

EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT CHEERING

GUIDELINES FOR PROMOTING FAIR PLAY AND GOOD SPORTSMAN/WOMANSHIP!!

Hello captains and players!

USA League Tennis members often describe how rewarding it is to be part of a team in which there are such memorable experiences – the joy of winning against a tough opponent and the disappointment of losing in a close match. Tennis team membership brings with it a very special camaraderie and provides a build in support system among team members as well as a shared love of the game of tennis for its recreational, health and fitness benefits. As each season begins, it's important to review some reminders about tennis etiquette and to consider your tennis match behavior.

This is a timely opportunity to send along a reminder about good sportsmanlike (or sportswoman like) conduct by spectators and team-mates who make the special trip to cheer for their friends and family members.

Each facility is different and each accommodates spectators to varying extents. Some courts have viewing areas. For example, Cabin John has large windows so that spectators can sit comfortably and enjoy the tennis match outside of the court areas. Other facilities (for example, TCCP) have meridians where people can gather to watch tennis matches. And still other courts, Wheaton, Bethesda Country Club and Potomac, for instance, have limited areas for observation. At a facility with limited observation capacity, observers including other captains and players, friends or family members, may ask players in the match if they may sit on a nearby court and watch or occasionally, an open court may be rented to allow observers to sit and watch. In some cases, a court adjacent to an ongoing match becomes available and team members from both teams might gather around to watch the matches in progress. All of these are possible and actual scenarios.

All of us want to support and cheer for our team-mates; these are natural behaviors in a sporting event. When we go to professional matches, we cheer loudly for our favorite player. Professionals are comfortable with spectator cheering and often utilize the cheering to their advantage. However, professional matches also have a Chair Umpire or referees to request that the spectators quiet down during a point or remind viewers to turn off cell phones. Similarly, in unofficiated matches such as ours, [The Code](#) is your advocate. A copy of [The Code](#) is posted on our website for your convenience.

For the most part, MCTA league players are social players placed in competitive situations with different levels of ability, experience and comfort. Some players find that they are distracted and self-conscious with spectators present. While it is commendable for players to support their team-mates by enthusiastically cheering, please... be sensitive to the entire situation.

Some guidelines and suggestions for cheering:

Be respectful. Be balanced. Applaud for winners not for those points won on errors by the opposing team. A brilliant shot that results in a forced error merits recognition. Clap only after points. Don't clap or cheer during points. Don't yell out during points. Don't make line calls. Don't "coach," that is, saying things like "move your feet," "no more lobbing," etc. Turn off all cell phones. Be fair. If there are six of you cheering for one team and no one is present to cheer for the other player/team, be sensitive to that and clap for their outstanding point too.

Also, keep in mind that when a player (from your team or the other team) asks you to stop cheering, clapping or requests that you move, please, make every effort to comply. There is neither purpose nor reason to cause a player or players unnecessary distress. These matches are for recreation and fun. The Golden Rule applies; treat other players the way you would have them treat you. Another consideration is; if you are on an adjacent court watching a match kindly remember to stand or sit at least 1/2 court away from the players.

Finally and most important, enjoy yourselves! This is a team sport. It's perfectly acceptable to cheer and applaud and, do be certain you're not interfering with the play of your player, the opponent, or play on an adjacent court.

All of this said, MCTA sponsors leagues the year long so that tennis players in Montgomery and surrounding counties have ample opportunity to participate in tennis; the sport for a lifetime and the game for fitness, health, competition and new friends!

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