



Player Regulations for Orange Ball Progression to 12 and Under Competition

Overview

The new 10 & Under and 12 & Under systems are developmental divisions that should focus on participation and developing a player's competitive skills through match play. The new system places emphasis on participation and promotes play in both Orange ball and Green ball events. The new system is structured to keep young players in Orange and Green ball events long enough to develop technically and tactically. The structure will enable a player to progress through participating in events with little emphasis on winning or losing. It is not a race to the Yellow ball.

Orange Ball Division

A. Orange Ball Eligibility

1. A player can start competing in Orange ball 10 & Under at any time, as long as the player has not reached the maximum age for the division.
2. A player **may** elect to move to Green ball 12 & Under by meeting one of the following criteria:
 - a. Earn 10 participation points in singles sanctioned tournaments during a 12 month period and be at least 9 years old.
 - b. Win the singles division of **four** Level 5 or higher Southwest Section tournaments and be at least 9 years old.
3. Participation points are earned as follows:
 - a. One participation point may be earned by competing in any 10 & Under Orange ball singles sanctioned tournament.
 - b. One participation point may be earned by completing any USTA Junior Team Tennis league season.
 - c. One participation point may be earned by playing a cross sectional team event.
4. A player **may** elect to move to 12 & Under once he or she has reached 10 ½ years of age even if the above criteria has not been met.

B. Orange Ball Match Formats

1. Matches will be played in accordance to the guidelines of 10 & Under tennis.
2. Court size: 60 foot court.
3. Racquet length: no longer than a 25 inch racquet.
4. Orange low compression balls.

5. Best two out of three short sets (first to 4 games) with a ten point tie-breaker in lieu of a third. Ad scoring applies.

C. Tournament Formats and Rankings

1. No rankings lists will be published. Participation point lists will be published to keep track of the number of points a player has accumulated.
2. It is recommended that Level 6 tournaments should be played in any non-elimination format such as a compass draw or round robin to ensure guaranteed competition. Players should be placed in flights with other players of a similar level.
3. It is recommended that the 10 & Under division at Level 6 tournaments be completed in one day.

Rationale: The Junior Competition Committee emphasizes that it is not a "race" to the 12 and under division. The priority is on maximizing participation and playing matches with the Orange ball. This helps in the fundamental development of the child and helps a child progress, as he or she gets older, with learning the correct technique and without picking up bad habits. Additionally, it places a player with correct equipment for his or her size, appropriate court size for his or her age, and a ball bounce that is in the strike zone for his or her height. A player can move up if he or she has satisfied the criteria, as it proves that he or she is ready to move up to the Green ball division. The Junior Competition Committee places no minimum age on when a child can play in the Orange ball Division. Players under the age of 8 are encouraged to play 8 & Under competition using the Red ball, however, they have the option of playing in 10 & Under Orange ball if they are ready or there is no available Red ball division.

12 and Under

A. Eligibility

A player can start competing in 12 & Under when he or she has satisfied either of the criteria from the 10 & Under Orange ball division, or when the player has reached 10 ½ years of age.

B. 12 and Under Match Format

1. Matches will be played in accordance to the guidelines of 12 & Under tennis.
2. Court size: 78 foot court.
3. Racquet length: no longer than a 27 inch racquet.
4. Green low compression balls
5. Any USTA approved match format.

C. Tournament Format

1. All Southwest Section tournaments **shall** play with the Green Ball in the 12 & Under division. **No** Yellow ball for the 12 & Under division will be offered as an option.

Rationale: The Junior Competition Committee believes that using the Green low compression balls, on a full sized court, will allow players to use the appropriate technique along with learning how to construct points better. In the Southwest, we play at altitude where the ball travels faster than at sea level. The Green ball will serve as a great transition tool to the Yellow ball and will enable players to have longer rallies at altitude. This improves a player's thinking skills and enables a player to learn how to construct points, a skill which can be transferred when the player competes in Yellow ball tournaments. The length of time a player spends in the 12 and under and 10 and Under Orange ball divisions is developmentally important.

Transitioning to 2012

Players caught in the middle

Players may be eligible to move up from 10 and under orange ball to 12 and under if they have exceptional and notable results. The Junior Competition Committee will decide based on results whether a player is able to move up to the 12 and under event.

Rationale: The changes are designed to look forward to the future with the new generation of players. However, we know that there might be a few players "caught in the middle" during the transition phase, which is why the Junior Competition Committee will consider moving exceptional players.

Conclusion

The new Southwest Section 10 & Under and 12 & Under systems integrate the USTA National rule change and its philosophy of boosting participation, enabling kids to have more success, enabling small, young participants to have more fun, and developing a new generation of players with sound, fundamental techniques. The 10 & Under system preserves the integrity of Orange ball events; emphasizing participation, experience, the development of young tennis players and, most importantly, having fun! The 12 & Under system provides players with much needed experience and tactical awareness, which is imperative in a high altitude section as well as for overall technical development. The system of progression as a whole helps players gain success from a young age, whether they win or lose, by equating success with participation rather than winning or losing.

Administration

The USTA Southwest Section office will monitor entry into the appropriate 10 and Under Orange ball, and 12 and Under events.

10 and Under - Tournament Directors will be able to view the participation point list starting January 1st 2012. It is their responsibility to make sure that the players entered are in the appropriate division according to their earned participation points as stated in rules above.

Level 3, 4 and 5 – All tournaments will be reviewed by the Southwest section. The JPDM will place players in the appropriate event according to their earned participation points as stated in the rules above.