

## *Tennis Study Guide*

### Getting Ready for a Match

It is very important to properly stretch your arms, legs, and back before playing tennis.

### Choosing a Racket

Tennis rackets come in two sizes, the midsize and the oversize. Most intermediate and advanced players use the midsize while beginning players will fair better using an oversized one. It is very important that your grip is correct. The grip is measured by slipping your thumb from your non-racket hand between the tip of your fingers and the pad of your thumb while your racket hand is holding the grip. With your thumb fitting snugly, you should get a comfortable grip size. Grip size for most men will be  $4 \frac{5}{8}$  circumference and  $4 \frac{1}{2}$  for women.

### Beginning a Doubles Match

Before beginning to play, the teams must decide who is to serve first and which side of the net each team will begin on. This is decided by spinning the racket.

- A player from team A spins the racket on the ground.
- A player from team B calls out “up” or “down”. Up or down is determined by the emblem on the butt of the racket. The winner of the spin will have one of the following choices:
  - a. To be the server or receiver
  - b. The choice of which side of the net they wish to begin on.
  - c. The loser of the toss will have the remaining choice.

### The Service

- The player who is serving must stand behind the baseline anywhere between the center mark and the sideline. The partner may stand anywhere he/she wishes
- The ball must be tossed in the air and hit before it touches the ground.
- If the server is serving from the right side of the court, the ball must land in his/her opponents right service court; if the server is serving from the left side of the court, the ball must land in his/her opponent’s left service court.

### Changing Side of the Court

- One server serves the whole game. The server begins, behind the baseline, on the right side of the court.
- After the first point has been decided, the server moves to the left side of the court to serve the second point and continues to alternate sides of the court after each point

### Receiving the Serve

- The receiving team should decide who is going to receive the serve(s) on the ad or deuce side and they will continue to alternate receiving serves throughout the game.
- The receiving team may stand anywhere they wish as long as they alternate receiving serves. When one partner is the receiver, the other partner may not return that serve.
- The percentage or best return of serve is cross-court

### Service Errors (faults)

- If the server fails to get the ball into the proper service court
- If the server steps on or over the baseline before the ball has been hit. (foot fault)
- If the server walks or runs during the act of serving (foot fault)
- If the server swings at the ball and misses it.

### **Results of Faults**

- If the server commits a fault on his/her first serve from one side of the court, he/she gets a second try to serve correctly.
- If the server commits 2 faults in a row (double fault) from one side of the court, the receiving team gets the point, and the next serve is taken from the other side of the court.

### **A LET**

The service is a let and must be replayed if:

- During service, the ball hits the top of the net and falls into the proper service court
- The server serves before the receiver is ready. If the receiver makes any attempt to return the service, he/she cannot claim they were not ready.

### **Order of Service**

In a doubles match “A” and “B” are partners and “C” and “D” are partners. As a result of the spin, “A” and “B” elect to serve. The order of server would go as follows:

- A & B serve the first game
- C & D serve the second game
- Whoever didn’t serve, serves the third game
- Whoever didn’t serve, serves the fourth game

### **Losing Points**

A team loses the point if:

- They fail to return the ball before it has bounced twice on their side of the net
- They return the ball so that it hits the ground or any object outside the boundaries of the court
- They fail to get the ball over the net to their opponent’s side
- They hit the ball more than once on their side of the net
- They, or anything they are wearing, touch the net or their opponent’s side of the court while the ball is in play
- They hit the ball before it passes over the net to their side
- The ball touches them or anything they are wearing
- They throw their racket and hit the ball
- When serving, the server commits two faults in a row from one side of the court
- The receiver returns the serve before it has bounced
- The wrong player on the receiving team returns the serve

### **A Good Return**

It is a good return if:

- The player does not commit any of the above errors
- The ball lands on a boundary line (lines are considered in-bounds)
- The ball hits the net, and then falls into the opponent’s court
- If a player runs out-of-bounds to return a ball
- If the player’s racket passes over the net after he/she has hit the ball in his/her side first
- If the player returns the ball before it bounces (except on the serve)

### **Scoring**

The points in a tennis game are as follows:

- When a team has no score = love
- Their first point = 15
- Their second point = 30
- Their third point = 40
- Their fourth point = Game, unless one of the following occurs:

- When both teams have three points (they are tied 40-40) the score is called DEUCE.
- The next point won by a team is called ADVANTAGE for that team
  - a. If the serving team wins the next point after the score is deuce, the score would be called ADVANTAGE-IN (AD-IN)
  - b. If the receiving team wins the next point after the score is deuce, the score would be called ADVANTAGE-OUT
  - c. If the score is advantage-in and the serving team wins the next point, they win the game.
  - d. If the score is advantage-out and the receiving team wins the next point, they win the game.
  - e. If the score is advantage-in and the receiving team wins the next point, or if the score is advantage-out and the serving team wins the next point, the score is again deuce, and so on until one team wins two points in a row, and thus wins the game.

### **An Official Match**

An official tennis match usually consists of 2 out of 3 sets.

### **Sets**

The first team to win two sets wins the MATCH

### **Miscellaneous**

- Teams change sides of the net after every odd (1, 3, 5, etc.) numbered game in a set.
- The server should always call out the score before each score. He/she should call out his/her team's score first, then the receiving team's score.
- When there is a question on whether or not the serve is good, the benefit of doubt goes to the server. As a matter of fact, any time you do not know if the ball is in or out it should be called in.

### **The Singles Game**

The singles game (only one player on each side of the net) is played the same as doubles with regard to all rules concerning faults, errors, changing sides of the net and court, scoring, etc. The main difference is the size of the court. The alley is not used at all in singles play.

### **The Forehand Grip**

- Most players start with the Eastern or "Shake Hands" Grip
- The Continental Grip is used for serving
- The Western Grip is used to hit the ball with a lot of topspin

### **Hitting Forehands**

- Pretend you are standing in the center of a clock
- Take your backswing to the seven o'clock position
- Strike the ball between two and three o'clock
- Follow through and end your swing at the eleven o'clock position
- Make sure that as you swing at the ball, you transfer your weight to your front leg
- If you are left handed, your forehand will be from the five to one o'clock position

### **Forehand Key Points**

- Racket back early
- Natural shoulder turn
- Step in toward the ball
- Elbow slightly bent, hit the ball off of front foot
- Follow through across your body

### **The One-Handed Backhand**

- Rotate your hand one quarter turn to the left

- Take your backswing to the five o'clock position
- Strike the ball between the nine and ten o'clock positions
- Follow through and end your swing at the one o'clock position
- Make sure that as you swing at the ball, you transfer your weight to your front leg
- If you are left handed, your backhand will be from the seven to the eleven o'clock position

### **The Two-hand Backhand**

- You must use two forehand grips
- Take the racket back to the six o'clock position
- Strike the ball at the nine o'clock position
- Follow through and end your swing at the twelve o'clock position

### **Backhand Key points**

- Racket back early
- Turn body sideways to the net
- Transfer weight as you swing through shoulder and hip rotation
- Hit the ball off your front foot
- Follow through across your body

### **The Serve**

- The most important stroke in the game
- The toss is the hardest and most important aspect of the serve
- Hold the ball as if you were holding a glass of water
- Have your feet shoulder width apart and relax your hands
- Toss ball out in front and slightly to the right
- Full arm extension
- Fall into court and finish with the racket across your left side

### **Return of Service**

- The second most important stroke of the game
- Make a shorter backswing – four o'clock position
- Step in and forward to strike the ball
- Your safest shot or “percentage return” is cross-court
- A more difficult return would be down the line
- Make your return deep into the backcourt

### **Terms**

<b>ACE</b>	A serve so fast or so sharply angled that the receiver cannot get his/her racket to the ball
<b>ADVANTAGE or AD</b>	The score when one player has made a point after deuce “IN” of the server wins and “OUT” if the receiver wins the point
<b>BACKHAND</b>	A stroke made on the left side of the body by right handed players, on the right side of left handed players
<b>CROSS COURT</b>	A shot hit diagonally to the opposite corner
<b>DEUCE</b>	This is when the score is tied 40-40; also when the player with the advantage loses the next point

<b>DOUBLE FAULT</b>	The situation when the server has hit two faults and as a consequence, loses the point
<b>DOWN-THE-LINE</b>	A shot hit parallel to the sidelines
<b>DRIVE</b>	A stroke hit with a full sideward swing after the ball has bounced
<b>FOREHAND</b>	A stroke made on the right side of the body by right handed players; on the left side for left handed players
<b>LET</b>	A term used to indicate that a point should be replayed without penalty
<b>LOB</b>	A ball lofted high in the air
<b>LOVE</b>	Term used in scoring to mean zero or nothing
<b>RALLY</b>	The exchange of shots after a serve
<b>RECEIVER</b>	The player waiting to return the ball
<b>SERVE</b>	The stroke that puts the ball in play at the beginning of each point
<b>SMASH</b>	A hard overhand shot that is hit downward
<b>VOLLEY</b>	A shot in which the ball is hit on a fly before it bounces