

**2014 USTA Jr. Team Tennis Preview**

**What is USTA Northern JTT?**

**What is Jr. Team Tennis?**

USTA Jr. Team Tennis is the largest junior recreational tennis program in the country. It is a combination of practice and match play with an emphasis on skill development, fun, teamwork and friendly competition. The local season consists of competing against other area teams of similar age and ability level. Teams can then choose to participate in the USTA Northern Championship series, including a shot at a National Championship for the 14U and 18U Intermediate A and Advanced divisions!

**Age Divisions:**

**10 and Under** Intermediate

 Advanced

**12 and Under** Intermediate B

 Intermediate A

 Advanced

**14 and Under** Intermediate B

 Intermediate A

 Advanced

**18 and Under** Intermediate B

 Intermediate A

 Advanced

**Format:**

* Teams are coed and consist of at least six players, three boys and three girls, based on similar ages and skill levels
* Matches include boys singles, girls singles, boys doubles, girls doubles and mixed doubles
* Scoring format varies depending on the local program
* All matches are determined by total games won

**Minimum Requirements:**

* At least 3 boys and 3 girls on a team
* A coach or team manager in compliance with the USTA Youth Protection Policies and Procedures
* A practice component
* Players must have a valid USTA Membership number
* Players and teams must be registered on the TennisLink online system

 **Benefits of USTA Northern JTT**

* Local matches against teams of similar age and ability level
* Opportunities for your team to advance to Area, Section and possibly even National Championships
* Team social media competitions and opportunities for team bonding
* Increased program loyalty improving retention
* Access to TennisLink – the online player registration and tracking system
* $5 refund for every new USTA member you recruit to your program, if you are an USTA Northern Organizational Member
* Each player receives additional benefits through their USTA Membership such as *Smash* magazine, ability to participate in USTA sanctioned tournaments, scholarship opportunities, and more.

"I love the **fast-paced, high-pressure** matches that come with playing JTT.  Playing in those intense and high-stress matches has helped me during the high school season.  I also enjoy the team aspect of playing JTT.  It is rewarding to win matches as a team when most of the year you are out there on your own competing."

~Sonya Das – 2012-2013 MN State A Champion

**2014 UPDATES/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Area Playoffs Dates/Locations:**

* July 14-15: Northern MN Area Playoffs in Brainerd, MN
* July 17: North Dakota Area Playoffs in Fargo, ND
* July 17-18: South Dakota Area Playoffs in Brandon, SD
* July 21-22: Western WI Area Playoffs in Eau Claire, WI
* July 21-22: Twin Cities Area Playoffs in six different cities: Locations TBD

\*Awards will be given out for Advanced and Intermediate A and B in all age divisions.

**Section Championship Dates:**

* Monday – Tuesday, July 28-29 – 14U Intermediate A/Advanced
* Wednesday – Thursday, July 30-31 – 18U Intermediate A/Advanced
* Friday, August 1 – 12U Intermediate A/Advanced and 10U Intermediate /Advanced

**New Play Level: Intermediate B**

Generally, this player is fairly consistent when hitting medium paced shots, but is not comfortable with all strokes and lacks execution when trying for directional control, depth, or power. Player is improving court coverage and can sustain a rally and serve with consistency. On ground strokes, player needs to improve control of height, depth, direction, and speed. **Advancement in this division ends with the Area Playoffs.**

**Travel Grants are Available:**

USTA Northern will be offering $75 travel grants for teams that travel over 150 miles round trip to participate in Jr. Team Tennis matches (excluding the Area Playoffs and Section Championships). Funds are limited and given out on a first-come, first-serve basis. For questions or more information contact Brandon Jackson.

**Score Reporting:**

Local match scores must be recorded within **48 hours** of completion of a team match with the exception of the last match of the local season, as scheduled in TennisLink, which must be recorded no later than **24 hours** after completion in order for those matches to count toward player eligibility.

**Twin City Scheduling Options:**

* Pod/Dual Match Combination:
* *Pod Matches*: Teams will have multiple matches against multiple teams that take place at a single-site location. Expect play to last from 1 PM-4PM. **Played the weeks June 16th, June 30th, and July 14th.**
* *Dual Matches*: Teams will have one match against one team played at either team’s home facility. Expect play to last from 1 PM-3PM. **Played the weeks of June 23rd and July 7th.**
* JTT Tournaments: Dates and locations will be posted by April 1, 2014. To host a JTT tournament, please contact Brandon Jackson at jackson@northern.usta.com by March 17, 2014 to get on the schedule.
* Evening League Pilot: This will be a single-site pilot league that takes place in the evening. The specific age divisions and locations are to be determined. If you are interested in this as an option, please contact Brandon Jackson at jackson@northern.usta.com.

**USTA Youth Protection Policies and Procedures for USTA Jr. Team Tennis (Safe Play Program)**

Safe play is designed to help ensure a safe environment for all participants through the use of screening, education and reporting tools. For USTA Jr. Team Tennis team coaches/managers, this includes a mandatory Background Screening (Free for two team coach/managers per team and valid for 2 years) and a 90-minute online video. Background screening approval can take up to 10 business days, so coaches are advised to plan ahead**. Individuals who do not complete the Safe Play Program will be locked out of TennisLink and not have coach access.** For more, visit www.usta.com/safeplay.

**Play Level Changes:** *(pending approval from USTA National)*

**Description of Play Levels**

We rely on the INTEGRITY of the coaches and program administrators to place players in the appropriate level to the best of their ability. Below are general descriptions of the different play levels and rules to guide you in placing your players correctly so players have as competitive of matches as possible to maximize skill development and enjoyment.

**10 and Under (uses 60’ court and orange ball):**

* Intermediate - Player is able to judge where ball is going and can sustain a slow to moderate paced rally of several shots with someone of the same ability using both forehand and backhand sides. Player can keep score unassisted, can call own lines, can serve overhand from the baseline and has understanding of basic rules.
* Advanced - Player has dependable strokes with increasing directional control and depth of groundstrokes. Player is starting to recognize opportunities to attack short balls by coming to the net. Player has added variety in shot selection by using lobs, overheads, volleys, and approach shots with some success. Player is developing a game plan, serving with good consistency, and is now forcing some errors with power and/or spin.

**Intermediate B** – Generally, this player is fairly consistent when hitting medium paced shots, but is not comfortable with all strokes and lacks execution when trying for directional control, depth, or power. Player is improving court coverage and can sustain a rally and serve with consistency. On ground strokes, player needs to improve control of height, depth, direction, and speed.

**Intermediate A** – They have achieved improved stroke dependability with directional control on moderate shots. Player can use lobs, overheads, approach shots, and volleys with some success and occasionally forces errors when serving. They exhibit more aggressive net play, have improved court coverage, and are developing teamwork in doubles. Player is starting to recognize opportunities to attack short balls by coming to net. Player is developing more spin and power on the serve and seldom double-faults.

**Advanced** – This player has developed use of power and spins and can handle pace. They have sound footwork, can control depth of shots, and attempt to vary game plan according to the opponents. They can hit first serves with power and accuracy and place the second serve. They tend to over hit on difficult shots; aggressive net play is common in doubles.

**Regulation Changes:** *(pending approval from USTA National)*

1. The USTA Northern junior tournament standings lists are used to set play level benchmarks. Players who meet the benchmarks stated below as of the first standings list published in April 2014, **MAY NOT** play in the intermediate division.
* **For play on a 12 and under Jr. Team Tennis team**, players ranked in the top 20 in 12s MAY NOT play in the Intermediate division.
* **For play on a 14 and under Jr. Team Tennis team**, players ranked in the top 40 in 14s or in the top 20 in 12s MAY NOT play in the Intermediate division.
* **For play on an 18 and under Jr. Team Tennis team**, players ranked in the top 60 in 18s, top 40 in 16s, or top 20 in 14s MAY NOT play in the Intermediate division.
1. Minnesota: Any player who advances to the individual high school state tennis tournament in Class AA**MAY NOT** play in the Intermediate Division. This includes singles and doubles.
2. During a previous season, if a player participated on an advanced team in their age division and had a winning record at the Section Championships, they MUST continue to play Advanced in that age division during all subsequent seasons.

\*The complete version of benchmark guidelines will be available in the JTT Administrator’s Guide coming in April 2014.

**COST STRUCTURE**

**Local Season fees per player**\***:**

$6 Section Program Registration

* Local program schedule
* Online access to schedules, player records, and team standings
* Advancement opportunities
* Program administrative and marketing support

$4 Online Processing Fee

* + Note: all local program which collect more than $33 through TennisLink will pay an online processing fee of 7.5% + $.50 instead.
* *Players must be current USTA Members to participate.*
* *Additional local program fees may apply. Check with your Local Program Coordinator*

**Championship Series (optional):**

$10 per player: Area Playoffs

$20 per player: Section Championship (teams must qualify)

Championships include:

* At least three matches
* Coach's gift
* Player gift
* Awards to top finishers and sportsmanship winners
* Travel grants for eligible communities
* Opportunity for advancement
* Great fun!

**Membership Details:**

$20 Annual USTA Junior Membership\*

* Eligible to participate in USTA tournaments, Jr. Team Tennis, and events
* Additional member discounts at a variety of tennis events, retail stores, movie theaters, and dining establishments (contact USTA Northern for a full list)
* 1year subscription to SMASH magazine
* Contribution to the game of tennis through USTA grants, player scholarships, and more.
* *Multi-year discounts and promotions are available.*
* *Bulk processing of memberships is available through the bulk membership form. Allow 3-5 days for processing.*
* *USTA Northern Organizational Members receive $5 back for each new member they refer! Contact Sandy Smith at* *ssmith@northern.usta.com* *for details.*

