



The Role of a USTA Official in NorCal

WHAT IS A TENNIS OFFICIAL

A tennis official is someone who enforces the rules of play on a day-to-day basis at tennis tournaments. Most officials are motivated by a desire to see tennis well-played and fairly played. There are several "types" of officials, though, all described below.

HOW TO BECOME A TENNIS OFFICIAL

1. Be a USTA Member. (To become a member, [click here](#)).
2. Complete online [Safe Play Training](#), which includes passing a criminal background check ([click here](#)). If you are under 18, please [click here](#) to request a background screening waiver.
3. Complete the Introduction to Officiating, Rules and Regulations modules, and Roving 1 to complete the testing requirement for Provisional Certification. [Click here](#) to access these courses.
4. Have a vision certification form completed by an eye doctor attesting to 20/20 vision in each eye and in both eyes together corrected or uncorrected. To access the vision form, [click here](#).

Upon completion of the requirements, you will be certified as a Provisional Umpire. A Roving Umpire Workshop is the next step, followed by 4 volunteer days at USTA tournaments in Northern California are then required to be certified as a Sectional Umpire.

Once you have completed the Background Check, vision requirement, the Introduction to Officiating and the Rules and Regulations and Roving 1 modules, please contact Chris Wilson at norcalofficials@gmail.com to schedule a roving workshop.

Training

In NorCal we are proud to be able to offer training sessions for Roving Umpires, Line Umpires and Chair Umpires. These training sessions (workshops) are free of charge to our NorCal member officials. The Roving Workshop is required for all new provisional officials in order to gain full certification as a Sectional Umpire. We also have local evaluators who are at some tennis events, working to help each new official.

Roving Workshops are one day each, and are offered at various times of the year. These workshops are offered in various locations throughout Northern California.

Line Workshops are also one day sessions with follow up sessions spread out over an approximately two-month period with volunteer work at qualifying weekends of various Professional Tennis events. Clinics are typically held in May/June. The instructor also follows the progress of each person through these events.

Chair Workshops are one or two days over a given weekend. They are usually offered in the fall and spring. Additional workshops are added to meet the needs of the members. Each participant must be available for both days of the clinic. College tennis officiating requires that you have both roving and chair training.

CAN I OFFICATE WHERE MY CHILDREN ARE PLAYING?

Tough question. Let's start with your motivations.

Are you looking to fill in your time while waiting for matches to end? In that case, don't become an official. Look at the Court Monitor description coming up. That would fill your time!

Do you think you can do a good job keeping peace between players, parents, coaches and their opponents? Do you see unfair actions at some tournaments and you think you can improve what goes on? Then you may be headed in the right direction to want to become a certified official.

You MAY NOT officiate at your child's events. If your child plays in the Girls'14's, you MAY NOT officiate ANY Girls' 14's match. You MAY officiate for the 12's, 16's, and 18's. However, a Referee may or may not be able to hire you for an event where your child plays because it may be impossible for the Referee to schedule your assignment around when the 14 Girls will be playing. Then again, if there are multiple divisions playing, the Referee may be able to schedule you. The Referee will probably NOT want to schedule you for less than the full day, so if your child finishes play at noon, you would still be obligated to stay until the end of the day.

COURT MONITOR

A court monitor is a *non-certified volunteer* (that is, not a certified official) who has made themselves available to go on court when line calls are disputed or other assistance is needed. They may time warm-ups, flip the coin for players prior to play, measure nets, keep score, call footfaults, or even pick up the court between matches. Court Monitors do NOT wear USTA uniform.

ROVING UMPIRE

A roving umpire is a certified official who covers multiple courts and who may be asked to officiate on a single court when requested to do so by players or the referee. Roving umpires must have knowledge of the rules because they may be called upon to problem solve at a moment's notice. Certified roving umpires 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.

REFEREE

The referee is a certified official who makes the draw, schedules play, manages the courts, hires and oversees other 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. In NorCal, referees must also learn how to do a computer draw and schedule. The referee must be in USTA uniform so that they may be readily identified when necessary.

CHAIR UMPIRE

A chair umpire is a certified official who has been trained to preside over one match at a time, sitting in an umpire chair (unless none is available). Most local matches using a chair umpire hire a "solo" chair, meaning no linesmen are used, and they usually work in the chair for the semis and finals, roving matches prior to that. Chair umpires must have a very clear knowledge of the rules because they are called upon to make instant decisions that can affect the match. Many good chair umpires started as good roving officials, because as a rover, they got a good grounding in rules and procedures.

LINE UMPIRE

A line umpire is a certified official who is very visible at tournaments as the person standing or sitting directly on a line. These officials call the balls "good" or "out".

CHIEF UMPIRE

A certified official who hires and oversees line and chair officials at a tournament, working with the tournament director and the tour supervisor to ensure a smooth running event.

DO YOU STILL WANT TO BE A TENNIS OFFICIAL?

If your answer is "yes", please contact the NorCal Chairperson of the Officials Committee: [Chris Wilson](#)