USTA SoCal Section Regulation Highlights/ Local League Rules

Inland Empire

This document provides the day to day rules that apply to the So Cal Section. Where there is a Local League Rule (Area specific), it is listed in the text in blue font. Highlighted are key National and Section regulations (complete National regulations document is available for more detailed reference).

The Code of Tennis emphasizes acting with courtesy and to always give your opponent the benefit of doubt. The players on the court ultimately will make decisions together and those decisions and the points will stand as played. Our goal in USTA League is to play fun, fair tennis with each match!

Team/ Player Registration:

Year end ratings published on December 1, 2023, will be in effect for all 2024 league play.
Players must be USTA members during the league season to be eligible to join a team.
Players celebrating their birthday in the 2024 calendar year may play an age specific season (40, 55, 65 and over) anytime during the year. For the 18 and Over Mixed and Adult leagues, players must turn 18 before they can register.

- Initial Roster Deadline: By the deadline set by the Area League Coordinator, each team should have the correct number of players to fill a line up for a full match. Teams that do not have a minimum roster may not be included in scheduling. (i.e. 3 lines: 5 or 6 players (depending on format); 4 lines: 7 players; 5 lines: 8 players. Mixed: 3 men and 3 women)

- Final Roster Deadline: The last date to add a player to a roster (up to the maximum number of players for the league). IE-The date will be approximately 4-5 weeks after the season starts.

- Players must be 'on roster' online in TennisLink before the match starts to be eligible to play in a match. If not, they are ineligible and the line will be defaulted. Players may register for the team up until the match default time or by the Local registration deadline, whichever comes first.

- 50% of the team must be 'at level' by their first match and must be maintained through season. Matches not played in compliance may be disqualified. Plan team rosters accordingly. In a league with only 2 teams, they may be 40% 'at level'. National team opting to 'Move Up' are excluded from the 'at level' requirement.

- Straight level NTRP teams- players may be .5 NTRP below the level of play (i.e. a 3.5 can play up on a 4.0 team). For combined level leagues, the maximum difference of 1.0 NTRP between players is allowed (i.e. 8.0 can be a 3.5 and 4.5 player). For Tri-Level Leagues, at least one player must be 'at' the designated level. There are no requirements about playing lines in strength order.

- Captains should make sure new self- rated players have an accurate rating. All matches played at the Self Rated/ Appealed down level will be reversed in all "live" leagues if a player strikes out (they have 3 matches played well above their chosen rating level as identified in the NTRP system). Matches played at promoted level will stand if the league is at the new higher level.

Self-rated (S) and appeal players (A) are eligible for dynamic disqualification. Computer rated players (C) and Mixed exclusive players (M) are protected at their rating level until the next year end rating period.

- Players may be registered to two teams at <u>different levels</u> in an area league.

  Players may play the same level in two <u>different areas</u>.

  Weekday/ Weekend Leagues: In Adult 18+, 40+, Tri-Level and SoCal Doubles, players may be on a Weekday and Weekend team at the same level if there are at least 4 teams in each division for separate league advancement. Otherwise, if the winning teams are having a playoff to determine the advancing local league winner, players may <u>not</u> be on teams in both leagues. The exception is if one of the leagues is not advancing (local only).

- Players may not be shared on two rosters at the same level in the same league area or play for two teams in a league where teams are combined for local league play.

- **Refunds/ Credits:** USTA SoCal will issue a TennisLink credit for players who ask to be removed from their team <u>within the first two weeks</u> after the start of the league. Reasons can be injury/ illness, lack of availability, etc. The player is responsible for filling out the **[LEAGUE CREDIT REQUEST FORM](#)** to receive a $28.85 credit (less the non-refundable $3.15 fee) which will be valid for 364 days after being issued. Once processed, the player will be prompted to apply the credit the next time they register for a team. The player will be removed from the team when processed. No refunds.

Match Schedules/ Courts:

Schedules will be posted online approximately 7-10 days before the first match.

IE-You will receive an email when it is available to be viewed.

To see your team's schedule go to the USTA website, click on TennisLink, click on USTA Leagues, click on your team name to take you to your team page. To view the season on one page, click on <u>Match Schedule</u> tab, key details are listed. Also, <u>Captain's Report</u> for contact information (home phone number may be listed not cell). Captains should only *enter cell number i*n their USTA account. Go to Manage Account on upper right corner, follow steps to edit personal info.

Teams will have roughly half home and away matches.

IE-Home team provides courts, away teams provide balls.

Captains must confirm match details 3-4 days in advance including date/ time of match, if/ when warm up courts are available, court numbers (if known), line defaults (if known in advance). For split time matches, confirm how many courts to start and how many to follow and which lines will be played. Provide location and any facility specific information- i.e. parking or traffic events in area.

IE-Play in line order of line 1 singles, line 1 doubles, line 2 doubles, line 3 doubles unless captains mutually agree to play in a different order for that match only.

Home team is responsible for making sure the court conditions are ready for play. Courts need to be safe for players- free of ball mowers and other equipment. Home Captains should initiate text communication with opposing captain about court conditions if there are any concerns (i.e. wet courts, anticipated heat at match time). Consider driving time when communicating about delayed start times.

IE-USTA League plays on hardcourts in IE Local League. If both captains agree in writing, clay courts may be used. Courts may not have contrasting lines or tape for pickle ball however, blended markings for youth tennis are acceptable (lighter tone of the same color).

Majority of lines must be played for a match to count in the standings. In a 3 line match, 2 lines must be played; in a 4 line match, 3 lines must be played and in a 5 line match, 3 lines must be played (completed/ or retired).

All matches must be completed by the season end date. When a league does not complete all matches and team results are uneven in the standings, the Section administration will determine the winner using available metrics based on completed matches.

Formats of Play:

- **Best 2 of 3 regulation sets with a match tiebreak played in lieu of a third set**. When teams split sets, matches will be completed by playing a Coman match tiebreak (first to 10 points leading by 2 points).
- IE- If all players on court agree and the court time is available, a full 3rd set may be played, however the score will be entered as 1-0 into TennisLink. Decision is made after teams split sets.
- T**imed Match Procedure is to be used when there are time restrictions for a hard stop** (i.e. lights out, reservation time up).

  Players should be aware that they are playing a timed match when they start. One person will be selected to be the time keeper (and set a phone alarm) to stop 5 min prior to the court end time so they can follow the TMP to resolve the outcome for the match.

  If players are well into a match when it is suspended by weather, players may all agree to apply the TMP to resolve the winner of the match instead of resuming play.

  TIMED MATCH PROCEDURE
- All tiebreaks use the Coman rotation. Switch ends after the 1st point and every 4 points after. Players continue to serve on the same end of the court. Winner must be ahead by 2 points in either the set or match tiebreak.

  COMAN TIEBREAK PROCEDURE
- <u>Split Time Matches:</u> Many areas will utilize split times for matches when necessary for court management because all courts are not available at the same time. There will be matches that follow after early matches complete. Default time for later matches will be set as a 'not before' time <u>and</u> a court from the earlier match must be available. See local area guidelines on how split times may be communicated.

  FRIEND AT COURT

Line Ups:

- <u>Written</u> **line ups must be exchanged simultaneously by the match start time (varies by league).**
- Print scorecards in TennisLink. Texting or emailing the line up ahead of time is also acceptable (verify you have a cell #). It is <u>not</u> acceptable for a captain to write their line up on their opponent's scorecard 'from memory'. Please notify ALC if a captain requests to do this. It is acceptable for a captain to write their line up at any time prior to the exchange.
- Captain must designate an acting captain if they will not be at the match. They will be responsible for the lineup exchange and any needed match oversight.
- Captains may ask to see a player's photo ID to verify identity or age.
- If a player is missing at match time, they should be moved to the lowest line according to the default procedure. Opposing captain may change their line up accordingly at that time.
- Players may only be listed in one position in a match line up even if the lines are playing at different times.

- It is the responsibility of the players to make sure they are on the correct court with the proper opponents. Captains should give their players the names of their opponents when sending them to their court. If there is an error in court positions played, the scorecards will be adjusted accordingly. All matches stand as played.
- Use full names to avoid errors when inputting scores. Captains should verify player names/ rating levels on the scorecard prior to play starting.
- Before Tri-Level and all combo level matches (I.e. Mixed, 55 and Over, 65 and Over), verify that player rating combinations are 'at level' by line. If possible to rearrange the players to make the match valid, correct line ups to play the most lines possible.

Defaults:

- **Please avoid Team Defaults (all lines defaulting or majority of lines not played).** Joining a league is a commitment to play matches. League winners should be determined by playing matches not winning by default. Only a few players are needed to play the majority of lines to have a complete match. If captains agree, they may choose to play different combinations and reschedule a date to complete any needed lines to complete the majority of lines so the match will be valid.

League Format	# of lines for valid match	Min # of players	Play lines:
3 lines (1S/ 2D)	2 lines	3	1S/ 1D
3 lines (3D)	2 lines	4	1D/ 2D
4 lines (1S/ 3D)	3 lines	5	1S/ 1D/ 2D
5 lines (2S/ 3D)	3 lines	4	1S/ 2S/ 1D

Teams must make good faith efforts to complete every match. Captains are expected to work together with courtesy and cooperation to do their best to play a valid match.

A team in contention may be ineligible to advance to post season if they give or receive a team default (or incomplete match) without a demonstrated effort to play (i.e. texts, emails). If a team in contention receives a full team default, matches played by the defaulting team in the same round will be removed from the league and can impact the overall standings. When there are incomplete matches in unflighted play, USTA SoCal will determine league winner. Repeat offending captains/ players may face disciplinary actions including suspension of players in future leagues.

IE-Teams are expected to make up lines in order to complete the majority of lines in a match so the match is valid. Please note on scorecard at the line up exchange which line(s) will be played at a later date. Captains may exchange player names or may set the date but determine players prior to match play.

- **Default time:** Default policy varies by local area of play. Late arriving players (within default time) may still have a 5 min warm up. IE- Default time is 10 min after the scheduled match time or for morning split time matches, if a court is available after 10:30 AM.
- **Line Defaults (prior to line up exchange):** If you have a known default, please let the opposing captain know prior to the match out of consideration. (Do onto others…) The least amount of lines should be defaulted and as many players as possible should be utilized.

- **Line Defaults (after line up exchange):**
  Captains receiving a late default (without prior notification) will be able to change their line-up. The defaulting team may not rearrange their line-up once line up is exchanged. At this time, the captain receiving the default may change players receiving the default.

Matches must start in line order due to defaults rule in USTA. Defaults are taken at the lowest line.

After line ups have been exchanged,
> **Example**: If the #1 doubles line is a default,
> ● Line #2 moves up to play the #1 line. ● Line #3 line moves up to play the #2 line. ● Line #3 is defaulted.

Example: If there is a default on line 1 singles, line 2 singles moves up to play the line 1 position.
> **Example:** In Tri-level Leagues, the default is taken on the same line and no shifting of lines applies.
> **Example:** If higher lines started playing, allow them to finish and enter the default on the lowest line.

Player substitutions: An eligible player may be substituted into the line-up in case of injury, illness or disqualification of line-up player prior to the match starting (1ˢᵗ point played). If it occurs during warm up, the new player is entitled to a 5 min warm up. Other players in the line-up may not be changed.

Rescheduling matches: Please make every effort to play on your scheduled date.

IE- Captains are encouraged to honor reschedule requests when the opposing captain provides reasonable notice prior to the scheduled match. That said, teams should NOT automatically expect to receive the opportunity to reschedule a match.

Unplayable conditions: In case of rain, it is based on wet court conditions at match time. It is most important that people are safe on the courts. For liability reasons, a facility director may make that decision or more commonly, it will be determined by the players in the match.

- Teams should wait 30 min after the scheduled start time to see if conditions change. Captains/ players may agree to wait longer or may agree to leave sooner if the courts don't appear they will dry out.

 The heat rule states if the air temperature at the court location is 95° or higher in Inland Empire, matches may be rescheduled. Please use Accuweather.com.
IE-Home Captains should initiate text/phone communication with opposing captain about court conditions if there are any concerns)i.e. wet courts, anticipated heat at match time). Please consider travel time.

- If captains agree, you may move a match to the visitors club or neutral site if the conditions are playable. Captains may also play later start lines at their scheduled time if courts are wet for the early start time in split time matches. Early lines may be treated as make up matches. Work together to make decisions on conditions and reschedules.

- Matches may be mutually rescheduled ahead of time if the forecast is certain that conditions will be unplayable. (I.e. heavy rain for hours up to the match time and no sun/ wind to dry out courts). Use your best judgement knowing you will need to reschedule.

    -Please still communicate any line defaults due to player availability in advance. If a match is rescheduled due to weather, the default is waived and the full match will be played.

- **Interrupted play**: If a match needs to be continued after play has started, Captains need to note scores, side/position of players so the lines can resume with the same players and exact score from when play was halted. Lines that have not started play may opt to change players in the line-up. If players cannot agree on a reschedule date, apply the Timed Match Procedure to see if a winner can be determined.
- IE- Lines may be played individually if it helps to coordinate the same players in the match.

- **Requested rescheduled matches**: Rescheduled matches will fall under the 'No Penalty Policy' or under the 'Penalty Policy'. If a team requests a reschedule due to lack of available players, the Penalty Policy will apply. If a captain intends to enforce the penalty, it must be confirmed with the opposing captain (text or email). They may opt to not penalize the other team and play all lines.

  Penalty will be a 1 line default in a 3 or 4 line match and 2 lines defaulted in a 5 line match.
  The team receiving the default win (by penalty) will offer 3 dates to reschedule and determine which line will be defaulted in leagues with singles/ doubles or Tri-level.
  No penalties apply if the home facility has an unanticipated event and no courts are available at match time.
  Penalties are carried over when matches need to be rescheduled again. (I.e. a rescheduled match with a penalty gets rained out)
  IE- Captains accommodating a reschedule should offer potential new dates first.

- **Allowed rescheduled matches due to Championships**: If 4 or more players on a team are competing for the same area at Sectional/National Championships on their scheduled local league match day, no penalties will apply to the rescheduled match. Captains may verify the roster players in question. **Reschedule as soon as team advances**. IE - If part of the match can be played, please play those lines as scheduled and reschedule the balance. For Tri-Level leagues, only reschedule line levels that are affected unless both captains agree to a team match reschedule.

  All rescheduled matches need to be emailed to ALC with old and new date, team names and match ID# within 7 days of the original match date. Captains are expected to work together with courtesy and cooperation to do their best to play a valid match. If teams cannot come to an agreement on a reschedule date, the ALC/ SLC may select a day/ time for the match to be played.
  IE- Make up matches: Captains accommodating a reschedule should provide new dates first. If it is a requested reschedule and after reasonable number of dates have been offered there is no agreed to date, the team requesting the reschedule will default the match. But if at all possible please make every attempt to get the match played.
  Email address: Inlandempireleagues@scta.usta.com

Completing and scoring matches:

- **Confirm** the match score between all players before leaving the court. Confirm completed scorecard with opposing captain so correct scores/ names are entered.
- Report/ write the score down from the point of view of the winning team (not home/ visitor). (I.e. we won the match and won the first set 6-4, lost the 2nd set 3-6 and won the 3rd set 1-0). The order is important and games will make a difference in rating calculations.
- **Please enter scores the same day of the match.** Scores not entered within 48 hours may be entered by the League Coordinator as a Double Default.
- Home captain is responsible for entering scores in TennisLink however, either captain may input. Please review final scores and full player names to be input, do not guess. The opposing captain can dispute input within 48 hours of input. Correctly entered scores and player names are important because they affect NTRP ratings.

- **To enter scores,** click on the date next to your match on your TennisLink team page or enter the match ID# under Enter Scores on your home page.
- **Match type dropdown options:**
  Completed- Most matches should fall into this category.

Retirement- One match has begun and a player needs to stop playing (usually injury or time issue) Only enter games played.

Default- For a late arrival, no show or ineligible player. Enter the names of players winning the default line only. Score will be 6-0, 6-0.

Timed Match- This option is mainly for limited time court reservations or evening league matches when lights turn off. Follow the Timed Match Procedure to complete match.

- **Corrections:** If there is a mistake on an entered scorecard (incorrect score or player), click to dispute the match in Tennis Link if you are the non-entering captain and email the ALC office.
  Always **include the match ID#, date and both team names**. Please cc the other captain since both captains must confirm the change before it can be updated. If you are a captain that is cc'd, please reply quickly if you agree or if you do not agree, state what you believe to be accurate. Please double check your input before you finalize to save extra rework. Thanks in advance!
  Email address: Inlandempireleagues@scta.usta.com

TennisLink: How ties are broken in standings and individual matches
- Match Wins (overall record of matches won)
- Individual Wins (overall number of lines won)
- Head to Head (between tied teams, which team won when they played each other)
- Least Sets Lost
- Least Games Lost
- Games Won %
- In Adult 40 and Over 4 line league, if all metrics are tied within a match down to the GW% (excluding default), the winner of line 1 doubles will determine which team wins the match.

Tennis Link: Information available from your personal page. (Shows 'Welcome, *your name...*')
- "Team Summary" tab is your most used page. It shows your schedule, standings, match results, list of players. You can print your scorecards and enter scores by clicking on the date next to your match.
- "Match Schedule" tab shows all matches for a season listing the home/ visitor teams, date, location and match ID #. Captain/ co-captain phone number also shows here.
- "Captain's Report" tab has contact information (emails and phone numbers) for all captains in the league.
- "Player Roster" tab shows your registered players, their ratings, and phone numbers.

Grievances:
Online submission forms, rules/ guidelines and FAQ's about filing a Grievance may be found at
https://www.ustasocal.com/forms-information/

Sportsmanship- If any captain wishes to lodge a grievance against a player or another captain for rule violations, it must be submitted prior to the next scheduled match for the player/ team involved in that league (typically 7 days) or within 24 hours of the end of the Local League Season End Date, whichever comes first.
- Submit via online form. It is recommended to discuss situation with ALC first.

NTRP/ Ratings:
Dynamic Disqualification- Players with a C (Computer) or B (Benchmark) rating are not subject to dynamic disqualification based on results. These rating types may not be challenged with an NTRP Grievance.

NTRP Grievances against Self rated players- If credible written or online documentation can be presented that the player answered incorrectly or omitted information from their player history that resulted in a rating too low, it can be submitted to the NTRP Committee for further investigation. Submit via online So Cal form.
https://www.ustasocal.com/adult/leagues/grievance-form/

National Suspension Point System- USTA So Cal implements sanctions utilizing the USTA National Suspension Point system. https://www.usta.com/content/dam/usta/2023-pdfs/USTA-League-Suspension-Point-System-2023.pdf

Advancement/ Championships:

2024 Key Dates:
So Cal Sectionals Championships page (calendar, registration):
https://www.ustasocal.com/adult/leagues/championships/
Link to USTA National Calendar page   (Info will be posted as ready)

2024 USTA So Cal Key Dates/ Advancement				
League	**Sect Season End Date**	**Sectionals Date(s)**	**Sectionals Location**	**Nationals**
USTA Mixed 18 and Over	3/31/2024	April 19-21	Orange County	USTA Oct/ Nov
USTA Adult 40 and Over	4/14/2024	May 17-19; May 31-June 2	San Diego	USTA Oct/ Nov
USTA Adult 18 and Over	7/14/2024	July 26-28; Aug 2-4; Aug 9- 11	Beach Cities	USTA Oct/ Nov
USTA Adult 55 and Over	8/25/2024	Sept 6-8	San Diego	USTA Oct/ Nov
USTA Mixed 40 and Over	9/2/2024	Sept 21-23	TBD	USTA Oct/ Nov
SoCal Adult 65 and Over	10/13/2024	Nov 1-3	SGV- Claremont Club	Invitational 1/2025
SoCal Tri-Level Doubles	11/17/2024	Dec 6-8	Orange County	Tri Invitational 3/2025
SoCal Mixed 55 and Over	11/24/2024	Dec 13-15	Orange County	Invitational 4/2025
SoCal Mixed Tri-Level	11/24/2024	Dec 13-15	Orange County	None
SoCal Fall Doubles	12/22/2024	TBD	Coachella Valley	None
Elite level play (Open and 5.0+) leagues will advance to Las Vegas Open Invitational Sept 2024				

<u>**League winners**</u> will be determined using these tiebreakers in order for League standings.
- Match Wins, Individual Wins, Head to Head, Least Sets Lost, Least Games Lost and Games Won %
- If there is a team default to a team in contention for first or second place, matches played by the defaulting team will be removed for all matches played in the same round.
- In the event the league season cannot be completed, the Section Administration will determine the local league winner using available metrics based on completed matches.

<u>**Player eligibility for Sectionals or Local League Playoff**</u>:
All players need to have played <u>a minimum of 2 Local League matches</u> to be eligible.
- Computer rated players: 2 matches needed but may include 1 default win.
- Self-rated or Appeal players: 2 matches are needed. (no default wins)
- Players can only play for one team per level at Sectionals. If both teams advance, shared players will have to commit to playing for one team. The first match played will determine the team they will compete on during the entire Sectional Championship.

<u>**Sectional Championships**</u>:

- **Local League winners (LLW)** will advance directly to Sectionals. once confirmed by the ALC
- **Local league playoffs** may take place when there are two flights of play or an unflighted schedule. Typically, this occurs in a league/ level with a large number of teams. Players must be eligible to advance to the playoff match with their two qualifying matches.
- **Weekday/ Weekend Leagues:** In Adult 18 and over, 40 and over, Tri-Level Doubles and So Cal Fall Doubles, if there are a minimum of 4 teams in both weekday and weekend flights, each winner will advance to Sectionals. If fewer than 4 teams, a playoff may be needed between the two local leagues. Players may only be registered to one team if the league format results in a potential playoff.
- **Wildcard Opportunities:** When a team is needed (for scheduling purposes only), the top 2nd place team in SoCal based on the highest games won % may be invited. Teams must have a winning GW% (over 50%) to be eligible.

Player eligibility for USTA Nationals:
Adult 18 and Over, Adult 40 and Over, Adult 55 and Over, Mixed 18 and Over, Mixed 40 and Over
- Computer (C) rated players: must complete 3 matches (may include 1 default win)
- Self-rated (S) and appeal (A) rated players: must play 4 matches (no default wins included) in the specific league and level to be eligible to compete at Nationals.

Player eligibility for National Invitational:
(Tri-Level, 65 and Over, 55 and Over Mixed, Las Vegas Open)
- Computer (C) rated players: must complete 2 matches (may include 1 default win)
- Self-rated (S) and appeal (A) rated players: must play 2 matches (no default wins included) in the specific league and level to be eligible to compete at Nationals.

Move Up / Split Up Rule Addition:

National Teams: Move up/ Split up rule (2.06A) applies to teams who have won the So Cal Sectionals and are eligible to participate at a National level in the USTA leagues. Any player who was eligible to participate, even if they chose not to, is considered part of the team. For those who stayed at the same level, only 3 players may be on a team returning in the same league/ level as their Nationals. Players who played fewer matches and were not eligible do not have restrictions. The whole team may also opt to 'move up' with the '% at level' being waived. (Applies to USTA Adult 18 and Over, USTA Adult 40 and Over, USTA Adult 55 and Over, USTA Mixed 18 and Over and USTA Mixed 40 and Over leagues.)

National Invitational Teams: Move up/ Split up Rule: Starting in 2024, select 2023 leagues that lead to National Invitational Events will also have Move Up/ Split Up rule applied. For the SoCal Mixed 55 and Over and SoCal Tri-Level leagues, the team has the option to Move Up and may play together as a team, in whole or in part, if they move up one NTRP team level. If they choose to play the same NTRP level league, they must Split-Up. No more than 50% of the players on the roster of any team that advanced to or qualified for the National Invitational the previous year may play together in the same Division, same Age Group, and at the same NTRP team level as the National Invitational team(s), if their NTRP rating allows. This will be audited by the Section however, captains and players are responsible for maintaining compliance.

Team rosters not in compliance with the 3 player maximum for USTA Leagues or 50% on the above SoCal leagues will be corrected by removing any players who registered after the maximum was reached. Matches played by that player(s) will be reversed due to player ineligibility.

Sectionals Default Deposit

Participation at Sectionals events are commitments on behalf of the captain and players of a team to be able to field a full roster for the duration of the event. Teams are expected to alert the ALC and Tournament Director in advance if they are unable to provide a full roster so an alternate team may be invited. It is disappointing for players and teams to register anticipating match play only to receive a default. There is cost for travel and frustration incurred by teams and staff when defaults occur.

In 2024, Captains will submit a $100 credit card deposit to ensure their team will be in compliance for their event matches. The card will only be charged if they default at the event. The Tournament Committee will allow for appeals to the charge that may be granted in the case of a documented emergency. Collected fees will be donated to the SCTA Foundation.

Links to National Regulations/ The Code: Please make sure that your team is a positive example of goodwill on the court. It's a quick read but a good reminder for all of us when situations get tough. It is the responsibility of the captain to understand the rules and ensure that their players are familiar with the most common situations and play using the principles of The Code (of Conduct). *The Code*

 If there is a reason to research the correct rule in a match, stop play and look it up in a rule book or online.

> **– 2024 USTA LEAGUE RULES & REGULATIONS**
> https://www.usta.com/content/dam/usta/2023-pdfs/2024_National_Regulations_with_Interpretations.pdf

> **– 2024 FRIEND AT COURT**
> https://www.usta.com/content/dam/usta/coach-organize/content-fragments/resource-library/assets/pdfs/2023-Friend-at-Court.pdf

See the last 2 pages of this document for common issues on court and general match rules.
Printable version of Rules/ Etiquette:
https://www.ustasocal.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/USTA-SoCal-League-Match-Rules-and-Etiquette.pdf

Wishing everyone good luck, great sportsmanship and a winning experience during the USTA Season!

ALC Contact Info
Char DeHesa
Inland Empire Area League Coordinator
inlandempireleagues@scta.usta.com

Rules specific to Leagues:

General:

Age requirements:

18 and Over Leagues- Players must be 18 before they can register to play.

40 and Over, 55 and Over and 65 and Over- Players may play if they celebrate their birthday during that year.

Rating requirements:

All players must have a current USTA NTRP rating to register.

New players and players with T (tournament) ratings need to self-rate.

Players with an M (mixed) rating will be prompted to self-rate to register for a men's or women's league team.

Mixed Doubles

USTA 18 and Over Mixed Doubles, USTA 40 and Over Mixed Doubles, SoCal 55 and over Mixed Doubles

- 3 line format- all mixed doubles
- Combined rating level teams:
  - Partner ratings are added together.
  - Pairs may have up to 1 point rating level difference (i.e. 3.0 + 4.0 for a 7.0 team)
  - Pairs may total less than the rating level for the league (i.e. 3.5 + 4.0 for an 8.0 team)

Adult Leagues

USTA Adult 18 and Over, USTA Adult 40 and Over

- Format of play varies by local area.
  Sectionals format Adult 18 and Over (2 singles/ 3 doubles); Adult 40 and Over (1 singles/ 3 doubles)
  Nationals format Adult 18 and Over (2 singles/ 3 doubles); Adult 40 and Over (1 singles/ 4 doubles)

- Rosters must have a minimum of 50% of players at NTRP level. (Areas can set a higher 'at level' minimum)
- Ratings may be 'at NTRP level' or .5 (one level) below.
- Lower level players may 'play up'; higher level players cannot 'play down'.

- Lines play in order due to default rule. Singles then doubles matches in line order.

Adult Leagues- Senior Leagues

USTA Adult 55 and Over, SoCal 65 and Over

- 3 line format- all doubles
- Combined rating level teams:
  - Partner ratings are added together.
  - Pairs may have up to 1 point rating level difference (i.e. 3.0 + 4.0 for a 7.0 team)
  - Pairs may total less than the rating level for the league (i.e. 3.5 + 4.0 for an 8.0 team)

SoCal Tri-Level Doubles Leagues

Tri-level Men's or Women's, Tri-Level Mixed Doubles

- 3 line format- all doubles
- Each line is a different NTRP Level.
- At least one of the two players by line must be 'at NTRP' level.
- If a default occurs in Tri-level, it is taken at the same line level. (No shifting of lines)

Elite Level Leagues (Plus leagues)

Plus players (5.5 and higher should play in a line 1 position)

Capstone 40 and Over 5.0+

- 3 line format- all doubles

SoCal Fall Doubles

- 3 line format- 1 singles/ 2 doubles

Common Rules Questions During Match Play:

General Rules for the match:
NO coaching is allowed at ANY time during the match. So Cal leagues are specified to be Match Tiebreak format.

Spectator behavior (including pros, coaches, players and captains):
Captains and players may be held responsible for the behavior of their spectators.

Spectators **may not**: talk to or distract players on the court; coach, either verbally or visually; comment or make visual signals on line calls; sit on the court; get involved with any dispute between the players on the court. A captain may clarify a rule <u>only if asked by a player</u>. Spectators may not sit on the court. Pets should not be on the court during a league match even if the facility allows.

Cell phones and smart watches must be placed in airplane mode or turned off during a league match. It is assumed that if you are checking your phone that you are receiving coaching.

Recording matches: Taking photos or filming during league play must have permission from <u>all</u> players on the court.
Swingvision may not be utilized for line call verification under any circumstances.

Tracking the score- Score should be called out after each point of play by the server or serving team. If your courts have score tenders, change consistently either at change of ends or after each game.

Start/ Stop of play
Warm up- Players should try to hit shots directly to their opponent cooperatively to ensure a good warm up
Friendly transfer of balls- Return the balls gently to the serving team or by leaving in a convenient location on the court at a changeover. Do not practice hard returns on out serves during the match.

- **Starting a new set**- Switch ends if the game total is odd, stay if even. If a set tiebreak was played, switch ends from where you finished. Team that received the first point of the tiebreak serves the first game of the 2nd set or match tiebreak. Teams may change serving order at this time.
- **Breaks-** Changeovers during a set are 90 seconds. After a set finishes, players may take a 2 minute break. Continuous play after the first game of any set or during a tiebreaker. Players may sip water or towel off but may not sit down.
- **Bathroom breaks-** Try to time during a changeover or end of a set but may be taken as needed.
- **Water bottle refills-** Must take place during a changeover not during a game or tiebreak in play.
- **Medical Time Out-** *3 minutes per treatable condition (injury, illness or heat related condition): one during warm up and one during match. Maximum time allowed where blood is present is 15 minutes for evaluation/ treatment. A*ll visible bleeding must be completely stopped. An eligible player may be substituted in the lineup if the MTO takes place during warmup and the player cannot continue.

  Be reasonable on time especially when restrooms are needed and not located nearby or if supplies are needed to treat a condition.

Calls/ Confusion:
- **Calling Balls In or Out:** A ball that cannot be seen clearly landing with space outside the line, is in. Players who are looking down the line instead of across the lines should make the call for best visibility. Opponent should get the benefit of the doubt if players are unsure.
- **Partners disagree on call-** The point is awarded to the opposing team. Do not replay point. If it happens on a first serve, play a second serve.

- **Lost track of the score**- Try to reconstruct points played in the game and use as your starting score. If you can't agree on the points, go back to the last score everyone agrees on, even if it means starting the game over. Make sure to stop the serve immediately if a disputed score is called out and play a let once score is resolved.
- **Teams did not switch ends** at the right time- as soon as the mistake is realized, correct ends and continue play. Service rotation continues as started.
- **Players received on wrong half of court-** Complete game as started, switch back to correct positions during next receiving game.
- **Wrong player on a team serves out of order-** If during a game, switch to correct server and play from current score. Points played stand. If the game is complete, it counts and the order of service remains as altered for set.

Interruptions/ Self- calls/ Hindrance
- **Ball on Court**- Safety is extremely important. Any player <u>on</u> the court can stop play if a ball comes from a neighboring court and is a visual distraction or a hazard for an injury. The court should play a let.
  Players on the neighboring court who hit the ball should not immediately call 'ball on' especially if it interrupts the point in play. (I.e. if the ball rolls to the back of the court.) When the affected court stops the point due to a ball on court, play a let.
- **Self-calls-** Double bounce, tipped ball, crossing over the net plane to make contact, touching the net with racquet or body or ball making contact with their body are self-calls by the player only. Do not stop play unless the player makes a self-call even if you disagree.

- **Talking to/ Warning your partner:**
  Talking between doubles partners when the ball is moving toward them is allowed. • Doubles players should not talk when the ball is moving toward their opponent's court. • When talking interferes with an opponent's ability to play a ball, it is a hindrance. See Hindrance definition.

- **Hindrance**- Player must stop point immediately if truly 'hindered' in making a shot. You may not hit or make a play on the ball and then call hindrance. Loud noises that affect the outcome of a point may be a hindrance. Ii.e. shouting right before the other team is about to make contact). Only an official can rule if grunting while hitting is a hindrance.

- **Service Let Calls**- May be called by any player on the court.

- **Foot Faults-** Foot fault must be obvious from all angles on the court and at least one warning must be given. Foot fault point penalties should be called by an official. (i.e. Sectionals matches)

Assistance on Court/ Court Monitors (when and how)
- **Court Monitor:** Court/ line monitor(s) may be called in to assist with the management of a match by any player in the match and at any time. It can be requested if there is tension between players or in anticipation of potential problems. It is preferred to have two for better court coverage. They should be positioned at each net post and each one is responsible for the court divided in half lengthwise. The players are still responsible for their calls but they may ask the court monitor on the near side (where the ball lands) for a ruling. The court monitor from the opposite side will not have the best perspective on seeing the ball. They should not make calls across lines. The court monitor <u>can overrule clear</u> <u>mistakes only and only when asked</u>. Decision of the Court Monitor is final.
  Monitors are to remain impartial and not have conversations during the match or at changeovers. If no one is available, a match with conflict may wait for someone to assist or reschedule as a last resort.