10 and Under Competition

Running A Successful 10 and Under Tennis Tournament
Tournament directors are the keys to success at any tournament, impacting the present and future of tennis in so many positive ways. They are crucial to keeping the event running on time and on schedule, and to keeping players and fans alike happy and ready to come back for more. And the hard work is rewarded in smiling faces and, long term, in the growth of the sport. Your contributions may often go unsung, but they are never unappreciated, and they directly impact thousands of kids who will soon take up tennis or further develop their games, becoming players, fans – and maybe even champions – for a lifetime.

Shaping the future of tennis, however, is no easy task. That is why we’ve created The 10 and Under Tennis Tournament Director’s Manual, which provides the tools necessary for tournament directors like you to deliver the highest-quality experience for both players and parents, ensuring that they will want to come back to our sport again and again. And make no mistake; tournament directors are CRUCIAL in shaping the future of a player and, by extension, the future of our great game.

Running a successful tournament is no easy task. It takes balancing a number of priorities and personalities, including:

- Advanced planning
- Volunteers who can provide assistance in multiple areas
- And capable monitors and/or referees

To run a successful 10 and Under Tennis tournament, tournament directors must also understand the differences in the needs and characteristics of the varying 10 and Under Tennis age groups:

Players 8 and under have shorter attention spans and more difficulty following directions, and competition (i.e., winning and losing) is a concept they are just beginning to understand. But that doesn’t mean they can’t enjoy tennis if tailored properly. This age group likes playing on teams, being with their friends and having fun, so those aspects need to be highlighted.

The following are suggestions for 8-and-under tournament competition:

- Team competition is preferred over individual competition
- The length of each match should be less than 10 minutes for the novice level and no more than 20 minutes for the advanced level
- The total time of tournament should be two hours or less
- Concepts of “best two-out-of-three” and “win-by-two” can be used for more experienced players
- Players should play with as many opponents as possible during the event
- Non-elimination team formats are ideal

Players ages 9-10 are further developed in their self-confidence and are better able to concentrate for longer periods of time. They are beginning to understand the differences between winning and losing but still need to learn how to handle defeat.

The following are suggestions for 10-and-under tournament competition:

- Individual competition is appropriate, provided that the emphasis is on participation
• The length of matches should be 15-25 minutes for the novice level and 25-45 minutes for the more advanced level
• The total time of a tournament should be four hours or less for the novice level; for more advanced levels, one-day tournaments or two-day tournaments during the summer are acceptable
• Players are capable of scoring "two-out-of-three" and "win-by-two"
• For the novice level, participants should play as many matches as possible; for state- and sectional-level events, the goal should be a minimum of three matches, not counting defaults/withdrawals
• Non-elimination formats are ideal

Specifications for Eastern Competition

Eastern PlayDays

**8 and Under Red**
- Age: Same as USTA regulations, must remain age-eligible through the month of the tournament
- Court Size: 36’ x 18’ (singles court only)
- Net Height: 2’ 9” at center
- Balls: Stage 3 ITF, red ball (foam or low compression)
- Racquets: 23” or less is used
- Scoring: Tiebreak games and timed matches

Eastern L3 and L2R, L2O

**10 and Under Orange**
- Age: Same as USTA regulations; must remain age-eligible through the month of the tournament
- Court Size: 60’ x 21’ for singles; 60’ x 27’ for doubles
- Net Height: 3’ at center (regulation net)
- Balls: Stage 2 ITF, orange low compression ball
- Racquets: 25” or less is used
- Scoring: Short sets and timed matches

Eastern L1 & L1B

**10 and Under Green**
- Age: Same as regular USTA divisions; players cannot turn 11 years old during the month of the tournament
- Court Size: 78’ x 27’ for singles; 78’ x 36’ for doubles
- Net Height: 3’ at center (regulation net)
- Balls: Stage 1 ITF, green low compression ball
- Racquets: 29” or less is used (in accordance with ITF Rules)
- Scoring: Best of 3 tiebreak sets with a 10 point match tiebreak in lieu of a 3rd set with ad-scoring
- Balls: For USTA-approved 10 and Under Tennis balls, click here.
- Racquets: Always check the length of the players’ racquets before their first match. Make sure there are extra racquets available for the players to borrow.

Additional Considerations for 10 and Under Tennis Tournaments

Working with Parents
Keeping parents informed is very important for all tournament play - and particularly for novice-level 10 and Under Tennis tournaments, which may well be a child’s first experience with tournament competition. To that end, consider a parent-orientation meeting at the start of the competition; it serves as an icebreaker and sets a friendly, constructive tone for the rest of the competition.
The following are suggested topics for discussion in meeting with parents:

- **Purpose of the event** – this meeting is to serve as a learning experience for both parents and players. Discuss the idea of teaching the kids how to play, address sportsmanship and emphasize fun.
- **Format for the event** – specifically discuss the scoring and match format, including how many matches parents should expect their child to play. For 10 and Under Tennis tournaments, briefly explain the concept of main draw and consolation (if a consolation draw is used).
- **Parental behavior** – explain that parents are there to observe and not to interact with their child while they are playing. Parents also should be made aware that they are not allowed to talk to the court monitors during the match. Stress the fact that there needs to be a positive environment throughout the competition.
- **Court monitors** – let parents know there will be helpers to assist with scoring and line calls. Parents should not be involved with the match, and if there is a problem, they should allow the court monitor to handle the situation.

**Court Monitors**
Consider holding a court monitor training session before the event begins. If there is already a network of parents and volunteers from Play Days, Kids’ Tennis Clubs or USTA Jr. Team Tennis, make every effort to utilize them. Here are a few additional tips:

- Other than the tournament referee, court officials do not need to be hired (i.e., volunteers, parents and other tennis enthusiasts can serve as court monitors). This keeps entry fees low and allows the bulk of your expenditures to go toward player amenities.
- For 8-and-under play, every court should have a monitor. For 10-and-under play, a minimum of one monitor is needed for every two courts.
  - Court monitors for 8-and-under play require much less training. For most, a simple written explanation of the rules will suffice. The basics can be covered in approximately 15 minutes. It is not imperative that monitors have tennis experience.
  - For 10-and-under court monitors, tennis experience is helpful. USTA League adult players and ranked high school players are great candidates. A 15-20 minute training session with written instructions should suffice.
- Remember, many parents would prefer to watch their child play instead of monitoring. Most parents do not serve as referees in their child’s other sports, so this should not be the expectation in tennis (though willing parents should be encouraged to serve as court monitors for matches not involving their child).
- Local Community Tennis Associations (CTAs) can be a great resource for providing volunteer court monitors.

**Awards and Amenities**

- Only in the L2, L1b and L1 tournaments are awards given to the winners and finalists, make sure to also recognize outstanding effort and sportsmanship as well, putting an emphasis, particularly with younger children, is on the spirit of competition and fair play over results.
- For 8-and-under players, a certificate, medal or sticker for participation is recommended.
- As the age and level of the player’s increases, awards should increase in importance.
- Try to offer amenities to all players, even if the entry fee is reduced.
- If the tournament is a half-day or full-day event, consider providing a lunch or snacks for players. Pizza or hamburgers and hot dogs are relatively inexpensive and create a desired social aspect to the tournament.
- If your event has extended rest periods/breaks for kids, consider adding off-court activities to keep kids on site and engaged.
Match Formats for 10 and Under Tennis Tournaments

L3 Tournaments
Round Robin - Each player plays all the other players in the group.
- Round robin with multiple groups – Players are split into separate round-robin groups. Players can be grouped randomly or by level, or the better players can be spread out evenly among the groups.
- Round robin groups with playoff – At the completion of the round robins, players can then playoff in order of finish, move into a final or semifinal draw, or stage additional round robins.
- Team round robin – With a small number of teams, players from one team play all the players from the other team. For larger numbers of teams, players can play a specific position and play against all the other players at the same position. This format would rely on ranking or seeding the players on each team to ensure competitive matches.
  - For odd numbers, have one player rotate out each round. It is important to have shortened scoring so no one sits too long.
  - Pay extra attention to which players are losing decisively and try to arrange an extra “fun” match at their level so they leave on a positive note. Again, players who don’t have fun are less likely to come back to play again.

L2 Tournaments – Non-elimination formats
Modified Consolation – Players who lose in the first two rounds of the main draw move into the same consolation draw, guaranteeing at least two matches per competitor. To provide at least three matches, additional draws will have to be created.

Modified Feed-in, First round losers or first match loser consolations – are all acceptable and provide each participant with at least a two matches.

Layered Draws – When players lose in the main draw or in the consolation draw, another “layered” draw can be created with all the losers from that particular round.
- To record in TDM, go to “create event” and give the draw a name (U10 consolation #3, French Open, etc.).
- Since you may have additional “no-shows” and byes, use a blank draw sheet when you set up your tournament desk. After the event, you can create the layered draw in TDM and manually enter the players’ names on the layered draw and enter scores.

Point Penalty Suspension System will apply to egregious behavior. With this age division we recommend a warning 1st, educating the player on his/her unacceptable behavior.

L1B & L1 Tournaments – Formats
You can use one of the following non-elimination formats or a single elimination format. Whichever format you decide must be stated on the sanction form. The maximum entry fee for a single elimination draw is $50 and a non-elimination draw is $65.

Single Elimination

Modified Consolation – Players who lose in the first two rounds of the main draw move into the same consolation draw, guaranteeing at least two matches per competitor. To provide at least three matches, additional draws will have to be created.

Modified Feed-in, First round losers or first match loser consolations – are all acceptable and provide each participant with at least a two matches.

Layered Draws – When players lose in the main draw or in the consolation draw, another “layered” draw can be created with all the losers from that particular round.
- To record in TDM, go to “create event” and give the draw a name (U10 consolation #3, French Open, etc.).
• Since you may have additional "no-shows" and byes, use a blank draw sheet when you set up your tournament desk. After the event, you can create the layered draw in TDM and manually enter the players’ names on the layered draw and enter scores.

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### Scoring Formats for 10 and Under Tennis Tournaments

#### 8 and Under Playdays

**One 7-point tiebreak game (win by one, or win by two)**
- Suggested for 8-and-under play
- For large round-robin group and/or limited time

**Best 2-out-of-3 tiebreak games**
- Recommended as the maximum scoring for 8-and-under play
- Beneficial for experienced 8-and-under players or for small round-robin groups

#### 10 and Under L3 Tournaments

**One short set (win by one, or win by two)**
- The 1st player/team that wins 4 games by a margin of 2 games wins the short-set. If the score reaches 4-4, then play a 7 point tie-break to determine the winner. No-ad scoring will be used.
- Play win by one for novice-level and state/district play
- Play win by two for section play

**Timed matches**
- Use for shorter-duration events (novice level), indoor courts, and limited use of outdoor courts
- Options are to play a point format (tiebreak game) with a shorter duration such as 6-10 minutes or a game format (no-ad games) for 15-30 minutes.
- The point format is recommended for 8-and-under play. The game format is recommended for 10-and-under play.

#### 10 and Under L2 Tournaments

**Best 2-out-of-3 short sets**
- The best of 3 short sets with a 10 point match tiebreaker played in lieu of a 3rd set, using ad-scoring. A short set whereby the first player to win 4 games wins the set, provided there is a margin of 2. If the score reaches 4 games all, a 7 point set tiebreak shall be played.

#### 10 and under L1B & L1 Tournaments

**Best 3 tiebreak sets with a 10 point tiebreak in lieu of a 3rd set**
- Best of 3 tiebreak sets with a 10 point match tiebreak in lieu of a 3rd set with ad-scoring. Play shall be continuous. No coaching is permitted and the player may not leave the court during the 2-minute set break between the 2nd set and 10 point match tiebreak.