

TENNIS

How Tennis is Played...

When playing **singles**, the players stand on opposite sides of the net. The player who first delivers the ball to begin play is called the server while the other player is called the receiver. The server will serve for an entire game, after which he/she becomes the receiver for a full game. Players then take turns serving a game and receiving a game for an entire match.

The server begins by standing behind the baseline, anywhere between the center mark and the extension of the right singles sideline. The server should serve the first point of a game from the right of the center mark diagonally into the opponent's right service court. The server will then serve the ball from the left of the center mark into the opponent's left service court. This change will continue until the game is completed. The server then becomes the receiver for the next game and the opponent becomes the server.

For each point, the server is given two chances to make a good serve. A serve that is not good (if the tennis ball lands outside of the diagonally-opposite service box or if the server misses the ball when swinging for it or if the ball hits any part of the racket frame on an attempted serve) it is called a "FAULT." If the second attempt of the serve is not good, it is called a "DOUBLE FAULT" and the server loses the point. If the serve is good, the receiver must let the ball hit the ground once before returning it. If the served ball touches the top of the net and lands within the proper service court, it is called a "LET" and does not count. That serve may be played over and there is no limit to the number of lets that can be served before a successful serve or a double fault occurs. When receiving the serve, the receiver should stand either in front of, on or behind the baseline or sideline and must return the ball before it bounces twice.

When playing **doubles**, players take turns in serving and they must serve in a particular order throughout the set. The player who begins serving will serve throughout the first game and his/her partner will serve during the 3rd game after a player from the other team will serve throughout the entire second game and that team's partner will serve throughout the fourth game. The server can stand anywhere between the center mark and the doubles sidelines and will still serve from the right, then from the left just like in playing singles and alternate until a team has won. The receiving formation of a double team cannot be changed during a set. The player who receives the first serve on their right side of the court, must play the right court every time service is made to his/her team during the set. However, after a serve is returned, players can move anywhere on their side of the court during that point but must return to their side for the next point being served.

Keeping Score in Tennis...

A player scores a point when his/her opponent hits a ball out of bounds or fails to return a shot. When competing with no umpires to officiate, players make the calls for their side of the net. According to "The Code" from the USTA, players should give their opponents the benefit of the doubt regarding their line calls.

Scoring in tennis consists of winning games, points and sets. To win a game, you must win four points, by a margin of two points. These points have specific names: "love," for zero points; 15, for the first point; 30, for the second point and 40 for the third point. The next point wins the game. If both players earn 40 points, they reach "deuce." A player must win two more points to win the game. When a player wins a single point after deuce, they have the "advantage" (add IN or add OUT – IN is if server scored point, OUT is said if receiver scored point). Winning the next point gives them the game.

In non-officiated matches, the server announces the game score prior to the first point in the game and should announce the point score before each point, according to the USTA's code of conduct.

To win a set, a player must win six games and have a margin of at least two games more than his opponent. A 12 point tie breaker is used when a score in a set reaches "6 ALL," the first person to win 7 points by a margin of 2 points wins.

The match generally consists of 2 out of 3 sets. The player who wins 2 sets wins the match. Some championship tournaments are played on a 3 out of 5 set basis and the first player who wins 3 sets wins the match.

Other General Rules/Information to Know...

- If the ball hits a line, it is good and still in play.
- Players cannot reach over the net to hit the ball (a follow through of the racket can pass over the net, but the ball must be hit on his/her side of the net)
- Striking of the net in any way results in losing the point.
- Do not catch the ball – let the ball bounce (a ball is considered good until it actually hits the ground or fence outside of the court)
- "Playing a let" is the term used when a point is replayed should any interferences occur during play (affected player decides whether or not the point is replayed)
- The ball cannot touch any part of the player – only the racket
- The server cannot step on or across the baseline into the court until the ball is struck by his/her racket, or walk/run into the act of serving.
- In order to equalize factors such as sun and wind, players change the side of the net they are playing on after the odd numbered games (1st, 3rd, 5th, etc.)

The Court...

