

Sportsmanship Committee Procedures

It is the objective of the USTA NorCal Section to further the orderly and fair conduct of the game of tennis through the establishment of and adherence to the highest standards of conduct in all tournaments, league matches, and out-of-section matches.

The Sportsmanship Committee is charged with the responsibility of insuring that this objective is achieved in non-league events, and, to establish a set of procedures when the code of conduct has been violated. The sportsmanship procedures shall apply to all USTA NorCal events not covered in the USA League Regulations, including but not limited to, Junior Tennis, Senior Tennis, NTRP Tournaments, USA Team Tennis and Junior Team Tennis, held in or out of the USTA NorCal Section. These procedures shall apply to all Northern California players participating in any USTA sanctioned event held within or outside the Northern California Section.

The Sportsmanship Committee shall be composed of at least six people appointed by the USTA NorCal President. The members of the committee shall be selected in accordance with USTA Northern California By-Laws. The Committee shall be responsible for addressing grievances involving the rules and regulations of the USTA and USTA NorCal, and the standards of conduct, fair play and good sportsmanship by seeing that a firm but reasonable code of conduct is applied in a fair and consistent manner,

The Sportsmanship Committee may address grievances concerning violations occurring at USTA NorCal sanctioned tournaments and out-of-section sanctioned tournaments. Although the Leagues Program have their own grievance and appeal procedures, this Sportsmanship Committee may impose penalties different from and/or additional to any penalties previously imposed. This Sportsmanship Committee may impose penalties different from and/or additional to any penalties imposed by USTA officials at any tournament under the Committee's jurisdiction.

I. Grievance & Appeal Sub-committees

- A. All Sportsmanship Grievance Sub-committees shall consist of no less than three persons, including a chairman to adjudicate grievances.
- B. All Sportsmanship Appeals Sub-committees shall consist of no less than three persons, including a chairman to adjudicate appeals. With respect to any single matter, no member of the Sportsmanship Appeals Committee may be a member of the Sportsmanship Grievance Committee whose decision is being appealed.

II. Governing Rules

USTA Northern California non-league events are governed by the standards of good conduct, fair play and good sportsmanship during tournament play in a doubles match, the partner may receive the same penalties as those received by the player committing the offense.

III. Compliance

Failure to comply with the standards of good conduct, fair play and good sportsmanship may result in sportsmanship grievance action, and shall not be excused on the grounds that one was misinformed by a NorCal staff member or volunteer.

IV. Filing Grievances

Grievances may be filed against any member of the USTA NorCal, any parent, coach or other apparent representative of any such member, or any USTA NorCal official or organizer of an USTA NorCal sanctioned tournament.

All grievances shall be in writing, signed and addressed to the USTA NorCal Section Sportsmanship Committee, 1920 North Loop Road, Alameda, CA 94502, or to <sportsmanshipcom@norcal.usta.com>. The name of the grieving party shall not be disclosed by the Committee to the party against whom the grievance is filed without the consent of the grieving party.

All sportsmanship complaints shall be processed through the Sportsmanship Grievance Sub-committees and Sportsmanship Appeals Sub-committees. Decision of the Sportsmanship Appeals Sub-committees shall be final and binding.

EXCEPTION: At the direction of the Sportsmanship Chairperson, appeal of a "no show default" may be assigned to, and adjudicated by, one (or more members) of the Sportsmanship Committee.

Grievances may be filed by:

- A. Any person witnessing the alleged violation;
- B. The chairman of the Sportsmanship Committee, USTA NorCal staff, or an event official.

Any such written grievance should be filed (i.e. received) within 14 days from the conclusion of the tournament in which the alleged violation occurred with the exception of category B. The chairman, staff or event official may file a grievance at any time. The Committee may, at its discretion, consider grievances submitted more than 14 days from the date of the alleged violation. All grievances shall be considered filed when it is received by the NorCal office.

It shall be the responsibility of the party filing the grievance to set forth all facts establishing a violation. This information shall include the name of the party against whom the grievance is filed and a description of the alleged violation. The grievance should also include the names, telephone numbers, and/or emails of any witnesses to the alleged violation and/or accompanying declarations of those witnesses, the date(s) of the alleged violation, and the name of the tournament or place where the violation occurred.

V. Sample Violation

Minor violations by a member or his/her representative include, but are not limited to the following:

- A. use of profanity or obscene gestures
- B. ball or equipment abuse
- C. continuous or disruptive screaming or shouting
- D. extended or impolite arguing with tournament officials, umpires and/or directors
- E. spectator interference by relatives, coaches or friends of player
- F. unauthorized coaching
- G. intimidation
- H. intentional failure to compete to player's best ability (i.e. tanking)
- I. stalling
- J. gamesmanship
- K. any conduct employed to gain an unfair advantage, including cheating or any other unsportsmanlike behavior
- L. defaulting a match in any sanctioned tournament without notification and/or substantial justification
- M. entering two or more tournaments, matches or exhibitions scheduled to take place at the same time, in whole or in part, unless each tournament director involved gives his consent in writing.

Major Violations by a member or his/her representative include, but are not limited to the following:

- A. striking, threatening or abusing in any way, any tournament official, player, spectator or director.
- B. knowingly falsifying or forging information on any official USTA or USTA NorCal document, or on any writing submitted to the USTA or USTA NorCal.
- C. committing multiple or repeated minor offences after receiving warnings for each conduct, or after imposition of or in violation of prior disciplinary action.
- D. any conduct deemed detrimental to the USTA and/or USTA NorCal.

VI. Investigation and Disposition

The Committee shall investigate every signed, written grievance that is filed on time.

- A. A copy of the complaint shall be sent to the party against whom the complaint has been made.
- B. If a hearing is not held, the investigation of the complaint should include a personal or telephone interview of the party against whom the grievance was filed as well as any witnesses named.
- C. If deemed necessary a hearing should be held, at which time the parties involved shall have the right to appear personally and present evidence. If requested, the committee shall not reveal the identity of the complaining party to the other party involved.

Grievances shall be decided by the Sportsmanship Grievance Committee within 20 days of the conclusion of the investigation, and within 60 days of the filing of the grievance.

The Grievance Committee shall not be required to hold any hearing prior to making any decision or taking any action upon such decision unless suspension of more than 30 days is contemplated. If suspension is contemplated a hearing must be held. A written notice must be sent to the party involved at least 7 days before the scheduled hearing.

The Grievance Committee shall have the absolute discretion to determine the severity of an offense and to impose penalties for violations. The Committee shall have the power to dismiss the complaint, and/or direct correction of any violations by reasonable means, including, but not limited to the suspension, and or, fine in an amount up to \$1000. The decision of the Grievance Committee shall be by majority vote. The Sportsmanship Grievance and/or Appeals Committees may impose penalties different from and/or additional to any penalties imposed by USTA event officials under the Committee's jurisdiction.

Grievances against members or their representatives:

- A. The parties shall be notified of the decision of the Committee within 30 days after a decision has been made.
- B. In the event that a decision of the Committee imposes probation or suspension, written notification shall be mailed to the parties within 30 days of the date of the decision.
- C. A decision which imposes suspension greater than one year shall be presented to the USTA NorCal Board of Directors for approval.

VII. Penalties

Minor Offenses (Recommended)

- A. First violation: verbal or written reprimand
- B. Second violation: placed on probation with appropriate terms and conditions
- C. Third violation: placed on suspension

Note: At the discretion of the Grievance/Appeal Sub-committees, in circumstances particularly flagrant, a single violation of the above "minor" offenses may constitute "aggravated" behavior, and as such, shall result in the party at fault being placed on probation or suspension. In addition, while an investigation is being conducted or an appeal is in process, the party at fault may also be placed on probation or suspension in circumstances which are deemed particularly flagrant.

Major Offenses (Recommended)

- A. First violation: placed on probation under appropriate terms and condition, and/or suspension
- B. Second violation: placed on suspension
- C. Third and subsequent violations: To be dealt with in a severe manner, including possible permanent suspension.

VIII. Appeals

A direct appeal may be taken from the final decision of the Sportsmanship Committee which suspended or placed on probation a member or his/her representative.

A party filing an appeal shall do so in writing within 30 days after the mailing of a written notice of decision by the Sportsmanship/Grievance Sub-committee. Such appeal shall be directed to the Sportsmanship Committee at USTA NorCal, 1920 North Loop Road, Alameda, CA 94502, or to <sportsmanshipcom@norcal.usta.com>, and considered filed when received by the office.

Upon receipt of a written appeal, the Appeals Sub-committee shall not be required to hold a hearing if a hearing was held in deciding the grievance. Its decision may be based entirely on the findings of fact by the Grievance Committee whose decision is being appealed and on the facts and arguments submitted in writing by the parties to the appeal.

If no hearing was held by the Grievance Sub-committee and a hearing is requested in writing by the appealing party, the Appeals Committee shall promptly fix a time and place for a hearing and shall give the appealing and responding parties not less than 10 days written notice of the hearing. At any such hearing, the person penalized shall have the right to appear personally, to present testimony and other evidence, and to cross-examine witnesses.

The Appeals Sub-committee shall have the power to affirm, modify or reject the decision of the Grievance Sub-committee. A copy of its decision shall be promptly sent to all parties involved and such decision shall be final and binding. The decision of the Appeals Sub-committee shall be by majority vote.

IX. GENERAL PROCEDURES:

If one or more members of the Grievance Sub-committee or Appeals Sub-committee cannot be present at a hearing, such members may, at the discretion of the chairperson, participate by means of a telephone conference call. The requirement that a notice or other document be in writing is satisfied if it is sent by a telegram, fax, e-mail or equivalent communication. Failure to comply with any procedural rule for filing a sportsmanship grievance or appeal shall result in such appeal being dismissed.

NO SHOW DEFAULT POLICY

If a player is defaulted by the referee or Tournament Committee for not showing up for a scheduled tournament match, and the player has failed to notify the Tournament Director in advance of play, the player shall be issued a "No Show Default" and suspended from USTA NorCal competition for a period of 30 days. The player shall have the right to appeal, according to the procedures of the Sportsmanship Committee, and the suspension shall be delayed pending the appeal. The decision of the Sportsmanship Committee shall be final and binding.

Whenever possible the player should notify the Tournament Director at least 24 hours in advance. Those default situations that are not known as early as 24 hours in advance (i.e. illness, injury, etc.) must be called in as soon as possible.

Players are reminded that even though the player has called the Tournament Director before his scheduled match to notify the tournament of the player's withdrawal, the player will still accumulate penalty points according to the Point Penalty Suspension system.