

FAIR PLAY – Note from SARAH TRICKS, Herts Tennis Executive Committee

HERTS VALUES: Honesty-Excellence-Resilience-Teamwork-Sportsmanship

From time to time I get asked questions about the rules of tennis on the basis that I should know the answer because I am a tennis referee and umpire. Certain points arise again and again.

Our competition is reliant on the honesty and goodwill of all who play. All LTA league competition is subject to the ITF Rules of Tennis <https://www.itftennis.com/officiating/rulebooks/rules-of-tennis.aspx> and so far as applicable also the LTA Competition Regulations <https://www.lta.org.uk/globalassets/officiate--volunteer/documents/regulations/lta-competition-regulations-september-2016.pdf>

No one may pick and choose which apply to them and, within the spirit of the game, everyone playing a match should PLAYFAIR.

Of particular note are the regulations relating to matches played without a chair umpire 5.55-5.56. I am attaching a copy of this section which is always displayed by every referee at any event they run. This notice applies to all Herts league matches.

For matches played without a chair umpire, as is the case with our league, we need to rely on everyone PLAYINGFAIR and in accordance with Herts Values. So, where do problems arise?

1. Is the ball in or out? The ball is IN if it comes into contact with any part of the line and, if in doubt, the player calling the ball should call it in. If the player is unsure, the ball is in. At no point should a let be played. If you know you have made a mistake, admit it and give the other team the point. Many of you will remember the saying 'Do as you would be done by'.
2. On the subject of calling the ball out, it is not out until it has hit the ground wherever it might be going to land. Don't catch it, even if you are stood well outside the line. An early call when the ball lands close is never going to convince your opponents.
3. Foot faults – your foot must not touch the baseline or an extension of the centre service line whilst you are in the serving motion ie, from the start of the ball toss to the point of impact. Yes this rule does apply – it is probably the one most widely abused but it shouldn't be.
4. Lets and not up – A service let may be called either by the server or the receiver. A not up can only be called by the player attempting to return the ball. This is widely unknown, but the general rule is that in non-umpired matches a player or team are responsible for matters on their side of the net.

In an ideal world everyone would take note and there would be no issues. What can you do as a player if you believe the server is foot faulting or a player has not got a ball up? Basically nothing can be done other than to calmly and quietly raise the matter with the other team at the end of the point. Bearing in mind all that I have said above I would hope that the other team would respond politely and take on board the concerns. If, however, they do not you just have to get on with the match but please do get in touch with your league organisers. [Please remember that if there is a dispute in the match it is the responsibility of the captains to take over the dispute to ensure a satisfactory and fair conclusion without rancour.]

The success of our competition also depends on clubs recognising their home responsibility of showing hospitality towards their visitors. This is exactly how it sounds; the home team are the hosts welcoming the opposition into their 'home'. The Team Tennis rules have an excellent section on the welcome that should be provided. This can be found at

<https://www.lta.org.uk/globalassets/competitions/team-competition/team-tennis/documents/2019/2019-teamtennis-captainsguide.pdf>

The minimum requirements are:- Options for cold or hot drinks during and after the match should be available for away teams. A post match meal (hot or cold) should be supplied.

Wishing you all successful and enjoyable tennis.