



SPIRIT OF THE GAME™

“The integrity of squash doubles depends on each player’s responsibility to uphold the Spirit of the Game, and this responsibility should remain paramount.”

“Spirit of the Game. Squash Doubles relies upon a spirit of sportsmanship that places the responsibility for fair play on the player. Highly competitive play is encouraged, but never at the expense of mutual respect among competitors, adherence to the agreed upon rules, or the basic joy of play. Protection of these vital elements serves to eliminate unsportsmanlike conduct from the doubles court. Such costs’ behavior is contrary to the Spirit of the Game and must be avoided by all players.” Respect should also be given to the referees (and line judges).

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT SPIRIT OF THE GAME™

1. The golden rule: treat others as you would want to be treated.
 - ~ Spirited games result from mutual respect among opponents. Assume the best of your opponent. Give him or her the benefit of a doubt. You would want the same for yourself. But if you are thick-skinned, do not assume that your opponent is. Maybe you should think of this rule as, "treat others as you would have them treat your mother."
2. Control: SOTG takes real effort.
 - ~ SOTG is not just some abstract principle that everyone adopts and then games run smoothly without effort. Close calls are made in tight games. Hard fouls are committed. SOTG is about how you handle yourself under pressure: how you contain your emotionality, tame your temper, and modulate your voice. If you initiate or contribute to the unraveling of spirit, the concept falls apart quickly. If you act to mend things (or at least not exacerbate the situation) by following (1) above, the game heals itself.
3. SOTG is compatible with championship play.
 - ~ It is a fallacy to argue that the stakes are so important that some aspect of SOTG can be cast aside. Time and again, great teams and star players have shown that you can bring all your competitive and athletic zeal to a game without sacrificing fair play or respect for your opponent.
4. Breathe.
 - ~ After a close call, or disputed play, take a step back, pause, and take a deep breath. In the heat of competition, emotions run high. By giving yourself just a bit of time and space, you will gain enough perspective to compose yourself and concentrate on the facts involved in the dispute. Your restraint will induce a more restrained response from your opponent. Conflagration averted, you may resume business as usual.
5. When you do the right thing, people notice.
 - ~ When you turn the other cheek, you know you've done the right thing. You may not hear praise, there may be no standing ovation, but people do notice. Eventually, their respect for you and their appreciation of the game will grow. Likewise, others notice when you are acting like a jerk on the court, and your reputation will be tainted for a long time.
6. Be generous with praise.
 - ~ Compliment an opponent on their good play. Remark to your partner that you admire their honesty in calling a decision against themselves. Look players in the eye and congratulate them when you shake their hands after a game. These small acts boost spirit greatly, a large payoff for little time and effort.
7. Impressions linger.
 - ~ Not only does the realization that your actions will be remembered for a long time serve to curb poor behavior, it can also inspire better conduct. Many old-timers enjoy the experience of meeting an elite player who remembers their first rendezvous on the field and recalls the event in detail. A good first encounter with an impressionable young player can have considerable long-term positive impact.
8. Have fun.
 - ~ All other things being equal, games are far more fun without the antipathy. Go hard. Play fair. Have fun. Respect the referee.

National Referees in particular should set the example as players to all doubles squash players.

Created by: Tony Swift and Adapted by the Squash Canada Doubles Officiating Committee (October 11, 2018)