USTA SOUTHWEST PHOENIX

2026 Championship Year Adult Play Regulations
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General

These regulations serve as a supplement to the USTA National and USTA Southwest Section League Regulations and are approved by the USTA Phoenix Region. They are subject to periodic amendments. These apply to traditional Advancing, Tri-Level, 55 & Over Mixed, 65 & Over Adult Leagues, 70 & Over Adult and all summer recreation leagues for the 2026 championship year.

Captains, co-captains, and acting captains are required to read and follow these regulations, in addition to the USTA Southwest Section and USTA National league regulations, and "Friend at Court" handbook. **Captains are responsible for managing their players, league team matches, and relaying all provided information, regulations, and notices to their players and spectators. All deadlines referenced in these regulations can be found on our Captains Corner page:** https://www.ustaphoenix.com/captains-corner

A. League Administration

1. Registration and Fees

a. The league coordinator (LC) manages the league program. LC shall determine the method and deadline (see link above) for team registration. The LC retains the discretion to permit late team registrations.

b. A league registration fee, as approved by the USTA Southwest Board of Directors, shall be established and is subject to periodic increases.

c. Refunds will be issued only for documented medical reasons, provided the player has not participated in a league match or been listed on a scorecard.

2. Rosters and Withdrawals

a. The LC shall establish the minimum roster and at-level requirement deadlines (see link above.) Teams that fail to meet minimum roster requirements or the specified at-level requirement may be removed from the league. In such cases, all rostered players forfeit fees paid.

b. Teams are not permitted to withdraw after the designated deadline (see link above.)

c. A team that abandons the league is subject to grievance and penalties. In the event of a team drop, or TTD, the LC may adjust the schedule to ensure all teams have the same number of matches as required by USTA National Regulations.

d. The LC shall establish the player registration deadline (see link above,) players may not register after this date.

e. Roster Limits - Tri-Level teams may have a maximum of 15 players on roster. All other leagues may have a maximum of 22 players on roster. An exception may be granted by the LC.

f. Straight-level league teams must maintain a roster with a minimum of 60% at-level NTRP players.

3. Scheduling and Flighting

a. A local league may be divided into multiple flights, which can be determined randomly or by geographical location.

b. The LC may designate a flight to be non-advancing based on the number of teams registered.

c. Captains are responsible for completing all team matches to validation.

d. League schedules may be structured in randomly assigned matches, a full or multiple round robin(s,) or full plus partial round robins.

B. Match Rules and Procedures

1. Home Courts and Match Start

a. Team captains must secure authorization to use their designated home court facility and are responsible for reserving courts in advance for all home matches. Facilities may but are not required to provide court time prior to match start times. Players may not claim a court prior to start time.

b. The home team is responsible for all court and guest fees and for providing a new can of USTA-approved tennis balls for each individual court. An alternative facility may be utilized if the primary home courts become unavailable.

c. Preferred start times for weekday evening matches are between 7:00 PM and 8:00 PM. Friday evening matches may commence as early as 6:30 PM. Morning and daytime league start times may vary between 7:30am and 4pm, based on court availability.

d. The type of court surface must remain consistent throughout the season unless a change is mutually agreed upon by both teams.

e. Captains must ensure that all team matches are played to validation, with the majority (not half) of individual courts in a team match played to completion.

f. Start times may be updated at least two weeks in advance, unless otherwise agreed to by both captains. Match start times must be approved by the facility manager and permitted in regulations.

g. **TBA Location**. A match with “TBA” listed as location has an “R” listed next to it under the match schedule tab (full tennislink site, not the app,) and has no court availability at the home team’s facility. Home captains are responsible for scheduling “TBA” matches through either of the following options and must notify the LC of the date/time/location for the match <u>at least 2 weeks in advance</u>.

    a. Secure alternate courts on the original date.

b. Treat it as a rain out and reschedule the match with the opposing captain to be played by the deadline set by LC (see link at top of page 1.) See USTA Phoenix regulation “C. Special Match Circumstances, item 3. Suspended and Rescheduled Matches.”

2. Lineups and Defaults

a. A captain or acting captain must be present at each match to exchange lineups and fulfill all captain's duties.

b. Lineups must be exchanged at scheduled match time. However, lineup exchange should not occur if either team is missing players. If an unforeseen default occurs and individual courts have not begun play, both captains redo lineups so they may utilize players as they like. In this situation, players may not be changed for a match that has begun play.

c. If the submitted lineups from both teams would result in fewer than the majority of individual matches being played, both teams are required to revise their lineups before play begins, ensuring the majority of courts are played. Players may not refuse to play singles in such a situation.

d. Defaults known in advance must be placed on the lowest-numbered court. Defaulted courts

e. Each individual court has a 15-minute grace period after the scheduled match time. Defaults may be declared at the 16th minute past scheduled start time. (7:16 pm for a 7:00 pm match.)

f. "Penalties for Lateness" as outlined in "Friend at Court" do not apply to un-officiated local matches. All regular season matches are un-officiated.

3. Scoring and Scoring Corrections

a. Scores are entered from the perspective of the winner.

b. The winning captain is responsible for entering scores into TennisLink within 24 hours of the match start time. The opposing captain is authorized to enter the scores if this deadline is missed.

c. Either captain may confirm or dispute the scores in TennisLink. Additionally, a score dispute must be submitted in writing to the LC copying the opposing captain within 48 hours of score entry.

d. The individual recipients of defaulted matches cannot be altered 48 hours or more after initial entry.

4. Conduct and Etiquette

a. Captains are responsible for presenting a welcoming environment for visiting players and spectators. All must adhere to all regulations and “The Code" listed in "Friend at Court."

b. Teammates, spectators, and captains are prohibited from offering advice or commentary to players in an ongoing match unless necessary to de-escalate a situation. Coaching is not permitted.

c. Team captains are accountable for the conduct of spectators and pets associated with their team and/or facility. All parties are subject to grievance for bad behavior

d. Smoking or vaping is prohibited during a league match, including during changeovers or breaks. Non-playing team members or spectators are not permitted to smoke or vape on the facility premises where it could be noticeable to players.

e. A ringing cell phone is considered a deliberate hindrance. If an opponent's phone rings during a point, a player may immediately stop play and claim the point.

f. Video recording. Facilities may have their own restrictions that must be followed by all guests of the facility. These restrictions could require consent by the other party before recording. As in most matters concerning our community, we count on our members to conduct themselves with the highest level of sportsmanship, kindness and common sense. The Southwest Section recommends that players, parents and coaches obtain consent from the other player before recording. Full statement available here: https://www.ustaphoenix.com/captains-corner

C. Special Match Circumstances

1. Timed Matches

a. Timed match rules (TMR) may be used if a facility has a hard stop time or closing time. The home captain must inform the visiting captain of the allotted time prior to line up exchange.

b. In the event of limited match time, either captain may elect to use timed match rules for any or all courts in a team match. Such declaration must be made prior to warm-up.

c. Timed Matches with Staggered Start times: The earlier courts' hard finish time shall be half-way point between first courts' start time and the facility's hard closing time UNLESS otherwise agreed to by both team captains. For example: first courts begin at 6pm and the facility closes at 9:30, the hard finish time for the first courts shall be 7:45pm with the 20-minute warning at 7:25pm (giving 1 hour and 45 minutes to complete 6pm matches.) The 2nd start time matches shall start at 7:45pm (if not earlier) and "hard" finish at 9:30pm with 20-minute warning at 9:10pm (giving 1 hour and 45 minutes to complete 7:45pm matches.)

d. Should the home captain fail to inform the visiting captain hard stop/closing time and TMR are not used, the visiting team shall choose the location to complete any incomplete matches.

e. If both teams choose not to use TMR, the visiting team shall travel to the home team's location to complete any unfinished matches at a mutually agreed upon date.

f. A "warning time" is set at 20 minutes before the hard closing time, with special rules applying to incomplete matches. Once the "warning time" has been reached the following shall apply:

I. If the match is complete, the scores shall be entered as played.

II. If the first set has not been completed, the match shall be suspended and rescheduled.

III. If a third set 10-point tie-break has already begun, complete the tie-break.

IV. If the second set has not been completed, complete any game or tie-break in which the first point has already been played, then:

a) If the second set is tied, play a 7-point tie-break for the set.

b) A team ahead by two games or more is the winner of the second set.

c) If a team is ahead by one game, play one additional game, then:

i. If a team is ahead by two games or more, that team is the winner of the second set.

ii. If the second set score is tied, play a 7-point tie break for the set.

iii. If, upon completion of the second set, the match is tied, play a third set 10-point tie-break.

V. Should the match time expire, and the match remains incomplete under these rules, the match will be considered suspended and rescheduled.

VI. Scoring for any match completed under these “Timed Match” rules shall be entered on the score card with “Timed Match” designation. Only the actual games played shall be entered.

VII. A second set awarded by virtue of being ahead by two games or more shall be entered with the actual game score. A second set determined by a 7-point tie-break shall be entered with the tie-break counting as one game. A third set determined by a 10-point tie-break shall be entered as 1-0 in favor of the winning team/player.

2. Staggered Start Times

a. Staggered start times may be used if required by the facility or requested by the home captain. For weeknight team matches, individual matches shall not be scheduled to begin prior to 6pm or later than 9pm, unless both captains agree otherwise. No more than two individual matches for a 4 or 5 court league and one individual match for a 3-court league shall be scheduled prior to 7pm or later than 8pm, unless both captains agree otherwise. The remaining courts may begin 90 – 120 minutes later.

b. The visiting captain is responsible for designating which lines will play at each staggered start time and must notify the home captain in writing 48 hours or more in advance. If this notification is not provided, the home captain may make such designations.

3. Suspended and Rescheduled Matches

a. Matches may be rescheduled due to inclement weather, unexpected facility closure, court unavailability or if captains agree. Both captains are jointly responsible for agreeing on a new date (or dates,) times, and location. Captains must send the re-schedule details to LC via email within a week of the original date. All matches must be played by the deadline set by the LC (see link at top of page 1.)

b. If a match in progress is interrupted by rain, teams should wait for up to 45 minutes to see if courts become playable. Alternatively, they may mutually agree to reschedule without waiting. Any player may determine that a court surface is unsafe for play.

I. When a match is suspended, all completed individual courts shall stand. Incomplete matches will be rescheduled to resume from the point of interruption. Players must make a note of the set, game, and point score, serve/return sides, and rotation order.

II. A match not started requires a new lineup exchange. Previous defaults are vacated.

c. The LC may mandate a full or partial match reschedule for 1.) public safety reasons, 2.) to resolve scheduling conflicts, or 3.) to prevent a total team default. In such cases, matches must be played according to directions provided by the LC. A captain may request a full or partial match reschedule for any other reason not listed above. The opposing captain may grant or deny the request.

4. Total Team Default (TTD)

a. A Total Team Default (TTD) occurs when two of three, three of four, or three of five individual courts are defaulted or double defaulted. A TTD can skew standings and is not permitted.

b. The LC may impose penalties on captains and/or players and may file a grievance. The USTA Southwest Section League Grievance Committee may impose suspension points.

c. In the event of a TTD, a captain from either team must notify the League LC before entering scores.

I. If a TTD occurs in a complete round robin (all teams played the defaulting team during that round), only the scores from the complete round robin with the full team default will be removed from the standings if necessary. If all teams with a mathematical possibility of winning the league have played the defaulting team, those matches shall stand.

II. If a TTD occurs in an incomplete round robin, scores will be reversed in the incomplete round robin for all teams that played the defaulting team in that round. Scores will be reversed for all that team's *other* opponents in the first completed round robin.

D. Determining League Winners and Player Eligibility

1. Season Winners

Standings tie-break procedures are outlined as follows:

For 3 and 5 court format leagues:

1. Most Team Match Wins
2. Most Individual Match Wins
3. Head-to-Head
4. Fewest Sets Lost
5. Fewest Games Lost
6. Game Winning Percentage
7. Coin Flip

For 4 court format leagues:

1. Most points earned
2. Head-to-Head
3. Fewest Sets Lost
4. Fewest Games Lost
5. Game Winning Percentage
6. 1st Doubles Court Winner (head-to-head)
7. Coin Flip

a. In a single-flight league with one full round plus a partial round robin, or multiple round robins, there is no post season playoff. The first-place team is the season winner.

b. For single-flight leagues with 11 or fewer teams and 1 round robin, the 1st and 2nd place teams will participate in a playoff.

c. For single-flight leagues with 12 or more teams and 1 round robin or un-flighted randomly assigned matches, the top four teams will compete in a single-elimination playoff.

d. In a multi-flight league, the 1st place teams from each flight will compete in a playoff.

e. The highest seed for a playoff match has the option to provide balls and host the playoff match or that team may defer to the opposing team. In a league with more than one flight with varying number of matches the highest seed is determined by using the following:

    1. Team match winning percentage, if tied
    2. Individual match winning percentage, if tied
    3. Lowest individual sets lost percentage, if tied
    4. Lowest individual games lost percentage, if tied
    5. Coin Flip.

2. Player Eligibility

a. **NTRP Rating Types “C,” “M,” and “T:”** On traditional advancing teams, players with a C, M or T rating must play a minimum of two regular season matches to be eligible for Playoffs, District, or Sectional Championships. One default may count toward this requirement. For Nationals the requirement is three matches played, with one default counting.

b. **NTRP Rating types “S” & “A:”** Players with S or A ratings must play a minimum of three matches to participate in Playoffs, District Championships, or Sectional Championships. No defaults count toward this requirement. For Nationals, the requirement is four matches played, no defaults count.

c. **Early Start Leagues:** Players with a C or M rating who are "bumped up" at year-end may continue to play on their early start team at the lower level during the season but are ineligible to advance to the post season at that level, unless they receive notice of being "Clearly Above Level" (CAL) or bumped two NTRP levels. CAL players may only play at their new higher level from that point forward.

d. **Invitational Leagues (Tri-Level, 65 & Over, 55 & Over Mixed):** Players must play a minimum of two matches to advance to a District, Sectional, or National Invitational. One default may count.

e. There are two different advancing seasons offered: 1) fall early start and 2) spring. Only matches played for the specific team number will count for eligibility purposes to advance. Matches played during the fall early start season DO NOT count for eligibility purposes for players on spring teams and vice versa.

3. District Championships and Sectional Wildcards

a. If a league has both a fall and spring season, the winner of each season will compete in a District Championship to determine the team that advances to Sectionals. District Championships occur after spring season completion. District Championships dates will be published by the LC.

b. If the same team wins both seasons no championship match is required, and the captain shall choose which team advances. At the same age and level, a fall winner and a spring winner with at least 51% of the same players are considered "the same team." If the winning teams have different captains and cannot reach an agreement, the team with the most qualified eligible players will advance.

c. Wildcard policy and details are explained in the USTA Southwest Section Regulations.