

## Foot Faults

It seems to be apparent that foot faulting is a problem in Michigan High School Tennis. Many coaches talk about it and yet the problem persists. The ultimate solution must be that coaches “coach” players to NOT foot fault in practice so they won’t commit the violation in competition.

During competition, coaches must cooperate when addressing the problem of foot faulting. Respect and integrity among all coaches and all players are paramount. The Rules of Tennis are very clear and thus the solution to the problem of foot faulting must be dealt with in practice before competition.

To clarify the rules on foot faulting - - (USTA Rules of Tennis)

Foot Fault – During the service motion, the server shall not:

- a. Change position by walking or running, although slight movements of the feet are permitted; or
- b. Touch the baseline or the court with either foot; or
- c. Touch the area outside the imaginary extension of the sideline with either foot; or
- d. Touch the imaginary extension of the center mark with either foot.

If the server breaks this rule, it is a “Foot Fault”.

Comment: When may the receiver or the receiver’s partner call foot faults?

Answer: In a non-officiated match, the receiver or the receiver’s partner may call foot faults after all efforts (warning the server and attempting to locate an official) have failed and the foot faulting is so flagrant as to be clearly perceptible from the receiver’s side.

The Code #23 Foot Faults: A player may warn an opponent that the opponent has committed a flagrant foot fault. If the foot faulting continues, the player may attempt to locate an official. If no official is available, the player may call flagrant foot faults. Compliance with the foot fault rule is very much a function of a player’s personal honor system. The plea that a server should not be penalized because the server only just touched the line and did not rush the net is not acceptable. Habitual foot faulting, whether intentional or careless, is just as surely cheating as is making a deliberate bad line call.

## MHSAA RECOMMENDATIONS:

### **Dual Matches** – Procedure to follow when foot faulting is occurring:

- A. The opposing coach of the foot faulter should communicate with the coach of the foot faulter that the violation is occurring. The foot faulter's coach should immediately address the violation with the player. The easiest and proper solution is to have the player move back from the line before starting the service motion.
- B. If the coaches cannot agree that a violation is occurring, the home coach is the official who makes the final decision.
- C. The last resort is to have someone (a responsible adult) act as an official, observe in a position that allows for clear vision and to call violations of the foot fault in that match for both sides of the net. Note: The USTA does not establish, as such, a position of foot fault judge.

Coaches should NOT attempt gamesmanship by waiting until a 3<sup>rd</sup> set tie break to "see" a foot fault problem.

### **Regional and Final Tournaments**

- A. The opposing coach of the foot faulter should contact the official manager of the tournament concerning the violation. The manager should address the problem with the violator and his/her coach.
- B. The procedure to follow is the same as with **Dual Matches** with the Regional Manager making the final decision.