

MPA TENNIS RULEBOOK

MISSION STATEMENT

"The ideals of good sportsmanship, ethical behavior and integrity permeate our culture. The values of good citizenship and high behavioral standards apply equally to all activity disciplines. In perception and practice, good sportsmanship shall be defined as those qualities of behavior which are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. Further, an awareness is expected of the impact of an individual's influence on the behavior of others. Good sportsmanship is viewed by the National Federation as a concrete measure of the understanding and commitment to fair play, ethical behavior, and integrity." (National Federation of State High School Associations)

INTRODUCTION

This rulebook has been published by the Maine Principals' Association's Tennis Committee and the **Maine Principals' Association Tennis Tournament Committee** who are working to promote excellence in Maine high school tennis.

OFFICIAL RULES

The United States Tennis Association rules have been adopted by the MPA Tennis Committee and with the rules in the accompanying MPA bulletin, are in effect during the regular season and all MPA-sponsored events.

Rule books may be ordered from U.S.T.A. Publications, 70 West Red Oak Lane, White Plains, NY 10604 or by visiting their website at <http://www.usta.com/Improve-Your-Game/Rules/>.

HEAL POINT REPORTER SYSTEM

The seeding for the MPA **Team** Tennis Tournament will be determined by using the Heal Point System. Athletic Directors are responsible for the reporting of home matches online ASAP following the match's completion. Coaches/athletic administrators are asked to enter results through the link on the MPA website. Please report all scheduled matches to this site.

TEAM TOURNAMENT QUALIFICATION INFORMATION

1. Two-thirds of the schools (**or a minimum of eight**) in each region (north/south) in each class will qualify for the regional tournament.
2. If two or more teams finish with identical heal point tournament ratings, the following tie-breaking system will be in effect:
 - a. If the tying teams are both (all) qualifiers for the tournament field, the numerical seeding will be defined by: 1) Head-to-head play, 2) A coin flip.
 - b. If two teams are tied for the final playoff spot, and the tie is not resolved by head-to-head play, a one match playoff will be held with the home team determined by a coin flip.
 - c. In the event of a three- (or more) way tie for the final qualifying position(s), byes and pairings to determine the tournament qualifier(s), will be decided by a coin flip(s). All coin flips will take place at the MPA office.

MPA TENNIS STATE SINGLES SEEDING FACT SHEET

Tennis coaches should complete this document and bring the information to all seeding meetings! Every tennis coach's input is very important to help determine fair and equitable seeding for the MPA Singles Tennis Championships. This form may be sent to Regional Site Directors in advance of the Regional Seeding Meeting.

School _____ Telephone # _____
 Coach: _____ Telephone #'s Home: _____ School: _____
 Business: _____ Cell: _____ Email address: _____
 Athletic Director: _____
 Telephone #: Home: _____ School: _____ Cell: _____
 Email address: _____

PLAYER'S NAME: _____ Year in School _____
 Current regular season record W ____ L ____ Ladder Rank: (circle one) #1 #2 #3
 Other: _____

A. Regular season significant match results:

	Match Result (W or L)	Opponent's Name	School	Scores
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____
7.	_____	_____	_____	_____
8.	_____	_____	_____	_____

B. Progression and results from previous M.P.A. Tournaments and Tennis Seasons

State singles qualifying results: Year: _____

	Round Result (W or L)	Opponent's Name	School	Scores
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____

Progression and results from previous MPA Tournaments and Tennis Seasons

State singles qualifying results: Year: _____

	Round Result (W or L)	Opponent's Name	School	Scores
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Progression and results from previous MPA Tournaments and Tennis Seasons

State singles qualifying results: Year: _____

Round	Result (W or L)	Opponent's Name	School	Scores
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____

C. Current UTR Rating: _____

D. Past regular season singles results: Ladder Rank: _____

W _____	L _____	Year _____	#1 #2 #3
W _____	L _____	Year _____	#1 #2 #3
W _____	L _____	Year _____	#1 #2 #3

E. **Significant** results from past seasons in M.P.A. Heal Point countable matches:

Match	Result	Opponent	School	Year	Scores
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

F. Significant results in non-countable high school Heal Point matches during the current tennis season:

Match	Result	Opponent	School	Year	Scores
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

G. Close losses against quality opponents during the current tennis season:

Match	Result	Opponent	School	Year	Scores
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

H. Documented local, sectional, and national rankings:

Year	Rank	Organization	Governing Official

I. Documented head-to-head results in Non-M.P.A. junior and adult tournaments:

Match	Result	Opponent	Tournament	Year	Scores

Coach’s signature serves to verify the correctness of all information given above!

Coach’s Signature: _____ Date: _____

Reflections on the UTR System

The recently developed UTR rating system is a more friendly and accurate evaluation of player skill than other rating systems such as NTRP U.S. and NTN international. It is also a free rating service for high school and youth tennis players. It is a modified Elo rating system that promotes fair and competitive play across the tennis world.

Players are rated on actual results, not age, nationality, or socioeconomic status. When a player understands his/her skill level they can find hits, events and tournaments where they will play competitive tennis and improve their game. The UTR rating is a number between 1.00 and 16.50. One match is all it takes to receive a projected UTR rating. After approximately five matches, the rating becomes much more reliable. As matches are played and the results entered into the system a player’s UTR rating will increase or decrease. Two factors are considered when calculating the match rating. The first is the UTR rating difference between opponents. The second factor is the competitiveness of the match, as determined by the percent of total games won. Given the UTR rating difference, the algorithm expects a certain percent of total games won. The player who performs better than the algorithm’s expectation will see their match rating go up while the other player’s match rating will go down. When one player’s match rating increases, the other player’s match rating decreases by the same amount. However, If the two players have a different number

of matches counting toward their rating, the overall UTR rating may not increase or decrease by the same amount.

Calculating Match Weight:

Format: As the match format increases in length, more weight is given. A match with a three-set format receives more weight than a match with an eight-game pro set format.

Competitiveness: As the UTR rating difference between players increases, less weight is given. For example, imagine a player with a UTR of 6.00 (an intermediate rating). A match played against an opponent with a UTR rating of 5 .00 or 7.00 receives more weight than a match played against an opponent with a UTR of 4,00 or 8.00.

Reliability: As the reliability of the opponent’s UTR rating increases, more weight is given. A match played against an opponent who competes often and thus has a more reliable UTR rating receives more weight.

Time Degradation: As prior matches get older, less weight is given. Since the algorithm is a representation of the current form, it gives more credit to matches played within the last few months.

Ways to improve a UTR rating:

Play Well: Performing well in matches is the easiest way to improve a UTR rating. If the match gets out of hand, don’t give up! It does not matter whether you play higher or lower rated opponents; you can improve your UTR either way by winning more games than expected.

Play often: The more matches played, the quicker your UTR rating will reflect your current form. The algorithm is especially accurate for those who play against a variety of opponents rated above or below them. Be patient since a UTR rating is a rolling weighted average, the effect of new results may be slightly lagged. A UTR rating may not fully reflect a recent outcome right away, but it will over time.

THE MPA IS CURRENTLY RECOMMENDING THAT ALL COACHES HELP THEIR PLAYERS ESTABLISH A UTR RATING JOINING 20 OTHER STATE ASSOCIATIONS.

THE MPA, FOR THE FIRST TIME, IS REQUIRING ANY PLAYER WHO MIGHT BE CONSIDERED FOR SEEDING IN THE MPA TENNIS SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIP HAVE 6 AN ESTABLISHED UTR RATING. THE UTR RATING MAY PROVE VALUABLE DURING THE SINGLES SEEDING PROCESS.

UTR RATING and LEVEL DESCRIPTION

RATING

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

1.0-4.0	Beginner	Learning basic court positioning and racket feel Developing basic fundamentals Working on keeping ball in play Can sustain a minor rally Developing teamwork in doubles
4.0-7.0	Intermediate	Dependable strokes and first serve Strong team play in doubles Mastered the use of power and ball spin Strong footwork and net play
7.0-11.5	Advanced	Strong shot anticipation and ball control Consistent second serve Strong established strategy Comfortable in high stress competition
11.5-16.5	PRO	Mastery of technique Capable of highest level of competition Elite active player over many years

QUALIFICATION FOR SINGLES ROUND OF 52 PLAY

Players for the MPA Singles Championships will be determined by qualifying play in five geographical regions. Schools may designate up to three girls and three boys to participate in qualifying play. **Currently, there is a provision for school's to request one or two additional entrants (please see MPA Bulletin, page 9)**

The number of female and male qualifiers from each region is set as follows:

- Region 1 – 5
- Region 2 – 12
- Region 3 – 9
- Region 4 – 8
- Region 5 - 18

In qualifying play, all matches will be one eight (8) game pro set, with a twelve point tiebreaker played should the set reach 8-all.

In the final round of qualifying play (where the winner advances to the Round of 52 at the MPA Singles Championships), matches will be two sets with a 10-point Match Tiebreaker used should the players split sets.

SINGLES ROUND OF 52 DRAW PROCEDURE

1. The players qualifying for the round of 52 in the singles tournament will be seeded by the director, after consulting with the regional site directors, experienced coaches and Athletic Administrators as well as knowledgeable tennis professionals in various areas of the state. Hopefully this cross-section of opinions will permit us to establish the fairest and most accurate seedings possible.
2. The draw for the boys' and girls' round of 52 championship singles tournament will be developed with the following guidelines:
 - A. The top twelve players will be seeded numerically by ability.
 - (1) If two (or more) teammates are seeded, every effort will be made to place them in separate halves (quarters) of the draw unless such placements result in obvious errors in seeding.
 - (2) Non-seeded teammates **must** be placed in opposite halves (quarters) of the draw from other seeded/unseeded teammates.
 - B. The numerically seeded players should be assigned to the 64 player draw sheet as follows:
#1 seed – line 1; #8 seed – line 9; #9 seed – line 13; #4 seed – line #17;
#5 seed – line 25; #12 seed – line 29; #11 seed – line 36; #6 seed – line 40;
#3 seed – line 48; #10 seed – line 52; #7 seed – line 56; and #2 seed – line 64.
 - C. The four quarters of the draw will then be constructed so that ten non-seeded players are randomly drawn to join the three seeded players in each quarter of the draw. Attention to [#2, A (1, 2) above] remains in effect.
 - D. Only the twelve (12) numerical seeds will receive first round byes. All other qualifiers will play a first round match.
3. In the MPA Singles Championships, all matches in the Round of 52, in the Round of 32, **and in the Round of 16** will be two sets with a ten point match tiebreaker used if the players split sets.

Matches beginning with the Quarterfinal Round will be the best two of three tiebreak sets.

TENNIS PROTOCOL FOR ALL MPA SANCTIONED EVENTS

(Regular season, singles tournament, team tournament)

- Glassware must not be taken onto the court.
- Most first-class tennis facilities prohibit gum chewing on all courts.
- All technological devices must not taken onto the court by the players.

- Tennis shoes with non-marking soles are always required
- Players must use appropriate language at all times.
- Common sense and courtesy should always prevail while playing competitively
- Court areas must be picked up at the conclusion of all tournament matches and scorecards should be returned to a 0-0 setting

TOURNAMENT BALL

The official ball for the MPA Team Regional and State Championship and the MPA Singles Championship will be the Wilson Extra Duty Hard Court Tennis Ball. Tennis balls for these events will be provided by the MPA.

In the preliminary, quarterfinal and semifinal rounds of regional team play, the host school will be responsible for providing yellow, USTA approved tennis balls for the matches.

Each entrant in the singles qualifying tournament must bring one unopened can of yellow, USTA approved balls with him/her to the qualifying site. The individual match winners will take the unused balls for his/her next match; the opponent will keep the used balls

TEAM TENNIS FIVE POINT MATCH SCORING SYSTEM

1. There are five equal points in the team competition, three for singles, and two for doubles. The match is won by the team that earns the most points. (5-0, 4-1, 3-2)
2. A player may only participate in one of the five matches in a team tennis competition. There are no substitutions allowed once play has commenced in a singles or doubles match, but a coach whose team has already won the team competition may change his/her line-up to allow a lesser player(s) to participate in a match not yet underway.
3. **Regular Season Team Matches may end in a tie as in many other MPA High Point regulated team sports. However, All Team Tournament matches must be resolved as follows: *Tie-breaker Format: 1.) Total sets won, 2.) Total games won, 3.) Total sets in the singles matches won.***

Twelve-Point Tiebreaker and Match Tiebreaker

Object (12 point tiebreaker): To get seven points and win by two points.

Object (Match tiebreaker): To get ten points and win by two points.

Note: Coaches should give special attention to teaching the correct tie-breaking procedure and should attempt to supervise all tiebreak situations when they arise.

Rotation for Both the 12-point and Match Tiebreakers:

1. Player whose turn it is to serve (at 6 all) serves one point from "deuce" (server's right) court.
2. Opponent serves twice, the first coming from the "AD" (server's left) court.
3. Other side serves twice, etc. with players **switching ends of the court after six points have been played; so after 6, 12, 18...total points have been played players switch sides until the tiebreak procedure produces a "winner."**
4. If the match requires an additional set, the side who received first in the set just concluded, now has the first serve in the next set; regardless of who won the

tiebreaker.

5. If the first two sets are both decided by tiebreakers, a spin of the racket will determine who will serve to begin the third set.

Order of Play - Twelve-Point Tiebreaker and Match Tiebreaker

A vs B Swap Sides after each set of Six Points

1 – A serves, right court

2 – B serves, left court

3 – B serves – right court

4 – A serves – left court

5 – A serves – right court

6 – B serves – left court

SWAP SIDES – After each set of six points

7 - B serves, right court

8 - A serves, left court

9 - A serves – right court

10 - B serves – left court

11 - B serves – right court

12 - A serves – left court

Repeat sequence starting with point one until one player has won seven points in a twelve-point tiebreaker or ten points in a match tiebreaker and is ahead by a margin of two.

DETERMINING THE LADDER FOR MPA TEAM TENNIS MATCHES

The three tennis players who have earned one of the top three singles positions on a team's singles tennis ladder **must** play singles. The #1 singles player must be better than the #2 singles player, and the #2 singles player must be better than the #3 singles player.

Once the best three singles players have been established by ladder play, the coach may set doubles pairings in a manner of his/her choosing. Doubles teams may be composed of any of the remaining squad members, providing the #1 doubles team is better than the #2 doubles team. It is recommended that all coaches maintain a separate doubles ladder to verify the rank correctness of the doubles teams.

Participation on the doubles ladder must never excuse talented players from challenging on and assuming their rightful spot on the singles challenge ladder.

COACHING RESPONSIBILITIES IN CONSTRUCTING AND MAINTAINING PROPER SINGLES AND DOUBLES LADDERS:

1. It is the coach's responsibility to:

- A. Develop tennis ladders that include **ALL** team members in rank order of ability. Whenever possible, this rank ordering should be established by head-to-head ladder matches

(though it is understood that because of weather-shortened pre-seasons, the initial rank ordering of players may necessarily be partially subjective, it is expected this subjective order be revised through substantiated ladder play as soon as possible). **A coach should never allow a dubious challenge match result to justify an incorrect lineup for an extended period of time!**

- B. Promote, provide time for, and document the results of ladder matches.
- C. Have documentation of the dates and results of these ladder matches available at team matches in case a challenge is lodged by an opposing coach as to the rank ordering of players.

2. Transgressions:

- A. It is inappropriate for a coach to withhold skilled players from challenging on the team's singles ladder or for a skilled player to declare himself/herself exempt from the team's singles ladder to become doubles eligible. Such a practice is unacceptable, unethical, and dishonest.**
- B. Coaches should never discipline a player by dropping him/her down the ladder for the next match. This only punishes the upcoming opponent(s). If a player must be disciplined, the only acceptable solution is to drop him/her from the lineup.
- C. Players who have suffered a **long-term illness or injury** (missing four or more team matches) MUST successfully challenge the player who has assumed his/her ranked order on the team ladder. If unsuccessful, he/she must continue to challenge successively lower ranked players until his/her proper order is established before being entered into a match.
- D. Players who have suffered **short-term illness or injury** (less than four team matches) may be reinserted in their former ranked position when he/she has been deemed ready to play by the proper authority. ***A player having been on short-term leave from the team may NOT be dropped down in the team lineup upon his/her return unless ladder play dictates.***
- E. If the coaches and administrators of a school feel a player who has earned a singles ranking on the tennis ladder needs to be dropped to doubles due to health concerns or chronic injury, they must:
 - 1. submit such a request to the MPA Assistant Executive Director responsible for Tennis (at least 48 hours before this proposed change is to take effect), and
 - 2. submit a written doctor's recommendation for making the proposed change.

APPROPRIATE ADJUSTMENTS DUE TO PLAYER ABSENCES:

Over the years, there have been numerous transgressions of the rules dealing with substitutions due to player absence. Many, but not all, of these transgressions have been deemed unintentional by opposing coaches and the MPA Tennis Committee.

The following guidelines have been established to help clarify appropriate options to deal with player absence(s):

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- 1. Teams that will not have a full seven-player team throughout the entire season:**

- a. The three most highly ranked players on the singles challenge ladder must play singles throughout the season. The #1 player must be better than the #2 player, and the #2 player must be better than the #3 player.
 - b. If a doubles match can be played, it must be at the #1 doubles position!
- 2. When a full complement of seven players is available but a regular player in the top seven is missing on a match day:**
- a. If the missing team member is a singles player, the coach may (1) break up one or both of the doubles teams and play the eighth ranked player on one of the doubles teams, or (2) play the eighth ranked player as the #3 singles.
 - b. If the missing team member is a doubles player, any doubles adjustment made by the coach is permissible.
 - c. In both 1. and 2. above, the #1 doubles team must be stronger than the #2 team.
- 3. When fewer than seven players are available for a specific match:**
- a. Six players available: Default #2 doubles. Allow the benched player to play an exhibition match if possible.
 - b. Five players available: Default #2 doubles.
 - c. Four players available: Default both doubles. Allow the benched player to play an exhibition match if possible.
 - d. Three players available: Default both doubles.
 - e. Fewer than three players available: Default the match.

“THE CODE”

The Players Guide to Fair Play and the Unwritten Rules of Tennis

(It is important that coaches instruct players to familiarize themselves with all aspects of the “Code”)

The CODE is 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 and coaches in goodwill follow the principles of “*The Code*”, they should be able to reach an agreement, while at the same time making tennis more fun and a better game for all.

Principles:

- **Courtesy is expected. Tennis is a game that requires cooperation and courtesy. Initially, it should be assumed that all players are doing their best to make correct line calls. Any questions during the match (regarding any issues) should be made in a polite and non-accusative manner.**
- **Shaking hands at the end of a match is an acknowledgement by the players that the match is over.**

Warm-up:

Warm up is not practice. Each player should try to hit shots directly to the opponent and aid them in receiving or performing shots pertinent to the game of tennis such as overheads and volleys. Each player should attempt serves within the TEN minute on court warm-up. Ideally, prior to the warm-up, the players should determine who will serve first.

Making Calls:

All points played in good faith stand.

If there is any doubt on line calls or any rules violations the opponent must be given the benefit of the doubt. There is no possibility for video replay in high school tennis. 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. If any part of the ball touches a line it is good. *Lets* and *replays* may not occur after a point has been completed. It is each player's responsibility to call all balls landing on, or aimed at, the player's side of the net.

All points must be treated the same regardless of their importance. There is no justification for considering calls on a match point differently from calls on a first point.

Either partner may make a line call in doubles. However, the call of a player with the best positional perspective is more likely to be accurate. Both teammates must be in agreement before making an out call. Any uncertainty or disagreement must be resolved in the favor of the opponents.

If a player requests an opponent's opinion on a call it must be accepted if given. Aid from the opponent is available only on a call that ends a point. A player may call his own shot out regardless of whether requested to do so by an opponent. The prime objective in making calls is accuracy.

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.

COACHES, TEAMMATES, PARENTS AND SPECTATORS MUST NEVER MAKE CALLS! A player should not enlist the aid of PERIPHERAL INDIVIDUALS in making calls. NO PARENT OR SPECTATOR HAS A ACTIVE ROLE IN ANY INTERSCHOLASTIC MATCH AND HE/SHE SHOULD BE ADMONISHED OR BANNED FOR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR!

Any "LET CALLS" (not involving the serve hitting the net) due to unexpected events (such as a ball from another court interfering with play) must be made before an affected player chooses to play the ball to eliminate a potential two chance option

A player shall concede the point when:

A ball in play touches that player

That player touches the net or opponent's court while the ball is in play

That player hits a ball before it crosses the net

That player deliberately carries or double hits a ball

A ball bounces more than once in that player's court.

*****The opponent is not entitled to make these calls (as outlined above) but often a polite question by the opponent could be in order.**

*****The receiving player can make the call when a ball goes thru the net or bounces into the ground before going over the net.**

SERVING:

A server may request a third ball and the receiver shall comply when the third ball is readily available. Distant balls will be retrieved at the end of a point or game.

The server must avoid foot faults. It is a foot fault when any part of the foot touches the service line, even when the player does not follow the serve to the net.

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 out of the service box.

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. Any let call must be made promptly.

A player shall not put into play or hit over the net an obvious fault. To do so constitutes rudeness and may even be considered 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.

The receiver shall play to the reasonable pace of the server. The receiver should make no effort to return a serve when the he/she is not ready for the point to begin.

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.

SCORING:

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.

Any disputes involving scoring must be resolved as soon as the problem is discovered. In cases of disagreement or uncertainty, count all points and games agreed upon by the both players/doubles teams and continue play from a score mutually accepted.

HINDRANCE ISSUES:

A player who claims a hindrance must stop play immediately.

Talking when a ball is in play might result in a hindrance call. Singles players should not talk during points. Talking between doubles partners is allowed regarding striking the ball, court position, or allowing an opponent's shot to continue on its path out of play.

Body movement is allowed at any time but any movement or any sound made solely to distract an opponent should be ruled a hindrance.

A player who is hindered by an opponent's unintentional act or by something else outside of the player's control is entitled to a let only if the player could have attempted to make the shot had the player not been hindered.

A let is not authorized for a hindrance caused by something within a player's control such as a ball not cleared by a player before moving on to the next point.

A player should avoid grunting and making other loud noises if it is deemed distracting to an opponent or players on adjacent courts. It is best to let coaches or officials deal with this issue.

STALLING:

The following actions constitute stalling:

Warming up longer than allowed by rule.

Playing at less than a player's normal pace or a pace normally expected by the rules of tennis. (taking more than 90 seconds on odd game changeovers, extending allowed coaching instructional breaks, excessive bouncing of a ball before serving and numerous other intentional tactics to disrupt timing of play.)

Coaches should be contacted to address these issues.

Requesting Coaches to come to court during play:

Stalling

Flagrant Foot Faults

Extreme Grunting

Medical Issues

Scoring Disputes

Help With Tiebreakers

A Pattern of Bad Calls

Unruly Spectators

Equipment, Court Conditions, Ball Issues

BALL ISSUES:

Each player is responsible for removing stray balls and other objects from the player's end of the court. Balls should be collected by or returned to the server promptly to allow for play to continue at a reasonable pace.

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

If balls are lost or proven defective, it might be best to replace all three if a fresh can is available.

Questioning an Opponent's Calls

1. The tennis code dictates that **any line call in which the result is unclear must be resolved in favor of one's opponent.**

2. Everyone misses a call now and then; therefore, no player should become enraged when he/she believes his/her opponent has "missed one."

3. An angry refutation of an opponent's call is just like saying "You're a cheater" for everyone to hear.

4. When **Player A** feels that an incorrect call by **Player B** has "robbed" him/her of a point fairly earned and is so upset that he/she must stretch the constraints of "the honor code" (which does not allow for questioning an opponent's call), he/she should politely ask **Player B** if he/she is quite sure the call was correct. If **Player A** continues to feel that **Player B's** calls are erroneous in **Player B's** favor, **Player A** should ask for both coaches and explain the situation to them. From that point on, the coaches are expected to resolve the situation and, if necessary, officiate the remainder of the match.

5. In relation to foot faulting:

During the service motion the server shall not:

a. Change position by walking or running although slight movements of the feet are permitted. The server should come to a still position with the feet just before the service action begins.

b. Touch the baseline or the court inside the court boundary lines until after the ball has been struck during the service.

c. Touch the imaginary extension of the court center mark or the imaginary outside edge of the singles or doubles sideline depending on the type of match being played.

All of the above are considered foot faults and could result in a service fault being called by the receiving player or a linesman/chair official.

Enforcement of the Foot-Faulting Rule

Foot faulting has long been one of the most frequent complaints at tennis events by coaches, parents, and other spectators at matches where the viewer is perfectly lined up with the service line on the court. At the high school level, it is practically impossible for the service receiver to detect that his/her opponent is foot faulting unless it is absolutely egregious, or it is brought to his/her attention by an off the court observer. Most often the person breaking the "foot fault" rule has no idea that they are in violation. In truth, the rule was put into place to prevent the server from gaining an advantage by getting to the net quicker. (The serve and volley style of tennis). Scientifically, there is no study that shows there is any advantage to being a few inches closer to the net while serving and some claim it might even be a disadvantage (excluding the serve and volley type player).

However, foot faulting is a violation in the tennis rule book and coaches should be instructing their players to avoid violating the rule. The first avenue of resolution when a PLAYER feels that his/her opponent is "gaining an advantage" by foot faulting is for the PLAYER to request that his/her opponent check his/her feet positioning before serving to avoid a service fault call. This would serve as a warning to the opponent that the receiver has a concern regarding foot faults and if the problem is not resolved the player may contact a coach or official to lodge an official complaint. It is hoped that the opponent will take the initial request in stride and move back off the service line. However, sometimes this may lead to discord and the match may become

more contentious. At that point a coach or official may need to come to the court to observe the match. From that point on, the resolution of any foot fault violations should be dealt with by both coaches or a match official. Failure to correct foot faulting violations can lead to service fault calls or even match disqualification.

The first question to be answered when dealing with “foot faulting” is to determine the extent of the violation and if the server is *really gaining an advantage*.

Realistically, the answer is that the server is never gaining an advantage unless he is “serving and volleying”.

These responsibilities and a higher order of sportsmanship are what make high school tennis matches unique and refreshing.

Consequences For Violations of USTA/MPA Established Sportsmanship Rules

Point penalties may be imposed against a player for unsportsmanlike conduct during a regular season match or during tournament play for the following violations.

- A. Unreasonable delays between points and when changing ends as well as any other unreasonable delay tactics.
- B. Visible or audible obscenity or profanity
- C. Violently, or with anger hitting, kicking or throwing a tennis ball or other equipment
- D. Verbal or physical abuse of a person associated with a match by the player or anyone associated with the player
- E. Retaliatory calls made against an opponent due to some perceived injustice during the match
- F. Improper or illegal coaching by a team coach, a parent, another player or any onlooker.
- G. Any other behavior deemed to be unsportsmanlike

1. First offense a conduct warning
2. Second offense player receives a point penalty
3. Third offense a player receives a game penalty
4. Fourth offense the player is defaulted

(A player may be defaulted at any time for egregious misconduct)

It is **expected** that **COACHES** of the opposing teams will **jointly** enforce sportsmanship violations at all matches including at MPA sponsored Tournaments.

Disruptive Spectator Behavior

In the event that a player on court feels that the behavior of spectators is disruptive to fair play, the player should:

- A. Stop play immediately and set his/her racket down on the court
- B. Call over his/her coach who will notify the opposing coach of a potential issue
- C. Explain to both coaches the issue at hand and potentially identify the spectator(s) in question.
- D. Wait for the coaches to resolve the matter

IF THE COACHES DETERMINE THAT SPECTATOR RULES HAVE BEEN VIOLATED THEY SHALL REMIND THE OFFENDER(S) OF SPECTATOR SPORTSMANSHIP EXPECTATIONS AND IF FURTHER

SPORTSMANSHIP

VIOLATIONS CONTINUE THE PERPETRATOR(S) SHOULD BE ASKED TO LEAVE THE PREMISES BEFORE THE MATCH WILL CONTINUE. IF THE OFFENDER(S) ARE TEAM MEMBERS THEY MUST REMAIN SUPERVISED AND STAND WITH THEIR COACH OR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR

Tennis Match Supervision and Spectator Involvement

Although tennis matches have traditionally been known for exemplary sportsmanship, in recent years there has been some concern regarding responsibility for proper supervision of the sport in relation to player and spectator behavior.

High School Tennis in the State of Maine relies heavily on school coaches to administer matches and players to make their own calls during all competitions. Unlike most sporting activities there are no officials involved in high school tennis. This puts extra pressure on the players to make the most accurate and honest calls possible, and to do so without any outside involvement.

A school is held responsible, at both home and away matches, for the conduct of its competitors, students, coaches and spectators. During most regular season tennis matches there are few spectators, but as State Tournaments begin spectator involvement increases exponentially.

Players and coaches are often unfamiliar with this increased involvement and this may create sportsmanship issues that have not arisen during the regular season. Spectators at these tennis matches are often not familiar with the so-called "Tennis Code" and cheer their players or teams on just like at most other sporting activities that they have attended.

Although providing added excitement, this increased level of cheering and spectator involvement often creates angst amongst coaches and players alike. All spectators, including players not currently on court, **must** remain a respectful distance from the fence and/or netting surrounding the court. Spectators, including other players, **may not** speak to players on court during play beyond comments of general encouragement.

Spectators or other players may never attempt to influence or make line calls or other rulings.

Tennis cheering etiquette requires keeping the volume at a respectful level. Players on court should also keep celebration of a winning point at a reasonable level so as to avoid disrespecting the opponent as well as disrupting play on nearby courts.

Cheering should take place only when a player makes a good shot or has an extended rally, not when an opponent makes an unforced error.

With this in mind, the MPA expects the administrative control of matches to follow the guidelines established below:

REGULAR SEASON MATCHES

The **HOME** and **AWAY COACHES** are expected to **jointly** administer all aspects of regular season tennis matches with the **Home School Athletic Administrator or his/her designee** available if any issues arise that the coaches cannot resolve (including control of spectators). The MPA Tennis Bulletin or Rule Book should serve as a guiding light to address any specific match issues that might develop.

MPA HOME TEAM TENNIS TOURNAMENT MATCHES:

Again, both Home and Away tennis coaches involved with the tournament match are expected to jointly administer all aspects of the event. Due to the heightened importance of the activity, it is **suggested** that the home school have a designated School Administrator at the match site to help supervise and resolve any issues that might arise. If not at the site, a school administrator **must** be available (**on call**) to address any problems or concerns.

MPA TEAM TENNIS REGIONAL AND STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

Again, both **head tennis coaches** involved with the tournament event are expected to **jointly** administer all aspects of the team matches. Due to the increased importance of this activity it is also **REQUIRED** that a participating team have a **Designated School Administrator** at the match site to help supervise/resolve any issues that might arise involving their team's participation and help with player/coach/parent/spectator behavior for the entirety of the event in conjunction with the MPA Tournament Representatives. *The school Administrator/Designee must make his/her presence known.*

MPA SINGLES TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIP MATCHES

At the tennis REGIONAL QUALIFYING portion of the Singles Championships the player's school identified coach or supervisor will remain at the event until his/her player(s) qualify or is/are eliminated. They are responsible for their player's needs, transportation, and player/parent/spectator behavior at the event in conjunction with the MPA Site Director.

The same holds true for all the matches at the MPA Singles Championship Site prior to the Semi-final and Final Championship Matches.

At the MPA Singles Semi-Final and Championship Matches the School's Approved Coach AND the School's Athletic Administrator/Designee are REQUIRED to attend these matches to help oversee their player's participation and help supervise player/parent/coach/ spectators behavior. in conjunction with the MPA Tournament Directors. The school Administrator/Designee must make his/her presence known to the MPA Tournament Directors and remain on site for the entirety of the event while their player remains involved.

The representatives of the MPA Tennis Committee and the MPA Tennis Tournament Committee may be requested to assist in the resolution of issues only after all other avenues have been exhausted.

Duties of the Coaches:

(Coaches are reminded that some of these duties extend into MPA-sponsored Tennis Tournaments.)

1. Coaches must establish, verify and accept team line-ups before the match may start.
2. He/she shall assign the courts. He/she must adhere closely to all information outlined in "The Five-Point Match Scoring System".
3. He/she shall supply a new can of USTA approved tennis balls for each match.
4. Determine match lengths which should be discussed by both coaches beforehand. It is recommended that a match consist of best out of three six-game sets, utilizing twelve-point tiebreakers. Common sense should prevail when very few courts are available or when weather forces indoor play. "Pro sets" are acceptable for use. However, both coaches must agree on the format to be used before the start of play. If no agreement can be reached, the best two of three tiebreak sets format will be utilized. Also, the order of individual match assignments should be established before the competition begins if less than five courts are available for simultaneous play. In both the Regional and State Team Tennis Tournament, matches will always be assigned in ascending order beginning with #2 doubles.

5. He/she shall enforce the ten-minute warm-up period prior to the start of the match. All practice serves must be part of this timed warm-up.

6. He/she must assure the sporting conduct of all players and spectators at home and away matches. He/she, as the match administrator, must ensure the integrity and the safety of all in attendance.

7. He/she shall report all match results, win or lose, to his/her athletic administrator for entry in the MPA online Heal point system.

8. After contacting and informing the opposing coach, either coach will warn players for: offensive language, inappropriate behavior, foot-faulting, inaccurate line calls, and misuse of appropriate break/rest periods. Coaches must confer and agree upon appropriate action to be taken against any player whose works or actions infringe upon the intended spirit of the match.

Note: The MPA has a strict default policy. Once a player has been officially warned by the coach(es), he/she may be defaulted at the next repetition of the objectionable offense. If a player is ejected from competition for misconduct of any type, he/she will be prohibited from playing for the remainder of that match and the next regularly scheduled MPA-sanctioned regular season or tournament competition.

9. In the MPA Singles Championship and Team Tournament, coaches may coach individual players for no more than two minutes on the court at the completion of the first set. After split sets, coaching may take place on or off the court, but play must resume with 5 minutes.

10. All breaks may be waived (but not extended) through the mutual consent of the players and/or their coaches.

11. Coaches are expected to solve match problems in a sporting fashion with the best interest of all players in mind. Hopefully, common sense will prevail. Failure to complete matches usually results in disastrous consequences and creates hard feelings between the players, coaches, and school administrators. Protests are not allowed in MPA tennis play. **In the event that the coaches cannot resolve a dispute, the host Athletic Administrator should be called on and will have the final decision.**

12. MPA representatives will assume duties 2, 3 and 4 at all regional and state championships.

TENNIS MATCH COACHING

COACHING IN MPA SPONSORED TEAM AND SINGLES TOURNAMENT EVENTS

Coaching during these events will continue to follow traditional U.S.T.A. guidelines as follows:

- 1.) In both the singles and team tournaments, coaches may coach individual players for no more than **TWO MINUTES ON THE COURT** at the completion of the first set.
- 2.) After split sets coaching off-court may take place but play must resume within **FIVE** minutes. Coaching will not extend the times allowed between sets.
- 3.) While encouraging a player is certainly within the rules, any form of coaching, whether verbal or through signals, is strictly forbidden at all other times during a match.

Coaches must understand that league approved enhanced coaching opportunities will not be allowed during M.P.A. sponsored singles and team tournaments due to facility and time constraints. When tie-break situations arise, both coaches may go to the courts and assist players who are unfamiliar with the required tie-break procedure. Actual coaching should not take place during the Tie--break!

COACHING DURING REGULAR SEASON MATCHES

Over the past years there have been several requests by **SOME** coaches and athletic administrators to allow additional coaching opportunities during a match. The MPA has been hesitant to support these requests for numerous reasons but, in truth, individual leagues can adopt rules, within conference guidelines, that might allow for enhanced coaching opportunities. **It is suggested that every athletic administrator survey his/her tennis coach(es) to determine their position on the subject before a league vote is taken to allow for enhanced coaching opportunities.**

The M.P.A. Tennis Committee is aware that College Tennis Match Regulations and Professional Tournament Rules allow for coaching almost anytime. The M.P.A. Tennis Committee finds this possibility a bit extreme. The M.P.A. Tennis Committee **SUGGESTS** extended coaching opportunities only be allowed during odd game change-overs by the **HEAD COACH** who remains outside the fencing surrounding the courts. All coaching comments should be directed toward his or her own player(s) who must be in close proximity and should be delivered in a positive, calm, relatively quiet and instructive manner. **Never should the information offered be offensive to the opponent(s). If a match is being played between teams from different conferences, BOTH coaches must agree that enhanced coaching opportunities will be allowed and, if so, to what extent.**

As conference rules or even individual matches during the regular season sometimes require the use of eight game pro sets, it is **suggested** that on court coaching for two minutes be allowed after five games have been played and again after 11 games have been played.

This adaption should be agreed upon before the start of any match utilizing 8 game pro sets.

Coaching during 8 game pro sets at the singles tennis championship qualifying rounds will not be permitted.

Team Sportsmanship Award Update: The MPA team sportsmanship award will be presented to the receiving team at the regional finals or at the receiving teams play-off run. The MPA Tennis Committee reserves the right to withhold a sportsmanship award based on behavior that takes place after voting concludes, including but not limited to behavior that takes place during tournament events

Point of No Recall

Individual Match: Once a match has started and one point has been completed, no substitution will be permitted in the case of illness or injury. The match pairing must stand and the injured/ill player must default the team point.

Team Match: Once there has been a formal exchange of lineups between the opposing coaches, these lineups must be honored, even if conditions dictate a postponement to another day. Exception: If a match has already been determined (one team has clinched three points), the substitution of a lesser skilled player is allowed in a match which has not begun.

Once an individual or team match has been completed, the final score will stand. If there is a conflict that cannot be resolved, it would behoove the coaches involved to get the correct ruling by consulting the MPA Bulletin / Rule Book or by contacting directly the appropriate governing body (i.e. MPA office) before allowing individual or match play to continue.

Weather and Other Potential Conflicts:

1. If a match winner has already been determined, there is no need to finish another day. However, due to Heal point ramifications, it is not appropriate to leave unresolved a match contested between two teams with the full complement of players.
2. If weather becomes an impacting issue, safety should be the most important consideration (See **WEATHER CONDITIONS** in the MPA Bulletin).
3. If a match has to be postponed for any reason, play must be resumed from the exact point, with the same players -- no substitutions are allowed. If a player or team is unable to reschedule a match, the match must be forfeited. There will be a ten-minute warm-up period before restarting after a delay or postponement.

Further Weather Conditions

The safety of athletes (participants), spectators, coaches/directors, school personnel, and all others present at an athletic contest must be the first and foremost concern to the contest officials and building administrators.

1. When an interscholastic contest has been scheduled and dangerous playing conditions exist or severe weather is anticipated, the following should be considered:
 - a. Prior to beginning an athletic contest, when severe weather is anticipated, the head contest official and the principals of each school, or their designees, will meet to review the suspension and/or postponement procedures.
 - b. The match administrator will be responsible for informing all present the availability of designated shelter areas.
 - c. When lightning is observed in the vicinity of a contest, play should be suspended immediately and not resumed for 30 minutes after the last visual sighting of lightning.
 - d. If any other life-threatening condition occurs, play should be suspended immediately, and

predetermined directions to safe locations will be announced.

When a suspension of a contest occurs, the following should be considered

1. If the suspension is forty-five minutes or greater, resuming at a later date should be considered.
2. If play is to be resumed, contestants will be given the opportunity for a ten-minute warm-up period prior to the resumption of play.

Tardiness

1. It is the duty of a coach to ensure that he/she and his/her team arrive on time for all matches. This duty would include a phone call to the opposing coach/school if an emergency situation arises that will cause his/her team to be tardy.
2. During all MPA tournament play, all coaches, players, and teams are expected to arrive prior to the specific report time printed in the MPA Tennis Bulletin. To do otherwise may result in the offending player(s)/team(s) disqualification. Report times will remain in effect unless changed by the tournament event chairperson for such factors as weather or poor court conditions. After a fifteen-minute grace period, the default of any player/team, whose absence is delaying the tournament, may result.
3. During all MPA-sponsored tennis tournaments, players will not leave their assigned tournament sites unless granted permission to do so by the tournament director.

Information Common to all MPA Tournaments

Coaches and spectators must stay in designated areas during match play.

Uniforms:

Because of increased attendance and media attention afforded MPA tennis tournaments, the dress of all players is being scrutinized and must be brought up to a higher standard as follows:

1. In the MPA singles tournament, players must avoid wearing clothing which might be considered ambiguous, offensive, objectionable, or in poor taste. Acceptable dress might include team uniforms or clothing specifically designed for and/or promoting tennis. Many of the better tennis facilities in the state will require tennis-appropriate, non-marking footwear.
2. In all MPA-sponsored team tournament play, it is a requirement for all team members to be dressed in matching school issued uniforms (within reason: fading, dye lots, and sizing issues) throughout the entire match. In cold weather situations discretion should be used to allow for sweatpants and sweatshirts/jackets. All tops must be free of inappropriate wording or design and must be modest and tucked into or hang below the waistband of the shorts or skirt. The lower body garments must also be of the same color and appropriate length. One-piece tennis outfits may be worn if they meet the above requirements.
3. Athletes wearing inappropriate, non-conforming or offensive clothing will not be allowed to play until the situation has been corrected to the satisfaction of the match or tournament chairperson. Coaches are responsible for guaranteeing that their players are properly clothed and equipped.

Enforcement of Uniform Standards

Coaches are expected to promote and enforce the uniform requirements at regular season

matches and report violations to the appropriate school administrator. MPA representatives will enforce these uniform requirements at all MPA-sponsored tournament events. Players not in the team uniform may be ineligible to play in MPA-sponsored tournament events.

CODE OF ETHICS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

The Code of Ethics for secondary school activities has been developed for the purpose of stating the behavioral expectations of all who are involved with (secondary) school activities programs. Adherence to the Code is expected at all MPA sponsored or sanctioned activities. Reported consistent and/or flagrant violations of the Code may result in punitive action by the MPA Interscholastic Executive Committee if charges are substantiated at a hearing convened for that purpose.

In order to promote desirable behavior and enhance the over-all quality of secondary school activities programs for which MPA has assumed responsibility, the following Code of Ethics is in effect:

It is the duty of all concerned with secondary school activities programs to...

1. Cultivate an awareness that participation in high school activities is part of the total education experience. No one should either seek or expect academic privileges for the participants.
2. Emphasize sportsmanship, ethical conduct and fair play as they relate to the lifetime impact on the participants and spectators.
3. Develop an awareness and understanding of the rules and guidelines governing competition, and comply with them in all activities.
4. Recognize the purpose of activities in school programs is to develop and promote physical, mental, moral, social, and emotional well-being of participants.
5. Avoid any practice or technique which endangers the present or future welfare of a participant.
6. Avoid practices that encourage students to specialize or that restrict them from participation in a variety of activities.
7. Refrain from making disparaging remarks to opponents, officials, coaches, or spectators.
8. Encourage the development of proper health habits and discourage the use of chemicals.
9. Exemplify self-control and accept adverse decisions without public display of emotion.
10. Encourage everyone to judge the success of the activities programs on the basis of the attitude of the participants and spectators, rather than on the basis of a win or loss.

(Adopted by the MPA Membership: April 29, 1988)

MPA TEAM TENNIS SPORTSMANSHIP VOTING

The MPA Tennis Committee is committed to promoting and recognizing outstanding sportsmanship during the regular season and throughout all tournament events. Good sportsmanship is conduct that imposes a type of self-control involving honest rivalry, courteous relations among the players, coaches, spectators, school administrators and MPA committee members, and graceful acceptance of the results of competitions. To make the sportsmanship banner selection process meaningful, the committee asks that coaches and athletes from all levels of the program be directly involved in the voting process.

Things to be considered in the voting process:

- A. Neat and proper attire by all players and coaches
- B. Players supporting one another on the on and around the courts
- C. No acts of rudeness or taunting
- D. No inappropriate gestures, language, or expressions
- E. Players and coaches exhibit appropriate and positive communication
- F. Positive spectator involvement
- G. Players and coaches uphold the "Tennis Code" of fair play
- H. Conducting matches in a friendly and organized administrative manner.

Athletic administrators will forward their tennis team's Sportsmanship Award Ballot to the MPA Office during the time frame specified in the MPA Tennis Bulletin.

Sportsmanship banners will be presented in all classes in both the North and South divisions for boys and girls teams.

Any school who has a player ejected from a match is not eligible for the award.

SCHOOLS THAT DO NOT SUBMIT A SPORTSMANSHIP BALLOT WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED FOR THE AWARD

TEAM SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD UPDATE:

The MPA Team Sportsmanship Award will be presented to the receiving team at the team Regional or State final.

The MPA Tennis Committee reserves the right to withhold a Team Sportsmanship Award based on behavior that occurs after the conclusion of voting. This includes, but is not limited to, behavior that takes place during tournament events.

MPA TENNIS AWARDS

Trophies:

**State Champion Team
State Singles Champion
State Singles Runner-Up
State Singles Semifinalist
State Doubles Champion
State Doubles Runner-Up
State Doubles Semifinalist**

Plaques:

State Runner-Up Team

Regional Champion Team
Regional Runner-Up Team

Medals:

State Championship Team Members (12)
State Runner-Up Team Members (12)
Regional Championship Team Members (12)
Regional Runner-Up Team Members (12)
State Singles Qualifiers (104, 1 per qualifier)
State Doubles Qualifiers (64, 1 per qualifier)

Banners:

Class A, B, C Girls Regional Sportsmanship (6)
Class A, B, C Boys Regional Sportsmanship (6)

MPA Representative Jurisdiction

Please contact the appropriate MPA representative assigned to your region if questions or problems arise related to team or singles tennis matches during the spring sport season or MPA tournament play.

2024 MPA TENNIS COMMITTEE

Mr. Nick Karavas, Chairperson (Dirigo High School)
Mr. Nathan Priest (Morse High School)
Mr. Evan Graves (Caribou High School)

2024 MPA TENNIS TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE

Mr. Cooper Higgins (Falmouth), Chairperson C: 650-0390
Mr. Don Atkinson (Portland), Tournament Director C: 712-3956

2024 MPA COACHES REPRESENTATIVE

Mr. Devin Lachapelle (Coach, Waterville High School) C: 649-5436