

## Proposed Amendments to USTA Regulations

Note: Words underlined are proposed to be added. Deleted text is shown in strikethrough. References are to the *2010 Friend at Court*, unless otherwise noted.

### **R1. Proposed by Tennis Rules and Regulations Committee Eric Perkins, Chairman**

#### Part I.

Amend **Section 12** of *The Code* (p. 47) as follows:

#### MAKING CALLS

12. *Out calls corrected.* ~~If a player mistakenly calls a ball “out” and then realizes it was good, the point shall be replayed if the player returned the ball within the proper court. Nonetheless, if the player’s return of the ball results in a “weak sitter,” the player should give the opponent the point. If the player failed to make the return, the opponent wins the point. If the mistake was made on the second serve, the Server is entitled to two serves.~~ A player shall reverse the player’s “out” call if the player realizes that the player made a mistake or is uncertain of the call. The point goes to the opponent. It is never played over.

#### Part II.

Amend **Section 16** of *The Code*, by deleting it in its entirety and renumbering the remaining subsections (p. 47) as follows:

#### MAKING CALLS

~~16. *Opponent’s calls questioned.* When a player genuinely doubts an opponent’s call, the player may ask: “Are you sure of your call?” If the opponent reaffirms that the ball was out, the call shall be accepted. If the opponent acknowledges uncertainty, the opponent loses the point. There shall be no further delay or discussion.~~

**Part I - Rationale:** This proposed amendment provides a simpler method of dealing with the situation where a player changes an “out” call to “good.” As such, the Tennis Rules and Regulations Committee believes the proposed amendment will be easier to understand and apply, and it will also be viewed as more objective and fair by players. *The Code* covers matches played without officials. An important principal of *The Code* set forth in Section 6 requires that a player always give an opponent the benefit of the doubt on close calls:

A player being scrupulously honest frequently will find himself keeping a ball in play that might have been out . . . . Even so, the game is better played this way.

The proposed amendment is far more consistent with this principle than is the current language of Section 12, which provides a multi-factor test as to whether a changed call results in a let being played or loss of point depending upon several circumstances, including a subjective determination of whether the player making the call had returned a “weak sitter.”

The rationale for the current Section 12 allowing the replay of a point when a player returns the ball and then corrects an erroneous “out” call was to encourage reversal of incorrect calls. The Committee Call items distributed with Notice - July 28, 2010

believes that those players who are honest will continue to reverse their erroneous calls. The Committee also believes that the behavior of players who do not give their opponents the benefit of the doubt, and instead call out all close balls, will be unaffected by the amendment.

The current language in Section 12 confuses some players because the outcome is different in those situations in which a player self-corrects his or her incorrect call than it is when an official corrects the call. The proposed amendment effectively treats both situations the same—loss of point.

The approach of this proposed amendment to Section 12 was adopted several years ago by the ITA and has been widely accepted by players, coaches, and officials.

**Part II – Rationale:** The language specifically allowing a player to question an opponent’s call was not in the original *Code* and was only added as Section 16 in 1999 for the purpose of clarifying that a player may civilly ask an opponent about a call that the player genuinely believes to be incorrect. Based upon anecdotal evidence being reported to the Committee, it seems that Section 16 is more often being invoked by experienced players attempting to intimidate less experienced opponents into changing their calls; thus, it appears Section 16 is actually having the opposite of its intended effect. The Committee believes this unsportsmanlike practice will diminish if the proposed revision is approved.

**Effective Date:** January 1, 2011