

**Foothills Tennis Association  
Constitution and League Rules and Regulations  
Final January 2023**

**ARTICLE I: Name**

The name of this association is Foothills Tennis Association, hereinafter referred to as FTA.

**ARTICLE II: Purpose**

This association is a non-profit organization to promote interest in tennis through sponsorship of competitive play for members in the Upstate of South Carolina and to maintain the rules of play and high standards of sportsmanship.

FTA is organized exclusively for sports competition, charitable and educational purposes, including for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations described under Section 501c(3) of Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal code.

**ARTICLE III: Affiliation**

FTA shall be affiliated with the United States Tennis Association, the Southern Tennis Association, and the South Carolina Tennis Association. By this affiliation FTA shall abide by the rules, principles, and obligations as set out in the rules and regulations of the USTA League Tennis, STA, and SCTA. National, Sectional, and State Rules and Regulations take precedence over Local League Rules and Regulations.

**ARTICLE IV: Dues**

Dues shall be collected for each league in which a player participates during the calendar year. Only dues-paying members shall be allowed to participate in league play.

**ARTICLE V: Officers and Board Members**

FTA shall appoint a Local League Coordinator (upon approval of USTA SC State League Coordinator) to implement and administer the USTA league tennis program and, in conjunction with the Executive Board, interpret the FTA local league rules and regulations.

The purpose of the rules and regulations is to assure that fair play and good conduct is maintained, and to assist our team tennis league in rendering equity to all teams and players.

The Executive Board when deemed necessary shall secure the advice and recommendations of the USTA SC State League Coordinator.

The Executive Board shall consist of the Local League Coordinator, League Coordinators for 18 & Over, 40 & Over and 55 & Over Age Groups, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Flight Coordinators.

The Local League Coordinator (LLC) will organize, coordinate and supervise FTA league activities. These activities would include informational meetings, team captain's meetings, organizing the local

league season, playoffs, and assisting with the state championships. The LLC will also be responsible for setting/changing (if needed) deadlines for team registration each season.

The Vice-President will succeed into the LLC position. The Vice-President shall assist the LLC in the performance of her duties and shall exercise all the powers of the LLC in her absence.

The Secretary shall be responsible for the keeping of accurate membership records, certifying voting power and keeping the minutes of the meetings of the FTA and Executive Board and distributing this information.

The Treasurer shall be responsible for the financial management of the funds of FTA. The treasurer shall prepare annually a budget for the year and report all revenues and expenditures to the USTA SC State League Coordinator and all team captains.

Flight Coordinators will assist the Local League Coordinator in scheduling of matches, record keeping of team and individual scores and assist the captains with questions and instructions. Any of these officers or committee members may, by a vote of not less than 2/3 of the Executive Board, be removed from office for cause, and a successor elected.

#### **ARTICLE VI: Committees**

1. The Grievance Committee shall investigate all complaints issued by players or teams during the season. These actions shall be in accordance with USTA National and Southern section regulations. Members of the Grievance Committee are subject to change if any member has a conflict of interest with any party involved in a grievance. The LLC has the authority to appoint a new FTA representative when necessary.
2. The Grievance Appeals Committee shall investigate the results of the Grievance Committee if the result is appealed by any party involved in the complaint. Members of the Grievance Appeals Committee are subject to change if any member has a conflict of interest with any party involved in a grievance. The LLC has the authority to appoint a new FTA representative when necessary.

#### **ARTICLE VII: Annual Meeting**

The annual meeting of the FTA Executive Board will be held prior to the spring season. The time and place of the meeting will be determined by the LLC. Special meetings of FTA may be called by the LLC or the Executive Board at any time as needed.

#### **ARTICLE VIII: Amendments**

These by-laws and FTA Rules and Regulations shall be subject to alteration, amendments or repeal; and the new by-laws or rules may be approved at the annual spring season captains meeting. Any amendment or rules may have to be corrected or changed annually without approval of local membership if State, Sectional, National USTA Regulations are changed.

#### **ARTICLE IX: Playing Area**

The South Carolina area covered by Foothills Tennis Association are Greenville, Anderson, Pickens and Oconee counties.

## RULES AND REGULATIONS

### I. Team and Player Eligibility

**A.** All players must be current members of USTA with valid membership through the end of the current season. During the spring season, any reference to end of the current season includes the end of the state championship. It is the responsibility of members to renew their own USTA membership when it expires. New members must join USTA when they join FTA by applying for membership directly to USTA. All individual matches in which non-USTA members participate will be forfeited. Any player who registers for an 18 & Over team must be 18 years old before participating. All players in the 40 & Over and 55 & Over Age divisions must meet the age requirement for the Age Group in which they are playing during the calendar year.

**B.** A team captain or representative must be present at each seasonal league meeting to receive the captain's information and other pertinent information. Any team that does not have a representative at the pre-season meeting will be subject to disqualification for that season.

**C.** No player may be added to the team roster after the following deadlines: spring season – next to last match of regular season play; combo and fall seasons – last match of regular season play. In the event of a play-off to determine the league season winner no players shall be added during the play-off. A player must have played 2 league matches (one default counts) to qualify to participate in the play-off.

**D.** A player may play on more than one team in adult 18 & Over, or 40 & Over or 55 & Over Age Group, **in FTA** but the teams must be different levels. (i.e. A player can play 3.0 and 3.5 for FTA). **A player may play only one NTRP level above the player's current NTRP level (USTA National Regulation).**

**E.** A player may play at the **same** NTRP level in the same Age Group on teams in **separate** Local Leagues during the same season (i.e. a player may play 4.0 Adult 18 & Over in both FTA and UPTA). Players who qualify for South Carolina State Championships may advance on more than one team within an Age Group only if they are at different NTRP levels but with no scheduling accommodations. Any player deciding to represent FTA after the deadline for on-line player registration will be responsible for submitting her name and entry fee to the Championship Director.

**For a 2-team flight a minimum of 40% of each team roster must be on-level.**

**F.** Teams outside the regions covered by FTA (see Article IX) that play in FTA due to lack of teams in their own league must secure courts within the FTA playing area. Any fees associated with this team will be the responsibility of this out-of-area team.

**G.** A player may not change teams after the roster has been submitted to the LLC without written permission of the LLC.

**H.** A grievance shall be filed against any team for missing the reasonably set deadlines for submission of required paperwork. The Grievance Committee has the authority to disqualify any team for missing these deadlines.

**I.** A player may play one level above her NTRP level, but not below it. Players with no computer rating may self-rate in accordance with NTRP guidelines. Players must self-rate at the level they feel best describes their game. Any players who rate themselves at a level lower than their ability dictates may have a grievance filed against them at any time during the season. Penalties, including dismissal from league play, may be taken against any player and/or captain who knowingly violates the self-rate policy.

## **J. Flights**

1. The following flights will be offered:

### **Flights**

18 & Over

40 & Over

55 & Over

### **Play levels**

2.5, 3.0, 3.5, 4.0, 4.5, 5.0

2.5, 3.0, 3.5, 4.0, 4.5

3.0, 3.5, 4.0, 9.0 combined

In the 9.0 Combined level NTRP difference between partners shall not exceed 1.0

2. A team will be flighted according to the highest NTRP rating of any player. The team may play above this rating if desired but not below it.

## **II. Team Roster and Line-ups**

**A.** See chart on page 13 & 14 of USTA League Regulations for minimum number of players required for each Age Group. There is no maximum limit, but at least two or three additional players are recommended. At the time of the deadline for team registration all teams must have the minimum number of players on their rosters as shown above. (8 for a 5-line match; 7 for a 4-line match; 6 for a 3-line match). Failure to have the minimum players could result in disqualification and exclusion from the season schedule.

**B. The 10-point match tie-break shall be played if the match is tied at 1-set all. The Coman tie-break procedure shall be used for all tie-breaks, both set and match.**

## **III. Line-up Exchange**

**A.** Each team must have a captain or acting captain present at every match.

Reference USTA regulations, section 2.01C(6) for rules of **Team Line-Ups**.

**B. Both captains must sign the scorecard completed by the home team captain.**

Scorecards do not have to be sent to the Flight Coordinator unless there is a dispute when the scores are entered into TennisLink. The home team captain must keep copies of each scorecard for the entire season.

**C. It is the responsibility of the *home team captain* to enter match scores in TennisLink.** Scores must be reported within 24 hours of the completion of the match. The visiting team captain must confirm these scores within 48 hours of their entry or TennisLink will confirm them automatically. After the scores have been automatically verified by TennisLink no changes can be made to the scores. If the Home captain has not entered the scores in a timely manner the visiting captain can enter the scores and the home captain can then confirm or dispute.

**D. If a match is rained out, notification of postponement and make-up date must be sent to the Flight Coordinator.**

#### **IV. Schedule for Playing Season**

**A.** Spring season will usually begin the first weekend in March. It may be necessary to start the spring season earlier in order to complete the local league season prior to state championships. Spring is an official USTA league season. Teams will advance to the South Carolina State Championships based on the spring season results. The fall season will typically start the second weekend in September. Fall is not an official USTA league season: however, it shall be governed by the same USTA, Southern, State, and Local League rules as the spring season except where the differences are stated in these rules.

**B.** In order to complete the spring season prior to the championships it may also be necessary to schedule some matches as a rain date. The league coordinator will set the deadline for having these matches completed. In the event these matches are not scheduled for play before the deadline, the home team will forfeit the entire match. This forfeit will not be counted as stated in section IX.D.4 (entire team forfeit) but will be counted as stated in section IX.D.5. (15% of matches forfeited).

**C.** Matches may be played in advance for any reason if agreed upon by both captains.

#### **V. Day and Time of Play**

Matches for the 18 & Over Age Group will be played on Sunday. Match play must be scheduled to start between 1:00 pm and 6:00 pm.

**Note: Matches played between Spindle Tree and any Greenville team at any site shall start no earlier than 2:00.**

Matches for the 40 & Over Age Group will be played on Saturday with match time anytime 9:00 am or after. The format of the 40 & Over matches will be 1 singles and 3 doubles.

Matches for the 55 & Over Age Groups will be determined by each flight prior to the league schedule being published.

**B.** It is the responsibility of the home team captain to contact the visiting team captain by Wednesday prior to the Sunday match in order to make arrangements for match play.

Note: If the visiting team captain or co-captain have not been notified by 10:00 pm Wednesday, the home team shall automatically forfeit #3 doubles. If the visiting team captain or co-captain have not been notified by 10:00 pm Thursday, the home team shall

automatically forfeit #2 singles. If the visiting team captain or co-captain have not been notified by 10:00 pm Friday, the home team shall automatically forfeit #2 doubles and therefore the match.

For matches not played on Sundays, the deadline for contacting the visiting teams is 4 days prior to the match (i.e., Tuesday for a Saturday match, Thursday for a Monday match, Friday for a Tuesday match, etc. The same time and penalties as stated above will apply.

## **VI. Inclement Weather**

In the event of rain:

**A.** Completed individual matches will stand as played. Incomplete matches must be continued by the same players and resumed at the *exact* point in the match - set, game and point - as they stood when halted. Any point played is always counted and never replayed. Matches must be completed on the same surface as they were started unless all players agree to change surfaces.

Note: in the event that rain or inclement weather forces the cancellation and re-scheduling of a team match, substitutions may be made in any individual matches which *had not* begun. Points awarded for forfeits during the original lineup exchange will stand. All players involved in such forfeits cannot participate in the re-scheduled match.

**B.** If teams assemble to play and the beginning of the match is delayed by rain or wet courts, the teams must wait no longer than one (1) hour past the originally scheduled time for the start of the first match to determine if the courts are playable. If the courts are not playable after one (1) hour has elapsed, the teams are free to reschedule and leave, unless both teams agree to wait longer.

**C.** It is the responsibility of the home team captain to contact the visiting team captain prior to the scheduled play time if the weather will not permit play. The captains can then discuss postponement, etc. If the temperature is below 32 deg F at match time and both captains agree, the match may be rescheduled as a rain date. The facility pro or tennis director has the final say as to court playability.

**D.** Rained out matches may be rescheduled at the discretion of both team captains, with the home team captain giving two (2) choices of dates within a two-week period. Three of the five individual matches must be made up as a team, with the remaining two matches being made up as agreed among the players. The home team captain shall determine which 3 lines will play together. The home team cannot force the visiting team to play all five lines together. The home team captain must contact the visiting captain with the choice of dates no later than Monday after the Sunday rain-out. The visiting captain must notify the home captain of her decision no later than the next day (Tuesday).

**Note:** Unless agreed to by both captains, matches played on a weeknight shall start no earlier than 6:30 p.m. **The team-lineups must be exchanged at the time the first match of the rain makeup is played.**

E. Once the rain make-up date is mutually agreed upon, teams are committed to play on that date.

**F. The Flight Coordinators must be notified by the home team captain of the make-up date as soon as it is scheduled.**

## **VII. Court Availability**

Home captains must have at least three (3) courts for match play. Every effort should be made for all matches to be played at one location. Unless the second round of matches in this situation is given a specific match time, these second round matches will start immediately upon completion of the first round. All players should be at the site ready to play at the start time of the first round matches.

**If there are multiple playing surfaces at a site, the visiting captain must be informed by the home team captain which specific lines will be played on which surface at the time the match is scheduled. Court surface cannot be changed at match time unless all players involved in that match agree. If an agreement cannot be reached, the match must be made up within 2 weeks – the makeup match will be played on the visiting team courts. (Only exception to this rule is if the scheduled courts are not playable at match time – according to the club pro/court scheduler).**

## **VIII. Match Play**

A. See chart on USTA League Regulations, page 10, for the number of individual matches played at each NTRP level for each Age Group.

B. Since all matches will use the 10-point match tie-break in lieu of the third set, play must be continuous throughout the match, as specified in USTA rules. All warm-ups, including serves, must be taken before the match begins. No coaching is allowed at any time during the match.

### **C. Scoring**

1. The team that wins three (3) of the five (5) individual matches, or two (2) of the three (3) matches in a 3-lineup match, or three (3) of the four (4) matches in a 4-lineup match will win the team match and will be awarded one (1) team point for the win. This scoring will be used at all levels of play.

2. The winner of the local league will be determined at the end of the season by the team that has the most team points.

3. In the event of a tie at the end of the season, the tie shall be broken by the first of the following procedures that does so:

a. Individual matches: winner of the most individual matches.

b. Head-to head: winner of head-to-head match

c. Sets: loser of the fewest number of sets.

d. Games: loser of the fewest number of games

e. Game Winning Percentage: Total games won divided by total games played.

(In a 4-court match, if the standings are tied through the “Game Winning Percentage”

the final tie break procedure will be the winner of the #1 doubles position)

4. In an individual flight if there are too many teams to complete one round robin prior to the deadline for roster submission to the state championship the flight will be sub-divided. The top two teams in each sub-flight will have a playoff to determine the league winner. The second-place team from each sub-flight will play the first-place team from the other sub-flight; the two winning teams will then play each other to determine the league winner.

#### **D. Forfeits:**

1. Any forfeited match must be done at the lowest position first. Forfeits shall be determined by team captains or coordinator in accordance with the following:

- a. Singles- the # 2 singles must be forfeited before the # 1 singles may be forfeited.
- b. Doubles- the # 3 doubles must be forfeited before the # 1 or # 2 doubles and the # 2 doubles if forfeited before # 1 doubles.
- c. Examples:
  - (1) one player absent- forfeit # 2 singles or # 3 doubles
  - (2) two players absent- forfeit # 1 and #2 singles or # 3 doubles

2. To receive a point for a forfeit or default, when the default is known ahead of time, the non-forfeiting team player(s) do not have to be present. No score will be recorded, but the words "default" or "forfeit" shall be noted on the scorecard in the place where the other team players' names would have gone to indicate that it is a forfeit or default. The names of players giving the forfeit need not be listed. The name of the player **receiving** the forfeit or default **must** be shown on the scorecard.

3. If both teams forfeit a position, it will be a dual forfeit, with no team receiving a point. If a match is tied 2-2 because of a dual forfeit, the winner would be determined by using the format described in IX.C.3. All winners will be determined by this method in case of a tie.

4. If a team forfeits the *entire* team match, all matches for the defaulting team already played or to be played shall be null and void when determining standings but will be used for ratings and advancement purposes. If all teams with a mathematical chance to advance have played the defaulting team in good faith, those matches shall stand as played when determining standings. Teams that default an entire match are expected to play the remainder of their schedule. A grievance may be filed against all players of the roster of the defaulting team. The League Grievance Committee shall have the authority to bar that team and all players from participating in league play for up to 11 months. Any team not fielding three of the five matches (or 2 of the 3 matches for a 3-position match or 2 of the 4 matches for a 4-position match) will be considered to have forfeited the entire team match.

5. Any team forfeiting 15% or more of their individual matches in one season shall have a grievance filed against the entire team. The League Grievance Committee shall



review the reasons for the excessive forfeits and take possible actions against the team, which may include being dropped from the league for the remainder of the season. Matches will count as described in step 4 above.

6. There will be a fifteen (15) minute default rule in effect for all scheduled matches from the time the two captains agreed to begin. Warm-ups must begin within this 15-minute period or the team not ready to play shall forfeit. Warm-ups should be completed within no more than ten (10) minutes, including service warm-up. A default can only be given if there is an available court.

## E. Court Etiquette

1. Every player is expected to call balls on her side as she would expect her balls to be called by the opponents on the other side. This is the golden rule of tennis. ***Any ball falling on any part of the line is good and calling such a ball "out" is cheating.*** Conversely, any out ball must be called instantaneously, otherwise, it is presumed good and in play. Avoid late calls.

2. No linesmen or umpires will be provided for matches. If a conflict occurs during match play over line calls, the players involved may request that the captain of each team appoint a lines person for the remainder of the match.

3. A player should call the score after each point to avoid confusion. Total disagreement concerning the score in the game results in going back to the last agreed upon score or a spin of the racquet.

4. Electronic devices shall not be allowed on court. If a cell phone/smart device rings during or between points, the opponent wins the point based on a hindrance.

5. Each home team will furnish an unopened can of championship quality yellow balls per individual match. Matches will be played using balls opened by the home team.

6. In the manner of calling "lets", good sportsmanship calls for each player to do all in her means to see that a match is played properly, fairly, and under the best possible circumstances. When anything distracts a player, such as a ball from another court rolling on to the court area (including the backstop), an immediate "let" call must be made promptly, before either opponent has a chance to hit the return or before a return has gone out of play.

7. The only time a player may leave the court is to:

- a. Contact a captain to settle a dispute
- b. Take a bona fide bathroom break
- c. Fix an item of clothing necessary for play (a player **may not** leave the court to fix or obtain a new racquet)

8. Players: league conduct- there will no profanity, distasteful comments or verbal harassment among the players during and/or after the match. While the ball is in play on the opponent's side of the court, there may be no disrupting noises made by the

players. In such case that does occur, a let may be called. There will be no slamming of ball or racquet throwing. Players must take care at all times not to interrupt play or distract opponents in any way.

**9. Spectators:** spectators may not aid players in making a line call nor in determining the correct score. Spectators should not participate in any way and should refrain from doing so even if asked by the player(s). Spectators may quietly watch a match in progress. They should not sit or stand at the end of the court immediately behind the servers or receivers if it is distracting to the players. Spectators may quietly clap for points well played. It should be remembered that the well-played point should be applauded regardless of who won the point. It is poor tennis etiquette to clap for unforced errors. It is the responsibility of each team to control the noise and behavior of its spectators. Loud, boisterous, or unsportsmanlike behavior is unacceptable. If a problem exists with a spectator, the player(s) or her opponent(s) should ask the spectators to refrain from the particular behavior. If the behavior persists, the team captain should be summoned to handle the situation.

## **G. Disputes On Court:**

**1.** In matches where there is no umpire, as in FTA matches, players themselves act as umpires and must see that obvious violations of the rules do not occur. Therefore, it is imperative that players know the USTA regulations and FTA rules that govern play. They must also be familiar with the USTA's publication of *The Code*, which is a handbook of ethics and fair play and *Friend At Court*. Captains should have a copy of each of these at courtside during match play to utilize in settling disputes.

**2.** Coaches or club pros must refrain from intrusion in discussions or negotiations between players or captains unless specifically asked by both captains. Even then, it is the responsibility of the two captains, not the pro, to decide on the resolution of the incident.

**3.** Disputes should be settled between players before the match is finished. Remember that all points played in good faith stand. It is hoped that the players involved can resolve any dispute by themselves. If that is not possible, the procedure to follow is:

**a.** A player should inform opponent of the problem and her intention to leave the court to obtain assistance of her captain. She should leave her racquet on the court when she leaves to get the captain.

**b.** The captain should contact the opponent's captain and they should try to resolve the dispute. If the captains are involved in playing a match, the players may have to postpone their play until the captains are available to assist them.

**c.** If the captains and players cannot agree on a resolution to the conflict, the offended player(s) may stop play- telling her opponent why and have her captain indicate on the scorecard that the match was stopped in protest. The exact place and

score of the match when play stopped must be recorded and signed by both captains. A grievance must then be filed by the player who stopped the match. The ruling by the Grievance and/or Appeals Committees will determine the match winner. In no instance is the match resumed – there is no do-over.

#### **H. Procedure for Filing Grievances**

A complaint against a player or team alleging a violation during local league competition shall be filed in writing on the proper grievance form with the Local League Coordinator prior to the commencement of the next team match involving such player or team, or within twenty four hours after the end of local league play, whichever occurs first.

#### **I. Procedure for Processing Grievances**

Any flagrant violation of these rules and regulations should be filed in writing to the Local League Coordinator who will then send a copy to the Chair of the League Grievance Committee and to the party(ies) against whom the grievance has been filed.

Following the receipt of a complaint, the League Grievance Committee shall, as soon as reasonable, (a) investigate the alleged violation as the committee deems appropriate, and if it deems necessary shall (b) arrange for a hearing at which the parties involved shall have the right to appear personally and present evidence. The League Grievance Committee shall have the power to dismiss the complaint or to direct the correction of any violations by reasonable means, including the suspension of a player or team from further participation in the USTA league program for the remainder of the league year and/or for the succeeding league year, for a maximum of 364 days. The League Grievance Committee shall prepare a written decision setting forth the basis for its decision and promptly copy the parties involved ***and the Flight Coordinator***. The decision of the League Grievance Committee shall be by majority vote.

Any party involved in the grievance has the right to appeal the decision to the League Grievance Appeal Committee.

Grievances will be assessed in accordance with the USTA Grievance suspension point system plan.