



USTA RULES OVERVIEW



1st & Foremost

Have Fun



STARTING THE TEAM MATCH

- Captains exchange lineups when all players are present. This should happen at least 5 minutes before the scheduled match time
- Players should be on their appropriate court no later than the scheduled match time.

STARTING AN INDIVIDUAL MATCH

Per Part 1, Rule 9 of the ITF Rules of Tennis: The choice of ends and the choice to be server or receiver in the first game shall be decided by toss before the warm-up starts. The player/team who wins the toss may choose:

1. To be server or receiver in the first game of the match, in which case the opponent(s) shall choose the end of the court for the first game of the match; or
2. The end of the court for the first game of the match, in which case the opponent(s) shall choose to be server or receiver for the first game of the match; or
3. To require the opponent(s) to make one of the above choices.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN: Spin a racquet or flip a coin before warming up to determine who is serving and what side of the court each player/team will start on

- **Take a 10 minute warm-up**
- **Begin play**

PLAYING AN INDIVIDUAL MATCH

- Server calls out the score loud enough for opponent(s) to hear before starting the service motion before every point (per Code, paragraph 31)
- Making Calls: Per the Code:
 5. Player makes calls on own side of net. A player calls all shots landing on, or aimed at, the player's side of the net.
 6. Opponent gets benefit of doubt. A player should always give the opponent the benefit of any doubt. When a match is played without officials, the players are responsible for making decisions, particularly for line calls. There is a subtle difference between player decisions and those of an on-court official. An official impartially resolves a problem involving a call, whereas a player is guided by the principle that any doubt must be resolved in favor of an opponent. A player in attempting to be scrupulously honest on line calls frequently will keep a ball in play that might have been out or that the player discovers too late was out. Even so, the game is much better played this way.

PLAYING AN INDIVIDUAL MATCH (CONT'D)

- **Making Calls: Per the Code (Cont'd):**

7. **Ball touching any part of line is good.** If any part of a ball touches a line, the ball is good. A ball 99% out is still 100% good. A player shall not call a ball out unless the player clearly sees space between where the ball hits and a line.
8. **Ball that cannot be called out is good.** Any ball that cannot be called out is considered to be good. A player may not claim a let on the basis of not seeing a ball. One of tennis' more infuriating moments occurs after a long hard rally when a player makes a clean placement and an opponent says: "I'm not sure if it was good or out. Let's play a let." Remember, it is each player's responsibility to call all balls landing on, or aimed at, the player's side of the net. If a ball cannot be called out with certainty, it is good. When a player says an opponent's shot was really out but offers to replay the point to give the opponent a break, it seems clear that the player actually doubted that the ball was out.

PLAYING AN INDIVIDUAL MATCH (CONT'D)

- **Making Calls: Per the Code (Cont'd):**

9. **Either partner may make calls in doubles.** Although either doubles partner may make a call, the call of a player looking down a line is more likely to be accurate than that of a player looking across a line.
10. **All points are treated same regardless of their importance.** All points in a match should be treated the same. There is no justification for considering a match point differently from a first point.
11. **Requesting opponent's help.** When an opponent's opinion is requested and the opponent gives a positive opinion, it must be accepted. If neither player has an opinion, the ball is considered good. Aid from an opponent is available only on a call that ends a point.
12. **Out calls reversed.** A player who calls a ball out shall reverse the call if the player becomes uncertain or realizes that the ball was good. The point goes to the opponent and is not replayed. However, when a receiver reverses a fault call on a serve that hit the net, the server is entitled to two serves.

PLAYING AN INDIVIDUAL MATCH (CONT'D)

- **Making Calls: Per the Code (Cont'd):**

13. **Player calls own shots out.** With the exception of the first serve, a player should call out the player's own shots if the player clearly sees the ball out regardless of whether requested to do so by an opponent. The prime objective in making calls is accuracy. All players should cooperate to attain this objective.
14. **Partners' disagreement on calls.** If one partner calls the ball out and the other partner sees the ball good, the ball is good. It is more important to give opponents the benefit of the doubt than to avoid possibly hurting a partner's feelings. The tactful way to achieve the desired result is to tell a partner quietly of the mistake and then let the partner concede the point. If a call is changed from out to good, the principles of Code § 12 apply.

PLAYING AN INDIVIDUAL MATCH (CONT'D)

- **Making Calls: Per the Code (Cont'd):**

15. **Audible or visible calls.** No matter how obvious it is to a player that an opponent's ball is out, the opponent is entitled to a prompt audible or visible out call.
16. **Spectators never make calls.** A player shall not enlist the aid of a spectator in making a call. No spectator has a part in a match.
17. **Prompt calls eliminate two chance option.** A player shall make all calls promptly. A call shall be made either before the player's return shot has gone out of play or before an opponent has had an opportunity to play the return shot.

Prompt calls will quickly eliminate the "two chances to win the point" option that some players practice. To illustrate, a player is advancing to the net for an easy put away and sees a ball from an adjoining court rolling toward the court. The player continues to advance and hits the shot, only to have the supposed easy put away fly over the baseline. The player then claims a let. The claim is not valid because the player forfeited the right to call a let by choosing instead to play the ball. The player took a chance to win or lose and is not entitled to a second chance.

PLAYING AN INDIVIDUAL MATCH (CONT'D)

- **Making Calls: Per the Code (Cont'd):**

18. **Let called when ball rolls on court.** When a ball from another court enters the playing area, any player on the court affected may call a let as soon as the player becomes aware of the ball. The player loses the right to call a let if the player unreasonably delays in making the call.

19. **Touches, hitting ball before it crosses net, invasion of opponent's court, double hits, and double bounces.** A player shall concede the point when:

- A ball in play touches that player;
- That player touches the net or opponent's court while a ball is in play;
- That player hits a ball before it crosses the net;
- That player deliberately carries or double hits a ball; or
- A ball bounces more than once in that player's court.

The opponent is not entitled to make these calls. The principle of giving the opponent the benefit of any doubt applies.

PLAYING AN INDIVIDUAL MATCH (CONT'D)

- **Making Calls: Per the Code (Cont'd):**

20. Balls hit through net or into ground. A player makes the ruling on a ball that the player's opponent hits:

- Through the net; or
- Into the ground before it goes over the net.

SITUATIONS (CONT'D)

- **Scoring Disputes: Per the Code:**

32. Disputes. Disputes over the score shall be resolved by using one of the following methods, which are listed in the order of preference:

- o Count all points and games agreed upon by the players and replay only disputed points or games;
- o If the players do not agree on the court in which the disputed point started, toss a coin to select the court.
- o If the players do not agree on who served a disputed point in a tiebreak, toss a coin to select the server. (A coin toss may also be needed to determine the side in which the point is played and the end from which the server serves.)
- o If the players do not agree on who served a disputed game, toss a coin to select the server.
- o Play from a score mutually agreeable to all players;
- o Spin a racket or toss a coin.

SITUATIONS (CONT'D)

- **Scoring Disputes: Per the Code (Cont'd):**

SCENARIO #1:

The server states that the score is 40-15; the receiver states that the score is 30-30. The players agree on who won every point except for the second point. What should they do?

They should replay the second point from the advantage court. If the server wins the point, the score becomes 40-15; if the receiver wins the point, the score becomes 30-30. The next point is played from the deuce court. (Rule 5)

SITUATIONS (CONT'D)

- **Scoring Disputes: Per the Code (Cont'd):**

SCENARIO #2:

The players agree that they have played six points in the game but disagree over the score because they do not agree on who won the second point.

The receiver acknowledges that the server called the score after each point and that the receiver did not express disagreement with the score until now. What should happen?

The score as announced by the server should prevail because the receiver did not object. Note, however, if the receiver denied hearing the score, then the normal 3-step process of Code § 32 is used to settle the dispute. (Rule 5)

