

# USTA Cape Cod League EZ Rules (2025)

March 7, 2025

**Court fees** are set by the clubs for members and non-members.

**Lineups** are exchanged by the captains prior to match start time.

**Stacking** (not playing “in order of strength”) is discouraged. Most captains prefer playing their lines “straight,” so all lines have a competitive match.

**Lateness:** Ready means dressed, racquet in hand and fees paid.

**Outdoors:** At the courts when the lineups are “called.”

**At Willy's:** On the tennis courts when the lineups are “called.”

**At MCAC and FSC:** At the front desk when lineups are “called.”

## **Penalties for lateness:**

Up to five minutes: loss of toss and one game

Over five minutes and up to ten minutes: loss of toss and two games

Over ten minutes and up to fifteen minutes: loss of toss and three games

Fifteen minutes: court default

For **untimed matches**, with captains’ agreement, penalties can be waived or modified.

**Official clock for timed matches:** Before the match starts, players on each court shall establish their “clock,” e.g., the club clock, or a digital watch or phone.

**Ten-minute warm-up:** cooperative hitting (not practicing) including serves. You can hit with your partner.

**Changing sides:** after odd games (the 1st, 3rd, 5th game, etc.) is not required if all players agree up front; teams traditionally only change sides after sets. Only after odd games (starting after the third game) is there a 90-second rest time when you should take liquid. There is a 120-second rest time between sets.

**Play best of three sets:** if sets are split, play a third-set tie break in lieu of a full set.  
**(NEVER play a full third set.)**

## **Play out deuces.**

**Play is continuous:** 20 seconds allowed for first serve; second serve is immediate. Receiver plays to the pace of the server. Receiver should not return a serve that is obviously out. Call the score at each point (loud enough to be heard by your opponents).

**For 90-minute timed matches:** at 85 minutes, finish any game (or tie-break, technically a game) in progress.

- If games are tied 6-6, play a **set tiebreak -- first to five** (in serve rotation), first person serves from the DEUCE side then the AD side; other side does same. If the tiebreak score gets to 4-4: the last person serves a third time. Last point in “first to five” tiebreak – For mixed doubles, the server serves to the same gender person on the opposing team. For single sex doubles, the receiving team chooses which player receives. For singles, the receiving team decides what side to receive on. Winner of the tiebreak wins the set 7-6.
- If a team is ahead by one game when time is up, they win the set.  
If the games are tied, play a **first to five** set tiebreak (first server in the tiebreak is the next server in rotation). Add 1 game to the tiebreak winner’s score.
- **If sets are split, play a tiebreak in lieu of a 3rd set:** this is effectively a new set, so teams may change their serving and receiving order. The tiebreak counts as one game played, so the third set score is recorded as 1-0.  
**if at 85 minutes, regulation time is expected to be expired - play a first to five tiebreak.**  
**if regulation time has not expired (fewer than 85 minutes) - play a 10-point match tiebreak: first to ten by two.** Serve the first point from the DEUCE side, then the other team serves from the AD then the DEUCE side. If playing outdoors, use Coman tiebreak switching - change sides after the first point and then every four points, (1, 5, 9, 13, 17, 21, 25, etc.). If playing indoors, Coman switching is optional.

Note: A tiebreak played after the score is 6-6 is a game and does end a set. The team who served first in the tiebreak receives service in the next game.

**Call a "let"** if a ball rolls on the court. Anyone on the court can call a let.

**Call lines** on your side of the court only (either partner can call the side lines). A ball that is 99% OUT is 100% IN. If in doubt, give the point to the opponent. If partners disagree, the point goes to the opponent.

**A ball is not dead until it hits a permanent fixture or lands out.** If a ball in play hits you, you lose the point; if you catch the ball (even if behind the baseline), you lose the point. However, if you catch a ball that has hit the ceiling or a ball hits you after it bounces out, the ball is dead, and you do not lose the point.

**If you (or your racquet) touch the net**, you lose the point. Your racquet can break the plane, but you must hit the ball on your side of the net.

**If there are any disagreements**, settle on the court. Captains are NOT allowed to provide advice as such can be perceived as coaching.

**Ball and Racket Abuse** – “Friend at Court” rules apply. This includes behaviors such as racket throwing and smashing of balls not “in the course of play.” If these cases, if a player gets hurt, a lawsuit is possible. If abuse occurs, the captain should talk to the offending player ASAP after the match for a minor first-time occurrence. If the situation is more troubling, email the USTA Local League Coordinator for the Cape Cod and the Islands at [capecod-league@newengland.usta.com](mailto:capecod-league@newengland.usta.com). This behavior could result in a grievance and if repeated, the player could be sanctioned.

**A POINT PLAYED IN GOOD FAITH STANDS.** Shake hands at the end; this represents that the match was played in good faith and the match is binding.

**Match Winner:** Is determined by # courts won; if tied, then fewest sets lost; if tied, then fewest games lost; if tied, then the team that won the first doubles line wins.

**Local League Winner:** Is determined by # matches won; if tied, then # courts won; if tied, then fewest sets lost; if tied, then fewest games lost; if tied, then head-to-head.

## MATCH ENDING RULES

### General Comments

Match ending rules are not specific to a club, but to a particular match, i.e., while most matches at MCAC are 90-minutes, there are times (e.g., weekend afternoons) when with club agreement, a longer timed match, or an untimed match can be agreed upon for each individual court.

The default match time for Cape USTA matches is 90-minutes timed. To vary from this, the club must allow extra time and all four players on the court must agree to a longer time.

For outdoor play, matches can be timed at 90 or 120 minutes to comport with the time allowed by the club. Alternatively, a different ending time, e.g., 115 minutes (must be >90 minutes) can be set to deal with impending weather or darkness.

Captains can “direct” the players about match ending rules before they go on the court, but if ONE person on a court wants to “play by USTA rules” on their court, then a 90-minute timed match is played on that court.

## **Cape Cod USTA League Match Ending Regulations for MATCHES WITH NO EXTRA TIME (a 90-minute timed match or a 120-minute timed match).**

### **Match Ending Procedure:**

Finish any game or tiebreak in progress.

Matches which require all players to be off the court when the allotted match time is complete use the following protocol when there are 5 minutes remaining:

<b>Score at time limit for "A" vs. "B"</b>	<b>Result</b>
5-4	"A" wins the match.
6-4, 1-2	"B" wins 2 <sup>nd</sup> set. Play a 5-Point No-Ad Tiebreak to decide the match.
6-1, 4-4	Play a 5-Point No-Ad Tiebreak to decide the 2 <sup>nd</sup> set. If "A" wins 2 <sup>nd</sup> set, then "A" wins match; if "B" wins 2 <sup>nd</sup> set, play a second 5-Point No-Ad Tiebreak to decide the match.
6-4, 3-2	"A" wins the match.
7-6, 1-6	To decide the match: under 85-minutes play a 10-Point Tiebreak; over 85-minutes play a 5-Point No-Ad Tiebreak.
6-3, 6-7, (third set tie-break in progress)	Teams will finish the match tiebreak to decide the match. (Note: if the tiebreak started before the 85-minute point, a Ten-Point will continue; if started after 85-minutes, a 5-Point No-Ad tiebreak will continue.)

For a 5-Point No-Ad Tiebreak: if at 4-4: for doubles, receiving team chooses which player will receive the deciding point; for singles, receiving player chooses which side to receive the deciding point; for mixed, the receiver will always be the same gender as the server.

## **Cape Cod USTA League Match Ending Regulations for MATCHES WITH NO TIME DEADLINE.**

For matches without an ending time (an untimed match), use the following protocol:

- At 6-6 in a set, play a 7-Point Set Tiebreak (first to 7 by 2 points).
- If split sets: a 10-Point Match Tiebreak (first to 10 by 2 points) in lieu of a 3<sup>rd</sup> set is played.