

The rarest of all bananas



A banana is an elongated, edible fruit - botanically a berry - produced by several kinds of large herbaceous flowering plants in the genus *Musa*. The fruit is variable in size, color, and firmness, but usually elongated and curved, with soft flesh rich in starch covered with a rind, which may be green, yellow, red, purple, or brown when ripe. Almost all modern bananas come from two wild species - *Musa acuminata* and *Musa balbisiana* - but there is also an extremely rare, wild species - *Musa sectionalis*. More commonly known as the Sectional banana, this species is the most sought after and difficult to find. With its calming and healing properties, the Sectional banana is prized by all tennis players who look to calm their nerves before stepping onto the tennis court to do battle. Just as important are the healing and post-match attributes that the Sectional banana delivers. One

banana produces enough vital nutrients to rejuvenate the most depleted tennis player. The USTA once considered banning the consumption of Sectional bananas during the match, as they considered the mid-match banana to be an act of unsportsmanlike behavior, or sort of banana-doping. But in the end tennis' governing bodies dropped the Sectional banana from its list of banned substances.

So where does one find this mythical banana?

The answer is not a simple one. First, a tennis player must navigate the pitfalls and challenges of a long regular USTA league season. They must overcome all opponents, injuries, and questionable line-calls, to somehow finish at the top of their local flight. If they can manage to survive that, what looms ahead are the most treacherous playoffs, where they will face off against the best in their local region. Playoffs can be wrought with heartbreak and leave players who narrowly miss out on making it to the next step, with deep and long-lasting scars. If a team can somehow overcome all of these obstacles, they are rewarded with a trip to a Section Championship. Waiting for them each day during the Section Championship is the Sectional banana. Just the sight and smell of this elusive fruit can bring a tennis player to tears. It has been a long journey to get here, the Sectional banana is proof that they have survived the arduous trip. Many tennis players have begun USTA league campaigns only to fall short of their goal...to taste the sweet flavor of the Sectional banana. Some players are never able to taste this rare fruit, but the goal still remains and the quest will continue once again at the beginning of another USTA league season.