

LAWS AND REGULATIONS - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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The ETTA National Umpires & Referees Committee is responsible for dealing with questions of rule interpretation that are received at the ETTA Office. Many of these are on the same topics and the following questions are some of those most frequently asked, with their "official" answers.

Q Can I change my racket during a game in a League match?

A The restriction on changing a racket during a match applies only to competitions held under the ITTF Regulations for International Competitions, such as open tournaments and, in England, British League and County Championships matches. It does not apply to local Leagues unless the League has made a specific decision to adopt this regulation and has published it in the League's rules. If these rules do not say that it is forbidden, a racket can be changed during or between the games of a match, but the umpire and the opponent must be allowed to inspect the new racket before it is used.

Q In a League match must I use one of the ITTF-authorized racket coverings?

A No, unless the League has specifically adopted such a regulation. Otherwise, the only requirement is that the covering conforms with the Laws in respect of material, thickness, colour, etc.

Q In a League match can I claim a time-out?

A No, unless the League has specifically adopted such a regulation. Time-outs are not included in the Laws.

Q If my opponent serves when I am not ready, must the umpire call a let?

A Not necessarily. The umpire has to judge whether you are really unready or, say, just unwilling to try to return a difficult service. In any case, if you attempt to return the ball you cannot claim to be unready, whether or not you are successful.

Q When the expedite system is in operation, if my opponent serves last in a game, must I serve first in the next game?

A No, the first server in any game after the first is always the player or pair who received first in the previous game, whether or not expedite is in operation.

Q In doubles, if X serves to A at the start of the first game, must A serve first in the second game?

A No. In each game of a doubles match, the pair serving first can choose which of them will do so, but the order of play is determined by the choice made by the receiving pair in the first game. Thus if X serves to A at the start of the first game, at the start of the second game either A serves first to X or B serves first to Y. In the third game, either X serves first to A or Y serves first to B, and so on.

Q Is a racket with rubber on only one side of the blade legal?

A Yes, but the uncovered side must be either red or black, depending on the colour of the covered side, and it must not be used to strike the ball. If the ball is struck with the uncovered side the opposing player scores a point.

Q If I win the toss and ask my opponent to serve first, can I then choose an end?

A No. The winner of the toss can choose either (a) to serve first or to receive first or (b) to start the match at a particular end. When one of these choices has been made the loser of the toss makes the other.

Q If in a doubles match I am unable to reach the ball to return it because my partner is in the way, can I claim a let?

A No. A doubles pair is treated as a unit and the fact that one player gets in the way of the other is not considered to be "a disturbance outside their control".

Q Am I entitled to a warning, without losing a point, for the first illegal service in a match?

A No. An illegal service always results in a point for the receiver. A warning is allowed only on the first occasion where the umpire suspects, but is not certain, that the service was illegal.

Q Is the net support that rests on the table part of the net assembly or part of the playing surface?

A It is part of the net assembly.