

# RIVER CITY RACQUET LEAGUE RULES 2019-2020

Purpose of the Organization: The purpose of the River City Racquet League (“RCRL”) is to provide a structure for socially competitive tennis.

## I. RIVER CITY RACQUET LEAGUE ORGANIZATIONAL RULES

- A. The following are the rules of the RCRL. These rules shall remain in effect until changed by action of the Board of Directors (“Board”).
- B. No rule change relating to player eligibility, “strength rosters” or court placement, or division placement for teams shall take effect during a league year. Other rules may be changed by action of the Board during the league year if necessary to promote orderly and efficient management of the league as a whole.
- C. Each year, through the Rules Committee, the Board shall solicit and consider the suggestions of the membership for rule changes for the upcoming year.
- D. **Waivers:** In extenuating circumstances, a player or team may request a waiver of a rule for a designated situation or for a particular period of time. A waiver request must present a compelling case of unique circumstances making application of the rule patently unfair to a player or team or creating a hardship for the division as a whole.

## II. LEAGUE ADMINISTRATION

- A. RCRL is governed by its officers and Board; the **bylaws** of RCRL define more specifically the officers and Board, and set out their responsibilities, manner of selection and terms of office. The bylaws may be found at RCRL.org.
- B. The Board shall be responsible for enforcing all rules and the standard of conduct, fair play and good sportsmanship.
- C. **Board meetings** are held on the 2nd Monday of each month (except December and January) at 5:00 pm at Louisville Tennis Club. Any change to the regular meeting will be emailed to officers and Board members.
- D. The **League Year** is July 1 through June 30.
- E. RCRL shall be composed of the following **Divisions:** A, A1, A2, A3, B1, B2, B3, C1, C2, Masters I, Mid Masters, Masters II and Masters III. In some years, one or more divisions may be vacant.
- F. Each division shall have a **Division Director**, who together are the voting members of the Board. Each Division Director will represent the teams in her division on a fair and equal basis at all Board meetings. She is entitled to one vote representing the majority of her division. She is disqualified from voting upon

issues involving the team of which she is a member, and, if requested, she will excuse herself for votes specifically involving her team.

1. She is primarily responsible for assuring complete and accurate communication between the Board and the division's teams.
  2. Term of office is October 1 through September 30.
  3. She is required to hold a mandatory Captains meeting at least two weeks before the start of the season.
  4. She takes the primary role for the administration of her division in accordance with these rules by monitoring the eligibility of players and the composition of teams and by bringing concerns to the attention of the Board as necessary. She assists in the process of assigning teams to divisions by soliciting, receiving and reviewing letters of intent for the new year and making recommendations as necessary.
  5. A division that does not have a Division Director for the upcoming year may not begin play until a nominee willing to serve is identified.
- G. Each division shall have a **Co-Director**, who assists the Division Director and addresses issues in her absence. She will succeed the Division Director for the following term. She will serve on the Rules Committee and will assist the Vice President with the annual league event. Co-Directors are not voting members of the Board.
- H. The **officers** are President, President-Elect/Secretary, Immediate Past President, one or more Vice Presidents and Treasurer. Other than the President, they serve on the Board with voice but without vote. The President may vote if needed to break a tie. Term of office is July 1 through June 30.
- I. RCRL has a **Data Administrator** appointed by the League President and approved by the Board who is responsible for schedule development, and assisting with issues (such as scores or ratings) in the online TopDog system. She serves on the Board with voice but without vote. In addition, the Board may appoint additional persons as assistant administrators for the TopDog system.
- J. The **Rules Committee** shall be chaired by the President-Elect, and shall be composed of the Division Co-Directors. If a division has no Co-Director, the Director shall serve on the Rules Committee, or another player from the division may be appointed to serve on the committee instead.
1. Each year, the Rules Committee shall solicit recommendations for rule changes from the RCRL membership, using clearly defined and communicated procedures.
  2. Rules Committee meetings shall be announced to the general league membership and shall be open to all members to observe.

3. The Rules Committee shall make recommendations to the Board by the March meeting of the Board.

### **III. TEAM CAPTAINS AND CO-CAPTAINS**

A Team Captain is that individual chosen by her team to handle its affairs within the division for the league year.

- A. Each team must have a Captain and Co-Captain, whose phone numbers and email addresses will be published on TopDog and in RCRL publications, so that they are accessible to members of the Division.
- B. The Captain and Co-Captain are expected to model for their team excellent behavior and sportsmanship at all times, and to treat others with courtesy and respect. For all purposes in these Rules, references to Captains also refer to Co-Captains.
- C. It is the responsibility of the Captain to assure that all her players are familiar with the rules of tennis, the Code, and the rules of RCRL. It is also the responsibility of the Captain to assure that all players understand the expected standard of conduct of players.
- D. Captains and/or Co-Captains shall attend all meetings called by the Director and report all information to teammates. In those situations, in which it is absolutely impossible for either the Captain or Co-Captain to attend a called division meeting, the Captain shall arrange for another member of the team to attend.
- E. The Captain must timely file a Letter of Intent for her team and assure that sufficient eligible players are rostered for her team for the upcoming year, as set forth in more detail in Rules IV and V, below. She is also responsible for verifying match court time with her team's home club before filing the Letter of Intent.
- F. Each Captain shall confirm the ratings for each member of her team when they roster, whether at the beginning of the season or during the League Year. She must notify the Division Director of any player added to the roster after play begins in her Division, before that player plays a match. See Appendix A for ratings information.
- G. In those circumstances in which the Captain cannot be present at a match, it is the responsibility of the Captain to arrange for a Co-Captain or acting captain to serve as captain. That substitute must be thoroughly familiar with the rules and prepared to make decisions on behalf of the team if necessary. Captains are encouraged to advise the opposing Captain in advance of the name and contact information for any acting captain.
- H. When hosting a dual meeting, she will contact the visiting team captain if there is a change from the established time. In the event of a forfeited match, the forfeiting Captain is responsible for canceling any court(s).

- I. As set forth in Rule VI.E, she will present in writing, names and court assignments of her team for dual meetings to the opposing captains. The Captain is responsible for assuring that each player is assigned to an appropriate court consistent with these Rules in general and any court placement rule that applies in her division.
- J. Within 24 hours of the completion of the match, either the host or the visiting Captain shall enter the results online, and the other Captain shall confirm the match scores.
- K. In the event of a grievance by or against her team, she will first discuss it with the Division Director as indicated in Rule VIII.
- L. See Appendix B pertaining to Captains of C2 teams.
- M. In the event of a grievance involving the behavior or leadership of Captain or Co-Captain, remedies that the Board may apply include removing either the Captain or Co-Captain from the role, as well as barring those individuals from those leadership positions for a defined term in the future.

#### **IV. TEAM FORMATION (LETTER OF INTENT) AND DIVISION PLACEMENT (For C2, see Appendix B)**

- A. **Letter of Intent.** A **letter of intent** must be filed by the Captain of any team, existing or new, proposing to play RCRL in the upcoming year.
  - 1. The deadline for filing is June 8.
  - 2. The letter of intent must include a roster of at least 11 players, indicating their ratings, and must indicate at which level the team proposes to participate.
  - 3. The letter of intent must be submitted within the deadline to the current (outgoing) Division Director of the division in which the team proposes to play.
  - 4. With its letter of intent, each team must have proof of two (2) hours indoor court availability for its home matches.
- B. **Division Placement of Teams and Movement (Percentage System):**
  - 1. The Masters I, Mid Masters, Masters II, Masters III and C2 Divisions are not subject to these rules pertaining to movement up or down.
  - 2. Nothing in this rule regarding team placement supersedes the rules in the Appendix pertaining to individual ratings and individual placement.
  - 3. For purposes of this rule, percentages are based on total available points for the previous season.
  - 4. **Definitions. A Returning Team** is a group of 6 or more players who played on the same team in the previous year. **A New Team** is any other combination of players, including the merger of groups of 6 or more players from two or more teams that played in the prior year on different levels.

5. **The Board will place teams into divisions using the following rules and priorities:**
- a. First, except as set out below, all **Returning Teams** will be placed in the same division as in the previous year. In addition, any group which is a merger of parts or all of two or more Returning Teams from the same prior year division will be placed in that division again. Exceptions to this rule for Returning Teams are:
    - 1) **Mandatory Move Up Teams.** Any Returning Team which won its division in the previous year, and any team which achieved a 75% or higher winning percentage in the prior year **must move up one division**, if that team returns a majority of its players from the prior year.
      - a) **This rule does not apply to movement into the A division, which is not mandatory.**
    - 2) **Mandatory Move Down Teams.** A Returning Team which achieved less than 25% winning percentage in the prior year **must move down one division.**
      - a) **This rule does not apply to movement down from the C1 division.**
    - 3) **Qualified Move Up Teams.** A Returning Team (not mandated to move up) which achieved a 70% or higher winning percentage in the prior year **may choose to move up one division**, if that team returns a majority of its players from the prior year.
      - a) **A Returning Team may choose to move up into the A division only if it both won its division below and also achieved a 70% winning percentage in the prior year.**
    - 4) **Qualified Move Down Teams.** A Returning Team (not mandated to move down) which achieved 30% or less winning percentage in the prior year **may choose to move down one division.**
    - 5) **A Mandatory or Qualified Move Up Team may not include 6 or more players from another prior year team that did not on its own qualify to play at that level.** Inclusion of such players must be requested as a waiver and may result in denial of the movement up.

- b. The Board will strictly adhere to the above standards for the placement of Returning Teams except under these circumstances:
- 1) The Board may make a different placement of a Returning Team, other than a Mandatory Move up or Mandatory Move Down Team, if it determines in its discretion that doing so is necessary to assure that the divisions are appropriately sized.
  - 2) The Board may reassign a Returning Team to a different division if it determines there is strong evidence that the team is not really competitive at its level. In doing so, the Board may consider, without limitation, the team's history of "stacking" in order to avoid mandatory movement up or down.
  - 3) **Maximum Division Size.** The maximum division size which will allow two match rotations in a year is 16 teams. Accordingly, if a division reaches 16 teams, in the following year, the Board may, in its discretion, move the Returning Team which finished in last place down one division, notwithstanding its winning percentage.
- c. **All New Teams must request a first and second choice for division placement on their Letters of Intent.** After careful consideration of the verifiable facts about the individual players and the recommendation of the Division Director, the Board will place any New Team in an appropriate division, which may be different from its requested division.
- d. **Waiver Requests.** The following team placement requests will be considered requests for waivers from RCRL rules, governed by the standard in Rule I, D. Waivers (compelling case of unique circumstances). The Board will consider such requests last after placing other teams in divisions, and will give them strict scrutiny:
- 1) A Returning Team that seeks to move divisions but did not achieve the necessary winning percentage in the prior year.
  - 2) A team which qualifies under the rules above to move one level, but requests to move more than one level.
  - 3) A Mandatory Move Up or Move Down Team which seeks to avoid the mandatory movement.
  - 4) A Mandatory or Qualified Move Up Team which proposes to include 6 or more players from another prior year team that did not qualify on its own to play at the new level.
- e. In exercising its discretion to place teams in proper divisions, the Board may consider, without limitation:
- Individual ratings of players,
  - Individual records of players in RCRL, including division level and court placement,

- Prior team records,
  - Individual records in other leagues and,
  - Division sizes and court availability.
6. **Team “Piggybacking” is prohibited.** A team may not selectively list proposed players on its Letter of Intent in order to hide the fact that it intends to add more than 5 players from a different prior year team which could not qualify on its own for the division in which the team will play. Any team which believes there is a likelihood that 6 or more players from such a prior year team may wish to join them should disclose that to the Division Director in writing before the Board considers its Letter of Intent. If a team does not do so, it may not thereafter roster more than 5 players from the same such team without first obtaining specific Board approval in advance. If at any point during the year it is discovered that a team has done so, all matches played by the sixth and later players to join the team will be forfeited. In addition, this may form the basis for a grievance against the team Captain.

## V. TEAM ROSTERS AND INDIVIDUAL PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

### A. Initial Preseason Roster.

1. By July 15, each team shall have rostered a minimum of 11 players by signing up and paying a roster fee on [www.rivercityracquetleague.topdoglive.com](http://www.rivercityracquetleague.topdoglive.com).
2. Additional names of eligible new players may be added to the roster up to midnight seven days before the first scheduled match for the division in the league year.

### B. Mid-Season Roster Additions.

1. Rosters will close at midnight 7 days before the first scheduled match for the Division and will reopen on October 1. They will remain open for the addition of players through March 31. Players may be added so long as the maximum roster size is not exceeded.
2. A Captain shall notify her Division Director of the addition of any player after the season begins. If there is a court placement rule in effect for the Division, the Captain and Director shall each make note of the player’s rating at the time of her rostering. The player may play in a match no earlier than 7 days after she rosters.

- C. A team may carry a **maximum** of eighteen (18) players, with the exception of Masters I, Mid Masters, Masters II and Masters III, which may carry 22 players.

#### **D. Individual Players**

1. RCRL requires players to be 21 years of age or older. If a player will be 21 during the current League Year, she may play that year.
2. An individual player may represent only one A, B or C level team within the League Year. In addition, a qualified player may play on one Masters I, Mid Masters, Masters II or Masters III team. Also, eligible players in Masters II may roster on a Masters III team during the 2020, 2021 and 2022 seasons.
3. No player may move from one team to another during the RCRL year with the exception of a player who chooses to be removed from her team's roster for any reason before playing her first match of the RCRL year for that division. She may roster with another team with the written consent of both team captains in accordance with the existing RCRL rules.
4. Limitations on eligibility based on NTRP and RCRL ratings is set out in Appendix A. Teaching pros are subject to individual evaluations.
5. Masters I, Mid Masters and Masters II divisions require players to be 50 years of age or older. If a player will be 50 during the current League Year, she may play that year. Masters III requires players to be 60 years of age or older. If a player will be 60 during the current League Year, she may play that year.
6. Each player's name must appear on her team's official roster to be eligible to participate in match play.
7. Each player must have a rating entered into the TopDog system before playing a match. See Appendix A regarding ratings. If at any time after playing a match it is discovered that a player has no official rating, or her rating is not appropriate for the level or court on which she played, the match will be defaulted automatically. While the Division Director will attempt to monitor the eligibility of players within the division, it is the responsibility of the Captain to assure that the player is appropriately rated for the team and court.

#### **E. Removal of players from roster.**

1. A player may choose to have her name removed from a team's roster by notifying her captain, or if necessary, the Division Director.
2. A Captain may remove a player from a roster:
  - a. Before the first match after the player is rostered, or
  - b. If the player is discovered to be ineligible to play on that team, or
  - c. With the written agreement of the player. The requirement for written agreement may be waived by the Board if the Captain can demonstrate that the player could not be reached after reasonable effort to do so (e.g., the player has moved out of the area).
3. If she has not played a match, a player may have her roster fee reimbursed so long as the removal occurs either before the first match of the League year for that division or within one month after her initial rostering on the team if she rostered mid-year. No refunds will be issued beyond these time frames.



4. A player properly removed from a roster may be replaced with another player if done as provided in these rules.

## VI. MATCH PLAY

RCRL Rules govern play. In cases not specifically covered by these rules, USTA Rules govern play. Also, "The Code" as a handbook of ethics and fair play should be understood and followed by every RCRL player.

- A. RCRL encourages **courtesy and cooperation** between captains, and recognizes that there are occasions that captains (or acting captains) agree to go forward with a match under circumstances in which, without that agreement, there would be a violation of these rules (for instance, accommodating a player running slightly late due to an unusual traffic situation, allowing the opposing captain to correct an unintended error in a lineup after the lineup is exchanged but before play has begun). In those cases, neither captain can later complain or file a grievance over the accommodation. **Matches played in good faith will stand.**
- B. Delay, interference, distraction or interruption of play due to the presence of **electronic devices (cell phones, smart watches, tablets, pagers or others)** is not acceptable. The first time there is an electronic interference, the opponent will get the point. If there is second interference, the opponent takes the game being played. A third interference gives the opponent the match. Any surrounding courts affected by the electronic device may call a "let." Players may not make or receive phone calls or actively engage in messaging of any kind from the beginning of warmup through the completion of the match except with the agreement of all players on the court. Any violation of this prohibition will be considered electronic interference subject to the penalties set out in this paragraph.
- C. A player may call a let for an adjacent court if a ball from her court rolls onto that court and legitimately appears to create a hazard for the players unaware of the ball.
- D. **Match Format.**
  1. **Definitions:** (In tiebreaks, players change ends of the court after every 6 points are played.)
    - a. "Match Tiebreak" is defined as first team to win 10 points by a margin of at least 2 points.
    - b. "Set Tiebreak" is defined as first team to win 7 points by a margin of at least 2 points.

2. **Tiebreaks:** All matches will be the best two out of three sets. The 7-Point Set Tiebreak will be in effect any time that the score reaches “6-6” in any set. If the match is tied at one set each, a third deciding set will be played unless at the time the ball goes out of play in the second set, there are **only 30 minutes or less of remaining court time**. In that case, a 10-point Match Tiebreak will be played in lieu of a third set. In addition, with the full agreement of all four players, a Match Tiebreak may be played in lieu of a third set even if more than 30 minutes remain. Tiebreaks played in good faith shall stand and an objection to the form of tiebreak cannot be a basis for a grievance.
3. The HOME Team must provide an unopened can of first quality yellow championship balls for each court played.
4. Outdoor play is discouraged but not prohibited if mutually agreeable to both captains.
5. **Scoring:** Except as provided below, a total of 20 match points will be awarded as follows:
  - a. Court 1 – the winning team receives 6 points
  - b. Court 2 – the winning team receives 5 points
  - c. Court 3 – the winning team receives 4 points
  - d. Court 4 – the winning team receives 3 points
  - e. Bonus Points –Total the number of games won by each team. If a team wins by 10 or more games, that team receives 2 bonus points. If the difference in games won is 9 or less, each team receives 1 bonus point.
6. A different scoring system will only be permitted to be used in those divisions which utilize a strength roster or a court placement rule based on rating, or in the case of the beginner/instructional C2 division. See Appendix B for these special rules.
7. **Third Set Scoring:** If a third set is decided by a Match Tiebreak, the set score shall be recorded 1-0. If a third set is played out to “6-6” and then decided by the Set Tiebreak, the set score shall be recorded “7-6.”

#### E. Exchange of Lineups

1. The Captain will present, in writing, names and court assignments of her team before each match. Numbers 1-2-3-4 will play numbers 1-2-3-4, respectively.
2. Teams should determine their lineups based on the relative strength of the players in order to ensure fair and competitive play on all courts. Subject to the special rules in Appendix B for particular divisions, captains/pros may make any combinations of players as double teams, but in determining the court placement of a doubles team, they must consider their relative strengths. The team which the captain/pro reasonably believes to be the strongest against the opponents shall be placed on court 1, the next strongest on court 2, and so forth. “Stacking,” “sacrificing,” or “throwing a court” (defined as placing a team on a higher court knowing they are unlikely to be competitive against the

- opponent's higher court players in order to manipulate the outcome on other courts, or intentionally playing the strongest combinations on the lower courts) is inconsistent with this rule.
3. In addition, see Appendix B for special strength roster or court placement rules in specific divisions.
  4. Lineups must be exchanged promptly at least five minutes before the scheduled match time. Failure to do so will result in forfeiture. In the event of illness, injury or no-show of a player prior to the start of an individual match (once the lineup has been exchanged), a team may substitute a player in the affected position within the **10 minute** default time, using a player not already listed on the lineup. If no such substitution can be made, the affected position will be forfeited. Strength rosters remain in effect. (That is, a substitute cannot switch positions with another player in order to comply with the strength roster or court placement rules, without the agreement of the opposing team.)
  5. **Penalty for playing on an incorrect court:**
    - a. If it is found within 48 hours of the conclusion of the match that a player played on court other than the one to which she was assigned on the official score sheet, that team will automatically be penalized by defaulting that court and whatever other courts that may have been affected. If the captains of both teams agree on the violation and the penalty, they shall report this to the Division Director who will arrange to have the score changed in Top Dog by the Data Administrator. If the captains do not agree on the facts or the penalty, the matter must be handled under the Grievance Procedure set out in Rule VI.
    - b. In those divisions with strength roster or court placement rules as defined in Appendix B (A, A1, Masters I, Mid Masters and Masters II), if a player plays on a court for which she is ineligible due to rating, the match shall be recorded as a forfeit and the points earned on that court (and only on that court) will be forfeited automatically if brought to the attention of the division director within 48 hours of the conclusion of the match.
    - c. Player position errors not brought up within 48 hours are waived.

#### F. **Forfeitures**

1. **Prior Knowledge:** If a Captain knows in advance that she must forfeit a court, she shall notify the opposing Captain of that as soon as possible. Court position 4 will automatically be forfeited followed by Courts 3, 2 and 1 in that order. The forfeiting Captain is responsible for canceling any court(s) with the club. The forfeiting team shall pay the court costs for any courts not cancelled by 7 pm the night before the match.
2. **At Match Time:** If a pair or a member of a pair arrives on court more than 10 minutes late, her team captain shall graciously forfeit that court immediately, and that team will be responsible for the entire court fee for all four players (if

no tennis is played). The official clock for match play shall be a cell phone on the affected court.

3. **Injury:** If a player is injured during match play and cannot continue play after a five (5) minute injury time-out, her court must default.
4. **Scoring Forfeitures:**
  - a. Forfeits before matches begin will be recorded as a win for the affected court, with the court value plus game count of 6-0, 6-0 awarded to the non-forfeiting team.
  - b. Injury / Emergency / Retirement - The actual score of the completed games shall be awarded to each team, and the non-forfeiting team shall be awarded the court value [Example: Team A forfeits in the second set at 3-3 to Team B after winning the first set (on court 3) : The score is recorded as 4-6, 3-3, the match status is recorded as retired, and Team B is awarded 4 points. Team A is credited with 9 games and Team B is credited with 7.]
5. Any team forfeiting 25% of its courts during the League Year is ineligible to be declared the league winner and will not be allowed to play as a team or to form a new team during the following league year.

G. **Warm-Ups** shall be completed by ten (10) minutes after the scheduled start time for the match. No additional warm-up time will be allowed after this time expires. All warm-up serves shall be completed before the first serve of the match. A player shall not practice return of serves on her opponent's warm-up serves.

#### H. **Continuous Play/Breaks**

1. When changing ends, a maximum of one minute thirty seconds shall elapse from the moment the ball goes out of play at the end of the game to the time the ball is struck for the first point of the next game. During play, the time, which shall elapse from the moment the ball goes out of play at the end of the point to the time the ball is struck, shall not exceed 25 seconds.
2. A two (2) minute break is allowed between sets or before a match tiebreak.
3. Once play begins, it shall be continuous, and players may leave the court only for the reasons and time limits listed below. In case of disagreement, every attempt should be made to resolve the issue with the players on their court.
  - a. Bona fide bathroom breaks should be taken at changeovers or set breaks. They are limited to five (5) minutes, which may be combined with the changeover time for a total of 6-1/2 minutes or the set break, for a total of 7 minutes. If a player violates the bathroom break time limit, the offending team will receive a one-point penalty for any lateness up to three minutes over the specified time. If a player returns to court 3 to 5 minutes after the allowed time, the penalty will be the loss of one game. If a player returns

to court 5 minutes after the specified time, she and her partner will forfeit the match.

- b. Equipment malfunction (including shoes, contact lenses): Limited to five (5) minutes.
- c. Medical timeout (for instance, gastrointestinal problems, blood sugar testing): Limited to five (5) minutes, and only one medical timeout for the same medical problem in a match. A medical timeout can be used as a bathroom break but cannot be combined with a bathroom break for a longer time limit. A medical timeout can be combined with the changeover time for a total of 6-1/2 minutes or the set break, for a total of 7 minutes.
- d. Injury timeout – limited to five (5) minutes.

**I. Postponement and/or snow/inclement weather.**

- 1. In case of postponement during match play due to weather or having to yield the court, the previous score and occupancy of the court will hold. If a court, on site, is immediately available, then the match must be played to completion or be forfeited. Otherwise, rescheduling will be allowed, and the match must be completed within six (6) days or be forfeited. Changing surfaces or going outside does not warrant an acceptable reason not to continue play unless the players and captains determine the weather is too severe. A 10-minute warm-up is allowed when the match resumes unless there is a court available immediately, in which case no warm-up is allowed. (EXCEPTION: with a change of surface, i.e. outdoor from indoor, a 10-minute warm-up is allowed.) Every effort should be made to complete the match on match day. If the match resumes on another day or at another site, then the four players should share the court costs involved.
- 2. Snow/inclement weather Match play will be postponed if the Jefferson County Public Schools are canceled or delayed unless both teams agree to play. The host team will notify the club.
- 3. Rescheduling matches. If a match is postponed for any reason, within 14 days the Captains must agree on a new date and time to play the match. The Captains must notify the Division Director of a rescheduling. If the teams fail to agree within 14 days on a new date, the Division Director may refer the matter to the Grievance Committee to set the date and/or determine an appropriate penalty. All rescheduled matches must be completed by May 15.
- 4. If all four (4) courts cannot be re-scheduled for the same start time, then the entire lineup must be exchanged before the beginning of the first match start time. If a player in such a split match lineup becomes unavailable to play when scheduled, the team may substitute a player who was not already listed in the full lineup, but may not switch the player with another listed in a different court position.

5. In case of severe weather, it is up to the discretion of the captains of the dual meet to determine match play. If either team cannot field four (4) courts, match play shall be rescheduled in accordance with the rules above.
6. If a team has forfeited a court in advance of a match, but the match is then rescheduled due to weather, the forfeit does not stand.

**J. Division Match Days and Times**

1. Division Match Day
  - A Thursday
  - A1 Thursday (inactive)
  - A2 Tuesday
  - A3 Tuesday
  - B1 Monday
  - B2 Friday
  - B3 Friday(inactive)
  - C1 Friday
  - C2 Thursday (inactive)
  - Masters I Wednesday
  - Mid Masters Thursday
  - Masters II Tuesday
  - Masters III Monday (inactive)
2. Scheduled matches are to begin no earlier than 9:00 a.m. and no later than 12:00 p.m. with the exception of the four Masters divisions, whose matches begin no earlier than 12:00 p.m. or later than 1:30 p.m. Both captains must agree on any schedule change, and all default rules apply to the new start time.

**K. Coaching/Spectators**

1. No coaching will be permitted from the start of the warm-up through the conclusion of the match, including during any break, by anyone including a team's coach, a captain, another player, or an observer.
2. If coaching does occur, a warning will be issued by the affected Team Captain. If the offense is repeated, the offending team will forfeit the match.
3. Good sportsmanship and conduct are expected by the players and spectators.
4. Spectators (including infants or children) are not allowed on the court during warm-ups or play.

- L. There will be no matches scheduled during the Jefferson County spring break week.

## **VII. AWARDS**

### **A. Final Standings**

1. The teams finishing first and second in each Division except C2 will be awarded trophies.
2. Team standings in each Division will be determined according to the procedure listed below. In the event of a tie, the tie shall be broken by the first of the following procedures that does so:
  - a. total points won,
  - b. total matches won,
  - c. total courts won,
  - d. fewest sets lost,
  - e. fewest games lost.

- B. **Trophies.** The RCRL Board will determine the type of trophy/prize to be awarded and will provide up to 18 trophies for each of the first and second place teams (up to 22 for Masters) in each Division except C2. Absent special circumstances, no trophy will be provided for a rostered player who did not participate in a match. If a team wishes additional trophies, that team will be responsible for payment of the additional cost.

## **VIII. GRIEVANCES**

### **A. Grievance Committee.**

1. At its first meeting of the League Year, the Board will appoint a Grievance Committee comprised of five (5) current or former Board members, no two of whom shall play in the same division. The Grievance Committee shall serve for one league year but members may be reappointed. The Board shall appoint a chair from among the committee members.
2. A committee member who plays in the Division in which the grievance is filed shall abstain from the vote.
3. In any instance in which a committee member cannot serve, or must abstain, the Immediate Past President will serve in her place. If any additional substitutes be required, they shall be appointed by the League President.

- B. **Official Score Sheet.** The official score sheet shall be the host team's score sheet. Both captains (or acting captains) shall sign the official sheet to acknowledge the accuracy of the scores and the line-ups.

### **C. Procedure**

1. Chain of command for rules interpretations is team captain, Division Director, and as a last resort, Grievance Committee. Every effort should be made to resolve disputes or protests without resort to filing of a grievance.
2. Within 48 hours of the conclusion of match play, any protests shall be filed in writing (email is acceptable) on the Grievance Form. The protest shall be submitted to the League President and the Division Director.

3. The League President shall forward the grievance, via email, to the team against whom the grievance has been filed.
4. The responding team shall have 48 hours from the receipt of the grievance to respond, likewise in writing to the League President, the Division Director and the other teams involved.
5. Grievances or responses filed after the deadlines will not be considered.
6. The League President will forward the grievance and any response to the Grievance Committee within one week of the original filing.
7. The Grievance Committee will make any additional investigation it deems necessary and may request additional information from the parties or witnesses. It may consult with the Division Director.
8. The Grievance Committee will in a timely manner render its decision in writing, including a decision on any penalty. The decision will be submitted promptly to the parties to the grievance, to the Division Director and to the Board.

**D. Sportsmanship and Appropriate Behavior.**

1. RCRL expects teams, captains and players to recognize USTA Rules (where not inconsistent with these rules), USTA Code of Conduct and appropriate tennis etiquette. Players are expected to maintain control of their emotions and resulting behavior throughout the match. Gamesmanship or intentional distractions that interfere with an opponent's concentration or effort to play the ball are prohibited.
2. If a player feels that an opponent failed to conduct herself in accordance with these standards and has committed a violation under the Code of Conduct, her captain or acting captain may file a grievance, following the procedures set out in this section.
3. If the Grievance Committee determines that an infraction has occurred, the Committee shall consider the severity of the infraction and the player's history of previous reported incidences and shall impose one of the following penalties:
  - a. Level 1 (first offense in a one year period): Written warning.
  - b. Level 2 (second offense in a one year period): Written reprimand.
  - c. Level 3 (third offense in a one year period): Suspension of the player from play on the affected team for the four matches immediately following the date of final decision.
  - d. Level 4 (fourth offense in a one year period): Suspension of the player from play on the affected team for one year from the date of final decision.
  - e. In addition, in the event of a Level 3 or Level 4 penalty, the court on which the offending player played will be scored as a default for her team.



4. This is intended as a progressive discipline system, with the levels followed in most cases. However, should the severity of the conduct warrant it, the Grievance Committee may skip one or more levels of penalty.
5. The decision shall be communicated to the parties, to the player, to the Division Director and to the Board in accordance with the procedures above.

**E. Finality of Decision.**

1. Except as provided immediately below, the decision of the Grievance Committee is final and may not be appealed, including to the full Board.
2. The decision of the Grievance Committee shall be final for any Level 1 or Level 2 penalty. Any decision of the Grievance Committee imposing a player suspension (Level 3 or 4) under section D, above, may be appealed by the suspended player to the full Board, by filing an appeal in writing (email is acceptable) addressed to the League President. The League President will present the appeal to the Board at its next regularly scheduled meeting. The Grievance Committee Chair, if not a Board member, will be invited to attend the Board meeting, as will the parties to the grievance. The Board will render a decision at that meeting, which will be final and non-appealable.

## **APPENDIX A PLAYER RATINGS**

RCRL utilizes the TopDog dynamic rating program as the primary determinant for player placement in the league and for court placement in those divisions utilizing strength rosters. "Dynamic rating" means the computer generated rating appearing in the Top Dog tracking system under the individual player's results, as expressed to three decimal points, without rounding.

**1. Rating Determination.** At the time of rostering on a team, a rating will be entered for each player, which will be determined as follows:

- a. For any player who has a history of at least 5 matches reported in Top Dog (since the inception of Top Dog's tracking of RCRL), with the exception of a recent college player (see 1 f. below), the rating will be her current Top Dog dynamic rating at the time she rosters. That is, her dynamic rating at the end of a season will become the rating at which she rosters at the beginning of the next season.
- b. For those players who do not have that 5 match experience in Top Dog, her rating will be her current USTA rating. However, any player whose USTA rating is a self-rating and who has, at the time of her initial rostering in RCRL, played no USTA matches which would be used to calculate a USTA computer rating must get a pro verification.

- c. Any player who has neither the Top Dog rating based on at least 5 matches or a current USTA rating must be verified by an independent tennis professional (that is, not the pro who coaches her team or who regularly gives her lessons). RCRL will designate which pros will participate in the verification program. Players with prior RCRL or USTA experience must provide their records to the pros at verification.
- d. A player who has not played an RCRL match within the last three seasons may choose to roster at her current USTA rating, if any, and if none, to have a pro verification of her rating, which will supersede the dynamic rating already in the system.
- e. All players who play in the C2 division must obtain a pro verification for the following league year, notwithstanding the number of matches they may have played. RCRL will arrange verification clinics for C2 players separate from those for the rest of the league.

f. "Recent college player" means any player who played or committed to play tennis at a Division I, II or III or NAIA college and who is younger than 26 years of age at the beginning of the league year. Beginning with the 2019-20 league year, a recent college player must roster with the higher of the following:

- Her rating based on the subparagraphs a and b, above, or
- 4.5

g. Any player who feels her RCRL or USTA rating is not reflective of her current level due to health or other circumstances, may appeal to the Board for a pro-verification. A written appeal with detailed information concerning current ratings, match records and extenuating circumstances should be sent to the Division Director and the RCRL President for Board consideration at the next scheduled meeting.

**2. Player Placement.** Player placement shall be as follows:

A player whose rating equals or exceeds **2.6** shall roster at the **C1** level or higher.  
 A player whose rating equals or exceeds 3.0 shall roster at the **B3** level or higher.  
 A player whose rating equals or exceeds **3.3** shall roster at the **B2** level or higher.  
 A player whose rating equals or exceeds **3.6** shall roster at the **B1** level or higher.  
 A player whose rating equals or exceeds **3.9** shall roster at the **A3** level or higher.  
 A player whose rating equals or exceeds **4.2** shall roster at the **A2** level or higher.  
 A player whose rating equals or exceeds **4.4** shall roster at the **A1** level or higher.  
 A player whose rating equals or exceeds **4.5** shall roster at the **A** division.  
 A player whose rating exceeds **4.0** may not roster at **Mid Masters**.

A player whose rating equals or exceeds **3.6** may not roster at **Masters II**.  
A player whose rating equals or exceeds **3.2** may not roster at **Masters III**.

No player with a USTA rating (at the time of rostering) of 5.5 or higher may play in the league. A player with a USTA rating of 5.0 (at the time of rostering) may only play in the A division or Masters I.

No player in the A, A1, A2, A3 or B1 division may roster at Masters III.

No player in the A, A1, A2 or A3 division may roster at Masters II.

No player in the A or A1 division may roster at Mid Masters.

Notwithstanding the foregoing list, no player will be required by the ratings system to move up more than one division from one league year to the next.

The Board may vary these division cutoffs from year to year, based on experience under the rating system and the needs of the league.

**3. Captains' Responsibility:** Captains have the primary responsibility to assure that their players are rostered at the proper rating before they play their first match and are in a division in which they are eligible to play.

**4. Ratings Changes During the League Year:**

- a. No player is required or permitted to change divisions during the league year based on movement in the dynamic ratings.
- b. For those divisions with strength roster or court placement rules (A, A1, Masters I and Masters II), the rating used for each player for purposes of strength roster or court placement rules shall be the rating at the time the player rosters. It is the responsibility of the Captain to keep a list of her players' starting ratings and to assign her players to courts accordingly. In addition, the Division Director of each of those divisions should maintain a master list of the starting ratings (or of the court eligibility) of all players in the division for reference in the event of a question arising during the season. When a player is added during the season in those divisions, the Captain of the team adding the player must notify the Division Director and the other captains in the division of the addition of the player and the courts on which she is eligible to play.

## **APPENDIX B SPECIAL RULES FOR PARTICULAR DIVISIONS**

### **A Division:**

1. Players with a USTA rating of 5.0 (at the time of rostering) may only play on Court 1.
2. A team may only play one such USTA 5.0 player in any match.
3. There is no mandatory move up into the A Division.

### **A1 Division:** (Note that A1 is a vacant division for 2019-20)

1. Players with a USTA rating of 4.5 (at the time of rostering) may only play on Court 1.
2. A team may only play one such USTA 4.5 player in any match.

### **Masters Divisions:**

Players may play in only one Masters division with the exception that eligible players may play in both Masters II and Masters III.

### **Masters I Court Placement:**

Players shall be assigned to courts in Masters I following these rules:

1. Any player who is rated 4.5 or higher at the time she rosters may only play on Court 1 for that league year.
2. Any player who is rated 4.3 or higher at the time she rosters may play no lower than Court 2.
3. Any player who is rated 4.0 or higher at the time she rosters may play no lower than Court 3.
4. A player who is rated below 4.0 at the time she rosters may play on any court.

The Division Director will compile and update as necessary a list of Masters I players who are limited to particular courts by this rule and distribute that information to captains. However, it is the responsibility of the captain to see that her players are placed on the correct courts. See Rule VI.E.5, regarding the penalty in the event of incorrect player placement.

**Mid Masters:** Players who are rated 3.7 or above at the time they roster must play Court 1 or Court 2.

## **Masters II:**

1. Strength Roster: A players whose rating at the time she rosters equals or exceeds 3.3 may only play on Courts 1 or 2.
2. Scoring: Court value is 2 points per court, with 2 bonus points available.

### **C2: (Note that C2 is vacant for 2019-20)**

1. C2 teams will be formed by a qualified professional at each club. A team may form with a minimum of 8 players. There is no roster limit. Letters of intent are due by June 8.
2. Qualified beginner players may roster at any time during the RCRL year.
3. The first rotation of the Division will be designated a “preseason” where no points are awarded for courts won.
4. C2 teams will play three courts for each match. Courts are worth one (1) point each.
5. There will be no requirement for winning teams to move up regardless of the win percentage achieved by said team.
6. Matches will be played on Thursdays.
7. Club professionals will act as team captains or may designate a player on the team as captain.
8. Although there will be no requirement for players to move up after a certain time period, club professionals are strongly encouraged to move players to the appropriate division when the player’s skill level sufficiently to warrant such movement.
9. Players on the winning C2 team will be recognized by the RCRL Board.
10. The Immediate Past President/Treasurer or her designee will act as Division Director for C2 until such time as another director can be identified.

## **APPENDIX C THE CODE Reprinted courtesy of USTA**

### **THE CODE**

#### **THE PLAYERS’ GUIDE TO FAIR PLAY AND THE UNWRITTEN RULES OF TENNIS**

The Code is not part of the ITF Rules of Tennis. Players shall follow The Code, except to the extent to which an official assumes some of their responsibilities. This edition of The Code is an adaptation of the original.

**PREFACE** When a serve hits a player’s partner who is stationed at the net, is it a let, fault, or loss of point? Likewise, what is the ruling when a serve, before touching the ground, hits an opponent who is standing back of the baseline? The answers to these questions are obvious to anyone who knows the fundamentals of tennis, but it is surprising the number of players who don’t know these

fundamentals. All players have a responsibility to be familiar with the basic rules and customs of tennis. Further, it can be distressing when a player makes a decision in accordance with a rule and the opponent protests with the remark: “Well, I never heard of that rule before!” Ignorance of the rules constitutes a delinquency on the part of a player and often spoils an otherwise good match. What is written here constitutes the essentials of The Code, a summary of procedures and unwritten rules that custom and tradition dictate all players should follow. No system of rules will cover every specific problem or situation. If players of goodwill follow the principles of The Code, they should always be able to reach an agreement, while at the same time making tennis more fun and a better game for all. The principles set forth in The Code shall apply in cases not specifically covered by the ITF Rules of Tennis or the USTA Regulations. Before reading this, the following question may come to mind: Since there is a book that contains all the rules of tennis, is there a need for The Code? Isn’t it sufficient to know and understand all the rules? There are a number of things not specifically set forth in the rules that are covered by custom and tradition only. For example, if there is doubt on a line call, the opponent gets the benefit of the doubt. This result cannot be found in the rules. Further, custom dictates the standard procedures that players will use in reaching decisions. These are the reasons a code is needed.

### **THE CODE PRINCIPLES**

- 1.** Courtesy is expected. Tennis is a game that requires cooperation and courtesy.
- 2.** Points played in good faith are counted. All points played in good faith stand. For example, if after losing a point, a player discovers that the net was four inches too high, the point stands. If a point is played from the wrong court, there is no replay. If during a point, a player realizes that a mistake was made at the beginning (for example, service from the wrong court), the player shall continue playing the point. Corrective action may be taken only after a point has been completed. Shaking hands at the end of a match is an acknowledgment by the players that the match is over.

### **WARM-UP**

- 3.** Warm-up is not practice. A player should provide the opponent a warm-up of five to ten minutes. If a player declines to warm up the opponent, the player forfeits the right to a warm-up, and the opponent may warm up with another person. Some players confuse warm-up and practice. Each player should try to hit shots directly to the opponent. (If partners want to warm each other up while their opponents are warming up, they may do so.)

**4.** Warm-up serves are taken before first serve of match. A player should take all warm-up serves before the first serve of a match. A player who returns serves should return them at a moderate pace in a manner that does not disrupt the server.

### **MAKING CALLS**

**5.** Player makes calls on own side of net. A player calls all shots landing on, or aimed at, the player's side of the net.

**6.** Opponent gets benefit of doubt. A player should always give the opponent the benefit of any doubt. When a match is played without officials, the players are responsible for making decisions, particularly for line calls. There is a subtle difference between player decisions and those of an on-court official. An official impartially resolves a problem involving a call, whereas a player is guided by the principle that any doubt must be resolved in favor of an opponent. A player in attempting to be scrupulously honest on line calls frequently will keep a ball in play that might have been out or that the player discovers too late was out. Even so, the game is much better played this way.

**7.** Ball touching any part of line is good. If any part of a ball touches a line, the ball is good. A ball 99% out is still 100% good. A player shall not call a ball out unless the player clearly sees space between where the ball hits and a line.

**8.** Ball that cannot be called out is good. Any ball that cannot be called out is considered to be good. A player may not claim a let on the basis of not seeing a ball. One of tennis' more infuriating moments occurs after a long hard rally when a player makes a clean placement and an opponent says: "I'm not sure if it was good or out. Let's play a let." Remember, it is each player's responsibility to call all balls landing on, or aimed at, the player's side of the net. If a ball cannot be called out with certainty, it is good. When a player says an opponent's shot was really out but offers to replay the point to give the opponent a break, it seems clear that the player actually doubted that the ball was out.

**9.** Either partner may make calls in doubles. Although either doubles partner may make a call, the call of a player looking down a line is more likely to be accurate than that of a player looking across a line.

**10.** All points are treated same regardless of their importance. All points in a match should be treated the same. There is no justification for considering a match point differently from a first point.

**11.** Requesting opponent's help. When an opponent's opinion is requested and the opponent gives a positive opinion, it must be accepted. If neither player has an

opinion, the ball is considered good. Aid from an opponent is available only on a call that ends a point.

**12. Out calls reversed.** A player who calls a ball out shall reverse the call if the player becomes uncertain or realizes that the ball was good. The point goes to the opponent and is not replayed. However, when a receiver reverses a fault call on a serve that hit the net, the server is entitled to two serves.

**13. Player calls own shots out.** With the exception of the first serve, a player should call out the player's own shots if the player clearly sees the ball out regardless of whether requested to do so by an opponent. The prime objective in making calls is accuracy. All players should cooperate to attain this objective.

**14. Partners' disagreement on calls.** On any call, always give your opponents the call that most benefits them (Code §6). For example, if one partner calls the ball out and the other partner sees the ball good, the ball is good. It is more important to give opponents the benefit of the doubt than to avoid possibly hurting a partner's feelings. The tactful way to achieve the desired result is to tell a partner quietly of the mistake and then let the partner concede the point. If a call is changed from out to good, the principles of Code § 12 apply.

**15. Audible or visible calls.** No matter how obvious it is to a player that an opponent's ball is out, the opponent is entitled to a prompt audible or visible out call.

**16. Spectators never make calls.** A player shall not enlist the aid of a spectator in making a call. No spectator has a part in a match.

**17. Prompt calls eliminate two chance option.** A player shall make all calls promptly. A call shall be made either before the player's return shot has gone out of play or before an opponent has had an opportunity to play the return shot. Prompt calls will quickly eliminate the "two chances to win the point" option that some players practice. To illustrate, a player is advancing to the net for an easy put away and sees a ball from an adjoining court rolling toward the court. The player continues to advance and hits the shot, only to have the supposed easy put away fly over the baseline. The player then claims a let. The claim is not valid because the player forfeited the right to call a let by choosing instead to play the ball. The player took a chance to win or lose and is not entitled to a second chance.

**18. Let called when ball rolls on court.** When a ball from another court enters the playing area, any player on the court affected may call a let as soon as the player becomes aware of the ball. The player loses the right to call a let if the player unreasonably delays in making the call.



**19.** Touches, hitting ball before it crosses net, invasion of opponent's court, double hits, and double bounces. A player shall concede the point when: • A ball in play touches that player; • That player touches the net or opponent's court while a ball is in play; • That player hits a ball before it crosses the net; • That player deliberately carries or double hits a ball; or • A ball bounces more than once in that player's court. The opponent is not entitled to make these calls. The principle of giving the opponent the benefit of any doubt applies.

**20.** Balls hit through net or into ground. A player makes the ruling on a ball that the player's opponent hits: • Through the net; or • Into the ground before it goes over the net.

**21.** Making calls on clay courts. If any part of a ball mark touches a line on a clay court, the ball shall be called good. If only part of the mark on a court can be seen, this means that the missing part is on a line or tape. A player should take a careful second look at any point-ending placement that is close to a line on a clay court. Occasionally a ball will strike the tape, jump, and then leave a full mark behind the line. If a player hears the sound of a ball striking the tape and sees a clean spot on the tape near the mark, the player should give the point to the opponent. A player is not required to show an opponent the mark. The opponent shall not pass the net to inspect a mark.

## **SERVING**

**22.** Server's request for third ball. When a server requests three balls, the receiver shall comply when the third ball is readily available. Distant balls shall be retrieved at the end of a game.

**23.** Avoid foot faults. Players should not foot fault because it violates the ITF Rules of Tennis. It is a foot fault when a foot just touches the line, even when the player does not follow the serve to the net.

**24.** Calling 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 fault is so flagrant as to be clearly perceptible from the receiver's side.

**25.** Service calls in doubles. In doubles the receiver's partner should call the service line, and the receiver should call the sideline and the center service line.

Nonetheless, either partner may call a ball that either clearly sees.

**26.** Service calls by serving team. Neither the server nor server's partner shall make a fault call on the first service even if they think it is out because the receiver may be giving the server the benefit of the doubt. There is one exception. If the receiver

plays a first service that is a fault and does not put the return in play, the server or server's partner may make the fault call. The server and the server's partner shall call out any second serve that either clearly sees out.

**27. Service let calls.** Any player may call a service let. The call shall be made before the return of serve goes out of play or is hit by the server or the server's partner. If the serve is an apparent or near ace, any let shall be called promptly.

**28. Obvious faults.** A player shall not put into play or hit over the net an obvious fault. To do so constitutes rudeness and may even be a form of gamesmanship. On the other hand, if a player does not call a serve a fault and gives the opponent the benefit of a close call, the server is not entitled to replay the point.

**29. Receiver readiness.** The receiver shall play to the reasonable pace of the server. The receiver should make no effort to return a serve when the receiver is not ready. If a player attempts to return a serve (even if it is a "quick" serve), then the receiver (or receiving team) is presumed to be ready. The receiver may not become unready unless outside interference occurs.

**30. Delays during service.** When the server's second service motion is interrupted by a ball coming onto the court, the server is entitled to two serves.

When there is a delay between the first and second serves:

- The server gets one serve if the server was the cause of the delay;
- The server gets two serves if the delay was caused by the receiver or if there was outside interference.

The time it takes to clear a ball that comes onto the court 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.

## **SCORING**

**31. Server announces score.** The server shall announce the game score before the first point of a game and the point score before each subsequent point of the game.

**32. Disputes.** Disputes over the score shall be resolved by using one of the following methods, which are listed in the order of preference:

- Count all points and games agreed upon by the players and replay only disputed points or games;
- If the players do not agree on the court in which the disputed point started, toss a coin to select the court.
- If the players do not agree on who served a disputed point in a tiebreak, toss a coin to select the server. (A coin toss may also be needed to determine the side in which the point is played and the end from which the server serves.)
- If the players do not agree on who served a disputed game, toss a coin to

select the server. • Play from a score mutually agreeable to all players; • Spin a racket or toss a coin. **HINDRANCE ISSUES**

**33.** Claiming a hindrance. A player who claims a hindrance must stop play as soon as possible.

**34.** Talking when ball is in play. • Singles players should not talk during points. • Talking between doubles partners when the ball is moving toward them is allowed. • Doubles players should not talk when the ball is moving toward their opponent's court. • Any talking that interferes with an opponent's ability to play a ball is a hindrance. For example, if a doubles player hits a weak lob and yells "get back" and the yell distracts an opponent who is about to hit the ball, then the opponent may claim the point based on a deliberate hindrance. If the opponent chooses to play the lob and misses it, the opponent loses the point because the opponent did not make a timely claim of hindrance. For example, if a player yells after an injury or getting stung by a bee, this is an unintentional hindrance that would entitle the opponent to claim a let.

**35.** Body movement. A player may feint with the body while a ball is in play. A player may change position at any time, including while the server is tossing a ball. Any other movement or any sound that is made solely to distract an opponent, including, but not limited to, waving arms or racket or stamping feet, is not allowed.

**36.** Let due to unintentional hindrance and loss of point due to deliberate hindrance. A player who is hindered by an opponent's unintentional act or by something else outside the player's control is entitled to a let only if the player could have made the shot had the player not been hindered. A player's racket coming out of the hand or a shoe coming off is not the basis for either player claiming a let. A let is never authorized for a hindrance caused by something within a player's control, such as when a player's racket comes out of a hand, when a player's shoe comes off, or when a player trips over the player's own hat. However, if a player's hat falls off during a point, an opponent may immediately call a let due to unintentional hindrance. Out calls and other noises from spectators are not hindrances and, therefore, are not considered grounds for a player calling a let or claiming the point. A ringing cell phone is a deliberate hindrance; if an opponent's cell phone rings during a point, the player may immediately stop and claim the point. Another example of a deliberate hindrance occurs when the receiver asks the server to stop discarding the second ball after serving, and the server continues to discard the

second ball. Continued discarding of the ball constitutes a deliberate hindrance, entitling the receiver to immediately stop play and claim the point.

**37. Grunting.** A player should avoid grunting and making other loud noises.

Grunting and other loud noises may bother not only opponents but also players on adjacent courts. In an extreme case, an opponent or a player on an adjacent court may seek the assistance of an official. Grunting and the making of loud noises that affect the outcome of a point are hindrances. Only an official may rule that these actions are hindrances and order that a let be played or a loss of point, depending on whether an official had previously warned the offending player.

**38. Injury caused by player.** When a player accidentally injures an opponent, the opponent suffers the consequences. Consider the situation where the server's racket accidentally strikes the receiver and incapacitates the receiver. The receiver is unable to resume play within the time limit. Even though the server caused the injury, the server wins the match by retirement. On the other hand, when a player deliberately injures an opponent and affects the opponent's ability to play, then the opponent wins the match by default. Hitting a ball or throwing a racket in anger is considered a deliberate act. **WHEN TO CONTACT OFFICIAL**

**39. Withdrawing from match or tournament.** A player who has decided not to play a match or a tournament shall notify the Referee immediately.

**40. Stalling.** Stalling violates the continuous play principle of the ITF Rules of Tennis. A player who encounters a problem with stalling should contact an official. The following actions constitute stalling: • Warming up longer than the allotted time; • Playing at about one-third a player's normal pace; • Taking more than 90 seconds on the odd-game changeover or more than 2 minutes on the set break. • Taking longer than the time authorized during a rest period; • Starting a discussion or argument in order to rest; • Clearing a missed first service that doesn't need to be cleared; or • Excessive bouncing of a ball before any serve. Stalling is subject to penalty under the Point Penalty System.

**41. Requesting officials during play.** While normally a player may not leave the playing area, the player may contact an official for assistance. Some reasons for contacting an official include: • Stalling; • Flagrant foot faults; • Extreme grunting; • A medical or bleeding timeout; • A scoring dispute; or • A pattern of bad calls. A player may refuse to play until an official respond.

## **BALL ISSUES**

**42.** Retrieving stray balls. Each player is responsible for removing stray balls and other objects from the player's end of the court. Whenever a ball is not in play, a player must honor an opponent's request to remove a ball from the court or from an area outside the court that is reasonably close to the lines. A player shall not go behind an adjacent court to retrieve a ball or ask a player on an adjacent court to return a ball while a point is in play. When a player returns a ball from an adjacent court, the player shall wait until the point is over on the court where the ball is being returned and then return it directly to one of the players, preferably the server.

**43.** Catching a ball. If a player catches a ball in play before it bounces, the player loses the point regardless of where the player is standing.

**44.** New balls for third set. When a tournament specifies new balls for a third set, new balls shall be used unless all players agree otherwise.

#### **MISCELLANEOUS**

**45.** Clothing and equipment malfunction. If clothing or equipment, other than a racket, becomes unusable through circumstances outside the control of a player, play may be suspended for a reasonable period. A player may leave the court after a point is over to correct the problem. If a racket or string is broken, a player may leave the court to get a replacement, but the player is subject to code violations for delay under the Point Penalty System.

**46.** Placement of towels. Towels are to be placed on the ground outside the net post or at the back fence. Clothing or towels should never be placed on a net.