

# TENNIS

## SCORING

Points in tennis are called love, 15, 30, 40, deuce and advantage.

## THE GAME

0, or nothing, is called 'love'. It is believed to come from the pronunciation of the French word 'l'oeuf', which sounds like 'love'. The use of 'l'oeuf', meaning 'egg', to denote nothing, is derived from the shape of an egg. The first point won by a player is called 15, the second point, 30, the third point, 40. If a player then wins a fourth point before his opponent has won three points, then that player wins the game. However, if both players have won three points (40-all), the score is then deuce, and it is necessary to win two points in a row to win the game. The word 'deuce' comes from an Old French word 'deus', meaning 'two'. The first point won after a score of deuce is called advantage, either to the server or receiver, but if that player loses the next point then the score returns to deuce.

Here are the score of the game in which deuce occurs:

15 - love

15 - all

30 - 15

40 - 15

40 - 30

deuce

advantage receiver (or player' s name)

deuce

advantage server (or player's name)

game server

## THE SET

The first player who wins six games, wins the set, provided he has won two more games than his opponent. If the score reaches five games to six, then the winning player must win the next game. If the score reaches six games all, then it becomes a tiebreak.

Men usually play the best out of five sets and women, the best out of three sets.

## THE TIEBREAK

In most matches, when a game score of six all is reached, a tiebreak is played. In a tiebreak the points are called 1, 2, 3, etc. Each side serves only once. This is so as not to give too great an advantage to the server. The player who wins the tiebreak game is the player who wins seven points with at least two more points than his opponent. He wins the set seven games to six. In a tiebreak the players must keep playing until one player is two points ahead.

In doubles the players serve alternately in the same order as before.

## **ON THE LINE**

A ball that touches only a hair of the line is in, even if 99 per cent of the ball touches the ground outside the line.

Tennis has its official rules, then it has The Code of Tennis, the unofficial rules of good tennis sportsmanship. Any serious player should take the time to read both. Players who don't understand the rules, or worse, The Code, are more likely to experience a gradually shrinking pool of opponents.

Besides the rules of tennis there are also some important unwritten laws which come under the title of tennis etiquette. Tennis is a social game, a game involving simple politeness and consideration. Everyone will enjoy the game so much more if those standards are maintained.

Here are some of the rules which are most important:

- Talk quietly when standing near tennis courts that are in use.
- Never walk behind a court when a point is still in play. Wait until the point is over and then cross as fast as possible.
- If people are already on your court, don't disturb them until their time is up.
- Always come prepared. Bring not only balls, but towels and water to drink when it is hot.
- Wear sneakers for tennis. Other shoes may wear out quickly, hurt your feet, or damage the court.
- When you're ready to play, put racket covers, ball cans, jackets etc., out of everyone's way.
- To see who serves first, spin your racket or toss a coin. If you win the toss, the choice is yours. You may serve first, or you may choose to receive first or to pick which end of the court you want to start playing on. As a third choice you may make your opponent choose first.
- When sending balls back to a neighboring court, roll them on to the back of the court. Never send them back while play is in progress.
- Offer to bring new balls or organize a system to decide who brings the balls.
- Retrieve balls for your partner and your opponent.
- Don't criticize your partner, offer encouragement.
- Call your own lines and let your opponent hear the call. If the ball is good say nothing and play on.
- Always respect the linecalls of your opponent.
- If there is a disagreement, offer a let. In other words, replay the point, even if it was a second service.

## **Ball Management**

Even the most efficient tennis players spend more time between points than playing points. Getting the balls in the server's hands is the biggest time-waster. While a brief rest between points is often needed, many players slow the game down by a factor of two or three by failing to collect balls and get them to the server efficiently. Here are a few tips that will speed up the game and make it more fun for everyone:

Balls should be kept either in hand, in a pocket or ball clip, or against the fence directly behind the center mark.

Any time your opponent has to walk a significant distance to get a ball, look around your side to see whether you can use that time to collect a ball that's similarly far away. If the server needs a ball, the player closest to a ball should get it and send it to the server.

Send a ball to the server so that he/she can catch it easily with one hand. Advanced players seem to be able to get the ball to bounce once, softly, to the server, but most less advanced players should make the ball bounce twice to ensure that it arrives at a low speed.

Never hit a ball hard toward the server's side with the intention that he/she will eventually collect it off the fence. Aside from the possibility of hitting someone who's not expecting a ball to be coming, you'll also probably cause the ball to bounce off the fence and roll either too far away or into the court where it will become a hazard. Also, it's rude to make the server pick a ball up off the ground when you could have sent it so that it could be caught after a bounce or two.

## **Keeping Score**

The server must announce the score at the start of each game and at the start of the second point and each subsequent point in each game.

If the receiver cannot hear the server's announcement of the score, he must ask the server to speak louder. You can't wait until the server believes he has won the game to try to reconstruct the scoring point by point.

## **Line Calls**

The Code addresses this topic quite well, but here a few points that many players often overlook:

If you're not sure whether your opponent's shot is in or out, it's in.

If you return a first serve that your opponent can clearly see is out, your opponent won't be sure why you're not calling it out. It's often hard for the receiver to tell on fast serves, and you must give the server the benefit of the doubt, but if you can see that you

confused your opponent by playing an out ball, offer to replay the point. See The Code's interesting discussion of calling serves in or out.

In doubles, you should not call balls wide when they land near the far sideline, unless the call is obvious and your partner was somehow hindered from seeing the ball land. If you are the receiver, and your partner is on or near the service line at the start of a point, your partner has the best view of whether a serve is in or long. You can make a call if he doesn't, but always defer to his judgment. (You generally shouldn't disagree with your partner's calls anyway.)

### **Demeanor**

Try to look like you're having fun, even if you're playing badly. Your opponent does not want to see you looking miserable, at least in a friendly match, and you're likely to play better if you try to present a positive state of mind.

## **Tennis Court**

