

USTA Northern Tournament Director's Manual

So you want to run a tennis tournament?

Congratulations on your decision! This can be one of the most rewarding experiences you can have as long as you have the tools and information necessary in order to run a successful tournament.

This manual is not intended to teach you how to run a tournament. There are various tournament formats, events and locations. These issues can make holding a tennis tournament significantly different each time. This manual is intended to describe the important actions and activities necessary to plan and hold an event. Several pieces of information in this manual are taken directly from the *Friend at Court* handbook, consisting of the rules and regulations governing all USTA Sanctioned events.

The manual is not intended to be a static document but one that is subject to revisions and enhancements in order to assist tournament directors in running a tournament. Please provide any feedback you may have about the manual to Pat Colbert at colbert@northern.usta.com or Danielle Pellicano at pellicano@northern.usta.com.

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Facilities

Many instances have occurred where inadequate planning and preparation resulted in the facility not having enough courts to conduct the tournament. It is suggested, all tournaments should have alternate courts arranged to accommodate unforeseen circumstances.

Provided the courts are available, how many do you need? This is important when planning your tournament. You cannot run BG 12-18SD full feed-in on 6 courts unless the draws are 3-4 players only. Experience has shown that for a full feed-in draw, you need a minimum of one court per age group for small events (4 to 8 players) and up to 3 courts per age group for larger events (16-32 players) if the tournament is to be completed from Friday afternoon to Sunday. The number of courts needed is significantly smaller for a single elimination event or a first match consolation event. The number of courts available may play a big part in determining the type of draw you select.

Sometimes directors who are not part of a club or tennis facility decide that they want to run a sanctioned tournament and then immediately direct their attention on how to schedule it with the USTA. Unfortunately, that is far from the first step. A proper facility with appropriate amenities is the foundation for a successful event. Even before you talk about the type of tournament to hold, you should have sufficient courts and court-time available to you. Location and amenities are important factors when deciding where to hold a tournament. People will turn out repeatedly when the location is easy to find and has the amenities to make the event enjoyable for the players and spectators.

When looking for a location, be sure to go to various facilities and evaluate the following:

- Quality and type of the court surface. USTA rules prohibit the same division to be played on different surfaces. The event can use different surfaces but each division that participates, must use the same court type within their division. (USTA Regulations I.L.4)
- Quality of the nets, net straps, and support posts.
- Spectator viewing areas, including seating options.
- Restroom facilities – this is a must. (Restrooms can cost \$150-\$200 for a weekend event.)
- Other amenities (swimming pools, playgrounds, open areas).
- Wind protection available on outdoor courts.
- A functional and visible location for the tournament check-in desk.
- Proximity to other courts players may use for practice.
- Ease of parking.

Once you find a suitable facility, meet with the owner or manager to discuss what is needed to reserve the courts for your event(s). This is important since most communities and high schools actually reserve the courts for a fee and it would be embarrassing if on the day of your event, someone else had the courts reserved.

Make sure when you reserve the facility, you discuss the following:

- Any repair and maintenance of the courts and nets during the event is the responsibility of whom? Typically, it will be yours. (For example, always carry extra net straps and black plastic ties for the net straps.)
- Are Roll-Dri's provided in case of rain or is that your responsibility? (They are essential!)
- Who is responsible for posting the reservation permit at the site and how?
- Are you responsible for restroom facilities or is that part of the fee? (Example: One park had restrooms but they were locked all weekend and it created a problem for the players since the director just anticipated they would be available.)
- Who is the contact person at the facility for any problems?
- Does the permit extend into the week or following weekend if rain delay does not allow the tournament to finish or will that require an additional fee?

Events

Now that you are aware of the number of courts you have, you now can determine how many events to include in your tournament. There are several types of draws available that will help you determine how many events to run during your tournament.

They include:

- Single elimination – No consolation round.
- First match consolation – Only the loser in the first match play in the consolation rounds. Each player is guaranteed two matches.
- Modified Consolation – The losers in the first two rounds of the draw play the consolation round.
- Full Feed-In Consolation – All players move into the consolation except finalists (or semi-finalists if a 3rd/4th place match is played). This draw type provides the greatest amount of match play for all players.
- Compass Draw – Not frequently used. Complications will develop if there are byes in the draw. Therefore, it is best to limit the entries to 16, 32 or 64. At the end of each round, the winners continue in their tournament in the same direction, while the losers move to other points on the compass to form a new satellite tournament.
- Curtis Consolation - When there is a shortage of courts or when a feed-in championship needs to be played in a limited amount of time, some tournaments use a modified feed-in championship format.

The USTA does not mandate the type of draw a tournament director can hold with the exception of the Level 3, Level 4 and Level 5 Championship USTA Northern tournaments. For further information on USTA rules and regulations for creating a draw, please refer the *Friend at Court* handbook.

Budgets

Now that you have the courts reserved, the events chosen and the type of draw you will run, you can evaluate the budget and seek sanctioning. The budget is a major factor for many directors. It can fluctuate greatly depending on the number of entrants. One should have an overall budget in mind in order to know the entry fee amount you will need to charge your entrants to enter the tournament.

The following is a list of significant budget expenditures:

- **Court costs** – This can range from zero to hundreds of dollars.
- **Balls** – The costs of balls can vary significantly. A tournament with BG12-18sd events with 100 entrants in a full feed-in draw can have as many as 180 matches; 110 which are consolation matches. If you were to use three new balls for each match and assume 10 percent will go to a third set, that will be 198 cans of balls (8.25 cases). Ball purchases can vary from \$56 to \$65 per case. The ball costs as described above are \$462 to \$536 total. On the flip side, use only two new balls and utilize used balls for consolation, the ball cost is only \$140 to \$165 total. Although, using three balls has been proven to speed up the match and players like to start with new balls.
- **Awards** – The number and type of awards can vary greatly depending on what you prefer and how much you have to spend. What kind and how many awards are given out is left completely at the discretion of the tournament director. USTA recommends that awards are given to first and second place finishers
- **Officials or Assistance** – If you desire to hire certified officials (Level 3, 4 and 5 championship tournaments are required to have officials), the cost is on average \$12 per hour. This will significantly increase the efficiency of the event. The warm-ups are timed and a professional in the field of officiating monitors the matches. If you do not hire an official, then you should have an extra person at each site to be prepared if a line judge or a court monitor is needed due to behavior issues. Without a court monitor, the 10-minute warm-up can run up to 15–20 minutes long. For example, with 6 courts, you can get 30-60 minutes behind the schedule each set of matches. Some-tournament directors will hire monitor or check-in table staff at a rate of \$7-\$10 per hour.
- **Ice, First-aid and Refreshments** - It is essential that each event has items available for the players and spectators. If you do not have these readily available at the facility, a minimum of \$50 should be set aside for these items.

The following chart is an actual breakdown of revenue and expenses from a tournament in 2005: (NOTE: This is from a non-profit who orders awards after entry is closed and then selects the quality of the awards on the budget remaining after the essentials are considered.)

FEES (Total 73 Players) \$25.00 for two events	
Internet fees collected	\$1,525.00
Fees collected at event	\$300.00
TOTAL FEES	\$1,825.00
Refunds for withdrawal (4 players)	\$100.00
Court rental	\$250.00
Officials (Officials 13 hours) and table help (21 hours)	\$315.00
Balls 7.5 cases @ \$56.97 per case	\$427.28
Water 12 cases @ \$4.00 per case	\$48.00
Trophies (46 units)	\$518.87
Sanction fees (\$50.00)	\$50.00
Ice, refreshments, etc....	\$79.50
Printing charges	\$36.18
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,824.83

Sanction Forms

Once you have an idea of the budget and have assigned the appropriate entry fees, the next step is to fill out the Sanction Form.

This should include the following information:

- a. Specific events and eligibility procedures.
- b. Limits on the size of the draw.
- c. Location(s), directions and date(s) of play (including any preset rain dates).
- d. The entry fee amount and whom to make the payment to.
- e. Match format including alternative format draws to be used. (Whether a Set Tie-Break or Match Tie-Break will be used in lieu of the third set, if this is the case.)
- f. Time and place of the draw being published.
- g. The entry deadline (when entries have to be received by the Tournament Director).
- h. Mailing address for the entry to be sent and/or online registration made available.
- i. Court surface.
- j. Type of ball (brand name not required) that will be used.
- k. Additional information recommended includes how first match information may be obtained and the name of the referee.

USTA Northern typically sets the overall tournament schedule for the following year in August. All of the information for sanctioning should be filled out online using TennisLink or under rare and approved circumstances, sent to the USTA office where staff will fill out the Online Sanction Form on your behalf. To be considered for sanctioning, you must have your forms turned in by the due date given by the section office each year (Typically in August). ALL TOURNAMENT DIRECTORS ARE APTLY NOTIFIED VIA EMAIL OF DEADLINES AND PROCEDURES REGARDING ONLINE SANCTION FORMS FOR THE UPCOMING SEASON. The sanction fee cost is \$50.00 per tournament.

The benefits of running a USTA-sanctioned tournament:

- a. The tournament is listed online and online registration is available to entrants (if preferred.)
- b. Entrants are assured that the tournament will be conducted in accordance with USTA Rules.
- c. Tournament results are used for rankings.

NOTE: All sanctioned tournament's (other than Challenger 2) points count towards Sectional and National rankings.

Preparations

Now that a majority of the work is completed in reserving the facilities, setting the dates and events, planning the budget and filling out the sanction form, there will be a period of time where preparations can commence.

Tournament preparations:

- a. Chairs or benches for players (if needed).
- b. Court cleaning materials available (brooms, roll dryers and/or squeegees).
- c. Draw sheets for posting (how to produce and where to post).
- d. Adequate copies of current *Friend at Court* handbooks for each site.
- e. Ice, water and refreshments on-site.
- f. Net measurer and singles sticks available on-site.
- g. Scorecards.
- h. Stopwatch (for lateness, injuries, intermissions, and in case the Referee is called upon to chair a match).
- i. Emergency first-aid kit.
- j. Official clock.
- k. Net-straps (alternative-heavy twine or rope).
- l. String (to repair holes in net).
- m. Plastic Tie downs for flapping backstops or nets.
- n. Clipboards.
- o. Legal size pad of paper.
- p. Pencils, erasers, and pens (small and large felt tips).
- q. Rubber bands.
- r. Scissors.
- s. Stapler.
- t. Hole-punch.
- u. Tape (masking, double-sided and scotch tape).
- v. Whiteout (for those inevitable mistakes).
- w. Bulletin Board (to post notes, rules, changes, draws, etc.).
- x. Personal articles (i.e., sunscreen, insect repellent, hat, towel, etc.).
- y. Rain gear (umbrella, slicker, or poncho).
- z. For the really organized, make signs such as: NO DRINKS ON THE TOURNAMENT DESK, PLAYERS SIGN IN HERE or SHOW USTA CARD.

Preparations two to four weeks before the tournament:

- If you are going to provide a T-shirt or other item to all registrants, then make sure the order is made and delivery is assured.
- If you are utilizing online registration, make sure TennisLink is active and your banking information is current and correct.
- If you are utilizing TDM, make sure you have the most up to date version.
- Double-check the court reservation(s) you have at the facility(s).
- If officials are used, make sure the most up to date information is provided to them.
- Check the availability of your volunteer and work staff (have enough to run all the facilities but make it known, depending on the size of the draw, they may not be needed).
- If you are going to provide awards, select the vendor of your choice then make sure the order is made and delivery or pick-up is assured.
- Purchase the balls, if you already have not done so.
- Know if a stringer or stringing is available at the site – if not, have options available.
- Assure there are restroom facilities available and rent a Biffy if necessary.

Seeding

USTA rules do not allow seeding more than one player for every four players in the event. The USTA rules require: "Seedings merely represent the subjective ratings of the various players' chances of winning the tournament. These ratings may not be based on whim, caprice, or hunches, but instead shall be justified by a reasonable amount of factual evidence. The committee shall consider all available evidence, including, but not limited to, rankings, current records, types of surface and particularly head-to-head encounters."

If a player feels he or she should be seeded, but may not show up under "auto seed", it is the player's responsibility to provide information to the tournament director ahead of time.

Common errors in seeding: "He's ranked No. 1, so he must be seeded No. 1"; "She won the tournament last year so she must be seeded No. 1 this year"; "Since this is his first year as a senior and he has no record in senior play, he can't be seeded or he can't be seeded any higher than five."

If you have no knowledge of the players, the common method of seeding is using the ranking lists and head to head results. For TDM users, this can be done using TDM as follows:

- Select the event and select Auto Seed on the lower part of the page.
- Select the Section/District "Northern" and rank type list "standings"
- Click "Search"
- Select the list (The most recent list for the correct type of tournament. (Challenger 1 or Championship) and click "OK"
- Enter the number of seeds – Remember, USTA rules allow no more than 1 seed per 4 players. Click "OK"
- Complete the above task for each event in your tournament.

NOTE: There may be players in an event that may be overlooked in Auto Seed that should be seeded. For example: In a draw of 8 players for a B14s event, 2 players are eligible for seeding. When utilizing the Auto Seed feature, the #1 seeded player turns out to be #25 on the Standings List. However, when reviewing the list of B14s participants, one of your players is the #1 ranked 12-year old and he is not seeded because Auto Seed only takes into account the age group you are currently working with (14). Auto Seed does not recognize players who play out of their age group. Therefore, you may have to manually set the seeds. USTA Northern is happy to answer any seeding questions you may have, but it is your responsibility to seed your tournaments, this will not be done for you.

Scheduling

- If this is a Challenger 1 or Championship tournament, make sure all players are USTA members.
- If possible, the tournament director shall take into consideration the number of matches a player may play each day. There is no rule but guidelines are no more than 2 singles and one doubles per day. This usually does not happen for a typical weekend event with both singles and doubles, so rest between matches becomes increasingly important.
- USTA rules require that in all cases, an adult player must be offered 30 minutes and a junior player must be offered 60 minutes between matches.
- If you play two out of three full sets, a player must be offered one-hour rest between each match in the same event. Example: A player plays a match at 9:00 AM and the winner is scheduled to play at Noon. The 9:00 AM match is a long match than ends at 11:50 AM. The player may play earlier but you cannot make a player play before 12:50 PM. The rest period is 30 minutes if an alternative format is used or the next match is another event.
- It is to your benefit and generally accepted practice to have the draws published no later than 5:00 PM, two days before the event starts to allow players to plan.
- When scheduling matches, if possible, make sure players from the same school, same community or same club do not play one another first round. There is a setting in TDM, under "Groups" that will allow you to set the above-mentioned groupings when making the draw. If you have further questions on this, please contact the section office.

NOTE: Please always refer to the Friend at Court handbook for specifics regarding rules and regulations for tournament play.

Running a Tournament

Early arrival and site preparation: (It is recommended that you arrive at least one hour before the first scheduled match on the first day of the tournament to check on the facility.)

- Courts are clean.
- Nets with center straps, without holes and properly attached to posts.
- Singles sticks are properly placed then nets measured.
- Water and ice are available to players.
- Proper number of balls available for day's play.
- Locations of first aid kits and restrooms.
- Post draw sheets, schedule of play, sanction and all signs.
- Designate tournament clock and tournament desk.
- Prepare for player check-in including briefing volunteers on their responsibilities.

Players are coming, provide the following: (You can provide the following information in writing to each player, verbally to each player as they check in for the first time or to players before they go on the court.)

- Greet the player with a smile by name or if you do not know their name, introduce yourself as the tournament director.
- Length of warm-up. USTA Rules state there should be a maximum of a 5-minute warm-up although they allow the event committee to increase this to 10 minutes if ball persons are not available.
- Format of matches.
- Any changes in the draws.
- If outdoor, what to do if it rains.
- Any information with regard to behavior.

Assigning players to a court: (TIP: Make sure that the players shake hands and introduce themselves before the match.)

- Inform the player of the court they are assigned.
- Write the time the player was sent to the court on the event log. (This is used to monitor the warm-up.)
- Number of matches completed.
- Record the score.
- Make sure each player reports in to assure they know if their event is over or if they have additional matches. Draws may have changed or the opponent may have withdrawn so it is important they check in after the match.

If there are any behavior problems or code violations, make note of them and inform the player they will be reported to the USTA. Each day it is important to assure there are adequate supplies

at each site, this includes ice, water, first aid, sunscreen and bug spray. **As the tournament continues, update TDM with the results and upload the event.**

USTA NORTHERN SUSPENSION POINT SYSTEM

The Northern Section Suspension Point System will be in effect at all sanctioned junior tournaments in the section and will be used in main draw and consolation rounds. Persons authorized to file suspension point reports are: tournament referees and their assistants, on-court umpires, **tournament directors**, members of the Northern Section Junior Tennis Council (JTC) and the USTA/Northern Section Director of Junior Competitive Tennis. All of the above-authorized persons will report only on violations personally witnessed by them.

Recording of Suspension Points:

Suspension Point Reports with descriptions of all violations will be mailed to the Director of Junior Competitive Tennis in the USTA/Northern Section office. These reports will then be forwarded to the JTC for documenting and recording on the junior player's tournament record.

NOTE: Suspension points received out of section (National Tournaments, Zonals, etc.) will count against a player's local record.

Notices Issued:

The JTC will inform players and their parent(s) by mail when a player accrues 6 suspension points. Copies of subsequent suspension point reports received by the Northern Section will be sent to the player's residence. NOTE: Due to delay in receiving documentation, a player may accumulate additional suspension points before being notified when he or she is at 6 points. Therefore, all players must rely on their own records of suspension points to avoid actual suspension.

If, after receiving the 6-point notice, a discrepancy between the USTA Northern record and the player's personal record can be found, a review may be requested in writing by the player and/or parent and sent to the JTC at the USTA Northern office.

Player Suspension:

Initially, if a player accumulates 10 or more points over any 12-month period, he/she will be suspended according to the following information:

First suspension: 8 weeks with no tournament play. No ranking for the current year and no endorsement to the next Junior National Tournament. The initial 10 or more points are erased following reinstatement.

After a first suspension reinstatement, a player shall be suspended either a second or third time with the accumulation of 5 or more points.

Second suspension: 6 months with no tournament play. No ranking or endorsement as stated above. The 5+ points resulting in the second suspension shall be erased following reinstatement.

Third suspension: Additional six months suspension.

Appeal Following Suspension:

A player may appeal his/her suspension to the JTC. All such notices of appeal must be received at the USTA Northern office no later than 10 days after the date of the original suspension notice.