

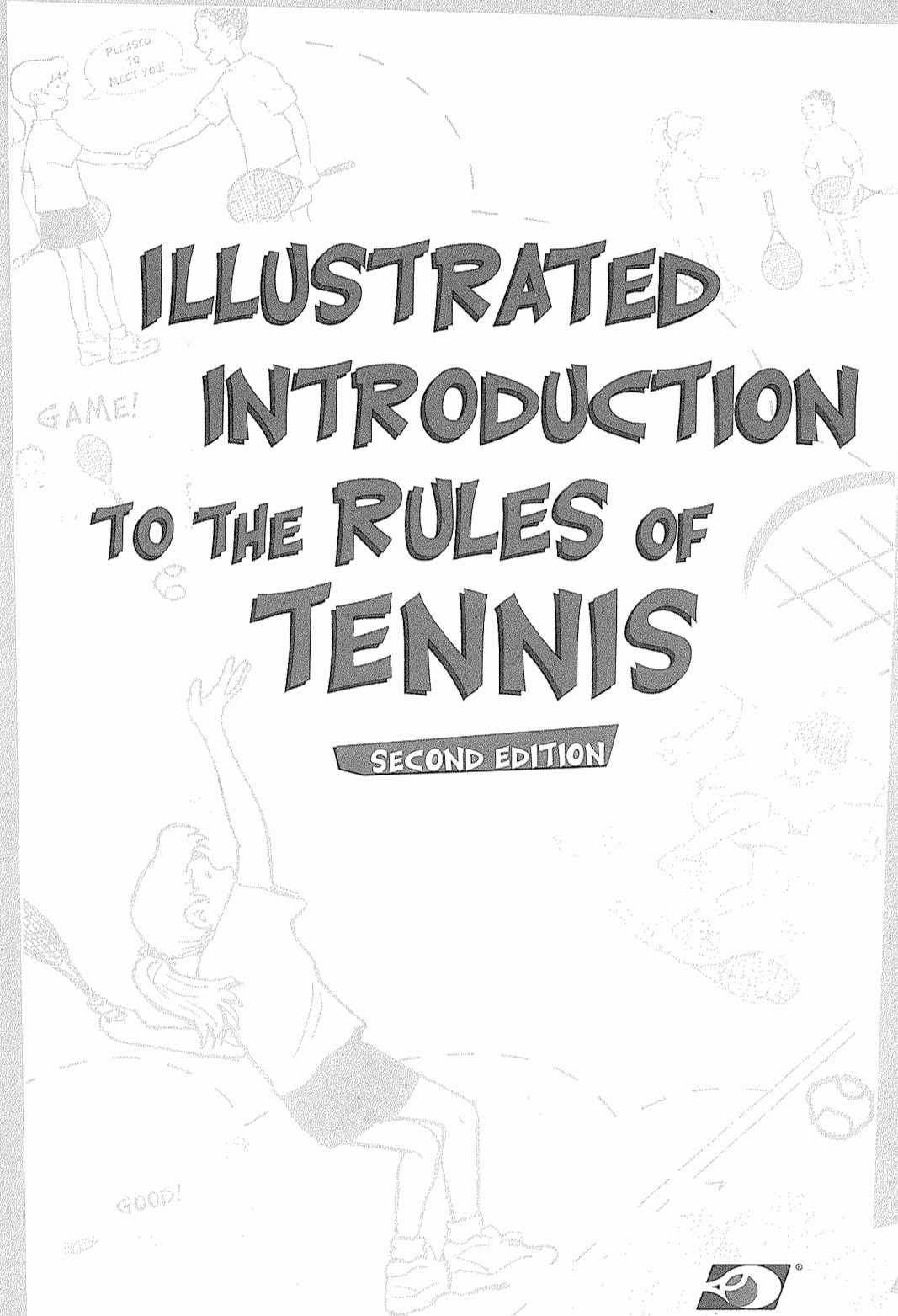


UNITED STATES TENNIS ASSOCIATION

70 WEST RED OAK LANE • WHITE PLAINS, NY 10604

© 2001 UNITED STATES TENNIS ASSOCIATION

11.6.115



ILLUSTRATED INTRODUCTION TO THE RULES OF TENNIS

SECOND EDITION



UNITED STATES TENNIS ASSOCIATION

**ILLUSTRATED
INTRODUCTION
TO THE RULES OF
TENNIS**

SECOND EDITION



UNITED STATES TENNIS ASSOCIATION

White Plains, NY • Flushing, NY • Key Biscayne, FL



UNITED STATES TENNIS ASSOCIATION

Illustrations by **ROBERTO SABAS**

The complete *Rules of Tennis* and *The Code* are available from the USTA Bookstore. To order your copies or for a catalog of publications, call 1-888-832-8291.

© 2001 by the United States Tennis Association Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any means without the written permission of the United States Tennis Association.

Change of ends: Players change ends at the start of the tie-break only if an odd-game changeover is due. During the tie-break, players change ends after every 6 points.

Rest periods: There are no rest periods permitted during the tie-break except that if an odd-game changeover is due, players may take the normal 90 seconds on the changeover.

TIE-BREAK SYSTEM OF SCORING

The tie-break system of scoring may be adopted as an alternative to traditional scoring, provided the decision is announced in advance of the match.

Set Tie-Break

The Set Tie-Break shall operate when the score reaches 6-all in a set (i.e., each player or team has won six games).

Singles: In a Set Tie-Break, the player who first wins 7 points shall win the game and the set, provided he leads by a margin of 2 points. If the score reaches 6 points-all, the game shall be extended until this margin has been achieved. Consecutive numerical scoring (i.e., 1, 2, 3, 4, etc.) shall be used throughout the tie-break game.

The player whose turn it is to serve shall be the Server for the first point. His opponent shall be the Server for the second and third points. Thereafter, each player shall serve alternately for two consecutive points until the winner of the game and set has been decided.

From the first point, each service shall be delivered alternately from the right and left service courts, beginning with the right court. Players change ends of the court after every 6 points and at the conclusion of the tie-break game.

Doubles: The same procedures for singles shall apply to doubles play. The player whose turn it is to serve shall be the Server for the first point. Thereafter, each player shall serve in rotation for two points, in the same order followed previously in that set.

Match Tie-Break

The Match Tie-Break is similar to the Set Tie-Break except that the winner is the first to reach 10 points by a margin of two. It may be used in lieu of a third or final set to determine the winner of the match.

Service Order: The player whose turn it would have been to serve first if a full game or set were played starts serving the tie-break. Either partner on a doubles team may serve first for their team.

Receiving Positions: A doubles team may change receiving positions at the start of the tie-break.

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Preparing for Play	2
Court Conduct	4
Starting a Game	8
Scoring: Game, Set, Match	10
Serving	13
Playing a Point	16
Calling Lines	18
Playing Doubles	20
Glossary of Tennis Terms	22
Tie-Break System of Scoring	26

TIE-BREAK GAME ("tie-breaker") - A system used to decide a set when the score is 6-all.

TOPSPIN - Forward rotation of the ball caused by hitting from low to high.

TOURNAMENT - A formal type of competition.

VOLLEY - During play, a stroke made by hitting the ball before it has touched the ground.

NET GAME - Play in the forecourt close to the net.

NO-AD - A system of scoring a game in which the first player to win four points wins the game. If the score reaches 40-40 (or 3-all), the next point decides the game.

OUT - A ball landing outside the boundary lines of the court or, on the serve, outside the boundary lines of the receiver's service court.

OVERHEAD - During play, a stroke made with the racquet above the head.

POACH - To hit a ball in doubles, usually at the net, that would normally have been played by one's partner.

POINT - The smallest unit of score, which is awarded to a player when the opponent does not make a good return.

RALLY - A series of good hits made successively by players. Also, the practice procedure in which players hit the ball back and forth to each other.

RECEIVER - The player who receives the service.

SERVE - Short for **Service**. It is the act of putting the ball into play for each point.

SERVER - The player who serves.

SERVICE BREAK - A game won by the opponent of the server.

SET - A scoring unit awarded to a player or team that has won: (a) six or more games and has a two-game lead, or (b) six games and the tie-break game when played at 6-all.

SHOT - The hitting of the ball across the net and into the court on the other side.

SINGLES - A match between two players.

SMASH - A hard overhead shot.

SPIN - Rotation of the ball.

STROKE - The act of striking the ball with the racquet.

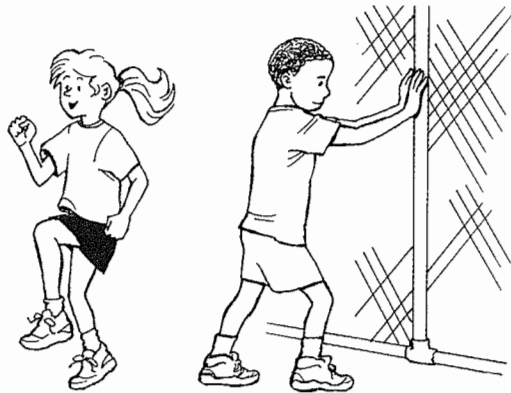
THIRTY - The score of a player who has won two points.

INTRODUCTION

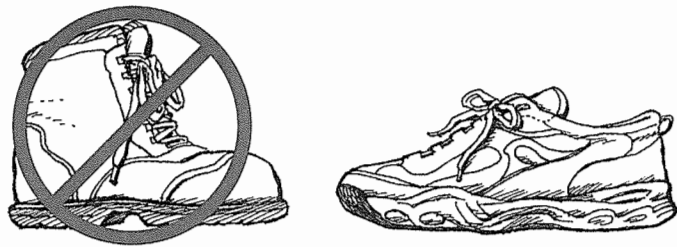
This new edition of the *Illustrated Introduction to the Rules of Tennis* takes the mystery out of a game where LOVE means zero and ALL means tied score. Aided by delightful illustrations, the *Illustrated Rules* explains in easy-to-understand language everything the beginner needs to know to start playing tennis—serving, scoring, the parts of a tennis court, how to call balls in or out, when you must allow the ball to bounce, and many other helpful points. It also provides tips on how to prepare for safe play and court etiquette. Of course, you should always seek the advice of your physician before beginning any exercise program.

This book is for anyone who wants to understand the basic rules of the game of tennis. By following the rules and treating opponents with respect, everyone wins because win or lose, everyone gets the most enjoyment out of the game.

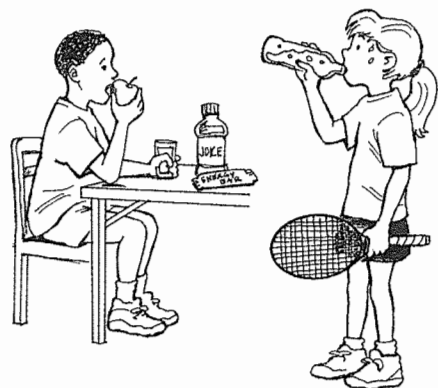
PREPARING FOR PLAY



Before starting play, warm up by jogging lightly or doing gentle calisthenics. This gets the heart pumping and makes the muscles warm and loose. Then do some gentle stretching exercises.



Wear tennis sneakers that provide good support. Other shoes may wear out quickly, hurt your feet, or damage the court.



Don't eat a heavy meal or food with lots of sugar before playing, and drink plenty of water or sports drinks throughout the game.

DOWN-THE-LINE SHOT - A ball that follows the path of a sideline.

DROP SHOT - A softly hit ball with lots of backspin that lands near the net after crossing it.

FAULT - A served ball that does not land in the proper court.

FIFTEEN - The score of a player who has won one point.

FLAT SHOT - A shot that travels in a straight line with little arc and little spin.

FOOT FAULT - A fault called against the server for stepping on the baseline or into the court with either foot during delivery of the service.

FORECOURT - The area between the service line and the net.

FOREHAND - The stroke used to return balls hit to the right of a right-handed player and to the left of a left-handed player.

FORTY - The score of a player who has won three points.

GAME - The part of a set that is completed when one player or side either wins four points and is at least two points ahead of his opponent, or wins two points in a row after deuce.

GOOD BALL - Applies to a ball in play that lands in the court (or on any part of a line forming the boundary of the court).

GROUND STROKES - Strokes made after the ball has bounced, either forehand or backhand.

HALF-VOLLEY - The stroke made by hitting a ball immediately after it has touched the ground.

LET - A point played over because of interference. Also, a serve that hits the top of the net but is otherwise good, in which case that serve is taken again.

LOB - A stroke that lifts the ball high in the air, usually over the head of the net player.

LOB VOLLEY - A volleying stroke hit over the head of the opponent.

LOVE - A score of zero.

MATCH - The overall contest, usually decided by the best two out of three sets.

GLOSSARY OF TENNIS TERMS

ACE - A ball that is served so well that the opponent cannot return it.

AD - Short for **Advantage**. It is the point scored after Deuce. If the serving side scores, it is **Ad in**; if the receiving side scores, it is **Ad out**.

ALL - An even score: 30-all, 3-all, etc.

ALLEY - The area between the singles and doubles sidelines on each side of the court. (The singles court is made wider for doubles play by the addition of the alley.)

APPROACH - The shot hit by a player just before coming to the net that puts the opponent on the defensive.

BACKCOURT - The area between the service line and the baseline.

BACKHAND - The stroke used to return balls hit to the left side of a right-handed player and to the right side of a left-handed player.

BACKSPIN - The backward rotation of the ball caused by hitting high to low under the ball. Also, slice or cut.

BASELINE - The court's back line that runs parallel to the net and perpendicular with the sidelines.

CHOKE-UP - To grip the racquet up toward the head.

CROSSCOURT SHOT - A ball hit across the court diagonally from one side to the other.

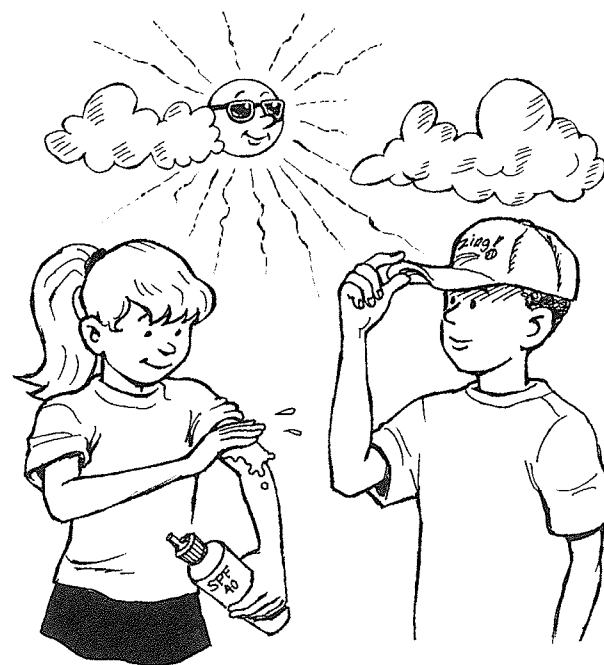
DEEP SHOT - A shot that bounces near the baseline (near the service line on a serve).

DEUCE - A score of 40-40 (the score is tied and each side has won at least three points).

DEUCE COURT - The right court, so called because on a deuce score the ball is served there.

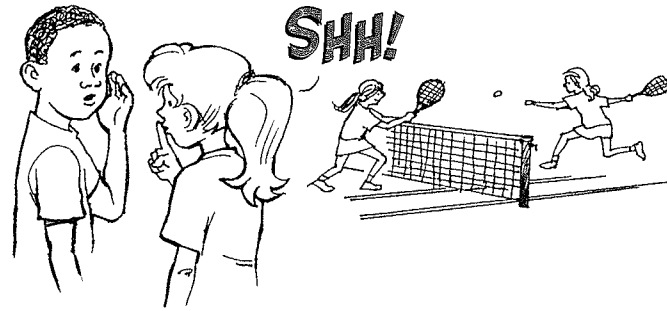
DOUBLE FAULT - The failure of both service attempts. The server loses the point.

DOUBLES - A match with four players, two on each team.

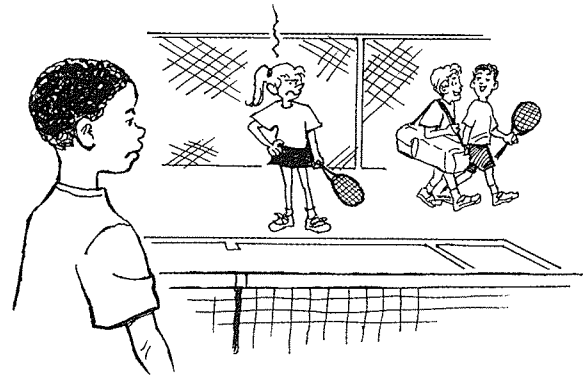


Use sunscreen and wear a hat where appropriate.

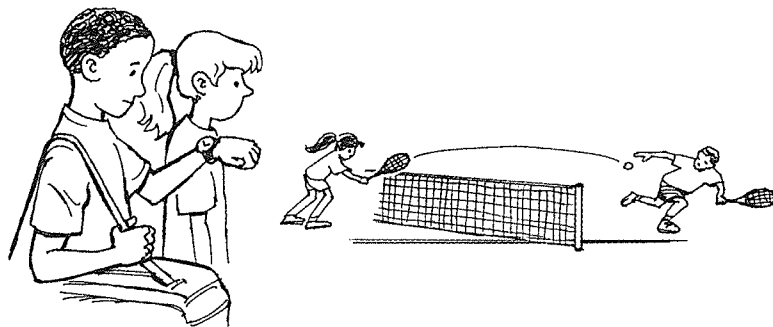
COURT CONDUCT



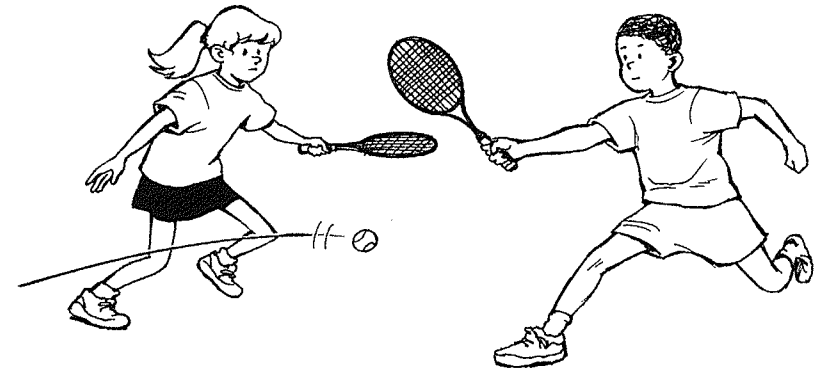
Talk quietly when standing near tennis courts that are in use.



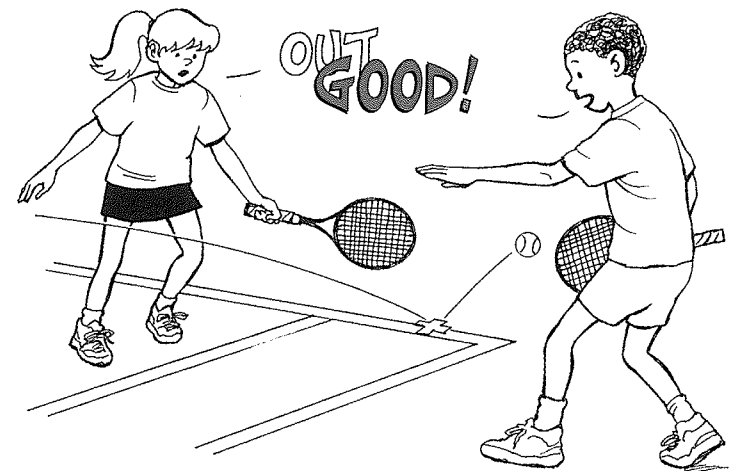
Don't walk across the back of another court until the players have finished playing a point. This can be distracting to them and affect their play.



If people are using your court, don't disturb them until their time is up.

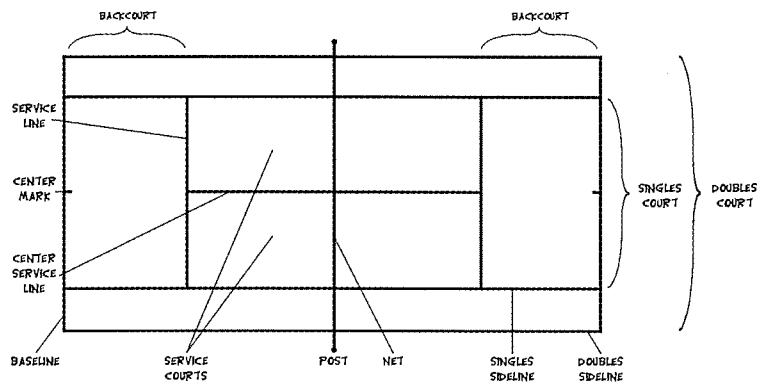


In returning shots (except the serve), either member of a doubles team may hit the ball. The partners don't have to alternate hits.



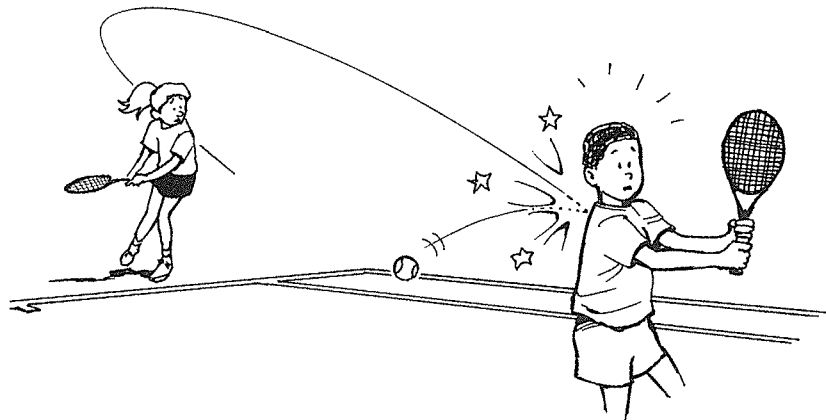
You should help your partner with line calls. If you think a ball your partner called out actually hit the line, you must call it good.

PLAYING DOUBLES



In doubles, you and a partner play against a team of two players on the other side of the net, using the full court between the baselines and the doubles sidelines.

If you are on the team that serves first, either you or your partner may begin the match by serving the first ball. Either person on the opposing team may receive the first ball in the right (or deuce) court. When it is your team's turn to receive, you can choose which player will receive the first ball. You must then keep the same order of serving and the same sides for receiving for the whole set.



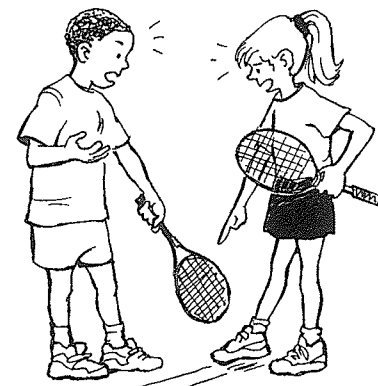
If the server's partner is hit with the serve, a fault is called. If the receiver's partner is hit with the serve, the server wins the point.



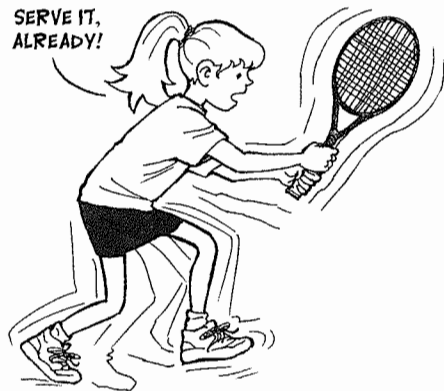
When you're ready to play, put jackets, water bottles, and any other items you have with you out of everyone's way.



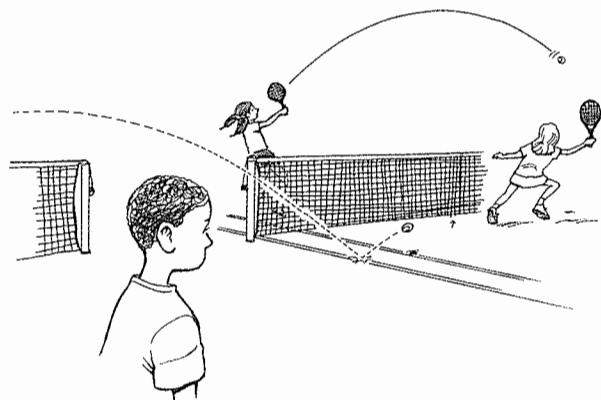
Keep a positive outlook throughout the match. Remember, you're playing for the fun of it.



Keep the game moving. Don't stall and waste time between points. Accept all calls made by your opponent—without arguing or sulking.

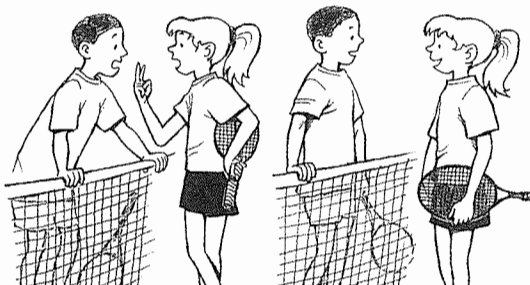


Don't distract your opponent on purpose by unnecessary movements or talking.



If your ball goes into the next court, wait until the players on that court finish the point before you ask for the ball. If a ball comes onto your court, return it as soon as play has stopped on both courts.

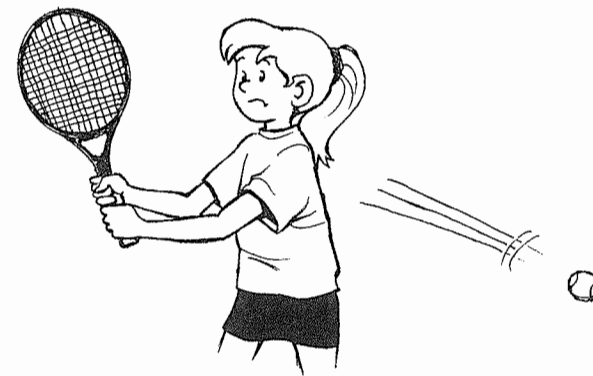
40 LOVE 30 - 15 30 LOVE 30 LOVE



If there is a disagreement on the score, go back to the last score that you both agree on, or spin a racquet. Both players must accept the score put forward by the person who wins the racquet spin.



If later on you see by a mark on the court that a ball you played was out, you can't change your mind and call it out. The point stands as played.

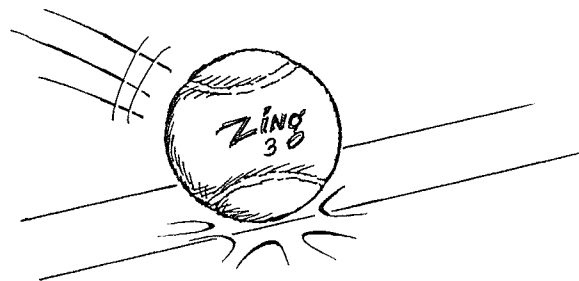


If a ball goes past you and you can't see where it lands, you must give the point to your opponent.

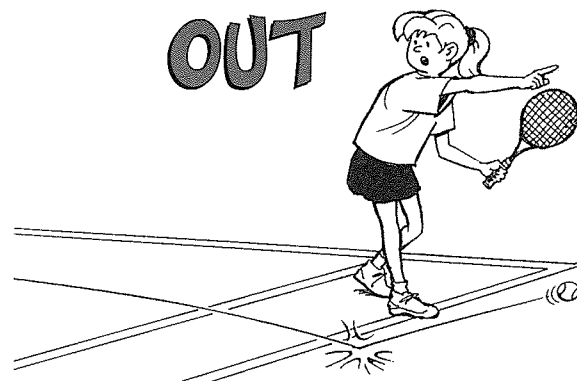


You lose the point if you catch the ball on the fly, no matter where you think it might land and even if you are standing outside of the court.

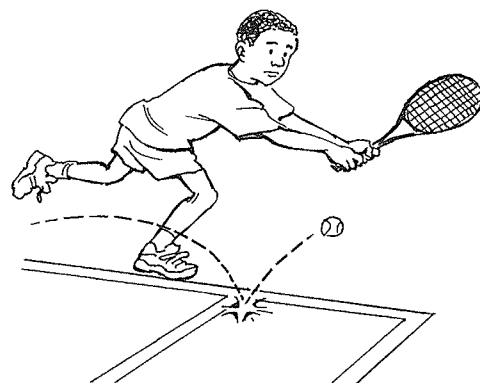
CALLING LINES



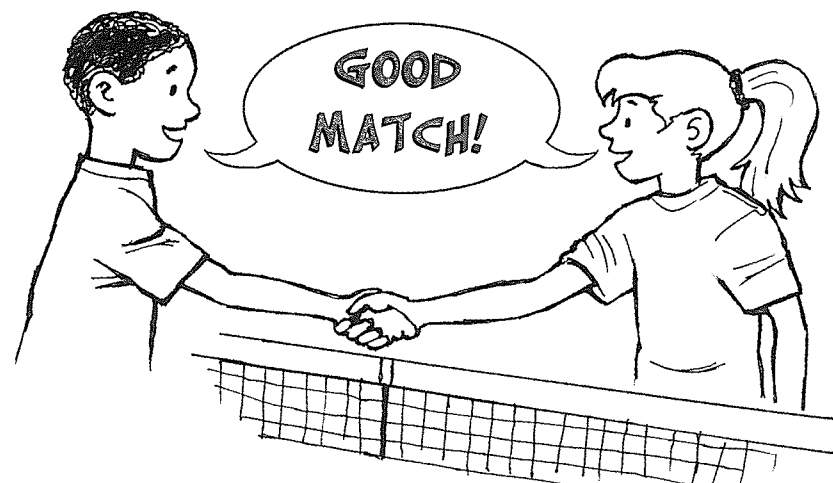
If the ball touches any part of the line, it is good. Call the ball out only if you clearly see a space between where the ball hits and the line.



You should make calls for balls hit to your end of the court. Out calls should be made immediately.



If you can't see that a ball is definitely out, you should continue playing the point.



After the last point, come to the net quickly and shake hands. Let your opponent know that you appreciated the match, no matter what the outcome. If you and your opponent follow the rules of tennis and treat each other with respect, you'll both get the most enjoyment from the game, regardless of who wins.

STARTING A GAME

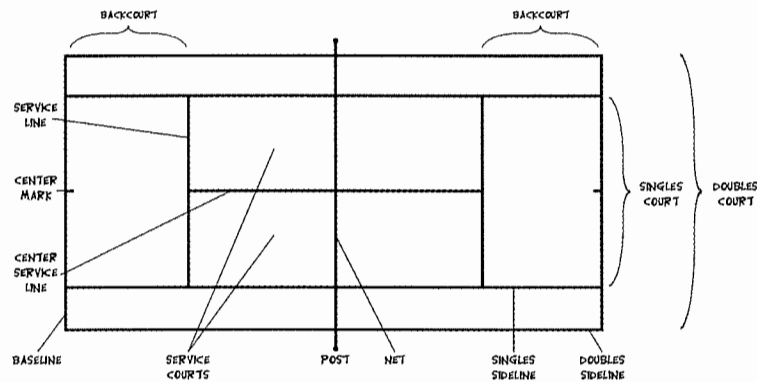
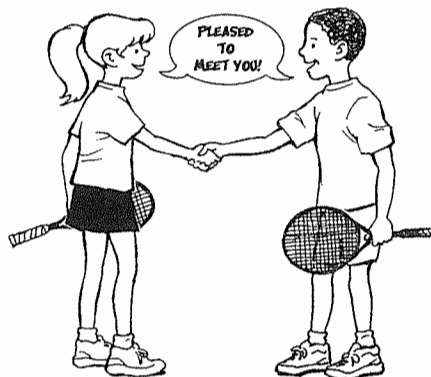
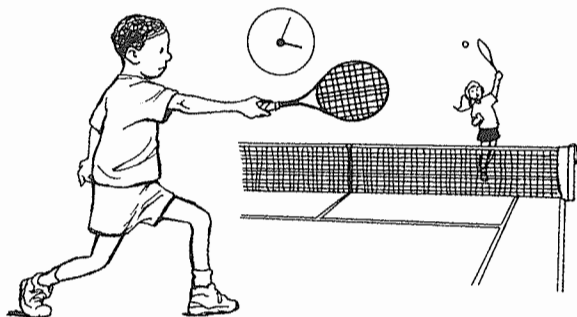


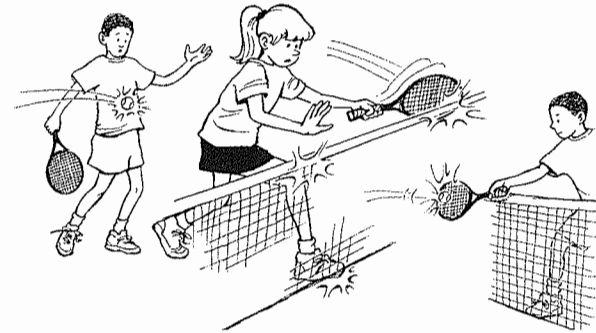
Diagram of a tennis court. In singles play, you use the area within the baselines and the singles sidelines.



Introduce yourself to your opponent.



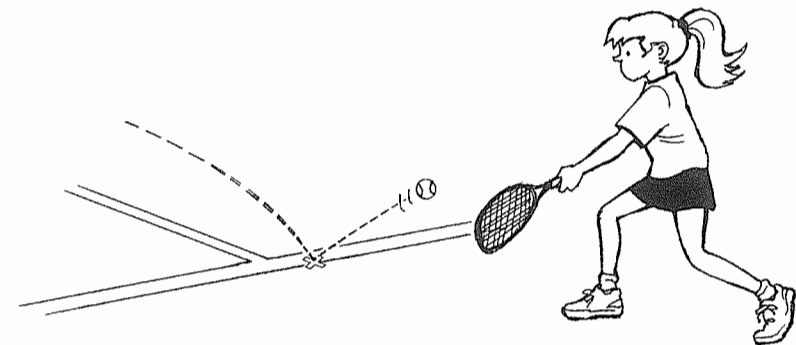
Limit the warm-up before a match to approximately five minutes. Hit the ball back and forth with your opponent. Then each player should take practice serves before play begins.



You also lose the point if the ball touches you or your clothing, if you or your racquet touches the net or post, if you hit a ball before it passes the net, or if you deliberately hit the ball more than once. You're on your honor to make these calls against yourself.

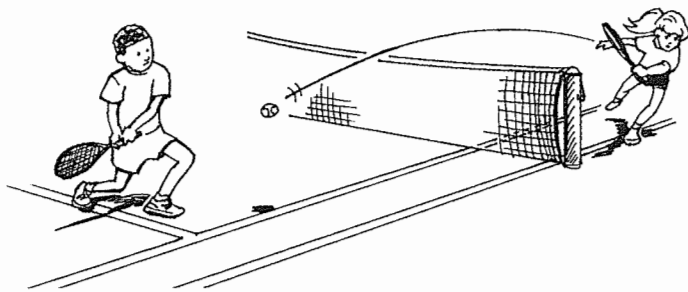


A ball is still in play if it happens to touch the net or post except on a serve.

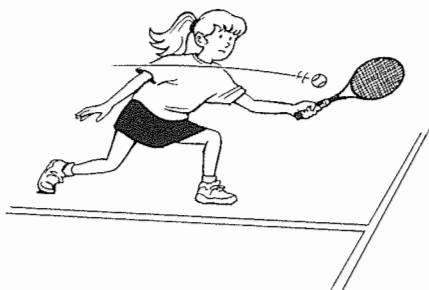


Continue to play a ball that lands on or touches a boundary line of the court. The ball is good.

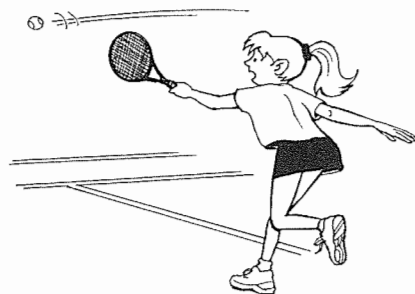
PLAYING A POINT



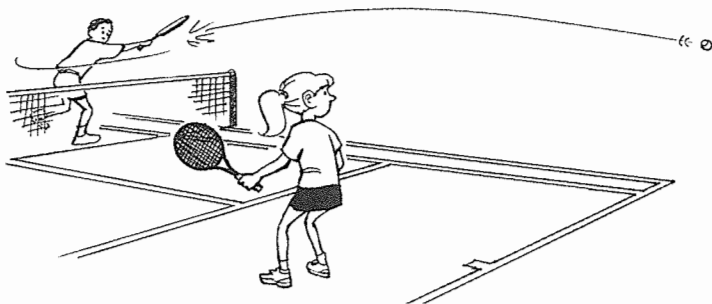
Except when serving, you may stand anywhere—in or out of the court—on your side of the net.



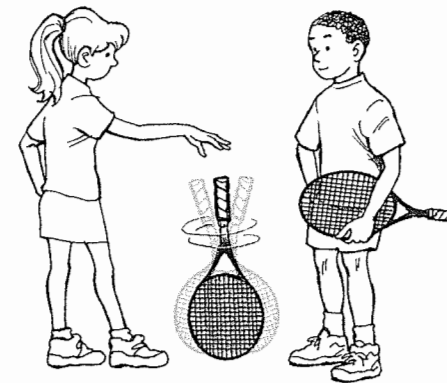
Except when receiving serve, you have the choice of hitting the ball on your side before it bounces or after one bounce. When receiving serve, you must let the ball bounce once before hitting it.



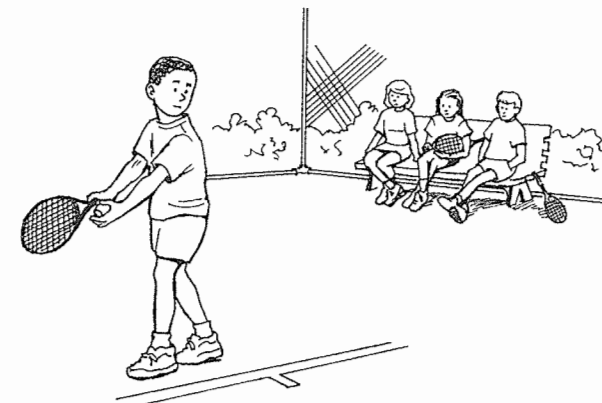
You win the point if you hit the ball over the net into the court on the other side and your opponent doesn't return it.



You lose the point if you hit the ball into the net or out of the court (unless your opponent plays the ball in the air before it lands outside the court boundaries).



To see who serves first, spin your racquet or toss a coin. If you win the coin toss or racquet spin, you may: (1) choose to serve or receive first, (2) choose which end of the court you want to start playing on, or (3) require your opponent to choose first.



To put the ball in play for each point, one player serves the ball from behind the baseline. That player is called the **Server**; the player who receives the serve is called the **Receiver**.

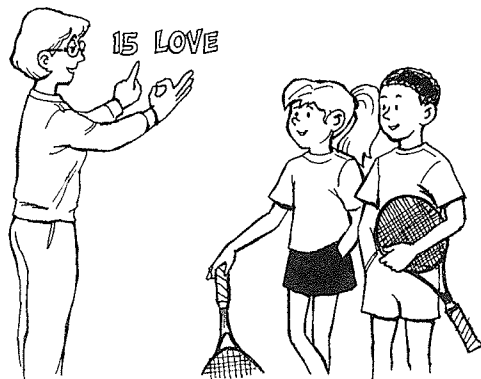
SCORING: GAME, SET, MATCH

When you're ready to begin playing a game, you'll need to know how to score. This may seem a bit confusing at first, but once you master what each point is worth and a few terms, you'll have no problem.

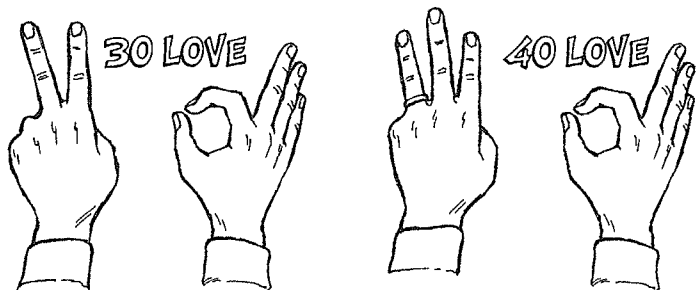
The first thing you need to know is that tennis players play a **Match**, which consists of **Sets**, which in turn consist of **Games**. So we'll start by explaining scoring for a Game.

Scoring a Game by the Traditional Scoring Method

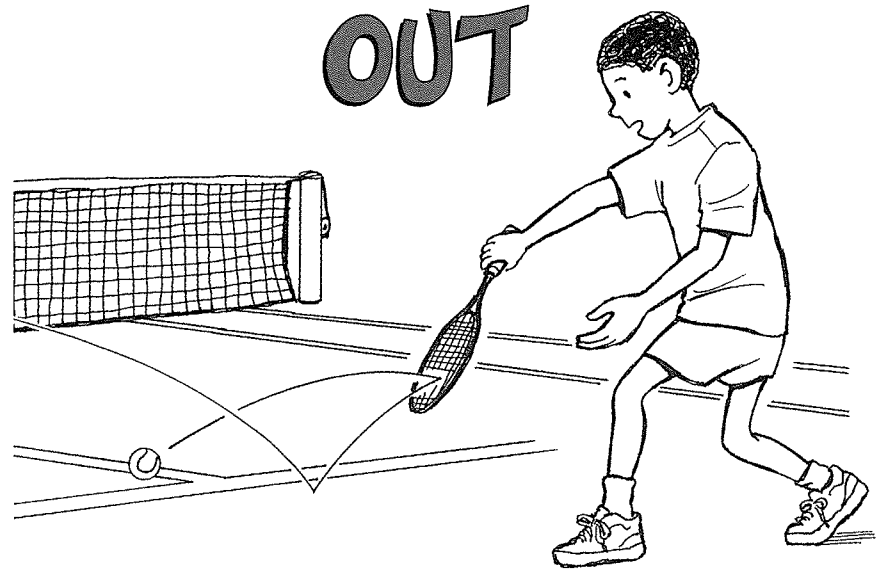
Two terms you should know right up front are **Love** and **All**. In tennis, **Love** means zero and **All** means the score is tied.



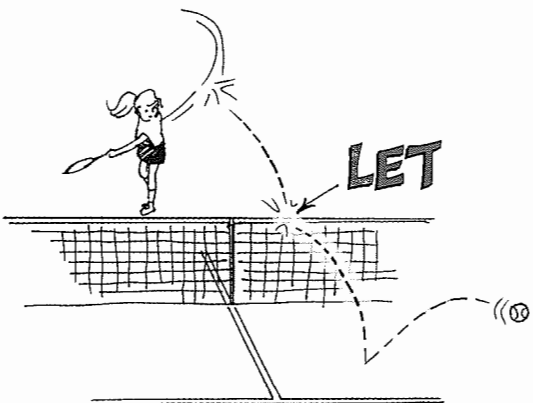
So here's an example of how scoring works. The first player to win a point has a score of 15; the other player who has no points has a score of Love (or zero). The server's score is always said first. So 15-Love means the server's score is 15 and the receiver's is 0.



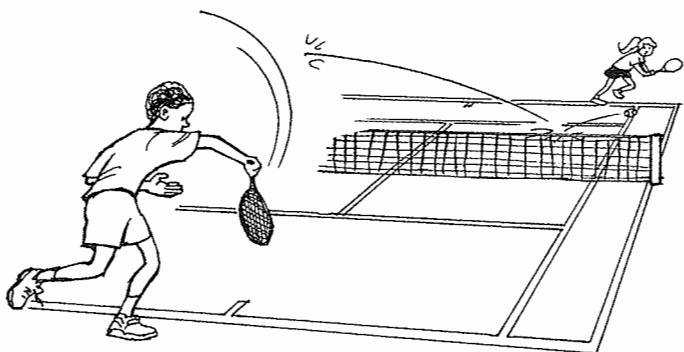
If the server also wins the next point, the score is 30-Love. If the server wins the third and fourth points, the score is 40-Love and finally **Game**. To win a game when using the traditional scoring method, a player must win by at least two points.



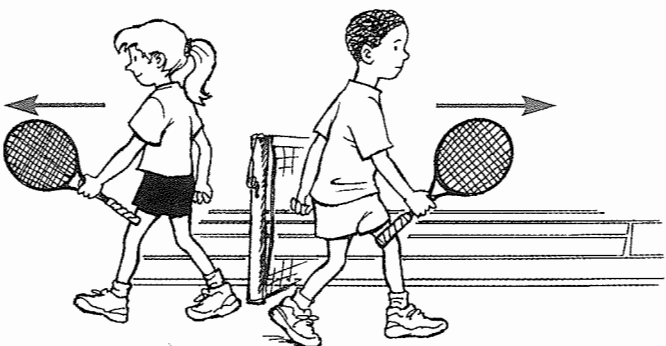
When receiving a serve, if it is out, don't return it unless you can't avoid doing so. Just tap it gently into the net or let it go behind you.



If you serve a ball that hits the top of the net before bouncing into the correct service court, it's called a **Let**. You may take that serve again. If it hits the net and then goes outside the correct service court, it's a fault. A served ball hitting the post is also a fault.



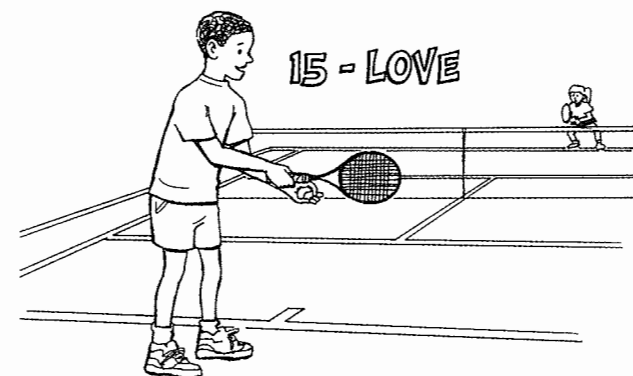
When serving the next point, stand behind the baseline between the center mark and the left sideline. The ball must go across the net into the receiver's left service court.



After you have served one game in a set, you switch ends of the court and now receive your opponent's serve for one game. You switch ends again after the third, fifth, and every following odd-numbered game.



If the receiver wins any of the points, the scoring changes. It may go Love-15 (server, 0; receiver, 15), 15-All (server, 15; receiver, 15), 15-30, 15-40, **Game**.



The server should call the game's score before each point is served in a loud enough voice so that the receiver can hear it.

DEUCE

Remember that to win a game by the traditional scoring method, a player must win by at least two points. Here's where the term "**Deuce**" comes in. If each player wins three points, the score is tied at 40-40. This score is called **Deuce**. The player who wins the next point after deuce has the **Advantage**, called **Ad in** for the server or **Ad out** for the receiver. If this same player wins the following point, she wins the game; if not, the score goes back to Deuce. The first player to score two points in a row after a deuce score wins the game.

Alternative System for Scoring a Game—No-Ad Scoring

In No-Ad Scoring, everything is the same up to Deuce (a score of 40-40). At this point, the receiver decides whether she wishes to receive the serve from the right half or left half of the court. The player who wins the next point after deuce wins the game. **Note:** Score-calling in No-Ad Scoring may be either in conventional terms (Zero, 15, 30, 40, Game) or in simple numbers (Zero, 1, 2, 3, Game).

Scoring Terms

Love:	Zero
All:	Tied score except when Deuce
Deuce:	A score of 40-40
Ad in:	Server needs one more point to win
Ad out:	Receiver needs one more point to win

Scoring a Game

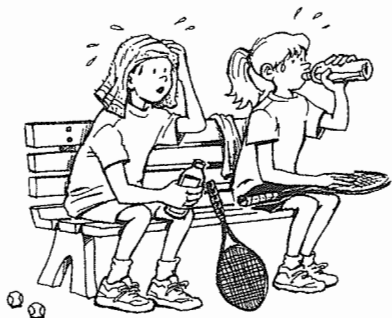
Points	Score
0	Love
1	15
2	30
3	40
4	Game

The player must win by two points in the traditional scoring method or by one point in No-Ad scoring.

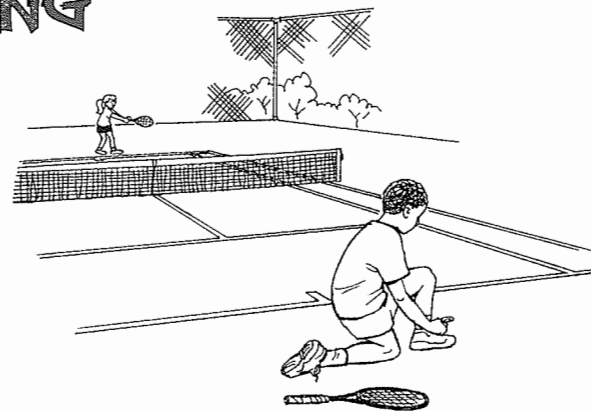
Scoring a Set and the Match

The first player to win six games and to be ahead by at least two games wins a **Set**. If the score reaches six games all, you may play a **Tie-break**. In a tie-break, the first player to reach seven points with a margin of two points wins the game. Whoever wins the tie-break wins the set. The first player to win two sets in the best of three wins the **Match**.

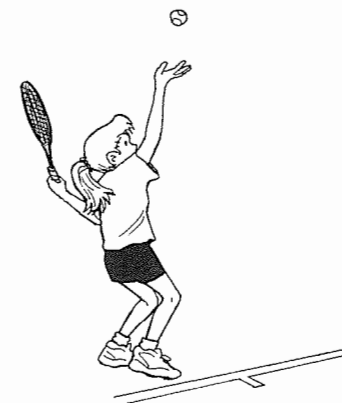
This is the most common method of scoring a set and match. Alternative methods are sometimes used in high school or college matches, indoor tennis matches, and in other situations when time is a factor.



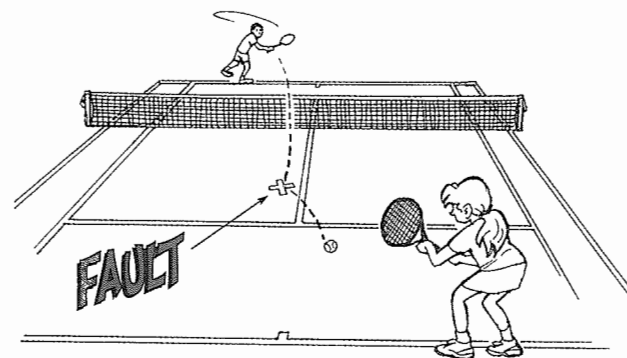
SERVING



Before serving, be sure that the receiver is ready to play.



When serving the first point, stand behind the baseline between the center mark and the right sideline. When serving, you're not allowed to step on or over the baseline before hitting the ball.



The first serve must go over the net into the receiver's right service court. If your first serve doesn't go into the correct court, it's called a **Fault**. Don't worry. You get a second chance. If you miss the second serve, your opponent wins that point.