

Tennis Rules

Updated 8/10/23

GENERAL INFO

1. All participants must meet the eligibility requirements listed in the Intramural Sports Participant Handbook. **Each participant must be a current UVA student or UVA Rec member, and must purchase an Intramural Sports Pass for the semester in which the activity is taking place.** All expired memberships must be updated before the individual may play in any game. Each player must present a valid UVA Student ID or current UVA Rec Membership Card before each contest in order to be eligible to participate. Any games in which an ineligible player signs in will be considered a forfeit.
2. **Teams are responsible for keeping their players and spectators under control.** Misconduct of players, coaches, managers or spectators can result in penalty, ejection or forfeiture of the game. Spectators must also remain within the area designated by the IM Sports staff.
3. Alcoholic beverages, smoking, and pets are prohibited from all intramural contests.
4. IM Sports Officials/Supervisors will have absolute authority during the contest and can make decisions on any matter or question not specifically covered in the rules.
5. Official USTA (United States Tennis Association) rules will be observed with the following Intramural Sports modifications.

EQUIPMENT

1. Appropriate footwear must be worn.
2. Participants will be responsible for providing their own balls and racquets.

THE GAME

1. Participants will officiate their own matches.
2. The first participant(s) to win a total of eight games will win the match.
3. Games will be played to four points with no deuce or advantage.

SERVER AND RECEIVER

1. The players stand on opposite sides of the net. The player who first delivers the ball is the server and the other is the receiver.

CHOICE OF SIDES AND SERVICE

1. The choice of ends and the right to be server or receiver in the first game is decided by coin toss. The player winning the toss may choose or require their opponent to choose: (a) the right to be server or receiver, in which case the other player shall choose the end; or b) the end, in which case the other player shall choose the right to be server or receiver.

DELIVERY OF SERVICE

1. Service is delivered in the following manner. Immediately before commencing to serve, the Server shall stand with both feet at rest behind the baseline within the imaginary continuations of the center mark and sideline. They shall not serve until receiver is ready.
2. The server may then opt to throw the ball into the air in any direction and strike it or serve by dropping the ball to the ground. Delivery is deemed complete at the moment the racket strikes the ball.

RETURN OF SERVICE

1. The receiver may stand wherever they please on their own side of net. However, they must allow the ball to hit the ground in the service court before returning it. If the receiver attempts to return the service, they shall be deemed ready.

SERVICE FROM ALTERNATE COURTS

1. In delivering the service, the server stands alternately behind the right and left courts, beginning from the right in every game. The ball served shall pass over the net and hit the ground within the service court which is diagonally opposite, or upon any line bounding such court, before the receiver returns it.
2. If the ball is erroneously served from the wrong half of the court, the resulting play stands, but service from the proper court, in accordance with the score, shall be resumed immediately after this discovery.

FAULTS

1. The service is a fault if the server misses the ball in attempting to serve it, if the ball does not land in the proper service court, or if the ball served touches a permanent fixture other than the net, strap or band, before it hits the ground.
2. Throughout the delivery of the service, the server shall not change their position by walking or running. A foot fault is called when the server touches the baseline or the imaginary continuation of either the sideline or centerline while they are in the process of serving. However, having their foot in the air over one of these lines is not a foot fault.

SERVICE AFTER A FAULT

1. After a fault (if it is the first fault) the server serves from behind the same half of the court from which he served that fault. If the service was a fault because it was served from behind the wrong half, the server is entitled to deliver one service from behind the proper half of the court.

A SERVICE LET

1. During the service, a ball that touches the net but lands in the proper court is termed a "let" and counts for nothing. That one service is replayed. There is no limit to the number of let balls that may be made on the service; the server continues serving into the same court until a good service is delivered or two faults are made.

RECEIVER BECOMES SERVER

1. At the end of the first game, the receiver becomes server and the server, receiver; and so on alternately in all the subsequent games of the match. The players change ends at the end of the first, third, and every subsequent alternate game of the set.
2. If a player serves out of turn, the player who should have served shall serve as soon as the mistake is discovered. All points scored before such discovery shall stand. If a game has been completed before such discovery, the order of service remains as altered.

SERVER WINS POINT

1. The server wins the point if the ball is served, not being a let, and touches the receiver or anything which they wear or carry before it hits the ground, or if the receiver otherwise loses the point as described below.

RECEIVER WINS POINT

1. The receiver wins the point if the server serves two consecutive faults, or otherwise loses the point as described below.

PLAYER LOSES POINT

1. A player loses the point if:
 - They fail to return the ball directly over the net before it hits the ground twice consecutively; or
 - They return the ball in play so that it hits the ground, a permanent fixture(other than net, posts, straps) or other object outside the court
 - They volley the ball and fails to make a good return even when standing outside the court
 - They deliberately carry or catch the ball in play on their racket or deliberately touch it with racket more than once
 - The player's racket touches the net, post, or the ground within his opponent's court at any time which the ball is played
 - They volley the ball before it has passed the net
 - The ball in play touches them or anything that they wear or carry other than the racket in hand
 - They throw the racket at and hits the ball
 - They deliberately and materially change the shape of their racket during playing of point
 - They deliberately commit any act that hinders their opponent in making a stroke.

A GOOD RETURN

1. It is a good return if:
 - The ball passes over the net, posts, singles sticks, straps, bands, or cables, provided that it hits the ground within the court.

- The ball, served or returned, hits the ground within the proper court and rebounds or is blown back over the net, and the player whose turn it is to strike reaches over the net and plays the ball, provided that neither they nor any part of clothing or racket touches the net, post singles sticks, straps or band or the ground within opponent's court, and that the stroke is otherwise good.
- The ball is returned outside the posts, or singles sticks, either above or below the level of the top of the net, even though it touches the posts or singles sticks, provided that it hits the ground within the proper court.
- A player's racket passes over the net after they have returned the ball, provided the ball passes the net before being played and is properly returned
- A player succeeds in returning the ball, served or in play, which strikes another ball lying in the court
- The ball touches any other permanent fixture after it has hit the ground within the proper court.

BALL FALLING IN LINE- GOOD

1. A ball falling on a line is regarded as falling in the court bounded by that line.

A LET

1. In all cases where a let (other than a service let) has to be called under the rules, or to provide for an interruption of play, the point shall be replayed.
2. If a player is hindered in making a stroke by anything not within their control, except a permanent fixture or deliberate interference by their opponent, a let shall be called.