

## Tennis Rules

*INJURIES ARE A POSSIBILITY IN ALL SPORTS.*

*JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY RECREATION ASSUMES NO RESPONSIBILITIES FOR INJURIES.*

*BASIC FIRST-AID AND CPR WILL BE AVAILABLE WHEN NECESSARY.*

THE GAMES WILL BE PLAYED ACCORDING TO USTA RULES WITH THE FOLLOWING EXCEPTIONS AND/OR MODIFICATIONS.

Changes from last year's rules are indicated by a **gray highlight**.

### **STARTING THE MATCH**

1. EQUIPMENT – UREC will provide tennis balls for each match, but participants must furnish their own rackets. Rackets will be available to rent from the University Park Gate House.
2. PLAYERS – In a doubles match, both players must be present to start the match.
  - a. All participants must be listed on the official team roster prior to their participation in any Intramural Sports activity. Roster provisions are outlined in the Intramural Sports Manual, which can be found on the UREC – Intramural Sports website.
  - b. If, at the scheduled game time, one team has not met the minimum player requirement and their opponents have, the Captain's Choice rule will go into effect. Captain's Choice provisions are outlined in the Intramural Sports Manual, which can be found on the UREC – Intramural Sports website.

### **SCORING**

1. WINNING A GAME: The game format will employ no-ad scoring. A standard game is played to 4 points ("Love"-15-30-40). If each player/team has scored 3 points in a game (tied at 40), a deciding point will be played. In that point, the receiver/receiving team will decide from which side the server/serving team will serve. The winner of that deciding point will be declared the winner of that game.
2. WINNING THE SET: UREC – Intramural Sports utilizes a standard set scoring system, in which the first player/team to win 6 games wins that "set," provided there is a differential of two games between opponents. If both players/teams have won 6 games in the set, a 7-point tie break shall be played.
3. TIE-BREAK GAME: The player/team who first wins 7 points in that game, given that there is a two-point margin over his/her/their opponent, will be declared the winner of the game.
  - a. Order of service: The player/team that was receiving in the last game before the tie-break will start with service. For the second and third points, that player's/team's opponent will serve, and service will alternate on a two-point basis until a winner is declared.
4. WINNER OF THE MATCH: The player/team who wins the set will be declared the winner of the match.

### **PLAYING THE GAME**

1. **ORDER OF SERVICE:** In order to determine who will serve first, a coin toss will occur and the “visiting team” on the score sheet will call the toss. The winner of the toss will have the choice of whether to take the serve or choose a side of the court on which he/she starts. At the end of each standard game, the receiver shall become the server and the server shall become the receiver for the next game.
2. **CHANGE OF ENDS:** The players shall change ends at the end of the first, third, and every subsequent odd game of each set. During a tie-break game, players shall change ends after every six points.
3. **SERVING:** Immediately before starting the service motion, the server shall stand at rest with both feet behind (i.e. further from the net than) the baseline and within the imaginary extensions of the center mark and the sideline. When serving in a standard game, the server shall alternate the sides of the court behind which he/she stands with each point, starting from his/her right half of the court in every game. The service shall pass over the net and hit the service court diagonally opposite before the receiver returns it.
4. **FOOT FAULT:** During the service motion, the server shall not:
  - a. Change position by walking or running, although slight movements of the feet are permitted;
  - b. Touch the baseline or the court with either foot;
  - c. Touch the area outside the imaginary extension of the sideline with either foot;
  - d. Touch the imaginary extension of the center mark with either foot.

If the server breaks this rule, it is a “foot fault.”

5. **SERVICE FAULT:** The service is a fault if:
  - a. The server breaks a serving rule listed in (3) or (4) above;
  - b. The server misses the ball when trying to hit it;
  - c. The served ball touches a permanent fixture, singles stick, or net post before it hits the ground;
  - d. The served ball touches the server or server’s partner, or anything the server or server’s partner is wearing or carrying;
6. **SECOND SERVE:** If the first service is a fault, the server shall serve again without delay from behind the same half of the court from which that fault was served.  
**NOTE:** If the fault serve was from behind the wrong side, the server shall move to the correct side before the second serve.
7. **LET SERVE:** The service is a let if:
  - a. The served ball touches the net, strap, or band and is otherwise good or, after touching the net, strap, or band, touches the receiver, the receiver’s partner, or anything the receiver or receiver’s partner is wearing or carrying before it hits the ground;
  - b. The ball is served when the receiver is not ready.

In the case of a service let, that particular service shall not count and the server shall serve again; but a service let does not cancel a previous fault. In all cases when a let is called, except when a service let is called on a second service, the whole point shall be replayed.

8. **LOSING A POINT:** The point is lost if:
  - a. The server serves two consecutive faults;

- b. A player does not return the ball in play before it bounces twice consecutively;
  - c. A player returns the ball in play so that it hits the ground or an object outside the correct court before it bounces inside the correct court;
  - d. A player returns the ball in play so that, before it bounces, it hits a permanent fixture;
  - e. The receiver returns the service before it bounces;
  - f. A player deliberately carries or catches the ball in play on the racket or deliberately touches it with the racket more than once;
  - g. A player or the racket, whether in the player's hand or not, or anything which the player is wearing or carrying touches the net, net posts, singles sticks, cord or metal cable, strap or band, or the opponent's court at any time while the ball is in play;
  - h. A player hits the ball before it has passed the net;
  - i. The ball in play touches a player or anything that a player is wearing or carrying except the racket;
  - j. The ball in play touches the racket when the player is not holding it;
  - k. A player deliberately and materially changes the shape of the racket when the ball is in play.
9. HINDRANCE: If a player is hindered in playing the point by a deliberate act of the opponent(s), the hindered player shall win the point. However, the point shall be replayed if a player is hindered in playing the point by either an unintentional act of the opponent(s), or something outside the player's own control (not including a permanent fixture).

### **DOUBLES**

1. ORDER OF SERVICE: In doubles, the team due to serve in the first game of each set shall decide which player shall serve for that game. Similarly, before the second game starts, team that received in the first game shall decide which player shall serve for the second game. The partner of the player who served in the first game shall serve in the third game and the partner of the player who served in the second game shall serve in the fourth game. This rotation shall continue until the end of the set.
2. ORDER OF RECEIVING: The team which is due to receive in the first game shall decide which player shall receive the first point in that game. Similarly, before the second game starts, the team that served in the first game shall decide which player shall receive the first point of the second game. The player who was the receiver's partner for the first point of the game shall receive the second point and this rotation shall continue until the end of the game and the set. After the receiver has returned the ball, either player on a team can hit the ball.
3. LOSING A POINT: The point is lost if:
  - a. Any of the circumstances outlined in the singles rules occur, or
  - b. Both teammates touch the ball when returning it.