



2004 Sectional Rules and Regulations

USA Mixed, USA Adult (Spring), USA Senior and SCTA Fall Combo League

All USTA Southern California Leagues are governed by the 2004 USA League Tennis Regulations (ULR) and these Sectional League Rules and Regulations (SLRR). The USTA Rules of Tennis, USTA Regulations, and The Code will apply unless altered by the above.

Local Rules and Regulations may be developed to supplement the USTA National and SCTA Sectional Rules and Regulations. The SCTA office must approve any Local Rules and Regulations.

The Local Rules and Regulations must not contradict National or Sectional established rules and regulations.

Compliance with the ULR (ULR Section 1.10) provides that all players, as a condition of their participation in the USA League Tennis Program, agree to abide and be bound by the ULR, the standards of good conduct, fair play and good sportsmanship. Team captains shall be responsible for knowing the ULR and SLRR. Team captains shall inform all team members of their obligation to be bound by the ULR and SLRR. Failure to comply with the ULR and SLRR shall not be excused on the grounds that one was misinformed by a USTA staff member or volunteer. The ULR and SLRR are available on the USTA Southern California web site, scta.usta.com

In all matches played without officials, the USTA "Code" of Conduct shall be observed.

Where changes have been made since the last SLRR, there is a vertical line in the the margin

Eligibility

- Each team member must be a member of the USTA throughout the entire league season. (see ULR Section 1.11) USTA memberships may be renewed or extended using *TennisLink* during the registration process. New memberships may be purchased via telephone through the USTA Membership Department. 1-800-990-USTA (8782) or online (www.usta.com).
- Each team member shall have reached the age of 19 years (for Mixed, Adult, & Fall League), 50 years (for Senior League) prior to or during the calendar year in which such player plays in his/her first local league match.
- A team member may not be currently rostered on a college team.

Participation

- **ULR Section 3.01H(5) b** - A player may compete in more than one NTRP level in the same division/season (USA League Tennis Adult, Senior, Mixed, and/or Fall Doubles) in the same local league area, providing it is a higher level than their rated level. (E.g. In SFV, Joe, a 4.0 rated player may play on one 4.0 team and may also play on a 4.5 team).
- **ULR Section 3.01H(5) c**: A player may play on more than one team within a division in the same season provided it is in separate local leagues.
 - (E.g. Julie a 3.5 rated player may play on a 3.5 team in SGV and a 4.0 team in SWLA or she may play on a 3.5 team in SGV and a 3.5 team in SWLA).
- A player may play on more than one team, but no more than two teams within a division/season. (USA League Tennis Adult, Senior, Mixed, and/or Fall Doubles) E.g., In Ventura Co., Bob can play in the Adult and Senior League at the same time.
- **In all divisions, a maximum of (3) three players from any one team may play together on a second team.**
- **ULR Section 3.01H(5)(d)** - Should both teams win their local flights and go on to Area Play-offs or Sectional championships, players who play on two teams must decide which team they will represent, before the start of the championships. If the team the player chooses is eliminated from Championship competition, the player may become eligible for the next level of Championship competition on the alternate team.
- Players who play on two teams in the same division must notify their captain and Local League Coordinator.
- A Local League may limit the number of players that appear on a team roster, and the number of players on that roster that are at a specific NTRP level.
- **ULR Section 3.03A(2)** - No player is eligible to progress to championship level competition unless he/she has played on the same team in at least (2) two matches during its local league season. Only one forfeited/defaulted match for the player(s) receiving same may count toward the two (2) match eligibility requirement for advancing to Area Play-off/Sectional Championship levels of play.



Participation - continued

- In all matches in which ineligible players participate; the team using ineligible players and/or the captain shall be penalized by forfeiting all individual matches played by such players. Ineligible players are:
 - Players who are not current members of the USTA.
 - Players that are playing below their NTRP computer rating.
 - Players who do not appear on the official team roster. (A coordinator must be notified before match play of any difficulties experienced in registering a player)
 - Players who have been disqualified because the Committee has decided the player is not properly rated for the particular level of play.
 - Players who have been disqualified because the Committee has decided the player has misrepresented their NTRP level when self-rating.
 - Players who have been registered by the captain without their knowledge and fictitious match results entered on TennisLink.
- A player shall not play a league match under another player's name. A player who does so and the team captain, and any team member who plays in the same match with knowledge of the impersonation, may be suspended from all USTA sanctioned activities up to a year.
- The Local League Coordinator with the approval of the Sectional League Grievance Committee has the right to suspend the playing privileges of a captain, player, or team whose behavior has been disruptive and/or found to be not in compliance with the regulations.

Verification

- Players with a valid computer rating must enter a USA League Tennis division (Adult, Senior, Mixed, or Fall Doubles) at that rating or higher. Any player who utilizes multiple USTA Membership Numbers in an attempt to circumvent this requirement shall be disqualified from further participation in any USA League Tennis program for a period of two years and all matches played by such persons will be declared forfeit.
- Players without a computer rating are required to declare a self-rating on TennisLink when first entering the Leagues program. In making their self-rating decision, players should consider the NTRP Guideline posted on the TennisLink website; their on-court performance against established league players; relevant tennis history including frequency of play and instruction; and general fitness. Once made, the self-rating declared by the player shall apply to all divisions. Players, who have a computer rating from 2000 or before, will be able to self-rate. Beginning in the year 2001, a computer rating is valid for five years or until another rating is generated.

Move-up / Split-up Rule

- (ULR Section 4.05) Any team that wins a Southern California Sectional Championship (USA Mixed League, USA Senior League, USA Adult League and SCTA Fall Combo League) must move up one level if they wish to play as a team, or disperse to form new teams with no more than (3) three players who were on the final roster at the conclusion of local league play on any single team for the following league year. (Exception: Open Division does not have to split up.
Adult 2.5 & 5.0 – no more than (2) two rostered players) (see 3.03A(5), 3.06C & 4.05)

Captain

- Each team must have a captain or designated co-captain present at each match who will be the only official spokesperson for that team. All correspondence/ communications, etc. will be done by the captain or designated co-captain.
- Visiting team captains shall call the home team captains at least three days prior to the match to confirm the following: date and time of match, directions to tennis facilities, number of courts to be utilized.
- Team captains or their representatives shall attend all league organization meetings.
- Team captains or their representatives at matches shall be responsible for their actions and the actions of their players. Teammates, spectators, or coaches may not volunteer advice on line calls, scoring, or on the conduct of the match. It is the home team's responsibility to control the conduct of spectators during match play.

Team Fees

- \$18.00 (\$16.00 + \$2.00 non-refundable user fee) per player for each League Division – Mixed, Senior, Adult, and Fall League.
- Team captains can receive a complimentary team fee – one captain per team. (Contact LLC for further details)
- Once League play has begun, league fees will not be refunded.



Local Leagues

1. When the majority of players on a team reside in a particular area, they are considered to belong to that local league area.
2. A Local league shall consist of a minimum of three teams in a specific NTRP level.
3. In an area which otherwise would not be able to have a league at a specific level, the Local Coordinator may request in writing a waiver allowing a two-team league.
4. If there are not enough teams in an area to form a league, teams may request permission in writing to play in another area. The Sectional League Coordinator and the Local Coordinators from each area involved must approve this application in writing. There will be careful consideration given to the effects on both league areas, with the understanding that there is a responsibility and obligation to promote the growth of the program without disrupting existing leagues. Teams playing out of their area will be responsible for securing home courts in the area in which they will play.
5. In the case of "combined" leagues, where teams from more than one area compete in league play together, the following policies will be in effect:
 - A. USA League Tennis Southern California policy is that each league area with three or more teams (or two teams if a waiver was granted) will have a representative at either Sectionals or Area Play-offs, whichever is appropriate based on the numbers of teams in each area.
 - B. Qualification for either Area Play-offs or Sectionals will be based on the number of teams from each area, regardless of which area wins in a combined league. For example, if (2) Pink County teams compete in a league with (10) Blue Valley teams, the best BV team will go to Sectionals, and the best PC team will go to Area Play-offs, regardless of who wins the combined league.
 - C. In combined leagues, numbers for each area will be considered separately. For example, if (3) teams from Green County play in a league with (4) teams from Red Valley, GC gets credit for (3) teams, and RC for (4) teams, rather than one area getting credit for (7) teams.
 - D. If an area is represented by only one team, that team will advance to the next level of competition only if they win the combined league. If the single team representative wins, the team with the best record from the other area will go to Area Play-offs or Sectionals, based on the numbers of teams from each area.
 - E. At Area Play-offs or Sectional Championships, teams will be designated by the name of their home area, regardless of where they actually played.
 - F. In a combined league in which each area is represented by three or more teams (or two teams if a waiver was granted), the winner will advance to Sectionals, or Play-offs, based on the numbers of teams from each area. The team with the best record from the second area will advance to Play-offs or Sectionals, based on the number of teams from each area.

Roster Additions/Deletions

- League players may be added to a *Tennis Link* Team Roster at any time throughout the local league season subject to a Local League rule otherwise limiting roster additions.
- Only players who have been promoted can register on another team at the higher level after the registration deadline.
- Players may not be dropped from a team after the start of the local league season. A player may transfer to a different team up to the final date for registration provided that individual has not played a match or received credit for a default.

Tennis Balls

- PENN is the official USA League tennis ball. It is highly recommended that teams provide PENN tennis balls.
- The visiting team furnishes the balls for the match unless local league rules specify differently.

Court Surface

- Unless otherwise determined, all league matches must be played on hard court surfaces.

Wheelchair Play

- Wheelchair players participating in Mixed, Adult, Senior and Fall Combo League events shall be allowed (2) bounces of the ball.



Team Format

- These formats are recommended for local leagues.
- The championship format starting with Area Play-offs will be:
- Adult League - 2 singles / 3 doubles
 - Adult 2.5, 5.0 & Open - 1 singles / 2 doubles
 - Senior League - 3 doubles
 - Mixed - 3 doubles
 - Fall - 3 doubles

Mixed Doubles Format

- Each Local League will be allowed to choose the competitive format for their Mixed Doubles Leagues.
 - Regular NTRP format (3.0, 3.5, 4.0, 4.5, 5.0) or
 - Combined ratings (6.0, 7.0, 8.0, 9.0, and 10.0)
- The combined rating system will be used at Mixed Sectional and Regional Championships.
- Under this system the sum of the ratings of the individuals who make up each doubles position must be at or lower than the level in which they are playing. (Ex. 7.0 level - a 4.0 man and 3.0 woman or a 3.5 man and 3.5 woman are both valid combinations).
- No more than 1.0 may separate the rating of the partners in each individual doubles team.

Fall Combo Doubles Format

- Combined NTRP ratings (6.5, 7.5, 8.5, 9.5 and 10.5)
- Three doubles teams of all men or all women.
- The combined rating system will be used at Fall Combo Doubles Sectional and State Championships.
- Under this system the sum of the ratings of the individuals who make up each doubles position must be at or lower than the level in which they are playing. (Ex: 7.5 level = a 4.0 and 3.5 player or a 3.5 and 3.5 player or a 4.5 and a 3.0 player are all valid combinations).

Team Match Scoring System

- Each individual match will count as one point. The team with the majority of points wins the team match.
- Local League play: The scoring system must be determined before the start of the local league season and stated in writing. It is recommended that local leagues establish match play as best of two sets using regular scoring and a set tie-break at six games-all in each set. In the event of split sets, a "Match Tie-Break" in lieu of a third set shall be played immediately following the two-minute end-of-set rest period.

Continuous Play and Rest Periods

- After the first game of each set and during a tie-break, play shall be continuous, and the players shall change ends without a rest period. A "set break" of a maximum of 2 minutes shall be taken at the end of each set, including the second set of a split set. There shall be no coaching during the "set break."

Order of Play

If there are not enough courts available at one time for a team match, team captains must agree in advance on the order of play and starting time for each individual match. Generally TWO (2) hours should be allotted for each match.

- Recommended order: Singles 1 & 2, then Doubles 1, 2 & 3.

Match Schedule

- The Local League Coordinators (LLC) shall establish match schedules.



Scorecards

- Team Captains should fill out their line-up *after determining who is present and ready to play*.
- Team captains shall exchange scorecards simultaneously PRIOR to the scheduled start time of a team match, record the scores as each match finishes and sign both scorecards.
- Match results **must** be reported on *Tennis Link* by the winning team captain (or his/her designee) within 72 hours of the team match. Failure to do so will result in the match being scored as a Team Match Default/Forfeit win to the opposing team. **In no event may a team match remain uncompleted for more than seven days after its scheduled date or the deadline for completing local league match play, whichever occurs first.**
- The losing team captain or designee must log in to *Tennis Link* and confirm or dispute the reported match scores within 48 hours after they have been reported. After that time, all reported results are deemed final and complete with no further right of challenge.

Team Lineups/Substitutions

- ULR Section 3.01H(4) No substitution may be made in an individual match after the lineup has been presented, except for injury to, illness of, or disqualification of a player, prior to the start of such match. If the substitution is made during the warm-up, the substitute player is entitled to a five (5) minute warm-up. In the event a substitution is allowed due to one of the above conditions, the substitute shall play in the position that is open due to the injury, illness, or disqualification. No substitute may be taken from the original lineup after the lineup has been presented, except that if a player's partner does not show up due to injury, illness, or disqualification, the player may be treated as a substitute. (** EXCEPTION: When a match is postponed to another day and an individual match has not started, a captain may change the lineup for any such match).

Penalty System

- The USTA Point Penalty System for lateness will be in effect unless amended in the Local League Rules.
- Starting with the Area Play-Off Championships, the USTA Point Penalty System will be in effect.
 - Under 5 minutes – Loss of Toss +1 game
 - to 10 min - Loss of Toss + 2 games
 - 10 to 15 min - Loss of Toss + 3 games
 - Over 15 min - Default
- The lateness penalty clock starts when the match is scheduled and called, a court is available, and a player has not arrived.

Inclement Weather

- Inclement weather will be a valid reason for not playing a team match at the scheduled time and location. On match day, the host or home team captain will decide, consulting with the visiting team captain, as to what constitutes “unplayable” weather.
- Completed individual matches will stand as played. Incomplete matches must be continued by the same players and resumed at the exact score - set, game point - as they stood when halted (any point played is always counted and never replayed).
- Rained-out matches should be rescheduled and played as a team, as opposed to individuals playing matches at different times/sites.
- The LLC must be informed of any change in the schedule.

Warm-up

All warm-ups, including serves, must be taken before match begins. Warm ups should take no more than 10 minutes.

Postponements

- All local matches will be played on the scheduled dates unless a change is approved by the Local League Coordinator (LLC). The LLC shall establish a deadline for team captains to reschedule all postponed matches. If team captains cannot agree on a time within that deadline, the LLC shall select the date and time. If neither team appears on that established date and time, a double default will be entered in the system.
- Postponements for any reason other than rain or at the request of a captain whose team advances to a championship of another league program (i.e. mixed doubles), requires the approval of the LLC.
- Unavailability of strongest player/s is **not** a valid reason for postponing/rescheduling a match.



Forfeits

- **Individual Player Forfeits:** Use of an ineligible player will result in a default. The match will be scored as a 6-0, 6-0 win for the opposing team.
- **Team Forfeits:** (ULR Section 3.03L). A team must have a minimum of four eligible players available for play in each match or the entire match must be forfeited. A team may forfeit a maximum of two positions in a match without forfeiting the entire match.
 - **3.03L(1) Singles,** The No. 2 singles must be forfeited before the No. 1 singles may be forfeited.
 - **3.03L(2) Doubles,** the No. 3 doubles must be forfeited before the No. 2 doubles and the No. 2 doubles must be forfeited before the No. 1 doubles.

If the captains allow (either by word or failure to prevent) a lower position to start out of sequence and later the higher match ends up a default - all matches should stand as played. The captains accepted the conditions under which the match was played when (s)he permitted the lower positions to start - All matches played in good faith stand. (Interpretation dated 7/17/03).

- **Team Forfeits at Championships:** Any team that forfeits a team match at Area Play-Offs or Sectional championships shall be ineligible to participate in any USTA league play for the immediate ensuing year. This penalty shall apply to every player who played at least one match for the forfeiting team at the Area Play-Offs and to every player who played at least one match for the forfeiting team at the Sectional championships.

Area Playoffs

Teams may be involved in Area Play-Offs in order to qualify for Sectional Championships.

- The selection of teams for Sectional Championships will depend upon the number of teams in each NTRP level in each of the local leagues.
 1. Some of the larger area leagues will automatically qualify for the Sectional Championships.
 2. Area leagues with a smaller # of teams in a level will have teams going to Area Play-Offs.
- Some areas may have teams at several levels involved in Area Play-offs, while others may have only one or two NTRP levels in the play-offs with other teams going directly to the Sectionals.
- The SCTA reserves the right to wild-card teams into the Area Play-offs.

Sectional Championships

Teams qualifying for the Sectional Championships will compete in a round robin format to determine the USA League Tennis Sectional Champion in each NTRP category. Winners of the Championships will be invited to participate in the USA League Tennis Regional/National Championships (if applicable).

- Format for all So Cal Area Play-Offs and Sectional Championships (Mixed, Adult, Senior and Fall Combo): Best of two (2) tie-break sets using regular scoring and a set tie-break at six games all in each set. In the event of split sets, a "Match Tie-Break" will be played (first to 10 by 2 points).
- The "Match Tie-Break" shall be scored as 1 set and 1 game for tiebreak procedures.
- Mixed Doubles Division – Sectional Championships will be organized using combination levels of 6.0, 7.0, 8.0, 9.0, and 10.0. They will advance to Western Regional Championships.
- Fall Combo Division - Sectional Championships will be organized using combination levels of 5.5, 6.5, 7.5, 8.5, 9.5 and 10.5. They will advance to State Championships.
- Adult and Senior Division - Sectional Championships will be organized using straight NTRP levels of 2.5, 3.0, 3.5, 4.0, 4.5, 5.0. They will advance to National Championships.
- Memberships must be valid through the USTA National/Western Regional Championships and through the SCTA State Championships.

The Southern California League Sectionals Championships are as follows:

- Mixed Doubles, April 3 & 4, 2004 - South El Monte, CA
- Adults, August 19 - 22, 2004 - Orange County, CA
- Seniors, September 18 & 19, 2004 - Lakewood, CA
- Fall Combo Doubles, January 21, 22 & 23, 2005 - South El Monte, CA



NTRP Information for 2004

Self-Ratings:

- Visual ratings will no longer be used.
- New USA League participants and those who did not generate a rating in 2001, 2002 or 2003, will use self-ratings for entry into USA League Tennis.
- Once you declare an initial self-rating, you are bound by it for the calendar year or until you generate a year-end rating.
 - *Exception:* In the event of a player disqualification, they are immediately bound by the higher, "DQ" rating.

Computer Ratings:

- Are valid for up to 5 years beginning with 2001 year-end ratings.
- One additional year will be added each Championship year until the 5-year history required by the rule 3.01D is available.

Appeal Period:

- *November* (After year-end ratings are posted) - *January*.
- *July - September* (Early start league)
- Individuals must complete a NTRP Appeal Form and return it to the SCTA office.
 - Medical Appeals: Must attach pertinent information & documentation that determines the degree to which the injury or debilitating condition is temporary or permanent.

Mixed Doubles:

- Are not included in the year-end rating calculations.
- Dynamic NTRP will not apply.
- Players who only play MxD will generate a separate year-end rating.

Dynamic NTRP:

- Is an enhanced tennis rating system that generates player ratings at regular intervals over the course of the Adult & Senior league season.
- Are updated regularly and based on an average of the previous four dynamic ratings.
- Are used to track play, identify those clearly above level and to assist with year-end benchmarking and ratings.
- Are not disclosed publicly (neither to the player or administrator below the section level).

Year-end ratings:

- Are based 50% on one's cumulative dynamic rating during the season and 50% on the traditional benchmark calculation method.
- The premise of computerized ratings is to mathematically reflect the intent of the National Tennis Rating Program definitions of competitive and compatible through a system, which assigns ratings to players by direct and indirect comparison to players who compete at the USA League National and Sectional Championships.
- Ratings are affected:
 - By your partner
 - Your opponents
 - The closeness of the match (regardless of whether it was a win or a loss).
- Ratings are not directly affected:
 - By what position you play
 - By your wins and losses
 - By team standings.
- Leagues starting in January will use the 2003 year-end ratings.
- Fall Combo League (Early Start League) will use the "dynamic ratings" that are generated in July.

Registration:

- Players will register through *Tennis Link*.
 - If they have a valid computer rating on file in the database, it will confirm their eligibility for the team.
 - If they have no rating on file, the player will be required to declare a self-rating before completing the registration.
- After each match played, the captain will enter the scores on *Tennis Link*.
 - These results will be calculated in the dynamic NTRP computer program.



Disqualifications

- Each time a player's dynamic rating exceeds the maximum tolerance for the level, he/she automatically earns a "strike"... *three strikes and you're disqualified from participation at that NTRP level.*
- USTA will monitor these ratings and the section office will inform players if they reach the disqualification level three times based on all adult and senior matches from all sections in the database from local league up to and including sectional championships.
- In all cases of NTRP disqualification, the affected player possesses the appeal rights described in ULR Section 3.04B.

How to handle individuals who misrepresent their NTRP level when self-rating:

- The USA League Committee has provided a method by which action can be taken against self-rated players who enter the program at two levels or more below their actual skill level. The committee considers these acts to be a violation of the standards of good conduct, fair play and good sportsmanship in accordance with the provisions of USA League Tennis Regulation 2.02.
- The following guidelines have been implemented to deal with these alleged violations.
 1. A "Fair Play Grievance" form may be filed by a captain, coordinator or member of a championship committee against the player and/or captain who commits or condones entering two levels or more below actual skill level.
 2. The Section Grievance Committee will have jurisdiction, augmented as necessary by experts in NTRP ratings, and may ask the alleged violator to complete the USTA Player Background History sheet and submit it to the committee for review. After review, and in consultation with the NTRP experts who have augmented the committee, they will take action, as they deem appropriate.
 3. This action may include disqualification, suspension from league play or other league sanctions.
 4. The Section Grievance Committee decision may be appealed in accordance with Regulation 2.03 of USA League Tennis Regulations.

Downloadable NTRP Forms

- All forms can be found on the SCTA web-site: scta.usta.com. Click on the USA League Tennis tab at the left of the screen. Scroll down that screen and click on "NTRP Downloadable" forms.



TennisLink

Tennis Link is the official and exclusive system for registering team and players, and reporting match scores and standings for the USA League Tennis program.

- **To register for a team,** join the USTA, or renew your membership and go to <http://national.usta.com>.
- When the *Tennis Link* page displays, choose from the menu on the right:
 - League Play or
 - Join the USTA or
 - Renew Membership
- **Score Reporting:** Before reporting your league score, be sure you comply with the following:
 1. All courts must have finished their individual matches
 2. You must have the match number
 3. You must be a member of either of the two teams who played the match. You do not have to be the captain. However, once a member from one team reports the match, only someone from the other team can enter the "scorecard." (Coordinators may enter the "scorecard" to fix disputed matches).
- **Entering Scores**
 1. Choose "Record a Score " from the menu at the right - under the League Players banner.
 2. Enter your USTA # and match #, then hit next.
 3. When the two teams appear, choose "next" if they are the right teams or "re-enter" if they are not.
 4. The scorecard will display. Put your cursor in the box for the first court to be reported. A list of players will appear. Choose the correct player/s.
 5. Fill in the radio button for the winner.
 6. Fill in the score in the blanks at the right. Be sure to report the score from the winner's point of view.
 7. Be sure the "Match Status" displays the correct information. It defaults to "Completed." If a match is defaulted, change the "Match Status" to "default."
 8. At the bottom of the scorecard, choose "next." If all of the information has been correctly been entered, the completed scorecard will appear for your review. If you are satisfied with the entries, choose "finish" from the bottom of the screen. If you are not satisfied, choose "re-enter."
 9. If you entered a score incorrectly or if you forgot to choose a winner or adjust the match status, a screen will display identifying any problem and give you the opportunity to go back and make corrections. **Always be sure to choose "finish" before exiting scorecard entry.**
 10. If you are the opposing captain, follow the above steps 1-3. The completed scorecard will display. You must choose "confirm" or "dispute" at the bottom of the screen and exit "scorecard." If you confirm, your work is done. If you "dispute," call your coordinator to report the dispute. Coordinators can fix errors in scorecard reporting.