

DETAILED INFORMATION ON BECOMING A TENNIS OFFICIAL IN TEXAS

(AND MAINTAINING YOUR ANNUAL CERTIFICATION)

USTA Tennis Officials enforce the rules of tennis to ensure fair play. There are different types of Officials with different responsibilities (listed below) - but the common goal for all Officials is to make sure that individual and/or Tournament matches are conducted under the fairest possible conditions. Make it Fair...Make it Fun...Make it about the Players.

HOW TO BECOME A TENNIS OFFICIAL - Texas

In order to become a USTA Tennis Official you must put in a little work. The following steps will get you started toward becoming an Official. Where the prompt indicates "Click Here" - put your cursor over the words "Click Here" then hold down your "CTRL" button and left click with mouse.

- 1) You must first be a member of USTA. If you are not a member, you can join online at United States Tennis Association [Click here](#).
- 2) Contact your "Area Coordinator" or Sectional Chair in Texas: [Click Here](#). Let them know of your interest. Because Texas is so large - we have "Area Coordinators," who assist with local recruitment, local training, learning materials and other needs of Officials. Stay in touch with your Coordinator - they are an important part of Texas Officiating.
- 3) Pass the *USTA Officials Exam [Click Here](#). Depending on the timing of this, it recommended that you attend a Certification School (Link for List of Schools/Sign Up). The entry-level official is termed a Provisional Umpire. You will want to be certified as a Provisional Umpire as soon as possible. Provisional Umpire is the only certification that does not require prior attendance at a USTA certification school. To become a Provisional Umpire you must take the test and then pass a Criminal Background Check. Officials are allowed to be Provisional status for one year and then must attend an approved school for follow-on years.
- 4) In an effort to protect all competitors, ALL OFFICIAL must watch a 30 minute "Play Safe" video. This procedure is now mandatory in most sports for all officials and for all of those who assist the athletes in competition. [Click here](#)
- 4) Pass a Back Ground Check [Click Here](#) - (This is paid for by the USTA and only takes a couple minutes to submit) all new Officials must take and pass the background check and ALL Officials must take and pass the background check every 'odd' year (I.E. to be certified in 2015 must submit the background check in 2014)
- 5) Register for a NUCULA account [Click here](#). NUCULA is mandatory for ALL USTA Officials - including Provisional's. NUCULA has MANY functions but the most important is that it is the place where an official records one's work record. The work record must be submitted to USTA each year in order to continue officiating year to year. Other information provided via NUCULA include: educational materials, registry of all Officials across the U.S., tournaments/events list, evaluations and many other functions.
- 6) Get a Uniform... Now that you have finished the above steps, and have talked with your Area Coordinator about opportunities to work, you will want to get the appropriate uniform. You must have the official shirt which you can purchase at the Uniform Site [Click here](#). All other outerwear can be purchased at the Uniform Site or you can wear a plain navy blue jacket, sweater, or vest with no logos. You can also wear a plain beige cap or visor with no logo.

7) NOW COMES THE FUN PART - **STUDY! TRAIN! STUDY! TRAIN!** You want to be hired - **MAKE SURE YOU KNOW YOUR STUFF!** Good Officials are always learning the rules and shadowing experienced Officials on court. Read and re-read your FAC and get with your Coordinator about shadowing opportunities in your area!

One of Texas' Best Officials made this very important quote about two important characteristics of ALL Officials: *"Above all -- an 'even' temperament and a great listening ability are required to 'solve' problems and to convey the 'right stuff' (rules interpretation and implementation) to players, parents and spectators. ... Millard Countryman*

8) YOU'RE READY! Get your availability out to your Coordinator ([TX Coordinator Link](#)), Referees, and Tournament Directors. You will want to WORK, WORK, WORK, to gain experience needed to expand your opportunities in Officiating. Work tournaments your Referees feel you are ready for... you will gain experience by working different events including juniors, adults, and seniors. They are all different and bring varied challenges.

Do not hesitate to call if you have questions, suggestions or issues. We appreciate your time and commitment to making TEXAS TENNIS GREAT!

Play On,

Kevin Foster, TX Section, Schools Coordinator (254) 709-3058

MAINTAINING YOUR ANNUAL CERTIFICATION

If you have been a Provisional and/or want to Certify (or re-certify) you will need to take the [USTA Sectional Exam](#). It is best to take the Certification Exam(s) with the appropriate "Friend at Court" (FAC) rule book [Click Here](#). You will see on this web-site that there are three exams - USTA, Referee and ITA (descriptions below). You must take and pass the USTA test to take the Referee and/or ITA exam. All questions are based on the content of the FAC. Once you take the test, print out the answer sheet and bring it to your Certification School: (List of [TX Certifications Schools](#)). Schools are taught each year throughout Texas - usually between February and October. You must take the USTA Sectional Exam and attend a Certification School each year

Are you ready for 2015?

All officials must complete the SafePlay Training and resubmit for the background check after October 1, 2014. If you have not resubmitted for the background screening, you will not be recertified for January 1, 2015.

[Click here](#) for USTA Membership Association

[Click Here](#) for USTA/Referee/ITA Exams

[Click Here](#) for Friend at Court

[Click here](#) to complete the SafePlay training.

[Click here](#) to apply for the background screening.

[Click here](#) Request or access your NUCULA account

[Click here](#) to read the original recertification announcement.

[Click here](#) to read the recertification FAQ.

Vision Forms

Vision forms are due for 2016 certification starting January 2015. About Mid-January we will be sending instructions for submitting vision forms. We would appreciate it if you **DO NOT** submit vision forms for 2016 until you receive the instructions.

TDM (Tournament Data Manager)

New for 2015, there will be a 10 question quiz about TDM. All Referees will be required to submit proof of passing this quiz as well as the Referee test in order to attend Referee class. All the answers you would need to complete the quiz can be learned from watching webinar available [here](#). While this webinar was recorded during TDM on the web launch and some information has been updated, the answers to any questions are contained within the presentation.

Officiating Website

[Click here](#) to check out the new USTA Officiating Website that was launched this month.

CERTIFICATION DESCRIPTION'S:

PROVISIONAL / USTA (Roving) / REFEREE and ITA (Collegiate) OFFICIALS

Provisional Certified Official -If you have no experience as a Tennis Official - you must start as a Provisional Official. The entry-level official is termed a Provisional Umpire. You will want to be certified as a Provisional Official as soon as possible. Provisional Umpire is the only certification that does not require prior attendance at a USTA certification school. To become a Provisional Umpire you must take the USTA Official's Exam, watch the *Play Safe* video (30 minutes) and pass the Background Check. *Officials are allowed to be Provisional status for one year.*

Sectional Certified Officials (Roving Officials) usually have about one year's experience at the Provisional level and five days of working on court. USTA Certified Officials will be required to take and pass the on-line USTA test each year. They must also attend a yearly certification school. Certified Officials cover multiple courts and may be asked to officiate on a single court when requested to do so by players or the referee. Certified Officials must have knowledge of the rules because they may be called upon to problem solve at a moment's notice. Certified Officials may overrule clear mistakes when standing on the court **WITHOUT** a verbal appeal by the player. They are trained to solve on-court problems with specific procedures, may give code violations, and they must wear the official USTA uniform to signify they are Certified Officials

The **Sectional Certified Referee** usually has about three years' experience at the Sectional certification level. Referees will be required to take and pass the on-line USTA and Referee test each year. They must also attend a yearly certification school. The Referee is a certified official who assist with: the making of USTA draws, schedule of play, court management, hires and oversees qualified officials, serves as the first person to whom a player may appeal when they believe an official has applied a rule incorrectly. The referee enforces all rules and regulations governing play, must be knowledgeable about the requirements for each age group or level of play, and may be called upon to go on court when necessary. The referee must be in USTA uniform so that they may be readily identified when necessary.

The **ITA Certified Official's** will be required to take and pass the on-line USTA and ITA test each year. They must also attend a yearly certification school. An ITA Official is a certified official who has been trained to preside over College matches. Most Officials are trained to preside over one match at a time, if available the Official will conduct match procedures from an umpire chair. Most college matches using a chair umpire hire a "solo" chair, meaning no linesmen are used, and they usually work in the chair for dual matches and the semis and finals of college tournaments. ITA Officials may rove matches prior to finals. When serving as a Solo Chair umpire, they must have a very clear knowledge of the rules because they are called upon to make snap decisions that can affect the match. Many good chair umpires started out as a roving official, as a rover you will have a good grounding in overall rules and procedures.

The following are links to ITA Coordinators in Texas:

BIG 12 Coordinator	Cheryl Jones	SwiftRef@aol.com
Baylor	David Fleuriet	Dfleuriet@yahoo.com
SMU, UTA, NTx	Randy McDonald	RM Tennis@yahoo.com
TxA&M men	Michelle Walker	Mwalker@oar.tamu.edu
TxA&M women	Sara Lammerts	Lammerts@verizon.net
Tx Tech	Trevor Edgmon	Tedge12@gmail.com
TCU	Myron Krueger	Myron.D.Krueger@lmco.com
Trinity, Incarnet Word	Carol Bruehler	RedOaks@gvtc.com
Tyler & UT Tyler	David Kemp	DavidKemp.dk@gmail.com
Univ Houston	Ginny James	Ginny_James@hotmail.com
Texas	Vickie Wright	VickieTennisNut@austin.rr.com
UTSA	Rick Moench	RickMoench@att.net