

HOW TO START A KIDS TENNIS LEAGUE

Ages 6 to 18



Official Publication

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ABOUT THE USTA

Established in 1881, the USTA is a progressive and diverse not-for-profit organization whose volunteers, professional staff, and financial resources support a single mission: to promote and develop the growth of tennis. The USTA is the National Governing Body for the sport in the United States and the largest tennis organization in the world, with 17 geographical sections, more than 740,000 individual members and 7,000 organizational members, thousands of volunteers, and a professional staff dedicated to growing the game.



WELCOME TO USTA JR. TEAM TENNIS

Jr. Team Tennis is a league for kids 6-18 that combines the challenge and fun of playing tennis with the educational and character-building aspects of team sports.

The idea of team tennis is not a new concept. High schools, colleges, and even the Davis Cup or Fed Cup matches are team play. What is new about Jr. Team Tennis is the addition of the new QuickStart play format, a set of game and equipment modifications that make it easy and fun for kids as young as age 6 to learn the game by playing, not drilling.

The minute kids pick up a racquet, they're learning the fundamentals of the game—serving, rallying and scoring—by doing. And most important, Jr. Team Tennis is incredibly fun, so they'll keep wanting to come back to play and learn more.

WHY START A JR. TEAM TENNIS LEAGUE?

It's to use the game of tennis as a tool to help develop kids into successful adults. And you might find the next grand slam champion.

- If you care about the values of sportsmanship, fair play, and integrity,
- If you believe in the power of team sports to teach life lessons like confidence, cooperation, and responsibility,
- If you believe in the benefits of exercise and fresh air for kids of all ages,

Then you are an ideal candidate to start a Jr. Team Tennis league.

THE NATION'S LARGEST AND BEST-SUPPORTED TENNIS LEAGUE

The minute you decide to start a Jr. Team Tennis league in your community, you have a nationwide network of resources ready to help you every step of the way.

United States Tennis Association has real people—section and district coordinators for your local area—whose only job is to promote tennis in local communities. They can help you with online registration, official uniforms, membership, advertising and promotional materials, and general questions at any time.



JR. TEAM TENNIS CODE

- Fun First
- Practice & Play
- Age appropriate equipment & rules
- Encourage parent's involvement
- Player uniforms



GETTING STARTED - WHO ARE YOU?

There are as many types of Jr. Team Tennis leagues as there are league leaders. But in general, leagues tend to fall into four categories. Many of the planning and organizational needs are common, but there are important differences.

ARE YOU AN INDIVIDUAL?

(PARENT, PLAYER, COACH, CERTIFIED TENNIS PROFESSIONAL)

You love the game and have probably been playing it since you were a child. Now you want to give something back to the community, but you aren't quite sure where to start. This guide will give you a step-by-step plan to get started. You'll learn how the right partners can give you a head start to success, how to attract parents and players to participate, and how to work with facilities to hold your league practices and matches.

ARE YOU A P.E. TEACHER OR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR?

(ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE, HIGH SCHOOL)

You believe that tennis can further your educational mission. You know where to find players and may have access to facilities, but you have many other responsibilities and need advice on the best way to set up and run a successful league. This guide will give you the best practices on the organization and administration of successful leagues as well as information on how USTA programs can help you recruit and train parents to get involved as Team Managers and Coaches.

ARE YOU A YOUTH SERVICES ORGANIZATION?

(BOYS/GIRLS CLUB, AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM, SUMMER CAMP, CTA, NJTL)

You believe in the importance of team sports in developing successful adults. You have the players and the organizational skills, but need help finding places to play and coaches to teach. This guide will help you identify and empower key stakeholders in your community who both love the game of tennis and believe in your mission. With our network of over 1,000 Community Tennis Associations, the USTA can connect you with coaches and facilities that can make a difference in the lives of kids.

ARE YOU A PARK OR RECREATION AGENCY?

(SINGLE FACILITY, NEIGHBORHOOD, OR CITY-WIDE)

You believe that league play can bring more traffic and more revenue to your facilities. You have courts and some experience with youth programming, but need help finding players for the league and volunteers to run it. This guide will help you apply your knowledge of youth and sports programming in a new way. You'll learn how the USTA is ready to partner with your agency to provide timelines, sample budgets, and training programs for parents and coaches that will help you achieve your program goals.

3 QUESTIONS AND 1 PHONE CALL

Depending on who you are, some of these questions may be answered for you already. But these three questions are the building blocks of every league professional staff dedicated to growing the game.

1. WHO – WHAT AGE DIVISIONS WILL YOU OFFER?

This choice will affect what kind of equipment you'll need as well as what times of the day you can schedule play. Jr. Team Tennis offers two ways to play depending on the ages of the kids in your league. Like other sports, Jr. Team Tennis divides play into age and skill categories.

- 8 & under
- 10 & under
- 12 & under
- 14 & under
- 18 & under

TEAMS FOR PLAYERS 10 & UNDER

It is a whole new ball game. QuickStart Tennis is a new play format used in the Jr. Team Tennis league to help kids 10 and under learn and play the game. To make it easier for them, we changed a few things. The court sizes. The racquet sizes. The balls. The scoring system. Even the net height. Now any child between ages 6 -10 can start playing tennis almost immediately—even if they've never picked up a racquet before.

TO LEARN MORE AND TO WATCH VIDEOS OF QUICKSTART TENNIS IN ACTION, GO TO QUICKSTARTTENNIS.COM

TEAMS FOR PLAYERS 11 & UP

Players progress to a full-size court that you are used to seeing. This is a chance for kids to participate in practice and team play.



2. WHERE – WHAT KINDS OF FACILITIES ARE IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

Start with this simple fact: all it takes is one court. If you can find one court in your community that is available to your league at a set time, you can start a league that will make your community a better place to live.

The good news is that there are more courts than you might think. And many of them will be open to partnering with a league that aligns with their facility's goals.

3. WHEN – WHAT TIME OF YEAR IS RIGHT FOR YOUR LEAGUE'S SEASON?

Your season doesn't have to be long in order to have a positive impact on the lives of kids. In the beginning, your league could last just one month. But if kids and parents have a great experience, it won't be long before you grow.

Your season will depend on where you live and the availability of courts. Most leagues play during the Spring, Summer, or Fall, but there are many leagues that are successful by playing indoors during the winter.

4. HOW – CALL YOUR LOCAL USTA SECTION OFFICE.

If you make the commitment to make a difference in your community, the USTA will make the commitment to support you. At any time, help, advice, and resources are just a phone call away. Your local USTA Section office can provide you with:

- Contact information for tennis facilities, advocates, leaders, and schools in your community.
- A start-up kit with information about league formats, rules, and regulations.
- Information about on-court trainings, typically a one-day training course that is proven to bring in new coaches and make existing coaches better.

You can find the contact information for your community's section on the inside back cover of this pamphlet.

TIP: CARLA O'CONNOR *Jr. Team Tennis Area Coordinator; Charlotte, NC*
 Create an Advisory Board comprised of "Jr. Team Tennis Champions" with representation from club tennis pros, park and recreation, schools, parents, etc. Involve these people in the planning process and give them specific assignments/responsibilities.

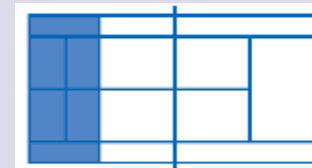


EQUIPMENT/FORMAT

The charts below show how kids can advance through the Jr. Team Tennis program. Children 10 and under play using the QuickStart Tennis play format which uses smaller courts, youth-sized racquets, lower bouncing balls, lower nets, and simplified scoring. As they grow older, the racquets and courts get larger and the balls bounce a little higher.

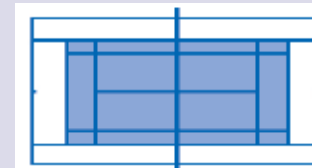
8 & Under QuickStart Tennis Format

Court Size: 36 ft. court
 Play Locally



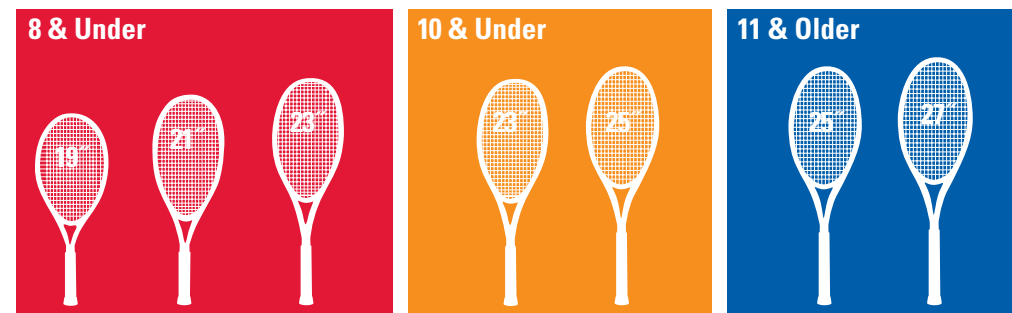
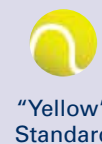
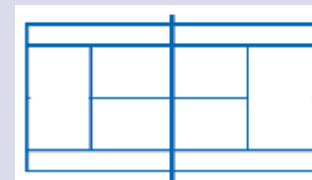
10 & Under QuickStart Tennis Format

Court Size: 60 ft. court
 Play Locally



11 & Older Various Formats Apply

(Round-Robin, Double Elimination, etc.)
 Court Size: 78 ft. court
 Play Locally/Section and/or National Championship



FINDING PARTNERS

No matter how much you believe in your league, there's no way you can do it alone. You're just one person! Fortunately, there are plenty of people out there who want to get involved in their community. Your league could be the opportunity they've been waiting for.

It's absolutely vital that you establish a support system. Whoever it is, reach out to them. Meet with them. Let them see your passion. You will be much more successful if your league has other people who have a stake in seeing it succeed.

PARTNER	MISSION	HOW THEY CAN HELP
Certified Tennis Professional	Grow his or her tennis programming.	Instructors aren't just running a business, they're part of the local tennis community. More kids playing and learning the game is good for them.
Youth Community Organizations <i>(Boys/Girls Clubs, CTA)</i>	Reach a wider audience of kids.	Youth Service Organizations look for quality youth programming to offer to their existing audience. Partnering with these groups can get you access to this audience as well as their staffing resources.
Schools <i>(PTAs/PTOs)</i>	Education and child development.	Schools and districts have facilities, teachers, and kids. Three things you'll need for your league.
Parks & Recreation Facilities	Fill extra court time, expand community programming.	Your city or town's parks department may have courts you didn't even know about. If you can run the league through them, they may waive all court fees. In addition, they will include your league program in their programming guides and flyers.
Existing Tennis League	Expand to more players.	Combine, don't compete! Not only will this save money through shared equipment and organizational costs, it may also improve the quality of the league you are offering.
Private Tennis Clubs	Increase club membership, get more traffic to their facility.	Tennis clubs to which you already belong (especially seniors clubs) can be a great resource when looking for volunteers with the time and passion for tennis.

FINDING COURTS



City Parks

These organizations exist for one reason only: to provide facilities for community activities just like yours. They can support your mission. All you have to do is ask.

Schools

When school is out for the summer, many school courts are underutilized. School administrators, including high school and middle school coaches, might welcome the activity, especially if some of their students are players in your league.

Colleges

College campuses have more flexibility during the school year and players on college teams are an excellent source of volunteers or coaches, especially if their college has a community service requirement for graduation.

Private Tennis Clubs

Private courts may charge for access because the needs of their members come first. But they are highly organized and know exactly when facilities are available and when they're not. When you meet with the club manager, emphasize how many new people your league will be bringing to the game and their facility.

Apartment Complexes, Gated Communities

These private facilities may have more availability and lower prices than private tennis clubs. It's especially helpful if you, a dedicated parent, or a coach live where the court is located.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, GO TO JRTEAMTENNIS.USTA.COM/FINDINGCOURTS

FINDING PARENTS AND PLAYERS

There's a reason why parents come before players. They have enormous influence over the sports their children participate in, especially when children are younger. Parents are by far your best way to find the players you need.

Connecting with a few key parents is often the spark your league needs to catch fire in your community. Try to get them involved as much as possible and give them specific tasks that support your league beyond just helping you recruit players. The more sense of ownership they have in your league's success, the better off you will all be.

TIP: RITA GLADSTONE *USTA Jr. Team Tennis Local League Coordinator; Volusia County, FL.* Instead of asking "Would you like to volunteer?" ask rather "Would you like to help make a difference for kids in our community?"

PEOPLE WHO KNOW YOU AND THE PEOPLE THEY KNOW: DREAM BIG, BUT THINK SMALL.

People who know you, who know your passion for the game and your desire to improve your community are always the place to start. Word of mouth remains the best recruiting source. Tennis communities are small. If you can convince a few people of your commitment and your league's mission to help develop kids into successful adults, you will find friends and friends of friends who are receptive to that message.

PEOPLE WHO DON'T KNOW YOU: LEAN ON YOUR PARTNERS.

Partnering with existing organizations will give you access to their audience of interested parents and players. Their e-mail newsletters, flyers, and notice boards are all vital ways to reach people who are already participating in other activities. For more information and ideas on Finding Partners, please refer to page 6 of this guide.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, GO TO
JRTEAMTENNIS.USTA.COM/FINDINGPARENTSANDPLAYERS**



TOWN HALL MEETINGS

The fastest way to get word of mouth going is to make a personal presentation at a community meeting. Stand up and show your passion to your community. In addition to providing a platform for introducing your league and answering questions, town hall meetings can also be a great place to find volunteers to help with marketing and other league tasks.

FINDING TEAM MANAGERS/COACHES

In Jr. Team Tennis, the job of the Team Manager is to organize the players to play tennis, have fun, and learn the values of the game. That's it. You don't need to be a tennis "expert" to be a Team Manager. Typically, the team manager takes care of the administrative tasks including scheduling practices and matches, carpooling, parents meetings and distributing forms.

A GOOD TEAM MANAGER/COACH CAN BE ANYONE WHO CAN:

Excite players and make sure they enjoy the game and league play

Organize activities, practices, and games

Teach simple tasks and aspects of the game in a positive learning environment

Motivate players to play their best so they keep playing and learning.

The person responsible for player supervision and instruction is the coach. Their job is to oversee the on-court activities such as running practices and setting line-ups. Ideally, you should have one coach and one team manager per team.

IN YOUR SEARCH, YOU SHOULD CONSIDER:

- Parents of players
- School teachers and administrators
- Adult league players
- Coaches from other sports
- Recent graduates and college players
- Volunteers from your partner organizations

FOR MORE INFORMATION, GO TO JRTEAMTENNIS.USTA.COM/FINDING COACHES

TRAINING TEAM MANAGERS/COACHES

You should hold a Team Manager/Coach orientation one month before your league is to begin play. This will help you evaluate the strengths and confidence level of your coaches.

Based on what you learn, you can pair less experienced Team Managers / Coaches with ones who have more coaching or teaching experience to be mentors.

For your coaches, the USTA offers the best in on-court training. The Recreational Coach Workshop (RCW) and the QuickStart Tennis Workshop (QST) are national training programs designed to prepare parents, coaches, and instructors to give players at the recreational level an exceptional tennis experience.

The Recreational Coach Workshop is designed for those who work with players of all ages, while the QuickStart Tennis Workshop focuses on those who work specifically with kids age 10 and under. Both interactive, on-court workshops are conducted by a specially trained certified teaching professional, who will ensure a successful workshop.

Both are a fun, easy, and proven way to train and educate dedicated parents and volunteers to be knowledgeable teachers and coaches—even if they've never played tennis before.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, GO TO JRTEAMTENNIS.USTA.COM/FINDINGTEAMMANAGERS

FINDING YOUR WAY

Organizing a league is no small job, but with the right planning and budgeting, you can stay on the right path.

TASKS TO DO FOR LAUNCHING YOUR LEAGUE

Here's a sample timeline to help you stay on track.

16 WEEKS OUT

- Organize a kick-off meeting with parents, coaches, and other volunteers—the core group who believe in your league as much as you do
- Meet with community organizations about partnering with your league
- Finalize your league format, rules, and regulations
- Create a tentative league schedule
- Develop a budget
- Begin contacting court facilities
- Start recruiting Team Managers/Coaches and Volunteers

12 WEEKS OUT

- Secure your courts
- Set up a Team Manager/Coach's meeting
- Tentatively organize the teams

8 WEEKS OUT

- Register your league with TennisLink (tennislink.usta.com/teamtennis)
- Begin promoting your league with your partners
- Hold a registration drive for signing up players

4 WEEKS OUT

- Hold Team Manager/Coach meeting to distribute league rules
- Team Manager/Coach collect entry applications and fees from players for registration
- Create match schedule and distribute to all team managers
- Order league awards
- Plan end-of-league social event

DURING THE SEASON

- Team Managers/Coaches collect and input all match scores into TennisLink
- Advise teams of advancement opportunities

POSTSEASON

- Summarize the season with final budget and evaluations
- End of season party
- Start planning for next season

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT YOUR LOCAL USTA SECTION OFFICE

TENNISLINK

TennisLink is an online resource from the USTA that helps you track players, schedule matches, and organize your league.

To register your league on TennisLink visit: tennislink.usta.com/teamtennis

BUDGETS

Determining financial requirements and the preparation of a league budget are necessary components of any Jr. Team Tennis league. It's how you'll calculate the fees you'll need from each player or the sponsorships you need to obtain.

HERE'S A LIST OF THE BASICS YOU'LL NEED TO BUDGET FOR:

- Court Fees for practices and matches
- Tennis balls and court equipment
- Awards/Trophies
- Marketing costs

It can be a complex process, but the USTA has sample league budgets and resources that can guide you through every step of the process.

SAMPLE BUDGET FOR A LEAGUE WITH 50 PARTICIPANTS

Income: \$3,750.00 (\$75.00 per player collected for local fee x 50 players)

EXPENSES:

Court Fees	\$500.00
Awards and Trophies	\$1200.00
Park & Recreation	\$300.00
Team Manager/Coach's Gifts	\$500.00
Telephone	\$50.00
Copies, Postage, Supplies	\$25.00
Internet	\$75.00
Other (food, etc)	\$700.00
Social Event	\$400.00

PLAYERS COSTS:

USTA Junior Membership (Annual Fee)	\$19.00
Nike Uniform	\$11.50
Local League Fee*	\$44.50
Cost per Player (6 week session)	\$75.00

**This Fee is set by you. Typical fees range from \$25 or higher.*

FOR MORE INFORMATION, GO TO [JRTEAMTENNIS.USTA.COM/BUDGETS](https://jrteamtennis.usta.com/budgets)

MARKETING

The only limit when it comes to marketing your league is your imagination. Even with a small budget or no budget, there are many ways to get your league's name out there. For inspiration, we've created a list of sample marketing materials that you can find online.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, GO TO JRTEAMTENNIS.USTA.COM/CTMARKETING

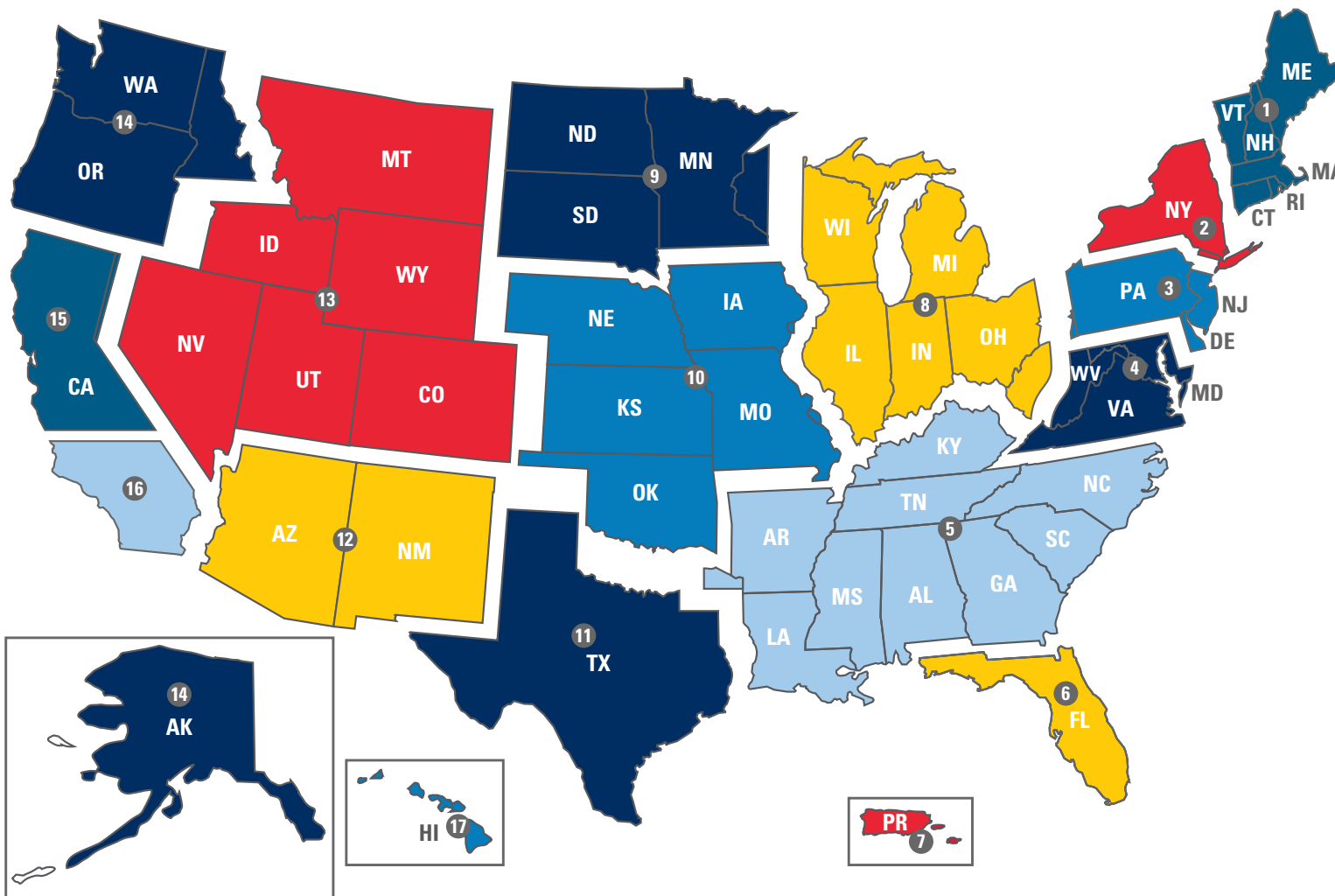
TIP: LISA STONE *Middle School League Organizer; Marietta, GA*

Use email, Facebook, Twitter, and other social marketing tools to get the word out about your league. If your child plays in other tennis leagues or tournaments, be sure to keep your league flyers on hand - word of mouth is your most valuable - and affordable - advertising tool!



USTA SECTIONS

AND HOW TO CONTACT



- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. New England
(508) 366-3450 | newengland.usta.com |
| 2. Eastern
(914) 697-2300 | eastern.usta.com |
| 3. Middle States
(610) 935-5000 | middlestates.usta.com |
| 4. Mid-Atlantic
(703) 556-6120 | midatlantic.usta.com |
| 5. Southern
(770) 368-8200 | southern.usta.com |
| 6. Florida
(386) 671-8949 | ustaflorida.com |
| 7. Caribbean
(787) 726-8782 | caribbean.usta.com |
| 8. Midwest
(317) 577-5130 | midwest.usta.com |
| 9. Northern
(952) 887-5001 | northern.usta.com |
| 10. Missouri Valley
(913) 322-4800 | missourivalley.usta.com |
| 11. Texas
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| 12. Southwest
(480) 289-2351 | southwest.usta.com |
| 13. Intermountain
(303) 695-4117 | intermountain.usta.com |
| 14. Pacific Northwest
(503) 520-1877 | pnw.usta.com |
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