

# NTRP MEDICAL APPEAL PROCEDURES Q&A

## 1. What is a Medical Appeal?

A medical appeal is a formal, written request from a player for reconsideration of his/her NTRP Rating based on a permanent, disabling illness or injury that has occurred since the player generated the year-end or early-start NTRP Rating. USTA League Regulation 2.05D states, "If an intervening, permanently disabling injury or illness indicates that a player's current computer rating may be too high, the player may request a medical appeal of such rating in accordance with NTRP Medical Appeal Procedures."

## 2. Who can file a medical appeal of a player's NTRP Rating?

Only the player whose rating is being appealed can file an appeal. A team captain, another player, a spouse or a physician may not file an appeal on the player's behalf.

## 3. Where should a medical appeal be filed?

Generally, medical appeals are submitted to the player's USTA Section League Coordinator who will forward to the Chair of the Section's designated Medical Review Committee. Contact the Section or District/State League Coordinator or go to the Section or District/State League website to obtain instructions for filing, medical appeal protocol and forms.

## 4. When can a medical appeal be filed?

The time to file a medical appeal varies depending on where it is filed. Contact the Section or District/State League Coordinator or go to the Section or District/State website for this information.

## 5. What are the written requirements for communication in filing a League NTRP Medical Appeal?

The requirement that a letter or document be filed in writing is satisfied if it is sent by email, mail, telegram, fax or equivalent communication. Verbal appeals are not accepted.

## 6. What would prevent a medical appeal from being considered?

A medical appeal would not be reviewed and/or considered if:

- a. player's NTRP Rating is no longer current or valid; player may self-rate.
- b. onset of player's illness or injury occurred prior to playing the last match used to generate their most current Year End or Early Start NTRP rating level.
- c. player does not complete and submit all required information.
- d. information submitted by player is not current.

- e. Attending Physician's Statement is not current and/or does not include required information.
- f. player has not been medically released to play tennis.
- g. registration for the league season, in which player desires to play, does not begin close to the time of filing, but at some point in the future.

**7. What information must be included to submit a medical appeal?**

- a. A written request from the player.
- b. A current, completed and signed USTA League NTRP Medical Appeal Form.
- c. A current Attending Physician's Statement (from the physician who is actually treating the player for the described illness or injury) that is dated, written on the physician's letterhead stationery or on the APS form provided, and includes an evaluation of the player's current condition. Specific information from the physician must include:
  - i. date of onset of the player's illness or injury.
  - ii. diagnosis of player's illness or injury.
  - iii. extent of the illness or injury that specifically defines what the player cannot physically do. (i.e., cannot lift arm above head, cannot see out of left eye, etc.)
  - iv. player's prognosis: how long will the injury or illness last, will player eventually have full recovery, what specific permanent limitations does the player currently have?
  - v. medical release to play tennis which includes date when player may resume playing.

**\*Additional medical information including written results of lab tests, x-rays, Cat Scans, MRIs, etc., may be submitted, but will not be accepted in lieu of an Attending Physician's Statement.\***

**8. What is not considered in the review of a medical appeal?**

- a. A statement from the attending physician stating what specific NTRP level the player should play. It is the responsibility of the committee to determine the skill level where the player should play.
- b. Statements from the physician like:
  - i. "Mr. Smith has asked me to request that he be allowed to move down from 4.0 as he feels he can no longer compete at that level."
  - ii. "Mrs. Jones has shown considerable improvement since starting on her medication but, her illness or limitations will progress over time and is therefore permanent." (This may be true but does not refer to current status.)
  - iii. "Mr. Ross would like to play with his friends, spouse, etc."
  - iv. "Ms. Harris may need surgery in the future." (Not current status)

### 9. What determines if a medical appeal is granted?

Each medical appeal is thoroughly reviewed and considered on an individual basis. A decision is based on the current, specific information that is submitted about the diagnosis, onset and extent of the player's illness or injury, the specific limitations present, whether the current limitations are permanently disabling and whether the specific limitations will impact the player's NTRP skill level.

**Very few medical appeals should be granted, as it is usually better to let the computer determine the NTRP Skill Level based on actual match play. Rationale:**

- If the illness or injury is not permanently disabling, an appeal cannot be granted even if treatment, recovery and/or rehabilitation may take a year or longer. .
- Individuals respond to illnesses and/or injuries in different ways so it is hard to predict the impact on their skill level.
- Many illnesses, such as osteoarthritis, are chronic, progressive, permanent conditions. However, the rate of progression of the illness, resulting symptoms and degree of impairment, as well as reaction to medication and treatment, varies in different people.
- Most individuals actually play better after knee, hip and shoulder surgery due to decrease in pain and possible increase in mobility from their pre-operative status. .
- Many individuals who have heart disease, cancer, etc., if medically released to play tennis, will probably be able to play at their previous skill level.
- If medically released to play tennis, potential pain, shortness of breath and risk of injury should not be factors in determining NTRP skill level, as these could occur no matter what NTRP level playing.
- Endurance issues may occur at any skill level and vary from individual to individual. More energy may be exerted at the lower skill levels than the higher skill levels depending on the player's style of play, court position and placement of the ball. Therefore, the amount of energy exerted while playing tennis varies in individuals and cannot be accurately predicted.

### 10. Can a player be disqualified if a medical appeal is granted?

Yes. He/She is assigned a 0.0 start level and is subject to dynamic disqualification and NTRP grievances.

### 11. If an appeal is denied, does a player have the right to appeal the decision of a League Medical Review/Appeal Committee?

No. If either the Section Designated League Medical Review Committee or the National League Medical Appeal Committee denies a medical appeal, their decision is final and binding.

**12. What is the procedure for reviewing medical appeals and making a decision on the appeal? (Refer to USTA League Regulations 2.05D)**

- a. A player's NTRP Medical Appeal will be reviewed and considered by the appropriate Medical Review Committee as designated by the player's section.
- b. The section's designated Medical Review Committee will either deny the appeal or, refer the appeal to the National Medical Appeal Committee for further consideration.
- c. If the section's designated Medical Review Committee denies the appeal, their decision is final and binding and there is no further right of appeal.
- c. If the section's designated Medical Review Committee refers the appeal to the National Medical Appeal Committee for further consideration, the National Medical Appeal Committee will review the appeal and make a final decision to grant or deny the appeal.
- d. If the National Medical Appeal Committee denies the appeal, their decision is final and binding and there is no further right of appeal.

**13. Who should serve on a League Medical Review/Appeal Committee?**

- a. A minimum of three persons, one of whom shall serve as chair.
- b. Individuals who are very league knowledgeable including knowledge of NTRP skill levels.
- c. Individuals who have current medical knowledge are recommended.
- d. A medical consultant is required to be accessible to the committee for consultation and input as needed.

**14. What are the responsibilities of the League Medical Review/Appeal Committees?**

The committee's responsibilities are to:

- a. make sure all required information has been completed, submitted and is current.
- b. determine if the player has sustained a permanent, disabling injury or illness since playing the last match prior to the publication of the most current Year End or Early Start NTRP rating level.
- c. determine if the intervening, permanent illness or injury has impacted the player's skill level and resulted in an NTRP Rating that is currently too high.
- d. make sure the player appealing has been medically released to play when the medical appeal is filed, not at some point in the future.
- e. make sure the player appealing is planning to register for a league season close to the time of filing, not at some point in the future.
- f. send, in writing, the committee's decision to the player and the appropriate coordinator(s).
- g. maintain confidentiality of the player's medical information.