

## Tennis Rules and Etiquette Guidelines

our spectator policy, this will not be tolerated. If someone does question you on a line call or a ruling you have the right to remove them/ask them to leave the playing area. Should they refuse to leave the playing area, let them and the player know that the player will now receive a code violation related to this action and will continue to do so until either one of two things occur –

- a) The parent/spectator leaves the area
- b) The player reaches his or her 3rd code violation and is defaulted from match play.

**Parent/Spectator Continues to be Unruly:** These are grounds for immediate removal from the playing area and facility. Should they refuse to leave the premises and having gone through Code Violations, then do not hesitate to contact security or the police to have them removed. Safety of the players, officials, tournament staff and facility staff always comes first.

**Should an Incident Occur:** If something does take place, please contact USTA Northern:  
<http://www.northern.usta.com>.

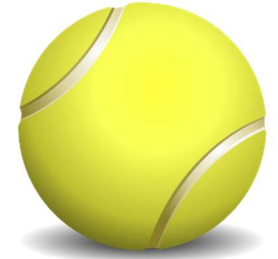


Bismarck-Mandan Tennis Association

*"To promote & support tennis in the Bismarck-Mandan communities"*

# Tennis

cheat sheet



# Rules and Etiquette Guidelines



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### Etiquette (for parent or spectators)

1. Use primarily your “inside voice” when watching matches.
  2. Don't cheer, shout encouragement, or applaud during a point or serve.
  3. Use mostly applause (versus verbal comments) to acknowledge good play; more specifically:
    - After the point is over, applaud either player when they make a great shot.
    - Applaud both players after a long rally, after the point is over.
    - Save verbal encouragement for important points in the match; if you are unsure, follow the lead of the coaches. When a coach is around, pay attention to when and how they verbally encourage between points. A good guideline would be to not be more verbal than the coach.
  4. Do not coach, nor give advice on what stroke or serve to use.
  5. Do not make line calls and do not applaud errors (balls hit into the net, missed serves, etc.).
  7. Do not interact with the players during the course of the match, and wait until players have left the court before interacting with them.
  8. Do not enter the playing area, unless the entire event is over (exception, indoor facilities where spectators are allowed to stand/sit on either end of wall).
  9. Cell phones must be silenced.
  10. Enjoy the match, and at the end, feel free to applaud both players, regardless of who won the match!
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1. Any attempt by a spectator (which includes the above mentioned) to question an official, tournament staff or player regarding a line call or other ruling during match play will be cause for immediate removal from the playing area and, if warranted, from the premises.
2. Any spectator behavior deemed unacceptable towards a player, other spectator, official, or staff member will be cause for immediate removal from the playing area or entire premises. If said behavior is directed towards a player, either before, during or after a match/tournament, it will result in **an automatic and immediate suspension of that spectator's right to attend USTA Northern tournaments, matches, and team events** for a period of time to be determined by the USTA Northern Junior Competition Committee.
3. Refusal to adhere to a removal request will trigger immediate enforcement of the point penalty system against the player with whom the spectator is involved (clearly detailed in the point penalty system regulations within Friend at Court).
4. The referee/acting referee, officials, tournament director/staff, Junior Competition Committee members, Junior Team Tennis Committee, Officials Council Chair, Director of Junior Teams and the Director of Junior Competition are the SOLE judges regarding unacceptable behavior. **REMOVAL IS NOT SUBJECT TO APPEAL.**

### DEALING WITH SITUATIONS

**Questioning an Official, Player, or Tournament Staff on a Ruling during Match Play:** Within the guidelines of

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### SPORTSMANSHIP GUIDELINES:

- Make honest line calls and assume best intentions in your opponent's calls.
- Applaud good shots from teammates and opponents.
- Always clear your court of any balls before serving. If you miss your first serve, move the ball off the court before serving the second ball.
- When your opponent is serving, send tennis balls that are on your side/near you their way.
- Don't make any noise while the ball is on your opponent's side of the court.
- Remain positive on court.

### USTA Northern Spectator Policy

No other sport allows umpire/official/spectator communication, whether it be about a ruling or any other facet of a sports event. **TENNIS IS NOT AN EXCEPTION.**

Being a parent, coach, etc. does not endow special privileges. With the only exception of the right to remove their own child from competition, at any time, a parent, friend or coach is merely a spectator.

Coaching, interjection into a match, audible obscenities, physical confrontation or verbal confrontation deemed to be threatening or disruptive by a coach, spectator, friend or parent is unacceptable in USTA Northern and will not be tolerated.

Should this occur, the following process is in immediate effect, and will be diligently and stringently enforced.

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### Rules

#### SCORING

Tennis scoring consists of points, games, sets and matches.

- **Points** are the smallest unit of score. You earn a point when your opponent double-faults, misses the ball, hits the ball after more than one bounce, hits the ball into the net, hits the ball out or hits an illegal shot (see special situations).
  - **Games** consist of four points. The score starts at "love-love." Points are counted as follows: 15, 30, 40, Game.
    - ◇ The server should always say the score of the game before serving. Say your own score first.
    - ◇ If a game gets to 40-40, this is a special score called "Deuce." In ND High School tennis, the receiver gets to choose which side this point is played on and whoever wins this point wins the game.
  - In order to win a standard **set**, a player must win 6 games. In Junior Varsity (JV) tennis, we may sometimes play sets to 8, meaning the winner of the set will be the player to reach 8 games first.
    - ◇ If the score in a standard set gets to 6-6, players play a tiebreak. A tiebreak is played to 7 points and follows special rules (see special situations). In a set to 8, a tiebreak would be played at 8-8.
  - In most tennis **matches**, a player wins the match when he/she wins two sets. In JV tennis, we will usually play only one set to 6 or one set to 8.
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- **No-Ad Scoring** is sometimes used as alternative scoring method.
  - ◇ When the score is 40-40 "Deuce," traditional scoring would dictate that a player must win by two points to win the game. The score would continuously rotate from "Deuce to Ad to Deuce to Ad" until one of the competitors or one of the teams wins two consecutive points to close out the game.
  - ◇ In No-Ad scoring, a competitor only has to win by one point. Therefore, when the score is 40-40 (Deuce), the next point wins the game.
  - ◇ Prior to playing for this point and ultimately closing out the game, the receiving player or the receiving team in doubles chooses to receive serve in the right service court (deuce court) or the left service court (advantage court).
  - ◇ Mixed-Doubles is the only competition that negates this rule. When competing in a mixed-doubles tennis game, the server serves to the receiver of the same gender. The player or team who wins this point simply wins the game.

### HOW TO PLAY

- **Warm-Up:** Prior to starting the match, players engage in a 10-minute warmup:
  - ◇ Rally from the baseline.
  - ◇ One player or doubles team comes to the net to hit volleys and overheads.
  - ◇ The other player or doubles team comes to the net to hit volleys and overheads.
  - ◇ One player or doubles team serves the balls. The

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- ◇ serving rotation (ad side first). This person will serve two points.
  - ◇ Continue through serving order with each person serving two points when their turn comes.
  - ◇ Switch ends of the court after six points have been played (and again after 12, 18, etc.)
  - ◇ The winner of the tiebreak is the first to reach 7 points, win by 2. This means that if the score is 7-6, you have to keep playing until one player or doubles team is winning by two points.
- **If the ball goes over and then spins back**, this is the one time that you can over the net to touch the ball. If you do not, the point goes to your opponent.
  - **Score Disputes:** *Make sure to say the score loudly and clearly before you serve in order to avoid score disputes.* If you and your opponent cannot agree on the score of a game, discuss what happened in each point of the game. (If you cannot remember what happened on one point, re-play that one point and adjust the score accordingly.)

### MISCELLANEOUS

- **No return necessary:** if your opponent serves a first-serve fault, don't hit a return unless the call was so close that you had no option but to hit the ball.
- Don't walk **behind** another court during a point, **across** some else's court while they're in the middle of a game or **interrupt** a point on another court to retrieve a ball.
- A service "**let**" may be called by either player/team.
- After the match is over, grab your things and **get off the court** so warm up can start for the next match.

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making honest calls. If you are not sure about what an opponent's call was, you can ask. However, as a general rule, don't challenge your opponents' line calls.

### SPECIAL SITUATIONS

- **Illegal Shots:** If a player hits an illegal shot, the point ends and the other player wins the point.
  - ◇ The ball cannot be hit more than one time on each side of the net.
  - ◇ Players cannot reach over the net to hit the ball or touch the net with the racquet during the point until the ball has traveled over the net.
  - ◇ Players cannot touch the ball or net, even by accident, with any part of their bodies/clothes during a point.
- **Net cord:** If the ball hits the net and then lands in on a serve, the returner should say "let" and the server should serve the ball again (this does not count as a fault). If the ball hits the net and lands in the court on any shot other than the serve, play continues as normal.
- **Ball on court:** If a ball rolls on your court from another court during a point, any player who sees it should say "let" and the point should start over. In this case, the server gets two serves again.
- **Tiebreak:** If the score reaches 6-6 in a standard set or 8-8 in a set to 8, players play a tiebreak to 7 points:
  - ◇ The same person who would have served the next game serves the first point of the tiebreak (deuce side).
  - ◇ After the first point, switch to the next server in the

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other player or doubles team catches the balls and serves them back.

- **Starting the Match:** One player spins a racquet. The player or doubles team that wins the spin gets to either choose to serve or receive or choose a side of the net. The other player or team gets to make the other choice.
- **Starting a Point:** The server starts each point by saying the score and then serving.
  - ◇ The server should say the score at the beginning of each game. After that, the server only needs to say the game score. The score should be said audibly so their opponent and others can hear it.
  - ◇ When an even (including 0) number of points have been played, the server serves from the deuce (right) side. When an odd number of points have been played, the server serves from the ad side (left) side.
  - ◇ Before you serve, make sure that the court is clear of any tennis balls and that your opponent is ready to start the point.
  - ◇ The serve must land in the cross court service box.
  - ◇ The server gets two chances to play a good serve. A serve is a fault if it lands outside of the correct service box, if the ball hits the net without going over, if one of the server's feet touches or crosses the baseline or if the server swings and misses the ball. If both serves are faults, the returning player or team gets a point.
  - ◇ You are allowed to catch your toss and try again. This does not count as a fault.

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- ◇ The server continues to serve for an entire game.
- **Scoring Points:** After the serve, the ball can be hit anywhere within the singles court (no alleys) for singles or doubles court for doubles. **The lines of the court are in.** The point ends if any of the following happens:
  - ◇ The ball hits the net.
  - ◇ The ball bounces twice before a player hits it.
  - ◇ The ball is hit out and a player on that side of the net says "out."
- **Switching Sides:** Players change ends of the court whenever the total number of games played is odd (after game 1, 3, 5, 7, etc.). After first game of each set, no break should be taken. On subsequent change overs, players are allowed 90 seconds before resuming play. There is a two-minute break in between sets.

- **Ending the Match:**  
When the match is over, both players or doubles teams should go to the net and shake hands. After your match, collect the balls then go report the score to the coach or court monitor.



### ADDITIONAL RULES FOR DOUBLES

- **Returning Sides:** At the start of each set, you and your partner should decide who will return on the deuce side and who will return on the ad side. You must return serve on these sides for the entire set. If you are playing more than one set, you are allowed to change sides when a new set starts.

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- **Serving Turns:** You and your doubles partner can choose who serves first in each set. After that, make sure you alternate service turns. When playing doubles, you should always serve every fourth game.

### MAKING LINE CALLS, DOUBLE BOUNCE CALLS, ETC.

In tennis, players (and nobody else!) make the calls. Each player is responsible for the calls on her own side of the court. It is very important that you make honest calls.

- **Out calls:** If you see the ball land out on your side of the court, make sure you say out right away. If you do not see a ball land or if you are unsure if it was in or out, you *must* call it in. Do not re-play a point because you are not sure if a ball was out.
- **Double-bounce calls:** If the ball bounces twice before you hit it, you *must* stop the point. This is your opponent's point.
- **Contact with the tennis ball:** If any part of your body or clothing touches the ball during a point, you *must* stop the point. This is your opponent's point.
- **Contact with the net:** If your racquet or any part of your body or clothing touches the net during a point, or if you reach over the net, you *must* stop the point. This is your opponent's point.
- **Double touch:** If you touch the ball before it lands out or before your doubles partner touches it, you *must* stop the point. This is your opponent's point.
- **Line call disputes:** Assumed best intentions are key to a friendly match. You should never make a call in your favor unless you are confident you are right about the call. If your opponent questions one of your calls, you should be able to confidently say that you saw the ball out (or got to the ball before the second bounce, etc.). Similarly, you should assume your opponents are