



2009 SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SECTION REGULATIONS

January 2009 – December 2009

USTA ADULT-SENIOR-MIXED-SUPER SENIOR–TRILEVEL DIVISIONS & SCTA DBLS LEAGUE

INDEX

Major National & Section Regulation Changes; The National Tennis Rating Program (NTRP) & Computer Ratings.....	2
1.00 General.....	3
1.02 Point Penalty System.....	3
1.03 USTA/SCTA League Program.....	3
- Local League.....	3
- Combined League Policy; Format & Scoring.....	3
- Confirming Match Play; Conduct; Team Lineup; Player Participation; Defaults; Postponements.....	4
- Inclement Weather; Coaching.....	5
- Progression.....	5
- Championships; Eligibility; Move-up/Split-up; Format and Scoring.....	5
- Substitutions; Tie-Break Procedures; Defaults; Retirement; Awards; Court Surface.....	6
1.04 League Registration.....	6
1.05 Score Reporting and Standings System.....	7
1.06 League Rating Program.....	7
- Entry; Levels of Play; Year-End Computer Ratings; Appeal Procedures.....	7
- NTRP Disqualification Procedures.....	7
- Local League.....	7
- Championship.....	8
1.07-1.11 Official Ball; Waiver of Rules and Procedures Prohibited; Amendments; Membership and Age.....	8
1.12-1.14 Player Agreement; Waiver of Claims; USTA League Tennis Committee/Administrator.....	9
1.15-1.16 Associations.....	9
1.17 Section League Coordinator (SLC).....	9
1.18 Area League Coordinator (ALC).....	9
1.19 Local League Coordinator (LLC).....	9
1.20 Team Captain.....	9
1.21-1.23 Championship Committees; USTA League Tennis Year; Local League Season; General.....	9
2.00 Grievance Procedures.....	10
2.01 Committees.....	10
2.02 Grievance Complaints.....	10
- Local League.....	10
- Championship; Grievance Committee Action; Self-Rate Grievances.....	11
2.03-2.04 Grievance Appeals; General Procedures for Grievance and Grievance Appeal Committees.....	12
USTA/SCTA Regulation Chart.....	13
The Code.....	14-17

Regulations that National has allowed the Section to delegate authority - are in BLUE

Regulations that the Section has allowed the Local Area to delegate authority - are in GREEN

Regulation changes/revisions are in red and underlined

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MAJOR NATIONAL REGULATION CHANGES FOR 2009

1. District/Area, Region, Section and National Championship benchmarks may not be appealed the first year received.
2. No dynamic disqualification of Year-end **Computer (C)** or **Benchmark (B)** players. Reg. 3.04A
3. So. . . **who can be dynamically disqualified?** NTRP published level followed by **A** (appeal-all), **S** (self-rated), **M** (mixed exclusive), **T** (tournament exclusive), in the Adult and Senior divisions through the Section Championships.
4. All medical appeals will be reviewed first by a section-appointed review committee and, if deemed a permanently disabling injury or illness, will be forwarded to the National Medical Review Committee for a final decision.
5. Mixed Doubles National Championship teams will follow the same Move-up/Split-up Regulations governing the Adult and Senior divisions. – no more than three (3) any gender may stay together the following league year.
6. Mixed Doubles Division will now include a 2.5 entry level for local through Section play. This is a straight level and may not be combined to form 5.0 teams.
7. Mixed doubles players NTRP disqualified after conclusion of their Section Championships may advance to Mixed Nationals, if they otherwise qualify.

MAJOR SECTION REGULATION CHANGES FOR 2009

1. Local league areas may limit the number of players on that roster that are at a specific NTRP level.
2. The minimum amount of players required (see chart) must register prior to the Initial Roster Deadline in order to be included in the local league schedule.
3. League players may be added to a *TennisLink* Team Roster and may request a refund up to four weeks before the end of the league season or up to four weeks prior to the last scheduled match, whichever comes first. No refunds will be accepted after the end of the local league season and once a match has been played or defaulted.
4. The Dynamic Rating System is in effect during the Adult and Senior championships. Self-rate grievances based on match results will not be considered at those championships.
5. In the Mixed Doubles division, individuals who receive their third strike while participating in another division but following the conclusion of their Mixed Section Championships for a given year will be allowed to advance to the Mixed Doubles Nationals at their NTRP disqualified level, if they otherwise qualify.

THE USE OF THE NATIONAL TENNIS RATING PROGRAM AND NTRP COMPUTER RATINGS IN THE USTA LEAGUE TENNIS PROGRAM

The National Tennis Rating Program (NTRP) is the official system for determining the levels of competition for the USTA League Tennis Program. The USTA NTRP Computer Rating System assigns ratings based on play in the local league and at championship level during the current league year.

1. The National Tennis Rating Program (NTRP) Guidelines define the characteristics of the various NTRP skill levels.
2. The USTA NTRP Computer Rating System is the official system to determine computer ratings for players throughout the country who participate in the USTA League Tennis Program. It is a mathematical system that assigns computer ratings to players by direct and indirect comparison of match results obtained from USTA League Tennis, select NTRP tournaments, and Open and Adult/Senior Age Division tournaments.
3. A NTRP published level is valid for two (2) years for individuals 60 years of age and older prior to, or during, the championship year and for three (3) years for all others, or until another NTRP published level is generated.
4. Players with a NTRP published level must enter at that rating or higher.
5. Players in the USTA League Tennis Program without a computer rating must self-rate in accordance with the NTRP Guidelines. Factors such as a player's on-court performance, tennis background, and any additional information should be considered in the self-rating decision. When players are rating themselves, if they question at which level they should play, they should place themselves in the higher NTRP level of play.
Note: Players who are good athletes or intend to spend a great deal of time taking lessons and practicing should be aware that their improvement may be significant enough to surpass their original self-rating by the time they reach the end of the local league season or championship level. To avoid NTRP disqualification, these players should enter at a higher level of play at the beginning of the local league season.
6. Players without a NTRP published level are required to declare a self-rating on *TennisLink* when entering the program regardless of the NTRP level they enter. They begin to generate a dynamic rating after their first match with a **Computer** or **Benchmark** rated player.
7. In the USTA League Tennis Adult and Senior divisions, dynamic ratings will be calculated at regular intervals for all participants during local league competition, at the end of the local league season, and either during, or at the end of, Area through Section Championships.
8. At USTA League Tennis Adult and Senior National Championships, players will continue to generate dynamic ratings through their last match played; but, there will be no dynamic NTRP disqualification at National Championships.
9. After the USTA League Tennis Adult and Senior National Championships, benchmark and year-end NTRP published level will be calculated using USTA NTRP Computer Rating System Procedures approved by the USTA League Tennis Committee.
10. In the Mixed Doubles Division, a NTRP published level will be calculated for participants who play in that division exclusively. Year-end ratings will be based on the final dynamic rating generated from local league and championship level competition.

FOR REFERENCE

ULR = USTA League Regulations

SLR = Section League Regulations (SCTA)

LLR = Local League Regulations

SLC = Section League Coordinator

ALC = Area League Coordinator

LLC = Local League Coordinator

1.00 GENERAL

Printed below are the **Southern California Tennis Association Section League Regulations (SLR)** as authorized by the **USTA League Tennis Regulations (ULR)**. These regulations are subject to change based on action taken by the **National Committee and the Section office**. All USTA League Tennis Regulations in **1.00 GENERAL** shall apply to all USTA League Tennis Divisions and the **SCTA Doubles League**. (See regulation chart for specific details)

Any authority delegated by these regulations to the section, unless otherwise stated, may be delegated by the section to a lower authority.

1.01 NAME. The SCTA section has approved the adoption of rules and regulations for SCTA League Tennis that shall be known as the **SCTA Section League Regulations (SLR)**.

1.02 APPLICABILITY. The ULR and SLR have full force and applicability at all levels of play in USTA/SCTA League Tennis and there is no authorization to modify, amplify or change them by Area League Coordinators, Local League Coordinators, Grievance or Grievance Appeal Committees. The RULES OF TENNIS and TOURNAMENT REGULATIONS including those for wheelchair play, shall apply to all matches played in the USTA/SCTA League Tennis Program except as modified herein. In all matches played without officials, the USTA official publication "THE CODE" shall be observed. The ULR, SLR and "The Code" are available at: *scta.usta.com* (under USTA League Tennis). The USTA Point Penalty System shall be used at all championship levels. The lateness penalty clock starts when the match is scheduled, called, a court is available and a player has not arrived.

- 5:00 minutes or less - Loss of Toss + 1 game
- 5:01 to 10 min. - Loss of Toss + 2 games
- 10:01 to 15 min. - Loss of Toss + 3 games
- Over 15 min. – Default

1.03 USTA/SCTA LEAGUE PROGRAM. The USTA/SCTA League Tennis Program is a team competition for men, women and for mixed doubles at specified NTRP levels of play (See chart). The purpose of the program is to provide organized recreational play, emphasizing local competition, with advancement for winning teams from local competition to area, section or national championships to determine annually USTA League Tennis Sectional and/or National Championship teams in each approved level of competition. The USTA/SCTA League Tennis Program shall be conducted without regard to race, creed, color or national origin.

Local League. A local league is a team competition in a specified geographic area that applies specific local league regulations and consists of NTRP level(s) with a minimum of two or more teams per level. A local league may choose to divide any or all NTRP levels into flights. Where flights are used, flight winners will play off to determine a champion for each NTRP level. For minimum amount of players per team - See Chart. Teams from more than one area competing in league play together are considered a "Combined League". The following policy will be in effect:

- An area with two teams may "combine" with another area that has two or more teams upon approval from the hosting area. The SLC must be notified.
- The team with the best record from each of the combining areas will advance to the next level of competition, regardless of who wins the league. For example: If teams in LA combine with teams in SFV, the best team from LA and the best team from SFV will advance. Numbers for each area will be considered separately. At the Championships, teams will be designated by the name of their home area.
- Teams must secure home courts in the area they are representing. The location of the home facility will determine the league area for a team. They may use a "shared facility" as their home facility.
- Special circumstances will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

League Format. May be the same as championship competition. Any NTRP level with only two or three teams is required to play a minimum of three matches. **Eligibility requirements for "local league playoffs" may be the same as that of championship requirement (two match minimum).**

Team Format and Scoring. For team format – (See chart). The method of awarding points in order to determine the winning team of a local league team match and the winner of the local league competition may be the same as that used in championships competition. All warm-ups, including serves, should be taken before match begins. (See "The Code"). Warm ups should take no more than 10 minutes. The scoring system must be determined before the start of the local league season and stated in writing.

Confirming Match Play. Visiting team captains shall **contact** the home team captains at least three days prior to the scheduled match to confirm the following: date and time of match, directions to tennis facilities and number of courts to be utilized.

Conduct. Team captains or their representatives shall be responsible for their actions and the actions of their players and their spectators during the match. Teammates, spectators, or coaches may not volunteer advice on line calls, scoring, or on the conduct of the match.

Individual Match. An individual match is any singles match or any doubles match played as part of a team match.

Team Lineups. Team captains for each team shall: 1) Exchange their team line-up cards simultaneously prior to the scheduled start time and after determining who is present and ready to play. Substitution procedures are the same as in championship competition. In the event a substitution is allowed, the substitute shall play in the position that is open. No substitute may be taken from the original line-up after the line-up has been presented, except that if a player's partner does not show up due to injury, illness, or disqualification, the player may be treated as a substitute. **If two players on a team do not show up that are members of two different doubles teams, the two players should play together at the higher position in order to avoid an additional forfeit. Example: If one player came from the #1 doubles team and the other player came from the #3 doubles team, these players would play at #1 doubles. The #2 doubles team would remain the same and the forfeit would occur at the #3 doubles position.** **EXCEPTION:** *When a team match is postponed to another day and an individual match has not started, a captain may change the lineup for such match;* 2) Record the scores as each match finishes and signs both line-up cards when all matches are completed. If there are not enough courts available at one time for a team match, team captains must agree in advance on the order of play and starting time for each individual match. Generally TWO (2) hours should be allotted for each match. Recommended order: Singles and then Doubles.

Player Participation. An individual player may play in only one position within each team match. Players may play on a maximum of two teams per area (must be at two different NTRP levels)/per division (Adult, Senior, etc). There will be no limit on how many areas they compete in. The following examples are acceptable team entries: 3.5 & 4.0 in SFV and 3.5 & 4.0 in LA or 6.0 & 7.0 SFV and 6.0 & 7.0 in LA, etc. In local leagues where NTRP levels are divided into flights, players may not play in more than one flight. **The Local League area has the authority to accept or deny participation. Local League areas may limit the number of players that appear on a team roster. The championship schedule will not be changed to accommodate time conflicts for players who qualify to play on more than one championship team.** At any national championship, if a player qualifies for two or more teams at the same NTRP level for an event, the individual must declare which team he/she will represent. In the absence of a declaration, the first match played will determine which team he/she will represent. In all matches in which ineligible players participate, the ineligible player may be penalized by defaulting all individual matches played and/or the captain may be suspended from all league play for up to a year. Examples of ineligible players are listed below but may not constitute a full list:

- Players who do not appear on the official team roster. (Unless there were difficulties experienced during registration and the ALC was notified)
- Players who have been registered by the captain without their knowledge and/or have fictitious match results entered on Tennis Link.
- Players who play under another player's name.
- Players who utilize multiple USTA Membership numbers in an attempt to bypass their computer generated NTRP rating in order to self-rate into the league program at a lower level.

The Area League Coordinator, with the approval of the Section League Grievance Committee, has the right to suspend the playing privileges of a captain, player, or team whose behavior has been disruptive and/or found to be not in compliance with the regulations.

Wheelchair Play. Wheelchair players participating in a USTA/SCTA league program shall be allowed (2) bounces of the ball.

Individual Defaults. Default procedures will be the same as those in championship competition, unless there is a modification in the local area. If the captains allow (either by word or failure to prevent) a lower position to start out of sequence and later the higher match ends up a default - all matches played in good faith stand (Interpretation dated 7/17/03). **The captain accepted the conditions under which the match was played when they permitted the lower positions to start.**

Team Defaults. Default procedures will be the same as those in championship competition, unless there is a modification in the local area. In a multiple round robin format each round robin is considered a separate unit. If the team default took place in the 2nd round robin, for example, only those matches may be affected.

Postponements. All local matches will be played on the scheduled dates unless a change is approved by the ALC. The ALC shall establish a deadline for team captains to reschedule all postponed matches. If team captains cannot agree on a time within that deadline, the ALC shall select the date and time. If neither team appears on that established date and time, a double default will be entered in the system. Postponements for any reason other than rain or at the request of a captain whose team (**minimum of 4 players**) advances to a league championship of another USTA/SCTA league division requires the approval of the ALC. Unavailability of strongest player(s) is not a valid reason for postponing/rescheduling a match.

Inclement Weather. On match day, the captains will decide what constitutes "unplayable" weather. If teams have assembled to play and the beginning of the match is delayed by inclement weather, teams must wait no longer than 1/2 hour past the originally scheduled time for the start of the first match to determine if the courts are playable. If courts are still not playable after 1/2 hour has elapsed, teams are free to reschedule, unless BOTH captains agree to wait longer or choose a different location to play the match. If the match has started prior to the inclement weather, completed individual matches will stand as played. Incomplete matches must be continued by the same players and resumed at the exact score - set, game point - as they stood when halted (any point played is always counted and never replayed). Rained-out matches should be rescheduled and played as a team, as opposed to individuals playing matches at different times/sites. The ALC must be informed of any change in the schedule. When a league season cannot be completed due to inclement weather, the local league champion will be determined by the ALC in consultation with the SLC. Factors to be considered may include, but are not limited to:

- Length of schedule
- Number of matches completed
- Head to Head results of teams in contention

Coaching. There will be no coaching during a match. Exception: Coaching will be permitted during the rest period only if the scoring method is the best of three tie-break sets and there is a 10-minute rest period between the 2nd and 3rd sets.

Local League Champions. At the conclusion of local league competition, the Area League Coordinator shall certify to the Section League Coordinator the results of the local league competition along with the names of all ineligible players. Local league competition must be concluded prior to the deadline set by the section association. (See yearly league schedule at scta.usta.com – under USTA League Tennis – under Championship Key Dates)

PROGRESSION - If the winning team at any level of competition is unable to compete further towards championships, then the SLC may select the second place team and/or use the wildcard procedures for such further competition. **(The move-up/split-up regulation will apply).**

Local League Competition. Each team that wins a specific level of local league competition shall be entitled to advance to the next level of competition.

Area Championships. The selection of teams will depend upon the number of teams in each NTRP level in each of the local leagues. Areas with a smaller # of teams in a level may have teams going to Area Play-offs. The winning team(s) will advance to compete in the Section Championship.

Section Championships. The winning team at each level shall be eligible to compete in the USTA League Tennis National Championships. (See chart)

National Championships. The team winning the national championship in each level of competition shall be the USTA League Tennis National Champion.

Area, Section and National League Championships - In all championships after local league competition, the following shall apply:

Eligibility. The Section has the authority to determine the progression of teams to its Championship competition by (1) determining a champion of the preceding level of competition in its NTRP category or (2) the use of the Championship Wildcard Procedures. Champions of the preceding level of competition must be included in the progression. A player is eligible to advance to the next level of competition, below the national level, if that player has played on that same team in at least two matches during its local league season. A maximum of one default received by the player during local league competition shall count for advancing (For waivers - See chart). A retired match shall count for all players involved. For national eligibility requirement - See chart. The required minimum number of team members who were on the final roster of their local league team at the conclusion of local league play must be available and eligible to compete. (See chart) The Championships Tournament Committee, by majority vote, can reduce that number to not less than four. All team members must be members of the USTA at the time of each competition.

Move-up/Split-up. National championship rostered team members and SCTA Doubles Section Champions may move up one level as a team or must disperse to form new teams. The new teams may have no more than three (3) players who were on the final roster at the conclusion of local league play of any team or combination of teams that advanced to the national championships. This applies to any player who participated in any match for that team during the championship year, including defaults received. If a local league has a regulation that limits the number of players on a roster that are at a specific level, the area must suspend that regulation for one year for any team that participated at the national championships the previous year and chooses to move up one level.

Team Format and Scoring. It is recommended that all matches be the best of two tie-break sets with a match tie-break in lieu of a 3rd set. The Coman style tie-break will be used for all tie-breaks. There will be no coaching during the 2-minute set breaks. The match tie-break shall be counted as 1 set and 1 game for scoring purposes. For play at or below the section level, the section association may authorize the use of other USTA approved scoring methods and other scoring methods that are compatible with the USTA NTRP Computer Rating System. Other match formats include: best of three tie-break sets with a set tie-break at 6-all, pro-set matches, a single set with a set or match tie-break at 6-all. No-Ad scoring can be used with any of the above scoring methods. For team format – (See chart). The team winning the majority of those matches will be awarded one team point.

Competition Format. A round robin format will be used where each team shall play every other team in its flight and a flight champion will be determined by the team with the most team points. If there is more than one flight, the flight winners will play off to determine a champion.

Substitutions. No substitution may be made in an individual match after the lineup has been presented, except for injury to, illness of, or disqualification of a player, prior to the start of such match, and except under such further circumstances as the section and/or championships committee may authorize. If the substitution is made during the warm-up, the substitute player is entitled to a five (5) minute warm-up.

Procedures in the Event of a Tie. In the event of a tie, whether in round robin or single elimination competition, the tie shall be broken by the first of the following procedures that does so:

(1) **Individual Matches.** Winner of the most individual matches in the entire competition.

(2) **Sets.** Loser of the fewest number of sets.

(3) **Games.** Loser of the fewest number of games.

(4) **Head-to-Head.** Winner of head-to-head match.

(5) **A method to be determined by the championships committee:** procedure to be announced prior to commencement of championship competition.

Individual Defaults. An individual default occurs when a player fails to appear on time, or is disqualified by a tournament official for misconduct. Individual defaults will be scored as a 6-0, 6-0 win for the player or doubles team receiving the default and a 0-6, 0-6 loss for the player or doubles team that defaulted the match. In the event of a default by both players or doubles teams, both sides will be given a 0-6, 0-6 loss and neither receives credit for a win. If a double default results in a tie, the tie-break procedures shall be the same as: Procedures in the Event of a Tie in order to determine a winner of that team match.

Team Defaults. A team must have a minimum of four eligible players (three players for the 2.5, 5.0, 5.5 & Open levels) available for play in each match or the entire match must be defaulted. A team may default a maximum of one position (two positions for the Adult 3.0-4.5 levels) in a match without defaulting the entire match. In such cases, defaults shall be determined by the team captain in accordance with the following:

(1) **Singles.** The No. 2 singles must be defaulted before the No. 1 singles.

(2) **Doubles.** The No. 3 doubles must be defaulted before the No. 2 doubles and the No. 2 doubles must be defaulted before the No. 1 doubles.

If a team defaults an entire team match for any reason during round robin play, then all matches of that team played or to be played, shall be null and void. If all teams in contention for the Championships have already played the defaulting team in good faith, the matches stand as played. [An entire team defaulting in a championship may be ineligible to participate in that division for the following league year. This penalty shall apply to every player who played at least one match for the forfeiting team. Special circumstances will be evaluated on a case by case basis.](#)

Retirement. A retirement occurs when an individual match has started and a player (doubles team) is unable to continue due to injury, loss of condition or emergency. The non-retiring player (doubles team) shall be credited with such number of additional games as would have been won if the match was completed and the non-retiring player or doubles team won every subsequent game. For NTRP computer data entry in TennisLink, mark as "retired" and submit actual scores of match at the point of retirement.

Awards. (See chart)

Court Surface. All league matches will be played on hard court surfaces. (Exceptions will be reviewed and approved on a case by case basis).

1.04 OFFICIAL LEAGUE REGISTRATION. TennisLink is the official system for registering teams [and players](#) for the USTA/SCTA League Tennis Program. [The player's name must be listed on the team roster, as shown on TennisLink, prior to participation in any match. This includes any player who is added to a team roster after the commencement of local league play. Local league areas may limit the number of players that appear on a team roster and the number of players on that roster that are at a specific NTRP level. The minimum number of players required \(see chart\) must register prior to the Initial Roster Deadline in order to be included in the local league schedule. A player may transfer to a different team up to the final date for registration provided that individual has not played a match or received credit for a default. League players may be added to a TennisLink Team Roster and may request a refund up to four weeks before the end of the league season or up to four weeks prior to the last scheduled match, whichever comes first. The local league has authority to impose an earlier deadline. Refund requests must be submitted to the ALC. No refunds will be accepted after the end of the local league season and once a match has been played or defaulted.](#) Players shall not be added to the team roster during local league flight play-offs or at any championship. **To register:** 1) Go to Tennislink.usta.com/leagues, 2) Choose "register for a team" and 3) Follow the steps. (Must have a current USTA #, Team ID# and credit card information). Registration fees include a \$3.00 non-refundable TennisLink user fee and an \$18.00 section fee per player per team. (Section fee is waived for one captain per team-contact your ALC for more information).

1.05 OFFICIAL SCORE REPORTING AND STANDINGS SYSTEM. TennisLink is the official system for reporting scores and providing standings for the USTA/SCTA League Tennis Program. To enter a score on TennisLink:

- 1) Go to tennislink.usta.com/leagues;
- 2) Choose "record a score";
- 3) Enter the match #;
- 4) Complete the scorecard;
- 5) Choose "finish" if you are satisfied with the entry; **or**
- 6) Choose "re-enter".

Retired matches, mark as "retired" and submit actual scores of match at the point of retirement. **Scores must be reported in TennisLink within 72 hours of the completed team match.** They must be confirmed or disputed by the opposing team within 48 hours of the initial entry or the initial score will automatically be considered valid. To confirm or dispute a score:

- 1) Follow steps 1-3 above;
- 2) Choose "confirm" **or**
- 3) Choose "dispute" and inform your ALC, then exit "scorecard."

ALC's can fix errors in scorecard reporting. **In no event may a team match remain uncompleted for more than seven days after its scheduled or postponed date or the deadline for completing local league match play, whichever occurs first.** The local league has authority to impose an earlier deadline.

1.06 OFFICIAL LEAGUE RATING PROGRAM. The National Tennis Rating Program (NTRP) is the official system for rating levels of competition for the USTA/SCTA League Tennis Program.

Entry. Players entering the USTA/SCTA League Tennis Program are defined as having an NTRP computer rating on file in Tennis Link or as new/returning players without a computer rating. All self-rated players are subject to Self-rate Eligibility Grievances.

Levels of Play. Levels of play for the USTA/SCTA League Tennis Divisions are described in terms of "maximum" ratings. Players cannot have a rating higher than the NTRP level in which they are competing. It is not necessary for all of the players on a team to be of the same rating. However, if there is a mixture of abilities, the team may compete only at the NTRP level of the highest rated player. In combined leagues, a doubles team's combined NTRP ratings may not exceed the level entered and the NTRP difference may not exceed 1.0. **Local League areas may limit the number of players on that roster that are at a specific NTRP level.**

Year-End Computer Ratings. After the USTA League National championships, benchmark and year-end computer ratings will be calculated using USTA NTRP Computer Rating System Procedures approved by the USTA League Tennis Committee. TennisLink will automatically remove expired computer and self ratings thereby allowing individuals to self-rate. Ratings are directly affected by: 1) Your partner; 2) Your opponent's dynamic rating; 3) Your current dynamic rating; 4) The closeness of the match (regardless of whether it was a win or a loss). Ratings are not directly affected by: 1) What position you play; 2) Your wins and losses; 3) Team standings; 4) Age

Appeal Procedures. Year-end NTRP computer ratings may be appealed and granted or denied in accordance with USTA NTRP Computer Rating System Procedures.

1) The **NTRP Coordinator** will be responsible for the management of the Automated Appeal Process. Only Medical Appeals require an Appeal Form and will be assessed a non-refundable fee of \$20.00. The Automated Appeal Instructions are located on the SCTA website at: scta.usta.com. *Click on USTA League Tennis – click on NTRP ratings.*

- Year-End rating appeal period: All year
- Medical appeal period: All year –. The Section Association **shall utilize a Medical Review Committee to evaluate all medical appeals; and, if the injury/illness is deemed permanently disabling, the appeal will be forwarded to the National Medical Appeal Committee for a final decision.** (Must include pertinent information & documentation that determines the degree to which the injury or debilitating condition is temporary or permanent)
- **District/Area, Region, Section and National Championship** benchmarks may not be appealed following the championship it is received except for **permanently disabling injury/illness**. A year-old championship benchmark may be appealed in accordance with the NTRP Computer Rating System Procedures.
- The Medical Appeal may be downloaded from the SCTA website: scta.usta.com. *Click on USTA League Tennis - click on NTRP Ratings.*

NTRP Disqualification Procedures. **The regulations in this section apply only to the USTA League Tennis Adult and Senior divisions -** (See chart). Dynamic ratings will be calculated for all players during local league competition, and at every level of championship competition below National Championships, to determine if any players have reached the NTRP disqualification criteria stated in the USTA NTRP Computer Rating System Procedures. **Year-end computer (C) and benchmark (B) players are not subject to dynamic NTRP disqualification. All other players (Self-rated, Appealed, Mixed Exclusive, Tournament),** will be NTRP disqualified if they reach the disqualification level three (3) times.

1) **Local League NTRP Disqualification.** **All matches played shall be considered losses and those matches shall be considered 6-0, 6-0 wins for the opposing player or doubles team.** Players will be notified by the **NTRP Coordinator** and have the right to a review in accordance with NTRP Disqualification Review Procedures.

2) Championship NTRP Disqualification. The Section will run dynamic calculations and produce ratings throughout the championship. Through the conclusion of the championship event, notify and disqualify those players that meet the criteria for NTRP disqualification. (See chart).

a) During the round robin format or segment. All matches played by the player within the flight shall be considered losses and those matches shall be considered 6-0, 6-0 wins for the opposing player or doubles team.

b) During single elimination or segment. The last individual match played by the player shall be considered a loss and that individual match shall be considered a win for the opposing player or doubles team.

3) Individuals who receive their third strike while participating in another division, but following the conclusion of their Section Championships for a given year and division, will be allowed to advance to the appropriate Nationals, if they otherwise qualify.

4) Following an NTRP disqualification, the player may not play at the disqualified NTRP level of play (and any lower level of play) in either singles or doubles for the remainder of the championship league year and for the succeeding league year.

5) Players who are NTRP disqualified may be allowed to move up and participate on another team at a higher NTRP level during that same local league season provided the roster add-on date has not ended.

6) In combined leagues, the disqualified player must play with a partner that does not surpass the level entered. In the Mixed Doubles division, individuals who receive their third strike while participating in another division but following the conclusion of their Mixed Section Championships for a given year will be allowed to advance to the Mixed Doubles Nationals at their NTRP disqualified level, if they otherwise qualify.

7) If the NTRP disqualification of a player is not upheld by the NTRP Review Committee, a second NTRP disqualification will be considered if warranted by additional data.

NTRP Disqualification Review Procedures.

1) Reviews are considered based solely on missing or incorrect information and must be submitted to the NTRP Coordinator within the deadline.

2) Local. If the team captain or the player disqualified in the local league desires to request a review of the NTRP disqualification, he/she must request, in writing, to the [NTRP Coordinator](#), a review before the NTRP Review Committee within the deadline set by the administrator.

3) Championship. If the team captain or the player disqualified during the conclusion of championship competition desires a review of the disqualification, he/she must request, in writing, a review before the NTRP Review Committee within the deadline set by the chairman of the championships committee.

4) The request for a review shall be delivered to the chairman of the NTRP Review Committee. A review shall be held as soon as reasonable.

NTRP Review Committees.

1) NTRP Review Committees may be appointed at the area and section championships to consider reviews to the NTRP disqualifications. Each committee shall be appointed with the approval of the SLC.

2) The members of any NTRP Review Committee may be the same as, or different in whole or in part, from the members of any other local, area or section committees.

3) The decision of the NTRP Review Committee shall be by majority vote. The Committee shall immediately notify the affected players and team captains in writing of its decision.

4) There shall be no further right of appeal from the decision of any NTRP Review Committee.

1.07 OFFICIAL BALL. Any USTA approved ball may be used for USTA League Tennis matches.

1.08 WAIVER OF RULES AND PROCEDURES PROHIBITED. Except where a waiver is specifically permitted by a USTA League Tennis Regulation or by a USTA League Tennis Procedure, no USTA League Tennis Regulation or USTA League Tennis Procedure shall be waived by any Section Association or by any local, area or Section League Coordinator or Grievance or Grievance Appeal Committee. [No SCTA League Tennis Regulation or SCTA League Tennis Procedure shall be waived by any Local or Area League Coordinator or Grievance or Grievance Appeal Committee.](#) Any violation of this Regulation shall be subject to such sanctions as may be imposed by the USTA League Tennis Committee (including, for example, the disqualification of any teams involved in any such waivers). Such sanctions are not subject to appeal.

1.09 AMENDMENTS. The USTA League Tennis Regulations (ULR) may be amended by the USTA League Tennis Committee with the approval of a committee comprised of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the USTA League Tennis Committee and the National League Administrator. The Southern California Section League Tennis Regulations (ULSR) may be amended by the section office with the approval of the Section League Coordinator (SLC). All proposed amendments for the following year must be forwarded to the SLC by June 1st.

1.10 SANCTION. Local league competition is sanctioned in accordance with USTA Regulation V. C. 2.

1.11 MEMBERSHIP & AGE.

(A) Any individual who competes in the USTA/SCTA League Tennis Program must be domiciled within the boundaries of the [Southern California Tennis Association](#) (or participate through a USTA direct Member Club). Residents of foreign countries who meet membership and age requirements may be invited to participate in the program provided that all such matches are played within the section.

(B) All individuals who compete in the USTA/SCTA League Tennis Program must be current members in good standings for the league season.

(C) Any individual who progresses to championship level in the USTA/SCTA League Tennis Program must be a current member through each championship progression.

(D) USTA Memberships may be purchased, renewed or extended using Tennis Link during the registration process or online at: [usta.com](#).

(E) Each player shall have reached the required minimum age prior to or during the calendar year in which such player plays in his/her first local league match. (See chart) *College players must consult the Intercollegiate Athletics Compliance Officer/Athletic Director at their college to insure that their eligibility will not be jeopardized by competing in league tennis.*

1.12 PLAYER AGREEMENT. All players participating in the USTA/SCTA League Tennis Program, as a condition of their participation, agree to abide and be bound by the USTA Constitution and By-Laws; the USTA Regulations; the Rules of Tennis (unless modified by these USTA LEAGUE TENNIS REGULATIONS); the USTA LEAGUE TENNIS REGULATIONS and the standards of good conduct, fair play and good sportsmanship.

1.13 WAIVER OF CLAIMS. Players participating in the USTA/SCTA League Tennis Program, acknowledge the risks associated with playing competitive tennis, accept those risks voluntarily, and in consideration of their acceptance in the Program assume all risks for bodily injury, waive all claims for injury and property damage and release and hold harmless the USTA, SCTA, any host facilities, their officials, employees and agents with respect to any injury or loss caused by negligence or otherwise to the fullest extent permitted by law.

1.14 USTA LEAGUE TENNIS COMMITTEE. The USTA League Tennis Program shall be governed by the USTA League Tennis Committee appointed by the President of the USTA and subject to the control and direction of the USTA Board of Directors.

1.15 USTA NATIONAL LEAGUE ADMINISTRATOR. The USTA National League Administrator, under the employ of the USTA, shall be responsible for the day-to-day administration of the USTA League Tennis Program including the interpretation of the USTA LEAGUE TENNIS REGULATIONS.

1.16 ASSOCIATIONS.

SECTION. The USTA has seventeen (17) section associations; the names and territories of which are defined in the USTA By-Laws. Each section association is responsible for the development and implementation of the USTA League Tennis Program within its geographic territory in accordance with the USTA LEAGUE TENNIS REGULATIONS. [The Southern California Section League Regulations \(SLR\) shall be governed by the Section office and subject to the control and direction of the Section League Coordinator.](#)

AREA. The Southern California Tennis Association (SCTA) has fourteen (14) area associations: Bakersfield, Central Coast, Coachella Valley, Inland Empire, Los Angeles, Orange County, Ridgecrest, San Diego, San Diego North County, San Fernando Valley, San Gabriel Valley, Santa Barbara, Temecula Valley and Ventura.

1.17 SECTION LEAGUE COORDINATOR (SLC). The section association shall appoint a Section League Coordinator to implement and administer the USTA/SCTA League Tennis Program.

1.18 AREA LEAGUE COORDINATORS (ALC). The Section League Coordinator may appoint area league coordinators to establish match schedules, implement and administer the USTA/SCTA League Tennis Program in their respective league area. Local League Regulations (LLR) may be developed to supplement (not contradict) the ULR and the SLR and must be submitted to and approved by the SLC.

1.19 LOCAL LEAGUE COORDINATORS (LLC). The Section League Coordinator may appoint Local League Coordinators to implement and administer a division within the USTA/SCTA League Tennis Program in their respective local league area.

1.20 TEAM CAPTAIN. Each team shall appoint a team captain to handle all administrative affairs, including:

a) Represent the team [at captain's meetings](#) and keep team members informed of all matters pertaining to the USTA/SCTA League Tennis Program.

b) Receive information regarding local and championship play.

c) Be responsible for knowing local, section and national regulations. *Failure to comply with the ULR, SLR and LLR shall not be excused on the grounds that one was misinformed by a USTA staff member or volunteer.*

1.21 CHAMPIONSHIPS COMMITTEES. A championships committee of at least three members (one of whom is a USTA Certified Referee or Umpire) shall govern each championship. At least one member of the championships committee shall be in attendance at all times during play. The championships committees, except for the national championships, shall be appointed by the SLC. The Chairman of the USTA League Tennis Committee shall appoint the championships committees for the national championships.

1.22 USTA LEAGUE TENNIS YEAR. The League Year shall be January 1 through December 31.

1.23 LOCAL LEAGUE SEASON. [The section shall determine the dates for the season\(s\) of the local leagues within its section. Local leagues shall obtain approval from the Section for dates that are different than those published.](#)

1.24 GENERAL. League players may play in the USTA League Tennis - Adult, Senior, Super Senior, Mixed Doubles, TriLevel divisions [and the SCTA Doubles League](#) during the same local league season.

2.00 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES: The Regulations in 2.00 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES shall apply to all USTA League Tennis Divisions [and the SCTA Doubles League](#).

2.01 COMMITTEES.

Grievance & Grievance Appeal Committees. All Grievance & Grievance Appeal Committees shall consist of no less than three persons, including a chairman, to adjudicate grievances and consider appeals from the Grievance Committees. The members of the Grievance Committee may be the same as or different in whole or part, from the committee first approved. No member of a Grievance Appeal Committee may be a member of a Grievance Committee. The members of any Committee are to be approved by the SLC.

1) Local. With the approval of the section association, each local league may appoint a Local League Grievance & Grievance Appeal Committees.

2) Area and Section. The section association shall appoint an Area and/or Section League Grievance & Grievance Appeal Committees.

3) National. The Chairman of the USTA League Tennis Committee shall appoint a National League Grievance Appeal Committee.

Championship Grievance & Grievance Appeal Committees.

1) Area and Section Championships. The section association shall appoint an Area and/or Section League Championship Grievance & Grievance Appeal Committees.

2) National Championships. The Chairman of the USTA League Tennis Committee shall appoint National League Championships Grievance & Grievance Appeal Committees. The members may be the same as, or different in whole or in part, from the members of the National League Championships Committee.

2.02 GRIEVANCE COMPLAINTS: *(Complaint forms can be downloaded from the website at: scta.usta.com - under USTA League Tennis - under Forms).*

(A) Local League Grievances.

1) All complaints alleging a violation, of the USTA Constitution and By-Laws; the USTA Regulations; the Rules of Tennis or other USTA regulations (unless modified by these USTA LEAGUE TENNIS REGULATIONS); the USTA/[SCTA](#) LEAGUE TENNIS REGULATIONS or standards of good conduct, fair play and good sportsmanship, shall be filed in writing with the USTA/[SCTA](#) League Tennis Grievance Committee responsible for enforcement.

2) A complaint against the administration of the League should be filed and heard at the next higher level in the same manner as any other complaint, with the Section being the final authority.

3) Any complaint against the National League Administrator shall be filed in writing with the USTA League Tennis Committee. The decision of the USTA League Tennis Committee shall be final and binding.

4) Complaints with regard to any aspect of the USTA/[SCTA](#) League Tennis Program shall be processed through the USTA/[SCTA](#) League Tennis Program Grievance and Grievance Appeal Committees at the appropriate level (i.e. local, area, section, or national.) Decisions of Grievance Appeal Committees shall be final and binding except with regard to suspensions of individuals or teams for a period of 12 months or more.

5) A complaint against an individual or team may only be filed by:

a) The team captain of the team who has competed in the match where the alleged violation occurred,

b) A league coordinator

c) A member of a championships committee.

6) Regardless of any other regulation, a league coordinator or a member of a championship committee, may file a grievance at any time.

7) Play during grievance procedures: An individual or team may continue to play during a grievance investigation and hearing but must understand that if upheld, all matches played during that time may be defaulted.

(B) Local League Procedures.

1) All complaints alleging a violation by an individual or team during local league competition shall be filed in writing with the [ALC](#). The complaint must be filed prior to the commencement of the next team match in that specific flight and that specific division involving the participant(s) or team(s), or within twenty-four hours after the end of local league play, whichever occurs first.

2) Upon receipt of the complaint, the [ALC](#) shall immediately send a copy to the chairman of the Local League Grievance Committee, [the SLC](#) and to the party(ies) against whom the complaint has been filed.

3) A complaint regarding failure to meet eligibility requirements (e.g. under age, not a USTA member, misrepresentation of identity) may be filed by a team captain, league coordinator or member of a championship committee at any time.

a) For eligibility matters of simple fact (e.g. age, USTA membership, TennisLink registration) a USTA League coordinator may declare a player ineligible and disqualify that player without filing a grievance. (See ULR: 1.04, 1.11, 3.01C, 3.01D, 4.01, 5.01C, 5.01D, 6.01C and 6.01D)

b) All other complaints must go to the appropriate league grievance committee.

4) Scoring of Eligibility Disqualification in Local League.

a) In the event of an eligibility disqualification **during the local league season** and up to 24 hours after the end of local league season, all matches played by the player shall be considered defaults and those matches shall be considered wins for the opposing players or doubles teams and scored (6-0, 6-0). In case of an eligibility disqualification in single elimination, the last individual match played by the player shall be considered a win for the opposing player or doubles team and scored (6-0, 6-0). If a double disqualification results in a tie, the local tie-break procedures shall be used to determine the winner of the team match. If no such local tie-break procedure exists, the Championship Procedures will be used to determine a winner of that team match.

b) In the event of an eligibility disqualification **after the conclusion of the local league season by more than 24 hours**, the team will remain eligible to participate and retain points received up to the disqualification, but the ineligible player will not be allowed to continue or advance.

(C) Championship Procedures.

1) All complaints alleging a violation during championship competition shall be in writing and delivered to the duly appointed site director within thirty minutes of completion of the team match, or prior to the commencement of the next team match involving the individual or team, whichever occurs first.

2) At the time a complaint is filed, a copy of such complaint shall be sent to the party(ies) against whom the complaint has been made.

3) A complaint regarding failure to meet eligibility requirements (e.g. under age, not a USTA member, misrepresentation of identity) may be filed by a team captain, league coordinator or a member of a championship committee at any time.

4) Scoring of Eligibility Disqualification for Championships.

a) In the event of an eligibility disqualification **prior to or after the conclusion of a championship event**, the team will remain eligible to participate and retain points received up to the disqualification, but the ineligible player will not be allowed to continue or advance.

b) In the event of an eligibility disqualification in a round robin format **during the championship event**, the player will not be allowed to continue or advance **on that team** and all matches played by the player shall be considered losses and those matches shall be considered wins for the opposing players or doubles teams and scored (6-0, 6-0).

c) In case of a disqualification in single elimination format during the championship event, the last individual match played by the player shall be considered a win for the opposing player or doubles team and scored (6-0, 6-0). If a double disqualification results in a tie, the "tie-break procedures in the event of a tie" will be used in order to determine a winner of that team match.

(D) Grievance Committee Action.

1) Following the receipt of a complaint, the appropriate USTA/SCTA League Tennis Grievance Committee shall, as soon as reasonable, (a) cause such investigation of the alleged violation to be made as the Committee deems appropriate, and if it deems the same to be necessary shall (b) arrange for a hearing at which the parties involved shall have the right to appear personally and present evidence.

2) The USTA/SCTA League Tennis Grievance Committee shall have the power to dismiss the complaint or to direct the correction of any violations by reasonable means, including the suspension of an individual or team.

3) The USTA/SCTA League Tennis Grievance Committee shall prepare a written decision setting forth the basis for its decision and the deadline for any written appeal and promptly deliver copies to the parties involved.

4) The decision of the USTA/SCTA League Tennis Grievance Committee shall be by majority vote.

(E) Self-Rate Grievance

1) Players who enter the USTA League Tennis program by inappropriately self-rating at an NTRP level lower than their actual skill level are considered to have violated the standards of good conduct, fair play and good sportsmanship. These players may be subject to a Self-Rate Grievance. USTA League Tennis Regulation 2.00 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES, with the following exceptions and modifications, shall apply to Self-Rate Grievances.

2) Players with a valid computer rating are not subject to self-rate grievances.

3) Any league captain, coordinator or member of a championship committee may file a Self-Rate Grievance.

4) A player who inappropriately self-rates, and captains and others who condone inappropriate self-rating, may be subject to possible sanctions, including disqualification and suspension.

5) Self-Rate Grievances may be filed at any time up to forty-eight (48) hours after the conclusion of a self-rated player's Section Championships. No Self-Rate Grievances will be accepted at National Championships.

6) **Local League Competition** – Self-Rate Grievances shall be filed in writing with the [NTRP Coordinator](#). Self-Rate Grievances shall be handled by the Section League Grievance Committee.

7) **Championship Competition** – Self-Rate Grievances shall be filed in writing with the [NTRP Coordinator](#). Self-Rate Grievances shall be handled by the Section League Grievance Committee. **The Dynamic Rating System is in effect during the Adult and Senior championships. Self-rate grievances based on match results will not be considered at those championships.**

8) A Self-Rate Grievance disqualification occurs when the Section League Grievance Committee reaches such decision and sends notification to the parties involved. The date and time that the Section League Grievance Committee sends notification controls the assessment of sanctions, including the scoring of matches, which shall be administered in accordance with USTA League Tennis Regulations (ULR) 2.02B(4) and 2.02C(4), concerning scoring of eligibility disqualifications.

9) The Section League Grievance Committee decision may be appealed in accordance with USTA League Tennis Regulation (ULR) 2.03 GRIEVANCE APPEALS.

2.03 GRIEVANCE APPEALS.

(A) General Procedures.

1) Any party to the complaint may appeal the decision of the Grievance Committee within the time fixed by the Grievance Committee. Upon receipt of an appeal of the decision of the Grievance Committee, the Grievance Appeal Committee shall act promptly to resolve the appeal.

2) Play during grievance appeal procedures.

a) If the grievance was upheld, the individual is subject to all sanctions imposed by the Grievance Committee during the appeal process.

b) If the grievance was denied and appealed by the filer, the individual may participate during his/her appeal process but must understand that if the decision of the Grievance Committee is reversed; all matches played during that time may be defaulted.

3) The party appealing shall file written notice of appeal with the appropriate coordinator or designee who shall send to the: chairman of the appropriate Grievance Appeal Committee, chairman of the Grievance Committee whose decision is being appealed, Local or Section League Coordinator, and to the other party(ies) involved in the complaint.

4) The parties appealing shall have an opportunity to submit in writing facts and arguments in support of their respective positions.

(B) Grievance Appeal Committees Action.

1) The Grievance Appeal Committees shall not be required to hold any hearing except as provided in 2.03B(2). Its decision may be based entirely on the findings of fact by the Grievance Committee whose decision is being appealed and on the facts and arguments submitted in writing by the parties to the appeal.

2) If the Grievance Committee did not hold a hearing, the Grievance Appeal Committee shall do so, provided any party involved in the complaint so requests in writing. However, the Committee may hear such further evidence as it, in its absolute discretion, deems appropriate.

3) The Grievance Appeal Committee shall have the power to affirm, modify or reject the decision of the Grievance Committee. If the Grievance Committee has imposed a penalty, the Grievance Appeal Committee may not impose a harsher penalty. Any individual or team suspended for a period of 12 months or more may appeal the final decision of the Grievance Appeal Committee to the National League Grievance Appeal Committee within the deadline established by the Grievance Appeal Committee.

4) A copy of the Grievance Appeal Committee's written decision setting forth the basis of its decision shall be promptly sent to all interested parties and such decisions shall be final and binding. The following exception shall apply: Any individual or team suspended for a period of 12 months or more may appeal the final decision of the Grievance Appeal Committee to the National League Grievance Appeal Committee within the deadline established by the Grievance Appeal Committee. The administration may not appeal the decision of the Grievance Appeal committee.

5) The decision of the Grievance Appeal Committee shall be by majority vote.

(C) National League Grievance Appeal Committee Action.

1) The National League Grievance Appeal Committee shall hear appeals from individuals/teams who have been suspended for a period of 12 months or more by a local or section Grievance Appeal Committee. Upon receipt of an appeal of the decision of the Grievance Appeal Committee, the National Grievance Appeal Committee shall act promptly to resolve the appeal.

2) The National League Grievance Appeal Committee shall have the power to conduct such investigation as they deem necessary and to affirm, modify or reject the decision of the Grievance Appeal Committee but may not impose any harsher penalties.

3) The National League Grievance Appeal Committee shall notify the affected player(s)/captain(s) and local, district or section individuals or teams and the Grievance Appeal Committee in writing of its decision.

2.04 GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR GRIEVANCE AND GRIEVANCE APPEAL COMMITTEES.

(A) Telephone Conference Calls. If one or more members of a Grievance Committee or Grievance Appeal Committee cannot be present at a hearing, such members may, at the discretion of the chairman, participate by means of a telephone conference call. If any witness cannot be present at a hearing to present evidence, such witness may, at the discretion of the chairman, be permitted to do so by means of a telephone conference call.

(B) Written Requirement. The requirement that a notice or other document be in writing is satisfied if it is sent by a telegram, fax, e-mail or equivalent communication.

2009 USTA/SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SECTION REGULATION CHART

REGULATION	ADULT	SENIOR	MXD	SUPER SENIOR	SCTA DOUBLES	TRI-LEVEL DOUBLES
MINIMUM AGE	19yrs & older	50yrs & older	19yrs & older	60yrs & older	19yrs & older	19yrs & older
GENDER	Men & Women (Separate teams)	Men & Women (Separate teams)	Men & Women (Same team)	Men & Women (Separate teams)	Men & Women (Separate teams)	Men & Women (Separate teams)
NTRP LEVELS <i>(See Tennis Link)</i>	2.5, 3.0, 3.5 4.0, 4.5, 5.0, 5.5, OPEN	3.0, 3.5, 4.0, 4.5	2.5, 6.0, 7.0, 8.0, 9.0, 10.0	6.0, 7.0, 8.0, 9.0	2.5, 3.0, 3.5, 4.0, 4.5, 5.0, 5.5, OPEN	2.5/3.0/3.5 3.0/3.5/4.0 3.5/4.0/4.5
TEAM FORMAT	2 Sgls & 3 Dbls - OR - 1Sgls & 2 Dbls (levels: 2.5, 5.0, 5.5, Open)	3 DOUBLES	3 DOUBLES	3 DOUBLES	3 DOUBLES	3 DOUBLES
MIN. # of PLAYERS REQ'D	8 (levels 3.0-4.5) 5 (levels 2.5, 5.0, 5.5, Open)	6	6	6	6	6
LEAGUE FORMAT	Same as Championship	Same as Championship	May be the same as Championship	May be the same as Championship	May be the same as Championship	May be the same as Championship
NTRP DISQUALIFICATON	YES (Exception: 5.5 & Open)	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
COMPUTER RATINGS/VALID	3 years	3 years	3 years	2 years	3 years	3 years
YEAR-END RATINGS <i>(Results entered in T/L by Oct 31 are used)</i>	YES	YES	NO (Exclusive year-end rating)	YES	YES	YES
NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP	YES	YES	YES <i>Exception: 2.5 level (Section play only)</i>	YES	NO	INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENT <i>(Only 3.5/4.0/4.5)</i>
MIN. # OF MATCHES REQUIRED FOR PLAYOFFS & SECTIONALS	2 (1 default may count)	2 (1 default may count)	2 (1 default may count)	WAIVED	2 (1 def. may count)	WAIVED
MIN. # OF MATCHES REQUIRED FOR NATIONALS	3 (No defaults will count)	3 (No defaults will count)	3 (No defaults will count)	2 (1 default may count)	N/A	N/A
MOVE-UP/SPLIT-UP RULE	YES <i>Exception: 2.5 & 5.0 (Only 2 players stay together)</i>	YES	YES	WAIVED	YES	WAIVED
MAX. # OF AWARDS GIVEN AT SECTIONALS	12 ---OR--- 9 (2.5, 5.0, 5.5, Open)	10	10	10	10	10

2008
THE CODE
THE PLAYERS' GUIDE FOR MATCHES WHEN OFFICIALS ARE NOT PRESENT
PREFACE

When your serve hits your partner stationed at the net, is it a let, fault, or loss of point? Likewise, what is the ruling when your serve, before touching the ground, hits an opponent who is standing *back* of the baseline. The answers to these questions are obvious to anyone who knows the fundamentals of tennis, but it is surprising the number of players who don't know these fundamentals. All players have a responsibility to be familiar with the basic rules and customs of tennis. Further, it can be distressing when a player makes a decision in accordance with a rule and the opponent protests with the remark: "Well, I never heard of that rule before!" Ignorance of the rules constitutes a delinquency on the part of a player and often spoils an otherwise good match. What is written here constitutes the essentials of *The Code*, a summary of procedures and unwritten rules that custom and tradition dictate all players should follow. No system of rules will cover every specific problem or situation that may arise. If players of good will follow the principles of *The Code*, they should always be able to reach an agreement, while at the same time making tennis more fun and a better game for all. The principles set forth in *The Code* shall apply in cases not specifically covered by the ITF Rules of Tennis and USTA Regulations. Before reading this you might well ask yourself: Since we have a book that contains all the rules of tennis, why do we need a code? Isn't it sufficient to know and understand all the rules? There are a number of things not specifically set forth in the rules that are covered by custom and tradition only. For example, if you have a doubt on a line call, your opponent gets the benefit of the doubt. Can you find that in the rules? Further, custom dictates the standard procedures that players will use in reaching decisions. These are the reasons we need a code.

—Col. Nick Powel

Note: *The Code* is not part of the official ITF Rules of Tennis. Players shall follow *The Code* in all unofficiated matches. Many of the principles also apply when officials are present. This edition of *The Code* is an adaptation of the original, which was written by Colonel Nicolas E. Powel.

PRINCIPLES

1. *Courtesy*. Tennis is a game that requires cooperation and courtesy from all participants. Make tennis a fun game by praising your opponents' good shots and by not:
 - conducting loud postmortems after points;
 - complaining about shots like lobs and drop shots;
 - embarrassing a weak opponent by being overly gracious or condescending;
 - losing your temper, using vile language, throwing your racket, or slamming a ball in anger; or
 - sulking when you are losing.
2. *Counting points played in good faith*. All points played in good faith stand. For example, if after losing a point, a player discovers that the net was four inches too high, the point stands. If a point is played from the wrong court, there is no replay. If during a point, a player realizes that a mistake was made at the beginning (for example, service from the wrong court), the player shall continue playing the point. Corrective action may be taken only after a point has been completed. Shaking hands at end of the match is an acknowledgment by the players that the match is over.

THE WARM-UP

3. *Warm-up is not practice*. A player should provide the opponent a 5-minute warm-up (ten minutes if there are no ballpersons). If a player refuses to warm up the opponent, the player forfeits the right to a warm-up. Some players confuse warm-up and practice. Each player should make a special effort to hit shots directly to the opponent. (If partners want to warm each other up while their opponents are warming up, they may do so.)
4. *Warm-up serves and returns*. A player should take all warm-up serves before the first serve of the match. A player who returns serves should return them at a moderate pace in a manner that does not disrupt the server.

MAKING CALLS

5. *Player makes calls on own side of the net*. A player calls all shots landing on, or aimed at, the player's side of the net.
6. *Opponent gets benefit of doubt*. When a match is played without officials, the players are responsible for making decisions, particularly for line calls. There is a subtle difference between player decisions and those of an on-court official. An official impartially resolves a problem involving a call, whereas a player is guided by the unwritten law that any doubt must be resolved in favor of the opponent. A player in attempting to be scrupulously honest on line calls frequently will find himself keeping a ball in play that might have been out or that the player discovers too late was out. *Even so, the game is much better played this way.*
7. *Ball touching any part of line is good*. If any part of the ball touches the line, the ball is good. A ball 99% out is still 100% good.
8. *Ball that cannot be called out is good*. Any ball that cannot be called out is considered to have been good. A player may not claim a let on the basis of not seeing a ball. One of tennis' most infuriating moments occurs after a long hard rally when a player makes a clean placement and the opponent says: "I'm not sure if it was good or out. Let's play a let." Remember, it is each player's responsibility to call all balls landing on, or aimed at, the player's side of the net. If a ball can't be called out with certainty, it is good. When you say your opponent's shot was really out but you offer to replay the point to give your opponent a break, you are deluding yourself because you must have had some doubt.

9. *Calls when looking across a line or when far away.* The call of a player looking down a line is much more likely to be accurate than that of a player looking across a line. When you are looking across a line, don't call a ball out unless you can clearly see part of the court between where the ball hit and the line. It is difficult for a player who stands on one baseline to question a call on a ball that landed near the other baseline.

10. *Treat all points the same regardless of their importance.* All points in a match should be treated the same. There is no justification for considering a match point differently than the first point.

11. *Requesting opponent's help.* When an opponent's opinion is requested and the opponent gives a positive opinion, it must be accepted. If neither player has an opinion, the ball is considered good. Aid from an opponent is available only on a call that ends a point.

12. *Out calls corrected.* If a player mistakenly calls a ball "out" and then realizes it was good, the point shall be replayed if the player returned the ball within the proper court. Nonetheless, if the player's return of the ball results in a "weak sitter," the player should give the opponent the point. If the player failed to make the return, the opponent wins the point. If the mistake was made on the second serve, the server is entitled to two serves.

13. *Player calls own shots out.* With the exception of the first serve, a player should call against himself or herself any ball the player clearly sees out regardless of whether requested to do so by the opponent. The prime objective in making calls is accuracy. All players should cooperate to attain this objective.

14. *Partners' disagreement on calls.* If one partner calls the ball out and the other partner sees the ball good, they shall call it good. It is more important to give your opponents the benefit of the doubt than to avoid possibly hurting your partner's feelings. The tactful way to achieve the desired result is to tell your partner quietly of the mistake and then let your partner concede the point. If a call is changed from out to good, the principles of Code §12 apply.

15. *Audible or visible calls.* No matter how obvious it is to a player that the opponent's ball is out, the opponent is entitled to a prompt audible or visible out call.

16. *Opponent's calls questioned.* When a player genuinely doubts an opponent's call, the player may ask: "Are you sure of your call?" If the opponent reaffirms that the ball was out, the call shall be accepted. If the opponent acknowledges uncertainty, the opponent loses the point. There shall be no further delay or discussion.

17. *Spectators never to make calls.* A player shall not enlist the aid of a spectator in making a call. No spectator has a part in the match.

18. *Prompt calls eliminate two chance option.* A player shall make all calls promptly after the ball has hit the court. A call shall be made either before the player's return shot has gone out of play or before the opponent has had the opportunity to play the return shot. Prompt calls will quickly eliminate the "two chances to win the point" option that some players practice. To illustrate, a player is advancing to the net for an easy put away and sees a ball from an adjoining court rolling toward the court. The player continues to advance and hits the shot, only to have the supposed easy put away fly over the baseline. The player then claims a let. The claim is not valid because the player forfeited the right to call a let by choosing instead to play the ball. The player took a chance to win or lose and is not entitled to a second chance.

19. *Lets called when balls roll on the court.* When a ball from an adjacent court enters the playing area, any player shall call a let as soon as the player becomes aware of the ball. The player loses the right to call a let if the player unreasonably delays in making the call.

20. *Touches, hitting ball before it crosses net, invasion of opponent's court, double hits, and double bounces.* A player shall promptly acknowledge if:

- a ball touches the player;
- the player touches the net;
- the player touches the player's opponent's court;
- the player hits a ball before it crosses the net;
- the player deliberately carries or double hits the ball; or
- the ball bounces more than once in the player's court.

21. *Balls hit through the net or into the ground.* A player shall make the ruling on a ball that the player's opponent hits:

- through the net; or
- into the ground before it goes over the net.

22. *Calling balls on clay courts.* If any part of the ball mark touches the line on a clay court, the ball shall be called good. If you can see only part of the mark on the court, this means that the missing part is on the line or tape. A player should take a careful second look at any point-ending placement that is close to a line on a clay court. Occasionally a ball will strike the tape, jump, and then leave a full mark behind the line. This does not mean that a player is required to show the opponent the mark. The opponent shall not cross the net to inspect a mark. See **USTA Regulation IV.C.8**. If the player hears the sound of the ball striking the tape and sees a clean spot on the tape near the mark, the player should give the point to the opponent.

SERVING

23. *Server's request for third ball.* When a server requests three balls, the receiver shall comply when the third ball is readily available. Distant balls shall be retrieved at the end of a game.

24. *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.
25. *Service calls in doubles.* In doubles the receiver's partner should call the service line, and the receiver should call the sideline and the center service line. Nonetheless, either partner may call a ball that either clearly sees.
26. *Service calls by serving team.* Neither the server nor server's partner shall make a fault call on the first service even if they think it is out because the receiver may be giving the server the benefit of the doubt. There is one exception. If the receiver plays a first service that is a fault and does not put the return in play, the server or server's partner may make the fault call. The server and the server's partner shall call out any second serve that either clearly sees out.
27. *Service let calls.* Any player may call a service let. The call shall be made before the return of serve goes out of play or is hit by the server or the server's partner. If the serve is an apparent or near ace, any let shall be called promptly.
28. *Obvious faults.* A player shall not put into play or hit over the net an obvious fault. To do so constitutes rudeness and may even be a form of gamesmanship. On the other hand, if a player does not call a serve a fault and gives the opponent the benefit of a close call, the server is not entitled to replay the point.
29. *Receiver readiness.* The receiver shall play to the reasonable pace of the server. The receiver should make no effort to return a serve when the receiver is not ready. If a player attempts to return a serve (even if it is a "quick" serve), then the receiver (or Receiving team) is presumed to be ready.
30. *Delays during service.* When the server's second service motion is interrupted by a ball coming onto the court, the server is entitled to two serves. When there is a delay between the first and second serves:
- the server gets one serve if the server was the cause of the delay;
 - the server gets two serves if the delay was caused by the Receiver or if there was outside interference. The time it takes to clear a ball that comes onto the court between the first and second serves is not considered sufficient time to warrant the server receiving two serves unless this time is so prolonged as to constitute an interruption. The receiver is the judge of whether the delay is sufficiently prolonged to justify giving the server two serves.

SCORING

31. *Server announces score.* The server shall announce the game score before the first point of the game and the point score before each subsequent point of the game.
32. *Disputes.* Disputes over the score shall be resolved by using one of the following methods, which are listed in the order of preference:
- count all points and games agreed upon by the players and
 - replay only the disputed points or games;
 - play from a score mutually agreeable to all players;
 - spin a racket or toss a coin.

HINDRANCE ISSUES

33. *Talking during a point.* A player shall not talk while the ball is moving toward the opponent's side of the court. If the player's talking interferes with an opponent's ability to play the ball, the player loses the point. Consider the situation where a player hits a weak lob and loudly yells at his or her partner to get back. If the shout is loud enough to distract an opponent, then the opponent may claim the point based on a deliberate hindrance. If the opponent chooses to hit the lob and misses it, the opponent loses the point because the opponent did not make a timely claim of hindrance.
34. *Body movement.* A player may feint with the body while the ball is in play. A player may change position at any time, including while the server is tossing the ball. Any other movement or any sound that is made solely to distract an opponent, including, but not limited to, waving the arms or racket or stamping the feet, is not allowed.
35. *Lets due to hindrance.* A let is not automatically granted because of hindrance. A let is authorized only if the player could have made the shot had the player not been hindered. A let is also not authorized for a hindrance caused by something within a player's control. For example, a request for a let because the player tripped over the player's own hat should be denied.
36. *Grunting.* A player should avoid grunting and making other loud noises. Grunting and other loud noises may bother not only opponents but also players on adjacent courts. In an extreme case, an opponent or a player on an adjacent court may seek the assistance of the Referee or a Roving Umpire. The Referee or official may treat grunting and the making of loud noises as a hindrance. Depending upon the circumstance, this could result in a let or loss of point.
37. *Injury caused by a player.* When a player accidentally injures an opponent, the opponent suffers the consequences. Consider the situation where the server's racket accidentally strikes the receiver and incapacitates the receiver. The receiver is unable to resume play within the time limit. Even though the server caused the injury, the server wins the match by retirement. On the other hand, when a player deliberately injures an opponent and affects the opponent's ability to play, then the opponent wins the match by default. Hitting a ball or throwing a racket in anger is considered a deliberate act.

WHEN TO CONTACT AN OFFICIAL

38. *Withdrawing from a match or tournament.* A player shall not enter a tournament and then withdraw when the player discovers that tough opponents have also entered. A player may withdraw from a match or tournament only because of injury, illness, or personal emergency. A player who cannot play a match shall notify the Referee at once so that the opponent may be saved a trip. A player who withdraws from a tournament is not entitled to the return of the entry fee unless the player withdrew more than six days before the start of the tournament.

39. *Stalling.* The following actions constitute stalling :

- warming up longer than the allotted time;
- playing at about one-third a player's normal pace;
- taking more than 90 seconds on the odd-game changeover; or more than 120 seconds on the Set Break.
- taking longer than the authorized 10 minutes during a rest period;
- starting a discussion or argument in order for a player to catch his or her breath;
- clearing a missed first service that doesn't need to be cleared; and
- excessive bouncing of the ball before any serve.

A player who encounters a problem with stalling should contact an official. Stalling is subject to penalty under the Point Penalty System.

40. *Requesting an official.* While normally a player may not leave the playing area, the player may contact the Referee or a Roving Umpire to request assistance. Some reasons for visiting the Referee include:

- stalling;
- chronic flagrant foot faults;
- a Medical Time-Out
- a scoring dispute; and
- a pattern of bad calls.

A player may refuse to play until an official responds.

BALL ISSUES

41. *Retrieving stray balls.* Each player is responsible for removing stray balls and other objects from the player's end of the court. A player's request to remove a ball from the opponent's court must be honored. A player shall not go behind an adjacent court to retrieve a ball, nor ask a player for return of a ball from players on an adjacent court until their point is over. When a player returns a ball that comes from an adjacent court, the player shall wait until their point is over and then return it directly to one of the players, preferably the server.

42. *Catching a ball.* If a player catches a ball before it bounces, the player loses the point regardless of where the player is standing.

43. *New balls for a third set.* When a tournament specifies new balls for a third set, new balls shall be used unless all players agree otherwise.

MISCELLANEOUS

44. *Clothing and equipment malfunction.* If clothing or equipment, other than a racket, becomes unusable through circumstances outside the control of the player, play may be suspended for a reasonable period. The player may leave the court after the point is over to correct the problem. If a racket or string is broken, the player may leave the court to get a replacement, but the player is subject to code violations under the Point Penalty System.

45. *Placement of towels.* Place towels on the ground outside the net post or at the back fence. Clothing and towels should never be placed on the net.