



## MID-ATLANTIC

# MAJOR REGULATION CHANGES FOR 2018 MID-ATLANTIC USTA LEAGUE TENNIS RULES

Rule 8c – Individual matches played in conjunction with a specific match number may not be moved to make another team match valid.

Rule 16 – In cases where a wild card is needed, a wildcard entry may be extended to the next place team from a specific local league in a local area based on a random draw being made proportionately to the number of teams at that specific league and level in each area, until the draw is filled. If the next place team is unable to accept the wild card will continue to the next specific league and local area selected until the wild card spot is fulfilled or options have been exhausted. If there are less than five business days prior to Championships the Tournament Director may modify this procedure.

Rule 18 – Upon notification that a winning team is unable to advance, the next place team may advance if it has been determined that it is appropriate. If the next place team is unable to participate, it shall be determined whether that Region shall retain its right to place an entry in that specific level or flight.

Rule 21 - NTRP Grievances must be filed prior to or after a championship event. NTRP Grievances will not be processed during a Regional or Sectional Championship.

# 2018 MID-ATLANTIC USTA LEAGUE TENNIS RULES

## FOR ALL DIVISIONS

### Regulations for USTA League Tennis Play

USTA League Tennis play is governed by four sets of rules and regulations: [USTA National League Tennis Regulations](#), and [Mid-Atlantic Section Rules](#), and [Section Rules for Local Leagues \(below\)](#), and [Friend At Court](#), and [Local League Procedures](#).

RED marks changes for 2018.

1. The **2018 USTA League Tennis Regulations**, together with the Section Rules constitute the rules of USTA League Tennis in the Mid-Atlantic Section.
2. Each local league must use the Section Rules for Local Leagues (see page 5) provided by the Section League Committee. No changes/additions may be made without the approval of the League Manager. Each local league must prepare a Local League Fact Sheet, and Local League Procedures for their league, i.e. how to score timed matches, rain plans, payment of court fees, play-off information, etc. Neither the Fact Sheet nor the Procedures may include league rules without being approved in advance of the league.
3. Players with a valid computer rating established according to USTA-approved computer methodology must enter a USTA League Tennis division at that rating or one NTRP rating level higher. Any individual who circumvents this requirement by acquiring multiple, false or misleading (e.g., variants on the same name) USTA membership numbers shall be disqualified from further participation in any USTA League Tennis program for a period of 12 months from the date of disqualification and all matches played by such persons will be declared forfeit, or any other appropriate penalty determined by the Central League Grievance Committee.
4. When first entering the Leagues program, players without a computer rating are required to answer questions on-line regarding their player history and then declare a self-rating on TennisLink of 2.5 or higher. In making their self-rating decision, players must consider the NTRP Guidelines 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 until superseded by a computer-generated rating established according to USTA-approved computer methodology.
5. TennisLink is the official and exclusive system for registering teams and players, and reporting match scores and standings for the USTA League Tennis program. No person may participate on a League team, and no local league may commence, without first registering via TennisLink. All local league seasons must start and finish in the same calendar year, unless approved by the Section League Committee.
6. Match results **must** be reported on TennisLink within 48 hours of the completion of the team match. This may be done by either the winning or losing team captain, or their designee. The non reporting captain, or designee, **should** log in to TennisLink and confirm or dispute the reported match scores within 48 hours after they have been reported. After that time, TennisLink auto confirms the score and the results are deemed final and binding unless there is mutual agreement from the captains involved in the match that an error should be corrected.
7. A team match should not remain uncompleted for more than fourteen days after its scheduled date or the deadline for completing local league match play, whichever occurs first. (This does not preclude a local ambassador from formally re-scheduling a match date/time where local circumstances require, so long as established dates for completing local play are not violated.) Additionally,
8. Local League Play.
  - 8a. A team cannot advance to championships if they are in a position to do so as a result of being the recipient of a full team default. It is the local league ambassador's responsibility to check for full team defaults when determining a team's eligibility to advance. If a team is advancing because they are the recipient of a full team default then all matches played by the defaulting team must be removed from the standings (but will remain in TennisLink) of the round robin where the default occurred. The exception of this rule applies to two team leagues. A team in a two team league cannot advance to a championship if they have defaulted a local league match.

8b. The full match schedule for any local league must be published in TennisLink prior to or within seven days following the first match.

8c. For each team match, a majority of the individual matches must actually be played by the 2 teams to constitute a valid team match. In accordance with National Regulation 2.01C(2), if 2 teams arrive to play a match, and they each have 1 or more defaults at different positions which prevents them from playing a valid team match, then they should adjust their line ups, remembering to default from the bottom up. If the teams cannot agree on which courts to play, then the match is scored as a double default. **Individual matches played in conjunction with a specific match number may not be moved to make another team match valid.**

9. Player Dynamic NTRP ratings are automatically recalculated in the national database on a daily basis throughout the season unless some unforeseen technical problem prevents it. As a result, inputting match results in proper chronological order (the order in which they are played) is essential. If as a result of system-driven recalculations, a player's Dynamic NTRP rating reaches disqualification level three times, and if that player has an A, S, M, T or D rating:

9a. During local league: all matches played at that level shall be forfeited. The exception being the Plus (+) leagues e.g., if either a 4.5 or 5.0 self rated player competes at the # 1 position on a 4.5+ or 5.0+ team respectively and subsequently receives 3 strikes and is disqualified, those matches will stand, assuming the team is still in compliance with National Regulation 2.01A(1). Matches played at lower positions will be forfeited. The player may register on a team at the higher level if otherwise eligible to do so. The Sectional office shall issue notice of NTRP disqualification promptly to the player and the Team Captain as designated on the TennisLink team roster, with a copy to the League Manager and Local League Ambassador (Captains and players are encouraged to provide e-mail address information when registering on TennisLink, and to update such information as necessary, to facilitate timely notice in the event of disqualification.)

9b. During Regionals or Sectional Championships: computer calculations shall be run and new ratings produced after each team match. Players who accumulate their "third strike" (considering all matches reported in the database to that point) shall be immediately disqualified, and the championship tournament matches played by such players shall be considered 6-0, 6-0 wins for the opposing player or doubles team pursuant to Rule 2.04E(2)a. In the event that the Scorekeeper is unable to connect to TennisLink in "real time" during a championship event, upon notice to that effect the Tournament Committee may make an irrevocable election to suspend Rule 2.04B(2)a and instead follow the procedure outlined in Rule 2.04B(2)b for the event in question. Whenever such an election is made, 2.04E(2)c shall likewise be in effect.

10. Roster Limits: All Divisions will have a roster limit of no more than 20 players, excluding all levels of Tri-Level which will be limited to 22 players. Local Leagues may limit roster size further if they so choose. Players may be added to a team roster at any time up until the second to last regularly scheduled or rescheduled local league match for **their specific** team. This does not include local league playoffs or at any championships.

11. **USTA League Tennis Regulations:** Rule 1.04G authorizes players and captains to participate on more than one team under certain conditions. Specifically in Mid-Atlantic Section and for any Division, whether or not that Division results in Sectional Championship competition:

11a. **Same league, same level:** a player/captain may not captain a second team or play on a second team within an age group in the same local league.

11b. **Same league, different levels:** a player/captain may play on or captain more than one team within an age group in the same local league, so long as each team is at a different NTRP level.

11c. **Different local leagues:** a player/captain may play on or captain more than one team within an age group, regardless of the NTRP level, if each team is in a separate local league.

11d. **Player limitation for leagues which advance to Sectional Championships:** only three players may be members together on another team in the same Division, within an age group, at the same team NTRP level, during the same season. It is the same season if there is an overlap in the local league scheduled match dates. The infraction occurs at registration.

If you have two leagues that are the same Division, same Age Group and same NTRP level then the three player rule applies.

Division: Adult, Mixed, Tri-Level

Age Groups: 18 & Over, 40 & Over, 55 & Over, 65 & Over

NTRP Levels: 2.5, 3.0, 3.5, 4.0, 4.5(+), 5.0, 5.5+, 6.0, 7.0, 8.0, 9.0, and Tri-Level 2.5-3.5, 3.0-4.0, 3.5-4.5, 4.0-5.0

Where violations of this rule occur, penalties are established as (a) immediate disqualification from the second (or any subsequent) team of all players who are members together on another team, except for the first three such players, the order of registration as recorded in TennisLink being the determinative factor, unless one or more of the players subject to disqualification has not played a match for either team, in which case any one of them may select which team to be removed from to cure the violation; and (b) forfeiture of all matches played by the disqualified players on behalf of the second (or any subsequent) team. The disqualified players may continue to participate on their other team(s) without penalty, and to register for additional teams consistent with Rule #11 and any registration deadlines.

12. Two (2) local league matches, with one default counting, must be played prior to participating in any Regional or Sectional Championship. Three (3) matches, with one default received counting, must be played prior to participating at any National Championship and the BNP Paribas Tri-Level Open. The match requirement for player eligibility to compete at the Adult 65 & Over Championship is two (2) local or Section Championship league matches with one default counting.

13. For Tri-Level Leagues, a minimum of two players per level must be on the team roster prior to the start of the season. Match play must be in order of strength – no player may play above a player with a higher rating. Defaults do not have to be from the bottom up if players are not available for a particular level. Note: At Tri-Level Section Championships all players must at the correct level and no players may play up a level. If teams do not have enough players or combination of players to compete and meet this requirement, then they may request a waiver through the Section League Committee.

14. For Combo and Combo Mixed leagues, a 1.5 rating differential is allowed. For example: In the 8.5 level, partners can be a 4.5 and a 4.0 or a 5.0 and a 3.5. In any case, the partners' combined ratings shall not exceed the level entered.

15. The Mid-Atlantic Section will use the scoring format described in Rule 2.01C(3) match tiebreak in lieu of a third set at all League Championships, including the Coman tiebreak procedure. In addition, the League Championships shall be organized using the combined ratings for the Divisions and age groups listed in the below chart.

Mixed 18 & Over	6.0, 7.0, 8.0, 9.0 & 10.0
Mixed 40 & Over	6.0, 7.0, 8.0, & 9.0
Mixed 55 & Over	6.0, 7.0, 8.0 & 9.0
Adult 55 & Over	6.0, 7.0, 8.0, & 9.0
Adult 65 & Over	6.0, 7.0, 8.0, & 9.0
Combo & Combo Mixed	5.5, 6.5, 7.5, 8.5, 9.5

16. For Sectional Championships: The team(s) certified by each League Manager as its Regional Championship winner or, where the Director of Leagues has determined that it is appropriate, the 2<sup>nd</sup> place team at each NTRP level is entitled to advance to the Sectional Championship. The areas must certify their winning teams to the Director of Leagues in accordance with the Championship Dates and Deadlines document. Further, the League Managers must certify that their teams will attend Sectionals with a full contingent of players, and that their teams have abided by all National & Sectional Rules and Regulations.

The Mid-Atlantic Adult 18 & Over Section Championships will have 6 teams at each gender and level, **where appropriate**. Of the 6 teams eligible to participate, if the Director of Leagues has determined that it is appropriate, then 2 shall come from Virginia, 2 from Maryland, 1 from DC and 1 from West Virginia.

No area may receive the benefit of more than one "wildcard entry" per level, except where the Tournament Director has determined that it is appropriate. In that case, a wildcard entry may be extended to the next **place team from a specific local league in a local area based on a random draw being made proportionately to the number of teams at that specific league and level in each area, until the draw is filled. If the next place team is unable to accept the wild card will continue to the next specific league and local area selected until the wild card spot is fulfilled or options have been exhausted. If there are less than five business days prior to Championships the Tournament Director may modify this procedure.** To be eligible to advance to Sectional championship competition, a team must have registered the minimum number of players required by Rule 1.04D(4), and played the minimum number of matches required by Rule 2.01C(1) in accordance with the 2018 Championship Dates and Deadlines document.

17. For Regional Championships: All local league winners, except for the Singles Division, will advance directly to

Regional Championships. No playoff with other local league winners will be required. Only one team per level, per gender, per area will advance to the Singles Regional Championships.

Representation at the Maryland and Virginia Regional Championships will be determined by the number of teams in the league. An additional slot will be extended after every ten (10) teams, ex: 1-10 – 1 team, 11-20 – 2 teams, 21-30 – 3 teams, and so on. The only exception will be Virginia's Adult 18 & and Adult 40 & Over Regional Championships. For these events, an additional slot will be extended after every twelve (12) teams due to court constraints, ex: 1-12 – 1 team; 13-24 – 2 teams; 25-36 – 3 teams, and so on. If wildcards need to be offered to fill the draw it will be extended based on the procedures noted in rule 16 where it pertains to wildcard entries.

The Local Leagues must certify their teams to the League Manager in accordance with the Championship Dates and Deadlines document. The LLC must certify that their team(s) will attend the event with a full contingent of players and that they have abided by all National & Sectional Rules and Regulations.

18. Winning teams not able to participate in the corresponding League Championship tournament must notify the Director of Leagues and League Manager of their intention not to participate at least ten (10) days prior to the start of the Tournament. In order to participate at a Regional or Sectional Championship teams must put down a \$150 refundable deposit to hold their spot. Teams that withdraw less than ten (10) days prior to the start of the tournament will lose the refundable deposit required to hold their spot (see tournament notes). Upon notification that a winning team is unable to advance, the **next place team** may advance if it has been determined that it is appropriate. If the **next place team** is unable to participate, it shall be determined whether that Region shall retain its right to place an entry in that specific level or flight. Players/teams leaving a Championship tournament before completing their entire schedule of assigned matches, and without the Tournament Director's approval will lose the refundable deposit required to hold their spot (see tournament notes) and a grievance may be filed.

19. Mid-Atlantic Section follows national league regulation 1.04(G)7 governing players who qualify to compete on more than one team within the same Division, Age Group and NTRP level at the same league championship, that is: players may compete for only one team. They may file a Declaration specifying the team they will compete for, or in the absence of a filing, the first match played by the player will determine which team he or she will represent. In the event that a person is a captain of more than one team at the same level in the same Division and age group advancing to the same Championship event, that captain shall transmit written notice in advance to the Region or Section office (as appropriate) declaring which ONE team (s)he will represent at that event. Such declarations are binding only for the duration of the event where the conflict arises. In the event no Declaration is received and a person captains 2 teams, or a player competes for 2 teams at the same level, in the same Division and same age group, then all matches played/or captained for the 2nd team will be disqualified.

20. At all League Championships, match line-ups are due to the Tournament Desk 30 minutes prior to the scheduled start of each team match. Failure to turn in line-ups on time shall result in an automatic \$50.00 cash fine for each such occurrence. Any such fine must be paid before the offending team will be allowed to play its scheduled match. Match times are tentative and play will be on a "followed by" basis. The Tournament Desk has the right to call a match to begin play up to 30 minutes before the scheduled start time, assuming courts are available to do so. Once a match has been called, the USTA's Point Penalty System applies and will be strictly enforced.

**21. Based on National Regulation 3.03E(6), USTA Mid-Atlantic has elected to adjudicate NTRP grievances prior to or after a championship event. NTRP Grievances will not be processed during a Regional or Sectional Championship.**

22. In the event that a player is not notified of his/her disqualification before the deadline for submitting the team's next line-up, and the Team Captain has scheduled the disqualified player to participate in that next match, the Team Captain may substitute an eligible player into the position vacated by the disqualified player. No other line-up adjustment (reorganizing doubles teams or repositioning players, etc.) is permitted except for injury or illness.

23. At Regional and Sectional Championship events, if a team defaults an individual match without prior notice and before either team line-up is made public, than the captain of the team receiving said default is entitled to be advised of that fact, and may revise his/her line-up in light of that information.

## **RULES FOR LOCAL LEAGUES**

### **1) General League Rules**

- a) All leagues must abide by and enforce the rules listed in the USTA League Tennis National Regulations and the Mid-Atlantic Section Rules, for all USTA League play.

- b) Since USTA league matches are unofficiated, the most current edition of Friend at Court, "The USTA Handbook of Tennis Rules & Regulations" and The Code: The Players' Guide for Unofficiated Matches shall apply in any situation not covered by the rules.  
<http://assets.usta.com/assets/1/15/2.%20The%20Code.4.pdf>
- c) League Registration: Local League registration dates are set by each Local League Ambassador and may be found on TennisLink and on some Local League websites. Late registration is subject to the discretion of the Local League Ambassador. Late entries will not be accepted after the scheduling process has begun.
- d) Home teams provide USTA approved tennis balls if not provided by the facility/other party.
- e) Team captains handle all team administrative matters and represent their team in USTA League Tennis matters. All communication with the League Ambassadors must go through the team captain.
- f) Team captains must be familiar with all Regulations, Policies and Procedures in 1) a) above, TennisLink, Section and the local league website, if available.
- g) Team captains are responsible for fielding a complete team for each match of the league season. Team defaults may affect the final league standings. Therefore teams should play all matches regardless of whether they are in contention for post-season play.

## 2) Team Rosters

Players may play only one NTRP level above their current computer rating or self-rating. (USTA National Regulation 1.04G(5). There is no limit to the number of players per team who "play up", unless it is a 2 team league, in which case each team must maintain its roster with at least 40% of its players at the designated level of play. (USTA National Regulation 1.04D(5). The exception is the Adult 55 & Over Age Group that uses combined NTRP rating levels and will not be required to comply with this Regulation. The Section allows the same exception for the Adult 65 & Over Age Group.

## 3) Match Schedules and Match Times

- a) Matches are scheduled according to court availability.
- b) If due to court constraints timed matches are necessary, the minimum allowable match time is 1.5 hours. See Local League Procedures attached for timed match information.

## 4) Match Rescheduling

- a) **Match Schedules are firm. Matches are to be played on the scheduled date with the following exceptions, and at the discretion of the Local League Ambassador:**
  - i) Facility issues or weather (rain, heat, visibility, etc.)
  - ii) USTA Local Playoff or post season Championship (Regionals, Sectionals, Nationals).
  - iii) LLC sponsored tennis events.

**Note:** Delays or cancellations due to weather/facility issues are common; therefore, captains are expected to cooperate in the rescheduling process.

- b) Either the Local League Ambassador or the home team determines court playability if weather/court conditions or facility issues are questionable on the day of the match. See attached Local League Procedures for your local league policy.
- c) Inclement weather make up matches must be played within 14 days or the deadline for completing local league match play, whichever occurs first. See MAS Rule 7. This does not preclude a local ambassador from formally re-scheduling a match date/time where local circumstances require, as long as established dates for completing local play are not violated.
- d) If inclement weather or a facility issue occurs after a match has begun, completed individual matches will stand as played and incomplete matches must be resumed by the same players at the exact set, game and point when play was halted. If line-ups are exchanged and no matches have begun, different players can be presented at the make up match.



## 5) Match Format & Courts

- a) The Local League Ambassador may schedule any combination of hard courts, clay courts, or indoor courts for league matches.
- b) Warm ups are limited to no more than 10 minutes. If a player arrives late, but before the 15 minute default time, the player is entitled to a 5 minute warm-up. See MAS Rule 8.
- c) It is recommended that match play consist of best two out of three sets with a match tiebreaker in lieu of a third set using regular scoring and a set tiebreak (first to 7 points by 2 points) at six games all in each set. In the event of split sets, a match tiebreak (first to 10 win by 2) in lieu of a third set shall be played immediately following the end-of-set rest period. The Coman tiebreak procedure will be used for all tiebreaks, unless stated otherwise for indoor matches in the attached Local League Procedures.
- d) In leagues where there are timed matches, refer to the attached Local League Procedures for specific instructions to follow.

## 6) Line-up Exchange

- a) Team captains must simultaneously exchange line-ups before the match start time. Suggested time is 5 minutes before the match time. Those captains who do not submit the line up before the match start time are subject to the lateness penalties referenced in Local League Rule 7. Printed TennisLink scorecards (showing rosters) may be used.
- b) If a team knowingly begins a team match without a full complement of players for the line-up, they must forfeit from the bottom up. (#2 singles before #1 singles; #3 doubles before #2 doubles.)
- c) If a match is postponed after line-ups have been exchanged, all line-up positions may be changed except for any positions that already started their match (first service attempt). (USTA National Interpretations, Page 6)

## 7) Team Defaults and Individual Match Defaults

- a) Captains should notify opposing team captains (by email) of known individual match defaults in advance (USTA National Interpretations, Page 5) Once defaulted, players do not need to show to play and the team receiving the default will be awarded a 6-0, 6-0 score for the court. If unplayable conditions exist (weather, facilities, etc.) and the match is rescheduled, the default is void.
- b) If a player arrives 15 minutes after a scheduled match time, his/her individual match is considered a default. Below are the penalties for lateness::

5 mins. or less late, loss of toss and 1 game;

5:01 – 10:00 mins. late, loss of toss and 2 games;

10:01 – 15:00 mins. late, loss of toss and 3 games;

More than 15:00 mins. late, default. If a player arrives late for a match, local league penalties for lateness apply. However, the player is still entitled to a 5 minute warm-up.

See Table 16 in Friend At Court

- c) **Team Defaults:** For Leagues with 5 courts, a team may default a maximum of two positions in a match without defaulting the entire match. For leagues with 3 courts, a team may default a maximum of one position in a match without defaulting the entire match

## 8) Score Entry

If a team match is split up or interrupted by rain or other situation, use the date of the last outstanding individual match for entering the score in TennisLink.

9) **Post Season Play**

If Local League playoffs are required, playoff formats will be determined by the Local League Ambassador and will be communicated to captains prior to the start of the league season.

10) **Captain/Player Conduct**

- a) All players and captains are expected to exhibit the highest levels of sportsmanship along with courtesy and fairness. Each league participant is expected to know, and is bound by the league rules listed in Rule 1) a).
- b) All matches should be played in good faith and to the benefit of tennis and fair play. Teams are expected to compete to win.

11) **Grievances**

There is a standard process in the National Regulations: National Regulation 3.00 Grievance Procedures. Grievance and Grievance Appeal Committee members must be approved by the Section. Those local areas not opting into the Central League Grievance Committee must list Grievance and Grievance Appeal Committee members on the Local League Fact Sheet.

12) **Miscellaneous Rules**

- a) **Medical Time Outs:** No more than one (1) medical time out is allowed per player, per injury. The medical time out can be a maximum of 3 minutes in duration once treatment supplies are on court. Bleeding time outs consist of the time required to stop the bleeding up to a maximum of 15 minutes. If the injured player is unable to continue after the medical time out due to the injury or illness, the match will result in a retirement.
- b) **Cell Phones:** All players' cell phones are to be turned off during all matches. Any match disruptions caused by a cell phone will result in the opposing team being awarded one point.
- c) **Spectators:** No communication and no coaching is allowed between spectators and players.
- d) **Problem match:** If there is a problem on the court with outcalls, foot faults, or delay of game, teams may seek an acceptable (by both) impartial third party to make calls in regards to these concerns. If an acceptable impartial third party is not available, a team captain or team representative from each team may observe the match from a stationary position at the net post. Selected parties must be in DIRECT observation and must remain at the net post (I.e. don't start wandering to baselines). If both agree, out call correction stands. If only one party agrees then player's call stands. In regards to foot faults, before a player may call a foot fault on his opponent, (s)he must first give a warning.

This document incorporates all local league rules.

***Approved by MAS League Committee 10.31.17***