



# If Only Wives Followed the Rules of Tennis in Marriage (Part I)



By Barbara Wyatt

The game of modern tennis was patented in 1874, and was offered to players in a box with bats, balls, a portable court and a nine-page pamphlet titled *Wingfield's Rules of the Game*. Nine pages! By the time the 2015 edition of *Friend at Court, the USTA Handbook of Tennis Rules and Regulations*, was published, it took 296 pages of fine print to cover the rules for tennis.

I admire tennis players who understand all the rules and apply them fairly. What makes me chuckle is when players demand obedience to "the rules" when they stand within the white lines of a tennis court, while their day-to-day life is lived in opposition to those rules.

If an opponent arrives six minutes late for a match, players demand their pound of flesh—the loss of toss, plus two games. Later in the week, this same player who demanded a pound of flesh will arrive 45 minutes late for a dinner date and wonder why their significant other is angry.

Players will engage in near battle over the time wasted to pick up a stray ball that may, or may not, have been a hindrance. Then they return to a job and spend hours avoiding a supervisor while searching the Web, deliberately seeking ways to waste time.

So, I propose dragging the "Rules of Tennis" into our day-to-day lives. We'd all get along better. Let's start with marriage.

If only wives would follow the Rules of Tennis in marriage.



For example, Code Rule 11. Requesting opponent's help. It's the end of the point, and you aren't sure where the ball landed. Go ahead, ask your opponent for help; you're allowed. You must accept the decision that the opponent is obliged to answer honestly. You accept the decision and the game continues on fairly.

The same rule should apply in marriage. If a wife asks for her husband's help, she must listen, take the advice, and make the necessary adjustments to her behavior. The marriage continues.

Code Rule 16. Spectators never make calls. A tennis player cannot ask a spectator to help make a call. Spectators have no part in the match ... nor in a marriage. The best friend or mother's opinion cannot be called upon to weigh in on an issue between husband and wife. Both the games

of tennis and marriage are between two people, and that does not include family, friends or spectators. Though sometimes a trained official should be called upon for assistance.

ITF Rule 27(a) Correcting Errors. All points previously played stand. When an error is discovered, correct it, forget it, and play on. ITF Rule 27 (a) is used when a player serves from the wrong half of the court. First serve is a fault? Oops, you should have served from the ad side? The serve was played in good faith and is still a fault. Serve the second serve from the ad side.

In marriage, when a husband makes a mistake and it is discovered by the wife, make the correction and play on. The wife must not continue to speak about the mistake. It was corrected. Did the husband forget to pick up the kids? Oops! Make the correction (someone pick up the kids), forget it and play on. And please remember to pick up the kids next time.

If you believe this editorial has been unduly harsh on the behavior of wives, wait until you read the next edition, when we present the tennis rules that husbands should follow in marriage.

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