

USTA Middle States Grievance Procedures*

Grievance Committee

The USTA MS Grievance Committee is responsible for enforcing at all USTA MS-sanctioned or sponsored activities, the *Rules of Tennis*; and USTA and USTA MS constitutions, by-laws and/or standing orders; and standards of conduct, fair play and good sportsmanship (“USTA Regulations,” “Code of Conduct”). The USTA MS Grievance Committee shall consist of at least three persons appointed by the USTA MS president. Preferably, at least one of those members shall be a USTA-certified chair umpire. The USTA MS senior vice president shall be a voting member in the event that one of the regular members is unable to participate in the decision-making process.

Grievance Procedures

Any USTA Middle States Member may file a grievance. Grievances may also be filed by a USTA Middle States Committee acting in the best interest of their area of responsibility. Any grievance (which term shall include protests and complaints) must be filed in writing stating intent to file a grievance with the USTA MS office within 14 (business) days of the alleged violation. Grievance forms are available from the USTA MS office. Grievance information is not confidential and may be shared with the committee and all parties involved with the grievance. Upon receipt of the grievance, the USTA MS office will forward it to the USTA MS Grievance Committee chair. The chair of the Grievance Committee may dismiss the grievance or, at the complete discretion of the chair, make a decision. Such a decision may include imposing penalties and/or sanctions, conducting fact-finding that may include hearings, scheduling hearings or submitting the dispute to the full Grievance Committee. Within 20 (business) days after receipt of the grievance by the Grievance Committee Chair, the chair should, in writing to the parties involved, take one of the actions described above. Correspondence described in this and subsequent paragraphs will be shared with the parties involved in the grievance and other persons, as deemed appropriate by the chair. **Note:** Use of certified mail is recommended for all grievance correspondence.

Appeals from the Decision of the USTA MS Grievance Committee Chair

Appeals from the decision of the chair, if made, must be made to the Grievance Committee, in writing, within 10 (business) days by either party in the dispute. The Grievance Committee shall hold hearings and/or solicit responses from witnesses and the parties involved, as it deems necessary. Strict rules of evidence shall not apply. During hearings, if held, parties to a grievance shall represent themselves. However, in the case of juniors under 18, one parent/guardian may represent the junior. The committee may require the junior to be present as well. Hearings shall be scheduled no later than 30 (business) days after receipt of the appeal. Reasonable attempts will be made, but not guaranteed, to schedule the hearing at a time convenient for all parties involved. Hearings may be conducted by teleconference or in-person at the discretion of the grievance committee. If hearings are held, the decision should be rendered within 7 (business) days after the conclusion of the hearing. If no hearings are held, the decision should be rendered within 30 (business) days of receipt of the appeal by the grievance committee. All decisions must be in writing, must provide the basis for the decision and must be sent to all parties to the grievance.

Appeals from the Decision of the USTA MS Grievance Committee

The individual is subject to all sanctions, suspensions, and penalties upheld or imposed by the grievance committee during the appeal process.

Appeals to the decisions of the USTA MS Grievance Committee must be made, in writing, to the USTA MS office, c/o the Grievance Committee staff liaison, within 10 (business) days after receipt of the decision of the USTA MS Grievance Committee.

Written appeals must state the basis for the appeal including, but not limited to, additional evidence or facts to dispute the decision of the grievance committee.

Such appeals shall be referred to a committee of three USTA MS board members selected by the USTA MS president. This committee has the complete discretion to decide whether to hear the appeal and act on the basis of the evidence before it or to call for additional fact finding and hearings. The appropriate district presidents should be consulted when deemed appropriate by the appeal committee. However, if no hearing has been previously held, a hearing shall be conducted at the written request of any of the parties to the grievance if made at the time of the requested appeal. This committee of board members shall act within the time schedule established above for the Appeals to Grievance Committee Chair. The decision of the appeals committee shall be in writing and is binding and final.

General

Cumulative and/or serious grievances, particularly ones relating to sportsmanship, are not subject to the specific time requirements outlined above, although every effort must be made to resolve all grievances expeditiously. Grievance Committee members may, at their discretion, initiate grievance actions. All grievance and grievance appeal meetings and hearings may be conducted via electronic communications at the discretion of the appropriate committee chair.

Interpretation of USTA Middle States Grievance Procedures

Interpretations of the USTA Middle States grievance procedures rests with the executive committee of the USTA Middle States Board of Directors.

Penalties

The penalties and/or sanctions that may be imposed include, but are not limited to: warnings, probation, suspension for a specific or indeterminate period of time, banning from sites of sanctioned tournaments, ineligibility for ranking, ineligibility for endorsement and ineligibility for intersectional play.

** Please note that this does not apply to league grievances. League grievances must be handled by league grievance committees.*