

RULES OF TENNIS 2025 AMENDMENTS

At the ITF Annual General Meeting of 2024, the ITF Council resolved to amend the Rules of Tennis, with effect from January 2025, as follows:

Rule 30 – Coaching

The principles of the coaching rule have been amended to permit in-play off-court coaching.

- Off-court coaching is permitted in events played under the Rules of Tennis, but only with the permission of the sanctioning body* concerned.
- Permission for on-court coaching to take place in team events remains unchanged.
- Where coaching is permitted, it cannot take place during the playing of a point.

Appendix IV – Coaching

This is a new Appendix and describes when and how coaching can take place. That is:

- Coaching can take place at change of ends, set breaks and any other time permitted by the sanctioning body, except during the playing of a point.
- Communication may be verbal, but only when the player and coach are at the same end of the court, or by hand signals at any time when coaching is permitted.
- Off-court coaching must be both brief and discreet.

**A sanctioning body is the body that organises, authorises or sanctions a tennis event. Note that, if the ITF sanctions an event, the ITF will be the sanctioning body of that event for the purpose of compliance with this amendment to the Rules, even if another body also sanctions it. For national-level events, the sanctioning body will typically be the National Association. Members or sections of National Associations are encouraged to discuss any potential changes with their National Association in advance.*

Appendix VI – Alternative procedures and scoring methods

When the score in a match reaches one set all (or two sets all in a best-of-five set match) and six games all in the final set, a ten-point tie-break can be used to decide the match. As for normal tie-breaks, a two-point margin is required.

Note: This amendment to the Rules is mentioned for completeness. National Associations should only implement this change (which was primarily made to ensure a consistent approach across the Grand Slams) if they have a compelling reason to do so.



Off-court coaching implementation

Each sanctioning body should make a decision on each of the matters listed in Appendix A under the heading 'Sanctioning Body Regulations' and include each of those positions in its regulations.

The first decision is whether to permit off-court coaching. If that decision is to not permit off-court coaching, then this should be stated in the event regulations and no more needs to be done. If off-court coaching is permitted, then this should be stated in the event regulations and the requirements of Rule 30 and Appendix IV must be followed. The sanctioning body must also take a position on each of the matters listed at (b) to (i).

Once those decisions have been made and the event regulations have been published, you should make participants in your events aware of those decisions, to avoid any confusion.

At Appendix B is a list of frequently-asked questions and answers, and a table has been included at Appendix C to assist in the implementation of the amendment to the Rules regarding off-court coaching.



APPENDIX A

SANCTIONING BODY REGULATIONS

The following matters are reserved for determination by the sanctioning body concerned:

- a. Whether Coaching is permitted or not in events under its jurisdiction.
- b. Whether a Chair Umpire must be in place for Coaching to be permitted.
- c. Whether both players must have a coach for Coaching to be permitted.
- d. Who/what is eligible to provide Coaching (e.g. do coaches need to be qualified and/or accredited; can players use ITF approved Players Analysis Technology).
- e. How many people are eligible to coach a player/team.
- f. Where the coach(es) must be located when Coaching.
- g. Who polices the Coaching rules and regulations (e.g. Chair Umpire, off-court official).
- h. Whether Coaching is permitted (and for which player(s) and from which location(s)) during breaks in play that are not covered by the Rules of Tennis, for example:
 - i. medical time-outs
 - ii. toilet breaks
 - iii. change of attire breaks
 - iv. when play is suspended for weather- or light-related reasons
 - v. other interruptions in play arising from (e.g.) wheelchair repair; spectator medical condition; power outage
- i. Penalties for Coaching in a manner and/or at a time that is not permitted.

APPENDIX B OFF-COURT COACHING Q&A

<p>Question: Who decides whether coaching is permitted in a competition?</p> <p>Answer: The sanctioning body of the competition. A sanctioning body is the body that organises, authorises or sanctions a tennis event. If the ITF sanctions an event, it will be the sanctioning body of that event for the purpose of compliance with this amendment, even if a national-level body also sanctions it. For national-level events, the sanctioning body will typically be the National Association. Members or sections of National Associations are encouraged to discuss any potential changes with their National Association in advance.</p>
<p>Question: Can team events have off-court coaching?</p> <p>Answer: Yes. Team events can have off-court and/or on-court coaching, as determined by the sanctioning body.</p>
<p>Question: Can a coach move to the other end of the court when the players change ends, so that they can continue to give verbal advice?</p> <p>Decision: No.</p>
<p>Question: Can a coach engage in long conversation with their player when off-court coaching is permitted?</p> <p>Decision: No. Off-court coaching must be brief, except during breaks in play.</p>
<p>Question: Can a coach always coach verbally?</p> <p>Decision: No. Verbal coaching is only permitted when the player and coach are at the same end of the court.</p>
<p>Question: Can a player receive coaching during any other stoppage in play?</p> <p>Decision: It is up to the sanctioning body whether the player can receive coaching at this time.</p>
<p>Question: Why are so many decisions on implementation left to the sanctioning body?</p> <p>Answer: The Rules of Tennis deal with broad matters as to how tennis is played. Sanctioning bodies have responsibility for the implementation of more detailed matters, which are set out in their competition regulations. The division of responsibilities for the implementation of off-court coaching is the same. That is, the Rules of Tennis sets out the principle that off-court coaching is permitted, if deemed appropriate by the sanctioning body, and when and how it is permitted. The more detailed implementation is left to the sanctioning body.</p>
<p>Question: Will sanctioning bodies implement off-court coaching differently?</p> <p>Answer: Maybe. Sanctioning bodies may implement the elements of coaching that are within the scope of their decision-making responsibility as they see fit. However, the principles set out in Rule 30 and Appendix IV must be followed in all cases.</p>
<p>Question: Will tennis be less fair for those players who do not have access to a coach, if off-court coaching is permitted?</p> <p>Answer: Not necessarily. Players without a coach may access coaching (when coaching is permitted) from approved Player Analysis Technology (if permitted by the sanctioning body). Sanctioning bodies may also prohibit coaching where both players/teams don't have a coach.</p>
<p>Question: Will tennis be fairer if off-court coaching is permitted?</p> <p>Answer: In some ways. Feedback from stakeholders suggested that covert coaching took place, even though it was prohibited. By permitting coaching, those coaches who complied with the prohibition on coaching are now on a level playing field with those who did not.</p>
<p>Question: When will the rule change come into effect?</p> <p>Answer: 1 January 2025.</p>

APPENDIX C
TABLE FOR SANCTIONING BODIES TO COMPLETE TO IMPLEMENT THE OFF-COURT COACHING AMENDMENT

Regulation	Yes	No
Is Off-court Coaching permitted?		
Is a Chair Umpire required for Off-court Coaching?		
Must both players/teams have a coach for Off-court Coaching?		

Regulation	Requirement
Who/what is eligible to provide Off-court Coaching (e.g. do coaches need to be qualified and/or accredited; can players use ITF approved Player Analysis Technology)?	
How many people are allowed to coach a player/team during a match?	
Where must the coach(es) be located when Off-court Coaching (e.g. in a designated area)?	
Who policies the Coaching rules and regulations (e.g. Chair Umpire, off-court official)?	
What are the penalties for Coaching in a manner and/or time that is not permitted?	

Regulation	Yes	No	Conditions if 'yes'
Is Coaching permitted under the following scenarios:			<i>For example, only the player/team not receiving a MTO can receive coaching.</i>
- During Medical Time-Outs (MTOs)?			
- During toilet breaks?			
- During change of attire breaks?			
- When play is suspended for weather- or light-related reasons?			
- When there are other interruptions in play (e.g. wheelchair repair, spectator illness, power outage)?			

RULES OF BEACH TENNIS

2025 AMENDMENTS

The ITF Board of Directors has approved the following amendment to the Rules of Beach Tennis:

Rule 30 – Coaching

The principles of the coaching rule have been amended to include in-play off-court coaching.

- Off-court coaching is permitted in events played under the Rules of Beach Tennis, but only with the permission of the sanctioning body concerned.
- The permission for on-court coaching to take place in team events remains unchanged.
- Where coaching is permitted, it cannot take place during the playing of a point.

Appendix XII – Coaching

This is a new Appendix and includes when coaching can take place and how it must be done. That is:

- Coaching can take place at change of ends, set breaks and any other time permitted by the sanctioning body, except during the playing of a point.
- Communication may be verbal, but only when the player and coach are at the same end of the court, or by hand signals at any time when coaching is permitted.
- Off-court coaching must be both brief and discreet.