

2025 NTA Award Criteria

NOTE ON NOMINATIONS FOR AWARDS

When stated, nominees for most awards must be current members of USTA. Individual nominees must have participated in USTA events and cannot be members of the staff.

The supporting information for each nomination being submitted for section competition is critically important, as the USTA Missouri Valley Awards Committee reviews approximately 200 nomination forms each year. Any nomination form which does not have adequate information, and does not provide photos or endorsement letters when appropriate, places the nominee at a distinct disadvantage.

ADULT PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Two levels for this award will be recognized:

1. Player ranked 4.0 and above
2. Player ranked 3.5 and below

Adult Players of the Year award will be awarded to adult players who participate in USTA League tennis or USTA tournaments. Criteria are based on performance, current accomplishments, sportsmanship and the promotion of tennis in general, raising the standard of play to its highest level.

List for 2024 all accomplishments that highlight the nominees' careers, including ranking information.

Must not have a Code of Conduct report on file in the last 12 months. Refer to the Suspension Points Record in Serve Control.

Must be a current USTA Member.

JUNIOR HIGH PERFORMANCE PLAYER (S) OF THE YEAR (1 female and 1 male)

Junior High Performance Player(s) of the Year award is based primarily on high performance results at USTA tournaments, sportsmanship, and a demonstration of raising the game to its highest level. The nominated player should exhibit participation in the highest level of competition offered by USTA.

List for 2025 all accomplishments that highlight the nominees' careers. Emphasis should be placed on the last 12 months, but previous performance could also be considered. High performance results and accomplishments can include:

- A high ranking
- Placing at a National Championship or the Summer or Winter L3
- Invitation to participate in special camps or events

Must not have a Code of Conduct report on file in the last 12 months. Refer to the Suspension Points Record in Serve Control.

Must be a current USTA Member.

EMERGING JUNIOR PLAYERS OF THE YEAR (1 male and 1 female)

Recognition of a junior player who participates in USTA Team Challenges, USTA Junior Team Tennis or other events, such as USTA Junior Circuit, on a regular basis. Both recipients should demonstrate good sportsmanship and a love of the game.

An emerging junior player is **not** actively playing in section-level tournaments, maybe not even an L5. These players may show promise to be high-performance players, but may also just be actively playing in WTN Match Play, WTN Tournaments, Junior Team Tennis, Junior Circuit, and Team Challenges. As a result, they are developing a lifelong love for the game of tennis.

Must be a current USTA Member.

JUNIOR SPORTSMANSHIP

The USTA Missouri Valley Junior Sportsmanship Award is given to a male and female junior player in each age group, boys and girls 10, 12, 14, 16 and 18's who best exemplifies the finest qualities of sportsmanship in competitive play including tournaments, USTA Junior Team Tennis, and USTA Junior Circuit events. Good sportsmanship is an essential element of all junior sports and junior development.

The junior player is ineligible if there is a Code of Conduct on file in the last 12 months for the nominee. Nominator, refer to the Suspension Points Record in Serve Control.

Leadership off the court is a bonus. Examples could include taking on leadership opportunities or volunteering in the community or with the organization.

The nomination **must** have a minimum of two instances (**in detail**) where the nominee exemplified the finest qualities of sportsmanship on and/or off the court (quotes from officials, coaches, parents, or players are acceptable). Add any sportsmanship results, such as SuperSport nominations at the District level and/or tournament sportsmanship awards

Must be a current USTA Member.

USTA Nebraska nominees for this award will be recognized regardless of whether they win a section award.

TENNIS FAMILY OF THE YEAR

This award is made annually to the family who in recent years has done the most to promote amateur tennis - primarily on a **volunteer** basis. Ideally, all nominated members of the family should participate in some way, either as players or by running programs or tournaments or in junior development activities.

The family must be active in volunteering in some or all of the following:

- Serving as a volunteer in fostering tennis at any level of the USTA, such as national, section, district and/or local board or committee, tournaments and adult and/or junior programs.
- Developing and/or sustaining junior and adult programs
- Holding office(s) at any level of the USTA
- Volunteer coaching
- Competing in tennis, including any youth program or tournament, high school, Tennis On Campus or college varsity, tournaments (include age category rankings), USTA League or other organized play, including social/recreational
- Enriching the game of tennis in other related activities (i.e., non-tennis activity, honors and/or achievements.)

Include the years of service for each activity for each nominated family member.

All family members listed in the nomination must be current USTA Members.

FACILITY OF THE YEAR

Recognition will be awarded to one (1) individual outstanding tennis facility under the jurisdiction of:

- A parks and recreation department
- An educational institution
- Non-profit entities, or
- Private and/or commercially owned and operated facilities with USTA and other 'growth of tennis' programs

Criteria to be considered when nominating a facility are:

- Quality of each court area and surface
- Quality of the court enclosure and lighting
- Overall layout and adaptation to the site
- Accessories and amenities, especially encouraging the following of medical protocol for personal sanitation
- Evidence of good and green maintenance
- Quality Net Generation tennis guidelines met
 - Includes red to orange to green to yellow programs
 - Host Junior Circuit events
 - Host Junior Team Tennis teams
 - Facility has blended lines or permanent 36' or 60' courts
- Completed registration of programs on Serve Tennis

Tennis programs held should include:

- USTA programs
- USTA Junior Competitive Pathway
- Other tennis-related programs
- Important contributions to the game of tennis

Must be a current USTA Organization Member

MEMBER ORGANIZATION OF THE YEAR

Recognition of outstanding service by one (1) individual USTA Missouri Valley Member Organization.

- Service and impact to the community.
 - Donating facilities for amateur tournaments of all types
 - Providing courts for free clinics or seminars for the general public
 - Providing facilities for interscholastic play for high school and college tennis
 - Providing facilities for USTA programs (tournaments, Leagues, High Performance, etc.)
 - Allowing promising non-member juniors the use of the courts
 - Taking an active role in section or district affairs
 - Allowing use of facilities for special events (e.g., charities, wheelchair, etc.)
 - Involvement and support of diversity and inclusion initiatives and programs
 - Allowing use of facilities for section or district events or training
- Service to organization's members which demonstrates support of the USTA Mission and may include the following:
 - Maintaining an active tennis program including:
 - Tennis ladders and other recreational programs including intersectional/inter-organizational play
 - Adult and junior tournaments in various categories, especially USTA sanctioned tournaments
 - Encouraging and promoting play in USTA Leagues and USTA Junior Team Tennis

- Net Generation related programs, Schools Tennis and NJTL programs
- Adaptive tennis programs
- Senior initiatives
- o Maintaining effective systems for keeping membership informed of USTA section and district tournaments and activities and of pertinent changes in USTA and sectional rules and regulations
- o Encouraging and assisting junior players
- General service to the game of tennis
 - o Activities that promote and strengthen tennis within the member organizations and in the community
 - o Activities promoting the benefits of individual membership in the USTA

Must be a current USTA Organization Member

OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY TENNIS ASSOCIATION

A USTA Community Tennis Association (CTA) is defined as: “Any multipurpose, incorporated, geographically defined, not-for-profit, volunteer tennis support organization which supports or provides comprehensive programs.”

Describe in detail how the CTA meets the following criteria categories:

CTA history, CTA leadership, CTA mission, strategic plan, organizational structure, program offerings based on community needs, volunteer recruitment, community partnerships, fundraising, marketing and PR plans, staff positions, special recognitions.

Must be a registered USTA CTA and a current USTA Organization Member, and the main CTA provider must be Safe Play approved.

OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTOR TO YOUTH TENNIS PROGRAMS

The award is given to an **individual** (not a facility or academy) that is providing a full-service USTA Junior Competitive Pathway.

Criteria to consider:

- Individual is Safe Play approved
- Programs are registered on PlayTennis.usta.com
- Individual promotes USTA Junior Competitive Pathway within their program
- Individual organizes USTA Junior Circuit events
- Individual organizes USTA Team Challenges
- Individual organizes USTA Junior Team Tennis teams or programs
- Individual partners with schools for in school/after school tennis

Must be a current USTA Member

Bonus factors:

- Certified with USPTA and RSPA (be current on their education and dues and be in good standing)
- Registered Net Generation School Partner

OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTOR TO YOUTH HIGH PERFORMANCE PROGRAM

This award is given to an **individual** (not a facility or academy). This person has done the most to advance High Performance programs. The nominee has assisted in searching for new talented junior players and involvement with Team USA camp.

Required:

- Must be a current USTA Member
- Must be Safe Play approved

Junior successes to be considered include:

- Players with high national rank
- Players making it to the Quarters and beyond in national USTA tournaments and ITF tournaments
- Players are top finishers in top section events (Level 3 USTA Missouri Valley)
- Players who earn sportsmanship awards
- Players who are invited to regional and national camps

Bonus factors:

- Certified with USPTA or RSPA (current on their education and dues and be in good standing)
- Completed a USTA High Performance program
- Given back by coaching section or National Team Events, or volunteering time at community events

USTA JUNIOR TEAM TENNIS ORGANIZER

This award will be presented to one **individual** USTA Junior Team Tennis organizer who has helped expand an existing USTA Junior Team Tennis program or has developed a new USTA Junior Team Tennis program.

Criteria to consider when nominating are:

- Successfully implemented or helped expand local USTA Junior Team Tennis programs
- Served as a district/local coordinator or coach/manager within a USTA Junior Team Tennis program
- USTA Junior Team Tennis program must be listed in TennisLink
- Successfully implemented other USTA tennis programs
- Generated interest in USTA Junior Team Tennis programs through local advocacy
- Creatively and effectively utilized section and or national funding
- Sponsorship development – ability to find and utilize resources other than the USTA
- Number of participants in USTA Junior Team Tennis programs
- Current Safe Play approved
- Complete Coach profile on USTA.com

Must be a current USTA Member.

OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTOR TO THE USTA LEAGUE TENNIS PROGRAM

This person(s) has made significant contributions to the USTA League Tennis program as a volunteer in multiple aspects of leagues. The nominee has participated on teams, assisted in the promotion of the program, assisted in the administration of the leagues and/or volunteered at section championships.

Recipient(s) should demonstrate good sportsmanship and a love of the game.

Provide years of service, type of service provided and community activity. Documented information showing how, through their efforts, the league player experience has been enhanced, a program was developed and implemented, and/or has increased league participation or retention in the section.

- Must not be anyone who receives a stipend or monetary remuneration.
- Bonus factors: long-time service, and participation on section or district committees.

Must be a current USTA Member.

OUTSTANDING ADULT/SENIOR TOURNAMENT

An outstanding USTA sanctioned adult/senior tournament will include most of the following criteria:

- Excellent tournament organization
- Fair and proper seeding
- Fair and equitable scheduling
- Adequate staffing for tournaments (referees and umpires, monitors, desk staff and other volunteers)
- Encouraged sanitation protocol for use of personal amenities such as water, ice, towels
- Information dissemination, the use of technology to improve tournament
- Good site conditions with adequate indoor backup if needed
- Multiple matches and/or creative formats (e.g., - day tournaments)
- USTA Missouri Valley regulations and contract requirements followed
- Rules and regulations followed as outlined in current *Friend at Court*
- Effort to promote the USTA Missouri Valley SuperSport initiative and reward good sportsmanship

This award will **not** be given to an adult section-level event that is run by USTA Missouri Valley staff.

OUTSTANDING JUNIOR TOURNAMENT

An outstanding USTA sanctioned junior tournament will include most of the following criteria and must **not** be a section level (L3, L4, or L5) event:

- Excellent tournament organization
- Fair and proper seeding
- Fair and equitable scheduling
- Adequate staffing for tournaments (referees and umpires, monitors, desk staff, and other volunteers)
- Encouraged sanitation protocols for use of personal amenities such as water, ice, and towels, as well as social distancing methods (if required)
- Information dissemination, the use of technology to improve the tournament
- Good site conditions with adequate indoor backup if needed
- Applicable rules and regulations followed
- Effort to promote the USTA Missouri Valley SuperSport initiative and reward good sportsmanship

Include details on what distinguishes this event as an outstanding tournament (number of participants, exemplary use of Serve Tennis, organization of volunteers, tournament survey results, etc.)

OUTSTANDING OFFICIAL

This award shall recognize dedication, service, responsiveness, and technical proficiency. It shall be based upon a reputation for a high standard of officiating and providing appropriate leadership, on and off the court, in the pursuit of umpiring. The certified official shall have worked substantially at section/amateur USTA events, be a positive role model, and be supportive and involved in grassroots programs and events. A referee certification is highly desirable.

The USTA officiating database will be used as the source of the current work record. The recipient shall be selected in consultation with the USTA Missouri Valley Officials Committee Chair.

Bonus factors:

- Officiating at high school, college, and/or professional events, in addition to a substantial number of section/amateur USTA events.
- Successful recruitment of new officials
- Longevity as an official
- Serving on an officials committee

HIGH SCHOOL COACH OF THE YEAR

Recognition of a high school coach for the nominees' work during the 2023-2024 season as a coach who meets the following criteria:

- Supports and promotes USTA programs, including hosting Team Challenges and promoting USTA tournaments; high school teams had a record of success in win-loss and/or in improvement of players; develops players' physical, mental and emotional abilities and promotes development; maintains high ethical and sportsmanship standards; promotes a passion for tennis in the team, school and community.
- Required:
 - Must currently be coaching a high school team (not retired).
 - Must be Safe Play approved and/or the state or school equivalent.
- Bonus factors:
 - Registered through the Team Coach registration on USTA.com
 - Serves as a School Partner for physical education tennis programming
 - Certified with USPTA or RSPA (current on their education and dues and be in good standing)

Include in the nomination one to two specific examples of how the nominee promotes play and supports USTA programming outside of the high school.

OUTSTANDING DIVERSITY ACHIEVEMENT

Given to an outstanding USTA Missouri Valley program leader, athlete, organization or administrator for success in providing outreach to the diverse tennis community. This award may include NJTL chapters and/or leaders.

This award is presented to an individual or organization that has championed the cause for diversity both on and off the tennis court. Through hard work, persistence, and unwavering dedication, the nominee has helped to expand the image of tennis to be inclusive of diverse populations. Other considerations are demonstrating a high degree of organizational ability, success in serving all players in the area, quality off- and on-court programs, management structure, and involvement with the tennis community.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

Distinguished Service award recognizes outstanding, long-time performance, dedication and accomplishment of an individual's effort in district-level service* to USTA.

Criteria to consider when nominating are:

- Outstanding and sustained service to the sport through active participation, advocacy, or district leadership*, in a manner consistent with the highest standards of the field. These standards may be met in a variety of ways, including activity that involves exceptional creativity, innovation, intellectual, moral courage and leadership.
- A willingness to work with others to improve the game of tennis
- Candidate should have a minimum of 10 years of service (e.g., long-term service on organizational-level committees, chair or vice-chair of an organizational committee(s), board of directors, advisor)
- The award may be given posthumously

Must be a current USTA member.

* Nominations for the USTA Missouri Valley award must be based on **section-level** service.

NTA-ONLY AWARD (NOT ELIGIBLE FOR NOMINATION TO MV)

MEDIA EXCELLENCE

Presented annually to an individual or media outlet in recognition of outstanding contributions to the coverage of tennis. Part-time or full-time anchor, reporter, writer, editor, photojournalist, videographer, or other member of the media or freelancers who provide extensive media support for the sport of tennis and its related activities. Criteria include coverage of USTA programs and events, awareness building of USTA and/or the game of tennis through features, frequency and depth of coverage and overall involvement in the tennis field.

Nominees need to be in one of three categories:

- Print media (newspaper, magazine)
- Broadcast media (TV, Radio)
- Internet-based media (websites, social media, blogs, digital publications, internet radio)

USTA Membership is **not** required