**LINE CALLS - USTA**

**Q. I like to call “out!” to my partner in doubles as a substitute for “let it go” but opponents complained that I cannot use that specific word. They say it’s the same as an early line call, and they relaxed on the point even though my partner ignored it and played the ball. What word(s) can one use to advise their partner? My opponents say “bounce” is acceptable, but not “no, long, wide, back, deep.” – What do professionals say? Thanks for your time.**

A. You cannot say anything that will hinder your opponent(s), so long as the ball is moving toward you opponents’ side of the court. The scenario you have described is different though. By yelling “Out!” to your doubles partner – to assure that he lets a ball fly past that you estimate will land outside the lines – that is a far cry from an “early line call.” If your judgment is incorrect, and the ball lands on or inside the line, then play continues. Now, if you keep yelling “Out!” as the ball has been returned to your opponent(s), then that is a different story. As players gain competitive experience, this becomes a non-issue. I would advise you to be respectful of your opponents, but do not allow them to intimidate you into becoming quiet when your partner might be expecting some verbal assistance.

EDITORS NOTE- Thanks to Tony Simmonelli for providing this current USTA ruling. I remind you, however, that we play senior tennis……….while governed by USTA rules in our league play, we have no umpire or lines persons……..as a result, more often than not, your opponents (and, perhaps your partner) may, indeed stop play as a result of your utterance. If you want to avoid hard feelings, and, perhaps, an argument to ensue, I’d suggest that you leave the “Out!” utterance to balls that have already bounced. I use the term “No!” in spite of the author’s advice.