

## GENERAL RULES & COURT ETIQUETTE

Please read this, it is important to know all this stuff. Even if only one of the things in this newsletter happens during the season, it is up to you to know how to handle the situation so you won't be disadvantaged. I doubt players from other clubs get this information and probably don't know three quarters of the rules. When a situation arises about a rule, get your newsletter out and say 'I know what to do'. e.g. players from another club think they don't have to umpire or that there's a formula for the umpiring. You can with total confidence say, 'yes we do have to umpire and this is how the umpiring is worked out'. If a situation arises during the match that is not covered in this information, PLEASE let me know so I can add it to next season's newsletter.

You should always know the score during your set. If you haven't heard the score called, ASK FOR IT!! There is no point coming off the court and moaning to me that 'they had the score wrong'...I will give you 25cents and tell you to phone someone who cares ☺

Keep track of which side you are supposed to be on compared to the score. If you realize that you are on the wrong side to what the score is, the score must stand and play must continue on the correct side of the court that agrees with the score. In this instance, you may have to play 2 points in a row on the same side if you have played any points on the wrong side. It is very important to check after each point.

When there is no umpire for a set, call 'out' or 'fault', DO NOT FLICK OUT YOUR FINGER indicating if the ball has gone out or the serve was a fault.

The toss of a coin or the spin of a tennis racquet decides the choice of ends and the right to serve or receive in the first game of the match. Home team tosses the coin or spins the racquet, with the away team calling. The team winning the toss may choose to serve or receive, or can ask the opposing team to choose to serve or receive. The other team then chooses the end they wish to start from. Serving and ends are then alternated in each set.

Each game commences with the server serving in the 1<sup>st</sup> (or deuce) court.

Change ends after the first game of each set then after each two games (when the games played add up to an odd number).

It is important to remember that while receiving serve you must receive serve on the same side of the court (i.e. 1<sup>st</sup> (deuce) or 2<sup>nd</sup> (advantage) on both ends during a set. When players change ends, they quite often go to the opposite side to receive serve. So you will have to remember which side you were on before you changed ends.

Parents and friends cannot 'coach' or make comments on scoring from outside the court. Do not yell out to or at the children. This is considered poor etiquette. Coaching during a match by non-players is contrary to the rules of tennis. Of course words of encouragement like 'good work' or 'well done' etc. are acceptable but comments like 'move to the ball', 'hit up' or similar are not acceptable. Children who may be having a bad day on court don't need to hear 'come on what are you doing' or similar, they will know they are having a bad day, they don't need to be reminded from outside.

If the serve hits the opposition with a serve on the full, the point goes to the side serving.

Do not go on to another court or even close to the back fence to get a ball if a point is in progress. You must wait until the point in progress has been completed.

If a ball comes on to your court during play from another court, play should stop immediately and the point should then be replayed. When returning the ball to another court, wait until the point in progress on that court has been completed. So many times I have seen players just whack the ball back to the other court in the middle of a point.

Always start serving with two tennis balls – one in your hand to serve and the second one in your pocket, in your ball holder or against the back fence directly behind where you're going to serve from. Do not leave the ball right at your feet because you may step on it limiting your ability to hit the next shot, because you're going to be thinking 'where's that ball, ooh I'm going to stand on it' or you could roll your ankle. If you serve with two balls in one hand and make a good first serve, do not throw the second ball on the ground so you can play the point. Depending on the circumstances, you will have to play a let or you may lose the point. You will have to hold on to it during the point or put it in your pocket.

Always abide by the umpire's decision. You are able to query whether or not the umpire is sure of their call...nothing else. If you think the umpire is doing a poor job, please call for the court supervisor.

If you are umpiring and notice that someone is foot-faulting, just ask them to watch their feet. If the problem continues, please call for the venue supervisor. For those of you who do stand close to the lines, please stand one step behind the base line and one step either side of the centre line. Centre supervisors will speak to anyone deemed to be foot faulting. A foot fault cannot be called on players who step over the baseline before making contact with the ball, but can be if a player is stepping over the centre line before making contact with the ball. BUT, it is up to the court supervisor to call it, not the umpire.

If any player hits the net with their racquet, any part of their body or clothing, or their foot goes under the net during the point, that person loses the point.

If the ball in play strikes a ball inside the playing area, the point will not be replayed; the person whose end this happens on loses the point. It's your end, make sure it's clear. This is one of the reasons why you should always remove the ball from the playing area. The other reason is that you may stand on it during the point.

Only the people playing each set and the umpire are allowed on to the court during play, except for a parent or supervisor assisting with umpiring when required.

If the ball is so close to the line that you cannot tell whether it was in or out, it is considered to be in. This is a rule of tennis. If you are 'unsighted' as the umpire of where the ball has landed, you must replay the point. Seeing chalk dust fly on clay courts does not necessarily mean the ball has struck the line.

If the ball hits any player or if a player catches the ball before it has been 'grounded', that player loses the point...even if the ball is obviously out. The ball is considered still in play until it hits the ground.

If a player follows through with their service action and misses the ball, that is a fault.

If you throw the ball up to serve and you feel you can't go through with the serve, let the ball bounce on the ground or catch it on your racquet. Don't be pressured into serving if you've thrown the ball awkwardly.

Do not return obvious faults. Serves close to the lines of the service box should be returned because in some instances you may see the ball as out but the umpire may see it as in. Do not continue to hit the ball after the point is over.

The tennis ball should be returned to the server preferably under the net. If that is not possible and you have to hit it back to the server over the net, make sure you look where your opponents are so you don't hit them.

Serving from in between the tramlines in singles is not allowed.

If players need to leave the court during a set (toilet or drink) they must get permission from the umpire or opponent.

Inappropriate behaviour is seen as bad court etiquette. e.g. to punch the air, high five, cheer, yell out etc. during a match. Obviously throwing racquets, hitting balls in anger, swearing and any similar acts will not be tolerated.

Please do not scribble, draw or write things on the result sheets or clipboards. Some things that we find on the clipboard are quite rude and offensive.

I am pleased to say that time wasting is getting less and less. Some matches do take a long time if there have been a couple of tie-break sets. It may not seem like it but...

- a minute or two fiddling around with the ball after the point is over;
- not hitting the ball back to the server making the server having to go fetch it;
- five minutes between each set because the person going on forgot to have a drink or go to the toilet;
- Sitting down between games during a set;

However, a lot of the things mentioned above cause time wasting. All of these 'minutes' can easily add up to 15 or 20 minutes over the length of a match. Maybe that 15 or 20 minutes may have been enough to finish the match. Players need to move quickly to get into position for the next point, change ends and pick up and return balls directly to the server.

### TIE-BREAK:

At 5 games all, a tie-breaker is played. The winner of the set is first to 7 points but must be ahead by 2 points. If the score gets to 6 all, keep playing until one side is ahead by 2 points. Serving continues in the same order as has been played during the set;

- the first server in the tie-break serves 1 point to the deuce court;
- the next server serves 2 points – the first point is to the advantage court and the second point is to the deuce court;
- the next server serves 2 points – the first point is to the advantage court and the second point is to the deuce court;
- the next server serves 2 points – the first one is to the advantage court THEN YOU CHANGE ENDS because the score will add up to 6 points; at the other end the server serves their second point into the deuce court.
- Now it's back to the first server. Every time the scores adds up to multiples of 6 you must change ends.

Tie-breakers are quite difficult at first, so please ask for help.

Enjoy your season.

*K.*