



Official Rules of Platform Tennis

With notes, comments and appendices

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While most of the rules of platform tennis are derived from tennis, there are differences with which players of platform tennis should be acquainted.

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Sportsmanship and Etiquette

Both sportsmanship and etiquette have been fundamental to this sport since the beginning and we are determined to keep it that way. Both subjects deal with integrity and respect, but the subject of sportsmanship is intended to keep egregious behaviors out of the game while the subject of etiquette is intended to raise the level of civility on the court.

Webster defines a sportsman as “a person who can take a loss or defeat without complaint, or victory without gloating, and who treats his opponents with fairness, generosity, courtesy, etc.”

Unsportsmanlike behavior will not be tolerated. Examples of unsportsmanlike behavior include, but are not limited to, throwing the paddle, abusive or foul language, retaliatory calls, threatening verbal or physical behavior, name calling and so on. When dealing with such incidents, tournament directors and the APTA recognize that there are degrees of severity related to these behaviors and will consider that when determining penalties. See Rule 28 below.

The subject of etiquette is equally important to the game and is focused more on how to raise the level of civility during play. For a description of expected behaviors, please read the addendum to these Rules titled “The Etiquette of Platform Tennis”

RULE 1. Dimensions and Terminology

The court is a rectangle 44 feet long and 20 feet wide, laid out on a deck with a playing area 60 feet by 30 feet which is enclosed by a screen 12 feet high. The screen is held taut by a superstructure around the perimeter of the deck. Screens are made of 1 inch hexagonal galvanized or plastic coated wire mesh.

The court is divided across the middle by a net, the ends of which are attached to posts. The posts are 37 inches high and 18 inches outside the court. The height of the net at the posts is 37 inches and at center is 34 inches. The net is held down taut and adjusted for height by a vertical center strap 2 inches wide.

The lines at the ends of the court, parallel to the net, are called baselines. The lines at the sides of the court, perpendicular to the net, are called sidelines. Two feet inside the sidelines and running parallel to them for the length of the court are the alley lines. Twelve feet from the net on either side and running parallel to it from alley line to alley line are the service lines. The segments of the alley lines between the service lines and the net are called the service sidelines. The area between the net and the service

lines is divided in half by a line perpendicular to them. This line is called the center service line.

Each baseline is bisected by an imaginary extension of the center service line called the center mark. The center mark appears as a line 4 inches long extending into the court at right angles to and touching the baseline. The area between the baseline and the service line is called the backcourt. The area between the service line and the net is called the forecourt, which in turn is divided into two service courts, deuce and ad. The area between the side line and the alley line is called the alley. All lines are customarily 2 inches wide and all measurements are made to the outside of the lines from the net or the center of the center service line. This line is in both service courts and is itself centered on the imaginary center line of the court. All lines are within the court.

There is a space of 8 feet between each baseline and the back screen, and a space of 5 feet between each side line and the side screen. These spaces are part of the playing area, but they are not part of the court. On either side of the court, or on both sides, an access door is cut into the superstructure. The door is located near the center of the side screen.

Court surfaces as well as colors for court and playing area must be approved by the APTA Rules Committee.

RULE 2. Court Fixtures

Court fixtures are the posts, the net, the net hand crank, the net cord (or metal cable) that holds up the net, the band across the top of the net, the center strap, the screens, the snow boards, the superstructure, any diagonal corner support beam within the enclosure, the doors, the lighting poles and lights, and, when they are present, the umpire and umpire's chair.

RULE 3. The Ball and the Paddle

The ball is a rubber ball with flocking, conforming to APTA specifications for diameter, weight, bounce and other standards as set forth in Appendix A. The paddle is 18 inches (maximum) in overall length. The paddle is perforated with up to 87 holes of 3/8 inch diameter (maximum). The surface of the paddle may be textured. APTA paddle standards are set forth in Appendix B. All paddle and balls used in an APTA sanctioned tournament must have been approved by the APTA Rules Committee.

RULE 4. Use of Paddle and Ball

A player may not carry a second paddle or a second ball during play, although it is permissible to use both hands on the paddle and to switch the paddle from hand to hand in the course of play. With regard to ball change, play should continue with the same ball as long as it is in good condition. In

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tournament matches (a) play should continue with the same ball throughout a set, and the ball should not be changed during the set unless: (i) the ball becomes clearly defective, such as a crack or split, or (ii) for any other reason all four players agree that the ball should be changed during the set (unless all four agree to the change to a new ball, play should continue with the same ball through the completion of the set - including tiebreaker); (b) at the end of a set, play can continue with the same ball (however, if any one player desires a new ball, a ball change is made).

Comment: In certain circumstances - for example, extremely cold conditions, or wet conditions causing rapid wear of the ball or the flocking - a change of ball more frequently than one set may be warranted. In this situation, to avoid any confusion or disputes during play, it is desirable that the officials (or, in the absence of officials, the players) decide on a specific ball change pattern prior to starting the match; for example, every 5 games, or every 9 games.

RULE 5. The Game

Platform Tennis is basically a doubles game, and the rules discussed in this booklet pertain to doubles play. Singles is sometimes played according to the rules set forth in Rule 27.

RULE 6. Choice of End of Court and Service

The choice of end of court and the right to serve first or to receive first is decided by toss, which is generally accomplished by spinning the paddle. The team that does not toss has the right to call the toss. The team winning the toss has the following options: (a) the right to serve first, in which case the other team has the right to choose from which end of the court to receive; (b) the right to receive first, in which case the other team has the right to choose from which end of the court to serve; (c) the right to choose the end, in which case the other team has the right to elect to serve first or to receive first; (d) the right to require the other team to make the first choice.

RULE 7. Server and Receiver

After the toss has been concluded, the teams take their places on opposite sides of the net. The member of the serving team who elects to serve first becomes the server. The member of the receiving team who elects to play the deuce court becomes the first receiver. The server must deliver service from a position behind the baseline and between the center mark and the sideline, diagonally crosscourt from the receiver (See Rule 11b). The receiver may stand wherever he/she pleases on his/her own side of the net, on or off the court. Likewise the server's partner and the receiver's partner

may take any position they choose on their own sides of the net, on or off the court. The server alternates serving, first from behind the deuce court into the receiver's deuce court, then from behind the ad court into the receiver's ad court, and so on. Members of the receiving team alternate receiving service. (See Appendix C for the proper service rotation in a tiebreaker and for when teams change ends.)

The ball served must pass over the net and hit the deck within the proper service court before the receiver may return it. The receiver may not volley the service (i.e., strike the ball before it has bounced). If he/she does so, the receiver loses the point outright.

If the server serves from behind the wrong court and the mistake is not discovered before the service is completed (see Rule 8), the point stands as played, but thereafter the server must serve from the correct side of the court according to the score. If such service from the incorrect position is a fault, it is a completed point - loss of point to the server. If the incorrect position of the server is detected prior to delivering the service, or after a good service is delivered, but no attempt is made by the receiver to return the ball, there is no penalty and the server should move to the correct position and deliver the service.

If either server delivers the first service of the tiebreaker from the wrong side of the courts and the mistake is not discovered before the service is completed, the point stands. If the service is a fault, it is loss of point to the serving team. If the incorrect position or incorrect server is detected prior to delivering the first service or if a good service is delivered and there is no attempt by the receiver to return the ball, there is no penalty and the correct server should re-serve from the correct side of the court. If the incorrect server serves the first point and the point is completed, the point stands as played but that team's service rotation stands as altered (i.e. the server's partner serves next in the tiebreaker rotation). Thereafter in the tiebreaker if a service is made from the wrong side of the court, or by the wrong server, and the error is not detected before the service is completed, the point stands. As soon as the error in side or server is detected, it must be remedied on the next point served by the team that made the error. If correcting the error would result in two consecutive services being made from the same side of the court, the next service must be made from the other side. If correcting the error results in a change of server to serve the next two services for his/her team, then the service should be changed for the duration of the tiebreaker. In any of these situations, as in the first serve of the tiebreaker, if a good service is delivered but no attempt is made by the receiver to return the ball, there is no penalty and the correct server should deliver the service from the correct side.

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RULE 8. Delivery of the Service

The service is delivered as follows: the server takes an initial position behind the baseline and between an imaginary extension of the center mark and the sideline, as described in Rule 7. The server then projects the ball by hand into the air in any direction and before it hits the ground strikes the ball with the paddle. At the moment of impact the service delivery is completed.

Note: The service may be delivered overhand, underhand or sidearm as the server chooses. There is no obligation on server's part to inform receiver as to the server's intention, and the server may vary the type of delivery.

RULE 9. Only One Service

Only one service is allowed (except in singles - see Rule 27). If the service is a fault, the server loses the point.

RULE 10. Fault or Out

Fault: The service is a fault if (a) the server does not take a legal position as described in Rules 7 and 8; (b) the server commits a foot fault (see Rule 11); (c) the server misses the ball completely in attempting to strike it; (d) the ball does not land in the proper service court; (e) the ball served hits the server's partner; (f) the ball touches a court fixture other than the net cord, post, net hand crank, band or center strap before landing in the proper service court.

Note: Any service that does touch the net cord, post, net hand crank, band, or center strap before landing in the proper service court is in play. This is unlike tennis, where a "let" service would be called.

On service, either member of the receiving team may make line calls. The service is a fault if (a) the ball lands outside the proper service court or (b) the server violates the foot fault rule. (see Rule 11). If an out call is made, play should stop. If there is a disagreement between the receiving partners as to whether the service is good or out, a let should be played, regardless of whether the service was returned in or out of play.

Out: A ball in play (other than a service) is out if it does not land within the court on the proper side of the net after either crossing the net or touching the post, net, net hand crank, net cord, band or center strap. Since all parts of the lines bounding the court are deemed to be within the court, a ball that touches any part of a line is good. In an unofficiated match, the usual procedure is for the receiving team to make line calls on its own side of the net (i.e., you call lines on your side; the opponents call lines on their side). However, players may assist their opponents with "out" calls in the

opponents' court, if requested. They should also call against themselves any ball that is clearly out on the opponents' side of the court if not called by the opponents.

If during play, a player makes an out call on a ball that the player could otherwise return, play should stop. If the partner disagrees and believes the ball was in, a let should be played. If a ball is not clearly seen by either player as in or out, or an out call is made on a ball which neither player could retrieve and the caller's partner believes the ball was in, the point should be awarded to the opponents. (See Addendum, "The Etiquette of Platform Tennis," for further discussion.)

RULE 11. Footfault

The server shall, throughout delivery of the service, up to the moment of impact of paddle and ball (a) not change position by walking or running; (b) not touch, with either foot, any area other than that behind the baseline within the imaginary extension of the center mark and the sideline.

Note: The server shall not by the following movements of his/her feet be deemed to "change position by walking or running": (a) slight movements of the feet that do not materially affect the location originally taken by the server; (b) an unrestricted movement of one foot, so long as the other foot maintains continuously its original contact with the deck; (c) leaving the deck with both feet.

In a match not being officiated, the server's opponents may call foot faults. The first call of a foot fault on each server shall be a let. After this grace fault, it is loss of point. Under tournament conditions, if there is an umpire or linesmen, they assume the responsibility for calling all foot faults. At any time in any round of a tournament match, any player is entitled to request a foot fault judge and/or linesmen.

RULE 12. Receiving Team Must Be Ready

The server must not deliver the service until the receiving team is ready. If the receiver makes any attempt to return the ball, the receiver is deemed to be ready. Also, if the receiver attempts to return the ball, it is deemed that the receiver's partner also is ready. If the receiver claims not to be ready as a service is being delivered, the service shall be played again, provided the receiver does not attempt to return the ball. In such case, the receiver may not claim a fault should the service land in the net or outside the service court.

RULE 13. A Let

In all cases where a let is called, the point is to be replayed. The service is a let if it is delivered when the receiving team is not ready (see Rule 12). A

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ball in play is a let if (a) it hits an overhanging obstruction such as a tree limb; (b) the ball becomes broken in the course of a point; (c) play is interrupted by an accidental occurrence, such as a ball from another court bouncing into the court; (d) the ball leaves the court through a hole in the screen, or gets stuck in the screen. If a player loses an item of clothing (i.e., hat, glasses, accessory), the opposing team has the option to call a let. This call must be made immediately, or the point will stand as concluded.

Note: In any situation during the play of a point when a let may be called, if the player who could call the let does not do so immediately and permits play to continue, that decision is binding on his team. It is not reasonable to opt not to call a let, strike the ball for loss of point, and then ask for a let to be called. In the event that one of the players incorrectly calls a "let" on a "net cord service" (see Rule 10) the following applies (a) if the let was called by the receiving team, it is loss of point for the receiving team and, (b) if the let is called by the serving team, it is loss of point for the serving team.

Comment: For further discussion of other situations in which a let may be called, see Rule 21.

RULE 14. Service Touching Receiving Team

If the service touches the receiver or the receiver's partner or anything they are wearing or carrying before the ball has hit the deck, the server wins the point outright. This ruling applies whether the member of the receiving team is hit while standing on or off the court.

RULE 15. When Receiver Becomes Server

At the end of the first game of a set, the receiving team becomes the serving team. The partners decide between them who will serve first in each set. The order of service remains in force for that entire set.

RULE 16. Serving or Receiving out of Turn

If a player serves out of turn, the player who should be serving must take over the serving from the point that the mistake is discovered. All points stand as played. If an entire game is served by the wrong player, the game score stands as played, but the order of service remains as altered, so that in no case may one player on a team serve three games in a row. If the receiving team receives from the wrong sides of their court (as established in their first receiving game of the set), they must continue to receive serve for the entire game from the "wrong sides," but must revert to the original sides of their court in the next game in which they are receivers.

RULE 17. Ball Remains in Play

Once a ball is put into play by service, it remains in play until the point is decided, unless a fault or a let is called. A player may not catch a ball that appears to be going out of bounds and claim the point. The ball is in play until it actually hits the screen on the fly, bounces on the deck out of bounds, bounces a second time after first bouncing in bounds, or goes over the screen. A player catching or stopping a ball and calling "out" before the ball is legally out loses the point for his/her team.

Note: A ball that is hit by a player outside the net post and lands within the opponents' court is in play. See Rule 20(c).

RULE 18. Loss of Point

A team loses the point if (a) as the receiving team, the ball bounces a second time, provided the first bounce was within the court.

Comment: Sometimes it is difficult to determine whether a player attempting to retrieve a ball, especially a drop shot that has bounced once and is about to bounce again, actually strikes the ball before it bounces the second time. Propriety dictates that the player attempting to hit the ball is honor bound to call "not up" if the player feels the ball did in fact bounce twice. A player who has any doubt in this situation should ask the nearest opponent, after the point has been decided, "Was it up?" If the opponent says no, the point should be conceded.

(b) A player returns the ball in such a way that it hits (i) the deck on the other side of the net outside the sidelines or baseline; (ii) any object, other than an opposing player, on the other side of the net outside the sidelines or baseline; (iii) the net, the post, net hand crank, cord, band or center strap and does not then land within the court on the other side of the net.

(c) A player volleys the ball and fails to make a good return, even when standing outside the court.

Comment: A player standing outside the court volleys at his own risk. It is not proper to volley the ball and simultaneously call it out, for if the ball is volleyed it is in play.

(d) A player deliberately carries or catches the ball in play on the paddle or deliberately touches it with the paddle more than once (i.e. any ball struck using a continuous motion is legal).

(e) A player strikes the ball before it has crossed over to his side of the net (i.e. reaches over the net to strike the ball, making contact on the opponents' side of the net; for exception, see Rule 20).

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(f) A ball in play touches any part of a player, including the hand(s) holding the paddle, or his/her clothing.

Note: It does not matter whether the player is inside or outside the court, whether he/she is hit squarely or his/her clothing merely grazed, or whether the contact is accidental or purposeful. If a ball touches anything other than a player's paddle, it is loss of point.

(g) A player throws his paddle at the ball in play and hits it.

(h) A player bounces the ball over the screen and out of the enclosure or into a lighting fixture or light pole, whether or not the ball rebounds back into the court.

(i) A player or anything the player wears or carries touches the post, net, net hand crank, cord, band or center strap, or the court surface on the opponents' side of the net, within the boundary lines, while the ball is in play. (See Rule 17 regarding ball in play)

Note: If the point has already been concluded, it is not a violation to touch any of these fixtures. Also, if in rushing forward to retrieve a shot, a player's momentum carries him/her past the net post onto the opponents' side of the net, this is not loss of point unless the player actually steps inside the opponents' court or interferes with one of the opponents. Mere physical contact with an opponent is not loss of point unless such contact hinders the opponent.

When a player is standing at the net and the opponent hits the ball into the net in such a way that it pushes the net against the player's paddle or person, the net player loses the point. It does not matter that the ball was not going over the net. The net player loses the point because the player made contact with the net while the ball was still in play.

(j) A player strikes a ball which lands in the court, then rebounds off the backscreen or corner, and lands back on the striker's side of the net (in or out of bounds) without being touched by an opponent. This rule does not apply to the serve.

RULE 19. Ball Touching Court Fixtures

If the ball in play touches a Court Fixture (as defined in Rule 2) after it has hit the deck within the boundaries of the court, the ball remains in play and may be returned, so long as it has not hit the deck a second time within the court or the playing area.

Exceptions: If the ball hits a lighting fixture or pole, the point is concluded - loss of point for striker. In matches in which an umpire and an umpire's chair are inside the enclosure, a ball striking either the

umpire or the chair prior to landing in the opponents' court is loss of point for the striker.

RULE 20. Good Return

It is a good return if (a) the ball touches the net, post, net cord, net hand crank, band or center strap and then hits the deck within the proper court; (b) the ball, served or returned, hits the deck within the proper court and rebounds or is blown back over the net, and one of the players on the opposing team reaches over the net and plays the ball, provided that neither the player nor any part of the player's clothing or equipment touches the post, net, net hand crank, net cord, band, center strap, or the deck within the opponents' court, and that the stroke is otherwise good (See also Rule 21); (c) the ball is returned outside the post, either above or below the level of the top of the net, whether or not it touches the post, or net hand crank, provided that it then hits the deck within the court;

Note: It is not a good return if the ball is hit through the open space between the net and the post.

(d) a player's paddle passes over the net after the player has returned the ball, provided that the ball has crossed to the player's side of the net before being struck by the player and that the stroke is otherwise good.

RULE 21. Interference

If a player is hindered in making a stroke by anything not within his control, the point is replayed.

Comment: If a tree branch or a ball from another court should interfere with play, a let should be called immediately. However, if a player bumps into his own partner or is interfered with by a court fixture, that is not grounds for a let. In the situation covered by Rule 20b, if his opponent willfully hinders the player attempting to strike the ball, the player is entitled to the point by reason of interference, whether such interference is verbal or physical. However, if it is agreed that such interference was unintentional, a let should be called.

RULE 22. Scoring

(a) The Game: Zero, or no points, is called "love." The first point is called 15, although it is also commonly called 5. The second point is called 30. The third point is called 40. The fourth point is Game. It is customary to call the score of the serving team first. For example, if the receiving team wins the first point, the score is "love 15." When both teams score 15, or both score 30, the score is called "15 all" or "30 all". When both teams score 40, the score is called "deuce." The next point after deuce is called "advantage" for the team winning it, thus

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"advantage server" (or more usually "ad in"), if the serving team wins that point, or "advantage receiver" (or "ad out"), if the receiving team wins that point. If the team with the advantage wins the next point, it wins the game. If the other team wins that point, the score reverts to deuce. This continues indefinitely until one or the other team wins two points in a row from deuce, which wins the game. A game that is won "at love" means that the losing team won no points.

(b) The Set: The team which first wins 6 games wins the set. However, the winning team must have a margin of 2 games, and a set played under the traditional rules continues until one team has such a 2-game margin (e.g., 8-6 or 11-9). A set that is won "at love" means that the losing team won no games. When the score in games is 6-all, the APTA the 12 point tiebreaker (see Appendix C) should be used, except as below.

(c) The Match: A match is usually best of three sets with a tiebreaker in all sets. See Guidelines below for exceptions.

Comment: In matches played without an umpire, the server should announce the point scores as the game goes on, and the game score at the end of the service game. Misunderstandings will be averted if this practice is followed.

(d) No-Ad Scoring: No-ad scoring is used occasionally to speed up play by concluding a game on the next point after both teams have scored three points (referred to as deuce in regular scoring). Points are scored 1, 2, 3 and no points is called "zero." When the score reaches "3 all," the receiving team may decide which partner will receive the service. The winner of that point wins the game.

Guidelines For Number of Sets To Be Played In Different Events:

2 out of 3 sets, with tiebreaker in all sets:

- Women's Ranking Tournaments
- Men's Ranking Tournaments
- Senior National Championships
- Junior National Championships
- Men's Singles National Championship

2 out of 3 sets, with tiebreaker in all sets, except third set of finals played out:

- Women's National Championship
- Men's National Championship
- Mixed National Championship

RULE 23. When Teams Change Ends

Teams change ends at the end of the first, third, fifth and every subsequent odd-numbered game of each set. When a set ends on an odd total of games (e.g., 6-3), the teams "change for one" - that is, they change ends for one game, and then change ends again after the first game of the next set. When the set ends on an even total of games (e.g., 6-4), the teams "stay for one" and then change ends after the first game of the next set.

RULE 24. Continuous Play

Play shall be continuous from the first service of the first game until the conclusion of the match, except (a) for rest periods permitted by tournament officials; (b) when changing sides on the odd games, a maximum of one minute is allowed for players to towel off, change equipment, rest, etc.; (c) during a service game, the server is permitted a maximum of 20 seconds between the finish of play on a point and the delivery of the next service; (d) play shall never be suspended, delayed or interfered with for the purpose of enabling a player to recover his strength or to receive instruction or advice. (The umpire shall be the sole judge of such suspension, delay or interference, and after giving due warning, the umpire may disqualify the offender. No allowance may be made for natural loss of physical condition such as cramps, faintness or loss of wind. Consideration may be given by the umpire for accidental loss of physical ability or condition.)

Note 1: In the event of an accident, a fall, collision with a net post, a sprained ankle, and the like, up to a 10-minute suspension in play may be authorized. A default will be mandatory if play is not resumed immediately after the suspension.

Note 2: If a player's clothing, footwear, or equipment becomes out of adjustment in such a way that it is impossible or undesirable for the player to continue, the provisions in Note 1 shall apply.

Comment: The intent of the Continuous Play Rule is to prevent unauthorized rest periods for players who are tired and to discourage stalling tactics for whatever purpose. In the event of an accident, the umpire or tournament chairman shall consider a temporary suspension of play. If a match is adjourned for a legitimate reason (e.g. a sudden rainstorm), when the match is resumed (a) the teams are entitled to a full warmup, and (b) the match must begin precisely where it left off, with the same game and point score, same server, same ends of the court, and same order of service.

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RULE 25. Only One Hit

In the course of making a return, only one player may hit the ball. If both players, either simultaneously or consecutively, hit the ball, it is an illegal return and loss of point. Mere clashing of paddles does not constitute an illegal return, provided that only one player strikes the ball.

RULE 26. Balls Off Screens

If a ball in play or on the service hits the deck in the proper court and then touches any part of the back or side screens, or both screens, or the horizontal top, rails, or the snow boards, it may be played, so long as it does not bounce on the deck a second time before being hit by the player. A ball taken off the screen must be returned into the opponents' court. It may not be caromed back indirectly by being hit from paddle to screen and then into the opponents' court.

RULE 27: Singles

The rules for singles are the same as for doubles except for the following: In singles, the game is played within the standard singles court (within the alley lines; see diagram on page 3), two services are allowed, and no-ad scoring is used. The no-ad game point is served to the service court of the receiver's choice (see Rule 22d).

RULE 28. Sportsmanship

A Tournament Director has full authority to administer penalties for unsportsmanlike conduct during a tournament and such penalties can include a warning, loss of point, loss of game, loss of set, loss of match, or expulsion from the tournament depending on the severity of the offense and the clarity of the facts of the case.

In addition, after the conclusion of any APTA sanctioned tournament, the APTA Board may, at its discretion, mete out penalties to players for unsportsmanlike behavior and such penalties can range from a warning letter to a total lifetime ban from all APTA sanctioned events.

Appendices

A. Ball Performance Standards

The APTA has established the following Performance Standards and Acceptable Tolerances for the ball. The APTA reserves the right to withhold or terminate approval if the Association feels the standards have not been met by a manufacturer and to approve balls for sanctioned play as it sees fit.

Bounce Test: Balls should be conditioned at 70 degrees F. and 25% - 35% relative humidity for 24-32 hours, then dropped from 90 inches to a concrete slab, and the rebound measured. Bounce to be measured from bottom of ball.

Acceptable Tolerance: 43.0 inches thru 51.0 inches.

Weight Test - Acceptable Tolerance: 70.0 grams thru 75.0 grams

Diameter Test - Measure diameter along two perpendicular axes of the ball. Both readings must be within tolerance. Diameter: 2.45 to 2.55 inches.

B. Platform Tennis Paddle Standards and Acceptable Tolerances

Total Length 18 inches maximum

Holes-Number 87 maximum

Holes-Diameter 3/8 inch maximum

Edge (or Rim) May be flush, or wraparound, with a maximum depth into the paddle face of 1/2 inch and a maximum height above the surface of the paddle face of 1/8 inch.

Surface Flat (not curved)

Surface Finish Texturing permissible

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C. The APTA Approved 12-Point Tiebreaker for Platform Tennis

At six games all, the players continue to serve in order and from the same end as before. The server of the first point of the tiebreaker will serve only one point, to the ad court. Each player will then, in normal service rotation, serve twice; first to the deuce court then to the ad court.

The single point served by the initial server of the tiebreaker results in an immediate change of ends, and teams will continue to change ends in the normal pattern as if the server had served an entire game.

First team to win 7 points wins the set, although if it be 6 points all, a team must win the tiebreaker by a margin of two points. The set shall be scored 7-6. The team receiving service for the first point of the tiebreaker shall begin serving the next set from the opposite side from which it received the first point.

The teams shall change ends after the first game.

Example:

A started serving the set from North End.

It's 6 games all and it's A's turn to serve again.

1) A serves Once (ad court) from North End.

Change Ends

2) C serves twice from North End.* (deuce court first; ad court second)

3) B serves twice from South End. (deuce court first; ad court second)

Change Ends

4) D serves twice from South End. (deuce court first; ad court second)

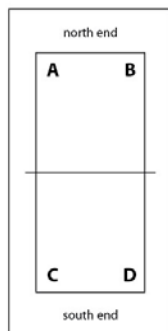
5) A serves twice from North End. (deuce court first; ad court second)

Change ends and repeat this order until one team reaches 7 points or wins by 2 points after each team reaches 6 points.

6) Team C-D starts serving next set from North End.

7) Teams change sides after 1 game.

*Assuming that C has been following A in service order. If a ball change is called for on a tiebreaker game, the change should be deferred until the second game of the following set, to preserve the alternation of the right to serve first with the new ball.



D. The Etiquette of Platform Tennis

Platform tennis, often referred to as "paddle" for short, is a keenly competitive sport and one in which, by tradition, good sportsmanship, integrity, and respect are key elements. It is a game that is played for fun, but there is also an active winter tournament circuit. The game is played in accordance with the Official Rules of Platform Tennis as published by the American Platform Tennis Association.

The main purpose of this section, however, is to discuss the etiquette of platform tennis play. Etiquette is an area where, unlike rules, which are generally more specific, there may be differences of opinion, or judgment may have to be exercised. Since platform tennis continues to attract many new participants, the APTA believes it desirable to provide these guidelines on the etiquette of the game. In doing so, it is recognized that etiquette does have its "gray areas." Therefore, these comments are offered not as hard and fast rules, but as suggested guidelines of behavior. In any case, it is hoped that the tradition of the game will be maintained through a continued high degree of sportsmanship and mutual respect and that these guidelines may assist in furthering that tradition by offering worthwhile suggestions on personal behavior while playing this rewarding game.

I. Line Calls

In matches where there are no linesmen, the general rule is that all lines are called by the receiving team (i.e., you call lines on your side, the opponents call lines on their side). Each side should, obviously, call the ball in or out honestly and without regard to the play situation. The decision of the team whose responsibility it is to make the call is final.

The following refinements are suggested:

1. If an out call is not promptly made, the ball is considered in and play should continue.
2. On service, either member of the receiving team may make line calls. If an out call is made, play should stop. If there is a disagreement between the receiving partners as to whether the service was good or out, a let should be played, regardless of whether the service was returned in or out of play.
3. During play, if a player makes an out call on a ball that the player could otherwise return, and the player stops play but his partner thinks the ball was in, a let should be played. If an out call is made on a ball that neither player could retrieve but the caller's partner disagrees and believes the ball was in, the point should be awarded to the opponents.
4. Players may assist their opponents with out calls in the opponents' court, if requested. They should also call against themselves any ball that is clearly out on the opponents' side of the court, if not called by the opponents.

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5. A certain amount of friendly kidding about opponents' line calls is inevitable. But etiquette dictates that the opponents' line calls are to be respected and considered final. In the end, questionable calls will usually balance off between the two sides.

6. If there is uncertainty about a line call any doubts should be resolved in favor of the opponents.

7. When coaching your partner to let a ball drop rather than hit it, try to use commands such as "bounce it!" or "drop it!" rather than "out!" so as not to confuse your opponents, who may think you are making an out call.

II. Foot Fault

The foot fault is the aspect of the game that demands the greatest amount of self-control by the server. Seldom will fellow players advise another player that he or she is foot-faulting for fear of "offending." Yet if the server steps on the baseline or on the court before striking the ball, the server is breaking the rules.

Many players may not know they are foot-faulting. This is because in serving, they make a slight movement of the forward foot, which is legal, but in doing so they step on or over the line. A player can find out if he or she is foot-faulting by asking a fellow player to observe the service. Conversely, a polite comment to another player, who may not ask, is not out of order. One subtle way to handle this is to ask the opponents if they would like to have you call foot faults during practice services.

The server is on his honor not to foot-fault; therefore, all players should exercise the self-control necessary to stay behind the line while serving. Apart from the rule-breaking and etiquette aspects of foot-faulting, linesmen may call foot faults in the semifinals and finals of major tournaments, and any player who is in the habit of foot-faulting regularly may have a difficult time adjusting to a correct service procedure under the pressure of tournament competition. The usual result is that the server will lose points on called foot faults or serve a higher percentage of faults in trying to adjust to a legal service.

So, in this area above all others, etiquette says that players must exercise the greatest degree of self-control in order not to break the rules and/or offend others. Practice serving legally, and check with others by asking that your service be watched.

III. Net Cord Ball on Service

The Official Rules of Platform Tennis state that if the service touches the net cord and lands in the correct service court, the ball is in play (i.e., it is not a let).

It is recognized that many platform tennis players are also tennis players, and in tennis a net cord service is still played as a let. To afford them, as well as new players of platform tennis, the opportunity to adjust to our rules, in non-tournament competition if a let is erroneously called on a net cord service by any of the players, the first such violation by each team may be considered a grace call, and a let played in each instance.

After the first such grace call (one for each team), if an erroneous let is called on a net cord service but neither team is distracted by the improper call, play can continue. However, if the let call is a distraction that causes either team to stop play, it is loss of point for the team calling the let.

IV. Ball Hitting Player

If a ball touches any part of a player's body or clothing (including any part of the hand) either before landing or hitting the screen on the player's side or after landing fairly in the court, it results in loss of point. Even if the player is standing outside the boundaries of the court, the point is lost if the ball strikes the player before landing on the deck or hitting a screen. Often a ball striking a player just barely grazes the clothing or hair. It is good etiquette for the player to declare that the ball touched him or her and award the point to the opponents.

It is not good etiquette for any player to declare that the ball hit an opponent and thereby claim the point. The player may politely ask if it did, but the determination of whether or not the ball hit the opponent is that player's to make, and his or her integrity and decision in the matter should be respected.

V. The "Tick"

A ball that is "ticked" is barely grazed with the paddle, and often when this happens only the player who ticks the ball can hear or feel it. It is good etiquette for the player doing so to promptly declare that the ball was touched and award the point to the opponents.

It is poor etiquette for a player to declare that an opponent ticked the ball and claim the point. The best person to determine whether the ball was ticked is the player, and it is good etiquette to respect the player's integrity and decision.

VI. Touching the Net

Touching the net with any part of the body or the paddle during play is loss of point. A player touching the net should promptly declare the violation and award the point to the opponents.

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On rare occasions, a ball driven by a player into the net will force a loosely strung net to strike the paddle of the opposing net person, who may be crowding the net. If this occurs, it is loss of point for the net player's team since the net was touched before the ball fell to the deck to conclude the point. (Moral – always tighten the lower net strings.)

VII. Double Bounce

If a player knows that the ball has bounced twice before returning it, he should call a “not-up” and the point should be awarded to the other team.

VIII. Reaching Over the Net

It is against the rules to reach over the net to strike a ball unless it has first landed in the striker's court. An over-the-net violation should be called by the violating player or partner as a matter of good etiquette. It is not good etiquette for the opponents to make that call and claim the point.

IX. Return the Ball to the Server

When a point is completed, if the ball is lying on your side of the court and your opponent is serving, it is good etiquette to pick up the ball and either give it to your opponent's net player, who can give it to the server, or to gently bounce the ball to the server at the next service position, waiting a moment before delivering the ball if the server's back is turned.

It is good etiquette to do your part by picking up the ball and getting it to the server in an easy and accommodating manner. If everyone does this it will be easier on you when your turn comes to serve! All too often, players simply kick or push the ball in the opponents' direction or arbitrarily hit the ball just anywhere over to the other side. This makes the server chase the ball, it is discourteous, and it results in a slower-moving game.

Finally, and above all, resist the temptation of venting aggravation at missing an easy shot by slamming the ball about the court after the point is lost.

X. The Woman in Mixed Doubles

This can be a sensitive subject. However, no document on etiquette would be complete without touching at least briefly on the subject. Specifically, the question is how the man should play against the woman in an opposing mixed doubles team, particularly if the woman is the weaker of the two partners. There are two schools of thought. The first, which is more often applied in friendly games, says that the man should be “gentlemanly” by not driving the ball hard at the woman at net, or in returning her serve, and should not work her corner disproportionately. This does have the advantage of balancing play between opposing partners. It is “gentlemanly,”

and it avoids the accusation of “picking on the woman.” In an otherwise close contest, it can also lead to losing the match.

The other school of thought says that a team is a team, gender makes no difference, and the normal strategy to beat a team that may be unbalanced is to play the weaker partner. If that partner happens to be a woman, so be it. And if the woman does not like that, she need not play (or can get better).

Both viewpoints have merit and both have their strong advocates. It is not uncommon to see a double standard practiced, with the first school of thought being applied in friendly, social games, where winning or losing may be unimportant, or even in an unbalanced tournament match; and the second standard being applied in a keenly contested tournament match. We believe it best to leave this choice to one's personal discretion.

XI. On Losing

It is much more difficult to be a gracious loser than a gracious winner. One should be gracious in either case—but try particularly hard to be so in losing. Congratulate your opponents, wish them well, live with it, and strive to improve, so you can be a gracious winner.

XII. Intentional Distractions

Players should not intentionally distract their opponents. Any talking or sudden movements made before or while the server begins his/her service motion, which has been deemed to be done solely to distract the server, violates the spirit of sportsmanship. This includes, but is not limited to talking, making loud noises, waving arms or paddles, dancing or jumping, or stomping of feet.

XIII. Good Manners

In closing, a few do's and don'ts on good manners are included, although most of these suggestions are obvious:

1. Be punctual. The game requires four players, and it is good etiquette to be on time and not inconvenience the other players by being late.
2. Bring a ball.
3. Don't use bad language during play (or keep it to yourself).
4. Don't bang the paddle against the net, the side screening, or the deck as an outward expression of self-dissatisfaction.
5. As a courtesy, don't deliberately wear clothing with the intent of making the ball more difficult for opponents to see.
6. Be complimentary of good play by both your partner and your opponents.

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7. When playing in a tournament, recognizing that a great deal of work dedicated to your enjoyment has been done by the tournament chairman and the tournament committee, take a moment before leaving to say “goodbye” and “thank you”.

The APTA welcomes questions or suggestions, which should be directed to:

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