

## THE LAWS OF RACKETS THE LAWS OF THE SINGLES GAME

1. The game is 15 up, that is, the player who first wins 15 points while serving/hand-in wins the game, except when:
  - a. The score reaches 13 all for the first time in any game when hand-out – the receiver – may, before the next point has been started, set the game to 5, or to 3, i.e., the first player winning 5 or 3 points wins the game.
  - b. Similarly at 14 all for the first time in any game hand-out may set the game to 3 (this cannot occur if set has been declared at 13 all).
  - c. In both the above examples, i.e., at 13 all or 14 all hand-out may choose no set. This means the first player winning 2 points at 13 all or 1 point at 14 all wins the game.
2. When a player fails to serve or to return the ball in accordance with the laws of the game, his opponent wins the rally. A rally won by hand-in – the server – scores a point. A rally won by hand-out – the receiver – makes him hand-in.
3. The ball after being served, whether the service is good or not – unless it is called a double fault by the marker – is in play until it has bounced twice, or until after being properly returned it has failed to hit the front wall above the board, or until it has touched a player, until a player asks for a let ball, or until it has gone out of court.
4. Either player may elect to knock up separately; providing that they notify (verbally or by email with acknowledgement) their intention to knock up separately to their opponent and the tournament stewards within an hour of the later of either their or their opponent's previous match finishing. If a player elects to knock up separately, the other player shall have the right to knock up with any person so long as such person is not officiating in the relevant match. Once a player has elected to knock up separately he shall not be allowed to knock up with any other person. The right to knock up first, if knocking up separately, shall be decided by the spin of a racquet. If the players knock up together a maximum of five minutes shall be permitted; if they knock up separately each player shall be permitted a maximum of five minutes. The Marker or Referee shall warn the players when two minutes and one minute is left in the knock up.
5. The right to serve first in a match shall be decided by the spin of a racquet.
6. At the beginning of each game and of each hand the server may serve from either box, but must thereafter alternate as long as he remains hand-in, or until the end of the game. If the server serves from the wrong box by mistake and if this is not immediately noticed by the marker and/or referee, there shall be no penalty and the service shall count as good except that hand-out may, if he does not attempt to take the service, ask that it be served from the correct box.
7. Hand-in serves his hand out and loses the right to serve;
  - a. If the ball is served on to or below the board, or out of court, or against any part of the court before it strikes the front wall.
  - b. If he attempts to and fails to strike the ball, or strikes the ball more than once.
  - c. If he serves two consecutive faults, i.e., a double fault.

N.B. The ball is out of court when it touches the front, sides or back of the court above the area prepared for play, or when it touches, or passes over, any cross bars or other parts of the roof or touches the electric light fittings of the court.
8. A service is a fault (except as provided by Law 7);
  - a. If at the moment of striking the ball the server fails to have one foot at least on the floor within the line surrounding the service box. This is a foot fault.
  - b. If the ball is served on to, or below, the service or cut line on the front wall.

- c. If the ball served, first bounces on or before the short line (called short by the marker).
  - d. If the ball served, first bounces in the wrong receiving half of the court, i.e., left of the court from the left-hand box and right from the right-hand box.
  - e. If the ball served, first bounces on the half court line.
9. Hand-out may take a fault unless it has already been called a double fault by the marker. If he attempts to take a first service, the service becomes a valid start to the rally, fault or not. For the avoidance of doubt, a second service that is called a double fault cannot be taken by hand-out.
10. A player wins a rally:
- a. Under Law 7.
  - b. If his opponent fails to make a legitimate return of the ball in play.
  - c. If the ball in play touches his opponent, or anything he wears or carries (other than his racquet when in the act of striking), except:
    - (1) As is otherwise provided by Laws 12, 13 and 15.
    - (2) In the case of a fault which hand-out does not attempt to take.
11. A return is good if the striker returns the ball above the board without it previously touching the floor, or the back wall, or any part of the striker's body or clothing, before it has bounced twice and if he does not hit the ball twice or hit it out of court. *No player may attempt to return the ball by boasting it off the back wall.*
12. If the ball, after being struck and before reaching the front wall, hits the striker's opponent, or his opponent's racquet or anything he wears or carries, a let shall be allowed providing the return would have been good. If the return would not have been good in the opinion of the referee or the marker the striker shall lose the rally. N.B. Play shall cease even if the ball goes up.
13. Notwithstanding anything contained in these Laws, a let may be allowed, on appeal by either player, in the following circumstances:
- a. If the player is prevented from obtaining a fair view of the ball, or from reaching the ball, or from striking at the ball.
  - b. If, owing to the position of the striker, his opponent is unable to avoid being touched by the ball.
  - c. If the ball in play touches any other ball in the court.
  - d. If the player refrains from hitting the ball owing to a reasonable fear of injuring his opponent.
  - e. If the player in the act of striking the ball touches his opponent or his racquet.  
N.B. No let shall be allowed:
    - (1) In respect of any stroke which a player attempts to make, unless in making the stroke, he or his racquet touches his opponent.
    - (2) Unless the striker could have made a good return.
14. An appeal to the referee may be made against any decision of the marker provided that with regard to service the following Laws shall apply:
- a. A let shall be allowed if the receiver is not ready and does not in any way attempt to take the service.
  - b. If the receiver attempts to take a first service no appeal may be made, but when he does not attempt to take it:
    - (1) If he appeals against the marker's call of play and the referee allows the appeal, the service becomes a fault.
    - (2) If the server appeals to the referee against a call of fault and the marker's decision is reversed, a let shall be allowed.

- c. When the marker calls fault to a second service, the receiver shall not attempt to take it. If the marker's decision is reversed on appeal by the server to the referee a let shall be allowed.
  - d. When the marker calls play and therefore deems good a second service, the receiver may appeal to the referee even if he has taken the service. If the appeal is upheld the receiver is awarded the rally and immediately becomes the server or hand-in.
- N.B. No appeal shall be made by the server (or receiver if he has taken that particular service) against foot faults called by the marker or referee.
15. If the player strikes at and misses a ball, he may make further attempts to return it but the following provisions shall apply:
    - a. If the ball accidentally touches his opponent or his racquet, the player shall lose the rally unless he could have made a good return in which case a let may be allowed by the referee.
    - b. In all other respects the laws shall apply as if the player had not struck at the ball.
  16. If in the course of play the marker calls "not up" or "out of court" or "time" or "down" or if any player appeals for a let, the rally shall cease immediately. If the marker's call of "not up" or "out of court" or "down" is reversed on appeal to the referee, a let shall be allowed.
  17. If a let is allowed, the service or rally shall be void and the server must serve again from the same side. A let does not annul a previous fault.
  18. After the first service is delivered, play shall be continuous, so far as is practical. During a game players must consult with the referee before they leave the court except between games when two minutes shall be allowed. The referee may suspend play for bad light or unsuitable court conditions or for other reasons at his discretion. In the event of play being suspended for the day the match shall restart from the point at which it was suspended, with a knock up being allowed as under Law 4.
  19. After the delivery of service (i.e., after the start of a rally), no appeal shall be made for anything that occurred before the service was delivered, except by appeal to the referee to adjust the score if this is incorrectly called by the marker.
  20. A new ball may only be requested by the receiver, i.e., when he is hand-out but not between the first and second service or after a let has been given. The server may appeal to the referee who may change the ball if he considers it unfit for play.
  21. There must be a new ball to begin each game.
  22. If the referee is unable to decide an appeal he must allow a let to be played, except on service line or short line appeals (see also Duties of the Referee No.11).
  23. The referee is responsible for calling foot faults; he may also nominate one or two umpires specifically to watch for these, to help him keep the score and from which side the service is to be delivered.
  24. Each player must get out of the way, after making a stroke, as much and as quickly as possible. He must do all he can to:
    - a. Give his opponent a good view of the ball.
    - b. Avoid interfering with him in getting to, and striking at, the ball.
    - c. Leave him, as far as the striker's position allows, free to play the ball to any part of the court, i.e., directly to the front wall or side walls.

When a player fails to do any of these things, the referee may on appeal, or without waiting for an appeal, award a let, or award the rally to his opponent, if in his opinion this is fair under the circumstances and taking into account what would have taken place had there been no such interference.
  25. In the case of consistent interference by one player with another/or in the case of negligent or dangerous play the referee may halt play irrespective of any appeal being made and award the rally against the offending player.



7. If a player does not serve when he should do so and one of his opponents serves instead, the player loses his right of service, unless it is claimed before he, or his partner, has attempted to take a service, or before a point has been scored.
8. In each pair one player shall receive service from the left and one player shall receive serve from the right. This side of receiving service may only be changed at the start of each game but before the first rally has begun.
9. Appeals against service faults may be made by the striker receiving service as in Law 14 (Singles) and this right of appeal shall also apply to his partner when he himself is not receiving.
10. Hand-in scores a point if the player in the right-hand court returns or attempts to return a service which has been served to the left-hand court, and vice versa.
11. While the service is being delivered, the player who is receiving that service may stand where he pleases. His partner must stand behind the server, in such a position that the server has an unimpeded swing. The server's partner, at the moment of service, must stand near the back wall and in the court into which the service is not being delivered.
12. Law 24 shall be amended so that any player in the four handed game after his partner has played a stroke must get out of the way as much and as quickly as possible. He must do all he can to:
  - a. Give his opponents a good view of the ball.
  - b. Avoid interfering with an opponent getting to, and striking at, the ball.
  - c. Leave an opponent free to play the ball to any part of the court, i.e. directly to the front or the side walls.

When a player fails to do any of these things, the Referee may on appeal, or without waiting for an appeal, award a let, or award the rally to the players' opponents, if in his opinion this is fair under the circumstances and taking into account what would have taken place had there been no such interference. [This is to stop 'blocking' via court positioning, particularly not dropping back and is slightly different to obstruction]

**Note: In these Laws of Singles and Doubles the following are applicable:**

- (1) The masculine shall include the feminine.
- (2) **Racquets.** Unless, exceptionally, the Association approves another specification, racquet frames shall be made entirely of wood or wood based derivatives, but may incorporate laminates made of other materials and essential adhesives, but not of any mineral substances. Strengthening of eyelets is permitted using only natural cellulose based substances, but the frames should not be otherwise be stiffened. The internal dimensions of the head shall not exceed 200mm in length by 173mm in width and the overall length of the racquet shall not exceed 760mm.
- (3) **Balls.** The ball shall not be less than 35mm and not more than 39mm in diameter. They shall not be less than 25gms or more than 29gms in weight or as otherwise approved by the Association.
- (4) **Definitions.** The meanings of the following expressions are:
 

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| <b>Board</b>                 | The board across the lower part of the front wall.   |
| <b>Court</b>                 | The whole building in which the game of rackets is played; the back of the court is divided by a <i>half court line</i> into two halves, called the right (or forehand) court, and the left (or backhand) court. |
| <b>Cut Line/Service Line</b> | The line drawn on the front wall.  |
| <b>Half Court Line</b>       | The Line of the floor, drawn from the short line to the back wall.   |
| <b>Hand-in</b>               | The player who serves.   |

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| <b>Hand-out</b>    | The player who receives the service.   |
| <b>To Serve</b>    | To start the ball in play by striking at it with a racquet.                              |
| <b>A Rally</b>     | The ensuing play after a serve.  |
| <b>Service Box</b> | The small squares on each side of the court from which the service is delivered.         |
| <b>Short Line</b>  | The line drawn across the floor parallel to the front wall.                              |
| <b>Striker</b>     | The player whose turn it is to play and strike the ball after it has hit the front wall. |
| <b>Trough</b>      | The channel under the board.   |

Drawn up by Major Spens, 1890  
Revised by the Tennis, Rackets and Fives Association, 1911  
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Revised, 1966  
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Revised, 2010  
Revised, 2011  
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### **CONDUCT OF PLAYERS**

1. It is the responsibility of players to conduct themselves, both on and off the court, in a manner consistent with the etiquette, sportsmanship and exemplary standards of behaviour and dress expected of the sport. For the avoidance of doubt at no time shall any player, official or anyone connected with the game bring the game into disrepute in any way whatsoever
2. In particular players are to:
  - a. Abide by the laws and spirit of the game.
  - b. Accept the decision of referees, markers and other officials without question or protest.
  - c. Exercise self control at all times.
  - d. Treat their opponents and fellow participants with due respect at all times and neither seek to, nor behave in any way likely to, distract, intimidate or belittle them.
  - e. Accept success, failure, victory or defeat with good grace and without excessive display of emotion.
  - f. Not behave in any way likely to bring the game into disrepute.

### **DUTIES OF THE REFEREE**

The Duties of the Referee are:

1. To ensure that the match court is empty five minutes before the start of the official

knock-up, which will commence at the time scheduled for the start of the match. Any unofficial knock-ups that take place before the start of official knock-ups shall be at the sanction of the Referee and the Referee shall ensure that equal opportunity for an unofficial knock-up is offered to all players.

2. To supervise the knock-up in accordance with Singles Law 4 and Doubles Law 2 and inform players when two minutes and one minute remain.
3. To make decisions firmly, clearly and without delay when a player appeals requesting a let or a not up or against a call by the marker.
4. To keep a check of the score.
5. To keep a check of the side for service.
6. To prevent time-wasting and unnecessary leaving of the court.
7. To call foot faults.
8. To condemn the ball if in his opinion it is unfit for play.
9. At all times to guard against dangerous play (with reference to Law 25 (Singles) and in particular to insist that a server draws back after serving and *not across the court*. After warning, the referee may award the rally to hand-out if in the opinion of the referee the server (hand-in) is intentionally attempting to gain advantage by allowing insufficient room to his opponent.
10. To suspend play if the playing conditions become dangerous.
11. To give decisions on service appeals by answering positively or negatively. When in doubt the referee should support the marker's decision.
12. To agree to artificial lighting being turned on if any player requests it.
13. Once a match is in progress, the Referee shall at all times ensure that play is continuous, although he shall apply the following provisions in the event of illness or injury occurring during the match:
  - a. A player who suffers a fatigue-related ailment or injury that is not a muscle injury or a blood injury may be allowed, at the Referee's sole discretion, a "time" break of up to 2 minutes but must thereafter continue play immediately or concede the match. For the avoidance of doubt, an ailment for the purposes of this clause shall include conditions such as a cramp, nausea, and breathlessness.
  - b. If a player claims to be injured but the Referee is not satisfied that the injury is genuine, he will advise the injured player to decide whether to resume play immediately, or to concede match.
  - c. Where the injury (which shall include a head, muscle, tendon, ligament or bone injury) is the result of the player's own action or of an accidental event involving the opponent (in the sole opinion of the Referee), the Referee shall permit one or multiple recovery breaks to be taken but only up to a cumulative total of 10 minutes. If the injured player is still not then ready to resume play, he shall concede the match.
  - d. In the case of blood injuries, play must stop and the injured player must leave the court and attend to the bleeding promptly. The Referee shall allow reasonable time for treatment and recovery. Play will resume as soon as possible after the bleeding has stopped and, where possible, the wound has been covered. If the bleeding was accidentally caused, the Referee shall take no further action.
  - e. Where the injury (whether under 13.c or 13.d above) was, in the sole opinion of the Referee, caused by deliberate action or dangerous play by the opponent, then he shall decide whether to suspend play until the match can be resumed or whether to award the match to the injured player.

- f. Where a second injury occurs falling within the categories covered under 13.c and 13.d above which is entirely unrelated to the first injury, the Referee shall again follow these same procedures in relation to the subsequent injury.
14. *A good referee should keep firm control without imposing himself unnecessarily on the match.* In particular, he should employ discretion in the application of Law 28 (Singles) which should be used with caution. The ultimate sanction of awarding the match should only be used after repeated deliberate infringements by a player.

### GUIDANCE FOR REFEREES

With reference to the following Law Singles:

- Law 1.** **The Score.** Referees shall keep a point-by-point written record for the score.
- Law 11.** **Good Return.** Referees should warn a player who strikes a dead ball.
- Law 13.** **Lets.** The referee has to be convinced that a good return could be made and that there has been no attempt at a stroke. When a player has had to turn on the ball and refrains from playing the stroke, because it is reasonable for him to be uncertain about the position(s) of his opponent(s), he should always be awarded a let.
- Laws 13/14** **Appeals.** If a player who is receiving service wishes to appeal both for a let and for a fault, the order in which he does so is immaterial. For the avoidance of doubt, the order for which a player appeals for a let or a point in relation to a ball striking the body of an opponent is material. A Player who appeals for a let before appealing for a point cannot then change his appeal to ask for a point.
- Laws 14/23** **Foot Faults.** The referee shall call foot faults and there shall be no appeal against his decisions.
- Laws 18/26.** **Play to be Continuous.** Referees should act promptly in warning a player who takes an excessively long time in picking up balls, bouncing them before serving, conversing with his partner, changing or adjusting equipment on or off the court, or requesting a new ball. The referee's permission is required to leave the court during the game and for more than two minutes between games.
- Laws 24/25.** **Obstruction.** Referees should act promptly in awarding a rally against a player who does not make every effort to comply with these Laws.
- Let First Time.** A player should not be awarded a let if he has made a significant movement towards playing the ball a second time, but then claims a let for the first time he could have played it.
- Overcut Service.** The referee must still be convinced that a return of service could be made, but a wider interpretation of the let Law should be permitted.

### GUIDANCE FOR MARKERS

The Duties of the Marker are:

- 1. To call faults.

2. To call play after each good stroke.
3. To call the score after each rally or when asked to do so.
4. To keep a point-by-point written record of the game's scores when there is no Referee or where the Referee requests the Marker to do so.
5. To call not up or down or out of court when indisputable. When uncertain, he should call play and await an appeal at the end of the rally.
6. To ensure that no balls are lying on the court except under the board
7. To allow used balls to cool before being used again.
8. To carry out all the duties of a referee in the absence of a referee.
9. It is the marker's responsibility, in the absence of a referee, to keep tight control over the possibility of dangerous play and to ensure that players are warned if they prejudice other players' safety for any reason. Irrespective of whether there is a Referee or not, the Marker may call time should a potentially dangerous situation arise and the striker must immediately halt his stroke.