



RECREATIONAL SERVICES

Intramural Rulebook



Tennis

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TENNIS RULES

Official rules are the USTA rules with the following intramural adaptations:

SINGLES TENNIS

Rule 1 - The Court. The court shall be a rectangle 78 feet (23.77m.) long and 27 feet (8.23m.) wide.

1. It shall be divided across the middle by a net suspended from a cord or metal cable of a maximum diameter of one-third of an inch (0.8cm.), the ends of which shall be attached to, or pass over, the tops of two posts, which shall be not more than 6 inches (15cm.) square or 6 inches (15cm.) in diameter. These posts shall not be higher than 1 inch (2.5cm.) above the top of the net cord. The centers of the posts shall be 3 feet (0.914m.) outside the court on each side and the height of the posts shall be such that the top of the cord or metal cable shall be 3 feet 6 inches (1.07m.) above the ground.
2. When a combined doubles (see Rule 28) and singles court with a doubles net is used for singles, the net must be supported to a height of 3 feet 6 inches (1.07m.) by means of two posts, called "singles sticks", which shall be not more than 3 inches (7.5cm.) square or 3 inches (7.5cm.) in diameter. The centers of the singles sticks shall be 3 feet (0.914m.) outside the singles court on each side.
3. The net shall be extended fully so that it fills completely the space between the two posts and shall be of sufficiently small mesh to prevent the ball passing through. The height of the net shall be 3 feet (0.914m.) at the center, where it shall be held down taut by the strap not more than 2 inches (5cm.) wide and completely white in color. There shall be a band covering the cord or metal cable and the top of the net of not less than 2 inches (5cm.) nor more than 2 1/2 inches (6.3cm.) in depth on each side and completely white in color.
4. There shall be no advertisement on the net, strap, band or singles sticks.
5. The lines bounding the ends and sides of the Court shall respectively be called the base-lines and the side-lines. On each side of the net, at a distance of 21 feet (6.40m.) from it and parallel with it, shall be drawn the service-lines. The space on each side of the net between the service-line and the side-lines shall be divided into two equal parts called the service-courts by the center service-line, which must be 2 inches (5cm.) in width, drawn half-way between, and parallel with, the side-lines. Each base-line shall be bisected by an imaginary continuation of the center service-line to a line 4 inches (10cm.) in length and 2 inches (5 cm.) in width called the center mark drawn inside the Court, at right angles to and in contact with such base-lines. All other lines shall be not less than 1 inch (2.5cm.) nor more than 2 inches (5cm.) in width, except the base-line, which may be 4 inches (10cm.) in width, and all measurements shall be made to the outside of the lines. All lines shall be of uniform color.

Rule 2 - The Ball. The ball shall have a uniform outer surface and shall be white or yellow in color. If there are any seams, they shall be stitchless.

1. The ball shall be more than two and a half inches (6.35cm.) and less than two and five-eighths inches (6.67cm.) in diameter, and more than two ounces (56.7 grams) and less than two and one-sixteenth ounces (58.5 grams) in weight.
2. The ball shall have a bound of more than 53 inches (135cm.) and less than 58 inches (147cm.) when dropped 100 inches (254cm.) upon a concrete base.

Rule 3 - The Racket. Rackets failing to comply with the following specifications are not approved for play under the Rules of Tennis:

1. The hitting surface of the racket shall be flat and consist of a pattern of crossed strings connected to a frame and alternately interlaced or bonded where they cross; and the stringing pattern shall be generally uniform, and in particular not less dense in the center than in any

other area. The strings shall be free of attached objects and protrusions other than those utilized solely and specifically to limit or prevent wear and tear or vibration and which are reasonable in size and placement for such purposes.

2. The frame of the racket shall not exceed 29 inches (73.66cm.) in overall length, including the handle and 12 1/2 inches (31.75cm.) in overall width. The strung surface shall not exceed 15 1/2 inches (39.37cm.) in overall length, and 11 1/2 inches (29.21cm.) in overall width.
3. The frame, including the handle, shall be free of attached objects and devices other than those utilized solely and specifically to limit or prevent wear and tear or vibration, or to distribute weight. Any objects and devices must be reasonable in size and placement for such purposes.
4. The frame, including the handle and the strings, shall be free of any device which makes it possible to change materially the shape of the racket, or to change the weight distribution, during the playing of a point.

Rule 4 - Server and Receiver. Players shall stand on opposite sides of the net; the player who first delivers the ball shall be called the Server, and the other the Receiver.

Rule 5 - Choice of Ends and Service. The choice of ends and the right to be Server or Receiver in the first game shall be decided by toss. The player winning the toss may choose or require his opponent to choose:

1. The right to be Server or Receiver, in which case the other player shall choose the end; or
2. The end, in which case the other player shall choose the right to be Server or Receiver.

Rule 6 - The Service. The service shall be delivered in the following manner. Immediately before commencing to serve, the Server shall stand with both feet at rest behind (i.e. further from the net than) the base-line, and within the imaginary continuations of the center-mark and side-line. The Server shall then project the ball by hand into the air in any direction and before it hits the ground strike it with his racket, and the delivery shall be deemed to have been completed at the moment of the impact of the racket and the ball. A player with the use of only one arm may utilize his racket for the projection.

1. The service begins when the Server takes a ready position (i.e., both feet at rest behind the baseline) and ends when his racket makes contact with the ball, or when he misses the ball in attempting to serve it.
2. The server may stand anywhere in back of the baseline between the imaginary extensions of the center mark and the singles sideline.
3. There is no restriction regarding the kind of service which may be used; that is, the player may use an underhand or overhand service at his discretion.

Rule 7 - Foot Fault

1. The Server shall, throughout the delivery of the service:
 - a. Not change his position by walking or running. The Server shall not, by slight movements of the feet which do not materially affect the location originally taken up by him, be deemed "to change his position by walking or running".
 - b. Not touch, with either foot, any area other than that behind the base-line within the imaginary extension of the center mark and side-lines.
2. The word "foot" means the extremity of the leg below the ankle.

Rule 8 - Delivery of Service

1. In delivering the service, the Server shall stand alternately behind the right and left Courts beginning from the right in every game. If service from a wrong half of the Court occurs and is undetected, all play resulting from such wrong service or services shall stand, but the inaccuracy of station shall be corrected immediately when it is discovered.
2. The ball served shall pass over the net and hit the ground within the Service Court which is diagonally opposite, or upon any line bounding such Court, before the Receiver returns it.

Rule 9 - Service Fault. The Service is a fault:

1. If the Server commits any breach of Rules 6, 7, or 8(b);
2. If he misses the ball in attempting to strike it;
3. If the ball served touches a permanent fixture (other than the net, strap or band) before it hits the ground.

Rule 10 - Second Service. After a fault (if it is the first fault) the Server shall serve again from behind the same half of the Court from which he served that fault, unless the service was from the wrong half, when, in accordance with Rule 8, the Server shall be entitled to one service only from behind the other half.

Rule 11 - When to Serve. The Server shall not serve until the Receiver is ready. If the latter attempts to return the service, he shall be deemed ready. If, however, the Receiver signifies that he is not ready, he may not claim a fault because the ball does not hit the ground within the limits fixed for the service.

The Server must wait until the Receiver is ready for the second service as well as the first, and if the Receiver claims to be not ready and does not make any effort to return a service, the Server's claim for the point may not be honored even though the service was good. However, the Receiver, having indicated he is ready, may not become unready unless some outside interference takes place.

Rule 12 - The Let. In all cases where a let has to be called under the rules, or to provide for an interruption of play, it shall have the following interpretations:

1. When called solely in respect of a service that one service only shall be replayed.
2. When called under any other circumstance, the point shall be replayed.

Rule 13 - The "Let" in Service

1. The service is a let:
 - a. If the ball served touches the net, strap or band, and is otherwise good, or, after touching the net, strap or band, touches the Receiver or anything which he wears or carries before hitting the ground.
 - b. If a service or a fault is delivered when the Receiver is not ready (see Rule 11).
2. In case of a let, that particular service shall not count, and the Server shall serve again, but a service let does not annul a previous fault.

Rule 14 - Order of Service. At the end of the first game the Receiver shall become Server, and the Server Receiver; and so on alternately in all the subsequent games of a match. If a player serves out of turn, the player who ought to have served shall serve as soon as the mistake is discovered, but all points scored before such discovery shall be counted. If a game shall have been completed before such discovery, the order of service remains as altered. A fault served before such discovery shall not be counted.

Rule 15 - When Players Change Ends

1. The players shall exchange ends at the end of the first, third and every subsequent alternate game of each set, and at the end of each set unless the total number of games in such set is even, in which case the change is not made until the end of the first game of the next set.
2. If a mistake is made and the correct sequence is not followed, the players must take up their correct station as soon as the discovery is made and follow their original sequence.

Rule 16 - The Ball in Play. A ball is in play from the moment at which it is delivered in service. Unless a fault or a let is called it remains in play until the point is decided.

1. A point is not decided simply when, or because, a good shot has clearly passed a player, or when an apparently bad shot passes over a baseline or sideline. An outgoing ball is still definitely in play until it actually strikes the ground, backstop or a permanent fixture (other than the net, posts, singles sticks, cord or metal cable, strap or band), or a player. The same applies to a good ball, bounding after it has landed in the proper court. A ball that becomes imbedded in the net is out of play.
2. When a ball is hit into the net and the player on the other side, thinking the ball is coming over, strikes at it and hits the net, he loses the point if his touching the net occurs while the ball is still in play.

Rule 17 - Server Wins Point. The Server wins the point:

1. If the ball served, not being a let under Rule 13, touches the Receiver or anything which he wears or carries, before it hits the ground;
2. If the Receiver otherwise loses the point as provided by Rule 19.

Rule 18 - Receiver Wins Point. The Receiver wins the point:

1. If the Server serves two consecutive faults;
2. If the Server otherwise loses the point as provided by Rule 19.

Rule 19 - Player Loses Point. A player loses the point if:

1. He fails, before the ball in play has hit the ground twice consecutively, to return it directly over the net (except as provided in Rule 23(a) or (c)); or
2. He returns the ball in play so that it hits the ground, a permanent fixture, or other object, outside any of the lines which bound his opponent's Court (except as provided in Rule 23(a) or (c)); or
3. He volleys the ball and fails to make a good return even when standing outside the Court; or
4. In playing the ball he deliberately carries or catches it on his racket or deliberately touches it with his racket more than once; Only when there is a definite "second push" by the player does his shot become illegal, with consequent loss of point. The word 'deliberately' is the key word in this rule. Two hits occurring in the course of a single continuous swing are not deemed a double hit.
5. He or his racket (in his hand or otherwise) or anything which he wears or carries touches the net, posts, singles sticks, cord or metal cable, strap or band, or the ground within his opponent's Court at any time while the ball is in play; or
6. He volleys the ball before it has passed the net; or
7. The ball in play touches him or anything that he wears or carries, except his racket in his hand or hands; or This loss of point occurs regardless of whether the player is inside or outside the bounds of his court when the ball touches him.
8. He throws his racket at and hits the ball; or
9. He deliberately and materially changes the shape of his racket during the playing of the point.

Rule 20 - Player Hinders Opponent. If a player commits any act which hinders his opponent in making a stroke, then, if this is deliberate, he shall lose the point or if involuntary, the point shall be replayed. 'Deliberate' means a player did what he intended to do, although the resulting effect on his opponent might or might not have been what he intended.

Rule 21 - Ball Falls on Line. A ball falling on a line is regarded as falling in the Court bounded by that line. In a non-officiated singles match, each player makes the call on any ball hit toward his side of the net, and if a player cannot call a ball out with surety he should regard it as good.

Rule 22 - Ball Touches Permanent Fixtures. If the ball in play touches a permanent fixture (other than the net, posts, singles sticks, cord or metal cable, strap or band) after it has hit the

ground, the player who struck it wins the point; if before it hits the ground, his opponent wins the point.

Rule 23 - A Good Return. It is a good return:

1. If the ball touches the net, posts, singles sticks, cord or metal cable, strap or band, provided that it passes over any of them and hits the ground within the Court; or
2. If the ball, served or returned, hits the ground within the proper Court and rebounds or is blown back over the net, and the player whose turn it is to strike reaches over the net and plays the ball, provided that neither he nor any part of his clothes or racket touches the net, posts, singles sticks, cord or metal cable, strap or band or the ground within his opponent's Court, and that the stroke is otherwise good; or
3. If the ball is returned outside the posts, or singles sticks, either above or below the level of the top of the net, even though it touches the posts or singles sticks, provided that it hits the ground within the proper Court; or
4. If a player's racket passes over the net after he has returned the ball, provided the ball passes the net before being played and is properly returned; or
5. If a player succeeds in returning the ball, served or in play, which strikes a ball lying in the Court.

Rule 24 - Hindrance of a Player. In case a player is hindered in making a stroke by anything not within his control, except a permanent fixture of the Court, or except as provided for in Rule 20, a let shall be called.

Rule 25 - Score in a Game

1. If a player wins his first point, the score is called 15 for that player; on winning his second point, the score is called 30 for that player; on winning his third point, the score is called 40 for that player, and the fourth point won by a player is scored game for that player except as below:
2. If both players have won three points, the score is called deuce; and the next point won by a player is scored advantage for that player. If the same player wins the next point, he wins the game; if the other player wins the next point the score is again called deuce; and so on, until a player wins the two points immediately following the score at deuce, when the game is scored for that player.

In a non-officiated match the Server should announce, in a voice audible to his opponent and spectators, the set score at the beginning of each game, and point scores as the game goes on. Misunderstandings will be avoided if this practice is followed.

Rule 26 - Score in a Set

1. In intramurals, the first player to win 10 games is the winner; need not win by 2 games.
2. A player (or players) who first wins 6 games wins a set; except that he must win by a margin of 2 games over his opponent and where necessary a set is extended until this margin is achieved.

Rule 27 - Continuous Play and Rest Periods. Play shall be continuous from the first service until the match is concluded, in accordance with the following provisions;

1. If the first service is a fault, the second service must be struck by the Server without delay.
 - a. The Receiver must play to the reasonable pace of the Server and must be ready to receive when the Server is ready to serve.
 - b. When changing ends a maximum of one minute thirty seconds shall elapse from the moment the ball goes out of play at the end of the game to the time the ball is struck for the first point of the next game.

2. Play shall never be suspended, delayed or interfered with for the purpose of enabling a player to recover his strength, breath, or physical condition. However, in the case of accidental injury, play will be suspended.

DOUBLES TENNIS

Rule 28 - The Doubles Court. For the Doubles Game, the Court shall be 36 feet (10.97m.) in width, i.e. 4 1/2 feet (1.37m.) wider on each side than the Court for the Singles Game, and those portions of the singles side-lines which lie between the two service-lines shall be called the service side-lines. In other respects, the Court shall be similar to that described in Rule 1, but the portions of the singles side-lines between the base-line and service-line on each side of the net may be omitted if desired.

The Server has the right in doubles to stand anywhere back of the baseline between the center mark imaginary extension and the doubles sideline imaginary extension.

Rule 29 - Order of Service in Doubles. The order of serving shall be decided at the beginning of each set as follows:

The pair who have to serve in the first game of each set shall decide which partner shall do so and the opposing pair shall decide similarly for the second game. The partner of the player who served in the first game shall serve in the third; the partner of the player who served in the second game shall serve in the fourth; and so on in the same order in all the subsequent games of a set.

Rule 30 - Order of Receiving in Doubles. The order of receiving the service shall be decided at the beginning of each set as follows:

The pair who have to receive the service in the first game shall decide which partner shall receive the first service, and that partner shall continue to receive the first service in every odd game throughout that set. The opposing pair shall likewise decide which partner shall receive the first service in the second game and that partner shall continue to receive the first service in every even game throughout that set. Partners shall receive the service alternately throughout each game.

Rule 31 - Service Out of Turn in Doubles. If a partner serves out of his turn, the partner who ought to have served shall serve as soon as the mistake is discovered, but all points scored, and any faults served before such discovery, shall be counted. If a game shall have been completed before such discovery, the order of service remains as altered.

Rule 32 - Error in Order of Receiving in Doubles. If during a game the order of receiving the service is changed by the Receivers it shall remain as altered until the end of the game in which the mistake is discovered, but the partners shall resume their original order of receiving in the next game of that set in which they are Receivers of the service.

Rule 33 - Service Fault in Doubles. The service is a fault as provided for by Rule 9, or if the ball touches the Server's partner or anything which he wears or carries; but if the ball served touches the partner of the Receiver, or anything which he wears or carries, not being a let under Rule 13(a) before it hits the ground, the Server wins the point.

Rule 34 - Playing the Ball in Doubles. The ball shall be struck alternately by one or other player of the opposing pairs, and if a player touches the ball in play with his racket in contravention of this Rule, his opponents win the point.

This means that, in the course of making one return, only one member of a doubles team may hit the ball. If both of them hit the ball, either simultaneously or consecutively, it is an illegal return. The partners themselves do not have to "alternate" in making returns. Mere clashing of rackets does not make a return illegal unless it is clear that more than one racket touched the ball.

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