

# The Coveted Sportsmanship Pin



**By Barbara Wyatt**

I've never won a USTA Sportsmanship Pin," says Sheila.

Frank places his arm around her shoulder and says, "You will. But until you do, you could have one of mine. I have three."

She laughs. Frank was at it again, teasing a fellow teammate.

Is Sheila doing anything wrong? She gives the benefit of the doubt to the opponent if she's unsure if the ball hit in or out (The Code 6). She calls balls good that touch any part of the line (The Code 7). She calls out the score clearly when serving (The Code 31).

Perhaps Frank demonstrates a few more rules from the book, *USTA Friend at Court*.

If you do not see where the ball hit at the end of a point, ask your opponent for help (The Code 11). If they answer, "The ball was in," then the ball is in. If they saw the ball hit out, they will—and I believe the vast majority will—call it out and award you the point. If your opponents are unsure where the ball landed, the ball is in.

When you or your partner complete a first serve, prepare for the return no matter

what. Do not call your first serve out. Only your opponent can make that call. If the receiver doesn't put the return in play, then you may make the fault call (The Code 26).

Call your shots out when you see them (The Code 13). Even if your opponent does not ask for help, call your shot out. The one exception? You or your partner's first serve (The Code 26).

Top tennis pros demonstrate sportsmanship during tough matches. At the 2016 Hopman Cup, Lleyton Hewitt serves and the umpire calls the serve out. Jack Sock yells to Hewitt, "That was in—if you want to challenge it."

Hewitt's eyebrows arch up in disbelief. Sock grins, "Challenge it." The chair umpire leans forward from the chair. Hewitt pauses, then says, "I challenge it." Sock was correct; Hewitt's serve was good. The call is reversed to Hewitt's favor. The audience applauds Sock's demonstration of Code 13 and his fair play ethics.

At the 2015 Australian Open, Rafael Nadal is serving in the fifth set after four tough hours of play against Tim Smyczek. Nadal tosses the ball up and seconds before he hits the toss, a fan yells loudly, breaks the silence and

disrupts Nadal's serve motion. The ball sails past the service line. Smyczek holds up two fingers. The chair umpire announces first serve again.

At the 2005 Rome Masters Tournament, a linesman calls Fernando Verdasco's second serve out. Andy Roddick is awarded the match on the double fault. Roddick points to the ball mark on the clay. The chair umpire reverses the call.

Sportsmanship decisions may cost a tennis pro thousands of dollars. Yet somehow, Sock reached a career-high doubles ranking of number two in the world. Smyczek won seven Challenger titles and achieved a career-high singles world ranking of 68th. Andy Roddick is an American former world number one professional tennis player.

Maybe there's something to this USTA Sportsmanship Pin.

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