

Youth Protection Policies and Procedures for USTA Jr. Team Tennis

The mission of the United States Tennis Association Incorporated (“USTA”) is *To Promote and Develop the Growth of Tennis*. USTA Jr. Team Tennis brings kids together to play singles, doubles, and mixed doubles on teams. It promotes social skills and important values by fostering a spirit of cooperation and unity, as well as individual self-growth. It is a fun environment for kids in which they learn that succeeding is about how they play the game – win or lose. An important goal of USTA Jr. Team Tennis is to provide a safe and positive experience for participants so that they may enjoy the benefits of a sport they can play for a lifetime.

Volunteer Involvement is Key

USTA Jr. Team Tennis would not be possible without the dedicated efforts and commitment of thousands of volunteers. Safety is a shared responsibility and requires the ongoing support and commitment of coaches, managers, volunteers, parents, spectators, participants, local/area coordinators and other USTA Jr. Team Tennis officials.

I. UNDERSTANDING AND PREVENTING MALTREATMENT

A. Maltreatment is Strictly Prohibited

A risk facing every organization that serves children is the potential of harm resulting from inappropriate conduct. The policies and procedures presented below are intended to reduce the risk of such conduct while promoting a safe and positive environment and fostering the growth of USTA Jr. Team Tennis.

Maltreatment of any kind is strictly prohibited within our organization. This means that USTA Jr. Team Tennis does not tolerate physical, sexual, emotional, or verbal maltreatment or misconduct from our participants, coaches, managers, volunteers, parents, spectators, or any person associated with USTA Jr. Team Tennis.

A brief description of four types of maltreatment -- all of which are strictly prohibited are provided below.

1. Physical Maltreatment - Any non-accidental contact which results in harm.
2. Sexual Maltreatment - Any form of sexual activity with a child or teen, which can include inappropriate touching, use of sexual or sexually explicit language, sexual references, or intentional exposure to sexually explicit media.
3. Emotional Maltreatment - Any intentional conduct which harms a child or teen’s spirit and/or self-worth through rejection, threats, harassment, terrorizing, isolating, or belittling.
4. Neglect - Conduct that endangers a child or teen’s health, safety, or welfare. Neglect may include withholding food, medical care, and rest.

B. Appropriate Contact is a Cornerstone to Safety

Understanding what constitutes “appropriate contact” is the first step to protect against inappropriate conduct or false allegations of misconduct.

1. Rule of Three - Coaches, managers, and volunteers should be aware that interaction with participants needs to be in an open and observable environment. Coaches, managers, and volunteers should strive to avoid being alone with a minor where he or she cannot be observed by others. The “rule of three” offers a reminder that a minimum of three persons (two adults and one child, or one adult and two children) should be present at all times

during any activities associated with USTA Jr. Team Tennis.

2. **Physical Contact** – Physical contact must always be respectful and appropriate in response to the needs of the participant.

C. Supervision

1. **Restrooms and Locker Rooms** - Vulnerable individuals, such as younger children, should not be permitted to enter a rest room or locker room alone. Adhering to the “rule of three” should be followed.
2. **Overnight Trips** - Sharing of rooms between a participant and a non-family adult is strongly discouraged. Participants should only stay with their parent (“parent” hereinafter includes legal guardians) on overnight trips unless written approval from parents for alternate arrangements has been provided.
3. **“Open Door” Policy** - Parents of USTA Jr. Team Tennis participants should be permitted and encouraged to visit and observe all USTA Jr. Team Tennis activities at any time. No USTA Jr. Team Tennis activities should be conducted in an area unobservable by parents.
4. **Supervision** - Providing a safe and positive environment requires supervision and taking prompt action when conduct does not conform to minimum requirements and expectations. Program providers and local/area coordinators are encouraged to get to know the coaches, managers, and volunteers in their program and observe practices and matches on a periodic basis to the extent it is practical to do so.

D. Reporting Obligations

1. **Internal Reporting Obligations** - USTA has a system and procedure in place for handling reporting of maltreatment that is brought to its attention in connection with USTA Jr. Team Tennis activities.

Any employee or volunteer who receives a report or complaint (whether written or oral) of maltreatment of a USTA Jr. Team Tennis participant or related retaliation, or suspects or has reason to believe that a participant has been maltreated shall immediately report it to the appropriate USTA Jr. Team Tennis administrator (i.e., local/area, or sectional coordinator). Parents and participants are encouraged to report incidents of maltreatment if they suspect or have reason to believe that a participant has been a victim of maltreatment.

All action should be taken in a professional manner and confidentiality should be maintained to the extent practicable under the circumstances.

2. **Legal Reporting Obligations** - Without respect to internal reporting obligations set out above, anyone who has reason to believe maltreatment has occurred shall immediately report the suspected maltreatment to the proper law enforcement authority as required or permitted by applicable law.

All observed or reported maltreatment should be documented.

3. **How to Report** - Anyone reporting maltreatment is encouraged to complete a Maltreatment Incident Report Form which is available at the website of your Sectional Association and District Association or Subdivision of a Sectional Association’s website, an example of one is attached hereto and incorporated as **EXHIBIT “A”**. The completed form should be provided to the appropriate USTA Jr. Team Tennis administrator (i.e.,

local/area, or sectional coordinator) of their organization who is responsible for USTA Jr. Team Tennis. Information on the form includes:

- a. the name(s) of the complainant(s);
- b. the type of maltreatment alleged;
- c. the name(s) of the individual(s) alleged to have committed the maltreatment, the approximate dates the maltreatment was committed; and
- d. a summary statement of the evidence or reasons to believe that maltreatment has occurred.

II. CRIMINAL BACKGROUND SCREENING

The USTA requires criminal background screening for USTA Jr. Team Tennis coaches/managers and co-managers who are registered on TennisLink, and local/area USTA Jr. Team Tennis coordinators who are registered on TennisLink. Criminal background screening is required for USTA Jr. Team Tennis in order to:

- Promote a safe and positive environment for participants to compete and continue to develop and enhance their skills;
- Provide parents with assurance that those who work with their children do not pose an unknown risk, to the extent possible; and
- Deter individuals with ill-intentions.

A. Process

USTA mandates that USTA Jr. Team Tennis coaches/managers, co-managers, local/area coordinators submit to a criminal background screening to (1) verify their eligibility to serve; and (2) to the extent possible, confirm the absence of any past conduct or history that falls outside USTA Jr. Team Tennis eligibility requirements.

The criminal background screening process shall consist of a criminal history records check conducted by a reputable background screening firm with experience working with youth-serving organizations. Sectional Associations and District Associations or Subdivisions of Sectional Associations, may develop policies that go beyond the requirements described herein.

B. TennisLink Team Tennis (TL TT)

TennisLink Team Tennis serves as the online registration process for USTA Jr. Team Tennis (“TL TT”). TL TT also provides registration for up to two coaches/managers per team (a coach/manager as well as a co-manager). The individual, who is the primary day-to-day contact for the team, and assuming team management and/or coaching responsibility, shall be listed as the coach/manager. If another individual has regular and continuous contact with the team, he or she shall be entered in TL TT as the co-manager. All persons listed as a USTA Jr. Team Tennis coach/manager or co-manager on TennisLink and all local/area coordinators are required to have a criminal background check. Coaches/managers and co-managers registered on TL TT are responsible for enforcing the policies and procedures set out herein during team activities.

Prospective volunteers that are subject to criminal background screening must be screened and determined eligible to volunteer before participating in Jr. Team Tennis activities, including practices and matches. Any prospective volunteer who refuses to consent to background screening shall be disqualified and not permitted to serve as a USTA Jr. Team Tennis volunteer.

C. Frequency

Criminal background screening shall be performed before a person who is subject to screening is allowed to serve as a coach/manager, co-manager, and local/area USTA Jr. Team Tennis coordinator and, thereafter, at least every two years.

D. Disqualification Criteria

Reportable convictions for, disclosures of convictions for, and pending dispositions for any of the following criminal offenses, or registrations will prompt a determination that an applicant does not meet the criteria for participation:

1. Any felony including an element of violence regardless of the amount of time since the offense, and any non-violent felony within the past fifteen (15) years (felony defined as any crime punishable by confinement greater than one year).
 - a. Defined on the basis of exposure for the offense for which the defendant was convicted, pled guilty, pled nolo contendere or which is pending a disposition. If pled down, then the crime for which the defendant ultimately was convicted.
 - b. Defined as all crimes punishable by greater than one year in jail or prison, regardless of how characterized by jurisdiction. If range, alternate sentencing, or indeterminate sentencing, outer range greater than one year.
2. Any lesser crime involving force or threat of force against a person regardless of the amount of time since the offense.
3. Any lesser crime, regardless of the amount of time since the offense, of a sexual nature or classified as a sex offense including but not limited to "victimless" crimes of a sexual nature such as prostitution, pornography, indecent exposure, and crimes in which sexual relations is an element.
4. Any lesser crime within the past ten (10) years involving controlled substances (not paraphernalia or alcohol).
5. Any lesser crime within the past fifteen (15) years involving cruelty to animals.
6. Any sex offender registrant.
7. Any lesser crime within the past ten (10) years involving harm to a minor not included in numbers 1 – 6 above.

Criminal offenses include "Attempted Crimes" in the above classification.

E. Appeal Process

If an applicant is deemed disqualified based upon the results of the background screening report, the applicant shall be given the opportunity to dispute the accuracy of the background screening report. An appeal due to a dispute of the accuracy or completeness of information provided by the background screening provider should be made directly to the background screening provider.

F. Responsibility for Implementation

Implementation, enforcement and funding of the requirements of these policies and procedures, including decisions related to the cost of background screening, shall be the responsibility of the

USTA, along with development of the online training and education referred to below.

G. Training and Education

Youth protection training for local/area coordinators, coaches, managers and co-managers who have responsibility for USTA Jr. Team Tennis activities is essential to managing the risk of harm to players. An online training course shall be provided by USTA. All coaches, managers, co-managers, and local/area coordinators who meet the USTA Jr. Team Tennis eligibility criteria shall be required to complete the USTA online safety course before they are permitted to coach or participate in a USTA Jr. Team Tennis activity, such as a practice session, match or tournament. As part of this course, volunteers and personnel shall be asked and required to verify their agreement to adhere to these Youth Protection Policies and Procedures for USTA Jr. Team Tennis.

H. Parent Education

No athletic activity is without risk and USTA Jr. Team Tennis is no exception. Even with the best intent and state of the art policies, USTA cannot guarantee the safety of participants. Parents can help provide a safe and positive environment by observing practices and matches and by reporting any circumstances or instances where they believe inappropriate conduct has occurred or is at risk of occurring.

These Youth Protection Policies and Procedures Should Not Be Construed as Legal Advice

EXHIBIT "A"
Maltreatment Incident Report

The Complainant(s) named below understand it is the United States Tennis Association Incorporation's policy to file this Maltreatment Incident Report Form in accordance with the definition of maltreatment and/or abuse as defined in the Maltreatment Identification and Reporting Policy and in accordance to all applicable federal, state, city and municipal laws.

Name(s): _____
(please print)

Address(es): _____

(please print)

Contact Telephone Number: _____

Type of Alleged Maltreatment: _____

Full name of person allegedly committing maltreatment:

(please print)

Describe incident of alleged maltreatment (provide specific details, including date and time of incident): *(please print)*

Provide a summary statement of the evidence or reasons to believe maltreatment has occurred:
(please print)

Has the alleged incident been reported to any federal, state, city or municipal law enforcement agency and if YES, please provide the name of the enforcement agency, name of contact person and case number:

Do you wish to withhold your name(s) as Complainant(s) from any federal, state, city or municipal law enforcement agency to the extent permitted by law:

YES _____ Name of Complainant(s): _____

NO _____ Name of Complainant(s): _____

Signature of Complainant(s): _____ Date: _____

Signature of Complainant(s): _____ Date: _____