

Tennis Rules and Sportsmanship Guidelines

1. **Avoid behavior such as bragging or putting your opponent down.** Instead, show a sincere interest in your opponent and genuine respect for his/her ability.
2. **Do not question your opponent's line calls, even if you are sure he/she has cheated you.** Avoid unpleasant accusations against your opponent. Work to build an atmosphere of harmony and trust rather than conflict and suspicion.
3. **Eliminate accusing body language.** Stares, head shaking, smiling or laughing in disbelief, and hand on the hips are all inappropriate. Indeed, they are worse than verbal accusations.
4. **Know the rules well so that you do not unknowingly try to take advantage of your opponent.** Strictly apply the rules against yourself, but be flexible when your opponent does not know a rule that penalizes him/her. Give up points, but do not take points when you know the rules and he/she does not.
5. **You are obligated to help your opponent make a call if he/she requests assistance and you clearly saw where the ball landed.** Never say, "It's your call." If you are not sure, you may say so, and then your opponent should call the ball good.
6. **You are required to call your own shots "out" without being asked,** unless it is a first serve which your opponent returns successfully. This obligation exists only when you are absolutely sure.
7. **For a ball to be out three conditions must exist.** First, you must be 100% certain that the ball was out. Second, you need to call the ball "out". Third, you need to make the call immediately, just after the ball bounced. You should not delay, inspect for a mark, and then make an "out" call.
8. **If you mistakenly call a ball "out", and then realize that it was good, give the point to your opponent.**

9. **Never ask spectators for assistance.** If you were not sure of a call, it was good. If you are not sure of the score, go back to the point where you can both agree. Call the score before every point.
10. **Let's must be called while the point is still in progress, not after the point has ended.** Never wait to make a "let" call or ask, "Did you hear a let?" At that point it is too late.
11. **Do not call rule violations on your opponent.** Such infractions as double bounce or touching the net must be called by your opponent on himself/herself.
12. **Compliment your opponent after good shots and be positive with yourself after all points.** End matches with a smile, a firm handshake, and praise for your opponent. Compliments for excellent points, a strong stroke, or a good attitude is always appropriate.
13. **Avoid excuses before, during, or after your match.** They detract from your opponent's accomplishments. You are unintentionally saying that his/her success was due to your shortcomings - not his/her strengths. Some of the worst excuses include "He/she cheated me.", or "I have never played so poorly.", or "He/she got all the breaks."
14. **Poor behavior (swearing, racket abuse, ball abuse) is always inexcusable.** Impose the USTA point penalty system (warning, point, game, and match) against yourself, but ignore the behavior of your opponent. Default the match to your opponent if his/her behavior becomes intolerable. Keeping tennis fun is far more important than winning a tennis match.