

USTA Northern California Adult Tournament Rules



NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

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SUMMARY OF CHANGES TO ADULT TOURNAMENT RULES SINCE January 1, 2017:

- Approved alternative match formats have been added. See rule 8.b. (Effective 5/1/2017)
- Entry fee refund rule further clarifies when a player will receive a refund in cases of rain. See rule 18 c and d. (Effective 5/1/2017)
- Adult One Day Tournaments are exempt from the certified officials rule. See rule 22. (Effective 5/1/2017)
- Specific match formats for one day tournaments have been removed. One day tournaments may now use approved alternative match formats under rule 8.b.

- 1. Rules of Play.** The USTA Regulations shall govern all aspects of USTA NorCal sanctioned tournaments; *except* that when a USTA NorCal rule is different than the USTA Regulations, the USTA NorCal rule shall govern play. A currently Certified Referee must be employed and on site for the duration of the tournament to supervise play. A Certified Official is recommended at each satellite site. Any waiver to this rule is subject to the approval of the Adult Tournament Coordinator. Tournaments needing referees should contact NorCalOfficials@gmail.com ASAP.
- 2 Entry Deadlines.** All entries must be received by the tournament chairman. Tournament entries received after the published tournament deadline may be accepted at the discretion of the Tournament Committee. Entries may be accepted after the tournament draw or match times have been publicly posted in accordance with the guidelines outlined in the Friend at Court.
- 3. USTA Membership.** USTA Membership in good standing is required to play in all USTA NorCal sanctioned adult tournaments.
- 4. First Match Times.**
 - Tournament Responsibility for Publicizing First Match Start Times.* The draw for each event must be published with start times to the USTA website no later than 10:00 am three days before the start date of the tournament, except that a tournament may delay the publication of a doubles draw with start times until 10:00 am two days before the start date of the tournament provided the tournament posts a notice about the delayed publication of the doubles draw on its home page. A waiver to this rule may be approved by prior written consent of the USTA NorCal staff.
 - Players Responsible for Obtaining Start Times.* Players are responsible for obtaining their own starting time by checking the Tennis Link Tournament Home Page or by calling the tournament phone number beginning three days prior to the tournament if the start times are not available on the website and a start time post card has not been received. It is recommended that those tournaments accepting mail in entries communicate to those participants their first two match times 72 hours in advance of the first match of the tournament. Players are responsible for obtaining start times that may have changed for any reason, including inclement weather.
- 5. Changes in the Draw.** Changes may be made in the draw as authorized in USTA Regulations. Should the draw be changed, it is NorCal's policy that the tournament committee must notify all players involved by phone message.
- 6. Limited Draw Tournaments.**
 - NTRP Gold Cup Series Tournaments and NTRP Tournaments of the Year. In a limited draw, NTRP Tournaments of the Year and NTRP Gold Cup Series Tournaments players/teams shall be selected as follows:
 - 25% of the draw shall be selected using the most recently published Grand Prix Points Race List of the division in the order the players are listed;
 - 25% of the draw may be selected at the discretion of the Tournament Committee; and
 - the remaining 50%, and if there are any remaining spots not selected by rank or at the discretion of the Tournament Committee, shall be selected by lot.Doubles and Mixed Doubles teams will be selected based their combined ranking using the most recently published Individual Doubles Grand Prix Points Race List for the division of the event.
 - All other tournaments. In all other limited draw Adult Tournaments, the Tournament Committee may select up to 25% of the players/teams for each draw at their own discretion. All other players/teams for each draw shall be selected by lot.
- 7. Seeding.** Tournament Committees shall seed tournaments as follows:
 - Adult Open and Senior Divisions.* Adult and Senior Tournament Committees are required to use the USTA NorCal approved seeding coordinators for each division.

- b. *NTRP Divisions.* NTRP Tournaments shall use the most recent Grand Prix Points Race List for seeding, except for the first tournament of the Grand Prix season held following the NTRP Grand Prix (approximately mid-October) through December, in which case the previous year's final rankings shall be used. Procedures for seeding doubles and mixed doubles with Grand Prix Points Race Lists are set forth in Rule 7.d. below.
- c. *Wheelchair and Family Divisions.* Wheelchair and Family Tournaments shall use the All-Factors Method of seeding as described in the USTA Regulations.
- d. *Procedures for Seeding Doubles and Mixed Doubles when Grand Prix Points Race Lists are Used.* Teams shall be seeded in the order of their combined ranking using the most recently published Individual Doubles or Mixed Doubles Grand Prix Points Race List. For example, if Partner A holds the #1 ranking and Partner B holds the #10 ranking, the Team of A&B would have a combined ranking of 11. Teams that have the same combined ranking shall be seeded in the order of the total number of doubles ranking points held by each team. If one partner does not have a ranking, for the purposes of calculating the combined ranking, the unranked player shall be assigned a rank that is equivalent to one lower than the lowest ranked player on the Grand Prix Points List. For example, if Partner C holds the #1 ranking, Partner D does not have a ranking, and the Grand Prix Points List for this event has a total of 100 players on the list, Partner D is assigned a ranking of 101 and Team C&D have a combined ranking of 102.
- e. *Waiver to Seeding Guidelines or Rules.* A Tournament Committee may request a waiver to the seeding guidelines set forth in Rule 7.a. or the procedures set forth in Rule 7.b., c., or d. if a request is made in writing to the Adult Tournament Coordinator no later than 60 days before entries open and includes a rationale for the request and a proposed alternate method of seeding. The Adult Tournament Coordinator in consultation with the Chair of the Adult Tournament Committee shall approve or deny the waiver request. If a waiver request is approved, the Tournament Committee shall post the approved alternate method of seeding to the tournament website no later than the date entries open. Failure to timely post the alternate method shall result in an automatic reversal of the approved waiver.

8. Match, Scoring and Draw Formats. All match and draw formats must be announced on the tournament home page before entries open.

- a. *Match Formats.* All matches will be the best two out of three sets unless an alternative scoring format is approved by the USTA NorCal for adult events. The 7-Point Tiebreak will be used at 6 games all.
- b. *Approved Alternative Formats.* The following alternative scoring formats may be used:
 - All approved formats in Friend at Court
 - Best of Three Tiebreak Sets with a 10-Point Match Tiebreak in lieu of the 3rd set;
 - One set match;
 - 6, 8 or 10 game pro set;
 - Best of Three Match Tiebreaks;
 - No-ad scoring.
 The tournament announcement must state which alternative scoring format will be utilized on the tournament home page before the entries open.
- c. *Coman Tiebreak Procedure May Be Used in Doubles.* The Coman Tiebreak Procedure may be used in any doubles match. A tournament using the Coman Tiebreak must announce it on the tournament home page before entries open.
- d. *Round Robin Draw Format.* Events with up to 6 entrants may use a round robin format. Tournaments may hold draws of only 2 but are not required to do so. Draws of 3 or more must be held.
- e. *Playoff for 3rd and 4th Place Required in NTRP Gold Cup Series Tournaments and NTRP Tournament of the Year Events.* All events in NTRP Gold Cup Series Tournaments and NTRP Tournament of the Year events shall play a 3rd/4th place playoff.

9. Tournament Matches May Be Played Off Site. A match in an Adult, Senior or NTRP tournament may be played off site, during the inclusive dates of a tournament when all of the following conditions are met:

- There are only two entrants or teams in a particular event.
- Both players (teams) agree.
- The Tournament Director agrees.
- Referee agrees.

10. Warm-up Period. Warm-up time is limited to 5 minutes except for Adult 30 Division and Senior Division events, which shall allow a 10-minute warm-up. All practice serves must be taken during warm-up.

11. Entry Limitations on Players.

- a. *NTRP Divisions.* Players in NTRP Divisions are limited to entering one singles event, one doubles event, and one mixed doubles event. A Tournament Committee may further limit the number of events a player can enter if the limit is published to the tournament website by the time entries open. Tournament Committees will determine whether a player's entries may be in more than one division and will publish that information to the tournament website by the time entries open.
 - b. *Adult 30, Senior, and Family Divisions.* A Tournament Committee may limit the number of events a player can enter if the limit is published to the tournament website by the time entries open. If no limit is published, there is no limit to the number of events that may be entered.
 - c. *Adult Open Divisions.* Players in the Adult Open division may play singles, doubles and mixed doubles, if offered. A Tournament Committee may further limit the number of events a player can enter if the limit is published to the tournament website by the time entries open.
 - d. *Wheelchair Divisions.* There is no limit on the number of events entered.
- 12. Matches Per Day.** The maximum matches per day as set forth in the USTA Regulations (*Friend at Court*) shall be mandatory for all divisions.
- 13. Right of Refusal.** The Tournament Committee reserves the right to decline any entry either before or after the draws have been published. Some draws may be limited.
- 14. USTA NorCal Point Penalty Suspension System.** The USTA NorCal Point Penalty Suspension System (PPSS) shall apply to all USTA NorCal sanctioned tournaments. It is a system that levies suspension points for violations of the USTA Regulations, no shows, defaults, walkovers and other misconduct. A copy of the PPSS can be found on the [USTA NorCal website](#).
- 15. Penalty for Lateness.** Players are expected to check and comply with all scheduling done by the Tournament Committee. A player is deemed to have arrived when the player checks in at the place designated for checking in and is properly clothed, equipped, and ready to play. The lateness penalty clock starts at the scheduled match time **regardless of court availability**, this is a variation from the national rule which states that a player is late if they are not there when the match is called.
- 16. Concurrent Tournaments.** A player shall not be entered at the time entries close in two or more USTA sanctioned tournaments scheduled to take place at the same time, in whole or in part, unless each Tournament Committee involved understands the situation, concurs in writing, and each agrees to accommodate the player's schedule. The final decision rests with each tournament committee. If one tournament agrees to accept concurrent entries and accommodate the player's schedule but the concurrent tournament does not, the player may not enter both.
- If entries for the overlapping tournaments close on different dates, approval must be received from all Tournament Committees no later than the entry closing date that occurs last.
- Players who enter a tournament and play it to completion, may then enter another tournament with overlapping dates without permission.
- If a player violates this concurrent tournament rule, ranking points earned in any concurrent tournament played will not count toward ranking or the Grand Prix Points Race and the concurrent tournaments will not count toward the minimum tournament requirement to qualify for the Grand Prix.
- 17. Unfinished Tournaments.** A tournament will have 30 days past the last scheduled tournament date to complete a tournament due to inclement weather or unforeseen circumstances approved by the Adult Tournament department. However, if a draw affected by inclement weather has not begun by the completion of the sanctioned dates of the tournament, the draw will not be started after the final date.
- 18. Entry Fees.**
- a. *Processing Fee May Not be Charged by Tournament Committee to Accept Entries.* Tournament Committees may not collect the Active.com fee when a player does not register online.
 - b. *Nonpayment of Entry Fee.* The tournament may charge a collection fee for returned entry fee checks or nonpayment of outstanding fees at the tournament. Nonpayment of entry fees or cancellation of payment after the entry deadline will result in player suspension until such payment is received by the involved tournament.
 - c. *Entry Fee Refunds.* The Tournament Committee shall refund a player's entire entry fee (minus the Tennis Link non-refundable registration fee) if the entry is not accepted, if the player withdraws before the draw has been published or no later than seven days before the start date of the tournament, whichever date is sooner. The Tournament Committee may not issue a credit for the entry fee in lieu of an entry fee refund.

The Tournament Committee shall not charge any fee (such as a processing, service, or handling fee) for refunding the entry fee. However, in the case where the tournament is rained out before a match is played, the tournament may withhold an administrative fee of \$2.00 per entry in the case of a tournament that charges a per-entry fee or a total of \$2.00 in the case of a tournament that charges a base fee.

d. *Partial Rain Out Policy.*

i. When Per Event Fee Charged. No refund of the per event fee will be required to be made to a player if that player finishes one match in an event and the event is subsequently rained out.

ii. When Base Fee Charged. No refund of the base fee will be required to be made to a player if that player finishes one match in the tournament, regardless of whether it is a singles or doubles match. A finished match is a match that takes place on court and is played to completion, meaning a player has either won a match point or has won after the start of the match because their opponent has retired or been defaulted.

19. **Restriction on Replacing Withdrawing Players with Byes.** A Referee shall not make changes in the draw as described in USTA Regulation II.C.i.b.iii. and iv. as follows: when a player who is not seeded withdraws from a tournament and there are no alternates awaiting entry, a Referee may not replace the withdrawing player with a Bye. If there are no alternates awaiting entry, the Referee is required to leave the unseeded withdrawing player in the draw and advance the opponent by means of a withdrawal or default, whichever describes the circumstances of the withdrawal.
20. **NTRP Gold Cup Series Tournament and NTRP Tournament of the Year Designations.** Annually USTA NorCal shall designate NTRP Gold Cup Series Tournament and NTRP Tournament of the Year designations to NTRP tournaments. These tournaments shall earn larger numbers of ranking points than non-designated NTRP tournaments. Criteria for determining these tournaments and the number of ranking points earned at each are set forth in the USTA NorCal Adult, Senior, Family, NTRP & Wheelchair Points Per Round Ranking & Grand Prix Points Race Rules.
21. **Player Attire.** Appropriate tennis attire is required for all matches. Rules of the host club will govern. As stated in the Friend at Court, any dress code must be published to the tournament website prior to the time entries open.
22. **Certified Officials.** The Referee of each USTA NorCal sanctioned adult tournament shall be a referee certified by the USTA. A Certified Official is recommended at each satellite site and for each 8 courts of play. One Day Tournaments are exempt from this rule.
23. **Cancellation of Tournaments.** The Tournament Committee shall not make the decision to cancel all matches for the remainder of the day until at least 12 Noon of the day in question, or the remainder of the tournament until at least 12 Noon of the last scheduled day of play.
24. **Awards.** Adult Awards must be given to all tournament finalists regardless of the number of entrants. Suggested value of 1st place award should be equal to or greater than 50% of entry fee. Prizes requiring additional money for redemption will not be allowed, unless players have the option of receiving said prize or equivalent certificate value in cash. Prizes with a cash value should be at minimum equal to the entry fee for 1st place, 50% for 2nd place. Tournaments held with only 2 entrants are not required to award second 2nd place awards. Tournaments that hold a playoff for 3rd and 4th place are not required to award 3rd or 4th place awards.
25. **Age Eligible Junior Players May Not Play in NTRP Tournaments.** Players who are age eligible to enter junior tournaments may not enter NTRP tournaments, except that junior players may enter and play in NTRP tournaments designated as pilots for adult and junior level-based competition.
26. **Tournament Evaluation Sign.** Tournament Directors must post a notice/sign, reminding players that the tournament evaluation form is available on the USTA NorCal website.
27. **Tennis Balls.** Three new tennis balls are required for adult tournament play at the start of every tournament match, and at the start of the 3rd set of play unless a match tie break is used for the 3rd set.
28. **One-Day Tournaments.** Below are special provisions for one-day singles and/or doubles tournaments. Except as provided below, these tournaments shall comply with all other Adult Tournament Rules and Sanction Rules:

- a. *Maximum Entry Fee.* The maximum entry fee for a one-day tournament shall be \$30 per player in doubles and \$35 per player in singles.
- b. *Multiple Flights Permitted.* The tournament may hold more than one flight per division. For example instead of holding one draw in a division with 16 entries, a tournament may hold 2 draws in a division of 8 entries each. Teams should be water-falled by rank into flights (see example below). If no ranking information is available, teams are drawn to flights by lot.
Waterfall Example: If 16 players, ranked 1-16 are entered, players 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, and 15 are water-falled into one flight and players 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, and 16 are water-falled into the other flight.
- c. *Cancellation of a One Day Tournament.* In the case of inclement weather, no earlier than two days before the tournament start date, the tournament may contact the USTA NorCal Adult Tournament Coordinator to request a waiver to the cancellation of tournaments rule. Waivers will be determined on a case by case basis.

29. **NTRP Ratings.**

- a. *NTRP Rating Required for NTRP Tournaments.* A player participating in a USTA NorCal sanctioned NTRP tournament must have an NTRP rating. A player who does not have a computer-generated NTRP rating must self-rate before entering.
- b. *Notice to Player in Violation of NTRP Rating Requirement.* If it is discovered that a player is in violation of the NTRP rating requirement, the player will be notified in writing by USTA NorCal. Any player who has been notified that he/she does not have a valid USTA rating must self-rate prior to registering in a USTA NorCal NTRP tournament. A player violating this rule will receive an automatic 30 day suspension and any points earned from that tournament toward the Grand Prix points race, seeding/tentative/final rankings lists will be removed.
- c. *Self-Rated Player May Not Play Below NTRP Rating.* A player may not enter and play below his or her NTRP Rating. Any player who plays an NTRP tournament below his or her NorCal self-rating level:
 - will be levied 10 suspension points in the NorCal Penalty Suspension System, and
 - any points earned for the tournament that appear on the Grand Prix Points Race List will be removed.

The Referee is encouraged to default a player for unsportsmanlike conduct if it is discovered after the draw has been made. A Referee may only default a player who has a self-rating higher than the level that they entered and/or played. A Referee may not default a player he or she "believes" is playing out of level.

Note: USTA NorCal republishes each player's NTRP ratings on the NorCal website; *however*, the official NTRP ratings are published in each player's profile on USTA.com. In the event a player's NTRP rating on the NorCal website differs from the rating published on the USTA player profile, the NTRP rating in the USTA player profile shall be the official NTRP rating. Direct questions about ratings to the Adult Tournament Coordinator.

- d. *Year end ratings.* When new ratings are released by National at the end of each year, any player that is already entered into a tournament at the time of the release that has been bumped up by National shall be able to play at the rating entered prior to the release for that tournament.
- e. *NTRP Self-Rate Grievance.*
 - i. *Persons Who May File a Grievance.* A Tournament Director, Referee, or player participating in a tournament may file a self-rating grievance. There is no requirement for the player to have played the person that he or she is filing against. A self-rating grievance can be filed at any time, but only grievances filed up on or before July 31 may impact the Grand Prix for that year. A member of the NorCal staff may file a self-rating grievance at any time with no restriction; staff generated grievances after July 31 may affect the Grand Prix after approval of the Adult Tournament Committee.
 - ii. *Grievance Form.* The following information is required:
 - name of person filing grievance;
 - name of person whom the grievance is being filed against;
 - specific and tangible information regarding the player's tennis history and information that substantiates the claim that the player has misrepresented his or her skill level by self-rating too low;
 - person filing grievance must specifically ask the USTA NorCal office to forward the grievance to player.

There is a \$25.00 fee for filing each Self Rate Grievance. This fee will be returned if the grievance is upheld. The fee should be submitted by check made payable to USTA NorCal, at the time the grievance is filed. Failure to comply with these instructions may result in grievance being dismissed.

- iii. *Procedure for Filing Grievance.* Email your grievance to wilson@norcal.usta.com and concurrently mail the filing fee to USTA NorCal, 1920 North Loop Road, Alameda, 94502. If you do not have access to email to file a grievance, you may hand write the grievance, following the requirements and directions given above, and fax it to (510) 748-7377, ATTN: NTRP Tournament Self-Rate Grievance.
- iv. If a player's rating gets bumped up during the season as a result of a self-rate grievance, the player must start playing at that level immediately. If a player is in the middle of the tournament, the player shall be able to play the tournament to completion.