



## Doubles Tennis Rules

### 33. The Doubles Game

The above Rules shall apply to the Doubles Game except as so noted in rules 34-40.

### 34. The Doubles Court

For the Doubles Game, the court shall be 36 feet (10.97m.) in width, i.e. 4 feet (1.37m.) wider on each side than the Court for the Singles Game, and those portions of the singles side-lines which lie between the two service-lines shall be called the service side-lines. In other respects, the Court shall be similar to that described in Rule 1, but the portions of the singles side-lines between the base-line and service-line on each side of the net may be omitted if desired.

**USTA Comment:**

The Server has the right in doubles to stand anywhere in back of the baseline between the imaginary extension of the inside edge of the center mark and the imaginary extension of the outside edge of the doubles sideline.

### 35. Order of Service in Doubles

The order of serving shall be decided at the beginning of each set as follows:–

The pair who have to serve in the first game of each set shall decide which partner shall do so and the opposing pair shall decide similarly for the second game. The partner of the player who served in the first game shall serve in the third; the partner of the player who served in the second game shall serve in the fourth, and so on in the same order in all the subsequent games of a set.

Case 1. In doubles, one player does not appear in time to play, and his partner claims to be allowed to play single-handed against the opposing players. May he do so?  
Decision. No.

### 36. Order of Receiving in Doubles

The order of receiving the service shall be decided at the beginning of each set as follows:

The pair who have to receive the service in the first game shall decide which partner shall receive the first service, and that partner shall continue to receive the first service in every odd game throughout that set.

The opposing pair shall likewise decide which partner shall receive the first service in the second game and that partner shall continue to receive the first service in every even game throughout that set. Partners shall receive the service alternately throughout each game.

Case 1. Is it allowable in doubles for the Server's partner or the Receiver's partner to stand in a position that obstructs the view of the Receiver?

Decision. Yes. The Server's partner or the Receiver's partner may take any position on his side of the net in or out of the Court that he wishes.

### **37. Service out of Turn in Doubles**

If a partner serves out of his turn, the partner who ought to have served shall serve as soon as the mistake is discovered, but all points scored, and any faults served before such discovery, shall be reckoned. If a game shall have been completed before such discovery, the order of service remains as altered.

**USTA Comment:**

For an exception to Rule 37, see Case 3 under Rule 27.

### **38. Error in Order of Receiving in Doubles**

If during a game the order of receiving the service is changed by the Receivers it shall remain as altered until the end of the game in which the mistake is discovered, but the partners shall resume their original order of receiving in the next game of that set in which they are Receivers of the service.

### **39. Service Fault in Doubles**

The service is a fault as provided for by Rule 10, or if the ball touches the Server's partner or anything which he wears or carries; but if the ball served touches the partner of the Receiver, or anything which he wears or carries, not being a let under Rule 14(a) before it hits the ground, the Server wins the point.

### **40. Playing the Ball in Doubles**

The ball shall be struck alternately by one or other player of the opposing pairs, and if a player touches the ball in play with his racket in contravention of this Rule, his opponents win the point.

**ITF Note 1:**

Except where otherwise stated, every reference in these Rules to the masculine includes the feminine gender.

**ITF Note 2:**

See Rule 26(b) with regard to the Optional Alternative Scoring System in Doubles and Mixed.

**USTA Comment:**

The partners themselves do not have to "alternate" in making returns. In the course of making one return, only one member of a doubles team may hit the ball. If both of them hit the ball, either simultaneously or consecutively, it is an illegal return. Mere clashing of rackets does not make a return illegal unless it is clear that more than one racket touched the ball.