TENNIS BASELINES KIDS

Love & Deuce

Let's play tennis!



A first rulebook for children
and everyone new to the game

MEET YOUR TENNIS FRIENDS

Two friends. One new game.



LOVE

A brave fox girl.
Love means zero.

DEUCE

A curious rabbit boy.
40-all? That is deuce!

Read together, try the activities and ask a grown-up or coach when a rule feels puzzling.

Find it fast: the court (4), serving (5), scoring (8), deuce (9), your mini-game (14).

BEFORE THE FIRST BALL

Ready, steady... tennis!



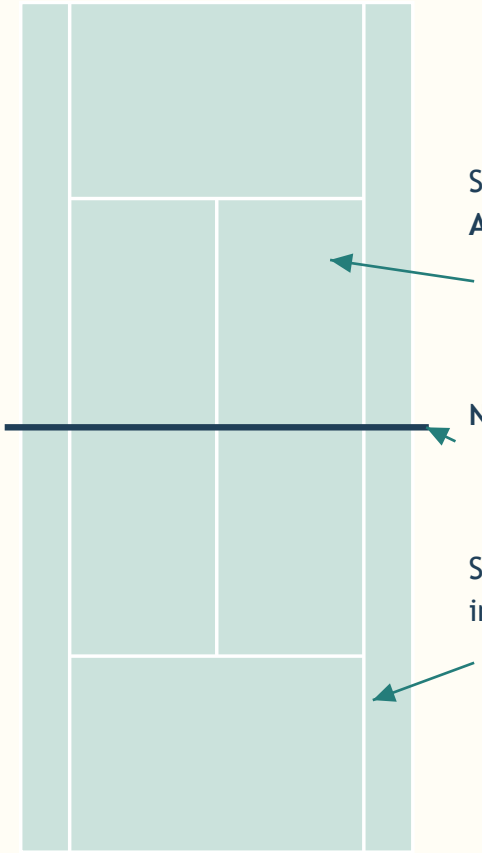
- Wear court-friendly shoes and tie your laces.
- Bring water and a racket you can manage.
- Keep a safe space around every racket swing.

START SMALL

A coach may choose a smaller court and a slower red, orange or green ball. Use the setup for your group, not a grown-up match by default.

EXPLORE THE COURT

Every line has a job.

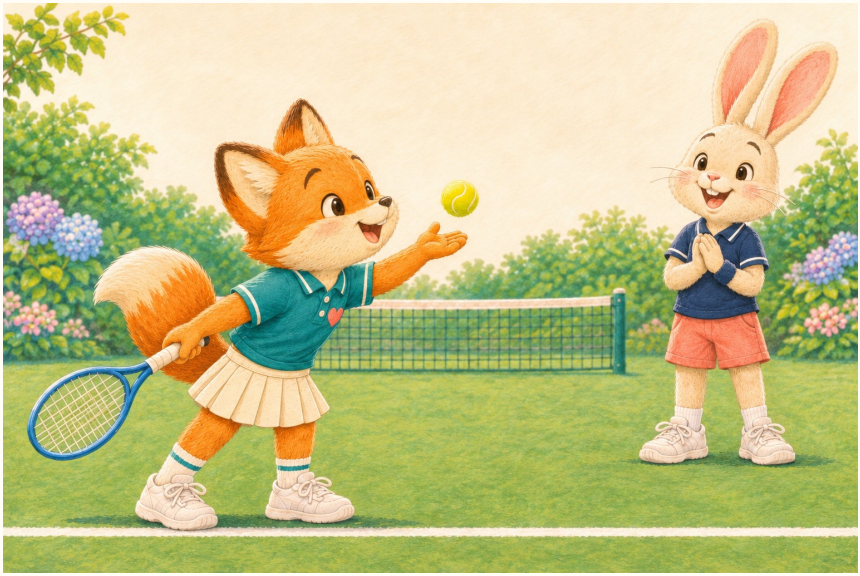


SINGLES = 2 PLAYERS

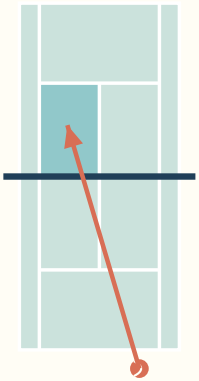
Doubles has 4 players and uses the wider court for rallies. The service boxes stay the same.

START A POINT

Send a serve diagonally.



Start behind the baseline. For the first point of a game, serve from your right-hand half into the opposite service box.



YOUR FIRST SERVE

Then swap left and right after each point. Wait until the receiver is ready.

Remember: the receiver must let a serve bounce before returning it. An underarm serve is allowed.

TRY AGAIN

Fault or let?

A serve outside the correct service box, or into the net without landing correctly, is a **fault**.

1

FIRST-SERVE FAULT

You get a second serve.

2

SECOND-SERVE FAULT

A double fault: the other player wins the point.

L

SERVICE LET

The serve touches the net and lands correctly? Repeat that same serve.

DEUCE SAYS

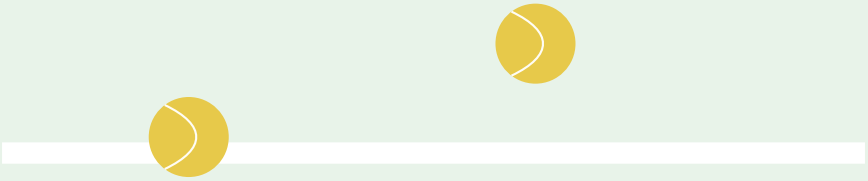
A let on my second serve is still a second serve!

KEEP THE RALLY GOING

Over the net. Into the court.

After the serve, hit the ball back before its second bounce. You may also hit it before it bounces: that shot is a **volley**.

A LINE COUNTS AS IN



If any part of the bounce touches the correct boundary line, the ball is in. A ball wholly outside is out.

You lose the point if you hit out, fail to send the ball over, or let it bounce twice. Do not touch the net while the ball is in play.

Net touch during a rally? If the ball goes over and lands in, play on. That is not a service let.

LEARN THE TENNIS NUMBERS

Love means zero.



Love	15	30	40	Game
0 points	1 point	2 points	3 points	win by 2

This is the path when one player wins four points in a row. At 40-all, use deuce instead: turn the page!

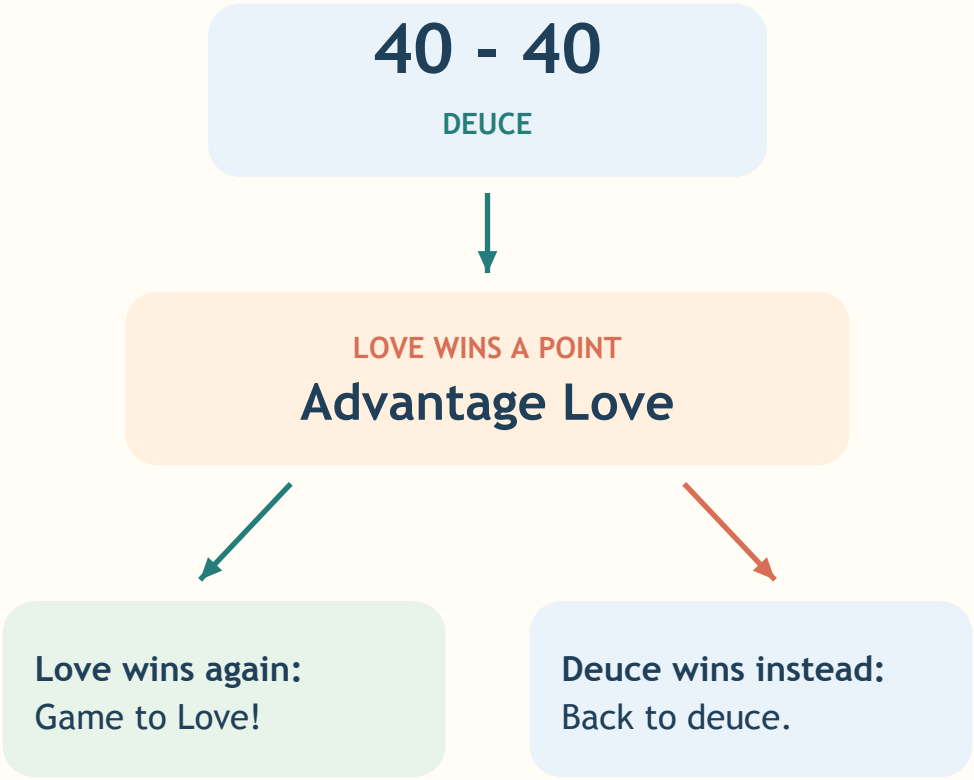
SAY THE SERVER'S SCORE FIRST

Love is serving and leads by 2 points to 1.
Say **"30-15"**, not "15-30".

MEET THE 40-ALL MOMENT

Deuce: two in a row!

In a standard advantage game, 40-all is called **deuce**. A player needs two points in a row from deuce to win the game.



Either player can earn the advantage.

BUILD A MATCH

Points. Games. Sets.

POINTS

Build a game.

GAMES

Build a set.

SETS

Build a match.

In a normal tie-break set, reach 6 games with a lead of 2: **6-4** wins, but **6-5** does not. At **6-6**, play the agreed tie-break.

A common match is best of 3 sets: the first player to win 2 sets wins. Your junior event may use shorter scoring.

STANDARD CHANGE OF ENDS: after games 1, 3, 5...

A DIFFERENT COUNTING GAME

The seven-point tie-break

Count **0, 1, 2, 3...** First to 7 wins only with a lead of 2. If it is 6-6, keep playing until someone leads by 2.

7-5	7-6	8-6
FINISHED	KEEP GOING	FINISHED

WHO SERVES? FOLLOW THE POINT NUMBERS.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
L	D	D	L	L	D	D

If Love is due to serve: 1 point for Love, then 2 for Deuce, then 2 for Love, and so on. The first point is served from the right. Keep alternating sides.

In this standard tie-break, change ends after every 6 points. Some events use a 10-point tie-break or other changes: ask before starting.

PLAY AS A TEAM

Two friends on each side



- The wider doubles court is in for rallies. The service boxes do not get wider.
- In normal games, one player serves the whole game. Then the other team serves.
- When your team serves again, it is your partner's turn. Keep the serving order for the set.

After the return: either partner may hit next. You do not have to alternate. Call "mine" early.

BE A GOOD TENNIS FRIEND

Kind players make good games.



- Say the score clearly before serving.
- Make honest line calls. If you are unsure, ask an adult or official to help.
- Praise a good shot, even from the other side.
- Stop if a loose ball rolls into your space. Tell the other players.

LOVE SAYS

A friendly greeting matters more than a trophy.

TRY OUR MINI-GAME

A little match of your own

OUR PRACTICE GAME

Count 0, 1, 2... First to **5 points** wins, with no two-point lead needed. Swap server for the next mini-game. A grown-up can feed the ball if you are learning.

This is a made-up learning activity, **not standard match scoring**. Agree the court and ball before you begin.

OUR PLAYERS

_____

_____

MARK ONE BALL FOR EACH POINT YOU WIN

Player 1 ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯

Player 2 ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯

Our kind-player moment: _____

YOUR TENNIS DETECTIVE BADGE

What do you remember?

1. Love means...

- ○ zero
- ○ fifteen

2. A ball touches the correct line. It is...

- ○ in
- ○ out

3. 40-all in a normal game is...

- ○ deuce
- ○ a fault

4. A let on the second serve means...

- ○ repeat second serve
- ○ start first serve

5. In a seven-point tie-break, 7-6 means...

- ○ keep playing
- ○ the game is over

6. Can you volley a serve before it bounces?

- ○ no
- ○ yes

Answers on the next page. Try it together!

FOR CURIOUS PLAYERS & GROWN-UPS

Keep it simple. Keep it kind.

QUIZ ANSWERS

1 zero / 2 in / 3 deuce
4 repeat the second serve / 5 keep playing
6 no: a serve must bounce before the return.

Before a match: ask which ball, court, scoring format and service-let rule apply. This booklet teaches common standard rules; junior events may use short sets, no-ad games, no-let serves or match tie-breaks.

Adults: help with safe spacing, honest calls and questions. Wheelchair tennis has a two-bounce rule and other adaptations; ask a qualified coach about suitable formats.

Rule references - checked 20 November 2026. Click a reference in the PDF to read more.

ITF Rules of Tennis 2026

ITF Tennis Play and Stay

LTA: rules and scoring

USTA: tennis scoring rules

Tennis Canada: points and rules

An independent Tennis Baselines publication. Not an official federation rulebook. Love, Deuce and their stories are original characters; illustrations were created with AI assistance. Court and score diagrams are editorial drawings.

tennisbaselines.com | First edition, November 2026