

# **2024 Local Rules and Regulations - METRO**

## **GOVERNING RULES**

USTA Adult leagues are divided into layers of organization: National, Sectional (Eastern), Regional (**Metro**), District, and then Divisions. Three levels of rules apply: The USTA League Tennis Regulations (National), the USTA Eastern rules (Section), and the Local Rules (Region). In addition, the USTA Code of Conduct applies. The local rules are to be read in a manner consistent with the Section and National rules whenever possible and are not intended to supplant those rules. The local rules are intended to identify only the most essential portions of the National and Section rules and only depart from those rules (available at [2024 National and Eastern Regulations](#)) as authorized by the USTA. For the purposes of local leagues, players should refer to the appropriate section (The Code) in "[2024 Friend At Court](#)" for unofficiated matches.

Clerical error should not determine the outcome of a league. Section League Coordinator (SLC) has authority to determine how an affected match will be corrected. All interpretations of local or sectional rules are to be referred to SLC and Chair of the Adult Competition Committee.

### **A. Rosters/Player Eligibility:**

1. A minimum of 8 eligible players (18&Over Adult Division 3.0, 3.5, 4.0, and 4.5) or 5 eligible players (Adult Division 2.5, 5.0) or 9 eligible players (40&Over Adult Division) or 6 eligible players (Adult Division 55&Over, 65&Over or Tri-Level and Mixed Division 18&Over or 40&Over) at each level of championship play must participate.
2. In **Metro**, the maximum roster size for Adult 18&Over, Adult 40&Over, Adult 55&Over, 18&Over Mixed and 40&Over Mixed is **24** players. The Local League Coordinator may authorize the addition of players due to season ending circumstances.
3. Adult 18&Over and 40&Over leagues require a minimum of **50%** at NTRP level except for two team leagues which require **40%**. Minimum percentage level does not apply to any combined leagues, 55&Over and 65&Over.
4. Players must be 18 years of age prior to participating in the USTA League program. For older age groups, each player over the age of 18 shall have reached the required minimum age prior to or during the calendar year in which such player participates in his or her first local league.
5. All players must register through Tennis Link at [www.tennislink.usta.com/leagues](http://www.tennislink.usta.com/leagues). All participating team members must be registered prior to playing in a match. If an unregistered player participates in a match, all point(s) won on that court shall be reversed.
6. A player(s) may be added to a team within the local league season until **your last match of the regular season.**

7. Requests for a registration refund or transfer to another team must be made by the league **registration deadline**. Only registrants who have not played any matches can be refunded or transferred.
8. A player shall play on only one team per age group, per NTRP level, per local league season. A player shall not play on teams having the potential to play each other during the same local season.
9. Captains should verify a player's level of play and background before the player "self rates". **Neglect of this responsibility is grounds for removal of a captain and possible suspension from league play.**

### **B. Matches:**

1. Match format by level for local league only (not including local championships) see C6 for Post Season formats):
  - 18&Over 2.5, 5.0 = **3 courts**
  - 18&Over 3.0, 3.5, 4.0, 4.5 = **5 courts**
  - 40&Over = **4 courts for metro**
  - 55&Over = **3 courts**
  - 65&Over = **3 courts**
  - All Mixed = **3 courts**
2. Each League shall consist of a minimum of two (2) teams. All teams must play a minimum of six (6) matches to be eligible for championships. (Excludes Tri-Level, 55&Over Mixed and 65&Over leagues which require a minimum of 5 matches.)
3. The match format for all local, area, district, and regional matches will be best 2 out of 3 sets with a match tie break in lieu of a 3<sup>rd</sup> set (first to 10 by 2 points). All matches will utilize regular scoring, and a set-tiebreak (first to 7 by 2 points) at 6-all in each set. The 3<sup>rd</sup> set tiebreak shall be scored as 1 set and 1 game for tiebreak procedures, and it will be entered as 1-0 for the winning team. All tiebreaks (set & match) should follow "Coman" tiebreak procedure for switching sides (switch after 1<sup>st</sup> point...then every 4 points thereafter - 5, 9, 13, etc.) Play must be continuous throughout the match, including the tie-breakers.
4. The team captain for each team shall exchange their team line-up simultaneously prior to the beginning of the team match. After lineups have been exchanged, team captains are allowed to make changes and substitutions in individual matches for the following reasons only: injury to, illness of, disqualification or no-show of a player prior to the start of such match. No other player changes are allowed on that scorecard for matches played on that day.
5. Teams are encouraged to field their players for each team match in order of strength. Local regulations may utilize a point system for scorekeeping to discourage stacking

- a. 18&over
    - i. 1st Singles - 5 points
    - ii. 2nd Singles - 4 points
    - iii. 1st Doubles - 5 points
    - iv. 2nd Doubles - 4 points
    - v. 3rd Doubles - 3 points
  - b. 40&over
    - i. 1st Singles - 5 points
    - ii. 1st Doubles - 5 points
    - iii. 2nd Doubles - 4 points
    - iv. 3rd Doubles - 3 points
  - c. Mixed
    - i. 1st Doubles - 5 points
    - ii. 2nd Doubles - 4 points
    - iii. 3rd Doubles - 3 points
6. There is a fifteen-minute default rule (inclusive of warm up time) in effect for all local matches. All late players are guaranteed a 5-minute warm up, and NO POINT PENALTY is allowed for a late player. In extenuating circumstances, a captain can reach out to a league coordinator regarding lateness, and the League Coordinator has the ability to extend the default time if deemed necessary. For staggered matches, a team cannot claim a default unless a court has been available to play for 15 minutes, and the opposing players are at least 15 minutes later than the arrival time. The arrival time for staggered matches shall be 75 minutes after the call time for the first courts.
7. A 10-minute warm-up, including serves, is permitted before the match begins. If the 10 minute warmup time is over and all players are not present, the affected matches shall not start until the 15 minute default time has expired. If players are not there at the start time, the line-ups must be adjusted as detailed below.
8. Defaults must occur from the bottom up. If a doubles player is missing, the line-up must be adjusted and that team placed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> doubles position. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> doubles teams (as designated on the scorecard exchanged) for the team with the missing player must then be moved up 1 position e.g. if the first doubles team is missing a player those players must be placed in third doubles and the 2<sup>nd</sup> doubles team moved up to first and the 3<sup>rd</sup> doubles team moved up to 2nd. No other changes in either team's line-up are allowed. Similarly, a missing singles player must be placed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> singles position. Third doubles and/or 2<sup>nd</sup> singles must be the first courts defaulted.
9. Cell phone use on the court is considered a deliberate potential hindrance. Turn off phones. Players may wear Smart Watches for activity tracking only.

10. The match officially starts when play of the first point is begun. In the event of a rain or a stoppage of play due to circumstances beyond the control of the players, completed individual matches will stand as played. An incomplete match shall be continued by the same players and resumed at the exact point - set, game, point - when play was halted. If players (s) are unavailable to continue the match on the rescheduled time or date then the individual match will be scored as either a retirement in favor of the team whose players are available or a double default if both teams are missing a player. The original line up may be changed on a court that has **not** officially started play even if the players completed warm-up.
11. 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 home team's scorecard will take precedence. **All matches stand as played.**
12. If score confusion occurs, the players count all points and games agreed upon and replay only the disputed points. If there is no agreement on the disputed point/game, play from a mutually agreeable score. If still no agreement, spin a racquet or toss a coin to settle the dispute.
13. A team that forfeits an entire team match or plays an invalid match (where less than 3 courts are played for a 4 or 5-court match or two courts for a 3 court league) without just cause may be penalized to the extent that all matches for the season will be considered null and void when determining team standings if it affects final flight standings for the team receiving the default; the team members may not be allowed to participate in league play the following season.
14. Players are allowed one three-minute medical timeout as needed.
15. Players, teammates, spectators, or coaches who interfere and/or are disruptive at matches are considered to have violated the standards of good conduct, fair play and good sportsmanship. This includes conduct before, during and after completion of the match. Teammates, spectators, or coaches may not volunteer advice on line calls, scoring, or on the conduct of the match. It is the responsibility of the teams to control spectators' conduct at all matches. Coaches are never allowed to interact with players or be present on the court during match play. Players shall inform any coach who violates this rule that they shall leave the court immediately.
16. **Timed Match Procedures:** Both teams must agree on which clock will be used to determine the end of the match before play starts. If an alarm is being used, play stops when the timers goes off even if players are in the middle of a point.  
  
Play should continue right up to the end of the match. Changeover breaks should be consistent throughout the match. No stalling or taking extra time at the end of the match. A 90 second break is allowed before a match tiebreak. During the match tiebreak, play is continuous, no breaks changing sides.

Players shall not leave the court for any reason during the last 15 minutes of the match.

In the event the match has not been completed at the 2 hour mark, **end the match** and allocat the points according to the following guidelines. (Use the “timed match” option when entering the scores for this court.)

- A game in progress should not be completed and does not count.
- If the teams split sets, with no time left to start the match tiebreak - the match ends in a tie.
- If the teams are in an unfinished match tiebreak:
  - If 8 or more points are played, and a team is ahead by 4 or more points, that team wins the match. If a team is not ahead by 4 or more points, the match ends in a tie.
  - If 7 points or less are played, the match ends in a tie
- If the team that won the first set is on serve, tied, or ahead by 1 break or more in the 2nd set, that team wins the match. This includes if the second set is in an unfinished tiebreak, the team that won the first set wins the match.
- If the team that won the first set is losing the 2nd set by 1 break or more, the match ends in a tie.

## 17. **Inclement Weather Policy & Makeup Policy for Outdoor Matches**

### **Weather Policy**

- The Coordinator will be in contact with the facility and will update captains if a match is canceled. On the Coordinator can cancel matches.
- Captains should also notify the League Coordinator or potential rain.

### **Postponed Before Match Begins**

- The Coordinator will give captains makeup date options based on team schedules and facility availability. Captains will choose dates and list in order or preference within a specified time by the Coordinator.
- The Coordinator will choose a makeup date, book the courts, and update the captains once booked.
- If captains cannot agree on a makeup date or reply in time, the Coordinator will set the date.

### **Postponement After Match Begins**

- Completed Courts
  - Courts that have been completed stand as played.
- Courts not started
  - Courts that have not started the first point of the match do not have to be completed by those players originally in the lineup
  - Any rostered player (other than those who have already played in this match on a different court) can play in the rescheduled match.

- Courts in First Set
  - 1 or more points have been played but the first set is not complete.
  - Court must be completed at a later date.
  - Starting from the exact score the match was stopped.
  - Note the server, returner, player, sides etc.
  - The score should be recorded on the scorecard and signed by both captains.
  - Each court can be scheduled on different dates.
- Courts in Second Set
  - Only completed games count.
  - 1st set complete, 2nd set not started: 1st set winner wins the court
  - 1st set complete, 2nd set tied in games: 1st set winner wins the court
  - 1st set winner is ahead by 1 break of serve or more in the 2nd set: 1st set winner wins the court
  - 1st set winner down by 1 break or more in the 2nd set: court is tied
- Match Tiebreak
  - If the teams are in an unfinished match tiebreak:
  - Every attempt should be made to finish the match tiebreak.
  - If 8 or more points are played, and a team is ahead by 4 or more points, that team wins the match. If a team is not ahead by 4 or more points, the match ends in a tie.
  - If 7 points or less are played, the match ends in a tie.

Players are prohibited from leaving the court in the last 15 minutes of a timed match.

In the event of rain and a subsequent full match reschedule, any court previously defaulted must be rescheduled and played.

### **C. Advancement:**

1. All players other than Self-Rated and Valid Computer Rated Appealed-Down Players are eligible to progress to championship level competition below National Championships if that player has played on the same team in at least two matches at the same NTRP level in the same Age Group during its local league season and is otherwise eligible. A maximum of one default received by the player during local league competition shall count for advancing. Players who appeal up use the same advancement criteria as Computer-Rated Players.
2. All **Self-Rated and Valid Computer Rated Appealed-Down Players** are eligible to progress to Local and Regional Championship if that player has played on the same team in at least two matches (no defaults count) at the same NTRP level in the same Age Group during its local league season. **In the Adult and Mixed Divisions, all Self-Rated and Valid Computer Rated Appealed-Down players** are eligible to progress to Sectional Championship if that player has played on the same team in at least three matches (no defaults count) at the same NTRP level in the same Age Group during its local league season, local championships and regional championships.

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| Rating Type                | Local Championships                             | Regionals                                       | Sectionals                                      | Nationals                                       |
|----------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Computer & Appealed Up     | 2 matches on the same team, 1 default can count | 2 matches on the same team, 1 default can count | 2 matches on the same team, 1 default can count | 3 matches on the same team, 1 default can count |
| Self-Rated & Appealed Down | 2 matches on the same team, no defaults count   | 2 matches on the same team, no defaults count   | 3 matches on the same team, no defaults count   | 4 matches on the same team, no defaults count   |

- 3. Player Declaration Prior to Championship Play** - Players who play on two or more teams at the same NTRP level and age group in the Eastern Section must declare which team they will represent prior to the start of any local, regional or sectional championship should more than one team qualify to advance. This declaration is done by playing in a championship match.

If a player declares for a team and that team is eliminated from championship play, after the completion of that championship, the player is eligible to re-select and play for any other team, in any local, regional or sectional championship that has not started, as long as they meet eligibility requirements for that team, regardless of region.

Exception – If a team wins a 2024 Early Start League Local Championship and a player played in the Local Championship, the player may choose to represent another team from another local league that started after January 1, 2024 in the same region. Prior to the start of Regional Championships in that region, the player will have to declare which team they will represent in the Regional Championships. If the player plays in a second Local Championship, the player must select one of the teams for which they played in the Local Championships. Players will not be allowed to play in a championship match for a team from another region, until all teams for which the player played in a local championship match have been eliminated.

- 4.** If two teams are scheduled for the same regional or sectional championships and share more than 7 eligible players only one team may advance. The teams must choose which team will advance, and the other team must concede their championship spot to the second-place team. The league coordinator must be notified no later than 48 hours following the conclusion of the season.

5. In the event of a tie in a league or championship that uses match wins, whether in round robin or single elimination competition, the tie shall be broken by the first of the following procedures that does so:
  - a. Individual Matches
  - b. Head-to-Head (if all teams involved in the tie have played each other the same number of times)
  - c. Least Number of Sets Lost
  - d. Least Number of Games Lost
  - e. Game Winning Percentage
  - f. Coin toss

In the event of a tie in a league or championship that uses points per position, whether in round robin or single elimination competition, the tie shall be broken by the first of the following procedures that does so:

- a. Head-to-Head (if all teams involved in the tie have played each other the same number of times)
  - b. Least Number of Sets Lost
  - c. Least Number of Games Lost
  - d. Game Winning Percentage
  - e. Winner of first doubles
6. All local, regional and sectional championships will consist of the following:
  - 18&Over 2.5 and 5.0 = 1 singles and 2 doubles
  - 18&Over 3.0, 3.5, 4.0 and 4.5 = 2 singles and 3 doubles
  - 40&Over all levels = 1 singles and 4 doubles
  - 55&Over and 65&Over all levels = 3 doubles
  - 18&Over Mixed, 40&Over Mixed and 55&Over Mixed = 3 doubles
7. Local Championships (Playoffs)
  - a. Flights of 6-7 teams will send the top two teams to Local Championships.
  - b. Flights of 8 or more teams will send the top four teams to Local Championships.

#### **D. Captain's Responsibilities/Procedures:**

1. Both home & visiting captains should make contact at least 5 days prior to the match to confirm match site, start time and number of courts. **It is the responsibility of the home team to inform the visiting team of any dress code required by the home site, as well as the court type to be played on.**



2. Call the club at least 4 days before your match
  - Verify team names, number of courts booked for your match, and match time
  - Be aware more than 1 USTA match can be booked at the facility so be specific
  - Booking errors can occur. Any issues, contact the League Coordinator immediately
3. **Defaults**
  - Defaults are highly discouraged
    - Please try to fill all courts, especially later in the season as facilities have set aside courts for us, blocking other bookings
    - Registration will remain open for the season in the event you need to add players to avoid defaulting courts
    - If you need more players, contact the League Coordinator
  - If you must cancel a court: Canceling captain must email the League Coordinator AND opposing captains
    - League Coordinator email: [ellis@eastern.usta.com](mailto:ellis@eastern.usta.com)
    - Indicate specifically which court is cancelled, such as 2nd singles or 3rd doubles
    - The coordinator will confirm by email when the court has been canceled
  - Cancellation Deadlines
    - 12pm 2 days prior to match date at all facilities, excluding Queens College (their deadline is 12pm 3 days prior)
    - See the [League Match Fees](#) for the most up to date cancellation deadlines
  - If you cancel past these deadlines, and the court fee cannot be waived:
    - If the opposing team uses the court: they pay for half, the defaulting team pays the other half
    - If the opposing team does not use the court: the defaulting team pays the full court fee, including the opposing team's half.
    - Specifically, the player/captain canceling late should pay.
4. Captains shall be present at every match or assign someone to be acting captain.
5. Complete your line-up on your scoresheet and exchange scoresheets with the other captain simultaneously prior to the beginning of the team match. **If it is a staggered match, the players for the later matches MUST be designated on the lineup scorecard.**
6. **Both team captains are responsible for inputting scores into TennisLink within 48 hours.** The first team to report will input the scores, the next to report will "confirm or dispute" scores. Captains may forfeit their right to dispute a scorecard if they do not confirm match results in TennisLink within 48 hours.
7. **The home team must supply a new unopened container of USTA approved balls for each individual match.** To determine who is the home team, go by what the match schedule in Tennislink says who the home team is, not the club assigned to your team.

8. A facility must provide a minimum of **three (3) courts** for a 5-court league, and 2 courts for a 3-court or 4-court league must be available at the commencement of a team match. Facilities must provide **two hours** of court time per court.
9. When only three courts are available for a 5-court league at the commencement of a match, the individual matches shall be played in the following order: #1 singles and #1 and #2 doubles, followed by #2 singles and #3 doubles. For a 4-court league, the two courts should be: #1 singles and #1 doubles. The captains may agree to change this order by mutual consent.
10. If, during a league match, an irresolvable dispute arises between the players about the accuracy of calling the lines, any player may suspend the match to request a court monitor to be present for the remainder of the match. The players shall seek out their respective captains or acting captains to arrange for the mutually acceptable court monitor. If there is no acting captain available, the players shall mutually designate a person, acceptable to all players, to monitor the match. If possible, two monitors are suggested. The monitor(s) shall stand at the net post and make a line call or resolve any other dispute only if requested by any player. The monitor(s) shall not independently make a line call or other ruling. The line call or ruling of the monitor(s) shall be final, controlling and not appealable. If there are two court monitors on the court and they disagree regarding a call, the call made by the player(s) stands. Please recall no one can leave the court in the last 15 minutes of a timed match.
11. Reschedules: Requests for full match reschedules are **not** permitted. If you are struggling to field a full line-up, as many courts as possible should be played on the originally scheduled date (preferably 3 out of 5 courts or 2 out of 3 courts to make the match valid). If fewer than 3 out of 5 courts, 3 out of 4 courts or 2 out of 3 courts are played, then only those courts to make it a valid match shall be rescheduled.

The USTA League Coordinator may reschedule any unplayed or incomplete matches occurring in the last two weeks of the season, which would impact the determination of a league winner. Any cost incurred would be shared by both teams.

Teams must participate through a facility within the Section unless prior approval has been authorized by SLC and Adult Comp Committee Chair. No matches or make-up courts may be played outside the USTA Eastern geographic boundaries.
12. Captains have **one week** from the day of the originally scheduled match to agree on a reschedule date for an incomplete court (s). Two viable dates must be given as options by the home team. If a date is not confirmed within this time period, the League Coordinator will set the date. Captains must report the rescheduled date to the League Coordinator. Incomplete court (s) that occur within the last two weeks of the season may be rescheduled by the League Coordinator.
13. **Payments:** Captains or designated captains collect fees from players prior to the match, and pay the facility in one lump sum, before going on the court or the day prior. Team fees can be found here: [League Match Fees](#).

### **Administrative Processes:**

**All grievances shall be submitted to either the Section League Coordinator or the Adult League Coordinator for processing.**

**There is a \$50 fee to file a grievance. If the grievance is upheld, the fee will be refunded. There is a \$75 fee to file an appeal of the grievance decision. If the decision is modified in any way, the fee will be refunded**

#### **1. NTRP Appeals:**

Computer rated players may only appeal their ratings electronically on the TennisLink website. If the decision is denied, there is no further right of appeal. If players choose to appeal and it is granted, they may NOT go back to their pre-appeal level, the decision is final and binding.

Self rated players may also appeal on the Tennislink website, with a decision made by the NTRP Appeals Committee. There shall be no further right of appeal from the decision of the NTRP Appeal Committee. Please refer to the Eastern Section website for Medical Appeals forms and instructions (see link below under Self-Rate Grievances).

#### **2. NTRP Grievances:**

If a captain or coordinator believes a player is competing at one level or more below their actual skill level, a grievance may be filed at the Section level only. Players with a valid computer or benchmark rating or granted an automatic appeal of a computer rating are not subject to an NTRP Grievance.

Pursuant to USTA Eastern C.5, a separate NTRP Grievance Form must be completed for each player being grieved and forms containing multiple names will be dismissed without consideration.

#### **3. Local Grievances:**

Informal notification should be made within 48 hours of the incident or dispute by the captain to their coordinator, or within 24 hours if it is the last match of the season..

The grievance must be filed prior to the commencement of whichever occurs first: (a) the involved team's next match listed in Tennislink, whether or not the involved player participates or (b) within 24 hours after the end of the local league season. Parties will be charged \$50 to file a grievance. This fee will be waived if the grievance is upheld.

In order for a grievance to be valid, it must state the specific rule or rules within the Local Rules, USTA Regulations or standards of good conduct, fair play and good sportsmanship that have been violated.

The Coordinator shall forward the grievance to the opposing captain, who shall have a set time limit to respond. The coordinator shall forward the grievance and response to the

Chair of the Grievance Committee. The Local Grievance Committee shall review the grievance and make a determination in accordance with its procedures.

Appeals after the grievance decision may be made to the Sectional Appeals Committee within the time period and in the manner specified in the decision.

All grievance forms can be found on the USTA Eastern Website [here](#).

**USTA Eastern, Metro Region Adult League Coordinator**

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