

Understanding the tennis “tie-break” or “tiebreak”

Traditionally, a tie-break is played during a regular tennis set when the score reaches 6 games all (6-6). The winner of the tie-break is the player who reaches 7 points first with a margin of at least 2 points.

Examples of possible tie-break scores:

- 7-0
- 7-1
- 7-2
- 7-3
- 7-4
- 7-5
- 8-6 (winner by 2 points)

A tie-break will be played as follows:

Point 1 – Player 1 serves (starting from the deuce court)

Point 2 – Player 2 serves (starting from the ad court)

Point 3 – Player 2 serves (starting from the deuce court)

Players will continue to serve 2 points at a time, until there is a winner.

The above is traditionally known as a “12-point” tie-break, however, more recently it is often referred to as a “7-point” tie-break.

A “10-point” tie-break is often played in lieu of a final set. This follows the same principle of a 7-point tie-break, however, the winner is the first to 10 points... 10-0, 10-1, 10-2, for example.

Depending on the tournament played and the rules therein, tie-breaks may be played at different score lines. “Short Sets” for example, are shorter tennis sets played to 4 games instead of 6 where a 7-point tie-break may either be played at 3 games all (3-3) or 4 games all (4-4).