage. It creates confusion.

Most players even understand the equipment... but still play on autopilot at the table. Because in a real match the ball comes differently, the spin changes and the decision has to be fast. And that's why they:

- miss easy balls
- don't know what to expect from the rally
- never manage to play with confidence

That has a cost: the cost of not improving.

THE NEXT STEP

PLAY WITH LOGIC.
PLAY AGAINST SPIN.

You understand the logic. The next step is taking it to the table, with someone watching your game.

At the Antispin Academy, you choose how much contact you want with me:

THE PLANS

ROOKIE
A training plan every 2 weeks, built with the method. No direct contact.

PRO
I review your plan and analyze one of your matches every month.

LEGEND
Direct coaching with me: calls, WhatsApp, 2 matches a month and every tournament.

WITH PIPS, AGAINST PIPS OR WITH TWO INVERTED

3, 6 or 12-month plans

POINT YOUR CAMERA

leoarata.com/mentorship

SEE THE PLANS

EVERY SHOT HAS A PURPOSE

YOU DON'T LOSE TO PIPS OR ANTI-SPIN. YOU LOSE TO WHAT YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND.

> Pips or antispin should be used to create an advantage, not to hide a weakness.
>
> *Every shot should have a purpose.*



Leo Arata
Brazilian Champion - Pips & Antispin

Anti Spin ACADEMY