

**NORTHERN CALIFORNIA ADULT LEAGUE
CAPTAIN'S HANDBOOK**
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Feb. 7, 11

(This document is for general information only. Please refer to The Local League Area Regulations for the most current rules governing NorCal local league play. In the case of any discrepancies between this handbook and the L.L.A.R., the L.L.A.R. ruling supersedes the Handbook.)

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Handbook-NorCal Leagues

USTA NorCal Leagues: The Big Picture.

Northern California is one of 17 sections that comprise National USTA.

NorCal offers seven different leagues:

Adult, Combo, Mixed, FiftyMixed, Senior, Super Senior-60, Super Senior-65

These leagues differ from one another in several respects: format, minimum age, separate genders or mixed genders, team skill levels, and levels of post season Championships.

Leagues that are well established in the majority of USTA sections are sanctioned by National USTA. National Championships are held at one location and the majority of USTA sections are represented. For Leagues that are not yet established in the majority of USTA sections, Invitational Championships are held in a few different areas and those sections with those leagues are invited to send their Sectional winners to one of those areas. The newer leagues, which may just be starting in a few of the sections, do not have National or Invitational Championship events yet, and their seasons culminate with Sectional Championships.

League	Format	Minimum Age	Gender	Skill Level	NorCal Championships
Adult *	Singles and Doubles	18	Separate	2.5 - Open	Districts, Section
Combo	Doubles Only	18	Separate	5.5 - 10.5	Districts, Section
Mixed*	Doubles Only	18	Mixed	6.0 - 10.0	Districts, Section
FiftyMixed	Doubles Only	50	Mixed	6.0 - 9.0	Section
Senior*	Doubles Only	50	Separate	3.0 - 4.5	Districts, Section
Super Senior 60*	Doubles Only	60	Separate	6.0 - 9.0	Section
Super Senior 65	Doubles Only	65	Separate	3.0-4.0	Section
* Nationally Sanctioned					

Handbook- Season Set-Up

SEASON SET-UP

Every league season is put on the calendar with consideration given to constraints such as rainy weather months, National deadlines and conflicts with other League events. Each league is allotted 12-14 weeks for local matches.

Because we have so many leagues, there is no way to avoid overlap with other leagues, but we try to minimize them whenever possible. Each league has a set of important dates, including deadlines, to which teams, players and captains are strictly held. These dates include:

- Opening of Team Registration
- Closing of Team Registration (after which teams may not be added without administrative approval)
- Start of the season
- End of the season
- Local league playoffs
- District Championships for our larger leagues
- Section Championships
- National or Invitational Championships for our nationally sanctioned leagues

NorCal Areas

In addition to the greater Bay Area, NorCal includes cities from Redding to Visalia to Monterey to Santa Rosa. NorCal is divided into separate geographical areas so that teams can be grouped in ways that reflect reasonable driving time. Of course, in the farthest areas, with fewer tennis facilities, the driving time will be considerably longer than for teams in the densely populated Bay Area. Likewise, with smaller tennis populations, there will be fewer teams and thus smaller flights in our outlying areas. In areas that are heavily populated with tennis facilities and teams, area boundaries are set with an eye toward balancing the number of teams.

Each season, for each league, scheduling presents particular challenges. When the team registration period closes, NorCal staff groups the teams by area, gender and level. In the Adult League, for example, all the men's 3.0 teams are grouped in their traditional areas. There may be 14 teams from the East Bay, and only 4 from Sonoma/Mendocino.

Team captains also have some options for changing the schedule we offer. Captains in flights with multiple rounds can agree to drop a round from their schedule to reduce the number of matches they have. They can vote either to combine with another area or separate from it, depending on their team's feelings about many matches versus traveling issues.

We know that we cannot please everyone. Some captains don't mind traveling, but really don't want to play the same few opponents more than once or twice and they consider a season with fewer than 14 matches a disappointment. Other captains hate to travel, and would rather have fewer matches and/or less variety in their opponents.

Flights

The goal in setting up flights is to provide a minimum of ten weeks of local league play for every flight. In most cases we can provide more. In some areas, at some levels, this goal can be achieved in one of two ways. One option involves moving one or two teams from their home area to an adjacent area. Whenever possible, we ask for a team to volunteer to move.

The second option involves combining adjacent areas. Areas are combined only when it serves the majority of teams involved by maximizing the number of matches to be scheduled. Whenever possible, we ask the captains involved to vote on whether they want to be combined. If teams at a particular level in Area A and Area B are combined to make one flight, this will impact some of the players who had hoped to play on same-level teams in each area. The combining, unfortunately, means that they will have to make a choice about which team they play on. This makes it difficult for captains to plan their rosters with absolute certainty. Some captains, concerned about this, contact us ahead of time to ask for assurance that certain areas will not be combined. Unfortunately, there is no way we can answer their questions until we know, at the end of the registration period, what teams we have and how best they can be grouped. If a vote by the majority of captains to combine areas impacts a team so severely that the team no longer is viable, of course there will be no penalty for dropping that team.

In areas that have more teams at one level than can be accommodated in the number of weeks in the season, we divide the large group into smaller flights. Whenever possible, teams from the same club are assigned to different flights. The philosophy is that those players compete against each other in club functions, and will enjoy playing different opponents during the league season. (In Sacramento, a large area where driving times are particularly onerous, the captains overwhelming opted to be placed in flights in a way that minimizes driving time, even if it means that teams from the same club would play each other.) Once same-club teams are split, the other teams are assigned at random to each flight.

Handbook-Team Registration

Team Registration

The Captain's first job is registering his team.

You need courts, players, and inner strength.

Courts: You need a home facility. Some of our teams come from private clubs, others arrange to play at public parks. Either is fine. You need the ability to reserve courts for each of your home matches, for the number of individual matches and for the length of time it will take you to play a full match. Most team matches consist of three individual matches. Team matches in the Adult league at all levels except 2.5, 5.0, 5.5 and OPEN have five individual matches. All other leagues play three individual doubles matches.

It is reasonable to allow 75 minutes for each individual match. You can schedule your matches in different ways:

- All five teams can start at one time. You should have a reservation for 75 minutes on all five courts.
- You can split your start time:
 - Adult League 3.0-4.5: playing 3 teams and then 2 teams or 2 teams and then 3, or 4 teams and then 1, or 1 team and then 4.
 - All other leagues, 2 teams and then 1 team, or 1 team and then 2 teams.

Most teams find that a three hour reservation block comfortably covers two individual matches played sequentially.

You may NOT register your team at a facility with the intention of playing all your matches as the away team. The facility you designate must have reservable courts for your use for your home matches.

You may NOT register a team at a facility in one area with the intention of playing your home matches in another area.

Q: What if I register a team at one site, and then want or need to relocate my team?

A: If this is during the registration period, just let us know and we'll change your registration. If this is after the registration period closes, you may move to another facility, but only to a facility in your original area. Again, just let us know and we'll change your name.

Q: What if something happens during the season to the courts I am using, like unexpected damage necessitating resurfacing, or the Park Department cancels my reservation?

A: Not a problem. For unforeseen circumstances you may either arrange to play that match at a nearby site, or you may ask your opponent if you may be the away team for that match.

Players: You need enough players to field a team for each match, to get through the season. Do not register a team unless you have enough committed players! If you register a team and

then your plans change, or you lose some of your players, let us know right away. As long as you tell us to drop your team before the end of the Team Registration period, there is no problem. When we close registration and begin the scheduling process, we assume that all the registered teams are good to go. There are severe sanctions for pulling a team out after the registration period closes, so if you have any doubts about your team coming together, do not register it until you are absolutely sure!

USTA regulations require a minimum of 8 players on an Adult League team, six on all other league teams. The minimum is not enough! While you are allowed to default two out of five, or one out of three individual matches, that is not much fun. You have no room to wiggle and must win everything to take the match. This is called pressure. Your opponent may be delighted to have such an advantage, but more often the other team is disappointed because they had a full line-up of players who wanted to play.

So, what number of players is just right? There is no one correct answer, but consider these things:

What is your team philosophy? If you are a group of players eager to enjoy tennis, meet new players and move through the League Season without the pressure of trying to be the best in your division, a large team on which everyone gets to play a couple times might be just fine. If you are a group of gung-ho players hoping to do really well and advance to post-season play, your plan may be to field the best team possible for every match, in which case a smaller team might work better.

With women it's easy to tell the difference between these two team types. Just look at their shirts. The social team has a very friendly team shirt, usually a pastel pattern with an adorable design. The competitive team shirts are in solid primary colors, and the design is on the order of an understated lightning bolt across the heart. With men it's harder to tell. Guys don't go for team shirts. Sometimes the spectator is lucky if they are wearing any shirts at all. A clue to identifying a competitive team is a shirt with blood smeared across the front.

If you have fewer than 12 players on your Adult League team, or fewer than 8 on any other league team, you had better pray for no injuries, no vacation plans, and no kid emergencies. You will need players who have no families because they will be so busy playing they will not have time for families. You need players who make Roger and Caroline look like wimps. You will need players who have no interest in anything except tennis, since they will be doing nothing else. And your role will be that of a slave master who makes threatening telephone calls to get your players to show up for another match. Get the picture?

Be very wary of players who tell you that they are entirely committed to playing and will be available whenever you need them. This changes when their spouses threaten divorce, when their in-laws move in, when their kids announce that they are joining a motorcycle gang because they need love or when their other captain is more persuasive/threatening than you are.

Also be prepared for little surprises that mess up your best-laid plans. Like Julie starts dating Louisa's ex husband, and there is no way that these two women are going to be on the same court. Or your new player Mike turns out to be such a total court jerk that no one will be his partner.

On the other hand, if you load up your roster with 30 players, you are asking to be burned in effigy before the season is over. It will be very difficult to give everyone two chances to play. And everyone will want at least three chances to play because that is how they will get a computer rating for the following year.

Final consideration: Players may and do join more than one team. It is important that you understand how this impacts your team:

East Bay Joe with a 3.5 rating may join a 3.5 team, and a 4.0 and 4.5 and 5.0 team if he wants! No limit on how many different-level teams in his area, as long as they are teams at or above his

rating level. (and good luck finding a 5.0 team that wants him...) Joe may also join an additional 3.5 team (or 4.0, or 4.5 etc.) but only if it is in a different area.

While players have enjoyed the opportunity to play on more than one team, captains have reported problems to us that have to do with what they described as their players' "loyalty" or "commitment." There will be weekends when you have been counting on Joe for a critical match, and it turns out that his other captain got him first. Be sure you discuss with your multi-team players just what your expectations are, and what their definition of commitment is. This could save you misunderstandings down the line.

Inner Strength: Being captain is hard work. You should have good organizational skills, basic computer skills, a devoted co-captain and an understanding spouse. Being captain takes time and energy: to organize and register the team, complete a roster, schedule matches, do line-ups, preside over matches, re-schedule matches, enter and verify scorecards. You will be dealing not only with your players but with opposing captains as well. While most matches will run very smoothly, there may be some problems-prickly opponents, late arriving players, rule misunderstandings, weather snafus. Some captains come back to us year after year so we know that there are rewards: satisfaction with a good season, appreciative players, the respect you win from other captains, and your personal sense of accomplishment.

Handbook-League Eligibility

ELIGIBILITY FOR LEAGUE PLAY

Every player on your team must meet several eligibility criteria: membership, age, gender and rating.

MEMBERSHIP:

At the start of the season, all your players must have USTA memberships that extend at least through the end of the local league playoffs, and this membership must be reflected on our NorCal website.

If you have a player who does not belong to the USTA, or whose membership has expired, or will expire before the end of the season, the computer will tell him/her when she tries to register for your team. With a credit card and a quick call to our National Membership office, a player can update his membership easily. We get a membership update every business day, so this player can return to our website and get his name on your roster easily, usually the next day. If this happens on a Friday afternoon or during the weekend, he will have to wait until the next business day to get on the roster, and he may not play for your team until then.

If your player has a USTA membership from another section, his name will not be in our Northern California database. Please ask him to contact the USTA and give them a Northern California address. This will move him into our database as described in the paragraph above.

Every season there is a captain who tries to add a player to his roster at the very last minute. If the player has a valid membership, this is not a problem. If his membership has expired, or if he is a brand new USTA member, there could be a problem. Please call us and we'll help you if we can. Better yet, don't wait until the last minute.

AGE:

There are minimum age requirements for our leagues. Each is the minimum age a player must reach by the end of the calendar year in which he plays his first league match.

Adult, Mixed Doubles and Combo Leagues: 18 years

Senior League and FiftyMixed League: 50 years

Super Senior-60: 60 years

Super Senior-65: 65 years

This means that a seventeen year old may join an Adult or Combo league team and play matches for them all year, as long as he turns 18 by 12/31 of that same championship year. Players who are on a high school tennis team should check with their coaches to be sure they are allowed to play on a league team. Some schools have restrictions.

GENDER:

Women play on women's teams. Men play on men's teams. Women and men play together on Mixed Doubles teams.

RATING:

A player must have a rating to join a team. This can be either a computer rating or a self-rating.

Computer ratings:

Computer ratings are dated.

For players who are not yet 60 years old, a computer rating is good for 3 years. Computer ratings more than 3 years old have expired, and those players will be asked to self-rate when they register for a team.

For players who are at least 60 years old, a computer rating is good for 2 years. Computer ratings older than 2 years have expired, and those players will be asked to self-rate when they register for a team.

A player may file an appeal to have his own rating reduced. There is more information about filing an appeal on our website.

Computer ratings from other sections are valid in Northern California, but are not in our database. If you have a player who moves here from Pacific Northwest, she may have a valid rating there, and that is the rating she must use in NorCal. Our program will not know about her PNW rating and will, in error, ask her to self-rate. Please contact us and we will post her rating.

Self ratings:

New players, or players with expired computer ratings (see above) will be asked to self-rate when they join a team.

The National Tennis Rating Program, or NTRP, is a classification program that identifies and describes levels of tennis ability. The NTRP is used to assure equitable competition in USA League tennis.

The opportunity to self-rate is presented when a player registers for a team. When a player enters his membership number, the computer checks for a valid rating, and finding none, will take the player directly to the self-rating program. This program explores the player's tennis history with him, and guides him to the selection of an appropriate tennis level, using the NTRP General and Specific Characteristics of Various Playing Levels.

These guidelines have been approved by the USA League Tennis Committee. They are considered "fair warning to players and captains who commit or condone future self rating abuses. USA League Tennis Grievance Committees are authorized to suspend captains for condoning any self rating abuses. The USA League Tennis Committee asks all players, captains, coordinators, tennis professionals and volunteers to join the campaign to maintain the integrity of the NTRP Rating System."

Captains will be held responsible for their players' self ratings. If the self rating of a player is challenged, that player's captain will be named in the grievance and will be subject to sanctions.

Handbook-The Match

THE MATCH

A league match has a number of components. You schedule it, you do the line-up, you play it, you enter the results on the web.

SCHEDULING

We have done the initial scheduling. We grouped your team with other teams at the same skill level and in the same geographical area. The master schedule that appears on the website is a skeleton, telling you what week you will be playing. The home team schedules the specific day and time, following the parameters in the Local League Area Regulations (LLAR).

If you are a home team for an early Adult league match (scheduled for a week prior to Daylight Savings Time), and your facility does not have lights, you may require the away team to accept a reschedule for that match. For any other match, team captains must agree to reschedule it.

The home team is required to offer only one day/time to each away opponent. The home captain usually will check with the facility first and secure the courts. If the facility can be flexible about this court time, the smart home captain will poll her players and find out what day/time is preferable, before she reserves the courts.

Once the reservations are made, the home captain must post on the web the dates and times of her home matches, and whether the match will be played all at once or in split shifts. This posting must be done by the designated deadline. If a facility has specific attire rules, the home captain has an obligation to notify her opponents.

Q. Can I schedule a match during a week other than the designated week?

A. Only if the away captain agrees to this, and only if the match is completed prior to the season deadline.

Q. I scheduled a match and notified the away captain, and then found out that it was not a good date for my team. Can I reschedule it?

A. Once the away captain has accepted the initial offer, any change must be agreed upon by both captains. This does not include situations such as weather problems that force postponement of a match, in which case the Reschedule Rule applies.

BEFORE THE MATCH

It is a courtesy to contact the visiting team a week or so before the match and confirm the arrangements. Be sure they have directions to your courts. Be sure they are aware of any attire rules at your facility. If the weather is iffy and rain is forecast, arrange a time to call each other prior to the match, in case the match must be called off. Be sure you have each other's phone numbers (cell, home, whatever.)

Print out a scorecard/line-up from your NorCal web Team Page. If you are using your nifty Player Availability program, the names of your players will be filled in for you.

(Away captains, be sure all your players know where to go and when to get there. Plan to arrive up to 30 minutes early. This gives you extra traveling time for traffic snarls, wrong turns, forgotten racquets, nervous bladders, etc. If you know that Wayne is something of a flake, tell him the starting time is 45 minutes earlier than it really is. Or talk to his wife. Better yet, offer him a ride.)

If your opponents arrive early and you have free courts, it is a courtesy to allow the visitors to use the courts to warm up. Rules require that you offer at least a 5-minute warm-up. If an opponent has arrived late, even just barely making the 15-minute default time, he/she is still entitled to that five minute warm-up.

(Away captains, if your team likes a real warm-up before a match, meet early at your own courts, or at public courts near your opponent's facility, and warm up there. Don't assume the home team can give you more than five minutes.)

GETTING THE MATCH STARTED

Home team provides the balls. If the away team wants new balls for a third set, and the home team does not, then new balls are NOT used. It is the home team's call. Captains should discuss this ahead of time.

Home teams traditionally provide some kind of post game refreshments, not required but always appreciated. There must be water available at the courts-either a convenient fountain, or water (bottled, or in a cooler, or in pitchers) provided by the home team. There must be bathrooms available and convenient. Asking your opponents to dash across the freeway to a gas station is not okay. Asking your opponents to walk down the sidewalk to a park restroom or port-o-potty is acceptable.

Be sure you send your players to the correct courts, and double check that the opponents go to the assigned courts. If a match is played and then it is discovered that there was a mix-up and #1 played against #2, it is too late to complain. Both captains are responsible for getting their players to the right courts.

What happens if you get to your facility for your 3:00 Men's match, and the 1:00 Ladies' match is still going on? Many of our facilities host multiple teams, running back-to-back matches on busy weekends. Inevitably some matches will run longer than planned, and the result is that teams following these delayed matches have had to wait for the courts. Any team whose match runs over their scheduled time allotment should vacate the courts for the next team, even if they have not finished their match.

Here is the scenario. Team A has the courts at 1:00. Team B has the same courts at 3:00. Team A starts late or warms up longer than five minutes, or takes multiple very long, very chatty bathroom breaks, and when Team B arrives at 3:00, Team A is still playing.

Team B should be entitled to start its match at its scheduled time. Team B might be willing and able to give Team A ten or fifteen minutes, if they are close to finishing. That is up to Team B. If Team A has not finished its match when Team B claims the courts, Team A will need to reschedule the balance of their incomplete match. Team A then knows the importance of starting on time, not extending warm ups, and keeping bathroom breaks to a minimum. And Team C will appreciate getting their courts at 5:00, as scheduled!

LINE-UP

For most matches you will, of course, field a full team. You do not have to arrange your individual teams in order of strength. If you want to play your weaker singles player in the #1 spot, or your weakest doubles team in the #2 spot, go ahead.

What if you don't have enough players? You must field enough players to win the match. That means that for matches with three doubles teams, you must field two individual matches, defaulting the #3 spot. For matches in our 3.0-4.5 Adult league teams, you must field at least three individual teams: both singles and #1 doubles, or #1 singles and #1 and #2 doubles, or all three doubles teams.

Carefully read the TEAM FORFEIT rule in the LLAR. There are very serious consequences for not fielding a team for a match, and you should be aware of them.

All the players you use must be on your roster at the time of the match. Each line-up/scorecard that you print from the web includes a list of both teams' rostered players. The time to check this

list is BEFORE the match starts! If there is a name on your opponent's line-up that is not on the bottom of your printed page, ask some questions.

Line-ups should be completed and exchanged prior to the start of the match, and at the latest, by the scheduled match time. If you are waiting for a player who is running late, you may not delay the exchange, and you may not exchange an incomplete line-up.

Newbie captains! You are exchanging line-ups. You are not handing your line-up to the other captain so he can study it and arrange his players accordingly.

SUBSTITUTIONS

This is explained clearly in the LLAR. Smart captains bring an extra team member with them to their matches. The substitute must be there at the court and ready to play. The captain cannot delay the start of the match while she runs off to change her clothes, or borrow a racquet.

The captain is not allowed to re-arrange her line-up to accommodate this substitute. The sub plays in the spot that is vacant.

ORDER OF PLAY

If you understand forfeits, and the principle of forfeiting from the bottom, you will understand that in matches played at split times, the order of play is important. For example, if you and the other captain agree, for whatever reason, to play the #3 doubles earlier than the #2 and #1 teams, (or the #2 singles before the #1 singles), you take a chance. Let's say you lose the #3 match. Then one of your opponent's #2 players does not show up and they must forfeit. The #3 match stands as played in good faith. However, you might wish you had played the teams in order, since forfeiting from the bottom would have allowed your #2 team to play their #3 team, and this might have been a better match-up for your team.

This is just a caveat. If the other captain calls you and says her #1 player has to get her nails/hair/face done and could she please play later, think about this risk before you agree.

COACHING

When a match is being played with a full third set, coaching may take place during the ten minute break allowed before the third set. During this ten minutes, players may leave the court to be coached. Anyone can coach. If the players are playing a match tie break in lieu of a third set, there is no coaching allowed.

Other than as specified, there is no coaching allowed. This includes any shouted advice from a spectator. As captain you need to be sure your players, their significant others, and any supportive spectators respect this rule, and behave accordingly. Yelling, "Great Shot!" is fine. "Keep lobbing!" is not.

REST PERIODS

Any player on the court may request a two-minute set break after the first and/or second set. If the players have agreed to play a full third set, there is an optional ten-minute break. There is no rest period after the first game of any set.

BATHROOM BREAKS

Bathroom breaks may be taken at any time. Of course, the optimal time for a gotta-go is between sets, or if really necessary, between games. Eyebrows might go up if your opponent is serving for the match and you announce that you "just can't wait." Use your good judgment.

FULL THIRD SET OR MATCH TIE-BREAK?

The decision to play either a full third set or a match Tie Break is made by the home team on each court. If they forget to make this decision, it should be made by the home team as soon as

someone realizes that it needs to be made. Once made, the decision can be changed only by agreement of all players on the court.

Regardless of format chosen, the third set score will be entered as 1-0 for the winner .

Captain, make sure the players on each court have made this choice before they start their matches. There are places on your line-up page to indicate their decisions.

REGULAR OR COMAN TIE BREAK?

The decision to play either a regular tie break or a Coman tie break is made by the home team on each court, prior to the start of the match. If they forget to make this decision, it should be made by the home team as soon as someone realizes that it needs to be made. Once made, the decision can be changed only by agreement of all players on the court. The Coman tie break applies to both set tie breaks (6-6) and match tie breaks (split sets).

RECORDING SCORES

Your players should report their scores to you, or record their own scores, as they come off the courts. At the end of the match, captains should compare their data, then sign each other's scorecard. Both captains are responsible for entering the match data on the web. Either captain enters the names and scores, the other captain confirms the accuracy. Scorecards should be entered promptly, within 24 hours of the match.

MATCH PRICKLES

The LLAR covers a number of prickly issues that may come up in a match. No matter how very sweet and non-confrontational the two captains may be, in the heat of a tightly contested match, or in a rush of hormones, situations develop. Please make yourself familiar with the rules regarding Court Monitors, Referees, Defaults and Forfeits.

INTERRUPTED OR RESCHEDULED MATCHES

If a match must be rescheduled, either totally postponed or interrupted, captains should follow the RESCHEDULE rules in the LLAR. Read the following sad story and you will understand the importance of following the rule:

Sometimes, very relaxed, very casual don't actually get around to rescheduling. They go out for beer to celebrate the rain and discuss each of their three incredible shots, and they depart with a cheery, "Well, I'll call ya!" And then they forget. And then seven days pass. Team B is no longer so friendly because they're in a cutthroat battle with Team C for first place, so they say, "Hey, man, you were supposed to offer me two dates within seven days of the match and you didn't, so I'm taking home court." Needless to say, friends no more.

Or worse, the season ends, the match hasn't been completed, and it becomes a loss for both teams, knocking one or both of them out of post-season play.

So, follow the rules. Be friendly, have your beer. Have two. Do not assume there will not be problems down the road. Usually there won't be, but when there is, it is your team's neck that is on the chopping block. You can still be a friendly, nice captain while following the rules for rescheduling.

Rain Scenarios:

1. It rains but no match has started:

The away team arrives, captains exchange line-ups, everyone is warming up, no one has started, it rains. When the match is rescheduled, the teams can use totally new line-ups. Any defaulted individual match disappears.

2. It rains after any individual match has started:

The away team arrives, captains exchange line-ups, two individual matches start, it rains. (Remember, if even one ball has been put in play (not warm-up) in your team match, the match has officially started.) When the match is rescheduled, the players who started in those two

individual matches return and start exactly where they left off. For the remaining match or matches that did not start, the captains may use different players. Any defaulted individual match stands as a default.

Because the same players who have started their matches must complete them, rescheduling becomes a bit problematic. Remember that they do not all have to agree on the same time and place to play. Many captains will work together to find times that work for all the players. They might allow their individual players to reschedule their own matches. If both captains agree, this is fine, but be sure that the individual players doing the rescheduling follow the rules, so there is no question.

If this cannot be worked out, the home captain will follow the rescheduling rules and offer two choices. If the away players are not available for either of those dates, they retire from the match and the home team wins.

What happens if the away team gets to the home courts and because of unexpected rain they are unplayable? Well, the two teams can sit down and socialize, enjoying the refreshments. The home captain made the best call she could, hoping the courts would be dry or would stay dry. Sometimes she will be right. Sometimes she will be wrong. Before the away team captain or players complain about the hassle of traveling, they should keep in mind that they may be in the same situation the following week. The match is rescheduled, of course, and the home team remains the home team.

Handbook Rules, Rules, Rules

Rules, Rules, Rules

NorCal Leagues operate under two sets of rules: National Rules from USTA, and local league rules, developed by the NorCal Adult League Committee.

National Rules are just that—rules authored at the National level that apply to all nationally sanctioned leagues throughout the country. They are combined in a document called the ULR (USTA LEAGUE REGULATIONS) and are available on-line.

Sectional rules, or “Local League” rules, are specific to NorCal. Each league has a specific document posted on the web, with a link on the League page, called the LLAR. (Local League Area Regulations).

The local league rules, or LLAR, cover a variety of issues, from type of tennis balls to rescheduling rules, to wildcards. Captains need to be very familiar with these rules, and smart captains make sure that their players are informed as well.

Much to the dismay of captains who find the rules cumbersome, new rules are added to the LLAR every year. These new rules typically arise out of situations in which a captain has either innocently misinterpreted, or cleverly exploited some loophole in an existing rule. For those captains who complain about “yet another rule”, we would love to embrace the “why can’t we all get along” philosophy. However, human nature and the competitive drive being what it is, there may never be a day when we can say we have all the rules we need. And when your team finds itself in the grasp of a confused or manipulative opponent, you will be glad to have the LLAR to back you up!

Handbook-Match Issues

MATCH ISSUES

Court Monitor

In the event one player requests a court monitor during a match, any USTA member who is acceptable to both players or doubles teams may act as a court monitor. The responsibilities of a court monitor are outlined in Friend at Court, (see Part 2, Section II, G, after No.5.) For example, a court monitor may be requested to stand at the net post and verify or overrule calls ONLY IF ASKED, to call foot faults, to verify let calls and/or to keep score. He or she may be asked to time breaks between points, changeovers or sets.

Notice that the rule specifies ONE court monitor. That is because of concern that two court monitors might disagree. In practice, most teams are more comfortable with two monitors, with one handling one side of the court, and the other handling the opposite side. Notice also that the monitor's role is not to call lines, but to confirm a line call, IF ASKED! ONLY IF ASKED! The exception to this is foot faults. If a monitor is there specifically to monitor line calls, but he observes obvious foot faults, he should call them. Please note the word OBVIOUS. Some service actions, especially at the higher skill levels, may look like foot faults, but in actuality the foot is not touching or crossing the line until after the ball is struck. This is not a foot fault. That is hard to call, and monitors should limit their foot fault calls, if any, to any obvious and flagrant steps on or over the line before the ball is struck.

Referee

We do not get many requests for a referee, but there are times when a captain may feel that this is money well spent. The presence of an official magically calms the waters, and matches that might otherwise be disrupted by hot tempers, old grudges or players going postal run smoothly with a referee present.

The procedure for arranging for a referee is detailed in the LLAR.

Defaults

With even the best laid plans, you may find yourself in a situation with a player missing and the clock before the match ticking. What to do, what to do?

The Default rule in the LLAR explains the complications and implications of having a late player. Read it carefully:

For the Adult League: "When five courts are used at one time for a match, a forfeit by default is taken if a player fails to appear (and no substitute is available) within 15 minutes after the scheduled match.

When fewer than five courts are used for a match, a forfeit by default is taken if a player fails to appear (and no substitute is available) within 15 minutes after the scheduled match time for the first matches. A forfeit by default is taken if a player fails to appear (and no substitute is available) within 15 minutes after the scheduled time for the remaining matches.

Other than as stated above, there will be no penalties for lateness imposed."

It is not the intent of this rule to allow a captain to claim a win when the opposing team is racing from the parking lot to the courts at minute 16! Captains are encouraged to be flexible and accommodating whenever possible. It is the responsibility of all players to be on time for a match, and it is the home captain's responsibility to keep things running on time (particularly true on heavily used courts and at facilities with many teams), but whenever possible, captains are encouraged to demonstrate good sportsmanship by treating their guests as they would like to be treated in return.

Forfeits

INDIVIDUAL PLAYER FORFEITS: If you use a player in a match who is not eligible, that match scores will be corrected to reflect a 6-0, 6-0 win for the opponent. The web program for putting players on a roster checks ratings, age and gender, so you usually don't have to worry about that. Be sure that all the players in your line-up are on your roster prior to the match. Look at the roster on your Team web page. Look at the roster printed on the bottom of the line-up page.

Every season we hear from a captain whose player assured her that she had joined the team, when in fact, she had only joined USTA. Every season some captain uses a player and then rushes home to put that player on his roster. This won't work. We have date-stamped records, to the minute, showing when a player is added to a roster.

INDIVIDUAL MATCH FORFEITS: Forfeits must be taken from the bottom up of the doubles line-up (ULR Section 3.03K). See Order of Play. For example, if the No. 1 and No. 2 doubles teams are scheduled to start at the same time, and the No. 1 doubles team does not show up (and there are no substitutes available), the No. 3 doubles team must be forfeited, the No. 2 doubles team must move to the No.1 doubles position, and the No. 3 doubles team must move to the No. 2 position. If, due to unforeseen circumstances, the captains allow (either by word or failure to prevent) a lower position to start out of sequence and later the higher match ends up a default, all matches stand as played.

Policy Recommendation: What happens in a match, scheduled for staggered start times, when a team from the earlier shift defaults and the player or players from the later shift are not yet there to move up in the line-up? This situation, in which the line-up is altered by an unforeseen forfeit, can be very problematic. In this case, if the early round players cannot wait, and/or the later round players cannot get to the match early, captains should treat this particular individual match as a reschedule, and follow the regular rescheduling rules.

If a player who is present at the match site becomes ill or is injured prior to the start of a match but after the exchange of scorecards and no substitute is available, that particular match shall be forfeited. Only in this case shall a team not forfeit from the bottom up.

If two team players who are members of different doubles teams fail to appear on time for a match, the two doubles players who did appear shall play together and only one position shall be forfeited. For example, if the lineup calls for A and B to play in No.1, C and D in No. 2 and E and F in No.3 and A and E fail to appear for the match, then B and F shall play in No.1, C and D in No. 2 and No. 3 is forfeited.

DOUBLE FORFEITS: If both teams forfeit the same individual match (i.e. a double forfeit of the same position), the teams must reschedule the individual match and play it.

TOTAL MATCH FORFEITS: If you cannot field enough players to win the match (two out of three, or three out of five individual matches) you are in deep doo-doo. Read the LLAR on Total Team Forfeits and you will understand forfeiting a complete match can result in all your season being voided, with all your match results excluded from the final standings for your flight, and all your players being suspended from League play. You really don't want this to happen.

If you are facing the situation of not enough players, call your opponent as soon as you know and BEG for a reschedule! Offer to bring refreshments! Offer to paint their clubhouse! Make them an offer they can't refuse! If your opponent can accommodate you, you are saved. If he or she can't, you need to scramble a bit and see if you can add an emergency player to your roster. An automatic grievance is filed against the team forfeiting, and the team has the opportunity to show "good cause" for not fielding a team. Earthquake, team food poisoning, cows on the freeway: these are all examples of good cause. Not enough players is not good cause.

HANDBOOK-RESCHEDULING MATCHES

RESCHEDULING MATCHES

Every season, new captains and experienced captains alike face the challenges of our very wet spring weather. Here is a review of how to handle rescheduling a match that is postponed or interrupted by rain.

Who decides that a match is rained out?

The home captain determines whether a match should be cancelled or not. Sometimes she will make the right call, sometimes not. Sometimes the clouds spit and sometimes they pour, and she makes the best call she can. Don't complain if the home captain makes the wrong call. You will be in her shoes someday.

Who decides that the courts are too wet to continue play?

Any player on the court may stop a match because the court conditions are dangerous.

How do you restart an interrupted match?

For each individual match, make a note of exactly what the scores are, who is serving, who serves next, what end of the court each team is on, what each player is wearing (just kidding). When the teams meet again, they will start exactly where they left off.

How to reschedule:

The rules for rescheduling a match are quite explicit, and are included in the LLAR, under Rescheduling.

It is important to follow the deadlines, both for offering make-up dates, and for accepting one of those dates. Yes, you are all nice people and pride yourselves on being flexible and cooperative, but not a season goes by that we don't hear of problems that come up because the captains were quite casual about this, and then later in the season, when that particular match became very important for standings, things got oh so ugly. You can still be nice, and flexible, and cooperative, but protect yourself by following the rules.

The final paragraph of this rule describes how to handle defaults when a match is interrupted or postponed. Be sure to read it all.

HANDBOOK-Post Season Play

POST SEASON PLAY

There are four levels of post season play, four carrots dangling in front of our league teams: LOCAL LEAGUE PLAYOFFS, DISTRICT CHAMPIONSHIPS, SECTION CHAMPIONSHIPS and NATIONAL/INVITATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS.

At the end of the season, with all matches completed, teams are ranked in order of their wins. This ranking appears in a table called Current Standings. There is a link to this page on every Team Information Page, upper left corner, above the captain's name. The top team or teams in each flight will advance to our first level of post season play.

This table, when read from left to right, reflects the tie break rule that is included in the National Regulations. See 3.031.

LOCAL LEAGUE PLAYOFFS provide an opportunity for the top teams in each flight to play off against each other. Depending on the size of the flight and the choices made by the majority of captains, these playoffs may involve the top 4 teams or the top 2 teams.

Flights with five or fewer teams have a two team playoff. Flights with six or more teams have a four team playoff. Team captains may agree, at the start of the season, not to have a playoff or to reduce a four team to a two team playoff. Refer to the LLAR, PLAYOFFS.

Choices must be made at the start of the season, and reported to the area coordinator or the office staff.

Captains may agree to play a playoff match earlier, but this is a mutually made arrangement. Neither captain can demand it. As always, these arrangements should be confirmed by email, so there is a written record. Once the agreement is made, neither captain can demand a change.

A Two Team Playoff is one final match between the #1 and #2 teams in a flight. It is hosted by the #1 team, and that team names the date and time, within the specific parameters set up by NorCal at the start of the season. For most leagues, playoffs are on a specific weekend. For our Super Senior-65 league, they are during a specific week.

The winner of that match advances to the next level of play.

A Four Team Playoff allows the top four teams to play off against each other. On the first specified weekend (or week, for Super Senior-65), Team #1 hosts Team #4 and Team #2 hosts Team #3. On the second weekend, the two winning teams from that first round play each other, hosted by the team that was higher in the final standings. While frequently this last round is between Teams 1 and 2, there are upsets every season, and, much to Team #1's dismay, they may be knocked out! The team that wins that final round advances.

In our bigger leagues we may have more complicated scenarios. Your team may be in a three-flight group. Your flight may have a wildcard, allowing more than one team to advance. These scenarios are explained in more detail in the LLAR, and if you are in a flight with either or both of these special circumstances, you will receive informative emails from NorCal at the start of the season.

DISTRICT CHAMPIONSHIPS are the next level of competition. Most playoff-winning teams in our bigger leagues-Adults, Mixed and Seniors-participate in District competition. (At the lower or higher skill levels, with fewer teams, the winners might advance directly to Sections.) The event is held at different sites, and these sites may vary from year to year, depending on where we can secure enough courts for the two or three days needed.

At this level of competition, flight winners from different areas (districts) are grouped in small flights, ideally but not always groups of four teams. The format is round-robin, with each team playing every other team in the flight. The winners advance to Section Championships.

SECTION CHAMPIONSHIPS are the final level of competition within our NorCal section. District winners compete in a format similar to Districts.

For our Sectional leagues-Combo, Super Senior-65 and Fifty Mixed-this is the glorious end of the line, the final juicy carrot. For our Nationally sanctioned leagues-Adult, Senior, Mixed and Super Senior-60, there is one more championship round, either National or Invitational Championships.

Move Up/Split Up. This very important rule is a national regulation that forces the dispersal of winning teams. If your team wins at Section Championships, all players who played for the team during the local league season must, for the next year, either play at a higher level or disperse to same-level teams with no more than three (two for 2.5, 5.0, 5.5 and OPEN levels) players together on one roster for the next same-league season. For a division with a limited number of upper level teams, the highest level teams registered may be exempted from this rule.

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

The winners of Adult and Senior Section Championships represent NorCal at National Competition. These events are held in the fall, typically in dry areas like Arizona or Southern California. Our best teams, from 2.5 to 5.0, go for the gold, and many of them do bring home the glory for NorCal. Win or lose, the teams have a good time, and return to NorCal determined to repeat the experience before they retire to the golf course.

If a Section Championship team cannot advance to National competition, NorCal will offer that spot to the second place team. The Move Up/Split Up rule (see above) will apply to both the original winner, and the team that takes its place at National Championships.

INVITATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Our Adult league 5.5 and Open level winners and our Super Senior-60 victors attend Invitational Championships. These are very similar to National Championships, but there are fewer Sections

in the US sending participating teams, so the scope is smaller. This competition is also held in the late fall, either in dry climates or on indoor courts farther east.

If a Section Championship team cannot advance to the Invitational competition, NorCal will offer that spot to the second place team. The Move Up/Split Up rule (see above) will apply to both the original winner, and the team that takes its place at the Invitational Championship event.

CHAMPIONSHIP PULL OUTS

It is very unusual for a team to make it to a championship match and then not be able to field a team. After all, they have worked hard all season to earn that spot! However, it does happen. It is a matter of courtesy to allow the next best team to take that vacant spot.

Teams that withdraw from participation in any post-season event (Local League Playoffs, Districts, Sectional and National Championships) must notify the NorCal office of their withdrawal no later than 48 hours after securing a position in that event. Failure to give notice may result in a sportsmanship grievance against the team and subsequent sanctions against the team members.

HANDBOOK-POSTING A SCORECARD

POSTING A SCORECARD

SCORE!

If you are a Sharks fan, you know that that should be read loud and long and hysterically, as in SCOOOOOORE !

HOW TO ENTER A SCORECARD.

THE BASICS:

- You must be logged in to your team page.
- You must know the scores and the players' names.
- You must know who won and who lost each individual match.
- You should enter the scores within 24 hours of the match.

You can be either the home captain or the away captain, either the winning captain or the losing captain. Whoever first gets to the computer enters the data. Whoever gets there second verifies and confirms the data.

In this explanation, we will refer to the FIRST Captain and the SECOND Captain.

First Captain logs in and sees, in the left hand column of her team's schedule, the word CREATE. This means "create the scorecard". She clicks there, sees a blank scorecard and enters the data. She is done. The word CREATE on her team page has changed, presto-chango, to EDIT.

An automatic email goes out to the Second Captain, reminding her to check out the info just entered. Second Captain logs in to her web page and sees, not CREATE, but VERIFY. This means that she will check out what First Captain has entered and be sure it is correct. She clicks on VERIFY, sees the data entered, agrees with it, and confirms it.

If Second Captain does not agree with what First Captain has entered, she should not confirm the card. Instead, she should contact First Captain, who can click on EDIT and change what has been entered. Then Second Captain can confirm.

More magic! Her word VERIFY changes to CONFIRMED. And, First Captain's word EDIT changes to CONFIRMED. That information is now locked in, and cannot be changed by either captain. Errors discovered after a scorecard has been confirmed should be reported to the office, and we will correct them for you. No charge!

HOW TO ENTER A SCORECARD. THE DETAILS:

Enter the exact date the match was completed.

1. Enter the date that the match played. If it was interrupted and finished on a later date, enter the date it was completed.

For each line of a match:

2. Enter the status of the match.

Choices are: Completed, Default, Retired.

3. Click in circle to indicate the winning team.

4. Use the drop down menu to enter the players' names. If there was a default, enter DEFAULT instead of a name.

5. Enter the scores of the match. Scores must be entered from the winning team's perspective, (not from the home team's perspective. For example, the program will not accept 0-6, 4-6.) The winner's scores come first.

6. The third set will always be entered as 1-0, whether it was played out in full, or replaced by a Match Tie Break.

It is neither necessary nor possible to enter the points of a tie-breaker.

HOW TO ENTER A SCORECARD. THE FINE POINTS:

MATCH NOT COMPLETED?

The computer will not accept an incomplete match. If your match was interrupted, you cannot enter the scores until the final match has been played.

RETIREMENT?

Enter Match Status as RETIRED.

Click the circle to indicate the winning team (the team that did not retire).

Enter the scores exactly as they were when the retirement occurred. Do not round up. Do not add 6-0, or anything, to a set not played or not completed. (Exception: a retirement that occurs when a team is playing a full third set cannot be entered as anything other than 1-0 in favor of the team that is receiving the retirement.)

DEFAULT?

Enter Match Status as DEFAULT.

Click the circle to indicate the winning team.

Enter the word DEFAULT rather than any name, of the player or players who defaulted.

Enter 6-0, 6-0.

NAMES NOT IN DROP DOWN MENU?

That usually means that the player who played the match was not an eligible player for the team/was not listed on the roster at the time of the match. Enter the individual match results as a default win, as described above, and then contact the office.

CAN'T MAKE THAT 24 HOUR DEADLINE?

We ask captains to enter match data promptly for a number of reasons. It is a courtesy to all the teams in your flight who, especially at the end of the season, are following current standings quite

closely. It also helps us keep current with National USTA, to whom we send match data daily, to be included on the usta.com website.

If there are problems to be settled-confusion or disagreements about scores, for example-of course this could delay posting, and the two captains should not worry that the wrath of NorCal will descend on them. Work out the problems, post the scores, all is well.

MAKE A MISTAKE?

If you enter something screwy, the program will give you a brief error message. Try again. Still stuck? Contact your area coordinator for help.

HANDBOOK-Web Surfing

SURF'S UP! USTA NorCal Websurfing for players and captains.

NorCal players and captains can justifiably brag that our website is head and shoulders above what any other USTA section site offers its tennis community. It includes features and programs that are designed to serve our captains as they lead their teams through the tennis season, and to serve our players, as they enjoy league tennis and keep an eye on not only their own tennis record, but also the competition's.

There are three main pages: the League Page , the Player Information Page and the Team Information Page . There are also two ways of viewing web pages: as a player/the general public, and as a captain, logged on with special rights. These three Information Pages have links embedded all over the place, allowing the surfer to click from one page to another, back and forth. If you're not sure where these links are, you can use your mouse like a Geiger counter: Slide it around the page and when the little hand shows up, click. That will take you from page to page.

Hang on. Surf's up!

League Page

Each of NorCal's seven leagues has its own page. Each League web page has information pertinent to that specific league. Each League Page has its own directory, a table of connections to vital information for captains and players. Included are links to the season's calendar of important dates, local and national rules, links for finding players and teams, archived season results, a library of the season's Captains' Newsletters, information about ratings, grievances, appeals, and, at the end of the season, logistics about post season play, including District, Section and National Championships.

Player Information Page

Every USTA NorCal member has one. It is born the moment our East Coast USTA Membership office notifies us of a new member, and it grows through the season as he plays his matches. It grows, season by season, to include all League and Tournament play. You can get to any player's information page by doing a PLAYER SEARCH. Enter "last name comma first name". The program will also do a fuzzy search, so if you aren't sure of the spelling, or your fingers are tired, you can enter part of a name. For example, to find the record of Huckleberry Hound, enter "hou comma huc". (Mr. Hound is not actually a member of USTA. He is not actually a tennis player. He is a cartoon dog.)

Under the Player's name is a link called MY INFORMATION. Players can use this program to update their address, phone number or email address. They can also personalize their password.

Leagues: The far left column is DIVISION/MATCHES. Each season of play is listed, and each is a link to the player's record that season: partners, opponents, and scores.

The second column is TEAMS. Each listed team name is a link to the appropriate Team Information Page.

Tournaments: Click around this to review a player's tournament history and results.

Team Information Page

Every team has one. It is born the moment a captain registers a team, and it grows through the season as the team plays matches and records scores. There are many PUBLIC LINKS (what anyone can see) on the Team Information Page.

HANDBOOK-Captain Tools

Every captain, logged in, has a host of captain tools at his disposal. These tools all appear in the drop-down menu under the Captain Tool link on each Team Page. Each is easy to use and will help you through the season.

Captain's Handbook and *Friend At Court*

These are your user's manuals, full of good information about everything league related. Read them.

Add to Roster

While most of your players will register themselves onto your roster, some captains like to do this task themselves, collecting from their players later. Some facility managers also like to handle player registration for their club members. The Player Registration tool allows only one entry per use but this Add to Roster program allows the user to enter several membership numbers at once and then pay just once.

Delete from Roster

This program allows you to remove a player from your roster. This can be done only if the player in question has not played for your team, and only prior to the posted season deadline. When you remove a player, a credit of the full registration fee less \$3.00 will be held for him or her, and automatically applied when he joins a future league team. The balance of \$3.00 is a fee we pay to National USTA, per player, and cannot be recovered.

Post Match Dates

Captains use this tool to post their home match arrangements onto their web schedules. The program also notifies opponents of these arrangements with an automatic email.

Update Team Info

At any time in the league season your team may have a change in leadership. You may need to replace yourself, or add or change a co-captain. This program allows you to do that-no need to contact the office. The change will appear immediately on your Team Page and on all web pages that list the team captain or co-captain.

Name Your Team

This program is mostly just for fun. It gives teams a chance to personalize their names with a parenthetical addition to our posted site name. For example, a team out of Bay Club may gussy their name up: BAY CLUB MX7.0A(BestInTheWest). Teams from different clubs that have combined can use this tool to reflect their split personality: SHASTA TC W4.5A(TACOMA RC)

Email Your Opponents

This program allows you to send a single message to all your opponents, or even some of your opponents. They are all listed and you can select the ones you are trying to reach. This can save you some emailing time. It is an easy way to provide driving directions, or parking advice, or attire rules at your club or whatever else you want your opponents to know. It is an easy way to start a discussion among all the teams regarding season decisions, such as altering your playoff format or adding or dropping rounds.

This program is Internet based. It is designed to conceal email addresses to protect our captains from spammers. You will not see the email address of the captain or captains you are contacting. The email message you send will not show up in your email program's Sent items. Rather, your message will be delivered, and a copy of the message will come to your inbox.

Player Availability

This is by far our niftiest program and can be a tremendous help to a captain. Each player on your team can log in and go to this program. It appears in their Player Tool dropdown menu. Each match is listed and the player can post his availability for that match. He can edit this at any time. Whether he sees the availability of anyone else on the team is up to the captain, who can set the program either way-show just the player's input, or show everyone's.

The captain can also opt to show who won and who lost in each completed match. Some captains wanted that information on this page as a help to making line-ups decisions.

When you go to this program through your Captain Tools, you will see everyone's posting. From here you can make decisions about your line-up for your matches.

If you click the Line-up link at the top of a column, you can post your players' names right onto the scorecard that you will take to that match. This posting will be available to your players, if they log in and click on the word VIEW that will appear on the Team Page, in the schedule.

The Remaining tools are information only, not programs

Opponent Contact Info

Not a tool. Just a handy list of email addresses and phone numbers for captains and co-captains.

Information on filing a Grievance

There are links for both General Grievances regarding sportsmanship issues or rules violations and Rating Challenges.

Special Offers to Captains. Currently there is an offer from Penn for tennis balls at reduced cost.

1/26/2011