



# 2025 USTA Officiating

SCENARIOS AND INTERPRETATIONS

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## A. THE COURT

1. **Net Cord Tension - Adjusting net cord tension is recommended before the day's first match and before each match.**

The ITF recommends net cord tension be between 1.8 kN and 2.0 kN with the tension of all nets at a facility within 0.1 kN of each other. This is approximately equivalent to a net tension between 400 and 450 pounds, with the tension of all nets within 25 pounds of each other. Use a net tension device when available. When a device is not available, loosen the center strap, tighten the net cord until the center of the net is approximately 39 inches (991 mm) above the ground, and tighten the center strap until the center of the net is 36 inches (914 mm) above the ground. **(Rule 1)**

2. **Where should singles sticks be placed?**

The center of the singles sticks should be placed three (3) feet outside the outer edge of the singles lines and should be diagonally opposite each other. **(Rule 1)**

3. **What happens if a singles stick falls to the court during a point?**

The point stops immediately and is replayed. **(Rule 1)**

4. A regular 78-foot court with permanent blended lines is suitable for sanctioned play in divisions that require a 78-foot court. **(Rule 1)**

## B. THE BALL

1. **What is the difference between a broken ball and a soft ball?**

A broken ball has no compression. A soft ball has some compression. Both broken and soft balls should be removed from play. **(Rule 3)**

2. **May a player cause a ball to become wet by using the ball to wipe perspiration from the player's body?**

No. A player may not take any action that materially changes the condition of the ball; therefore, a player may not use a ball to wipe off perspiration. **(Rule 3)**

## C. THE RACKET

1. **What happens if it is discovered after play has begun that a player has been using an illegal racket or an illegally strung racket?**

All points played stand. Play must continue with a legal racket. A player is subject to code violations for delay under the Point Penalty System. If the discovery occurs

after the match is over, the match counts. **(Rule 4)**

**2. What may a player who has broken a string or racket do if the player does not have a replacement racket?**

Unless prohibited by a published rule adopted by the tournament, the player may play with the broken racket. The player may leave the court to get a replacement racket. The player may ask someone else to get a replacement racket. The player is subject to code violations for delay under the Point Penalty System. **Rule 29b** permits a player “reasonable extra time” to leave the court only in those cases where “clothing, footwear, or necessary equipment (excluding racket) is broken or needs to be replaced.” **(Rule 4)**

**D. SCORING DISPUTES**

**1. The Referee and other Officials shall settle scoring disputes in non-officiated matches by using their best judgment. They should first attempt to get the players to reconstruct the score so that they agree on it. Thereafter, the following options are listed in order of preference:**

- Counting all points or games agreed on by the players, with only the disputed points or games being replayed;
- If the players do not agree or recall the court in which the disputed point started, toss a coin to select the court.
- Playing from a score mutually agreeable to the players;
- Deciding the score by a coin toss. **(Code 32)**

**2. The server states that the score is 40-15. The receiver states that the score is 30-30. The players agree on who won every point except for the second point. What should they do?**

They should replay the second point from the advantage court. If the server wins the point, the score becomes 40-15; if the receiver wins the point, the score becomes 30-30. The next point is played from the deuce court. **(Code 32)**

**3. What happens in the same situation as above, except that the disputed point is the third point?**

Everything is done the same except that the disputed point is played from the deuce court. **(Rule 5) (Code 32)**

**4. The players agree that they have played six points in the game, but disagree over the score because they do not agree on who won the second point. The receiver acknowledges that the server called the score after each point and that the receiver did not express disagreement with the score until now. What should happen?**

The score as announced by the server should prevail because the receiver did not object. Note, however, if the receiver denied hearing the score, then the normal three-step process of **Code 32** is used to settle the dispute. **(Rule 5)**

## **E. TIEBREAKS**

- 1. Do the players change ends after a 7-Point Tiebreak is played to decide a set?**

Yes. **(Rule 10)**

- 2. Service Order** – If a full set were played, the player or team whose turn it was to serve first starts serving a 10-Point Match Tiebreak that is played in lieu of a deciding final set. **(Appendix V)**

- 3. Receiving Positions** – A doubles team may change receiving positions at the start of a 10-Point Match Tiebreak. **(Rule 15)**

- 4. Change of Ends** – Players change ends at the start of a 10-Point Match Tiebreak only if an odd-game changeover is due. During the 10-Point Match Tiebreak, players change ends after every six points, except when the Coman Tiebreak Procedure is used. **(Regulation I.E) (Rule 10)**

## **F. CHOICE OF ENDS & SERVICE**

- 1. When should the toss be made?**

The toss should be made before the warm-up so that the players can warm up on the same end from which they play their first game. **(Rule 9)**

## **G. BALL IN PLAY**

- 1. Is a point decided when a good shot has clearly passed a player, or when an apparently bad shot passes over the baseline or sideline?**

No. A ball is in play until it bounces twice, lands outside the court, hits a permanent fixture, or hits a player. A ball that becomes embedded in the net is out of play. **(Rule 11) (Rule 24)**

## **H. BALL TOUCHES A PERMANENT FIXTURE**

- 1. During a rally in a singles match played on a doubles court without singles sticks, a player hits a shot that was going out until it hits the doubles post and ricochets into the proper court. Who wins the point?**

Every effort should be made to provide singles sticks for a match that is played on a doubles court so that this situation does not occur. If it does occur, the player who hit the shot wins the point because the entire doubles net and doubles posts are, respectively, the net and the net posts for this match. **(Rule 13)**

## **I. SERVING**

### **1. May a player serve underhand?**

Yes. **(Rule 16)**

### **2. Where may the server stand?**

In singles, the server may stand anywhere behind the baseline between the imaginary extensions of the inside edge of the center mark and the outside edge of the singles sideline. In doubles, the server may stand anywhere behind the baseline between the imaginary extensions of the inside edge of the center mark and the outside edge of the doubles sideline. **(Rule 18)**

### **3. What does the rule mean when it says that the server may “not change position by walking or running”?**

One key to understanding this rule is to realize that the server’s feet must be at rest immediately before beginning to serve. The delivery of the service then begins with any arm or racket motion and ends when the racket contacts the ball, or misses the ball in an attempt to strike it. To define “walking or running” with precision is difficult. This rule is intended to prevent the server from taking advantage of the receiver by serving while “on the move” and requiring the receiver to guess the position from which the serve will be launched. The rule should be enforced with that intent in mind.

- A server who takes more than one step with either foot after the “feet at rest” position described above is at risk for being called for a foot fault. The serve becomes a foot fault when the server has materially changed position before or during any racket or arm motion.
- A server whose footwork changes significantly from one serve to the next is at risk for being called for a foot fault.
- Serves that look like the running volleyball serve violate the rule. Serves in which the server runs or walks from a point well behind the baseline to the baseline are also illegal, as are serves in which the server walks or runs along the baseline before choosing a spot from which to deliver the serve. **(Rule 18)**

- 4. In matches without Officials, is the server required to announce the game score before the first point of a game and the point score before each subsequent point of the game?**

Yes. This is required by **The Code 31**. After an Official has cautioned a player to call out the score, the Official may in a particularly egregious case treat subsequent violations as code violations for unsportsmanlike conduct.
- 5. Does the rule that prohibits the server from serving until the receiver is ready apply to the first and second serve?**

Yes. This rule applies separately to both the first and second serve. **(Rule 21)**
- 6. Once ready, can the receiver become unready?**

The receiver cannot become unready unless outside interference occurs. **(Rule 21)**
- 7. May the server hit the serve just as the receiver looks up after getting into the ready position?**

No. The receiver is not ready until the receiver is in the ready position and has a second or two to make eye contact with the server. **(Rule 21)**
- 8. May the server suddenly increase the pace?**

No. The server may speed up the pace only so long as the new pace is reasonable and only so long as the change does not occur suddenly. **(Rule 21)**
- 9. What happens when the server is interrupted during delivery of the second service?**

The server is entitled to two serves. **(Rule 23)**
- 10. What happens when there is a delay between the first and second serves?**

If the delay is caused by the receiver (such as a broken string or contact lens problem), an Official, or outside interference, the whole point is replayed. If the server caused the delay, such as when the server breaks a string, the server gets one serve. Note that a spectator's call ("out," "fault," or other), a spectator's ringing cell phone, or grunting on an adjacent court is not basis for replaying the point. Action should be taken to prevent further spectator interference. **(Code 30)**
- 11. How much time may elapse from the moment the ball goes out of play at the end of the point until the serve is struck to start the next point?**

When practical, this time should not exceed 25 seconds. This limit does not apply if a player has to chase a stray ball.

## **(Rule 29)**

### **12. Does the 25-second provision of Rule 29 apply to the second serve?**

No. The server must strike the second serve without delay.  
**(Rule 20)**

### **13. What happens when the server observes that the receiver appears to be ready and hits the second serve in, but the receiver makes no attempt to return it?**

The server wins the point if the receiver had no reason for not being ready; if the receiver was not ready because of something within the receiver's control (such as a broken string or contact lens problem), then the server gets two serves. If the receiver was not ready because of some reasonable factor, such as clearing the errant first serve or a ball from an adjacent court, then the server gets one serve. If the time to clear the ball from the adjacent court is so prolonged as to constitute an interruption, the receiver should offer the server two serves. **(Code 30)**  
**(Rule 22)**

## **J. FOOT FAULTS**

### **1. When does a foot fault occur?**

A player commits a foot fault if, after the player's feet are at rest but before the player strikes the ball, either foot touches:

- The court, including the baseline;
- Any part of the imaginary extension of the center mark; or
- Beyond the imaginary extension of the outside of the singles sideline in singles or the doubles sideline in doubles.

However, it is not a foot fault in any of these cases if the player catches the ball instead of attempting to strike it.  
**(Rule 18)**

### **2. When an Official calls a foot fault and a player asks which foot touched the line, should the Official tell the player?**

Yes. **(Rule 18)**

### **3. It is improper for an Official to warn a player that the player is in danger of foot faulting. (USTA Officiating: Techniques and Procedures)**

### **4. On the second service, the server has tossed the ball in the air and is about to strike it when the Line Umpire calls "foot fault," whereupon the server catches the ball instead of striking it.**



### **What should the Line Umpire do?**

The Line Umpire should call "correction," as there could be no fault since the ball was not struck, or struck at. The Chair Umpire should then inform the player that, as a result of an interrupted serve, the server has two serves to come. **(USTA Officiating: Techniques and Procedures)**

#### **5. When may the receiver or the receiver's partner call foot faults?**

The receiver, or the receiver's partner, may call foot faults only after all reasonable efforts, such as warning the server and attempting to get an Official to the court have failed, and the foot faulting is so flagrant as to be clearly perceptible from the receiver's side. **(Rule 18) (Code 24)**

### **K. LETS**

#### **1. Who may call a let?**

Only an Official or player may call a let. A player may call a let only on the player's court. **(Code 18)**

#### **2. May the receiver claim a let if the server loses control and grip of the racket and it lands during the service in the server's court?**

No. **(Rule 22)**

### **L. BALLS ON THE COURT**

#### **1. Before returning the second serve, may the receiver clear a ball from a first service fault that has rebounded into the playing area?**

Yes. **(Code 42)**

#### **2. What happens when a ball from an adjacent court rolls on the court between the first and second serves?**

The time it takes to clear an intruding ball 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. **(Rule 23)**

#### **3. What happens if the ball in play strikes a ball that came from another court after the start of the point?**

Play continues. However, if it not clear that the actual ball in play has been returned, a let should be called. **(Rule 25)**

#### **4. Must a request to remove a ball that is lying in the opponent's court be honored?**

Yes, but not while the ball is in play. Additionally, a request to remove a ball that is outside the court but reasonably close to the lines also must be honored. **(Rule 25)**

## **M. LOSS OF POINT**

**1. Does a player lose a point if the ball hits the racket twice during one swing?**

No. Only when there is a definite and deliberate “second push” by the player does the shot become illegal. “Deliberately” is the key word in this rule. Two hits occurring during a single continuous swing are not deemed a double hit. **(Rule 24)**

**2. Does a player who touches a pipe support that runs across the court at the bottom of the net lose the point?**

Yes. The pipe support is considered a part of the net except when a ball hits it, in which case the pipe support is considered part of the court. **(Rule 24)**

**3. What happens if a player stretches to hit a ball, the racket falls to the ground, and the ball then goes into the court for a winner?**

The player wins the point unless the racket was not in the player’s hand at the instant the ball was struck. **(Rule 24)**

## **N. GOOD RETURN**

**1. Does the clashing of rackets make the return illegal?**

No, unless it is clear that more than one racket touched the ball. **(Rule 24)**

**2. In doubles, is it a good return if a ball passes under the net cord and inside the post without touching either in a doubles match?**

No. This is a “through”. **(Rule 25)**

**3. Does a player lose the point if the opponent’s ball touches a pipe support that runs across the court at the bottom of the net?**

No. The pipe support is considered a part of the court, except when it is considered part of the net when a player, or anything the player wears or carries, touches the pipe support. **(Rule 24)**

## **O. LOSING ATTIRE & DAMPENING DEVICE**

**1. May a player claim a let if an opponent’s shoe comes off during a point?**

No. ITF Interpretation. **(Code 36)**

- 2. Does a player lose the point if the player's hat hits the net?**  
Yes. A player loses the point when any part of the player's body, equipment, or apparel touches the net. **(Rule 24)**
- 3. What happens if the ball hits a player's hat that landed in the correct court earlier in the point?**  
The ball remains in play because the opponent did not ask for a let. When play continued after the hat landed on the court, the hat became a part of the court. Therefore when a ball hits the hat, it is treated in the same manner as if the ball had hit the court. **(Rule 25)**
- 4. If a player's hat falls off during a point, may the opponent stop play and claim the point?**  
No, but the opponent's immediate request for a let should be granted. A let should not be granted after the point, nor should a request, from the player who lost the hat. **(Rule 24) (Code 36)**
- 5. What happens if a player's damping device comes out and hits the net or the opponent's court?**  
The player loses the point unless the ball went out of play before the device hit the net or court. If the device is not discovered until after the point is over, the point stands as played. **(Rule 24)**

## **P. HINDERANCE**

- 1. What is the difference between a deliberate and an unintentional act?**  
Deliberate means a player did what the player intended to do, even if the result was unintended. An example is a player who hits a shortlob in doubles, and loudly shouts "back" just before an opponent hits the overhead. **(Code 34)** Unintentional refers to an act over which a player has no control, such as a scream after a wasp sting. **(Rule 26)**
- 2. Can a player's own action be the basis for that player claiming a let or a hindrance?**  
Nothing a player does entitles that player to call a let. For example, a player is not entitled to a let because the player breaks a string, the player loses the racket, the player's hat falls off, or a ball in the player's pocket falls out. **(Rule 26)**
- 3. Can the server's discarding of a second ball constitute a hindrance?**  
Yes. If the receiver or an Official asks the server to stop discarding the ball, then the server shall stop. Any continued discarding of the ball constitutes a deliberate hindrance, and the server loses the point. **(Rule 26)**

4. **Is an out call or other noise from a spectator a hindrance that allows a point to be replayed?**

No. **(Rule 26)**

5. **If a player leaves the playing area to return a ball and is unable to make a play on the ball because of something or someone on an adjacent court (for example, a ball, chair, or person), is the player entitled to replay the point based on hindrance?**

No. Hindrance does not apply outside the playing area. The playing area is the area inside the fences or backstop. When there is a row of courts, the playing area includes the area between courts, but does not include any of the adjacent court or its doubles alley. Note that players' bags and chairs located between courts are always permanent fixtures, and no player on any court is entitled to a hindrance when encountering these objects. **(Rule 26)**

## **Q. CORRECTING MISTAKES**

1. **The tournament announced on its entry form that a 10-Point Match Tiebreak would be used in lieu of the third set. The players inadvertently play a regular set until they realize the mistake at 3-0. What should happen?**

Since the mistake was discovered before the start of the fifth game, pursuant to **Rule 27h**, the player who is ahead 3-0 has won the set and the final set score should be shown as 3-0. **(Rule 27)**

2. **The tournament announced on its entry form that a 10-Point Match Tiebreak would be used in lieu of the third set. The players inadvertently play a regular set until they realize the mistake at 2-1 and 30-all. What should happen?**

Since the mistake was discovered before the start of the fifth game, the players must continue playing until the score reaches 3-1 or 2-2. If the score reaches 3-1, the player who is ahead wins the set, and the final set score is recorded as 3-1. If the score reaches 2-2, a 10-Point Match Tiebreak is played. The score is recorded as 3-2(x) with the score in the 10-Point Match Tiebreak placed inside the parentheses. **(Rule 27)**

3. **The tournament announced on its entry form that a 10-Point Match Tiebreak would be used in lieu of the third set. The players inadvertently play a regular set until they realize the mistake after the server has served a first service fault at the beginning of the second point of the fifth game of the final set. What should happen?**

Regardless of whether the score is 2-2, 3-1, or 4-0, the players must continue playing a full set because they have

started the second point of the fifth game. If the score reaches 6-all the players would play a 7-Point Set Tiebreak. The score is recorded the same as any other tiebreak set. **(Rule 27)**

4. **Player A should have served the first point of the second set tiebreak, but instead, Player B served the first point. Pursuant to Rule 27d, the order of service remained as altered. Who serves the first game of the final set?**

Player B serves the first game. **Rule 5b** states that the player whose turn it was to serve first in the set tiebreak shall be the receiver in the first game of the following set. Player B also serves first if a Match Tiebreak is played in lieu of the final set. **(Rule 27)**

5. **The tournament announced that a 10-Point Match Tiebreak would be played in lieu of the third set. The players split sets. With Player A ahead 7-5, Player A comes to the net to shake hands with Player B. Player B refuses to shake hands because Player B contends that the match tiebreak is not over. What should happen?**

The players should keep on playing because the 10-Point Match Tiebreak is not yet over. On the other hand, if Player B had shaken hands, then Player A wins the match. By shaking hands, the players have acknowledged that they agreed the match was over. Even though the USTA mandates the use of the 10-Point Match Tiebreak, the 7-Point Tiebreak was played in good faith, so Player A wins the match, and the final set score should be recorded 1-0(5). **(Rule 27)**

6. **Matches in a tournament are supposed to be the best of 3 tiebreak sets. The players mistakenly start playing a 10-Point Match Tiebreak in lieu of the final set. The error is discovered after Play A has served a first service fault in the second point of the 10-Point Match Tiebreak. Should the players continue playing a Match Tiebreak?**

Yes. Since the players have started the second point, they must finish the 10-Point Match Tiebreak. **(Rule 27)**

7. **What happens if a match is supposed to be played with no-ad scoring, but the players mistakenly use conventional scoring?**

All games played count. All points count. If the score is deuce when the mistake is discovered, immediately convert to no-ad scoring. Otherwise, continue using conventional scoring until a player wins the game or the score reaches deuce. If the score reaches deuce, the winner of the next point wins the game. (The receiver has the choice of sides, except in mixed doubles.) **(Rule 27)**

**8. What happens if a match is supposed to be played with short sets, but the players mistakenly play a conventional tiebreak set?**

(First note that a mistake has not occurred unless one player has won five games or unless the score is 4-all and the players have started to play the second point of the ninth game.) What happens depends on the score.

- If the error is discovered when one player leads by two games or more, stop play and the player in the lead wins the set. If the error is discovered when one player leads by one game, play one more game or complete the game in progress.
- If the player now leads by two games, then that player wins the set. If, on the other hand, the set is now tied, play a 7-Point Set Tiebreak to determine the winner of the set.
- If the error is discovered when the game score is tied and at least one point has been played in the next game, complete the game in progress and one additional game. If one player wins both games, then that player wins the set. If, on the other hand, the score is now tied, play a 7-Point Set Tiebreak to determine the winner of the set.
- If the error is discovered when the score is tied, play a 7-Point Set Tiebreak to determine the winner of the set. **(Rule 27)**

**9. What happens if a match or Pro-Set is supposed to be played with a 7-Point Tiebreak and the players mistakenly play a 10-Point Tiebreak?**

What happens depends on the score.

- If neither player has yet to win seven points, no harm has been done and the players continue playing just as if they intended to play a 7-Point Tiebreak all along.
- If the error is discovered when one player has won seven or more points and that player leads by two points or more, stop play and the player in the lead wins the set.
- If the error is discovered when one player has won seven or more points and the score is tied, or one player is ahead by one point, continue playing until one player leads by two points.
- This could result in unusual situations in which the player who first reached seven points, and was ahead by at least two points, ends up losing the set. **(Rule 27)**

**10. The tournament announced on its entry form that the Coman**

**Tiebreak Procedure would be used. The players inadvertently use the conventional procedure. The mistake is discovered at 1-all in the tiebreak. What should happen?**

**Rule 27b** requires that the mistake be corrected immediately so the player or teams are at the correct ends of the court for the third point. **(Rule 27)**

## **R. CONTINUOUS PLAY**

1. Reasonable extra time to deal with clothing or footwear is determined by the Official based on a number of variables such as fairness to the opponent and the distance between the court and a source for replacement clothing, footwear, or equipment. Rarely would more than 15 minutes be considered reasonable. **(Rule 29)**

2. **May play be suspended to replace a lost contact lens?**

Yes. Whenever possible, the player should replace the lens on the court. If the weather, court surface, or other conditions make it impossible to insert the lens on the court, the player should insert the lens in the area closest to the court where this task is possible. **(Rule 29)**

3. **When the weather is misty, may play be suspended to allow a player who wears glasses to insert contact lenses?**

No. The player may change into contacts only on the court and only during a changeover. This case is different from a lost contact lens, because the player chose to begin playing the match with glasses. **(Rule 29)**

4. **The receiver's cell phone rings just as the server tosses the ball. The receiver makes no attempt to return the ball and instead answers the phone and does not resume playing for about one minute. A Roving Umpire discovers the situation. What should the Official do?**

The server wins the point because the ringing cell phone does not entitle the receiver to get unready. The Official shall also penalize the receiver with at least one penalty under the Point Penalty System for delay. If the Official can determine with certainty that the delay was more than 50 seconds, the Official shall assess two penalties. **(Regulation VII.D)**

## **S. MEDICAL TIMEOUTS**

1. The time that it takes the player to get clothing and equipment other than a racket back into adjustment, and the time it takes to walk back and forth to the court, is not included in the treatment time, but is included in the overall 15-minute limit.

### **(Regulation III.E)**

2. If an Official becomes aware that a player has a medical condition that is being treated on odd-game changeovers, the Official should carefully monitor the changeovers to make certain that no player receives coaching. **(Regulation III.E)**
  
3. **Early in the third set, a player felt woozy and requested a medical timeout. The Referee told the player that the player was not entitled to a medical timeout because the player was suffering from non-treatable loss of physical condition. Was the Referee's decision correct?**

No. The Referee should have allowed enough time for a qualified medical person or trainer to evaluate whether the player was suffering from general fatigue that was not accompanied by a treatable medical condition such as cramps, vomiting, some forms of dizziness, or blisters. If the player's general fatigue was accompanied by a treatable medical condition, then the Referee should have allowed it to be treated. Otherwise, no treatment is allowed. If a qualified medical person or trainer was not on site, the Referee's decision still was not correct because the Referee should have explained the medical timeout rule to the player and allowed treatment. **(Regulation III.E)**
  
4. **What happens if a player aggravates an old hamstring injury during the warm-up and then re-aggravates it during the match?**

The player is entitled to a medical timeout during the warm-up and again during the match. **(Regulation III.E)**
  
5. **What happens if a player takes a medical timeout during the warm-up because the player has just pulled a hamstring muscle and then aggravates that injury during the match?**

The player is entitled to another medical timeout during the match. **(Regulation III.E)**
  
6. **A player requested a medical timeout for treatment of leg cramps. The Referee granted the request. Can a player receive treatment for loss of physical condition?**

Yes. A player may be treated as long as the condition is treatable. The **ITF Rules of Tennis** no longer distinguish between injuries and natural loss of physical condition. **(Regulation III.E)**
  
7. **A player's left leg started cramping so the player requested and received a medical timeout. One-half hour later, the player's right forearm cramped up and the player requested another medical timeout. The Referee gave the player another medical timeout. Was the Referee's decision correct?**

No. A player is entitled to only one medical timeout for



all cramping and heat-related conditions during a match.  
(Regulation III.E)

8. **A player's left leg cramped, and the player requested and received a medical timeout to treat this condition. Later, the player received a code violation point penalty and a code violation game penalty. With the score 4-4 and 40-30 in the final set, the player's leg cramp reoccurs. The player loses the point to make the score 4-5. The player hobbles to the chair where the player normally sits on changeovers. Throughout the changeover, the player rubs his leg in a futile attempt to get rid of the cramp. After 60 seconds, the Chair Umpire announces "time." After 90 seconds, the player is still seated in the chair rubbing the player's left leg. What should the Chair Umpire do?**
- The Chair Umpire should announce "Code violation. Delay of game. Default." The Chair Umpire should not issue a time violation because it is clear that the reason for the delay was related to the player's physical condition. Only if the Chair Umpire had any doubt about whether the delay was caused by the player's physical condition would the Chair Umpire issue a time violation instead of a code violation.  
(Regulation III.E)

## **T. BLOOD & VOMIT**

1. **A junior player started bleeding from the nose. The only way that the bleeding could be stopped was by placing a piece of cotton in the player's nose. The player does not want to play with the cotton. What should the Referee do?**
- The Referee should explain that the player must choose between playing with the cotton and being required to retire. (Regulation III.E)
2. **At 3-2 in the first set, a junior player started bleeding from the nose and received a bleeding timeout for this condition. Early in the second set, the nose bleed reoccurred, and the player asked for a second bleeding timeout. The Official denied the second bleeding timeout, but appropriately allowed the player to be treated briefly to stanch the bleeding by placing cotton plugs in the player's nose. The Official also cautioned the player that further treatment of the nose bleed must occur during changeovers or set breaks. Play resumed, but two games later, the player suffered a massive nose bleed that again stopped play. What action should the Official take at this point?**
- The Official should tell the player that the player obviously cannot continue play and must retire from the match.  
(Regulation III.E)
3. **What should an Official do after a player vomits on the court?**
- The player may receive a medical timeout. The Official

should follow the clean-up procedure for blood.  
**(Regulation III.E)**

## **U. TOILET/CHANGE OF ATTIRE BREAKS**

1. Change of attire breaks are limited to set breaks unless there is a clothing malfunction. Toilet breaks are allowed when an Official determines that the need is genuine. They should be taken at set breaks unless there is a true emergency, in which case the break preferably is taken during an odd game changeover, but may be taken immediately. Breaks taken at other times should be limited to true emergencies. Gastrointestinal problems are medical conditions that are governed by medical timeout provisions and not by the toilet break provision. **(Rule 29)**

## **V. REST PERIODS**

1. **A best of 3 tiebreak sets junior match is suspended for more than 10 minutes for rain with one player leading 6-4, 4-3. After play resumes, the players split sets. Are the players still entitled to a 10-minute rest period?**  
No. When play is suspended for 10 minutes or more during the second set during a best of 3 sets match, a mandatory 3-minute rest period will be taken (Table 12). **(Rule 29)**
2. **A junior match played with Match Tiebreak in lieu of a third set is suspended for more than 10 minutes for rain at 6-4, 1-0. After play resumes, the players split sets. Are the players still entitled to a 3-minute rest period?**  
Yes. The 3-minute rest period is mandatory for all junior matches. **(Rule 29)**
3. **A player plays a short best of 3 tiebreak sets singles match outdoors. The player's next match is another best of 3 set singles match. Is the player entitled to a minimum rest of two hours?**  
Yes. **(Regulation III.C)**
4. **A player's opponent retires before the end of the first set of a best of 3 tiebreak set singles match that was played outdoors. The player's next match is another best of 3 set singles match. Is the player entitled to a minimum rest of two hours?**  
Yes. **(Regulation III.C)**
5. **A player plays a long and competitive best of 3 set match with a Match Tiebreak in lieu of the third set. The player's next match is a singles match. Is the player entitled to a minimum rest of two hours?**  
Although the two-hour rest provision of the Recovery Rule

does not apply, the conditions justify more rest and the Referee should offer more than the minimum rest specified in the Rest Period Table. **(Regulation III.C)**

- 6. A player plays a long and competitive best of 3 tiebreak sets singles match. The player's next match is doubles. Is the player entitled to a minimum rest of two hours?**

Although the two-hour rest provision of the Recovery Rule does not apply, the conditions justify more rest and the Referee should offer more than the minimum rest specified in the Rest Period Table. **(Regulation III.C)**

- 7. A player plays a long and competitive match. May the Referee offer the player more than two hours rest?**

When conditions justify more rest, the Referee should offer additional rest. **(Regulation III.C)**

- 8. A player has entered two singles divisions, each with the best of 3 tiebreak sets as the format. The player's first match is in one division and the next match is in another division. Is the player entitled to a minimum rest of two hours?**

Yes. **(Regulation III.C)**

- 9. A player plays a long and competitive best of 3 tiebreak sets singles match indoors that lasts fewer than 120 minutes. Is the player entitled to a minimum rest of two hours?**

Although the two-hour rest provision of the Recovery Rule does not apply, these conditions may justify more rest and the Referee should offer more than the minimum rest in the Rest Period Table. Other indoor conditions that may justify additional rest include high temperature or humidity. **(Regulation III.C)**

- 10. May the Referee shorten the rest between matches in tournaments using No-Ad scoring?**

No. **(Regulation III.C)**

- 11. A junior player enters the 16s singles and the 18s doubles divisions. The player is scheduled to play two singles followed by one doubles match. How much rest must the Referee offer the player between the matches?**

The Referee must offer the player 60 minutes between the singles matches because the matches are in the same division. If the Recovery Rule applies because the format of the first match was two out of three standard tiebreak sets, then the player is entitled to two hours rest. The Referee is required to offer the player only 30 minutes between the second singles match and the first doubles match because these matches are in different divisions. **(Regulation III.C)**

- 12. A junior player enters the 16s singles and the 18s doubles divisions. The player is scheduled to play a singles match, the doubles match, and another singles match. How much rest must the Referee offer the player between the matches?**

The Referee is required to offer the player only 30 minutes between each match because, in each case, the matches are in different divisions. **(Regulation III.C)**

- 13. How does the Referee determine the length of an indoor match to decide whether the Recovery Rule applies?**

When Officials are available, they should record the time when the first ball is struck and when the last point is over. When this is not possible, the Referee should record the time that the match was sent to the courts and the time that the players report the scores. This time should be reduced by the length of the warm-up and by the additional time that can reasonably be expected for the players to get to and from the court. **(Regulation III.C)**

## **W. WARM-UP**

- 1. If there are no Ballpersons, may the warm-up be extended beyond five minutes?**

Yes. The warm-up may be extended to 10 minutes. **(Rule 29)**

## **X. COACHING**

- 1. Is coaching permitted in the USTA League programs?**

Coaching is permitted only during authorized rest periods, but in most league matches, rest periods are not authorized. **(Rule 30)**

- 2. May an Official control the location of devices capable of receiving information?**

Yes. An Official may require that these devices be placed where they can neither be seen nor heard. **(Regulation VII.A) (Rule 30)**

## **Y. NO-AD SCORING**

- 1. When a deciding no-ad point is replayed, the receiver or receiving team may not change the choice of court to which the server must serve. (Appendix V)**

## **Z. MATCH TIEBREAK**

- 1. The match tiebreak used in USTA sanctioned tournaments shall be the 10-Point Match Tiebreak unless other USTA regulations specifically authorize a different Match Tiebreak format.**

## **(USTA Regulations I.E.)**

2. If the previous set did not go to a tiebreak, under Rule 14, the order of service continues. If the previous set went to a tiebreak, under **Rule 5**, the player or team that was scheduled to serve first in the tiebreak receives first in the 10-Point Match Tiebreak. **(Appendix V)**
3. **USTA Regulations** authorize the 10-Point Match Tiebreak in lieu of a deciding final set. **USTA Regulation III.G.2.** explains when the Referee may switch the match format to a 10-Point Match Tiebreak in lieu of a deciding final set. The USTA Junior National Tournament, Ranking, and Sanctioning Regulations set forth when this format may be used in national Junior tournaments. **USTA Regulation X.A.3.g.** explains when 10-Point Match Tiebreaks may be played in lieu of a deciding final set at Category I USTA Adult, Senior, and Family National Championships. **USTA Regulation XIII.A.3.d. and h.** explain when 10-Point Match Tiebreaks may be played in lieu of a deciding final set at Category I USTA Wheelchair National Championships. **(Appendix V)**

## **AA. SHORT SETS**

1. **The winner of a short set is the first player to four games, provided there is a margin of two games. May the score in a short set match be recorded by simply adding two games to each player's score so that the score appears in the conventional fashion?**

No. For example, if the score of the match was 4-2, 3-5, 5-4 (7), it should be recorded precisely that way rather than 6-4, 5-7, 7-6 (7). **(Appendix V)**

## **BB. ROLE OF COURT OFFICIALS**

1. **What is the difference between a "Question of Fact" and a "Question of Law"?**

"Questions of Fact" involve whether a specific event happened such as:

- Whether a ball is in
- Whether a ball touched a player
- Whether a ball bounced twice
- Whether a server's foot touched the baseline before the serve was struck

"Questions of Law" involve the application of the rules or regulations to facts that have already been determined. Examples include determining:

- Whether an act was a hindrance
- Whether a player should have been assessed a

- code violation for misconduct
- The procedure for correcting errors in serving order, serving and receiving position, and ends **(Appendix VI)**

## **CC. SUSPENSION OF PLAY**

### **1. What is the difference between a suspension and a stoppage of play?**

The Chair Umpire or Referee stop play because of a condition that is believed to be relatively short-term. Players should be directed to stay in the player area or nearby. Examples of a stoppage of play include a medical timeout, toilet break, or light rain that is expected to stop soon. No coaching is allowed when play is stopped. The Chair Umpire or Referee suspends play because of a condition that is expected to delay play for a long period of time. Players are allowed to leave the playing area, and in most cases, they are also allowed to leave the tournament area. Examples include darkness and severe weather. Coaching is allowed during a suspension in play. Medical conditions for which treatment is normally not permitted may occur during a suspension.

**(Appendix VI & Regulation III.D)**

## **DD. PLAYER MISCONDUCT & POINT PENALTY SYSTEM (PPS)**

1. When a court is available, the Referee calls the matches on or shortly before the scheduled match time. If a court is not available, the Referee may delay calling the matches until a court is available. When several matches are scheduled at the same time, the Referee shall call all the matches at the same time. For example, if five matches are scheduled at 10:00 a.m. but only one court is available, the Referee should call all matches shortly before 10:00 a.m. and should start the lateness clock on all players who have not checked in by 10:00 a.m.
2. When more matches are scheduled than there are courts available, the Referee may put the matches out in any order. A player does not escape the lateness penalty because the player's match was one of the last matches to be put on the court.
3. If one of several matches scheduled at the same time is put out early and when the scheduled time arrives there is no available court, the lateness clock does not start until another court becomes available. **(Regulation IV.D)**
4. **Guidelines for Implementing the Point Penalty System**

An accepted method of match control is for an Official to caution a player whose behavior is borderline. The Official should never caution a player whose misconduct is clear; instead, the Official should issue a code violation. Implementation of the Point Penalty System requires judgment. If the player's action is such that the Official believes that the action should not be repeated, then at least a caution is required and a code violation may well be appropriate. A "yes" answer to any of the following questions requires action under the PPS.

- Is the player's action dangerous to any person on or around the court?
- Is the player's action abusive toward any person on or around the court?
- Is the player's action unreasonably delaying the match?
- Is the player's action unsportsmanlike conduct (for example, making a retaliatory call)? **(Regulation IV.D)**

5. **A player came back 90 seconds late after the 10-minute rest period, and the Official penalized the player one game. Was this the correct ruling?**

Yes. The PPS provides a game penalty for lateness of up to five minutes after a rest period. If the player was more than five minutes late, then the Official would default the player. **(Regulation IV.D)**

6. **A player took a medical timeout because of cramping. Later in the match, the player cramped again, acknowledged that it was a cramp, and was unable to continue play. The Roving Umpire assessed a code violation point penalty for delay and told the player to resume play. After another 25 seconds passed without the player resuming play, the Official assessed a game penalty. Should the player have been defaulted because the player had already received a medical timeout?**

No. The Roving Umpire handled the situation correctly. Even after a medical timeout a player may gain additional time through use of the PPS without being immediately defaulted. Once an Official directs a player to resume play, the player must play within 25 seconds or be assessed another code violation. **(Regulation IV.D)**

7. **Player A was assessed a point penalty because of misconduct. In the next game, Player B, who was Player A's partner, committed a conduct violation and was assessed a penalty of one game. Player A and Player B protested, saying that since this was Player B's first offense they should have been assessed only a point. Is this correct?**

No. An offense by either partner counts as a team offense

cumulatively. **(Regulation IV.D)**

- 8. A player took a medical timeout. Later, the player received additional treatment for that condition during a changeover. The treatment lasted more than 90 seconds, and the player was late in resuming play. The Chair Umpire assessed a warning against the player for a time violation. Was the Chair Umpire's decision correct?**

No. A player may be treated during any changeover, but if the treatment lasts more than 90 seconds, the player is subject to a code violation for delay. **(Regulation IV.D)**

- 9. A player received a code violation point penalty. Shortly thereafter, when the player was assessed a game penalty for a second code violation, the player demanded that the Referee be called. Must this demand be met?**

If the appeal involves a question of law, the Referee must be called. Most appeals involving the PPS will involve questions of law. If the appeal involves only a factual issue, the Referee should not be called. **(Regulation IV.D)**

- 10. Player A is penalized loss of toss and a game penalty for lateness; Player B elects to serve. Player A then asks to serve, claiming that the penalty game counts as the first game of the match. Decision?**

Player B will serve the first game actually played. Player B's decision to serve applies to the first game actually served, not the penalty game. **(Regulation IV.D)**

- 11. Player A is penalized loss of toss and a game penalty for lateness. Player B asserts that Player A has lost the right to a warm-up. Is this correct?**

No. Player A is entitled to a warm-up. **(Regulation IV.D)**

- 12. The score is 2-0 and 15-15 in the third set with Player A serving. Player B has already received a medical timeout for a heat-related condition. Player B appears to be cramping and is unable to play within 25 seconds. The Official issues a time violation warning and orders Player B to resume play. Player B is not able to play within an additional 25 seconds. The Official issues a code violation for delay and penalizes Player B with a point penalty. The score is now 30-15. Player B is not able to play within an additional 25 seconds. What should the Official do?**

The Official should treat this as another code violation for delay and penalize Player B with a game penalty. **(Regulation IV.D)**

- 13. The score is 2-0 and 15-15 in the third set with Player A serving. Player B has already received a medical timeout for a heat-**



**related condition. Player B appears to be cramping and is unable to play within 25 seconds. The Official issues a time violation warning and orders Player B to resume play. Player B is not able to play within an additional 25 seconds. The Official issues a code violation for delay and penalizes Player B with a point penalty. The score is now 30-15. Player B is not able to play within an additional 25 seconds, so the Official issues a game penalty making the score is now 3-0. The players are taking their 90 seconds on the changeover. What happens if Player B does not resume play after the changeover?**

The Official does not have to advise Player B to resume play. Instead, the Official should default Player B under the Point Penalty System. **(Regulation IV.D)**

- 14. The score is 2-0 and 15-15 in the third set with Player A serving. Player B has already received a medical timeout for a heat-related condition. Player B appears to be cramping and is unable to play within 25 seconds. The Official issues a time violation warning and orders Player B to resume play. Player B is not able to play within an additional 25 seconds. The Official issues a code violation for delay and penalizes Player B with a point penalty. The score is now 30-15. Player B asks for another medical timeout. What should the Official do?**

If the cramping is obvious and if Player B does not resume play within the allotted time between points, the Official shall immediately assess a game penalty. Otherwise the Official should ask Player B why Player B needs the medical timeout. If Player B says cramping, then the Official should advise Player B that Player B is not entitled to a medical timeout and should order Player B to resume play. The Official should assess a game penalty against Player B if Player B is not ready to play within 25 seconds. If Player B states that the problem is a pulled muscle, the Official must allow a medical timeout. If it is determined that Player B did not pull a muscle but instead is cramping, the medical timeout ends. The Official tells Player B to resume play. If Player B does not resume play within 25 seconds, the Official should assess a game penalty. **(Regulation IV.D)**

- 15. What should happen when one player repeatedly fails to call out the score and Officials are called to the court repeatedly to settle scoring disputes?**

The Official should tell the player that **The Code 31** requires the server to call out the score. In a particularly egregious case, the Official may treat subsequent incidents as violations under the Point Penalty System for failure to follow the instructions of an Official. **(Regulation IV.D)**

- 16. What should an Official do when a player has been overruled**

### **more than once during a match?**

At some point, an Official may caution the player (or team) that future overrules will be penalized under the Point Penalty System as unsportsmanlike conduct. There is no hard and fast rule as to how many overrules is “too many.”

An Official should consider all factors including:

- the age and experience of the player
- the closeness of the calls
- the importance of the points on which the overrules have occurred
- the factors that might have caused the player to miss the call (For example: a sudden gust of wind blew the ball in at the last minute versus apparent outright cheating or a retaliatory call)
- the frequency with which the overrules occur

An Official should consider cautioning a player if there have been two overrules during the same set. Once an Official cautions a player that subsequent overrules will be penalized under the Point Penalty System, the Official must penalize subsequent overrules. **(Regulation IV.D)**

## **EE. Suspension Point System**

### **1. What is the Suspension Point System?**

This is a system under which players are assessed points for unsportsmanlike behavior in USTA sanctioned tournaments and ITF tournaments. A player who accumulates too many points is suspended.

### **2. Which events does it apply to?**

The Suspension Point System applies to sanctioned tournaments except that it does not apply to a Net Generation program that uses red ball tennis or to a Net Generation program that uses orange, green or yellow ball tennis unless authorized by the sanctioning sectional association.

It applies to conduct:

- During all matches (main draw, compass draw, consolation, qualifying, and doubles);
- During tournament activities;
- At tournament facilities; and
- At facilities, such as hotels, dormitories, and homes where players stay.

### **3. When would a player be assessed suspension points?**

The player can be assessed suspension points for:

- Each code violation (point, game, or default)
- Defaults
- Improper Entry or Withdrawal
- Unsportsmanship Conduct
- Gross Misconduct

- Playing Under Suspension
- ITF Suspension Points

**Note:** Please see Table 17 for more information on the amount of suspension points that would be assessed for each of these violations.

4. The USTA Suspension Point System and Point Penalty System allow for suspension points and/or Code Violations to be assessed to a player when they, the player, or anyone associated with the player engages in unsportsmanlike conduct.
5. An Official may not impose a point penalty or game penalty after the match is over. Nonetheless, suspension points may be assessed. **(Regulation IV.D)**
6. **What are some examples when a player is penalized for the behavior of a person associated with the player?**
  - Code Violation Unsportsmanlike Conduct - 2 suspension points example
    - During the match, a person associated with the player calls their player's opponent "a cheater".
  - Unsportsmanlike Conduct - 2 suspension points example
    - After the match is complete and while the players are still in the playing area, a person associated with the player calls their player's opponent "a cheater".
  - Unsportsmanlike Conduct - 5 suspension points example
    - \*During or after the match is complete and regardless of whether the players are in the playing area or not, a person associated with the player says to the opponent and the people around them that they are all "expletive cheaters" and gives them the middle finger.
  - Unsportsmanlike Conduct - 8-10 suspension points example
    - \*During or after the match is complete and regardless of whether the players are in the playing area or not, a person associated with the player calls their player's opponent a cheater and also includes threatened or actual physical abuse or a slur regarding race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation etc.

**\*If these scenarios happen during the match, the match would most likely end in immediate default.**

## Guidelines for Assessing Penalties

	Action	Always Penalize	Generally Penalize	Sometimes Penalize
Racket Abuse	Throwing a racket that, even inadvertently, strikes a person	<b>X</b>		
	Throwing or striking a racket into the fence, net or other property		<b>X</b>	
	Throwing a racket in anger or in any manner that could or does endanger any person or that damages any part of the court surface or equipment		<b>X</b>	
	Breaking a racket		<b>X</b>	
	Tossing a racket into the air			<b>X</b>
	Tossing a racket at the player's bag			<b>X</b>
	Bouncing or striking a racket on the court			<b>X</b>
Ball Abuse	Deliberately hitting, throwing or kicking a ball that is not in play that hits a person	<b>X</b>		
	Deliberately hitting, throwing or kicking a ball that is not in play that leaves the playing area		<b>X</b>	
	Deliberately hitting, throwing or kicking a ball that is not in play that comes close to hitting a person		<b>X</b>	
	Deliberately hitting, throwing or kicking a ball that is not in play in a manner that could cause damage or harm		<b>X</b>	
	A player who hits the opponent while legitimately trying to return a ball to the opponent should not be penalized.			

## Guidelines for Assessing Penalties

	Action	Always Penalize	Generally Penalize	Sometimes Penalize
Audible or Visible Obscenity or Profanity	Words or gestures that are considered patently offensive to court personnel, players or spectators	<b>X</b>		
	References to sexual functioning	<b>X</b>		
	References to deities when associated with curses	<b>X</b>		
Verbal or Physical Abuse	Physical attacks, even if no one is hurt	<b>X</b>		
	Traditional fighting words	<b>X</b>		
	Ethnic or racial slurs	<b>X</b>		
	References to sexual orientation	<b>X</b>		
	Attacks on the competence of an Official		<b>X</b>	
	Words or gestures that are insulting, abusive, disrespectful, disruptive, or intimidating that are directed at a person		<b>X</b>	
Coaching	Words or gestures that are in the face of a person, such as strong pumped fist directed at close range to an opponent		<b>X</b>	
	Receipt of coaching	<b>X</b>		
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	Retaliatory calls	<b>X</b>		
	Other unsportsmanlike conduct*	<b>X</b>		
	<p><b>*An Official may immediately default a player for a single flagrant unsportsmanlike act. Examples of acts that may justify a penalty of immediate default include: physical attacks; injury to an Official or player through an act of racket or ball abuse; spitting on a person; and using racial, religious, or sexual orientation slurs.</b></p>			

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# We are USTA Officials.

**THE ULTIMATE TENNIS EXPERIENCE  
BEGINS WITH US.**

We don't just make calls.

We make our sport fun and fair.

We don't just oversee the game.

We are ambassadors for the sport.

We teach, learn, listen and lead.

Our diversity gives us strength.

Our mission unites us all.

**SET THE STAGE FOR  
TENNIS AT ITS BEST**

