

THE CODE – THE PLAYERS’ GUIDE TO FAIR PLAY AND THE UNWRITTEN RULES OF TENNIS

The Code is not part of the ITF Rules of Tennis. Players should, however, follow the code. Some of the more common rules are listed below but for the full code go to

[www.usta.com/Active/The-Rules-of-Tennis/2518 The Code The Players Guide for Unofficial Matches](http://www.usta.com/Active/The-Rules-of-Tennis/2518-The-Code-The-Players-Guide-for-Unofficial-Matches)

Principles

2. *Points played in good faith are counted.* All points played in good faith stand. If during a point, a player realises that a mistake was made at the beginning (for example, service from the wrong court), the player shall continue playing the point. Shaking hands at the end of a match is an acknowledgment by the players that the match is over.

Making Calls

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.* When a match is played without officials, the players are responsible for making decisions, particularly for line calls.
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.
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.
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 realises 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.
14. *Partners’ disagreement on calls.* If one partner calls the ball out and the other partner sees the ball good, the ball is good.
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 after a ball has hit the court. 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.
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 doubles bounces.* A player shall promptly acknowledge when:
- A ball in play touches the player;
 - The player touches the net or opponent's court while a ball is in play;
 - The player hits a ball before it crosses the net;
 - The player deliberately carries or double hits a ball; or
 - A ball bounces more than once in the player's court.
- The opponent is not entitled to make these calls.
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.
25. *Service calls in doubles.* In doubles the receiver's partner should call the service line, and the receiver should call the sideline and the centre service line. Nonetheless, either partner may call a ball that either clearly sees.
26. *Service calls by serving team.* Neither the server nor server's partner shall make a fault call on the first service even if they think it is out because the receiver may be giving the server the benefit of the doubt.
27. *Service let calls.* Any player may call a service let. The call shall be made before the return of serve goes out of play or is hit by the server or the server's partner. If the serve is an apparent or near ace, any let shall be called promptly.
28. *Obvious faults.* A player shall not put into play or hit over the net an obvious fault. To do so constitutes rudeness and may even be a form of gamesmanship. On the other hand, if a player does not call a serve a fault and gives the opponent the benefit of a close call, the server is not entitled to replay the point.
29. *Receiver readiness.* The receiver shall play to the reasonable pace of the server. The receiver should make no effort to return a server when the receiver is not ready.
30. *Delays during service.* When the server's second service motion is interrupted by a ball coming onto the court, the server is entitled to two serves. When there is a delay between the first and second serves:
- The server gets one serve if the server was the cause of the delay;
 - The server gets two serves if the delay was caused by the receiver or if there was outside interference.

The time it takes to clear a ball that comes onto the court between the first and second serves is not considered sufficient time to warrant the server receiving two serves unless this time is so prolonged as to constitute an interruption. The receiver is the judge of whether the delay is sufficiently prolonged to justify giving the server two serves.

Scoring

31. *Server announces score.* The server shall announce the game score before the first point of a game and the point score before each subsequent point of the game.
32. *Disputes.* Disputes over the score shall be resolved by using one of the following methods, which are listed in the order of preference:

Count all points and games agreed upon by the players and replay only disputed points or games;
Play from a score mutually agreement to all players

Hindrance Issues

33. *Claiming a hindrance.* A player who claims a hindrance must stop play as soon as possible.

Ball Issues.

42. *Retrieving stray balls.* Each player is responsible for removing stray balls and other objects from the player's end of the court. A player shall not go behind an adjacent court to retrieve a ball or ask a player on an adjacent court to return a ball while a point is in play. When a player returns a ball the player shall wait until the point is over on the court where the ball is being returned and then return it directly to one of the players.

43. *Catching a ball.* If a player catches a ball in play before it bounces, the player loses the point regardless of where the player is standing.