

TENNIS RULES

Tennis is a game played with a racket and a ball either indoors or outdoors. The surfaces can vary from grass to clay to asphalt. Tennis can be played in a singles or doubles format and it may be played as a male only, female only, or in a coed format. Points are scored by serving and hitting the ball in a ways so that the opponents miss the ball, hit the ball into the net, or hit it out of the court area. The skill of the game lies in mastering service techniques, offensive and defensive strokes, footwork, and game strategy. In competition the player strives to win points, games, sets, and ultimately the match.

GENERAL RULES

1. Play begins when the SERVER delivers a serve from behind the right BASELINE to the opponents' right service box. The SERVER alternates right and left side of court after each point. The SERVER serves an entire game.
2. The SERVER receives two chances to get a good serve for each point. If the first serve is not good, the SERVER gets a second chance.
3. A double service fault causes loss of point. For example, hitting the first serve into the net and the second serve out of bounds would result in loss of point for the SERVER.
4. The RECEIVER may not return the served ball until it has landed in his/her proper serving court.
5. During the RALLY, the ball may not bounce more than one time.
6. The SERVE is a fault if the server:
 - A. does not take the proper court position before serving.
 - B. commits a foot fault. FOOT FAULTS include changing their position by walking or running and stepping on or over the back line before they make contact with the ball.
 - C. misses the ball while attempting to strike it or hits it slightly with the racket.
 - D. fails to hit the ball into the correct service court.
 - E. hits any permanent structure with the served ball other than the net, strap or band.
 - F. hits his/her partner or anything he/she is wearing, with the served ball.
7. The penalty for any one of the above is a SINGLE FAULT. It is a DOUBLE FAULT and loss of point if a fault occurs on both serve attempts.
8. The play is considered a LET when:
 - A. a served ball touches the net or strap but lands in the correct service box.
 - B. interference beyond a player's control stops play.
 - C. the ball is delivered before the receiver is ready.
9. The player loses a point if he/she:
 - A. does not return the ball to the opponent's court on a volley or after first bounce.
 - B. his/her clothing touches the net on any play.
 - C. reaches over the net to play a ball unless it has bounced back over the net because of spin or strong wind.
 - D. throws his/her racket at the ball.
 - E. hits the ball more than once.
 - F. misses the ball, hits ball out of bounds, or into the net.
 - G. plays a served ball before it bounces.
10. A ball is considered good if:
 - A. it lands on any line.
 - B. it touches the top of a net post or the net and falls into the proper court.
 - C. a player reaches outside the net posts to play a ball and returns it successfully.

SCORING

1. A GAME consists of points: 0 (love), 15, 30, 40, game.
2. Several games make up a SET; you must win a minimum of 6 games and be ahead by at least 2 games to win a SET.
3. Several sets make up a MATCH. Women must win 2 sets out of 3. Men must win 3 sets out of 5.
4. Players change sides of the court after odd numbered games.
5. A tie score of 40-40 is called DEUCE. To break the tie a player must win two consecutive points after deuce. In a DEUCE game, the score will alternate between deuce and advantage in or out until one player or team wins two consecutive points.
6. If the score is DEUCE and the server wins the next point, the score is called ADVANTAGE IN.
7. If the score is DEUCE and the receiver wins the next point, the score is called ADVANTAGE OUT.

GAME COURTESIES

1. Do not return the first ball on the serve if it is a fault.
2. If both sides are in doubt of score or a line decision, replay the point.
3. Do not serve until opponent is ready.
4. Have a minimum of two tennis balls when starting to serve.
5. Keep score and announce the score when serving.
6. Retrieve and/or return tennis balls from adjacent courts after play has been completed on those courts.

TERMINOLOGY

1. ACE – good service that is not touched by the opponent
2. ALLEY – area between the singles side line and the doubles side line
3. BACK COURT – area between the service line and the base line
4. BACKHAND – stroke used to hit balls on the left side of a right handed hitter and vice versa
5. BASE LINE – line at each end of the court
6. CENTER MARK – a 4” mark that bisects the base line to limit the proper service area
7. DEUCE – even score when each side has won three or more points (occurs first at 40-40)
8. DOUBLE FAULT – failure on consecutive serves
9. DOUBLES – play with two people on each side
10. FAULT – failure to make legal service
11. FOOT FAULT – illegal movement of the feet during service
12. FORECOURT – area between the net and the service line
13. LET – serve that is to be replayed due to some type of interference
14. LOVE – zero score
15. MATCH – winning two out of three OR three out of five sets
16. RALLY – opponents hitting the ball back and forth to each other (before or after ball bounces)
17. SERVICE – putting the ball into play
18. SET – winning a minimum of six games and being ahead by at least two games (ex. – 6-3, 6-4, 7-5)
19. SIDE LINE – line on each side of court
20. SINGLES – play with one person on each side
21. VOLLEY – to hit the ball before it bounces