

THIS CONTENT IS A PART OF A FULL BOOK - TENNIS FOR STUDENTS OF MEDICAL UNIVERSITY - SOFIA

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Rules of the game of tennis

Basic rules

Tennis, as well as any sport, is played under certain rules. Referees, however, are mainly present at official tournaments and are mandatory for final matches. In regular tennis competitions, each player counts the score him/herself and calls his/her balls whether the ball is in or out of the court's outlines. Therefore, each student's main task is to know the rules of the game well.

Tennis is one of the oldest and most "conservative" games. Its first rules were officially adopted in 1970 and have not changed much since then.

The place where the game is practiced is called a tennis court - a rectangular playground with outlines, with a low net across the center. It can be used both for singles and doubles games.

The dimensions of the tennis court are defined and regulated by the International Tennis Federation (ITF) via the "The Rules of Tennis" document.

Technical characteristics

The court has a length of 23,78m and a width of 10,97m for games in doubles and 8,23m for singles. The line that encloses the serving area is 6,40 m away from the net. In order for players to move freely during rallies, additional space is necessary around the court, so that the total area of the court with the free space around it is 18,3m wide and 36,7m long (see Fig. 13).

return of the serve can only occur after the first rebound on the court; if the ball bounces a second time, it is considered an error and a point loss. The player also loses a point in case (s)he cannot return the ball to the opponent's field, or send the ball to the net or out.

Upon completion of the first game, the player who was receiving during that game is serving in the next one. The players are serving consecutively in the games until the match is over unless they reach a tie-break.

"Tie-break game" - this is continuation of the points when the two players reach a score of 6:6 games in the set.

During that game the points are counted 0, 1, 2, 3 and so on. The player (or pair) who has won the first seven points wins the game and the set, provided that they lead with a minimum of 2 points in the score. The tie-break continues until this condition is met.

The player, whose turn is to serve after reaching a 6:6 game score, serves for the first point in the tie-break. His opponent (in doubles, this is the opposing player whose order is to serve) serves the second and third points. Then the players (or team) alternate to serve for two consecutive points to the end of this game (in doubles, the change of serve should be kept in the same order that was during the set).

The player (or pair) who had first served in the tie-break game, is the one to return the serve in the first game of the following set.

Counting score

In tennis match-play, there is a three-point scoring system that has been adopted. Each match is divided into sets, games and points.

When winning the first and second point, the player gets 15 points, on the third - 30 points, and the fourth successive point means winning the game. The result in a "standard game" is reported as shown below, with first announcing the score of the serving player:

- at the beginning of the game - "0"
- first point - "15"
- second point - "30"
- third point - "40"
- fourth point - "game"

In the event when each player (or pair) has earned three points, the result is declared "even" 40:40 (Deuce) and starts to count in "advantage-disadvantage" terms. On the next point, an "Advantage" is called for the player (or pair) who has won it. If the same player (or pair) gets another consecutive point, the game is also won. If the latter point is won/ by the other player (or pair), the result is goes back to "Deuce".

To win the game, the player (or pair) must win two consecutive points after the result has been "Deuce."

Set

The first of the two tennis players to reach six games, wins the set. If the result is 5:5, one player must win the next two games in order to finish the set 7:5. Otherwise, it is 6:6 and a tie-break game is played.

Match

The maximum number of sets in a match is five for men and three for women. The specific rules of the tennis tournaments determine the number of sets to be played in a match.

For a tennis match victory, it is necessary to win two out of three sets. This rule applies to most tournaments, as only at major tournaments, such as Davis Cup or Wimbledon, three out of five sets have to be won.

The tennis term "game point" is the point for winning the game, "set point" - for the set, and "match point" - the match.

Doubles game:

For doubles play, the width of the court should be 10.97m, that is, the Singles court widens by 1,37m on both sides.

Serving roles must be determined at the start of each set in the following way:

The pair that will serve in the first game has to decide who of the two will be first. The same must be done by the other pair at the start of the second game. Hence, the partner of the server in the first game will have to serve in the third and the partner of the one who served in the second game will have to serve in the fourth one. This order will be retained for the remaining games of this set.

The return of serve has to be determined at the beginning of the set in the following way:

The pair to return in the first game must determine who of the two players will receive the first serve in any odd game in this set. Similarly, the other pair must decide who of the two players will receive the first serve in the second and every even game of this set. The doubles partners have to alternate returning the serve consecutively one after another in a given game.