

# Protective Mechanisms: Friend at Court & The Code

## Standards of Conduct

1. General. Players, persons who appear to be associated with a player (including, but not limited to, parents and coaches), officials, and organizers of any tournament are under a duty to encourage and maintain high standards of proper conduct, fair play, and good sportsmanship. They are under an obligation to avoid acts that may be considered detrimental to the game of tennis. Detrimental acts include, but are not limited to, the acts in USTA Regulation IV.C.

## The Code

### THE PLAYERS' GUIDE TO FAIR PLAY AND THE UNWRITTEN RULES OF TENNIS

The Code is not part of the ITF Rules of Tennis. Players must follow The Code, except to the extent to which an official assumes some of their responsibilities. This edition of The Code is an adaptation of the original.

#### SPORTSMANSHIP POLICY

Sportsmanship is the foundation of tennis. It is essential to tennis as a welcoming, open, and inclusive sport. Sports integrity follows core values and attributes that enrich the lives of all who participate. Attributes include, but are not limited to:

- Understanding and following the rules
- Being fair
- Acting with character
- Respecting others
- Winning with humility and losing with grace
- Maintaining composure
- Being accountable for one's own actions
- Giving others the benefit of the doubt

Tennis is more fun when players are good sports, and when they play with the players and the sport reinforce the ideals of good sportsmanship. People who stay involved with the sport their entire lives. Being a good sport is its own reward—both on and off the tennis court. Sportsmanship builds trust, generates mutual respect, and promotes enjoyment among all people. As we grow and develop the game, we do so with a commitment to sports integrity.

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## USTA JUNIOR PLAYER OATH

I recognize that tennis is a sport that places the *responsibility* for *fair play* on me.

I promise to abide by the rules of the game, which require me to *give the benefit of the doubt* to my opponent.

At all times I shall strive to compete with the true *spirit of sportsmanship*, recognizing that my behavior on the court is a direct reflection of my *character*.

Whether my matches end with my *victory or defeat*, I promise to conduct myself in a way that *honors my opponents*, those who support me, and the game of tennis.

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# Code of Conduct:

## Messaging:

- **Regular Reminders:** Regularly remind and reinforce these rules. This can be done at the beginning of each season, before games, and during practice sessions.
- **Focus on Learning and Fun:** It's important to remember that the main goal of playing tennis is to compete and have fun rather than just winning.
- **Focusing on the process** rather than the outcome can help reduce pressure that might lead to negative language or behavior.

## Respectful Communication:

Players should communicate respectfully with everyone involved. This means using polite language, avoiding yelling or aggressive tones, and actively listening.

## No Offensive Language:

No derogatory language or slurs are allowed during games, practices, or off-court interactions.

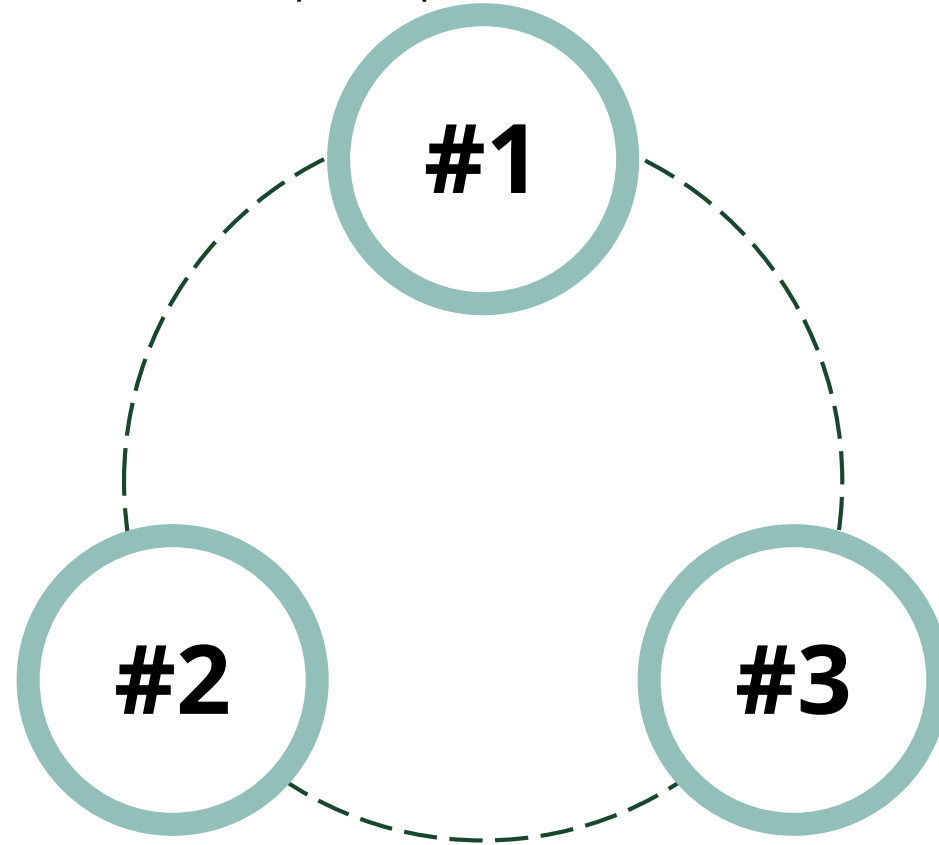
**Positive Encouragement:** We encourage a culture of positive reinforcement, fostering team spirit and reducing negative interactions amongst

**Lead by Example:** Our coaches, parents, and adults involved should model the behavior they expect from their kids. Children often mimic the behavior of adults, so all staff must demonstrate respectful language and conduct.

**Accountability:** Make it clear that there are consequences for breaking the rules. This could vary depending on the severity of the infraction following the guidelines of Friend at Court.

# GOLDEN RULES OF INCLUSIVE CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Remain objective, no matter what prior knowledge of participants/teams



Remember that 90% of conflict occurs not because of what was said, but the tone in which it was said!

Transparency, we have the tools to Communicate- Serve Tennis – via email and text message

**When communicating with a parent causing conflict at a youth sporting event, it's important to use non-confrontational approaches to address the issues. Here are some strategies:**

**Acknowledge Their Frustration-** If a parent is confrontational, acknowledge their frustration and suggest discussing the issue at a more appropriate time to ensure a focused and respectful conversation[5].

**Open Lines of Communication Early** Encourage open lines of communication early in the season to prevent misunderstandings and address concerns promptly[2].

**Hold a Family Meeting at the Start of the Season.** This can help set the tone for positive parental involvement and provide an opportunity to discuss expectations and potential issues[3].

**Avoid Gossip and Misunderstandings:** Refrain from discussing difficult parents with other families or staff, which can create harmful gossip and deepen tensions[3].

By approaching the situation with understanding and focusing on maintaining a positive environment for all involved, conflicts can be addressed effectively and contribute to a better sporting experience.

[1] <https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2333&context=thesesdissertations>

[2] <https://truesport.org/respect-accountability/6-ways-parents-resolve-coach-athlete-conflict/>

[3] <https://www.jerseywatch.com/blog/dealing-with-parents-in-youth-sports>

[4] <https://www.familyeducation.com/kids/development/social/keep-calm-parent-dealing-conflict-sporting-events>

[5] <https://truesport.org/respect-accountability/dealing-disrespectful-parents-fans-stands/>

# **We are USTA North Carolina**

- Our Mission: To Promote & Develop the Game of Tennis in North Carolina**
- We believe in Diversity and Inclusion: A Love of Tennis Unites US.**
- Tennis is a sport built on respect, and courtesy is expected.**