

Sandhills USTA League Tennis

ADULT, SINGLES, MIXED, COMBO, AND TRI-LEVEL

2023 Rules and Regulations

Play is governed by THE RULE OF TENNIS in The Friend at Court, The Code, STA Regulations, NCTA Regulations and the National regulations for USTA League Tennis with exception as modified with the STA and NCTA Regulations and the Sandhills League Rules.

Table of Contents

I.	General	2
II.	Team Requirements	3
III.	League Play	5
IV.	Rescheduling Matches Due to State Tournaments	7
V.	USTA Registration Fee	7
VI.	Refund Policy	7
VII.	Captain's Responsibility	8
VIII.	Inclement Weather Guidelines	9
IX.	Forfeits and Defaults	10
X.	Match Play	11
XI.	Unsportsmanlike Behavior	12
XII.	Grievances or Complaints	12
XIII.	USTA National and Sectional Rules	13
XIV.	State Championships	13
XV.	Local League Coordinators	14

I. GENERAL

- A. **USTA League programs are** team competitions for men and women with NTRP levels of 2.5 to 5.0. Winning local teams advance to the NC State Championship where applicable. Winners of the NC State Championship advance to the Southern Sectional Championships (except in the case of the Singles League, and the 65 & over divisions of Mixed Doubles and Combo Doubles). Teams are formed in four divisions: 18 & over, 40 & over, 55 & over, and 65 & over where applicable. The exception is Tri Level which is only available locally in the 18 & over flight.
- B. To play in the following divisions, players must reach the minimum age for those divisions by December 31, 2023 (**Must be 18 in order to play/register on an 18+league**):

Age Division	Minimum Age
18 & over	18
40 & over	40
55 & over	55
65 & over	65

- C. Players must be paid USTA members through the respective seasons. **No renewals are allowed during the local league season. A PLAYER MUST BE REGISTERED BEFORE PLAYING A MATCH.**
- D. Matches played in these leagues may be used in the calculation of NTRP Ratings as follows:

League	Results used to Calculate Rating?
USTA Adult Spring League 18 & over (2.5-5.0) 40 & over (3.0-4.5) 55 & over, and 65 and over.	Always
USTA League Mixed Doubles 18 & over and 40 & over	Only when player does not play USTA Adult 18 & over, 40 & over, 55 & over or 65 & Over AND does not have a previous Year-end C or B rating

II. TEAM REQUIREMENTS

A. Roster Requirements for each league:

League	Season	Minimum Number	Maximum Number
USTA League 18 & over	Spring	8	15
USTA League 18 & over 2.5, 5.0	Spring	5	15
USTA League 40 & over (3.0 – 4.5)	Spring	7	15
USTA League 55 & over	Spring	6	15
USTA League 65 & over	Spring	6	15
USTA League Mixed Doubles	Summer	6	15
Southern Combo Doubles	Fall	6	15
NCTA Singles League	Varies	3	9
Tri-Level League	Varies	6	15

B. In the USTA League Adult divisions, a player may play only one level above his or her current NTRP Rating (For example, a 3.5 player can play up on a 4.0 team but cannot play up on a 4.5 team).

C. A local league shall consist of a minimum of 2 teams at a specific level of competition. Advancement to a State Championship is not permitted if this requirement is not met, except for the following:

League	Levels permitted to advance to State Championships if they are the only local team
USTA League Adult	65 & over teams
USTA League Mixed Doubles	All 55 & over and 65 & over teams
Southern Combo Doubles	All 55 & over and 65 & over teams, 18 & over 5.0, 5.5, and 9.5 teams, 40 & Over 5.5 and 9.5 teams
NCTA Singles League	All Levels
Tri-Level	All Levels

D. (1): Teams that may advance directly to a State Championships must be added to TennisLink no later than the dates in the chart below **and have their rosters finalized.**

- E. Roster Deadline of the Local League, the LLC must contact the SLC to notify that a team has been added. Failure to notify the SLC may result in the team not being added to the State Championship schedule.
- F. Teams that advance directly to a State Championship must maintain their roster on TennisLink with a minimum of 51% (without rounding up) of players within the league area that they are representing. For example: a roster of 15 players must have a minimum of 8 players residing within the league boundaries.

League	Deadline to add a team advancing directly to State Championship
USTA League Adult	April 15
USTA League Mixed Doubles	July 15
Tri-Level	July 15
Southern Combo Doubles	September 15
NCTA Singles League	August 15

- G. If a level of USTA League Adult 18 & over, 40 & over or 55 & over consists of only two teams in a level of play, each team must maintain its roster with at least 40 percent of its players at the designated NTRP level of play. This rule does not apply to the Adult 55 & Over and 65 & Over 9.0 league.
- D. In levels where a team is advancing directly/qualifying to the state championships as provided for in Rule II. E., **players may be added to the TennisLink roster the date below.** After that, no changes may be made to the TennisLink roster. Deadlines are as follows:

- **Adult Spring 65+: April 15, 2023**
- **Mixed Doubles: July 15, 2023**
- **Tri Level: August July 15, 2023**
- **Singles: August 15, 2023**
- **Combo Week 1: September 15, 2023**
- **Combo Week 2: September 15, 2023**

III. LEAGUE PLAY

- A. In the Sandhills League, a round robin format shall be played where each team will play every other team at least once (exceptions may be requested in NCTA Singles League only).

When any NTRP level consists of only two teams, each team is required to play a minimum of three team matches which is a triple round robin. When any NTRP level consists of only three teams, each team is required to play a minimum of four team matches which is a double round robin.

- B. The Local League Coordinator will determine the schedules and the playoff format.
- C. If multiple flights in an NTRP level exist, at least 1 team from each flight will advance to a playoff to determine the winner of that level. This rule does not prohibit a playoff for single flight leagues.
- D. A team’s lineup **does not** have to be listed in order of strength except Tri Level.
- E. The scoring format for all leagues will be best 2 out of 3 sets with a 10-point match tiebreaker used in lieu of the third set.

Division and Age	Team Match	One Team Point Awarded for
Adult 18 & over 3.0, 3.5, 4.0, 4.5	2 singles, 3 doubles	3 individual match wins
Adult 40 & over	1 singles, 3 doubles	3 individual matches won, if tied 2-2, the tie shall be broken by the first of the following methods to do so: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Sets: Loser of the fewest number of sets b) Games: Loser of the fewest number of games c) Game winning percentage: total games won divided by total games played d) Winner of #1 doubles
Adult 18 & over, 2.5 Men & Women & 5.0	1 singles, 2 doubles	2 individual match wins
Adult 55 & over, Adult 65 & over, Mixed 18 & over, Mixed 40 & over, and Tri Level	3 doubles	2 individual match wins

- F. The **Coman** Tiebreak format will be used for all tiebreakers.
- G. Coaching is not permitted at any point during a match.
- H. Scorecards are to be exchanged when all players are on site and ready to play. At the scheduled match time, if a player is not on site, the captains have 3 options to proceed with the scorecard exchange:
 - a. Wait until the missing player is on site and ready to play (prior to the 15-minute default time), exchange scorecards and play the match. At the default time, if the player is still not on site and ready to play, the missing player would be moved to a defaultable court, scorecards would then be exchanged, and play would begin.

- b. Captains can agree to exchange scorecards and begin play. If the missing player arrives prior to the default time, he/she will take the court assigned and begin. If the missing player arrives after the default time, the default will be entered on the scorecard on a defaultable court. For example, the #1 singles player is late, and captains agree to exchange scorecards and begin play. The player does not arrive prior to the 15-minute default time. The #2 singles court that was played is recorded in TennisLink as the #1 singles court and the #2 singles court is recorded as a default.
 - c. Substitute a missing player with an eligible player that is on site and ready to play but is not listed on the original scorecard. Substitutions must be made prior to the 15-minute default time and can only be exchanged for the missing player in the original lineup.
- I. A team must be able to field enough courts to win the match. In the event that either team is short players, and the captains cannot come to an agreement on what lines will be played to constitute a valid team match, based on the number of players present, or to be present, then the following individual matches will be assigned in sequential order to be played:

Match Type		Players required for each team
2 Singles, 3 Doubles	#1 and #2 singles, and #1 doubles (priority); #2 doubles if enough players	4
1 Singles, 3 Doubles	#1 singles and #1 doubles and #2 doubles (priority)	5
1 Singles, 2 Doubles	#1 singles and #1 doubles	3
3 Doubles	#1 and #2 doubles	4

- J. Prior to the start (first service attempt) of an individual match injury to, illness of, or disqualification of a player, or no show* occurs, the affected team may substitute a player who is immediately ready to play and not already in the line-up and is qualified to play that court. The line-up can be adjusted at the affected position only. The substituted player is entitled to a 5-minute warm up.
- o A no-show player is a player who is unable to play the match because of an unforeseen situation of which the captain is unaware of before exchanging the scorecard with the opponent.
 - o If a substitute player (i.e., player not listed on scorecard) is available and more than one player is a no-show, the substitute player must play on the highest court missing a player that they are qualified to play on.

IV. RESCHEDULING MATCHES DUE TO STATE TOURNAMENTS

If a team has 4 or more players on a roster (3 for Singles League matches) who are playing or working at a League Championship at either the North Carolina State, Southern Section or National Levels and have a team match in conflict with these events, then the team can

reschedule the match either by playing before the scheduled date or within 2 weeks after the scheduled match (as long as the makeup match occurs within the league season dates). The Captain of the team with the conflict must notify the opposing team captain and LLC of the conflict **no later than 1 week before the scheduled match** and work with both parties to reschedule the match within the above-mentioned time-period.

V. USTA REGISTRATION FEE

The registration fee to play on a USTA tennis team for 2023 is \$24.15 per player, per roster for all Leagues. The fees are comprised of the \$6.00 NCTA head tax, a \$3.15 TennisLink user fee, and a \$15.00 community tennis association fee.

VI. REFUND POLICY

- A. **League with Local League Play**: Refund requests for Local Fees and State Head Tax charges must be made to the Local League Coordinator prior to the team's first scheduled match. Requests must be made in writing. You must go to [Cape Fear Regional Tennis Foundation - Adult Tennis \(usta.com\)](http://CapeFearRegionalTennisFoundation-AdultTennis.usta.com) and fill out the **REFUND REQUEST** in order to receive a refund. The TennisLink fee is non-refundable. The Local League Coordinator will hold all requests and submit one list to the State League Coordinator by the refund deadline. One check will be sent to the CTA, who will issue individual checks to the players. **Any team dropping out of a league after the initial roster deadline for that league will forfeit the registration fees.**
- B. **Covid Related Suspension of Play**
There will be no refunds given due to cancellation or suspension of League or Championship play due to acts of God, war, government regulation or order, pandemic (including, but not limited to, COVID-19), terrorism, natural disaster, or any other emergency beyond USTA NC's control, foreseeable or unforeseeable, which makes it illegal or impossible to offer or continue any USTA Adult League Tennis programming.
- C. **League with direct advancement to State Championships**: Refund requests for Local Fees and State Head Tax charges must be made to the Local League Coordinator prior to the Deadline to Add a Team Advancing Directly to State Championship as noted in the chart in II. F. in the 2023 USTA North Carolina League Tennis Regulations. Requests must be made in writing. The TennisLink fee is non-refundable. The Local League Coordinator will hold all requests and submit one list to the State League Coordinator by the refund deadline. One check will be sent to the LLC or CTA, who will issue individual checks to the players. **State Championships**: Refund requests for registration fees to any 2023 USTA North Carolina State Championship must be made in writing prior to the first scheduled match of the tournament, whether the level in question has begun play or not. Requests should be sent to Allison Steinmetz at allison@nctennis.com. All refunds will be credited to the credit card used to pay the registration fee. Refunds will be credited the week after the conclusion of the tournament.

VII. CAPTAIN'S RESPONSIBILITY

It is the captain's responsibility to review and understand all of the rules that pertain to league play. This includes local, state, sectional, and national rules. It is the responsibility of the captain to see that their players are knowledgeable of all the rules.

- **Each team must have a captain or ACTING captain present at every match.**
- Home team shall supply new balls – appropriate to surface and USTA approved
- The team captains for each team shall exchange their team line-up scorecards simultaneously prior to the beginning of the team match.
- Communicate with other captains and the LLC's. The home team has the choice of playing surfaces and courts. Each team should have a home court assigned in Tennislink. **The use of lines for another sport such as "Pickleball" are not permitted on courts used for local league matches.**
- It is the travelling captain's responsibility to verify with the home captain that courts are playable prior to a match where the weather is questionable (wet, frozen courts). It is the home captain's decision or the decision of the club pro to reschedule the match if the home courts are unplayable. If the travelling captain does not verify condition of courts before leaving for the match, and the courts are unplayable, the match will be rescheduled
- After the match, captains should confirm scores with each other to make sure they are accurate.
- The winning Captain is responsible for reporting scores on Tennislink within 48 hours of the match. If the winning captain has not posted the scores within the above time frame, the opposing captain should report them. If the opposing captain does not confirm the scores within the 48 hours of the completion of the match, Tennislink will consider the match valid and the score will stand. If there is an error inputting scores into Tennislink, go to [Cape Fear Regional Tennis Foundation - Adult Tennis \(usta.com\)](https://www.usta.com) to **REQUEST A SCORE CHANGE**. **Requests must be made within 48 hours of the match date.**
- Captains should keep a copy of the original scorecard for your records.

VIII. INCLEMENT WEATHER GUIDELINES

- A. In the case of rain, sleet or snow, the home captain should notify visiting team of court conditions at least **TWO HOURS (2)** prior to match time. Both captains should be **CERTAIN** that the courts are unplayable at the designated starting time and will not be playable for at least **ONE HOUR (1)** past match time. Play is cancelled unless both captains

agree on a later time in the day/night. Teams should show up at the designated match time or risk a forfeit if they are uncertain of the court conditions. It is much easier to play the match when scheduled, than try to find a makeup date for it. If courts are playable at the visiting captain's facility, every effort should be made to play the match there.

- B. **The league shall adopt Accuweather as the official weather app to determine temperature, windchill, or "Realfeel". Play can be canceled for any temperature/feels like temperature below 35 degrees Fahrenheit at the home facility at match time. However, captains can agree to play in these conditions to avoid a make-up. In situations where the heat index is above 105 degrees, captains should first attempt to delay play to a later start time. If that is not feasible, then the match shall be deemed canceled and treated as a rain make-up. Any existing weather warnings or watches (thunderstorm, tornado, severe weather alert) in the playing areas that do not expire prior to the start time shall effectively cancel matches. At all times, players' safety should be considered for the duration of the match as well as the potential commute to and from the match.**
- C. If a player feels the court they are playing on is unsafe to start/continue playing on, he/she can insist that play be halted. Facility staff can also declare their courts unplayable.
- D. If rain interrupts a warm-up or match, the visiting team is not required to wait longer than 30 minutes for courts to become playable, unless both teams agree to wait longer.
- E. **Rained out or incomplete matches must be made up within 21 days. and before the end of the season.** Within 24 hours of the regularly scheduled match, captains should agree on a make-up date or both captains must send their lineup and the player contact information to the league coordinator. At this time, the league coordinator will exchange the lineups for the captains and courts can be made up with the 21-day timeline. Preferably the whole team makes up the match at the same time, but not necessary. Match scores must be keyed in by the 21st day. Any team that does not show up for the assigned make-up date will receive a default. If the match is scheduled for the 21st day and is rained out, it is automatically rescheduled for the 22nd day, and so on until the match is completed. You do not get an additional 21 days to complete the match.
- If a scheduled match is completely rained out (first service attempt has not been taken on any court, any defaults on the scorecard are reinstated and can be made up. If, however, one court has begun play (first service attempt) and the match is interrupted due to inclement weather, all defaults stand.
 - If a date, time and location have been determined for a team match (or individual court) rescheduled due to inclement weather or another allowed circumstance, (i.e. State Championship conflict), the match can only be suspended again due to inclement weather. Any team that cannot make the rescheduled match time will default any affected courts.
 - Substitutions for team matches interrupted due to inclement weather: For any court that had begun play (first service attempt), lineups will stand. For any court that had

not yet begun play (first service attempt), teams may substitute players as long as the substitutions are not listed on the original scorecard.

- **If both captains agree in advance to reschedule a match, they may do so as long as the match is completed, and scores are entered in TennisLink before or by the original match date. Captains are responsible for canceling the originally scheduled courts and for reserving courts for the rescheduled match time. Matches not completed by or before the originally scheduled date will result in a default for both teams. The only matches that may be rescheduled after the originally scheduled date are matches rescheduled because of inclement weather or a conflict with State, Section or National Championships.**
- **The League Coordinator can postpone a match if conditions are unfavorable for play in order to safe guard the players.**

IX. FORFEITS AND DEFAULTS

- The 15-minute default rule will be strictly enforced.** If a player is not on court and ready to play at 15 minutes past the match start time, the court will be defaulted.
- Captains are allowed (but not required) to let the opposing captain know if they are defaulting a court and which court they are defaulting. If a captain is not aware of a default until the scorecards are exchanged, the captain may readjust their lineup after he/she learns of the default. If your team is defaulting a court, and wish to let the other captain know, please put it in writing (i.e. email) and also copy the LLC for documentation to protect against any confusion later.
- If you call ahead of time and tell the opponent you are defaulting a court, you cannot *CHANGE YOUR MIND* later and tell them you do not have a default. The rationale being that they have already told the players involved in the default and they have made other plans. However, if the match must be rescheduled to another date because of weather, you do not have to default the court if you have a full team.
- In the case of a default that is not known in advance, a default can be granted only to a player who is present and dressed to play.
- If a team defaults two entire team matches in one season, that team is disqualified for the remainder of the League season and all matches (played and scheduled) will revert to defaults. That team is not eligible for advancement. Matches played will count towards player NTRP ratings but will not be used for final standings. A grievance **may** be filed with the local Grievance Committee.
- In a team defaults an entire match during local play, the LLC will determine if this default has affected the local league standings in any way. If it is found that the local league standings have been affected, then the matches of that team may be ruled null and void. If any teams in contention for advancement to the State Championship have played the defaulting team in good faith, the matches stand as played.

- G. Any team defaulting an entire match should contact the Local League Coordinator with the reason for the entire team default. The ultimate goal is to play all matches so there are no entire team defaults, with the exception of extreme circumstances. Every effort should be made to complete all matches.

X. MATCH PLAY

- A. Matches between teams will be played on an **alternating home and away schedule (subject to court availability – coordinators decision)**. Each team must guarantee the use of 3 courts (preferably more) for league matches and rainouts. Any approved USTA surface is permissible, including indoor. The Local League Coordinator schedules matches and ensures that each team has the same number of home matches (or similar with odd number of matches). Travelling is not considered in scheduling as the Sandhills is considered one area. **However, matches that are determined to require more than a one (1) hour commute time between facilities will be played at an agreed upon neutral facility.**
- B. The schedules **will be followed** and no changes can be made between captains without the consent of the LLC!! You must be able to prove a hardship, (accident, death) to request a schedule change. **Any match scores that are not keyed in within 48 hours will be deemed as a default for the team determined unable to field courts.**
- C. **Exception:** After the schedule is emailed to you by the League Coordinator, you have a period of two days to notify the LLC and the opponent that you need to make a change. This means that once the schedule is done at the beginning of the season all captains have the responsibility to look at their schedules, get with their pro/players and make changes to their schedules within the first two days. After that period, there are no changes unless as described above. All schedule changes need to be sent to the league coordinator. A match can also be played earlier than the scheduled date if both captains agree.
- D. A match should not be postponed if you have at least 5 players who can play on an 18 & over and 4 players on 40 & over, 55 & over, and 65 & over team. It should not be postponed if you do not have your strongest players available to play. In the case of rescheduled matches, once a date, time and location have been agreed upon, it cannot be rescheduled except for inclement weather. Courts and/or matches will be defaulted.
- E. Team matches will consist of the following:

League	Season	Individual Courts Played
USTA League 18 & over	Spring	2 Singles, 3 Doubles
USTA League 40 & over	Spring	1 Singles, 3 Doubles
USTA League 18 & over 2.5, 5.0	Spring	1 Singles, 2 Doubles
USTA League 55 & over and 65 & over	Spring	3 Doubles
USTA League Mixed Doubles	Summer	3 Doubles
Southern Combo Doubles	Fall	3 Doubles
NCTA Singles League	Varies	3 Singles
Tri-Level League	Varies	3 Doubles

XI. UNSPORTSMANLIKE BEHAVIOR

All players are under an official warning in reference to Unsportsmanlike Behavior. The Sandhills League will uphold a non-tolerance policy of unsportsmanlike behavior of any kind. Profanity **WILL NOT** be tolerated in USTA League play! General behavior on the court is expected to be sportsmanlike at all times. Players who abuse these rules will suffer a penalty. Opponents may file an official grievance against such player. The Local League Coordinator has the authority to file a grievance against such player. Disqualification for further play in the League Season will be enforced if the Grievance Committee finds the complaint to be valid. This is a recreational league. Players should abide by the rules of tennis as stated in "THE CODE". A copy of "THE CODE" can be found in the NCTA website (nctennis.com). "THE CODE" is the players' guide for non-officiated play. It is a good idea for each player to keep a copy of "THE CODE" in his or her tennis bags.

XII. GRIEVANCES OR COMPLAINTS

Refer to section 3.00 in the USTA League regulations booklet or online at www.usta.com

- **Local Grievance Committee will be confirmed by the first day of league play: League Grievance Appeals committee shall be chosen from among the CTA Board members and/or league members as needed.**

XIII. USTA NATIONAL AND SECTIONAL RULES

- **Rules can be found on www.nctennis.com, www.usta.com and www.sta.com.**
- **Only the Local League Coordinator in conjunction with the NC State League Coordinator can interpret the Sandhills League Rules.**

- **If the Local League Coordinator needs to extend the registration deadline at any time, he/she will need to contact the NC State League Coordinator for approval to do so.**

XIV. STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

- A. Each local league will be extended one invitation per level of play for a Championship. First place teams must accept the bid within 24 hours. This is so the bid can be offered to the 2nd place team in a timely manner. **Wildcards, will be offered, if needed, to local leagues according to the chart at nctennis.com. The SLC will notify the LLC of each league after the Team Registration Deadline if any wildcards are being offered.**
- B. If the first-place team from a local league cannot attend the State Championships, the second-place team from that local league’s particular NTRP level will be asked to represent the local league. If the second-place team is unable to attend, the Local League Coordinator must contact the NC State League Coordinator to discuss the possibility of a lower finishing team attending in its place.
- C. The following is the minimum number of team members who were on the final roster of their local league team at the conclusion of local league play who must be available and eligible to compete at the State Championships.

League	Season	Minimum Number
USTA League Adult 18 & over (3.0 – 4.5)	Spring	8
USTA League Adult 40 & over (3.0 – 4.5)	Spring	7
USTA League Adult 55 & over and 65 & over	Spring	6
USTA League Adult 18 & over 2.5, 5.0	Spring	5
USTA League Mixed Doubles*	Summer	6
Southern Combo Doubles*	Fall	6
NCTA Singles League	Varies	3
Tri-Level	Varies	6

- D. Teams must have played in a minimum of three local matches, except in cases where a team is advancing directly to the State Championships, as provided for in section E.
- E. Players must play in a minimum number of matches to be eligible to advance to the State Championship.

League	Season	Minimum Required Matches Played	# of defaults that may count as a match played
USTA League Adult 18 & over, (2.5 to 5.0)	Spring	2	1
USTA League Adult 40 & over (3.0 – 4.5)	Spring	2	1
USTA League Adult 55 and over	Spring	2	1
USTA League Adult 65 & over	Spring	1	1
USTA League Mixed 18 & over, 40 & over	Summer	2	1
USTA League Mixed 55 & over, 65 & over	Summer	1	1
Southern Combo Doubles	Fall	1	1
NCTA Singles League	Varies	1	1
Tri-Level	Varies	1	1

F. Refer to nctennis for Championship regulations at <https://nctennis.com/sports/leagues>

XV. Local League Coordinators:

- **Michelle Benson:** Adult Spring, Combo - faycommunitycoordinator@gmail.com
- **Erika Harris:** Mixed, Tri Level, and Singles - Called2serveTNS@gmail.com