

# Playing Team Tennis Matches Safely: Player Tips, Guidelines, and Recommendations

## BEFORE YOU PLAY

- Do not play if you:
  - Are exhibiting any symptoms of the coronavirus: mild to severe respiratory illness with fever, cough and difficulty breathing, or other symptoms identified by the CDC.
  - Have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
  - Are otherwise ill.
- Become familiar with and adhere to the facility protocols and guidelines by going to the facility website (or call the facility if nothing is posted).
- Be prepared to wear a face covering when inside the facility in public areas.
- Avoid congregating and practice physical distancing inside the facility and as otherwise applicable.
- Be prepared for the facility's and/or team's required payment method.
- Know your court assignment prior to arriving at the facility so you can go directly to your assigned court after paying your match fee.
  - During the match confirmation process, the Home captain is to advise the Visiting captain of the court number for each position.
  - Captains then are to advise their players their playing position and court assignment.
- Come to the facility ready to play. Don't expect locker rooms and showers to be open for use.
- Spectators may not be able to be inside the facility to watch a match. Please check the facility website or call the facility.
- Captains exchange lineups, preferably electronically, prior to match start time.

## PREPARING TO PLAY

- Wash your hands with a disinfectant soap and water (for 20 seconds or longer), or use a hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available, before going to the court. Bring your own hand sanitizer.
- Clean and wipe down your equipment, including racquets and water bottles. If possible, use a new overgrip for each match.
- Bring sufficient water and any other fluids needed to sustain yourself entirely through a match. Avoid touching a tap or water fountain handle.
- For balls:
  - Use two new cans of tennis balls per court that have a unique ball number.
    - Odd number courts use tennis ball numbers 1 and 3

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- Even number courts use tennis ball numbers 2 and 4
- The home team uses one set of balls, the visiting team uses the other set.
- If players on a doubles team each want to use their own set of balls, they must provide the additional set of USTA approved balls that are unique to the others on the court.
- Arrive as close as possible to when you need to be there. Be aware of the facility guideline for soonest arrival time.
- Avoid touching court gates, fences, benches, etc. If do, sanitize your hands as soon as possible.

### WHEN PLAYING

- No mask or face covering is required while playing.
- Screens between courts are to be drawn closed to reduce balls going onto adjacent courts. If all players on adjacent courts agree, the screens may be drawn open.
- Maintain physical distancing as much as possible. Avoid all incidental physical contact including handshakes, high fives, hand touches, and “chest bumps”.
- Doubles partners should use hand signals to strategize and avoid talking or whispering to each other from a close distance.
- Avoid touching your face (mouth, nose, eyes) after handling a ball, racquet or other equipment. Wash or sanitize your hands promptly if you have touched your face.
- If you need to sneeze or cough, do so into a tissue or upper sleeve.
- Do not share racquets or any other equipment such as wristbands, grips, hats and towels. Do not share food or drinks.
- After the decision of serve/receive and court end to start the match, players (of the same team for doubles) are to pick a side of the court opposite their opponents to place their gear and always go around that side when changing ends. If the players on court agree that the court is a neutral environment, ends may be changed only after each set.
- If the facility has the access doors/drapes in the backstop(s) open, players may place their racquet bag(s) in such manner as to stop at least rolling balls from leaving the court. It’s recommended that a Home team bag and Visiting team bag be used so that only the associated bag is handled when going outside the court to retrieve a stray ball.
- Warm-up:
  - Doubles rallying and serve/return warm-up should be done with your own partner using practice balls or your team's match balls. This is an acceptable method found in The Code, principle 3.
  - If a cooperative warm up is done (with the opponents), balls other than the match balls should be used and hand sanitizer used before touching the new match balls.

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- Rather than warming up serves by alternating every two or three balls, the player (doubles team) that will serve first in the match shall first take serve warm up of 10-12 serves. The team that will first receive in the match shall then take serve warm up of 10-12 serves. Balls shall be returned to the server without being handled.
- Proceed with play, making sure to handle your set of numbered balls only. Should a ball with the other number settle on your side of the court, do not touch the ball with your hands. Use your racquet head or feet to advance the ball to the other side of the court.
- Set score must be announced by the serving team prior to the first point of each game. No scoring devices will be on court.
- Use your racquet/foot to pick up balls and hit them to your opponent. Avoid using your hands to pick up the balls.
- Maintain physical distancing when taking a break.
- If a ball from another court comes onto yours, send it back without handling it using a kick or your racquet.

### AFTER PLAYING

- Leave the court as soon as reasonably possible.
- Wash your hands thoroughly or use a hand sanitizer after coming off the court.
- After the match, advise your captain the names of their opponents, the match winner, and the scores, preferably electronically (by text or email message).
- Avoid congregating; leave the facility as soon as possible.
- If you are captaining and not playing and unable to be inside the facility, your players need to text or email scores to you immediately after the match. You may want to encourage that even if able to be inside the facility to reduce a need for physical proximity to others. Captains can then compare via text or email that they both got the same information.
- If you become ill, please advise your captain who is to advise the District League Coordinator, opposing captain, and facility for contact tracing. To the extent possible, personal information will be held in confidence.

The document incorporates elements from publications of the CDC, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Development, and USTA, and from captaining best practices and experience.

Author: Greg Franzo

Contact: [captainscouncil@tennisyoda.net](mailto:captainscouncil@tennisyoda.net)