



# RULES OF BEACH TENNIS

2013

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## FOREWORD

The ITF is the international governing body for tennis, including beach tennis. It aims to provide, promote and develop opportunities for men, women and children to participate in recreational and competitive beach tennis at all levels.

As the governing body of tennis, the ITF provides a leading role in the administration of beach tennis. The ITF aims to ensure that a fair and equal opportunity is provided for all those entitled to play under its eligibility rules and that the Rules of Beach Tennis are implemented according to the standards expected of an international body.

*Note: Except where otherwise stated, every reference in these Rules of Beach Tennis to the masculine includes the feminine gender.*

**References to the International Tennis Federation or ITF shall hereafter mean ITF Limited.**

## 1. The Court

The court shall be a rectangle measuring 16m long and 8m wide.

The court shall be divided across the middle by a net suspended by a cord or metal cable of 0.8cm maximum diameter, which shall pass over or be attached to two net posts. The net shall be fully extended so that it completely fills the space between the two net posts and it must be of sufficiently small mesh to ensure that a ball cannot pass through it. The height of the net shall be 1.7m at the centre. A band shall cover the cord or metal cable and the top of the net.

The lines of the court shall be between 2.5cm and 5cm wide, except that the baselines may be up to 10cm wide.

All court measurements shall be made to the outside of the lines and all lines of the court shall be of the same colour clearly contrasting with the colour of the surface.

## 2. Playing Surface

The terrain must be composed of levelled sand, as flat and uniform as possible, free of rocks, shells and any other irregular objects. The playing surface must not present any danger of injury to the players.

## 3. Permanent Fixtures

The permanent fixtures of the court include the backstops and sidestops, the spectators, the stands and seats for spectators, all other fixtures around and above the court, the chair umpire, line umpires and ball persons when in their recognized positions.

## 4. Balls

Stage 2 (i.e. low compression “orange”) balls, as outlined in the ITF Approved Tennis Balls & Classified Court Surfaces Booklet, are approved for play.

## 5. The Racket

Rackets, which are approved for play under the Rules of Tennis, must comply with the specifications in Appendix I.

The International Tennis Federation shall rule on the question of whether any racket or prototype complies with Appendix I or is otherwise approved or not approved, for play. Such ruling may be undertaken on its own initiative or upon application by any party with a bona fide interest therein, including any players, equipment manufacturer or National Association or members thereof.

Case 1:

Is a player allowed to use more than one racket at any time during play?

Decision: No.

Case 2: Is a player allowed to alter the playing characteristics of a racket?

Decision: Yes, except where specifically prohibited by event organisers or where the alteration results in the racket failing to comply with Appendix I.

Case 3: Is a player allowed to use a stringed racket?

Decision: No.

**6. Score in a Match**

A match can be played to the best of 3 sets (a doubles team needs to win 2 sets to win the match) or to the best of 5 sets (a doubles team needs to win 3 sets to win the match). The chosen format must be announced in advance of the event.

**7. Score in a Set**

There are different methods of scoring in a set. The two main methods are the “Advantage Set” and the “Tie-break Set”. Either method may be used provided that the one to be used is announced in advance of the event. If the “Tie-break Set” method is to be used, it must also be announced whether the final set will be played as a “Tie-break Set” or an “Advantage Set”.

a) “Advantage Set”

The first doubles team to win six games wins that “Set”, provided there is a margin of two games over the opposing doubles team. If necessary, the set shall continue until this margin is achieved.

b) “Tie-break Set”

The first doubles team to win six games wins that “Set”, provided there is a margin of two games over the opposing doubles team. If the score reaches six games all, a tie-break game shall be played.

Additional approved alternative scoring methods can be found in Appendix IV of the Rules of Tennis.

**8. Score in a Game**

In the absence of a chair umpire, the game score must be called by the server before the start of each point.

a) Standard game (No-Ad)

A standard game is scored as follows with the server’s score being called first:

No point	-	“Love”
First point	-	“15”
Second point	-	“30”
Third point	-	“40”
Fourth point	-	“Game”

If both teams have won three points each, the score is “Deuce” and a deciding point shall be played. The team who wins the deciding point wins the “Game”.

b) Tie-break Game

During a tie-break game, points are scored “Zero”, “1”, “2”, “3”, etc. The first doubles team to win seven points wins the “Game” and “Set”, provided there is a margin of two points over the opponents. If necessary, the tie-break game shall continue until this margin is achieved.

The player whose turn it is to serve shall serve the first point of the tie-break game. The following two points shall be served by the player of the opposing doubles team due to serve next. After this the rotation of service within each team shall continue in the same order as during that set until the end of the tie-break game.

Additional approved alternative scoring methods, as outlined in Appendix IV of the Rules of Tennis, may be used provided that the one to be used is announced in advance of the event.

## **9. Server & Receiver**

The doubles teams shall stand on opposite sides of the net. The server is the player who puts the ball into play for the first point. Players in the doubles team that are ready to return the ball served by the server shall be the receivers.

Before the start of each point the receivers shall first take their positions, followed thereafter by the server who will then serve. The receivers may not significantly alter their positions relative to each other and the server once the server has chosen his position.

*Case 1. Are the members of the receiving doubles team allowed to stand outside the lines of the court?*

*Decision: Yes. The members of the receiving doubles team may take any position inside or outside the lines on the receiving side of the net.*

*Case 2. Can the partner of the player serving stand in a position which hinders the view of the members of the doubles team returning the serve?*

*Decision: Yes. The partner of the player serving may take any position inside or outside the lines on the serving side of the net.*

*Case 3. Will a player who runs after a ball lose the point for his/her doubles team if he/she crosses the line which runs parallel to the net, but outside the lines of the court, prior to or after hitting the ball?*

*Decision. No. A player will only lose the point for his/her doubles team if he/she steps into the opposing team's playing area while the ball is in play.*

*Case 4: Is one member of a doubles team allowed to play alone against the opponents?*

*Decision: No.*

## **10. Choice of Ends & Service**

The choice of ends and the choice to be server or receiver in the first game shall be decided by toss before the warm-up starts. The doubles team winning the toss may choose:

- a. To be server or receiver in the first game of the match, in which case the opposing team shall choose the end of the court for the first game of the match:  
or
- b. The end of the court for the first game of the match, in which case the opposing team shall choose to be server or receiver for the first game of the match: or
- c. To require the opposing team to make one of the above choices.

*Case 1. Do both doubles teams have the right to new choices if the warm-up is stopped and the players leave the court?*

*Decision: Yes. The result of the original toss stands, but new choices may be made by both doubles teams.*

**11. Change of Ends**

Doubles teams shall change ends at the end of the first, third and every subsequent odd game of each set. Doubles teams shall also change ends at the end of each set unless the total number of games in that set is even, in which case doubles teams change ends at the end of the first game of the next set.

During a tie-break game, doubles teams shall change ends after every four points.

**12. Ball in Play**

Unless a fault or a let is called, the ball is in play from the moment the server hits the ball, and remains in play until the point is decided.

**13. Ball Touches a Line**

If a ball touches a line, it is regarded as touching the court bounded by that line. In case of a change in the position of any line, prior to the start of a point members of a doubles team may request the umpire to make taut the line (this may be done by a player in the case of a match without an umpire), but any such adjustment will not impact on the outcome of any previous point.

**14. Ball Touches a Permanent Fixture**

If the ball in play touches a permanent fixture before it hits the ground, the player who hit the ball loses the point for his/her team.

**15. Order of Service**

The doubles team due to serve in the first game of each set shall decide which member of that doubles team shall serve for that game. Similarly, before the second games starts, their opponents shall decide which player shall serve for that 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.

**16. Order of Receiving**

The ball served by the server can be returned by either player (receiver) on the opposite side of the net.

**17. The Service**

Immediately before starting the service motion, the server shall stand at rest with both feet behind the baseline and within the imaginary extensions of the sidelines.

The server shall then release the ball by hand in any direction and hit the ball with the racket before the ball hits the ground. The service motion is completed at the moment the player's racket hits or misses the ball. A player who is able to use only one arm may use the racket for the release of the ball.

*Case 1. If when serving the server throws two or more balls into the air, instead of one, is this a fault or does the server lose the point?*

*Decision. On the first occasion a let shall be called and the server shall serve again, but a service let does not cancel a previous fault. On the second and any subsequent occasion, the action shall be considered deliberate and a fault shall be called.*

## 18. Serving

When serving, the server may stand anywhere behind the court.

The service shall pass over the net and into the opponents' court area before a receiver returns it.

There shall be no second service.

In Mixed Doubles event, male players shall serve underarm.

## 19. 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; or
- b. Touch the court inside the baseline with the standing/front foot; or
- c. Touch the baseline or the court with the drag/rear foot; or
- d. Place either foot on or under the baseline; or
- e. Touch the area outside the imaginary extension of the side line with either foot

*Case 1. Is the server allowed to have one or both feet off the ground?*

*Decision. Yes.*

*Case 2. Is it a fault if the server's standing/front foot touches the baseline during the service motion?*

*Decision. As long as both the server's feet are behind the baseline prior to the start of the service motion, no foot fault is committed if his standing/front foot touches the baseline during the service motion.*

*Case 3. Is it a fault if the baseline moves because of sand pushed by the server during the service motion?*

*Decision. No.*

## 20. Service Fault

The service is a fault if:

- a. The server breaks rules 17, 18 or 19; or
- b. The server misses the ball when trying to hit it; or
- c. The ball served touches a permanent fixture (i.e. net post) as during the service action; or
- d. The ball served touches the server or server's partner, or anything the server or server's partner is wearing or carrying.

*Case 1. After tossing a ball to serve, the server decides not to hit it and catches it instead. Is this a fault?*

*Decision: No. A player, who tosses the ball and then decides not to hit it, is allowed to catch the ball with the hand or the racket, or to let it fall to the ground.*

## 21. When to Serve & Receive

The server shall not serve until the members of the doubles team receiving are ready. However, the members of the receiving doubles team shall play to the



reasonable pace of the server and shall be ready to receive within a reasonable time of the server being ready.

**22. The Let During a Service**

A ball served that touches the net, strap or band and that continues over the net is in play (no let rule).

**23. The Let**

In all cases when a let is called the point shall be replayed.

*Case 1: If the ball is broken during the playing of a point should a let be called?*

*Decision: Yes.*

*Case 2: If, during the playing of a point, one of the lines on the playing area is broken or becomes unattached should a let be called?*

*Decision: Yes.*

*Case 3: If either member of the receiving doubles team is not ready when the ball is served should a let be called?*

*Decision: Yes*

**24. Team Loses Point**

The point is lost if:

- a. The server serves a fault; or
- b. A member of a doubles team does not return the ball in play before it hits the ground; or
- c. A member of a doubles team returns the ball in play so that it hits the ground, or an object, outside the correct court; or
- d. A member of a doubles team returns the ball in play so that, before it hits the ground, it hits a permanent fixture; or
- e. A member of a doubles team deliberately carries or catches the ball in play on the racket or deliberately touches it with the racket more than once; or
- f. A member of a doubles team or the racket, whether in a player's hand or not, or anything which that player is wearing or carrying touches the net, net posts, cord or metal cable, strap or band, or the opposing team's court at any time while the ball is in play; or
- g. A member of a doubles team hits the ball before it has passed the net; or
- h. The ball in play touches a member of a doubles team or anything that that player is wearing or carrying, except the racket; or
- i. The ball in play touches a racket when a member of a doubles team is not holding it; or
- j. A member of a doubles team deliberately and materially changes the shape of his/her racket when the ball is in play; or
- k. Both members of a doubles team touch the ball when returning it.
- l. After the server has served, the racket falls out of the server's hand and touches the net before the ball hits the ground.

*Case 1: A member of the receiving doubles team touches the net before the ball that has been served touches the ground outside the correct court. What is the correct decision?*

*Decision: The receiving doubles team loses the point because one of them touched the net while the ball was in play.*

*Case 2: Does a doubles team lose the point if an imaginary line in the extension of the net is crossed before or after hitting the ball?*

*Decision: The doubles team does not lose the point in either case provided a member of that doubles team does not touch the opposing team's court.*

*Case 3: A player throws the racket at the ball in play. Both the racket and the ball land in the court on the opposing doubles team's side of the net and the members of the opposing doubles team are unable to reach the ball. Which doubles team wins the point?*

*Decision: The doubles team throwing the racket at the ball loses the point.*

*Case 4: A ball that has just been served hits either member of the receiving doubles team before it hits the ground. Which doubles team wins the point?*

*Decision: The server wins the point.*

*Case 5: A member of a doubles team standing outside the court hits the ball or catches it before it hits the ground and claims the point because the ball was definitely going out of the correct court.*

*Decision: The doubles team loses the point, unless it is a good return, in which case the point continues.*

## **25. A Good Return**

It is a good return if:

- a. The ball touches the net, net posts, cord or metal cable, strap or band, provided that it passes over any of them and hits the ground within the correct court; or
- b. The ball is returned outside the net posts, either above or below the level of the top of the net, even though it touches the net posts, provided that it hits the ground in the correct court; or
- c. A player's racket passes over the net after hitting the ball on the player's own side of the net and the ball hits the ground in the correct court; or
- d. A member of a doubles team hits the ball in play, which hits another ball lying in the correct court.

## **26. Hindrance**

If a member of a doubles team is hindered in playing the point by a deliberate act of a member of the opposing doubles team, that doubles team shall win the point.

However, the point shall be replayed if a member of a doubles team is hindered in playing the point by either an unintentional act of a member of the opposing doubles team, or something outside the player's own control (not including a permanent fixture).

*Case 1: Is an unintentional double hit a hindrance?*

*Decision: No.*

*Case 2: A member of a doubles team claims to have stopped play because the player thought that a member of the opposing doubles team was being hindered. Is this a hindrance?*

*Decision: No, the doubles team loses the point.*

*Case 3: A ball in play hits a bird flying over the court. Is this a hindrance?*

*Decision: Yes, the point shall be replayed.*

*Case 4: During a point, a ball or other object that was lying on the doubles team's side of the net when the point started hinders one of the players. Is this a hindrance?*

*Decision: No.*

*Case 5: Where are the server's partner and members of the receiving doubles team allowed to stand?*

*Decision: The server's partner and the members of the receiving doubles team may take any position on their own side of the net, inside or outside the court. However, if a player is creating a hindrance to a member of the opposing doubles team, the hindrance rule should be used.*

## **27. Correcting Errors**

As a principle, when an error in respect of the Rules of Beach Tennis is discovered, all points previously played shall stand. Errors so discovered shall be corrected as follows:

- a. During a standard game or a tie-break game, if the doubles teams are at the wrong ends of the court, the error should be corrected as soon as it is discovered and the server shall serve from the correct end of the court according to the score.  
If a player serves out of turn during a standard game, the player who was originally due to serve shall serve as soon as the error is discovered. However, if a game is completed before the error is discovered the order of service shall remain as altered.
- b. If a player serves out of turn during a tie-break game and the error is discovered after an even number of points have been played, the error is corrected immediately. If the error is discovered after an odd number of points have been played, the order of service shall remain as altered.
- c. If in error a tie-break game is started at 6 games all, when it was previously agreed that the set would be an "Advantage set", the error shall be corrected immediately if only one point has been played. If the error is discovered after the second point is in play, the set will continue as a "Tie-break set".
- d. If in error a standard game is started at 6 games all, when it was previously agreed that the set would be a "Tie-break set", the error shall be corrected immediately if only one point has been played. If the error is discovered after the second point is in play, the set will continue as an "Advantage set" until the score reaches 8 games all (or a higher even number), when a tie-break game shall be played.
- e. If in error an "Advantage set" or "Tie-break set" is started, when it was previously agreed that the final set would be a match tie-break, the error shall be corrected immediately if only one point has been played. If the error is discovered after the second point is in play, the set will continue either until a doubles team wins three games (and therefore the set) or until the score reaches 2 games all, when a match tie-break shall be played. However, if the error is discovered after the second point of the fifth game has started, the set will continue as a "Tie-break set". (See Appendix IV of the Rules of Tennis).

**28. Role of Court Officials**

For matches where officials are appointed, their roles and responsibilities can be found in Appendix V of the Rules of Tennis.

**29. Continuous Play**

As a principle, play should be continuous, from the time the match starts (when the first service of the match is put in play) until the match finishes.

- a. Between points, a maximum of twenty (20) seconds is allowed. When the doubles teams change ends at the end of a game, a maximum of ninety (90) seconds are allowed. However, after the first game of each set and during a tie-break game, play shall be continuous and the doubles teams shall change ends without a rest.

At the end of each set there shall be a set break of a maximum of one hundred and twenty (120) seconds.

The maximum time starts from the moment that one point finishes until the first service is struck for the next point.

Event organisers may apply for ITF approval to extend the ninety (90) seconds allowed when the doubles teams change ends at the end of a game and the one hundred and twenty (120) seconds allowed at a set break.

- b. If, for reasons outside a member of a doubles team's control, clothing, footwear or necessary equipment (excluding the racket) is broken or needs to be replaced, the player may be allowed reasonable extra time to rectify the problem.
- c. No extra time shall be given to allow a member of a doubles team to recover condition. However, a member of a doubles team suffering from a treatable medical condition may be allowed one medical time-out of three minutes for the treatment of that medical condition.
- d. Event organisers may allow a rest period of a maximum of ten (10) minutes if this is announced in advance of the event. This rest period can be taken after the 3rd set in a best of 5 sets match, or after the 2nd set in a best of 3 sets match.
- e. The warm-up time shall be a maximum of five (5) minutes, unless otherwise decided by the event organisers.
- f. Practice serves must be strictly limited to the warm-up period.

## Appendix 1

### The Racket

For all measurements in Appendix I, SI units shall take precedence.

The beach tennis racket must conform to all of the requirements below:

- a. The hitting surface, defined as the flat area of the racket head bounded by the inner edge of the rim or holes larger than 13mm in diameter, whichever is smaller, must not exceed 30cm in length and 26 cm in width.
- b. The racket must not exceed 50cm in length from the butt of the handle to the tip of the racket head. The racket head must not exceed 26cm in width.
- c. The profile distance between the two hitting surfaces (thickness) must be constant and must not exceed 38mm.
- d. Holes greater than 13mm in diameter must not extend over 40mm from the rim of the racket, with the exception of holes that form part of the throat.
- e. The racket must be free from any device that may provide communication, advice or instruction of any kind, audible or visible, to a player during a match.