



**2023 Championship Year Adult Play Regulations  
August 2023**

**ADVANCING, TRI LEVEL, 55 & OVER MIXED, AND 65 & OVER LEAGUES**

**GENERAL**

- 1.01 These USTA Phoenix League Rules are approved and adopted by the USTA Phoenix Region and may be amended periodically.
- 1.02 These rules are intended to supplement the USTA National League Regulations and the USTA Southwest Section League Regulations for the applicable championship year and are adopted as allowed by said regulations. These regulations are not designed to be the sole or exclusive source of league regulations.

**LEAGUE ADMINISTRATION**

- 2.01 **Scheduling.** The local league coordinator shall establish the method and deadline for team registration. The Local League Coordinator may allow a team to register after the established deadline, at his/her discretion.
- 2.02 **Fees.** A league registration fee shall be established and approved by USTA Southwest Board of Directors. League registration fees may increase periodically.
- 2.03 **Refunds.** Refunds on league registration fees will only be provided for medical reasons with appropriate documentation provided to the Local League Coordinator AND only if the player has not played in a league match.
- 2.04 **Team Withdrawal.** If a team withdraws from a league after the team registration deadline, all registered players forfeit their entry fees. Further penalties may apply.
- 2.05 **Deadline.** The individual player registration deadline shall be designated by the League Coordinator. Players may not register for any team after the last regularly scheduled league match for that team and/or before any playoff match. Teams that do not meet the minimum player deadline are subject to removal from the league. Registration fees paid by any players on the roster of a deleted team are forfeited.
- 2.06 **Rosters.** Team rosters for Tri-Level leagues may not exceed 15 players. Teams participating in straight level leagues must meet 50% at level NTRP requirements. Exception may be granted by League Coordinator.
- 2.07 **Flighting.** A local league may be split into more than one flight. The distribution of teams may be random or geographically based.

**ADVANCING CAPTAINS' DUTIES**

- 3.01 **Regulations.** All captains and co-captains must read, understand, and stay up-to-date with all regulations that govern USTA leagues. This includes: USTA Phoenix regulations, USTA Southwest Section league regulations, USTA National league regulations, and Friend at Court (including "the code.")

- 3.02 **Line up.** The captain, or a designee (“acting captain,”) shall be present for each match to exchange line ups and perform captain’s duties accordance with National League Regulation 2.01C(5). Teams must play the majority of the individual matches for all league team matches. If both teams present a line up that would result in fewer than the majority of individual matches being played, each team must re-do their line up to ensure that the majority of courts are played. i.e.: in a 4-court format (1 singles & 3 doubles): team A defaults the singles court and Team B defaults doubles court #3. This would result in only 2 courts out of 4 being played. BOTH teams must re-do their line up to ensure at least 3 courts are played. Line ups shall be exchanged once all players have arrived. **Also See Section 4.08 Defaults and Late Players.**
- 3.03 **Visiting Teams.** Captains must provide a welcoming environment for visiting players.
- 3.04 **Scores.** Winning captain shall be responsible for promptly entering scores into tennislink, no later than 24 hours following the match start time. The opposing captain may also enter scores. The scores may be confirmed or disputed. Any dispute must be made in writing to the Local League Coordinator within 48 hours of the initial entry of the scores in accordance with National League Regulation 1.04C(2). Individual recipients of defaulted individual matches may not be changed after 48 hours of the initial entry of the scores.

## **MATCHES**

- 4.01 **Home Courts.** Each team shall designate a home facility for all scheduled home matches. Team Captains must have permission to play home matches at designated facility. Home teams may use a reasonable alternative facility for a home match if necessary.
- 4.02 **Court Fees.** The home team shall pay any court fee and any guest fee for visiting players.
- 4.03 **Balls.** The home team shall provide an un-opened pressurized can of USTA approved yellow tennis balls for each court.
- 4.04 **Start Times.** The preferred match start time for weekday evening matches is between 7pm and 8pm. Friday evening matches may begin as early as 6:30pm. Home team captains may change start times if permitted by these regulations and the hosting facility. All match start times must be updated 2 or more weeks in advance, unless otherwise agreed to by both captains.
- 4.05 **Staggered Matches.**
- A. If a facility cannot make all required courts available at the same time, staggered match start times may be used. Monday through Thursday evenings: (1) No individual match shall be scheduled prior to 6pm or later than 9pm, unless both captains agree otherwise. (2) 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.
  - B. In the event of staggered matches, the visiting captain shall have the option of designating which lines (i.e.: #1 singles, #2 doubles) play at which staggered match start times. The visiting captains shall notify the home captain, in writing 48 hours or more in advance of the first start time. If this notice is not given at least 48 hours in advance, the home captain make such designations.
- 4.06 **Timed Matches**
- A. It is the Home Captain’s responsibility to know and inform visiting captains prior to line-up exchange of the host facility closing times.

- B. If the facility closes at a predetermined time, *either captain* may declare to use timed match rules.
- C. Timed match rules must be declared at time-of or prior-to line up exchange, (before warm-up.) Either captain may elect to use timed match rules for any or all courts in a team match if facility has a hard closing time. If timed match rules are utilized for a team match with staggered start time, then 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 or acting 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 15 minute warning at 7:30pm (giving 1 hour and 45 minutes to complete 6pm matches.) The 2<sup>nd</sup> start time matches shall start at 7:45 (if not earlier) and hard finish at 9:30pm with 15 minute warning at 9:15pm (giving 1 hour and 45 minutes to complete 7:45pm matches.)
- D. If neither captain elects to use timed match rules, the visiting players will travel to finish incomplete matches if any. (Retirements allowed.)
- E. If home captain (or designee) fails to inform visiting captain of closing time and timed match rules are not used, then the visiting team will choose the facility location to complete any incomplete matches.
- F. Timed Match Rules: "warning time" shall be 15 minutes prior to hard closing time.
- G. Once the "warning time" has been reached the following shall apply:
- 1) If the match is complete, the scores shall be reported normally.
  - 2) If the first set has not been completed, the match shall be suspended and rescheduled.
  - 3) If a third set 10 point tie-break has already begun, complete the tie-break.
  - 4) 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. If a team is ahead by two games or more, declare that team 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, declare that team the winner of the second set.
      - ii. If the second set score is tied, play a 7-point tie break for the set.
      - iii. Upon completion of the second set, should the set score be tied, play a third set 10-point tie-break.
- H. Should the match time expire, and the match remains incomplete under these rules, the match will be considered suspended and rescheduled.
- I. 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.

- J. Any second set determined by a 7-point tie-break shall be entered with the tie-break counting as one game.
  - K. A third set determined by a 10-point tie-break shall be entered as 1-0 in favor of the winning team/player.
  - L. A second set awarded by virtue of being ahead by two games or more shall be entered with the actual game score
- 4.07 **Warm Up.** Warm up is limited to ten minutes, including all practice serves. Warm up begins at match start time and lasts for no more than 10 minutes including serves. Players who arrive 10 to 15 minutes late forfeit a warm up. A two minute break may be taken after the second set. Line Up exchange shall not be done if all players are not on site.
- 4.08. **Defaults & Late Players.** Each individual court is entitled to a 15-minute grace period after the scheduled match time before a default may be declared. If an individual default is declared, then the defaulted match shall not be played; matches played shall stand regardless of start time or previous default agreement. If an individual default is declared after lineups have been exchanged and no other individual matches have begun play (for that same start time,) a new lineup may be exchanged. "Penalties for lateness" as defined in **Friend at Court** beginning on page 110 are NOT applicable in local un-officiated matches. All USTA league matches throughout flight playoffs are un-officiated. Only District, Sectional, and National Championship matches are officiated. IF both teams have the minimum number of players available to play, but the combination of individual defaults by the two teams would result in the majority of individual matches not being played, the teams must re-do and re-exchange their line-up to best fill as many courts as possible to ensure the majority (not half) of the courts are played and the match is valid. This shall be the first step before beginning any matches at all – even staggered start matches. Players may not refuse to play singles in such a situation.
- 4.09 **Coaching.** Coaching is not permitted for any league match.
- 4.10 **Ringling Cell Phone.** A ringing cell phone is a deliberate hindrance; if an opponent's cell phone rings during a point, the player may immediately stop and claim the point. A player may not return the ball, lose the point, and then claim a hindrance.
- 4.11 **Conduct.** The Code in "Friend at Court" shall be followed by all. Teammates, spectators, and captains shall not volunteer advice regarding line calls, scoring, or on the conduct players. The home host Captains (or acting captains) are responsible for home facility spectator conduct. Violators are subject to grievance and/or penalties.
- 4.12 **Total Team Default.** Should a team not play the minimum number of courts as defined by USTA National Regulation 2.03K ("Team Default"), in any local league match, the Local League Coordinator may impose penalties on captains or players. Further, Local League Coordinator may file a grievance (pursuant to the procedures set forth in USTA National Regulation §§ 3.00) against the captain of the team defaulting. The SW Section League Grievance Committee may impose penalties against any party to the team default.

#### **SUSPENDED AND RESCHEDULED MATCHES**

- 5.01 **Home "Host" Facilities.** All facilities must have courts reserved in advance for league matches.

- 5.02 **Inclement weather/court issues.** A match may be cancelled and rescheduled due to inclement weather or if a facility unexpectedly closes or courts become unavailable. Should a team match be suspended due to weather or a facility issue:
- A. Completed matches shall stand as played.
  - B. Incomplete matches shall be rescheduled and resume with the same players at the exact set, game, point score, side, and rotation order as when it was suspended.
  - C. Lineups for individual matches not begun when the team match is suspended may be changed.
- Heat is expected in the Phoenix Region. We ask and expect players to be understanding regarding the effects of heat during the hottest months of the year. However, heat and excessive heat is expected. If a player is vulnerable to the weather conditions, that player shall not participate.
- 5.03 **Match Interruption.** If a match is started and then interrupted by rain, teams shall, if allowed by the facility, wait up to one hour to determine if courts become playable. Teams may agree to reschedule the match. Any captain or individual player may determine a court surface is unsafe for play.
- 5.04 **Rescheduling.** A captain may request that an opposing captain agree to postpone and/or reschedule an entire match for any reason. The opposing captain has the right to accept or reject the request. Rescheduling is considered a courtesy and captains are under no obligation to reschedule a match. This rule is intended for every scenario and/or reason the request is made. A Local League Coordinator may not reschedule an originally scheduled and published match without both captains' consent unless otherwise explicitly authorized by these Local League Rules. The Local League Coordinator may mandate the reschedule of a match at his/her discretion for public safety reasons or conflicting schedules for advancing teams.
- 5.05 **Reschedule Deadlines.** All rained out, cancelled, or suspended matches shall be rescheduled in tennislink within one week of the originally scheduled match date. The rescheduled match shall be played by the last date determined by the Local League Coordinator. It is the responsibility of both captains to agree upon reschedule date(s) and then communicate the details via email to the League Coordinator. A match is not deemed to be officially rescheduled until this has occurred and is verified by the Local League Coordinator. Failure to convey this information to the Local League Coordinator within 30 days of original match date will result in the LLC setting a date, time, and location for the rescheduled match.

## **DETERMINATION OF SEASON WINNERS**

### **6.01 Scheduling and Playoffs**

- A. A single flight league in which the teams compete in one full round robin plus a partial round robin OR two or more round robins: the first placed team upon completion of the regular season shall be declared the season winner. In the event of a tie, the tie shall be broken using the procedures set forth in USTA National League Regulation 2.03H.
- B. A single flight league in which the teams have competed in a single round robin or un-flighted random matches, upon completion of the round robin, the first place team shall play the second place team in a playoff to determine the session winner of the local league. If there are ten or more registered teams the teams finishing in 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> place and the teams finishing in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place shall play. Those winners shall play each other to determine the season winner.

- C. For a league in which there is more than one flight, the teams finishing in 1<sup>st</sup> place shall play each other in a single round-robin playoff.
- D. The Local League Coordinator shall schedule dates for playoff matches with reasonable notice provided to all Captains. These dates may be rescheduled by the League Coordinator if necessitated by end-of-session makeup matches or inclement weather.
- E. The highest seed for a playoff match has the option to provide balls and host the playoff match or 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 1. Team match winning percentage, then if tied 2. Individual match winning percentage, then if tied 3. Coin Flip.

#### 6.02 **Player Eligibility.**

- A. Computer rated (C) and Mixed Exclusive (M) players must play in at least two regular season matches to be eligible to participate in a District Championship match. One default may count towards this two-match requirement.
- B. Self-rated (S) and Computer Rated Appeal rated (A) players must play in at least 3 matches to participate in a District Championship match. No defaults count towards this three-match requirement. This three-match requirement does not apply to Tri Level, 65 & Over Adult, or 55 & Over Mixed leagues. Players on the advancing Tri Level, 65 & Over Adult, and 55 & Over Mixed league teams must play in at least 2 matches, regardless of rating type (one default received may count.)
- C. Early Start Leagues (begin play prior to the publishing of year end ratings) A player with a “C,” or “M,” rating who participates in an early start league and is “bumped up” a level at year end, may continue to play on the early start team at the previous lower level throughout the early start season, but not in Flight Playoffs, District Championships, Sectional Championships, or beyond.) A player who receives notice of “Clearly Above Level” will immediately have their NTRP level adjusted up and will only be permitted to play at the new higher level from that point forward. Clearly Above Level notices are sent out to those players within the first two weeks of December each year.
  - 1.) Players with Computer ratings during local league play who are moved up in year end ratings (YERs) but granted an automatic NTRP Appeal down to their previous NTRP level may progress to championship level competition below National Championships based on the eligibility requirements for Computer Rated (C) players. All other “A” rated players are subject to the eligibility requirements of the Southwest Sectional Regulations for advancement to championship level competition below National Championships.
  - 2) Players with Computer ratings (C) during local league play whose “C” rating expires and do not generate a Year End Rating (YER) prior to championship level competition below National Championships are required to self-rate and are subject to the eligibility requirements of the Southwest Sectional Regulations for Computer rated “C” players as long as they do not reach the “clearly above level” rating and are disqualified.
- D. Seasons. There are two different advancing seasons offered: 1) early start fall and second 2) spring. Only matches played on the same age, level, and league team within that season will count for eligibility purposes of players on advancing teams. Matches played during the fall early start season **DO NOT** count for eligibility purposes for players on an advancing spring team.

Likewise, matches played during the spring season do not count for eligibility purposes for players on advancing fall teams.

- E. A player who is on two advancing teams at the same age and level in two different leagues (i.e.: 18+ 3.5 women's daytime and 18+ 3.5 women's nighttime,) may advance to the next level of play for any team for which she is eligible, if otherwise qualified. Such a player may play for either (not both) teams in the next level of playoff. A player may not switch playing for one to another within the same championship.
- F. In 4 court formats with "points per position" utilized, the winning team will be determined by:
  - 1. Most Points Won
  - 2. Head-to-Head
  - 3. Fewest Sets Lost
  - 4. Fewest Games Lost
  - 5. Game Winning Percentage
  - 6. Winner of 1<sup>st</sup> Doubles Court

#### **DETERMINATION OF LEAGUE WINNER - DISTRICT CHAMPIONSHIPS**

- 7.01 In leagues with an early start fall season and a spring season, the winning team of each season shall play each other in a District Championship to determine the team to advance to Sectional Championships. The location and date shall be set by the Local League Coordinator. Player eligibility is subject to Rule 6.02. Rescheduling of the District Championship after initial publication is subject to the rules herein.
- 7.02 If the same team wins both the fall and spring league (same age AND level) there shall be no District Championship. If the same team wins both the fall and spring seasons the captain will choose which team shall advance. If the two teams have two different captains and they do not agree as to the team that shall advance, the team with the most qualified players eligible to advance shall be the advancing team. If the two winning teams at the same age and level have at least 51% of the same players- the two winning teams shall be considered "the same team."