



The Roving Eye

# WHAT'S THE SCORE?

## AN OFFICIAL'S VIEW

**In our latest installment of The Roving Eye, our expert tennis official, Tony Hernandez, gives us his take on best practices when players can't agree on the score. This is what Tony has to say:**

### **WHAT IS THE SCORE? I LOST TRACK.**

How NOT to lose the score. Server ALWAYS, in a strong enough voice that receiver can easily hear, calls the score before they begin their service motion. Receiver NEVER attempts to return a serve if they aren't sure what the score is, and/or cannot hear the server calling the score. Easy.

So, what happens if there is a scoring dispute, and both/all players are confused and not agreeing at all about how to get to the "correct" score?

The 2023 Friend At Court rulebook, page 41 reads – "... listed in the order of preference:"

**First** – "Count all points and games agreed upon by the players and replay only disputed points or games;"

**Second** – "Play from a score mutually agreeable to all players;"

Finally, if the first two methods don't work, the final method is to "Spin a racket or toss a coin." This last method seems very drastic to me, and is not used very often, even by officials. Someone is going to be VERY unhappy about the result.

Most folks, on their own volition, use the second method – just find the place in the match that all agree on the score. That seems to be simple and easy. But if I am on the court, or asked to come over to help, I will start with the first method, just play ONE point to determine the accurate score. This method is the most fair (but confusing) rule. You could have played 3 or 4 points, in good faith, after there was a disputed point. As a player, I want credit for those 3 or 4 points, and wouldn't want them "erased" because we go back to "15 – Love" at the beginning of the game.

So, here is how it "usually" works. First point won by server – Player A. 15 – Love. Second point – called out by Player A, but the Out Call was not heard by Player B, and B thinks they won the point, and that the score is 15 – 15. Player A, the server, now stops calling out the score before they serve. Play continues, and the server is thinking 30 - Love. Then B wins the next

two points. Then A wins the 5th point. B wins the next point, and assumes that they have won the game. A says, "No, it is Duece". Then the argument begins. A says, "On the second point, I called the ball out, I won the second point." B says, "I didn't hear an out call, and you didn't call any scores after that point". Are you still with me?

If they both agree on all points, EXCEPT the second point, then they only have to replay the second point. The first point, and last 4 points, played in good faith, stay. So, when the 2nd point is replayed, there is no score announced. It is just a replay of the 2nd point – and played on the Ad side. AFTER the 2nd point is replayed, it will either be Game to Player B, if they win the replay. Or, Duece, if Player A wins the replayed point. Then, you continue on to the rest of the match. Confusing, yes, but accurate, the most fair, and the first method of choice in the rulebook. ■